Leszek Paweł Słupecki

Slavonic Pagan Sanctuaries

Cover: The so-called Sviatovid from the Zbrucz, presently in Archaeological Museum in Cracow. Photo L. Słupecki.
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INTRODUCTION

Poland, analogically to Bohemia and Ruthenia, originated as a pagan country, as all Slavs entered the historical scene professing their traditional beliefs, which they retained until the beginning of their own organized states. Polabians (the Slavs from the area between the Elbe/Saale and the Oder) never abandoned the traditional faith voluntarily and under the imposed rule they lost their Slavonic identity. Pagan faith strongly influenced the behaviour of princes, priests and leaders, warriors and farmers, men and women. Religion, as it has always happened in history, introduced sense into their life and world. We know that pagan gods were believed to guarantee the law and oaths, to lead their worshipers in wars, to grant good harvest and prosperity, to give advise through oracles. The princes performed their duties as the guardians of peace and order, leaders and defenders. They knew that they were responsible for the well-being of their people. The songs that glorified brave deeds of heroes, of which only fragments are known today, created the ethos of warrior. Also the farmer, who knew that the soil, which feeds the people, was sacred, had his own ethos. The myths about the peasant origin of the Piasts, the Pi'emysl dynasty and the princes of Carinthia prove that the work of a farmer was highly respected. The holydays, motivated by religion, marked the stable points in the year, constituted the calendar. Time, similarly to space, had a sacred dimension.

Records which would convey a straightforward image of the world presented by the pagan Slavonic religion similar to the Scandinavian Poetic Edda have not been written down. We can, however, infer much more information from the records concerning the appearance and arrangement of Slavonic sanctuaries.

Until now researchers have tried to interpret particular cult places of the Slavs through the relatively scarce data about their mythology. However, it seems worth to try the reverse procedure. According to Mircea Eliade (1966, p. 361–380), the sacred places symbolize the elements of the cosmic order of the world. Therefore it is possible that the universal ideas of the centre of the world, axis mundi, the cosmic mountain, the tree of life, the omphalos, end or border of the universe, primeval waters, the source of the water of life, were reflected in the plans and locations of Slavonic sanctuaries which should be thoroughly examined. Not all data will be used here. The burial
rituals, which is the subject of a separate branch of knowledge (Zoll-Adamokowa, 1975-1979, 1988), the image of afterlife (Bylina, 1992, p. 7-31) and the places of private home cult will remain outside the scope of this work.

We will present here the timing and the way of celebrating the rituals, sacrifices and oracles held in Slavonic sacred places. We will discuss the symbolism and the functions of sanctuaries as places of public meetings, adjudication, feasts and trade. Finally, we will try to answer the question whether the cult was organized by priests and what role they may have performed. Here, the political significance of the sanctuaries deserves special attention. It is also interesting to find out whether any hierarchy of sanctuaries existed, and to try to establish the area of religious influence of the most important ones. The attempts at reconstructing their physical shape cannot be omitted.

Studies over the pagan religion of the Slavs are deep rooted in tradition. As early as in the 15th century Jan Długosz (Annales, I, vol. I, 1964, p. 106-108) devoted several pages of his work to the description of the pagan beliefs of ancient Poles. He was followed by Maciej Miechowita (Chronica Polonorum, II, 2, 1521, p. 24), Marcin Bielski (1551, p. 166), Marcin Kromer (1589, p. 30-33) and Joachim Bielski (1597, p. 51). Modern critical research was initiated by nineteen-century historians. Their critical approach to the sources, although undoubtedly necessary at the time, resulted in positivistic hypercriticism, evident in the works of Aleksander Brückner (1985) and Erwin Wienecke (1940). Lubor Niederle (1916, p.182–263) presents less extreme views. The overcritical researchers did not believe in developed polytheism among the Slavs, with the exception of Northern Polabians. They consistently denied that the Slavs (except of Polabians) might have erected temples or used statues for cult purposes. They presumed that the Slavonic religion had not reached the level of developed polytheism with sophisticated rituals held in temples, anthropomorphic pantheons represented in sculpture, a powerful class of priests and rich mythology. Moreover, they questioned the existence of uniform Slavonic religion, whose basic features would be common to all Slavs. They did not believe that all Slavic tribes had worshiped common gods. Such opinions were also expressed by Henryk Łowmiański (1979; 1984) and Stanisław Urbaničzyk (1991). B.A. Rybakov (1981; 1987) is sometimes carried away by fantasy in his works, therefore the basic study of E.V. Anichkov (1914) and the work of N.M. Galkovsky (1913-1916) remain indispensable to studying the history of paganism in Ruthenia. J. Herrmann did not present a monograph of Slavonic religion, but he published a number of well-documented, although confined by the Marxist view of society and religion, articles (the most comprehensive: 1981, p. 41-68) on the subject. Rybakov and Herrmann do not take any position in the dispute between structuralists and neopositivists, which is basic for the reconstruction of Slavonic religion. W. Szafranski (1987, p. 352-434) generally supports the neopositivistic view, at the same time adopting a controversial thesis about uninterrupted development of religion on the Polish territory since time immemorial. The literature concerning the problem of Slavonic mythology was recently compiled, unfortunately with serious omissions, by M. Kulikowski (1989).

The hypercritical views were questioned by Aleksander Gieysztor (1982; 1984), Jacek Banaezkiewicz (1986) and Russian semioticians (Ivanov, Toporov 1974; Uspiensky 1985). Thanks to the methods of structuralism they proved the richness of Slavonic religion and mythology, in which – following the studies of G. Dumézil – they traced the basic religious beliefs shared by all Indo-Europeans.

Among Indo-European peoples the ideal model of a community was defined by three fundamental social functions: the execution of power in its legal, magic and religious aspects, offensive and defensive fighting, and ensuring food and affluence. It was reflected in the three-function social system of free people (consisting of princes and priests, warriors and farmers) and in the views concerning the world of sacrum. According to A. Gieysztor (1982, p. 44-158) sovereign supreme Slavic gods were Perun and Weles. The former was connected with the sphere of law and war, the latter with magic. Other gods, like Mokoš, Rod with Rožanice, many lower spirits, and possibly the twin gods whose statue was discovered in Fischersinn, were responsible for the feeding and well-being of the community. No model can explain all data. The power of Perun far exceeded the function of the supreme authority, we have mentioned above that he was also a war god, analogically to Polabian gods Sventovit, Rugevit and Jarovit, which were probably local variants of Perun. The spheres of the gods of the first and second function embraced also harvest and prosperity.

The division of gods according to three functions was not the only model of pantheon. There were gods of heaven and thunder, like Perun, and those who ruled the underworld, like Veles. Khors was the god of the Moon and Stribog of wind. Important role was attributed to gods of the sun and fire: Svarog, called also Radogost, and Dadžbog, the lord of fire, perhaps identical to Svarog. Such idols sometimes attained the status of supreme gods, as for instance Svarožić, who was worshiped in Radogošt. Tryglav, which was probably the Polabian and Pomeranian name of Veles, in the mythology of the Szczecinians ruled over heaven, the earth and the underworld.

For a long time sanctuaries of Slavonic gods could be studied only from written sources. They constituted the basis of Thede Palm’s monograph of Slavonic pagan cult places from 1937. Nowadays it is worth restarting the research, as archaeology has supplemented the written sources with the results of excavations in sites interpreted as sanctuaries, including several temples. The question is whether the remains really used to be temples. For a long time archaeology lacked reflection on reliable methods of identifying a cult place. An interesting attempt at specifying the criteria of identifying
sacred places, referring to the conception of C. Colpe (1970), was made by Tadeusz Makiewicz and Andrzej Prinke (1981), who, however, did not discuss the problem of applicability of written sources to verifying archaeological data.

As the location of Slavonic settlements before the Migration of nations is uncertain, the chronological framework of the search for Slavonic sanctuaries is limited from the 6th c. A.D., when the Slavs undoubtedly appear in the sources, to the moment of their official Christianization (different for various tribes), when the places of public cult were destroyed, which is symbolically marked by the year 1168, the surrender of Arcona. It is intriguing, however, that some of the sanctuaries are dated outside this scope. The territory relevant to the present discussion will be the land of Western Slavs, and for comparative purposes of Eastern Slavs, while the cult places of Southern Slavs will not be elaborated on. The reasons for the latter are: the influence of numerous and divergent assimilated tribes on the religious life of Eastern Slavs, and the lack of reliable archaeological data from that region.

1. The cult buildings of Slavonic, Germanic and Baltic tribes

Since the beginnings of studies over paganism researchers and lovers of the Old Slavs have been attracted by the most spectacular objects of worship: temples and statues. As early as in the 15th c., a Pommeranian historian, Thomas Kantzow (Chronik von Pommern, IV, p. 103–110) described the temple in Arcona, and as he drew information from the relation of Saxo Grammaticus, the description was quite accurate. Jan Długosz faced a more difficult situation – he lacked sources. He could not imagine the pagan state of the Polish ruler Mieszko I without temples, therefore in his Annals (Annales, I, vol. 1, 1964, p. 107) he situated a temple of Nyja in his capital Gniezno. Later Romanticism caused wide interest in paganism – good Polish examples are poet Juliusz Słowacki and novelist Józef Ignacy Kraszewski – and the love for “Slavonic antiquities” was supported by arising nineteen-century criticism. After a hundred years of research, however, constant dealing with the same written sources confirmed historians in the vicious circle of data and interpretations well known to everyone. Including folklore into the research contributed a lot to the reconstruction of mythology, but – unsurprisingly – much less to the knowledge about the temples, although such attempts – rather unsuccessful – were made (Mokolowski 1903, p. 280–290).

In 1975 the results of the studies over the written sources were summarised in the Dictionary of Slavonic Antiquities (Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich, vol. 1, p. 579): “Pagan temples as complexes of religious architecture are attested only in Northern Polabia and Western Pomerania in the last period of the development of Slavonic paganism (11th–12th c. A.D.). It is possible that they were partly modelled after Christian churches. They were novelties connected with internal changes in the pagan religion, which adapted to the transformations in the social and political structure of the north-western Slavonic communities at that time. Pagan temples were located near important strongholds and early towns (Starigard/Oldenburg, Brandenburg, Szczecin, Wolin and others), and some of them became centres influencing more than one tribe (Radogóś in the 11th c., Arcona in the 12th c.). (...) The attempts at interpreting some archaeological excavations as remains of pagan temples are not sufficiently motivated (Gniezno, Prague) or are simply misconceptions (Arcona).”
The above information corresponded to the state of research at the time of the publication of the Dictionary. But ten years of fruitful excavation work added new cult buildings to the group of those known from the written sources such as the temples in Radogoszcz, Szczecin, Wolin, Wolgast (Wologoszcz), Garz and Gültzkow. In 1967 remains of temples were discovered near Feldberg, later in Wolin, Gross Raden, Ralswiek and Parchim, in some other cases the function of the building is unclear.

The first task is to specify what can be considered a temple, because this term is sometimes applied to all sanctuaries, both those situated in roofed buildings and those where gods were worshiped in the open air. The author of this work reserves the name of temple to a roofed building regarded as a place of revelation or presence of a deity or deities, containing their effigies or symbols, sacred and guarded by a taboo, constituting a centre of cult rituals. No definition is perfect, so this one also causes certain problems. The Slavs (like the Germans and other tribes) had some buildings used by the community for both religious and secular purposes, in which sacrifices, prayers and rites, including ritual feasts and carouses, took place along with entertainment and counselling. That type of buildings can be named “cult hall” to distinguish them from sacrosanct temples. The union of sacrum and profanum should not shock us. The borderline between a ritual feast and secular celebration was certainly fuzzy, while the cult was intertwined with all aspects of merrymaking. Until now merrymaking, trading and social gatherings are closely connected with cult and holidays, in earlier times the connection used to be even stronger.

In written sources temples and cult halls are referred to by various names. Apart from Latin (Wienecke, 1940, p. 190-192), Old-Scandinavian (Knýtlingasaga, ch. 122), or even Arabic expressions, we are lucky to know native Slavonic names, which are first of all the Ruthenian word khram and Pomeranian kacína. The former was recorded in the 11th, the latter in the 12th century. Both unambiguously denote a building used for cult purposes. Khrám, apart from “a pagan temple” (khrám idolísky), later often meant “a church” or “an Orthodox church,” it can also refer to a house, a hut or a hall, but never signifies open space. Apart from Old Ruthenian and Old Church Slavonic, this word is attested in Bulgarian (khrám = temple), Slovene (hram = house, the house of God, peace), Czech (chram = church), Polish (Old Polish and dialectal chromina = hut) and Lower Lusatian (chrom = building) (Srećnovsky, vol. 3, 1956, p. 1398-1399; Vasmer, 1953-1958, vol. 3, p. 263-264). The word kacína is also unquestionable. Although Romantics tried to interpret the Latin transcription contína wrongly as gontyna (“a house with a shingle roof,” from the word gont = shingle), the correct etymology of this word, deriving kacína from kát = corner, includes into the explanation of its sense the notion of “a building with a roof.” The word kát (the place where two walls meet) is used in Polish until now to denote a house or flat. The Old Polish phrase cztyry kąty (four corners) mean simply a house. Koutina in Czech and k'tina in Bulgarian mean “a hut” (Slawski, vol. 1, 1952-1956, p. 318-319; Slownik Staropolski, vol. 3, 1960-1962, p. 263). Thus, kacína was a building with four corners, a house that could function as a place of meetings and a seat of deities.

Less attention has been devoted to the words božnica and świątnia. Božnica, derived undoubtedly from bog (god), was recorded in 1146 in Primary Chronicle as mysterious “Turowa božnica.” In contemporary Polish bożnica means only “synagogue,” but according to A. Brückner (1985a, p. 34) it used to denote any “house of god.” The word świątnia (from svět, świąty = holy), although not recorded as early as the previous one, may have equally ancient etymology. This claim is supported by the existence of Polish villages named Świątniki in which ancillary peasants serving the churches lived in the times of the first Piasts (SSS, vol. 5, p. 578).

The fact that recorded words denoting temples differed in Western and Eastern Slavs was used by H. Łowmiański (1979, p. 230) as an argument for the thesis that originally the Slavs did not know temples since there is no common expression for that notion. The word kacína, however, seems to be a pars pro toto type of name, and the fact that it was recorded
as Pomeranian in the lives of St Otto does not necessarily prove that the word *khram*, attested in Ruthenia, was unknown to Western Slavs, who did not leave any writings in their own language. Its existence in the vocabulary of the Czechs, Poles and Lusatians suggests that it may have been an all-Slavonic term.

Until now most historians have claimed that old Indo-Europeans did not erect temples. J. Gonda (1978, p. 141) stresses their absence in the Vedic cult. This thesis deserves closer examination and should be perhaps questioned, as ethnological studies describe various sacred buildings, such as cult huts or houses of tribal gatherings, discovered among peoples whose culture is by no means superior to that of primitive Indo-Europeans (e.g. Hauser-Schaublin 1989). For the purposes of this work, however, it will suffice to present shortly the temples of the Slavs’ closest neighbours, the Germans and the Balts.

The temples of Germanic peoples were first mentioned in ancient times. Tacitus in *Germania* (9; 40) generally states that the Germans did not erect temples or statues, but when describing the details of their religion he contradicts himself, as he mentions a temple of goddess Nerthus and a sanctuary of Tampha (Tacitus, *Annales*, I, 51; cf. de Vries 1956–1957, vol. 1, p. 375). Later, medieval references begin from the letter of pope Gregory the Great (Gregorius Mellito Abbati in Francisi, *MGH Epistolae*, vol. 2, 1855, p. 320–331), which is a kind of instruction concerning the tactic of christianizing the Anglo-Saxons in which the Pope commands that pagan temples should not be destroyed but converted into churches. Anglo-Saxon temples are also mentioned by Beda Venerabilis (*Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, I, 30; II, 15; II, 30, PLat., vol. 95, 1861). The Franks also had temples, which is proved by the information that one of them was destroyed by order of queen Radegund. Jonas of Bobbio described a temple of the Lombards, which was constructed of timber and surrounded with trees (Strzelczyk 1987, p. 114; de Vries 1956–1957, vol. 1, p. 376). These mentions, though scarce, allow to conclude that Germanic temples were usually built of wood.

There is much more information about Scandinavian temples (Olsen, 1966; 1970; Haraldsson, 1992). Shrines of gods are mentioned many times in the *Poetic Edda*. The songs present Asgard, the seat of the gods from the line of As, as a wonderful meadow called Itha Plain, surrounded with an embankment by the Giant hired to do this job. The gods themselves erected their temples there:

The Ases met in Itha Plain
they timbered high shrines and cult halls (*byrg oc hof*)
(Vglospa, stanza 7)

Thus, the building of temples originated in the example of gods themselves. Their seats, created at the dawn of history, are described in *Edda* as banquet halls adorned with silver and gold, from where the Ases rule the world sipping mead from pure gold cups. The most famous one was Walhalla, the seat of Odin, the most powerful of gods. It is described in *Grimnismál*. Among the gods’ seats:

Gladheimir is the fifth
where spacious Walhalla shines of gold
and Hropl [i.e. Odin] daily chooses those
who are to die of sword.
Those who hasten to Odin
Will recognize it at once:
Spearshafts make the walls, shields cover the roof,
Cuirasses lie on the benches.
Those who hasten to Odin
Will recognize it at once:
A wolf hangs to the west of the gate,
An eagle leans over him.

Let us omit the descriptions of the seats of other gods: guardian of temples Heimdall, who merrily drinks mead, Freya, hosting the warriors who after their death were not accepted by Odin, the manor of Forsete, called Glitner, with silver roof and gold columns, or the spiry temple
of Njord. The important point is that according to *Grimnismál* the tree of the world, a holy ash-tree called Yggdrasil, grew in Asgard and all rivers rose there. Thus, the gods’ houses, which reflected the existent cult halls of the pagan Scandinavians, were imagined to stand in the mythical centre of the world.

There is a good description of a really existing temple in Adam of Bremen (IV, 26–27), who vividly depicted the shrine in Old Uppsala. As he said the Swedes “have a magnificent temple, which they call Ubsola (...)”. In this temple, in which everything is made of gold, the people worship the statues of three gods, of whom Thor, as the most powerful, has a throne on a dais, Wotan and Frey have their places next to him.” The temple was in care of priests, offerings were made in a nearby grove. Further information is supplied by the scholia to Adam’s work (138/134/139/135/). According to them, near the temple there was a tree with evergreen leaves and a spring at which sacrifices took place, and the whole shrine was encircled with a gold chain. The mention about the evergreen tree may be connected with the myth of Yggdrasil, as Adam’s vision of Uppsala quite close to the image of gods’ seats in Asgard presented in Edda, but the tree and the spring may have really existed as reflections of their mythical prototypes. Unfortunately, the remains of the temple discovered in Old Uppsala turned out to be so minute that no reliable reconstruction could be undertaken (Duczko 1993). It seems, however, that it was a small square wooden building surrounded with a fence. It was the most important public sanctuary of the Swedes (Lindquist, 1923; de Vries, 1956–1957, vol. 1, p. 381; Brøndsted, 1964, p. 228–231; Olsen 1966, p. 116–167; 1970, p. 265–268). The information about it contained in sagas (Olaf’s Saga Tryggvasonar, 322, in: Flateyjarbók, 1860, vol. 1, p. 401; Ynglingasaga, ch. 18) indicate that the main deity worshiped there was Frey, whose cult was particularly popular in Sweden (*Hervarar saga*, ch. 14), although a temple of Frey existed also in Trondheim in Norway (Olaf’s Saga Tryggvasonar, 322, Flateyjarbók, 1860, vol. 1, p. 401).

The sagas describe another type of cult buildings. *Njals saga* presents a shrine in Norwegian settlement Gudbrandsdalen, a private sanctuary of a local noble. It was destroyed by sacrilege: “At night Viga-Hrapp went to the cult hall (godahuss) of the yarl and Gudbrand. He went inside. He saw there the statue of Thorgerd, Holge’s bride. She was as big as an adult man and was seated. She had a large gold bracelet on her arm and a cap on her head. He stripped her of the bracelet and the cap. He saw Thor in his carriage and took his gold bracelet. The third bracelet he took off Irpa. Then he dragged all the idols outside and robbed all their jewels. Then he set fire to the cult hall and burnt it down. Having done that, he went. It was at dawn. (...) Early in the morning yarl Haakon and Gudbrand came to the cult hall. They found the hall smouldering and the three statues dragged outside and stripped of all robes and jewels.” Such details as robes and jewels are worth remembering. The statues were not situated on the ground, which shows that the lack of post-holes in excavated buildings interpreted as temples does not necessarily mean the lack of statues.

Another description that is worth quoting, concerning the cult hall (*hof*) of Thor in Thorsnes in Iceland, comes from *Erbyggjasaga* (ch. 3–4). According to the story a powerful Norwegian noble called Hrolf Mostrarskegg was known as a worshiper of Thor, for whom he built a temple in his estate. Therefore he was nicknamed Thorolf. After a quarrel with king Harald, having asked Thor for advice first, he set off to seek his fortune in Iceland. When his ship approached the coast “Thorolf threw overboard the throne poles (ondvegissulur) that had stood in his temple. In one of them an image of Thor was carved. He explained that he wanted to settle down in that place in Iceland where with Thor’s permission the poles would touch the land.” The poles floated into a fjord. Thorolf gave it a name and started to explore the coast. He found out that the sea had thrown the image of Thor on a cape, which he named Thorns after the god. Thorolf went around the land that he wanted to possess with a lit torch in his hand. A stream which was a part of its borderline was called the Stream of Thor (*fhorsa*). A temple was erected at the bay, in a place called Hofstadir. He ordered to build the *hof* there: “It was an enormous house. The entrance was in the side wall,
poles with nails stuck into them. They are called god’s nails (reginnaglar). Inside there was the place of peace (fridstadr). Farther from the entrance, towards the more remote gable wall, there was a room similar to the choir in churches nowadays. There was a platform (stalli) in the middle of the floor, like an altar. On this altar lay a bracelet, made in one piece, which weighted twelve ounces. All oaths had to be sworn on it. The hofgodi had to wear the bracelet on his arm during all assemblies. Usually there was also a bowl for offerings on the altar.” Near it there was an oblation brush, a kind of aspergillum, used for sprinkling the blood of sacrificed animals, which was called the oblation of blood. “In the ahus, around the stalli, statues of gods stood. Everyone was obliged to pay taxes to the hof and follow the hofgodi in his journeys, just as thingmen are obliged to follow chieftains nowadays.” But the godi was supposed to maintain the hof at his own expense. The godi, the priest, chieftain and judge, led all the rituals held there. Near the temple in Thorsness there was a mound of rock, worshiped and Holy Mountain (Helgafell). Thorolf wished to be buried there. “In the place where the effigy of Thor touched the land, on the narrow cape, he ordered to hold all trials and established the thing for the whole district (heradsthing). This area was so sacred for him that he did not allow to sully it neither by bloodshed, nor by anyone relieving himself.” For those purposes a small rocky island was reserved. Many of the above details were drawn from the pagan Ulfljot’s Law, (Olsen 1966, p. 34-35; Strömberg, 1975, p. 40). A similar description can be found in Kjalnesinga saga (ch. 2).

The sagas (Hrafnkelssaga Freysgoda, ch. 2, 6; Hardar saga ok Holmveria, 1908, p. 79-80; Baetke 1937, p. 5-7) mention several similar edifices,
to which we should add over 20 topographical names containing the morpheme hof-, which testify that temples existed in other regions of Scandinavia. In Scandinavia a temple in the strict sense, a small building on a square plan was called horg, while a large, elongated cult hall corresponding to the above description was named hof, godahus or, in case of a private sanctuary, blothus (de Vries 1956–1957, vol. 1, p. 372–384; Olsen 1966, p. 55–115; Ström, 1975, p. 214–228). The plan of such a building is known from the excavations in Hofstadir in Iceland. The hof there was a large, elongated building composed of a long aisle, called langhaus, where banquets and meetings took place, and an adjacent smaller room, afhus, where the idols stood. Outside there was a special place surrounded by an embankment, used for preparing meat for ritual feasts (Olsen 1970, p. 272–274). Traces of similar buildings were found in the 19th c. in other places in Iceland (Haraldsson 1992). A similar building existed also in Maerê near Trondheim in Norway (Liden 1969). The tradition of erecting large buildings by Germanic peoples goes back at least to the Roman period, which is proved by the examples from Feddersen Wierde (Haarnagel, 1979), or – as far as Polish territories are concerned – from Wôlêka Lâsiecka (Bender, 1964, 1980; Bender, Balke, 1980).

Temples were probably built by the Balts as well. The contrary opinion, expressed by A. Brückner (1984, p. 167) seems too critical. Some mentions about Lithuanian and Samogitian temples come from Dlugosz, whose information concerning Baltic paganism should not be dismissed. In 1387 king Władysław Jagiełło (Ladislàs Jagiello), having come back from Cracow after his baptism, ordered “in the presence of the barbarians to put out the fire that they considered eternal in the city of Vilno (Vilnius), the main town and capital of the nation (…), and to pull down the temple and altars where oblations had been made” (Annales, X, vol. 6, 1985, p. 160). The existence of that temple is confirmed by the document issued on the 12th of March 1388 by Pope Urban IV, which allows to erect the Vilno cathedral in the location of the temple (Cod. eccl. Vilnensis, 1938–1948, No 10, p. 20–12; cf Jan Długosz, Annales, X, vol. 6, 1985, p. 160–163). In Samogitia in 1413 king Władysław Jagiełło, having explained to the people how odious their errors had been, extinguished the holy fire of the Lithuanians, situated at the top of a tower near Niewiaza Lake, fed by priests and regarded as eternal (Długosz, Annales, XI: Opera Omnia, vol. 13, 1887, p. 159). Also the Prussians might have had their temple at the holy oak-tree in Romowe the main sanctuary of this tribe, described by Peter of Dusburg (III, 5; Mierzyński, 1892–1896, vol. 2, p. 6) and Simon Grunau (1875, vol. I, after the index; cf Brückner, 1984, p. 217–218, gloss 86). Sustaining the holy fire, if it was supposed to be eternal, required locating it in a roofed building. Until now, however, no remains of Baltic temples have been discovered.

In comparison with the data available to the historians of Germanic and Baltic religion, the picture of Slavonic temples in the sources is surprisingly clear and impressive. Until now only the materials concerning Western Pomerania and Northern Polabia coming from the 11th and 12th century have been considered reliable (Palm, 1937, p. 168). This thesis needs verification. The problem can be outlined in the following questions: In which Slavonic territories did temples appear? How are thy dated? Did their erection result from foreign influence? As far as the first question is concerned the traditional opinions are best motivated. Indeed, almost all records concerning temples come from Pomerania and Polabia, but there are some exceptions. It is also true that the most recent archaeological finds of that type are concentrated in this region, but some objects that can be – although not without reservations – interpreted as temples or cult halls have been found in the territory of Bohemia and Moravia, southern Poland and Ruthenia. Until now their existence among the Southern Slavs has not been confirmed.

Answering the two latter questions we can try to falsify the traditional views. The beginnings of the cult building from Gross Raden, the remains of which are rather unquestionable, as we will see, are estimated at the 9th c. In the 11th c., when the epoch of Slavonic temple-building allegedly started, Gross Rosen had already been deserted. The temple in Ralswick is dated to the 8th c., and another one, discovered near Feldberg even earlier.

Thus, if the Slavs built temples already in the early 8th c., the claim that they adopted the custom of erecting roofed buildings for deities under the influence or pressure of Christianity is unmotivated. The Christian hierarchy had enough problems in the neighbourhood with converting the Germanic tribes, who were only turning into the German nation. After all the Saxons were christened at the end of the 8th c. What remains is the possibility of adopting the idea of temple by the Slavs from the continental Germanic tribes or Scandinavians. Both theses have already been posed, especially by German specialists (Palm, 1937, p. 165; Wienecke, 1940, p. 241–256). But if the Germans were able to conceive the idea of the temple, why should we not assume that the Slavs did the same. Moreover, the Germanic temples are not confirmed in sources much earlier than the Slavonic ones. They are mentioned – apart from Tacitus – by Pope Gregory the Great at the turn of the 6th c. At the end of the 7th c., if we rely on the archaeological finds from Feldberg, Slavonic temples already existed and the thesis, which is logical only on the assumption that the beginnings of Slavonic temple-building go to the 11th c., breaks down. It is more natural to assume that the Germans (including Scandinavians), Slavs and Balts adopted the idea of temple from the common heritage. Still, if the idea had been present in Slavonic religious concepts before they appeared in the history, it is surprising that it surfaced only in some borderland tribes. A question arises whether we are not dealing with a serious gap in the sources or perhaps whether the impressive records concerning the Polabian and Pomeranian temples did not outshine the
shrines from other territories, known only from scarce mentions, which deformed the overall picture of the issue.

It seems appropriate to start the survey of the sources from the general characteristics of temples in the context of the cult. Indispensable for that is the text of Helmold (I, 84), whose description of the cult places of the Abodrites can be extended at least to Northern Polabia and Pomerania. He wrote: "The Slavs have multiple modes of idolatry, as not all of them practise the same superstitions. Some erect strange statues in temples, as for instance the effigy in Płon which is named Podaga, other deities inhabit forests and groves, for example Prove, the god of Oldenburg. Those are not represented in any effigies. Many gods are carved with two, three or even more heads." According to Thietmar's (VI, 25) description of pagan beliefs of the Lutizen "there are as many temples in this country as regions, and as many demonic idols are worshiped by the pagans, among them the above mentioned stronghold [Radogóś] is considered as superior." The temples were connected with the territorial structure and clearly organized in a hierarchy, which is confirmed by Saxo Grammaticus (XIV, p. 826), who wrote about the cult of Sventovit in Rügen that apart from Arcona "this deity had other temples in various places, which were ruled with almost equal dignity, but lesser power of the priests." These data are very important. The existence of temples does not exclude existence of other types of sanctuaries. The above quotes show that in the 10th–12th c. the north-western Slavs had "the effigies of gods," inseparable from temples, but probably situated not only in them as well as holy forests and groves. The temples, however, attracted the attention of chroniclers and the relations about them outnumber the mentions concerning all other kinds of sanctuaries in total.

Some mentions about temples come from other Slavonic territories. The Bohemian legend Oportes nos frates (ch. 1) from the mid 11th c. says that introducing Christianity prince Spitygniew "destroyed many temples of idols" (Pekaf, 1906, p. 389). Also Christianus refers to Czech temples (ch. 6: Pekaf, 1906, p. 57–58). In Ruthenia The life of prince Vladimir form the 11th c. praises the ruler for destroying the temples and offering places and smashing the idols (Mansikka, 1922, p. 57–58). Unfortunately, the texts lack any details (Łowmiański, 1979, p. 206), and based neither on them nor on any other written sources can we point to any real temple of definite location in Bohemia or Ruthenia (with one questionable exception in case of Kiev).

Information about Poland is even more scarce. The earliest sources relate the Christianization of the country, but do not mention the liquidation of pagan cult places, except of Thietmar's story (VII, 72) about bishop Rain­bern destroying the temples in Pomerania, which, however, belongs to the history of a region quite loosely connected with the Piast state. The conclusion that the cult centre in Śleża Mountain did not function any more at the time of Boleslaw Chrobry's (Boleslaus the Brave) war with the Ger­
2. Arcona and other temples in Rügen

It seems that no other early medieval pagan temple, Slavic or non-Slavic, is depicted in such detail in so many sources as the shrine of Sventovit in Arcona. Most sanctuaries were already in decline when described in writings, but Arcona has quite a long history. The tribe of Rans, which ruled the shrine, was famous for its power and fervent paganism already in the 11th c. According to Adam of Bremen (IV, 18), who wrote at the end of that century, it was “a powerful tribe of Slavs – it is improper to settle any public matter without asking for their opinion, because they terrify others by their intimacy with gods or rather demons, whom they worship with more zeal than anyone else.” The name of Arcona does not appear here. It is first recorded by the annals of the monastery in Kolbac before 1150 (PUB, vol. 1, part 2, 1877, p. 482), which mention a skirmish near the place (Wehrmann, 1922, p. 22). Other sources that mention the events of its early history were written down later.

The island of Rügen, situated at the border of the interest spheres of the German Empire, Denmark and Poland, for a long time resisted all its enemies. Without elaborating on the details of the political history of the island, we have to refer to the events connected with paganism. Around 1111 the Rans attacked Lübeck, ruled by Abodrite prince Henry, and were defeated, which gave Helmold (I, 36) occasion to characterize this tribe in the following way: “The Rans (...) are a cruel people living at the heart of the sea. They are above all devoted to idolatry, they are superior to other Slavonic peoples, they have a king and a very famous temple. Because of the special service in the temple they are most respected, and although they enslave others, they do not suffer any thrall themselves for the simple reason that the features of the place make it unaccessible. They force the conquered tribes to pay tribute to the temple. They esteem the superior priest higher than the king. They direct their army where lots say. After a victory they bring gold and silver to the treasury of their god and divide the rest of the plunder between themselves.”

In the years 1123–1124 prince Henry of Abodrites, supported by Emperor Lothar, set out to the island to revenge the death of his son killed by the Rans. Seeing the enemy’s superiority, they sent the high priest to negotiate. First he offered 400 marcas of ransom, then 800, finally he achieved peace for 4400 marcas. Helmold (I, 38) informs that at that time the Rans did not have money. They used linen instead of it, which is a means of payment known also from other Slavonic territories. Gold and silver acquired through robbery, kidnapping or other methods they “give to their wives as trimmings or accumulate in the treasury of their god.” So the treasury was the source of the enormous tribute, which is proved by the role of the priest in the negotiations. According to Helmold (I, 38) prince Henry cheated with weighing the tribute money, therefore when half of the sum had already been paid, the war broke out again, but this time the Rans won.

The lord of the Arcona temple should be regarded as a sovereign deity. According to Helmold (I, 52), “among various Slavonic deities the most distinguished is the god of the land of Rans, Sventovit, who is most efficient in oracles; in relation to him others were considered only semi-gods. Therefore they annually sacrifice to him a Christian chosen by lot.” The temple collected the sums coming from neighbouring territories as offerings. Helmold stressed that the service for the god was highly esteemed and sacrilege of temples was prevented.

Another area of contest was the sea, where the Danes were enemies. Snorre Sturulson (Heimskringla, Magnus Blindes Saga, 10–12: Labuda, 1954, p. 307–312; Kocz, 1934, p. 161; Osiecki, 1967, p. 270) described in detail a piratical expedition to the capital of Denmark, Roskild, around 1134–1135, and the plunder of the Norwegian town Konungaheli on the 10th of August 1136, which caused revenge. According to Knytingasaga (ch. 101), in the same year 1136 “king Eric set out to the Slavonic land, ravaged it all and made a great war. He seized the town called Arcona; the inhabitants of it were pagans. King Eric left the place on the condition that those pagans who had not been killed converted to Christian faith, and he ordered to baptize all population of the town. Then he came back to Denmark. But as soon as he went they abandoned Christianity and returned to pagan customs and sacrifices.” Saxo Grammaticus (XIV, p. 661–662) related the events in more detail, but he did not mention the temple, only the statue worshiped in Arcona. In his relation the Arconians, when all possibilities of defence and the hope for help disappeared and king Eric blocked the access to drinkable water, “defeated by necessity, seeking rescue in conversion to Christianity, having hidden the worshiped statue, surrendered to the Danes. Because there was a statue in the town, worshiped by special service and constantly adored, erroneously called the image of Saint Guy (Sanctus Vites). Having preserved it the inhabitants did not allow to do away with the rituals of old religion.” Simulating the baptism they quenched their thirst and washed their bodies in a nearby pond. The Danes left in Arcona a priest, who was supposed to guide the neophytes, but he was expelled when Eric’s army withdrew. “The Arconians, having escaped the miseries of siege, returned to the cult of the statue, and those who had converted to God’s faith, betrayed it.”
Further information about Arcana concern its fall, which is widely reflected in the sources. The Rans were not able to stop the influx of Christianity to Pomerania and the Baltic coast of Polabia. In 1128 Szczecin was finally christened, and the Rans' armed intervention failed. Nevertheless, in 1147, during a "crusade" against the Slavs, they still managed to rescue a pagan prince of Abodrites, Niklot, by a sudden attack of fleet (Wachowski, 1950, p. 193). In 1157 a civil war in Denmark ended and Rügen had to resist an enterprising ruler, Valdemar I the Great, supported by an outstanding counsellor and military leader, Absalon, the bishop of Roskild. The prince of Rügen, Tetislav started negotiations with the Danes in 1160. In the peace treaty the Rans promised to restrain themselves from piracy and acknowledged the tributary supremacy of Denmark. In 1162 they even supported the Danes in the siege of Wolgast (Wologoszcz). Bishop Absalon took part in one of the Rans' counselling meetings then. Probably around that time the idea of accepting Christianity from Denmark emerged. Such course of action would strengthen the position of the prince, who at least since the late 11th c. had been dominated by the priests and the council, through eliminating the priests of Sventovit from the political game (Wehrmann, 1922, p. 24; Wachowski, 1950, p. 184–195; Pieradzka, 1953, p. 197; SSS, vol. 4, p. 568–569). The Saxo-Danish rivalry aroused hope for full independence. Danish supremacy was overthrown, but the hope for Saxon help was belied. In 1166 the Danes ravaged Rügen twice (after Wachowski, 1950, p. 195; according to SSS, vol. 4, p. 569, it happened in 1165). At that time the Rans remained the last Slavonic tribe adhering to pagan religion. In 1167 Abodrite prince Pribislav was baptized and recognized the supremacy of the Saxon prince (Wachowski, 1950, p. 195; SSS, vol. 4, p. 398).

On Whit Sunday of 1168, precisely on the 19th of May (Knytingasaga, ch.122; Osieglowski, 1967, p. 283) a Danish expedition led by king Valdemar and bishop Absalon landed in Rügen. The attack had been prepared together with Saxon prince Henry the Lion, who was represented by Pomeranian princes Casimir and Boguslav, Abodrite prince Pribislav, baptized in the previous year, and Berno, the bishop of Mecklenburg. Saxo Grammaticus (XIV, p. 821–822) begins his relation of the surrender of the temple with a description of the location of the stronghold: "The king attacked Rügen from many directions; when he found everywhere the occasion to plunder but not to fight, eager for bloodshed he besieged the town of Arcana. This town from the east, south and north is defended by natural, not man-made barriers, and situated at the very end of a certain cape. The precipices are higher than the walls, which cannot be reached by an arrow shot from a war machine. At the three sides mentioned it was surrounded by the sea, and from the west enclosed in a 50-elbow-high rampart, whose lower part was made of earth and the upper one of timber filled with earth. In the northern part there was a spring, which was accessible to the inhabitants through a fortified path. That path had once been cut off by Eric, who in this way subdued them rather by the torture of thirst than by armed force." The stronghold has partly survived until now, although the cape cliff, built of rocks vulnerable to decay, have been seriously eroded by the sea. At least since the 16th c. it was called the Stronghold of Jaromir (Jaromarsburg). In the 19th c. one of the neighbouring fields was called Danenlager, i.e. the camp of the Danes (Haas, 1925, p. 40, 43).

According to the Danish chronicler, "in the centre of the town there was a square in which a wooden temple of ingenious construction was situated.
It was respected for the magnificence of service but also for the divinity of the statue it housed. Its outer surface was remarkable for fine carvings which showed images of various things with simple art. There was only one entrance. The temple itself was included in a double row of fences, of which the outer, composed of walls, was covered with a red roof, while the inner, supported with four poles instead of walls, shone with red curtains and was connected with the outer one by several transverse beams. In the temple there was a huge statue, larger than the size of human body. It astounded the viewers because of four necks and four heads, two of which seemed to stare to the front and two to the back. The heads, both those situated at the front and at the back, seemed to look— one to the right and the other to the left. Their beards and hair were cut, it was visible that the artist had meant to depict the mode in which the Rans cared for their heads. In his right hand he held a horn made of various metals, which was annually filled with wine by a priest experienced in sacrifices, who could conclude about the harvest for the next year from the state of the liquid. The left hand, propped on his side, formed an arch. The robe reached the calves in the point where they were joined with the knees. Thanks to the use of various kinds of wood the junction was hardly visible and only with much effort could it be spotted. The feet touched the floor and their foundations were hidden in the ground. Nearby the god’s saddle, bridle and other attributes could be seen. The admiration for them increased in view of a sword of a decent size, whose sheath and hilt attracted attention with the glint of silver and magnificent carved decorations.

The main ritual was solemnly celebrated once in a year, after harvest. All inhabitants of the island gathered in front of the temple then. On the eve of the celebration the priest (who, contrary to the common fashion, had long hair and beard), “meticulously cleaned the chapel, to which only he himself had access, with a brush. He was careful not to breathe inside the temple. When he had to breathe in or out, he went to the door, apparently not to defile the divine presence with the breath of a mortal. On the next day, when the people camped in the open air in front of the door, the priest took the vessel out of the god’s hand and carefully examined whether the level of liquid had not decreased, which would be a sign of bad harvest for the following year. If he concluded that the usual level had not decreased, he prophesied abundant harvest. Following the annual divination he advised the people to save or to use freely their stock of food. Then he poured the old wine in libation at the feet of the statue, filled the vessel with fresh liquid, worshiped the statue as if toasting to it, asked in solemn words for prosperity for himself and the fatherland, for new riches and victories for the citizens. Having finished, he hastily gulped all the wine, refilled the vessel and put it back in the statue’s right hand. Another offering was a round honey-flavoured cake, whose height nearly equaled the height of a human. The priest placed it between himself and the people and asked them if they could see him. If they said that they did, he wished them that they would not be able to see him the following year. In that way he asked not for the misfortune for himself and his people, but for ample harvest in the future. Then, on behalf of the deity he saluted the people and reminded them to keep worshiping the majesty of the god with obligations. And he promised them victory at the land and sea as a reward for the worship. Having finished [the ritual] in this way, they spent the rest of the day on luxurious banquets, used the sacrificed food for feasts and gluttony and satisfied their greed with the animals offered to the god. Being inabstemiousness in that feast was considered pious, while the reverse was an impious deed.”

Each inhabitant annually presented one coin to the god. The treasury of the temple collected one third of war spoils. The troop of 300 mounted warriors, which was the guard of the god, handed all their spoils to the priest. “From the spoils [the priest] made various badges and decorations of the temple, he put them in locked cases, in which along with large amounts of money there was much purple textile, sometimes decaying of age. There were many public and private gifts there, collected thanks to the vows of those who had asked for favours.” According to Saxo Grammaticus, the temple of Sventovit, supported financially by all—supposedly pagan—Slavs, received gifts also from Christian kings. Saxo quoted the example of the Danish king Sweyn, who wanted to propitiate Sventovit with a cup.

The temple had an oracle (Matusiak, 1911; Ślupiński, 1991c). The medium of the god was a white horse, which could be ridden only by the priest. “At this horse, as was commonly believed in Rugen, Sventovit, as they called the deity, fought against the enemies of his divinity.” The proof of that was the fact that the mount was found muddied in the mornings, although it spent the nights in the stable. When the Rans intended to initiate war, Sventovit’s horse was used for divination. “In front of the temple servants placed three rows of spears crossed two in each row, with the blades thrust in the ground. The rows were at an equal distance from each other. When they wanted to undertake an expedition, the priest after solemn prayers led the horse adorned with thongs out of the yard (of the temple) and made him step over the spears.” If the horse stepped the right leg over the rows of spears before the left one, the divination was considered favourable to the war, if he even once stepped the left leg before the right, the plan was abandoned. The same procedure was observed before sea expeditions and other enterprises. Another method of divination was drawing lots (Saxo Grammaticus, XIV, p. 822–827).

The above description, although it is the longest text concerning pagan Slavonic religion, does not contain everything that the Danish chronicler— or his informant, who was probably bishop Absalon himself, which makes the information more reliable (Schröder, 1967)—knew about Arcana. The attack at Arcana was a conscious strategic decision: “Besieging the town the
king wanted to destroy not only the fortifications, but also the cult, as he believed that the end of the wicked rituals would allow to liquidate it in the whole island. He had no doubts that having destroyed the statue, it would be easier to suppress both pagan strongholds and idolatry" (Saxo Grammaticus, XIV, p. 828). The attack was directed to the very heart of paganism, the symbolic centre of the island. Exactly the same method was applied by prince Boleslaus the Wry-mouthed in his struggles with the Pomeranians (Banaszkiewicz, 1986a).

Taking advantage of an interval in the fight, the Danes started to cut down the neighbouring forest and prepare wood for war machines. The defenders trusted their strong fortifications and the power of gods. They barricaded the gate with earth, and, according to Saxo Grammaticus (XIV, p. 828, 830) "they became so self-confident that they covered the turret over the gate with badges and eagles. Among them there was stamititia [a military banner of the Rans], distinguishable for its size and colour, which the Rans worship almost as zealously as the majesty of all their gods."

On the 12th of June 1168 (Osiełkowski, 1967, p. 284) a group of boys from the Danish camp started to play throwing stones at the embankment. They noticed that the earth was sliding down exposing the wooden construction of the turret. One of the boys hid in the breach, he was given dried grass, twigs, wood and finally fire. The turret was burnt down together with the holy emblems. The gods deserted their confessors. There was not enough water to extinguish the fire and Arcona surrendered. The conditions of surrender were very tough: "The king took the inhabitants under his protection provided that they hand over the treasure consisting of gifts devoted to Sventovit worshiped by all Slavonic people.

That was the fall of Arcona from the point of view of the Danes. The extensive information of Saxo Grammaticus quoted above corresponds to a shorter relation from Knytlingasaga (ch. 122). There are also some German relations. According to Helmold (II, 108) Danish king Valdemar gathered a great army and many ships, and invaded Rügen in order to conquer it. Helmold enumerates Pomeranian princes Casimir and Boguslaw, and the Abodrite prince Pribislaw, who reinforced him by order of the Saxon prince, and mentions that bishops Absalon and Berno were present in Arcona. He says that when the Rans surrendered, king Valdemar "ordered to pull down the ancient statue of Sventovit worshiped by all Slavonic peoples and to tie its neck with a rope, to drag it in front of the Slavs among the army, and finally to cut it in pieces and throw them into fire. He also demolished the sacred place, liquidating the cult, and plundered the rich treasury. He also made them abandon the errors in which they had been born and adopt the service of the true God."

The temple in Arcona is so extensively described by the sources that we will omit the details of the legend about the alleged adoption of Christianity
by the Rans in the times of Charlemagne, which was supposed to leave a trace in the shape of the cult of Guy (St Vitus), later turned into Sventovit. The only authentic element of this fascinating mystification is the fact that the fame of Sventovit and Arcona reached in the 12th c. the abbey in Corvey, which tried to take advantage of the convergence of the names of their saint patron and the pagan deity, and claimed the rights to Rügen until the 14th c. (Osięgowski, 1967, p. 255-267; Sokszynski, 1984). J. Hermann (1974, p. 202) tried to find some truth in the story. The legend from Corvey gave occasion to describe the cult of Sventovit and the information cannot be neglected. Still before the surrender of Arcona Helmold (I, 6) wrote in his chronicle that the Rans “pride themselves (…) on the name of St Vitus, for whom they built a magnificent temple with a statue; they regard him as the first of all gods, and from all Slavonic countries people come there merchants who came there by chance to trade until they have offered the merchandise to the god, and only then was it allowed to bring also idolatry until” the disappointment of Henry the Lion and the Germans, who had had half of the spoil guaranteed in the agreement with the Danes. According to them, the Danish king “having seized much gold and silver from the main temple of the Rans, impressed a seal of Christianity on them, but soon it was wasted by his own avarice as well as by scarcerness and laziness of teachers.”

In the text quoted the rancour for the lost spoil clearly underlies the complaints about the alleged insufficiency of the work of missionaries, which were exaggerated. Helmold (II, 108) stressed that King Valdemar founded twelve churches in Rügen after the surrender of Arcona. The rancour undermined the Danish-Saxon alliance and very soon Pomeranian and Abodrite princes resumed piratical raids on Denmark (Helmold, II, 109-110).

In the expedition to Arcona Henry the Lion was represented, not very efficiently as we could see, by Bishop Berno. Emperor Frederick’s privilege from January 1170, which confirmed the establishment of the bishopric in Schwerin, contains a rapturous description of Berno’s ardour in missionary work. It was probably interpolated into the original document around 1225-1229, but it is nevertheless valuable for the present survey. Undoubtedly, Berno was present at Arcona, but the author of the interpolation overstated his importance, making him, and not Valdemar and Absalon, the main instigator of the expedition. He mentioned Pomeranian and Abodrite princes among its participants, but concealed the role and even the presence of the Danes. After a struggle with pagans near Schwerin bishop Berno “finally, as the tribe of Rans did not want to to listen to God’s words and abandon outrageous idolatry abhorrent to God and people, the mentioned bishop looked for some benefit from his neophytes and he found it: he caused that the princes and the people with true Christian ardour forced the idolaters to conversion. He himself acted as a standard-bearer to Christian recruits, and after the destruction of their idol Sventovit gathered them for baptism on the day of blessed Vitus the martyr…” (MUB, vol. 1, 1863, No 91, p. 85-87; cf Szacherska, 1968, p. 33-34). Ironically, the baptism of Rügen really took place around the day of St Guy, celebrated on the 15th of June (Sokszynski, 1984a, p. 469).

The conquest of Rügen by King Valdemar was confirmed by a bull of pope Alexander III, which in 1169 (PUB, vol. 1, No 52) included Rügen in the bishopric of Roskild, but the document does not say much about paganism. Nevertheless, it is worth knowing that the fame of pagan Rans
reached Rome. Perhaps the last trace of Sventovit’s treasure can be found in the testament of bishop Absalon, who died in 1201 and bequeathed “two cups of Rans’ idols,” undoubtedly made of precious metals, to a relative (PUB, vol. I, No 139). They cannot, however, be identified with full certainty as part of the Arcona treasury; although that treasury, was most important, by no means was it the only temple treasure on the island.

Archaeological data seem rather limited if compared with the rich written sources, but they should not be neglected. First excavations in Arcona were undertaken in the 1860s (Baier, 1872). In 1921 Carl Schuchhardt (1926, p. 13–24) after three weeks of excavations announced that he had found the remains of Sventovit’s temple. Some time later W. Petzsch and G. Martiny (1930) excavated the remains of the stronghold’s only gate. The excavations carried out in the years 1969–1971 by H. Berlekamp (1974) and J. Herrmann (1974) falsified Schuchhardt’s claims. The alleged traces of the temple were actually the remains of the stronghold’s internal rampart. It turned out that the area where the temple really used to stand had long before tumbled down to the sea, eroded by waves. It was not the only conclusion of the investigation. It was proved that the beginnings of Arcona went back to the first half of the 9th century. At that time an embankment constructed of timber and earth, accompanied by a moat, was built. Its remnants were interpreted by C. Schuchhardt as the foundations of the temple. It is uncertain whether the external embankment, preserved until now, comes from the same time, but it was undoubtedly erected before the mid 10th c. At the turn of the 11th c. the internal embankment was levelled and the external one heightened. The temple area was supposedly separated from the rest of the town with the hollow left by the former internal embankment moat. Between the embankments there were disorderly situated houses. An analysis of the excavated animal bones (H.-H. Müller, 1974, 1980) showed that the inhabitants ate mainly young livestock, which was usually slaughtered in autumn. As we remember, according to Saxo Grammaticus, it was the season when a great celebration was organized in Arcona to worship Sventovit. Apart from animal bones some human ones were found, among them skulls with signs of injuries, which, according to H. Berlekamp, proves that people were really sacrificed to Sventovit.
The ethnographic material is limited. Folk tales absorbed some information from the medieval chronicles, stylizing it after the model legend about the inundated town. Among the estates of Sventovit they mention a settlement two miles from Arcona called Smantewitz, where supposedly the god's herd of horses, amounting to 60 animals, was kept (Haas, 1896, p. 6-8, 127-128; Haas, 1921, p. 47-49). Indeed, near Arcona traces of intensive cultivation of oat and much oat pollen were found (Herrmann, Lange, 1982), but they should be perhaps associated with the information about Sventovit's guard of mounted warriors. On the other hand, sagas mention herds of divine horses bred at Scandinavian temples (Olaf's Saga Tryggvasonar, in: Flateyjarbok, ch. 322, vol. 1, 1986, p. 401; Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða, ch. 3, 6).

The name "Arcona" cannot be convincingly derived from the Slavonic language and its etymology is unclear (SSS, vol. 1, p. 47; Herrmann, 1974, p. 201; Haas, 1925, p. 41; Jacob, 1894, p. 113). Toponimastic data are supplemented with the already mentioned names of a stronghold – Jaromarsburg – an a nearby field – Danenlager – possibly quite late. A nearby village, situated two kilometers from the stronghold is called Puttgarten, which should be read Podgarden, i.e. suburb (Jacob, 1894, p. 118). As Arcona did not offer comfortable accommodation, the village should be interpreted as the settlement base of the sanctuary. The only possible location of its port is the contemporary fishing village Vitt, which is the only point in the area suitable for a harbour (Herrmann, 1974, p. 206; Leciejewicz, 1987, p. 133-134).

The conclusions are as follows: inside the stronghold in Arcona there was a fenced yard in which the temple of Sventovit, admired even by Christians, was situated. The edifice, built of wood and covered with a red roof, housed a four-headed effigy of the deity larger than lifesize, situated in a cela supported by four pillars and separated from the rest of the building with curtains. The temple was surrounded with a by-pass, described by Saxo Grammaticus rather vaguely as a wall or fence decorated with polychromatic relief. The latter detail appears in descriptions of the temples in Radogoż and Szczecin, which induced even such a sceptical scholar as H. Łowmiański (1979, p. 176) to conclude that this fact "points to the existence of a definite style with characteristic reliefs in the walls, in Polabian religious architecture." Nowadays the descriptions can be supplemented with facts. It is assumed that the unusual reliefs from Arcona, Radogoż and Szczecin resembled the decorated walls of the shrine in Gross Raden. They were formed of ornamented poles topped with schematic images of human heads. In later sanctuaries such walls may have been more carefully and amply adorned.

The analogy with Gross Raden suggests that the temple in Arcona might have been built of vertical poles, thus being a pillared construction. A careful reading of Saxo Grammaticus's relation supplies evidence for such assumption. The statue of Sventovit collapsed on one of the internal walls, which was subsequently pulled down. It is possible only in case of a pillared construction, in case of any other construction the whole building would have fallen apart. It also allows us to conclude that the shrine cannot have been too spacious. We know that the statue of Rugevit in Garz was larger than lifesize, as bishop Apsalon, who was a well-built man – the scrutiny of his skeleton showed that he was over 180 cm tall – was able to reach only the sculpture's chin with his axe, which allows to estimate its height at about 3 metres. The effigy of Sventovit was probably equally large. It stood in the centre of the temple, among the four poles of the cela. Nevertheless, when falling down it touched one of the external walls, which means, as it was proved by E. Dygge (1959, p. 192) that the breadth of the temple the double height of the statue and can be estimated at 7 metres at most.

Fig. 10. The plan of the stronghold in Arcona reconstructed by H. Berlekan and J. Herrmann. A – the coastline in 1969, B – the coastline around 1920, C – the presumable coastline around 900, D – the line of the external rampart 9th–12th c., E – the line of the internal rampart 9th–12th c., F – the gate, G – the presumable location of the sanctuary. After SSS, vol. 7, 1982, p. 373.
The relatively small measurements of the shrine should not surprise us, as it was a temple in the strict sense, a sacrosanct seat of the god, which is evident from Saxo Grammaticus. It was surrounded by a solid fence constructed of ornamented pales, enclosing the temple yard, at which the stable of Sventovit’s horse was located. The congregation gathered in front of the fence, probably in the temple circle separated from the rest of the stronghold by a moat. The sources do not supply any information about a cult hall which would be used for the feasts mentioned by Saxo Grammaticus. Due to the scarcity of data the attempts at reconstructing the plan of the temple in Aroona (Ohlmarks 1943; Bukowski 1974) are unsatisfactory. Recently J. Hermann (1985, p. 314; 1993) compared Saxo Grammaticus’s information with the plan of the complex in Gross Raden. It should be noted, however, that the shrine in Gross Raden was probably larger and no traces of internal pillars were found there. Therefore it is safer to limit the analogy to the specific decoration of the exterior.

C. Schuchhardt’s explorations provoked a heated discussion of the plan of the temple in Aroona. Historians looked for Scythian, Iranian, Scandinavian, Celtic and Eleusinian (Schuchhardt, 1926, p. 24; Schuchhardt, 1939; Lindquist, 1923, p. 85; Weber, 1931; Oelman, 1933, p. 169–177; Oelman, 1940; Knutsson, 1939) or late ancient (Ohlmarks, 1943) models for it. The common feature of all the alleged, better or worse motivated, models of the temple in Arcona were four pillars in the centre of the building. No researcher has ever considered a parallelism between the construction of Sventovit’s shrine and Greek megaron, an oblong room supported with four columns, known from Mycenaean architecture and mentioned by Homer. Unfortunately, the single temple in Arcona is not enough to compare Slavonic and Greek religious architecture.

Saxo Grammaticus, Helmold and Knytingsaga inform that Aroona was the principal centre of the cult of Sventovit, the superior god of Rügen.

Fig. 11. Niederle’s reconstruction of the temple in Aroona based on Saxo Grammaticus’s relation; after A. Gieysztor, 1982, p. 209.

Fig. 12. An attempt at a reconstruction of the temple in Arcona based on Saxo Grammaticus’s relation and the results of the excavations in Gross Raden (the plan of the temple in Gross Raden at the top); after J. Hermann, 1985, p. 314.
The god of the tribe dominating over other tribes becomes superior to other gods, simultaneously the control over a sanctuary of the highest deity helps in acquiring political leadership. Arcona, similarly to Radogo~, was that type of sanctuary.

The interior of the temple was subject to the strictest taboo, so only the priest could enter it, holding his breath. This detail of ritual has got a parallelism in Zoroastrianism (Gieysztor, 1984, p. 261). The main annual rite, focusing on the agrarian aspect of the deity, was celebrated after gathering the crops in front of the temple. The ceremony included offering of cattle, exposition of a ritual cake, divination of future harvest from the state of mead in the horn in the statue's hand, combined with a libation, and finally wishes of prosperity directed to the inhabitants of the island by the priest on behalf of Sventovit. The festival, which can be compared to Thanksgiving, ended in an orgiastic feast.

The military aspect of Sventovit was stressed by his saddle, bit and sword stored in the temple. Probably it also housed the war emblems of the Rans (some of which, as we know, had the shape of eagles). The most sacred of them was stanitia, the flag of Sventovit's guard. In a special stable the god's white horse was kept. The animal was used for divination concerning the prospects of planned military expeditions and piratical raids, which took place at the temple yard.

Offering people to Sventovit – Helmold stresses that they were Christians – was an annual ritual. The victim was chosen by lot, interestingly enough the purple. According to Saxo’s description. Sventovit’s horse was white, the roof of the temple red, while the curtains around the statue – purple. According to G. Dumezil (1982, p. 216) the white colour symbolizes the sovereign function, while red the military function. We know that Perun combined both of them. Toponomastics revealed some traces of the cult of this god under his original name in Slavonic territories. The most impressive piece of evidence was discovered near the coast of Rügen in the land of Rans at the continent. Two neighbouring villages near Stralsund are called Prohn and Muks. The first name was recorded in 1240 simply as Perun, the other in 1310 as Mukus, i.e. Mokoś (Witkowski, 1970, p. 369).

When the Rans were in the prime of their power (from the mid 11th c. to 1160), Sventovit’s temple in Arcona gained or strengthened its supertribal significance as the last important pagan sanctuary after the decline of Radogo~ in 1068. According to Helmold, Rügen was in fact ruled by the priest of Sventovit, who attained precedence over the prince in political matters. Through the oracle the priests decided about war and peace and they administered Sventovit’s treasury stored in the temple, which was also the state treasury. It collected the poll-tax, one third of spoils, tributes from dependent Slavonic tribes, ransoms from the Danes harassed by piratical raids (on tributes from Danish islands cf. Koczy, 1934, p. 213) and some kind of duty from merchants. Enforced gifts were supplemented with gratuities from those who asked the oracle for advice and political presents, like for instance a valuable cup offered by Danish king Sweyn Grathe, who wanted to gain the support of the Rans in the civil war in Denmark (Osięgowski, 1967, p. 275–276; Koczy, 1934, p. 201). There were also expenses, as the conservation and decoration of the temple was financed from gifts. Ransoms paid to enemies were drawn from the treasury as well, e.g. we know that an invasion of Abodrites was prevented thanks to a great sum taken from it. This fact shows the importance of the treasury as the public treasury and proves that it was administered by Sventovit’s priest, who negotiated the ransom. The Arcona temple had also its own land. The priest controlled the mounted guard of the god amounting to 300 warriors, who, contrary to others, were obliged to deposit all their spoils to the treasury. This unit, which went to battle under its own flag, had the privilege to do...
right or wrong according to their own will. They could plunder, kill and
demolish altars, even in their own country (Saxo Grammaticus, XIV, p. 825,
830–831), which reminds the behaviour of Scandinavian squads of berserks
(Slupecki, 1987, p. 50–59). It was a mighty instrument of power used on
behalf of the god, whose flag was particularly honoured. The priest’s power
cau sed the discontent of the princes, who opted for introducing the country
into the Christian community. In 1168 Tetislav with his brother and heir
Jaromir waited for new developments in Garz, where they made an agree­
ment with the Danes immediately after the surrender of Arcona. The end of
paganism did not mean the end of the Rans state. After baptism the prince
became a vassal of the Danish king and strengthened his influence on
domestic affairs. The state dependent on Denmark existed until the 14th
century (SSS, vol. 4, p. 596).

Arcona, as a sanctuary attracting masses of people and an important
political centre, was also economically significant. In November a large scale
herring trade took place, but the role of the town as a market place was
probably greater than that. There are some mentions concerning the coming
of foreign merchants with their goods (but they do not specify when it
happened) and the presence of foreigners in the stronghold at the time of its
surrender. Holidays provided a perfect occasion for trade, the season of
harvest, mentioned by Saxo Grammaticus as the time of celebrations wor­
sipping Sventovit, seems a good period for that. Merchants - at least foreign
ones - had to pay a special fee to Sventovit’s treasury. The market place was
probably situated outside the stronghold, possibly in a suburb at contemp­
orary Puttgarten, although in Arcona a so-called treasure hoard of a mer­
chant from the 11th c. was found.

There is also a Polish motive in the history of Arcona. When Szczecin
had been christened and new faith was successfully spreading at the Oder
estuary, the Rans’ fleet tried to invade the town, but the attack was repelled.
In 1135 prince Boleslaw the Wrymouth, who had been the supreme lord of
Pomerania for more than ten years, swore an oath of fealty from the island
of Rügen to the Emperor. The actual content of the oath has been disputed
among historians. We do not know whether Boleslaus the Wry-mouthed
was the sovereign of the island, even on the tributary basis, or only claimed
the right to it, but undoubtedly Poland was interested in Rügen at the time
interest may be reflected in an episode from The life of St Adalbert Tempore
illo (ch. 7), written in the 12th c. and showing obvious interest in Pomerania.
The story says that in the capital of Hungary there was a very famous idol,
through which devils gave oracular answers to people’s questions, which
attracted adoring crowds on particular days. St Adalbert burnt the statue in
the presence of its priests and gathered crowds. No Hungarian sanctuary
with an oracle is mentioned in other sources, and the tale resembles the
stories about Arcona. The life of St Adalbert Tempore illo might have

incorporated reminiscences of the fall of Arcona. We should also devote
some attention to a similar story from The Book of Wonders of abbot
Herbert (Szacherska, 1968, p. 88–89; cf. Palm, 1937, p. 43–51). One of the
legends collected there concerns an adventure of a monk from a Danish
monastery. In his youth, still as a layman, he went to a land of pagans,
which was probably Rügen (Szacherska, 1968, p. 80–88). He found an enor­
mous statue, through which a demon gave advice to his worshipers. On
certain days people gathered in front of his temple and made oblations.
The demon’s power was so great that he spoke to the inquisitive youth,
secretly participating in the ritual, in his native language. The scared Chris­
tian was saved from oppression by his faith in the power of the holy cross.

To sum up, we know that since the 9th c. in a cape situated 46 metres
above sea level in Arcona there was a stronghold, in which at least since the
mid 11th c. a pagan sanctuary existed. We know the name and character of
the god worshiped there, as well as his attributes. Many details of the cult
and the temple are described in sources. We know the approximate date
of one ritual, the types of offerings and oracular practices. The existence of
priests, their political role and the scope of their power are evident. Finally,
we can assume that the temple stronghold was the place of counselling
meetings. The data indicate the existence of a remarkable system comprising
a temple with a statue of a supreme deity of super-tribal influence, priests,
an oracle and divination with the special role of the sacred horse, a temple
treasury, sacrifices including ritual homicide, counselling meetings. The fact
that the sanctuary was located near the shore, in an elevated place, is
significant. The four heads of Sventovit, a symbol of the highest power
dominating over the four quarters of the globe (Giesztor, 1984, p. 261)
indicate that Arcona was considered by the Rans as the mythical centre
of their world, its capital function was not a coincidence.

We have no data about a sacrificial or eternal fire in the temple or its
neighbourhood. No relation mentions an altar, either. Saxo Grammaticus,
usually very meticulous, did not say anything about the fate of Arcona
priests after the surrender of the sanctuary and did not record their names.
We can speculate that they escaped death, because they were the only
persons entitled to hand the treasury over to the The transfer of the
treasury was decided at Arcona, not in Garz, Jaromir and Tetislav
stayed, which indicates that Valdemar and Absalon negotiated the surrender
of the stronghold with the priests.

Studying the history of Arcona temple we can conclude from numerous
mentions that the shrine had a dominant role in the life of the Rans, as well
as of other Slavonic tribes from the mainland which were influenced by
Rügen. No important enterprise was started without asking the opinion of
the islanders, which could be expressed by Arcona oracle. The tribes from
the mainland paid tribute to Sventovit, who was regarded as the superior
deity, and the cult was enforced. The tribes that were politically dominated
by the Rans got under the influence of their sanctuary. It is difficult to state when exactly particular tribes fell into such dependency, but they were mainly the inhabitants of the Baltic coast. Rügen controlled the territory stretching from Wagria, which "with all Slavonic countries" - i.e. Abodrites and Lutizians in Helmold's terminology (I, 108) - paid tribute to Sventovit, through Lübeck, attacked by the Rans' fleet in order to capture the whole area (Helmold, I, 36), to Wolin and Szczecin, which was attacked by the Rans without success after its Christianization (Herbord, III, 31; Ebo, III, 23). Initially the influence of Rügen, based on the power of its fleet, did not penetrate far into the mainland (Brüsk, 1955, p. 100–103), which was dominated by Radogoşć and its land forces, but after their defeat in the 1060s the authority of Arcona may have been extended also to this region. The narrower scope of Arcona's influence is delimited by the native land of the Rans, including the island and an adjacent part of the continent. According to Saxo Grammaticus (XIV, p. 826) "the deity had also other temples in many places [there], which were in care of priests who enjoyed equal respect, but lesser power."

The above quotations provoke two issues, namely: can we rely on the information about the hierarchy of priests subordinate within a strict system to the temple in Arcona? and: Is the cult of Sventovit confirmed in the descriptions of other sanctuaries in the island? The sources do not provide conclusive answers. We can try to approach the problem of priests answering the latter question first. If Sventovit indeed had other sanctuaries of lower rank in the island, the hypothesis about hierarchy of priests seems highly motivated in view of the quoted fragment from Saxo Grammaticus.

At first glance there are serious counterarguments against the thesis. Arcona seems to be the only place in Rügen and in all Slavonic territories where Sventovit was worshiped, as nowhere else his name was recorded. On the other hand Saxo's information is usually highly reliable, and other sources exactly coincide with his chronicle. Sventovit and Arcona appear even in texts which know hardly anything else about Rügen. The solution of the puzzle may be the following: Sventovit was not a separate deity, but - as Gieysztor (1982, p. 90–105) proved - an incarnation of Perun, worshiped in Rügen under a nickname. Was it the only name of this god used in Rügen? The sources present Sventovit as the ruler of the island and the supernatural leader of the tribe (Trębczewska-Oziemska, 1968), collecting poll-tax from his subjects. Such a deity should not coexist with another sovereign of the island. Surprisingly, Saxo Grammaticus says that in Garz Rugevit, whose name means "the lord of Rügen," was worshiped (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 106; SSS, vol. 4, p. 573).

In 1168 Garz was the seat of princes Tetislav and Jaromir, who - after the fall of Arcona and reconciliation with the Danes - opened the local temples to the invaders (Saxo Grammaticus, XIV, p. 839–841; Osięgowski, 1967, p. 284). According to Knytingasaga (ch. 122), the day after the treaty was concluded, "the king with his men came to the town called Karennz, and ordered to destroy three idols named Rinvit, Turupid and Puruvid..." What follows is an obscene anecdote from which we can infer that a taboo forbade sexual intercourse in the stronghold sacred because of divine presence. Although almost all data about Slavonic pagan rituals seem to contradict such a conclusion, we cannot easily dismiss it, as the same obscene anecdote is known to Saxo Grammaticus (XIV, p. 844). Knytingasaga's relation ends with a mention that the statues were burnt and robbed of "lots of money, gold and silver, silk cloth and robes, the purple, swords, helmets and all kinds of weapons." Saxo Grammaticus (XIV, p. 841–844) gives more extensive information: "In this magnificent town there were three temples,
beautiful and built with great skill. People came there to worship private gods almost as ardously as the public god in Arcona.” In peaceful periods the stronghold was not crowded, but in June 1168 it gave shelter to masses of people. “The main temple stood in the middle of its own yard. Both the yard and the temple had purple cloth instead of walls and the roof was supported by pillars only. Disclosing the yard for the purpose of cult, the priests pulled the curtains inside. When they were removed a statue made of oak wood, called Rugevit, became visible from all sides. It was badly blemished by swallows, which had built a nest beneath its nose, left their dirty muck on its chest. What kind of god it, whose beauty is spoilt by birds? Its head contained seven human-like faces, all situated on the circumference of this single head. The artist gave it the same number of real swords with sheaths, hanging on one belt. The eight, unsheathed one [Rugevit] held in the right hand (...). The effigy was broader than lifesize and its height was such that Absalon only on tiptoe was able to reach its chin with an axe which he usually carried with him. The deity was believed to lead warriors in wars and have powers similar to Mars. The sculpture did not impress viewers with anything cheerful, its shape was coarse and carved without skill. Finally, to great horror of the whole population, servants started to chop its calves. When they were cut across, the statue fell down with a bang and hit the ground. The inhabitants of the town, seeing their god degraded by soldiers, despised the religion that they were to abandon. The hands of servants, unsatisfied with one fall, greedily reached for the statue of Porevit, worshiped in another temple. It had five heads and was shown without weapons. Having pulled it down, they went to the temple of Porenut. This statue, carved with four faces, had the fifth one situated in the chest in such a way that the forehead touched the left hand and the chin the right one.” The statues were chopped and burnt.

The earliest excavations in an impressive stronghold, preserved in good condition until now, at the outskirts of the town Garz, were carried out in 1868. In the 1920s C. Schuchhardt, O. Stiehl and W. Petsch (1928) continued the work there. Following the intuition that a temple should have a wide, open area at the eastern side to be lit by sunrise, they initiated excavations in three points at the east-southern edge of the stronghold. They discovered two stone constructions and identified them, without any motivation, as the remnants of Porevit’s and Porenut’s shrines. Other finds were traces of two pillars and a circle of stones, interpreted as the remains of Rugevit’s temple, which is perhaps more probable, but based on very shaky evidence.

In the 19th c. the stronghold near Garz appeared in several legends. According to one of them, in the stronghold there is an underground chamber, where a former pagan turned into a black dog, guards his treasure and keeps beautiful princess Svanvitha in eternal confinement. Another tale says that the princess lives in a nearby lake and emerges from it only on St John’s day. There is also a legend about two musicians, who got lost in the stronghold at night and came wandering to a magnificent garden, where they spent a whole year without noticing that it elapsed (Haas, 1896, p. 77-78, 120-124; 1916, p. 257-277; 1918, p. 19).

The contemporary name of the settlement is Garz, which comes from Slavonic gard – stronghold, but it used to have another one. Saxo Grammaticus recorded it as Karentia, Knytingasaga as Karenz. Its etymology is
The main temple in Garz was located in the centre of a yard that separated it from the surroundings, enclosed in a construction on which purple curtains hung. The shrine itself, as sources suggest, was simply a roof supported with pillars. A remote analogy of such a construction may be perhaps found in a Germanic sanctuary from the late 4th c. discovered in Arras (Jacques, Tuffreau-Libre 1991). The roof sheltered a statue covered with curtains. The description of the uncovering ceremony proves that the temple was subject to a strong taboo. The congregation gathered in the yard or perhaps around it, which enabled them to see the statue, but they were probably denied entrance under the roof of the shrine. The two remaining temples might have been used as cult halls.

Saxo Grammaticus paid much attention to the main shrine, devoted to Rugevit, called Rinvit in Knytlingasaga. The name itself means probably "the lord of Rügen." There is also a possibility to derive it from *rzwa (anger, roar, rut), which, however seems a worse hypothesis (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 106). The etymology deriving Rugevit from "the lord of Rügen" leads to very interesting speculations. Rugevit, similarly to Sventovit, was a war god. The curtains in his temple were made of purple cloth, exactly like in Arcona. The red colour points again to the military function. Rugevit's insignia include a sword, which is also an attribute of Sventovit. A. Gieysztor (1982, p. 106) considers Rugevit as an incarnation of Perun and the original ruler of the island from the time before Sventovit's dominance. If we agree that Rugevit is identical to Perun, which can be additionally proved by the fact that its statue was carved of oak wood, attributed to Perun, we can go a step further in hypothesizing. Sventovit and Rugevit may be just two epithets of the only sovereign war god Perun, whose true name was hidden by a taboo. This thesis is supported by the most convincing etymology of the name of Porenut, a lesser god from Garz. This undoubtedly deformed representation is best deciphered as Piorunic, which is an augmented or rather a patronimic form: son of Perun (Jakobson, 1985, p. 6).

Thus, we can assume that along with Rugevit-Perun his divine son was worshiped in Garz. The names of Porevit (Puruvit from Knytlingasaga) and Turupit are more difficult to explain. The name Porevit is sometimes derived from the stem *pora ("power," cf. Polish przeć = press, napór = pressure), which does not, however, agree with the lack of weapons among his attributes. Another possibility is to relate it to *per (hit, strike, preserved in Polish prać = beat, wash), which would correspond to Perun's power as "the one that strikes with thunderbolts." The Kashubian word for thunderbolt, p'oron is not far from the form Porevit (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 47, 51, 107; Jakobson, 1985, p. 18). Turupit, although there is a possibility of connection with Finnish Tarapita, should be probably regarded as a hopelessly deformed record (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 107).

Saxo Grammaticus classifies the three temples in Garz as sanctuaries of private gods enjoying a rank lower than Sventovit. It may be true only with
regard to the temples or cult halls of Porenut and Porevit, as the description of the cult of Rugevit, who had priests, a temple subject to a taboo and— as we know from Knytlingasaga— a treasury, points to the public character of the ritual, which, according to Saxo himself was only Sventovit’s due.

The sanctuary in Garz, as every temple, was a centre of a community. The stronghold that sheltered it had been built on a hill dominating the neighbourhood, to the north of a lake. It is the only known example of such location of a Slavonic temple in relation to water. Perhaps swallows, divine birds worshiped by all Slavonic tribes, were believed to maintain the relation of water with the heaven domain of Perun (Moszyński, 1968, vol. 2/2, p. 557)? Some symbolic connection with the underworld cannot be excluded, as the Slavonic name of Garz, Korzenica, may be associated with the motive of the root of the tree of life.

If the argumentation presented above is correct, the existence of priest hierarchy in Rügen seems quite probable. The system would comprise the group of priests of Perun-Sventovit-Rugevit with the main temple in Arcona, a smaller, but important one in the seat of the prince in Garz, and others, only vaguely known scattered around the whole territory, subordinate to the authority of Sventovit’s main shrine. As traces of the latter group we can enumerate the sanctuary of Pizamar in Asund, the place of cult of Tjarnogolfoi (Black-Headed), still not found (Knytlingasaga, ch. 122), the holy grove of Boku upon Strelasund (Knytlingasaga, ch. 121), the presumed sanctuary of Perun and Mokoś, suggested by village names such as Prohn and Muuks (Witkowski, 1970, p. 369), and finally a minute but probable remnant of Rugevit’s cult near contemporary Bergen, called Góra (Mount) in Slavonic, where until now a mysterious statue incorporated in the wall of Holy Virgin church exists and a formidable stronghold nearby is called Rugard (Haas, 1910, p. 82; 1918, p. 3–62). The shrine excavated by archaeologists in Ralswiek comes from earlier times.

3. Radogoń (Rethra) and other temples of the Lutizens and Abodrites

The significance of Arcona for the Rans and the last pagan Slavonic tribes of the continent in the 12th c. is comparable to the role of Radogoń for the Lutizens a century earlier. The name of Radogoń for the first time appears in the sources at the turning point of the history of a whole group of Polabian tribes. In the 10th c. the land of the Vilzens seemed to have been definitely conquered by the Germans. The conquest was even confirmed by establishing bishoprics in the invaded territory. But the invaders’ oppression, mentioned straightforwardly by Thiétmar (III, 17), caused their defeat. In 983 the Slavs overthrew the foreign rule (Brüské, 1955, p. 16–43; Labuda, 1960–1975, vol. 1, p. 205–246). Since then the name of Vilzens and mentions about their princes disappear from the sources. In place of them we meet Lutizens, a union of tribes ruled by priests and the counselling meeting, centered around the sanctuary in Radogoń, which for the next century became the headquarters of uncompromising resistance against Christianization (Brüské, 1955, p. 5–8; SSS, vol. 4, p. 450–451, vol. 6, p. 431). The Lutizens chose their own way, which, however, led them to annihilation. It is not true that it gave no chance to create a state, as we can point to several similar tribal unions organized around a sanctuary in the history of the Romans, Greeks, Germans and other peoples (Beck, 1970, p. 242; Wenskus, 1961, p. 246–272). In Europe in the discussed period, however, there was no time or space for a slow evolution through such a stage. The success of pagan reaction in Slavonic tribes was only superficial, as it eventually caused a catastrophe (Strzelczyk, 1987a, p. 279–284). The forms of cult in Radogoń and the social system of the Lutizens were by no means primitive, but belonged to the passing epoch. The only solution could have been Christianization in favourable circumstances. The obstacle was a deeply rooted mistrust to “the German God,” powerful but in pagan mentality perceived as supporting only his own followers, that is Germans (Kahl, 1962, p. 82–101). An additional factor was the tradition that burdened the Lutizens since the union emerged. The organization resulted from an uprising against Christianity, after a series of bloody battles and brutally suppressed insurrections, and could not change the political and religious course, as in the early-republican system of government adopted after
983 the approval of the whole community was needed for that. This form of government guaranteed adherence to the traditional religion. A dynastic ruler, who—as the examples of Poland and Bohemia as well as domestic experience showed—might betray paganism, was simply absent in Lutizens’ system.

Resistance against Christianity did not exclude temporary alliances with Christian powers. In the conflict of the Polish king Boleslaus the Brave with the Empire the Union supported the Germans. At Easter 1003 Henry II received the envoys of “the Redars and Lutizens” in Quedlinburg and made an alliance with them (Thietmar, V, 52). Although monk Gunther tried to preach the Gospel to the Lutizens (Thietmar, VII, 52), they remained pagans, missing a perfect opportunity of entering the Christian community. In 1005 Lutizen troops reinforced the Emperor in his campaign against Poland. As Thietmar (VI, 22) wrote “on the day before our folks reached the Oder, they were joined by the Lutizens, who marched following their idols.” This fact provoked the chronicler to a lengthy digression describing the temple in Radogolit and the rituals held there. Due to the circumstances Thietmar should be considered a fully reliable source, as during the German-Lutizen alliance he definitely met knowledgeable informants. Moreover, if the Lutizens sent envoys to the Emperor, he might have dispatched his own envoys to Radogolit. Perhaps they supplied Thietmar (VI, 23–25) with the following information: “In the land of Redars there is a triangular stronghold with three entrance gates, called Riedegost (Radogolit), surrounded with a great forest untrodden by the natives and worshiped as sacred. Two gates are open to all that want to enter, the third one, facing the east, is the smallest one and opens onto a path leading to a nearby lake, which looks very frightful. In the stronghold there is nothing but a temple built skillfully of wood on the foundation from wild animals’ horns. Its exterior is decorated with effigies of gods and goddesses carved in an amazing way, as can be noticed from a close distance. Inside there are man-made idols, wearing terrifying helmets and cuirasses, and each has a name engraved. The first of them is Zuarasici (Svarozic) and is specially worshiped by all pagans. In the temple there are also standards, which are never taken out, unless they are needed them for a war campaign, and then infantry carries them. The natives have chosen priests to take care of the temple with due solicitude. When they gather there to make oblations or conciliate the gods, only the priests sit, while others have to stand. Murmuring secretly, they shakily dig in the ground in turns, in order to decide doubtful matters by casting lots. Having finished the divination, they cover the lots with green sod, thrust two spearheads crosswise in the ground and lead a horse over them with great reverence, as this animal is the highest and sacred for them. After the lot-casting, which was the first divination, they tell the fortune again using the divine animal. If both rituals give the same result, they act according to it, if not, they abandon the enterprise at all. From ancient times, when many false and erroneous stories were spread, comes a testimony that whenever a calamity of long civil war hangs over them, a big boar with foam on its tusks emerges from the above mentioned lake and in front of everybody walloons in a puddle with great satisfaction, causing terrible tremors. The country has as many temples as districts, and the same number of idols is worshiped by the pagans, but among them the mentioned stronghold has primacy. When they set out to war, they always salute it, when they come back after a victory, they honour it with due gifts. Through lots and the horse, as described above, they eagerly inquire what should be offered to the gods. They appease the silent anger of gods by sacrificing people and cattle.” Thietmar stresses that the Lutizens “have no single ruler over them,” and important matters of the union are decided by the counselling meeting, in which acclamation is required. If somebody opposes the approved decisions, he is beaten with sticks. Those who obstinately contradict the community are punished with fines, confiscation of property or arson. According to Thietmar, the Lutizens confirm a peace treaty—probably concluded ceremoniously in Radogoł—“by shaking the right hands and simultaneously presenting a tuft of cut hair and a bundle of grass. But they can be easily bribed to break the treaty.” It is possible that the latter details were drawn from the ceremony of ratifying the treaty with the Emperor, which Thietmar does not mention straightforwardly, as it was nothing to boast about. A similar example can be found not very far: Byzantine emperors made alliances with Ruthenia and the pagan side swore to keep them according to their own customs.

The Lutizens concluded another treaty with the prince of the Abodrites, Mstivoj. According to Helmond (I, 16), Mstivoj, offended by prince Theodor, who called him “a dog,” “came back to the Slavs, and first of all went to the town of Rethra [Helmold’s name for Radogoł, taken from Adam of Bremen], which is located in the land of the Lutizens. He gathered all the Slavs from the East, told them about the insult and said that in the Saxon language the Slavs were called “dogs.” But they answered him: ‘You are rightly suffering now, because you despised your own nation and you adored the Saxons, who are treacherous and greedy. Swear to us that you will desert them, and we will support you.’ And indeed, he swore to them.” The Slavs gathered troops and revolted against Christianity, they set fire to churches and murdered priests. In spite of that Helmold sympathizes with them and shows with praiseworthy impartiality the actual reasons of pagan reaction, blaming the German princes, whose “wickedness made the Slavs abandon the new faith. They persecuted the Slavonic peoples, whose faith was still not consolidated, and who used to be treated very leniently by best rulers, so cruelly that they felt the necessity to overthrow the bondage and defend their freedom with armed force.” Unfortunately, Helmold, who wrote his relation over a century after the events, mixed up the facts to such an extent that it is impossible to date them precisely. It seems that he
combined various occurrences from a long span. Wolfgang Brüske (1955, p. 39-40) supposes that the core of his narration is the uprising from 983, while Gerard Labuda doubts whether Helmold knew about it at all, like Adam of Bremen, whose chronicle supplied him with information contained in this fragment. According to G. Labuda (1960-1975, vol. 1, p. 224) the uprising of the Abodrites led by Mastivoj and Mstidrog broke out in 990, while other details of the relation refer to the events of the years 1011-1013 and 1019-1020. For the issues discussed here it is important that, according to Helmold, Mastivoj might have sought help in Radogosz, which proves the place was commonly regarded as the centre of paganism.

Thietmar’s information is confirmed by a contemporary source, the famous letter from Bruno of Querfurt to Henry II from 1008. Although St Bruno did not mention the name of Radogosz, he wrote about Svarozic, who was worshiped there, posing a rhetorical question to the German ruler: “Is it suitable to persecute a Christian people and live in amity with pagans? What is this alliance of Christ with Belial? How can we equal light with darkness? How can the devil Svarozic agree with the leader of saints, yours and ours, Maurice? Is it not shameful that the holy spear and the devilish banners of those who drink human blood come together? Don’t you regard it as a sin when a Christian’s head is — abhorrent to say — sacrificed to demons’ flag?” Indeed, the details of alliance with the Lutizens were not suitable to publicise. The ritual of offering an enemy’s head to Svarozic, mentioned only in passing in the letter, is confirmed by more concrete descriptions. According to Thietmar (IV, 13) Bohemian prince Boleslaus the Pious, reinforced by Lutizens, besieged a stronghold in the land of Mieszko I, seized it and captured the commander, “whom he gave to the Lutizens to be beheaded. They immediately sacrificed him to their patron gods near the town, and then resolved to come back home”. Around 1050 two martyrs were murdered in Radogosz: “Rumour has it that at this time two monks (...) arrived in Rethra. When they tried to preach the Gospel in public, the council of pagans put them to torture and finally they were beheaded for the glory of Christ, as they wished themselves. Their names are unknown to people, but, as we strongly believe, recorded in heaven” (Adam of Bremen, III, 20/19/, schol.71).

On June 7th, 1066 a Christian prince of Abodrites, Gotschalk, who tried to consolidate the country through Christianization, was assassinated. The murder initiated a violent pagan reaction, possibly instigated by Radogosz (Brüske, 1955, p. 81-83), as its success was celebrated by sacrifices right there. One of the captives was the old bishop of Mecklenburg, John, who was of Irish origin (Strzelczyk, 1987, p. 360-361). As Adam of Bremen (III, 51/50/) said — and Helmold (I, 23) quoted after him — the bishop was kept alive “until the moment of triumph. For Christian faith he was lashed, and then led through many Slavonic towns in derision. When he refused to renounce the name of Christ, the pagans chopped off his arms and legs and left his body in the street. They impaled his head onto a spear and offered it their god Radogost as a sign of victory. It happened in the capital of Slavs, Rethra, on the 11th of November.” The bishop’s death is also recorded in Scandinavian sources (Rehfeldt, 1942, p. 40-41).

The pagan reaction among Abodrites resulted from political reasons. In 1057 a civil war broke out in the Lutizen Union. According to Helmold (I, 21), who, surprisingly enough, seems to have known more about the events a century after them than their contemporary, Adam of Bremen, wrote: “those (...) who call themselves Lutizens or Vilzens consist of four tribes. Of those, as we know, the Kessiners (Chyżanie) and Zirizans (Czczepianianie) live at this side of the Peene (Piana) river, and the Redars and Tolensans – at the other one. A violent fight for dominance started between them.” Adam of Bremen had the same information (III, 22), but Helmold added a reason or excuse for the conflict: “The Redars and Tolensans, because of the antiquity of their town and the famous temple in which the effigy of Radogost is shown, wanted to hold the supreme power. They believed themselves to be specially significant, as other Slavonic peoples often visited them to get answers from the oracle and to make annual oblations. But the Kessiners and Zirizans did not want to submit to them and decided to defend their freedom with armed force. So, when the unrest had gradually increased finally the war broke out and after bloody fights the Redars and Tolensans were defeated.” As a result of the war, in which later the Saxon prince, the prince of Abodrites and the king of Denmark intervened, the Kessiners and Zirizans fell under the influence of the Abodrite state of prince Gotschalk, which explains why Radogosz contributed to this ruler’s defeat.

Helmold (I, 2) also gave the details concerning the appearance of the temple in Radogosz, but he borrowed them directly from Adam of Bremen, and did not add anything. Adam of Bremen’s description (II, 21/18/) starts from a list of tribes living between the Elbe and the Oder, including the Havellians, Lubushans, Wolinians and Stodorans. Then the chronicler says: “In the middle there are the Redars, who are most powerful among them. Their town is Rethra, the famous centre of idolatry. A large temple has been built there for demons, among which Redigast is the first. His effigy is made of gold, a purple bed is prepared for him. The stronghold itself has nine gates; it is surrounded by a deep lake, over which one can pass through a wooden bridge, but the passage is allowed only to those who bring offerings or come for divination. It is a sign, I believe, that doomed souls of idolaters gathered together

are confined within the nine circles of Styx.

The temple is said to be four days of travel from Hamburg.” The details recorded by Adam of Bremen differ quite significantly from Thietmar’s description, written only half a century earlier.
The Lutizens did not triumph over the kindred Abodrites for a long time. According to *Annales Augustiani* (year 1068), only a year after the martyrdom of bishop John, in winter at the turn of 1068: “Burchardt, bishop of Halberstadt, invaded, destroyed and burnt the province of the Lutizens. He captured the horse which had been worshiped as a god in Reda and came back to Saxony riding it.” The Annals provide us with a next, third form of the sanctuary’s name. The bishop’s expedition is recorded in other sources as well (*Bertholdi Annales*, a.1067; *Bertholdi Chronicon*, a.1067; Brüske, 1955, p. 84; Engel, 1969, p. 101), but only *Annales Augustiani* mention the horse. No mention suggests that any temple was destroyed, nevertheless Carl Schuchhard (1926, p. 35–36) believed that “Rethra has been dead since 1068, Burchardt of Halberstadt was its conqueror.” According to Schuchhard, bishop of Halberstadt’s campaign was in fact identical with an expedition against the Lutizens undertaken by young king Henry IV in 1069. Contemporary historians (Engel, 1969, p. 101) do not share this opinion and interpret the latter as a campaign initiated to confirm Burhardt’s success. *Annales Weissenburgenses*, which mention it (year 1069), supply some information about destruction of temples at last: “King Henry with his army invaded the barbarians living on the other side of the Elbe, killed many people, destroyed their towns, burnt temples with idols, and brought home much spoil.” Other sources (*Annales Altenhenses maiiores*, a. 1069; Schwartz, 1926, p. 211–212; Brüske, 1955, p. 84; Engel, 1969, p. 101) confirm this record, dating the campaign to the winter of 1068/1069 after Christmas, but do not mention any temples. Seemingly, Schuchhard’s thesis about the fall of Radogoš temple about 1068, although slightly modified, is rooted in the sources. Emil Schwartz (1926, p. 210), however, showed its weak points. *Annales Augustiani* do not say that the horse worshiped in Reda was captured there, it may have been seized by Burhardt in the battlefield. *Annales Weissenburgenses* inform about Henry IV’s campaign rather schematically and without details such as the location of burnt temples. Wolfgang Brüske (1955, p. 84) went as far as claiming that the 1069 expedition did not bring any concrete results except of plunder.

Schuchhard’s main argument was that allegedly Radogoš did not appear in the sources written after 1068. Schwartz, however, pointed to the fact that Adam of Bremen, who died around 1081 and wrote his chronicle about 1072–1076 (SSS, vol. 1, p. 3–4) did not know anything about the fall of Rethra and described the sanctuary as functioning. Undoubtedly, the Lutizen Union survived beyond 1068, as in 1073 Henry IV asked them for help (Schwartz, 1926, p. 212; Sulowski, 1960, p. 63). It is worth mentioning that Orderic Vitalis (IV, year 1069) includes the Lutizens among the tribes that reinforced Danish king Sweyn in his expedition to England and describes them as “a very large nation, which is still confined within the errors of paganism and has not recognized the true God, but tied by ignorance, worships Odin, Thor and Freya and other false gods or evil spirits.” The fact that the cult of the gods worshiped in Uppsala is attributed to the Lutizens points to the Scandinavian origin of the record. Orderic does not add any information about the Lutizen cult, but confirms that the Union and its pagan religion survived. The last sign of Radogoš is sometimes traced in a mention from Ebo (III, 5), concerning Lothar of Supplinburg’s campaign against the Lutizens in 1128, when an unnamed “town with a temple” was ruined, but it might have been another place (Schuchhardt, 1926, p. 56; Brüske, 1955, p. 97–100; Engel, 1969, p. 101–102).

Despite that the years 1068–1069 constitute a turning point in the history of Radogoš. Although the sources contain gaps, it is difficult to agree with Schwartz’s supposition (1926, p. 210–215) that the temple in Radogoš, certainly most severely attacked, survived intact. The situation is best explained by Brüske’s hypothesis (1955, p. 84) that Radogoš was actually destroyed, but the invaders did not manage to control the plundered land of the Lutizens for a long time, and the temple might have been rebuilt. Nevertheless, it never regained its status. We are not able to answer conclusively whether its decline was caused by bishop Burhardt or king Henry IV.

As we can see, Radogoš, similarly to Arcona, has got its history, we are better informed about the culmination of its prosperity than about the circumstances of its decline. The later the origin of sources was, the less concrete information was supplied, and finally the temple fell into such oblivion than nowadays we do not even know its location. According to Adam of Bremen, Radogoš was within a distance of four-day travel from Hamburg. As a trip from Hamburg to Wolin took seven days, which was proved by Labuda (1988, p. 66), we might conclude that Radogoš was situated three days from Wolin. Helmold said that the tribes controlling the sanctuary were the Redars and Tolensans, so it should lie within their territories, but the examination of local names did not bring any results. No trace of a name similar to Radogoš, Rethra or Reda has been found there, although the first and the last are attested in Slavonic toponomastics (Schlimpert, Witkowski, 1969, p. 529–544).

Attempts to discover Radogoš started as early as in the late Middle Ages. In 1378 Ernst von Kirchberg tried to locate it in Dymin. *Chronicon Slavicum* (compiled in the 15th c.) supplemented Adam of Bremen’s relation about the martyrdom of bishop John with the information that Radogoš was situated “upon Piana, that is behind Dymin.” Albert Crantz (1519) hesitated between Röbel at Müritz Lake and Stargard, Thurius pointed to Malchin, Chytreus (1589) and Lindenberg (1596) again to Röbel, Latomus (1610) and Pistorius (1739) opted for the region of Tollense Lake and neighbouring Lies Lake (Beckmann, 1959, p. 46–49; Engel, 1969, p. 103–104).

Richard Wossidlo (1909, p. 226–246) collected folk tales from Mecklemburg, in which Radogoš appears as Schön Reda, Reda, and even Margaret, Greta and Nineveh. P. Beckmann (1959, p. 56–69) examined this
material and concluded that the folk legends have common core: in all of them, when the Germans invade the temple in Radogosz, the Slavs escape from the stronghold with an effigy of a Slavonic god, which is often gold, bury it somewhere, transfer to another town or drown it in a lake. Some tales about Radogosz follow the scheme of the legend of the drowned town. Beckmann supposes that the tales preserved in German until now might have been inherited from assimilated Slavs. The folk tales situated Radogosz in the area of Lieps and Tollense Lakes and most ethnographic data come from that region, while late-medieval chroniclers and modern humanists until the times of Latomus opted for the area of Dymin and Muritz Lake. According to Beckmann, it shows that the legends were not taken over from the literate culture. Ethnographic studies situate Radogosz near Lieps and Tollense Lakes.

The pioneers of German archaeology shared this view. L. Brückner (1887; 1889) advocated the thesis that Radogosz lay in Fischerinsel in Tollense Lake, which provoked a heated discussion. A special "Rehra Commission" was set up. On behalf of it G. Oesten (1904; 1905; 1906; 1912) took soundings in several villages, but without conclusive results. In the early 20s C. Schuchhardt (1926, p. 27-63) searched in a stronghold near Feldberg at Grosse-Luzin Lake and after two weeks announced that he had found Radogosz. Even before the war his interpretation of the excavations was questioned (Wienecke, 1940, p. 223-225; Rajewski, 1948, p. 321-325 accepted it). Herrmann's excavations (1968, p. 198-204; 1969, p. 33-69) carried out in the same site in 1967 discovered some remnants of a temple, but they are dated to the 7th-9th century. In the times when chroniclers wrote about Radogosz this place had already been deserted by its inhabitants. The question of the location of Radogosz remains open. Over six hundred years of attempts at finding it, diverse results have been achieved. Ekhard Unger (1958) compiled 29 alleged localizations of the sanctuary, spread from village Rehna upon stream Radegast in the west (near Lübeck), to Stargard in Pomerania in the east, and from Loitz upon Piana (near Dymin) in the north to Gransee near Berlin in the south. Even renowned historians took seriously rather absurd combinations. E. Wienecke (1940, p. 222) desperately tried to identify Radogosz with Szczecin.

Nowadays the search is again concentrated around Lieps and Tollense Lakes. In 1969 in Fischerinsel two wooden statues were excavated, but no traces of a temple were found. V. Schmidt (1984, p. 21, 70; 1992, p. 59-61) suggests that the sanctuary may have been located in Hanfwenter island in Lieps Lake, based on the allegedly sacred character of one of the houses (sized 4.8 m × 4 m) found there, which is not very convincing. The only argument for his thesis are sculls of an aurochs and a horse, and deer horns found in its foundations, which should be rather interpreted as founding offerings. Moreover, the building comes from the turn of the 13th c. According to the same researcher, there was another cult building (24.4 × 9 m) in the burial ground in Usadel, situated exactly opposite the Hanfwenter island. Its alleged traces, which are irregular stone constructions, are not convincing, even if we assume that the object had been built as a log construction. Volker Schmidt's newest studies (1984; 1992) show, however, that the settlements of Tolensans and Redars were probably centered around the mentioned lakes, so we can suppose that Radogosz was situated in this region.

Thietmar recorded the name of the sanctuary as Riedegosz and calls the deity worshiped there Zuarasic. Adam of Bremen and Helmold call the
stronghold Rethra and the god Redigost. Annales Augustiani and folk tradition know the form Reda. The etymology of the first name is only apparently obvious. Rad = “nice” and gost = “guest” produce the meaning of the place of Radogost, a god that is eager to host nice visitors. Thus, Radogost would be a nickname of Svarozic. Aleksander Brückner (1985, p. 241) regarded this name as appropriate “rather for an inn than for a deity,” but he must have forgotten that religious rituals were accompanied by feasts given by the god to his worshipers, though prepared from their own products.

It is not the only possible etymology. G. Labuda (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 129) reconstructs the original form as Redny (wet) gost (forest). Thietmar indeed mentions a forest and a lake situated near the sanctuary. The most interesting etymology is connected with the existence of oracle in Radogost. In this interpretation Radogost would be “a god who gives advice to his guests” and Radogost would be the place where it happens (from rada = “advice,” also “council”). At least the first part of the explanation should be closely examined, as it seems to be confirmed by the form Reda, which can be read as rada, not only in the sense of the place where the counselling meeting was held, although Radogost was such a place, but also as a place where the advising oracle exists (Witkowski, 1968; Dralle, 1984). A. Brückner’s suppositions about the words rada, radyo (to give advice) being late borrowings from German are not convincing. This word seems to belong to the common Indo-European inheritance, as similar forms appear for instance in Icelandic (rada, rad, radzi) and in languages of the territory of the West Slavonic tribes (Vries, 1961, p. 431). Lutizian Radogost is not the only toponymic name with that stem in Slavic territories. Only in Mecklemburg there were two settlements of that name, far from the territory of the Redars, and a stream called Radegast (Bilek, 1955, p. 126-129). Radogost appears in the toponomastics of Moravia (mountain Radhost), Poland (a village near Łódź) and Ruthenia (Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego, vol. 9, 1888, p. 382, 39-391). Perhaps the name Radogost should be interpreted as “the grove (gost) where advice is given” (obviously by gods). The thesis may be supported by Tacitus’s information (Germania, ch.10, 40) about divination made by the Germans in holy groves. In this case Radogost would be a local nickname of Svarozic, used in his sanctuary. The form Rethra was probably coined from the name of the tribe: Redars – Rethari – Rethra. (SSS, vol. 4, p. 450-451).

Although the exact location of Radogost is unknown, we have got quite a lot of information about the temple of Svarozic thanks to Thietmar and Adam of Bremen. According to Thietmar, the stronghold in Radogost was triangular (tricornis), which provoked many amateur historians to see Radogost in various triangular hills (Unger, 1952, p. 102-106; Schröder, Hornemann, 1973, p. 63-71; cf. Gringmuth-Dallmer 1984). C. Schuchhardt related the word tricornis not to the plan of the town, but to three gate towers, similar to horns directed towards the sky, which complied with his speculations about three gates of the stronghold near Feldberg. Wienecke (1940, p. 222) followed Schuchhardt’s way of reasoning and tried to match the word tricornis with three hills in Szczezin. This interpretation is perhaps not entirely impossible, but definitely worse. The stronghold had three gates, two major ones open to everybody, and the third one, accessible only to the chosen, leading to the east, towards “a terrifying lake.” So, Radogost was situated at the western shore of a big lake, which was important in the cult, just as for instance Glomae, the sacred spring of the Dalemins. According to a fragment of Lutizian myth, preserved thanks to Thietmar’s chronicle, a boar came out of the lake whenever the country was facing a civil war. There is a close analogy with Glomae, where the fate of the tribe was forecast according to the signs showing in the water of the holy spring, but we should be cautious at this point as both tales were recorded by the same author. The stronghold was “all surrounded with great forest (...) worshiped as sacred” and intact by people i.e. subject to a taboo, so the cult complex in Radogost included a holy grove.

Supposedly in the stronghold there were no other buildings except of the temple. If so, its main function, like in Arcona, was to defend the shrine. People gathered there for a counselling meeting (which is evident from Thietmar, Helmold and the scholia to Adam of Bremen), to hear the oracle (Thietmar and Adam of Bremen), to confirm publicly an alliance (Thietmar and Helmold), and to celebrate holidays with indispensable feasts. Within the stronghold there was only one temple. The description of its exterior, which “is decorated with effigies of gods and goddesses, carved in an amazing manner” reminds – as in Arcona – of the ornamental construction of walls in Gross Raden. The difference would lie in the fact that here the figure poles would be probably decorated with a bas-relief (perhaps similar to the engraving from Ralswick), which is suggested by the words “as can be noticed from a close distance.” The temple was based on animal horns, which unfortunately is difficult to interpret. Undoubtedly, these were not only founding offerings, but perhaps some decorative elements of similar function, which cannot be reconstructed at the current stage of our knowledge.

In the shrine there were effigies of gods with their names inscribed. It is not entirely improbable. Our knowledge about literacy among Slavonic tribes is very limited, but runic inscriptions used by the Scandinavians mainly for magic and religious purposes allow us to consider a possibility that some forms of writing were applied in cult also by the Slavs. The statues wore helmets and cuirasses, which suggests their war functions. Only the name of the superior deity, Svarozic-Radogost, is recorded, but we know that military banners of the Lutizians bore an image of some goddess. According to Thietmar (VII, 64), during the Emperor’s campaign against Boleslaus the Brave, a German soldier insulted the goddess, throwing a stone at the image, which cost the Emperor 12 talents of compensation. So
It is possible that in Radogosz Svarozic was accompanied by a goddess of military function. The deities whose effigies were kept inside the temple were not identical with those engraved at the exterior wall. The latter, called “gods and goddesses” by Thietmar, seem rather minor deities worshiped as a group not as individuals or perhaps images of heroes or ancestors.

In the temple the military banners were kept. Two of them (both with an image of a goddess) are mentioned in the description of the Emperor’s struggles with Boleslaus the Brave, in which the former was reinforced by the Lutizens. One banner was assaulted, another one, according to Thietmar (VII, 64), drowned in the high waters of the Mulda River with a superb squad of 50 warriors. It seems that in Radogosz, like in Arcona, the priests had at their disposal special troops that fought under gods’ emblems.

The temple had a treasury. Thietmar does not mention it directly, but says that the Lutizens, coming back from a successful campaign, left “due gifts” in Radogosz. Such formulation points to their institutionalized character. The gods, believed to lead the Lutizens to victory, had their share of the spoils. Probably the treasury profited from confiscating the property of those who opposed the decisions of the counselling meeting and from punishing them with fines. Significant sums might have been acquired from foreigners. Thietmar’s remark that the Lutizens can be easily bribed to break a sworn treaty seem to indicate that Henry II paid handsomely for the alliance with Radogosz.

The description of the oracle does not differ from Saxo Grammaticus’s relation about divination in Arcona (Slopek, 1991c). The god’s medium was a horse, but we do not know its colour. As it belonged to Svarozic, the god of fire and son of the god of the sun, we can suppose that it was white, because white horse is attributed to solar deities (Widengren, 1965, p. 128). It is another Slavonic public oracle deciding about state affairs, war and peace. As Saxo Grammaticus did not draw from Thietmar’s chronicle, the descriptions of oracles in Arcona and in Radogosz independently document Slavonic divination practices.

Adam of Bremen’s description of Radogosz differs from Thietmar’s one in so many points that serious doubts arose whether they referred to the same sanctuary. It seems highly improbable, however, that the Redars had at roughly the same time two equally famous shrines, one of which was called Riedegost, and in the other Radogosz was worshiped. According to Thietmar, the temple is situated in a stronghold near the water, while in Adam of Bremen’s chronicle Rethra is completely surrounded with water, so it stands on an island to which a wooden bridge leads. These details are rather trustworthy as many strongholds in Polabia were located in this way, and in bridge construction the Slavs reached perfection rare in the then Europe (Schuldt, 1988, p. 57–60). The information that “passage [through the bridge] is allowed only to those who bring offerings or come for divination” cannot be questioned either.

It seems, however, that it is not the place described by Thietmar. J. Herrmann (1972, p. 34) supposes that the solution of the puzzle lies in the events of the civil war of 1057 or defeats from the years 1068–1069. It is possible that after the destruction of the old temple situated near the water, the new one was built in an island, a place more suitable for defense. In such a turbulent period admitting only few visitors coming to the oracle into the stronghold had a practical, not only religious sense. We know examples of strongholds in which entrance bridges were blocked with guardhouses (Schuldt, 1971, p. 264; 1985, p. 65). A stronghold in an island cannot have had nine gates mentioned by Adam of Bremen, who seems to have been showing off as an erudite at this point, because the nine gates correspond to the nine circles of Styx from the line of Vergil’s *Enid* that he quotes (R. Schmidt, 1974, p. 381–384).

As far as the details of cult are concerned, the sources describe, apart from the oracle, the offering ceremonies, showing them in rather distorted proportions. Thietmar writes that “[they] appease the silent anger of gods by sacrificing people and cattle.” The human offerings are renowned, while the others enigmatic. Adam of Bremen’s narration about the martyrdom of two monks suggests that their fate was decided by the counselling assembly. Thietmar, on the other hand, says that the priests “eagerly inquire what should be offered to the gods.” The object of oblation was not the whole human body, but first of all the head: the two monks were beheaded, bishop John’s body was neglected and only the head impaled onto a spear was offered to Radogost. According to Bruno of Querfurt, it was exactly the way offerings to Svarozic were made. The same sacrifice ritual is imputed to the Slavs in bishop Adelgot’s letter (Labuda, 1960–1975, vol. 3, p. 233–269; cf. Reinfeld, 1942, p. 39–45). The head as an object of offering and valued war trophy, is a common motive (von Amira, 1922, p. 207–213). Among Indo-Europeans it was especially important in Celtic culture (Schlett, 1987, p. 126): Irish heroes took pride in necklaces of enemies’ heads. The offering made of bishop John’s head followed the principle written down by Thietmar before 1018 that after a war the Lutizens “eagerly inquire what should be offered to the gods.” It was probably an important element of victory celebrations after abandoning Christianity by the Abodrites. The sources mention both thanksgiving and precipitating sacrifices.

Thietmar stressed the role of the priests, pointing to the fact that only they were entitled to seat during offerings. We can suppose that the temple had its own warriors and a treasury at disposal. It is evident that the domination of Radogosz and the tribes closest to the temple, i.e. the Redars and Tolensans, caused disintegration of the Lutizen Union in 1057. No priest is, however, mentioned by name. It is not a coincidence that the Emperor’s allies in the war with Boleslaus the Brave remained anonymous in documents.
Throughout a century Radogość was the most important sanctuary in Polabia. According to Thiemar it “holds primacy” among all other temples. For Adam of Bremen the Redars are “medii et potentissimi” (central and most powerful) of all tribes between the Oder, Havel and Elbe. Perhaps it is not only a topographic fact, but also a trace of mythical geography. In mythical thinking, the tribe destined to domination and close relationship with gods should live in the centre of the world (Banaszkiewicz, 1986a). Perhaps the Redars cherished such beliefs as well. Radogość was called by Adam of Bremen “the metropolis of the Slavs.” In his chronicle he consistently used the word “metropolis” only referring to seats of archbishoprics (e.g. Magdeburg), important mission centres (like Birka), and to Radogość. So, as R. Schmidt pointed out (1974, p. 393), he placed Radogość and Magdeburg on an equal footing.

Radogość was undoubtedly the seat of the counselling assembly of the Luitzen Union. We can assume that the assembly was called in order to conclude the treaty with the Emperor against Boleslaus the Brave, which was probably made in public. The principle of acclamation was observed in the assembly and opinions contradicting the majority were punished with whipping. Prince Mstivoy complained about being insulted before the assembly in Radogość and swore alliance with the Lutizens there (Lowmianiński, 1963–1985, vol. 4, p. 90–92). We do not know anything about the economic and trade significance of the sanctuary, although Adam of Bremen’s information about the distance between Radogość and Hamburg might have been obtained from merchants (Leciejewicz, 1987, p. 133). Probably there was a settlement and a market place outside the fortifications.

To sum up, the temple lay in a stronghold on the western shore of a large lake, and was possibly transferred to an island in the mid 11th c. It was built of timber and its exterior reminded the constructions from Gross Raden and Arcona. Inside there were statues of gods, the most important one was an image of Svarożič-Radogost, whose military and oracular functions prevailed in the sources over the attributes of the god of fire. It is surprising that Svarożič, the Slavonic god of fire, is in no text related with keeping a holy or sacrificial fire in the temple, which is never mentioned. One of pantheon members was probably a goddess of unknown name, having an important military function. The sanctuary was connected with a sacred lake, the mythical habitat of a boar foreshadowing civil wars, and with a holy grove. In the temple stronghold offerings were made of people and cattle before and after war campaigns or to precipitate gods; in case of human sacrifices the object of the ritual was enemy’s head. The cycle of rites remains obscure, we only know that bishop John was killed on the 11th of November, several months after he was captured. The sources do not say whether a victory was celebrated immediately after the campaign or the offering was delayed until a holiday included in the annual cycle. In the stronghold counselling assemblies of the Union were held and treaties were concluded. The temple had a treasury. For nearly a century (from around 983 to 1068) Radogość was the most important pagan sanctuary in Polabia and the priests from there were religious leaders at least for the four tribes of the Union. Through the public oracle, in which a horse (probably white) and lots were used for divination, they decided about war and peace and were able to control the pagan reaction in neighbouring tribes. From Adam of Bremen we know that also divination in private matters was possible, but the exact ritual was not recorded. Divination through the horse may have been reserved for public affairs. It is possible that the special role of Radogość was strengthened by the conviction that it was situated in the mythical centre of Polabia.

Adam of Bremen’s mention (II, 21/18) about the territories in relation to which the Redars were central shows how far the influence of Radogość reached. These were not only the territories of the four tribes of the Union – the Redars, Tollensans, Kessiners and Zirzipans – as the area stretched from the Oder in the east, including the land of Wolinians at its estuary, to the Havel in the south and the Elbe in the west (Koczý, 1933, p. 181–233; Labuda, 1988, p. 65–76). We have not got any reliable information about any concrete sanctuary in his region in the time when the Union was in the prime of power. Archaeological traces of cult date from earlier or later periods, or are not dated at all. All written sources come from the time after the defeat of the Union in the 1060s and confirm the existence of three sanctuaries at the borderland of the genuine Luitizen territory, excluding Western Pomerania. These were the statue of Triglav (Three-headed) in Brandenburg (discussed below), a place in Havelberg where Gerovit was worshipped (mentioned in 1128), of which no details are known (Ebo, III, 3), and Malchow, a stronghold of the Moritzans upon Müritz Lake. Annales Magdeburgenses recorded under the year 1147 that a crusade to Polabia destroyed “also a temple with idols, situated near a stronghold called Malchow.” We can supplement this short mention only with a supposition that temple lied on the shore of large Müritz Lake.

We have got more information about the temples of the genuine Luitzen tribes. It has already been mentioned that domination of Radogość caused a split in the Union in 1057 and secession of Kessiners and Zirzipans. Nearly a hundred years later Helmold (I, 71) wrote that in 1151 Niklot, prince of Abodrites, and Adolphus, earl of Holstein, “together set off to the land of the Kessiners and Zirzipans (…), destroying everything with sword and fire. They also demolished a famous temple with idols and all pagan cult.” The fragment does not include the location of the temple or the name of the deity worshiped there, but it may be related to a passage from Arnold of Lübeck (V, 24), who continued Helmold’s chronicle and wrote about Berko, bishop of Schwerin that he “uprooted the cult of demons, cut down groves and ordered to worship bishop Godehard instead of Gutdrac.” St Godehard’s church existed in Goderak, a settlement near Kessin (Chyżyn), the capital stronghold of the tribe, which is now a suburb of
Rostock (PUB Conrad, vol. 1, 1970, No 55, p. 68; Kahl, 1964, vol. 1, p. 337, vol. 2, p. 704; Leciejewicz, 1968, gloss 131; Herrmann, 1988, p. 273). The name of the deity remains unknown, but the quoted fragments create a picture of a temple recognized by two tribes, called famous, renown for rich forms of rituals, perhaps connected with a holy grove, and situated near the tribal centre. We can speculate that when the Kessiners and Zirzipans overthrew the influence of Radogošć, this shrine became their main temple. In Rostock, according to Saxo Grammaticus, there was some worshiped statue.

Under 1128 Ebo (III, 5) refers to another Lutizian sanctuary. Writing about Christianization of Dymín, he says that “the Lutizens, whose town with a temple was burnt down by famous king Lothar not long ago, tried to destroy Dymín (...)” It has already been indicated that some historians want to interpret the “town with a temple” as the last trace of Radogošć, others think it was Gützkow. Other Lutizian temples, mentioned by Thiétmar (VI, 25) and Annales Weissenburgenses (a. 1069) in plural, remain unknown.

It seems necessary to connect also the two statues from Fischerinsel in Tollense Lake, dated to 11th-12th c., with the territory influenced by Radogošć. The female figure may represent the war goddess from Lutizian standards, while the famous two-headed deity is sometimes interpreted as a trace of a cult of twins, similar to Dioscuri (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 150-153).

Despite the temporary German invasion, the Lutizens remained pagan until the 12th c. The Abodrites, on the other hand, at least at the time of prince Gotschalk, were not entirely resistant to Christianity, but after 1066 the old faith was fully revived. Victorious rebels elected as their prince a pagan thane Krut, “a persecutor of Christ’s name.” When he got older, Henry, Gotschalk’s son, killed him deceitfully and gained control over his heritage. Although he was a Christian, he had to tolerate his subjects’ paganism, or rather vice versa they tolerated Henry’s “German” faith, which was not very influential, as the only Church in his state was situated in his seat in Old Lübeck. When Henry was assassinated, the Gotschalk dynasty lost the throne, which was seized by a relative of theirs, Kazut Laward, son of Danish king. He was killed by his own brother and the former state of Gotschalk was divided between Henry’s nephew Pribislav and “starost of Abodrite land” Niklot. The former ruled the Vagrians and Polobians, the latter the tribe of Abodrites. According to Helmold (I, 22-26, 34, 49-52), “both were real beasts, very unfavourable towards Christians” (cf. Kahl, 1962; Lammers, 1964; Struwe, 1988).

Paganism celebrated the last triumphs before the decline. Along with holy groves in the land of Abodrites there existed roofed shrines. Pointing to the variety of cult forms, Helmold (I, 84) stated that the Slaves of that territory “erect strange statues in their temples, for example the effigy in Plön, which is called Podaga.” The temple in Plön, although used only for illustration by Helmold, is the only one straightforwardly mentioned in the sources, but as the Lutizens had as many temples as tribes, we can suppose that the same applied to the Abodrites. Helmold (I, 52) presented a map of their cult in the following way: “In those days varied cult of idols and superstitious practices were revived (...). Apart from holy groves and gnomes numerous in the fields and towns, the most important were Prove, god of Oldenburg, Siva, goddess of the Polabians [in the Copenhagen manuscript with the addition: that is the inhabitants of Ratzburg] and Radogost, god of the Abodrites.”

We have more information about the Vagrians, who had a grove called Prove, regarded as the most sacred place in the country, near the main stronghold, Starigard (Oldenburg), which is described in another place in Helmold’s chronicle. There was no temple in the grove, but a roofed shrine might have been situated in the stronghold. According to Widukind’s chronicle (III, 68), in 967 the Saxons captured in a certain town, probably Oldenburg, a statue of “Saturn” made of copper, or more likely covered with sheet copper. Excavations carried out lately in Oldenburg by Ingo Gabriel discovered some traces of an unroofed shrine and buildings that might have been used as cult halls. Another temple in Vagria, in Plön, had a lower status that the Prove grove. The name of the god worshiped there, recorded as Podaga or Pogaga, is sometimes related to Pogoda, known from the Polish “Olympus” of Jan Długosz, or to Dažbog. It can be also derived from the stem *dag (to burn: Jakobson, 1985, p. 8; SSS, vol. 4, p. 166) and deciphered as Požoga (great fire), then it would not be a female name, but rather a personification of the power of fire. Similar deities, such as Śmierć (Death) or Dola (Fate) were common in Slavonic pantheon.

Ratzburg, the main town of the Polabians, was the centre of cult of goddess Siva. This name reminds of Żywie, a deity mentioned by Długosz (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 150). The only trace of pagan cult discovered in this settlement is a small one-headed statue found near the stronghold situated at a peninsula at Ratzburg Lake (Lammers, 1964, p. 141).

The god of the Abodrites was the aforementioned Radogost. A stream named after him, Radegast, separated their land from the territory of the Polabians, who lived more to the west. The sanctuary might have been situated in one of two main strongholds: Mechlin (Mecklenburg) or Schwerin. There are more arguments for Schwerin. Both towns appear in written sources at the turn of the 11th c., but information about paganism is connected only with Schwerin. According to Thiétmar’s relation about Lutizian attack on Abodrite prince Mstislav (VIII, 5), the latter sought refuge from them “behind the enrenchments of the fortress in Schwerin,” but the rebellion made him escape from the stronghold and from the country. “At that time all the churches that had been erected in that country to praise and serve God were demolished and burnt down. And, what is even more regrettable, the holy cross was cut down and idolatry, preferred to the true faith, reintroduced.” This relation is accompanied by a mention about
Pluto's cult, which is nothing but a display of Thietmar's erudition. What is really worth attention is the mention about reintroducing paganism. It is believed that the war between Mstislav and the Lutizens was caused by the Union's attempts at dethroning this Christian prince and reviving paganism. The object of attack was Schwerin. Thietmar's text does not explicitly say that this place was the seat of the prince, but it implies that it was the most formidable of Mstislav's strongholds. Therefore we can try to connect with Schwerin the mention about reintroduction of idolatry, which must have caused reconstruction of the sanctuary. It is quite possible that the existence of the sanctuary was reflected by a mention in the foundation act of the bishopric, which was transferred to Schwerin from the temporary seat in Mecklenburg in 1170. According to it, bishop Berno, a member of the expedition against Arcona, "began to enlighten the people of Schwerin, who had lived in ignorance, he baptized them, pulled down their idols and founded churches ..." (MUB, vol. 1, 1863, p. 85-87).

Finally, it is possible to derive the name Schwerin from the stem *svar (SSS, vol. 5, p. 495), and as we know that Radogost was a nickname of Svarožić, it ties up with the thesis that the Abodrite sanctuary of Radogost was situated in this town, perhaps in the island near the western shore of Schwerin Lake, which is now occupied by the magnificent castle of Mecklenburg princes. Quite recently well preserved wooden construction of embankments was discovered in the foundations of the castle (Keiling, 1988).

In the fragment which initiated the above discussion Helmold does not explicitly say that the shrines of Prove, Siwa and Radogost had the form of temples, but this mention is only a beginning of a wider digression concerning the pagan religion in Helmold's Chronicle (I, 52). It contains very interesting information: "These deities had their servant priests, offering feasts were organised for them and they were worshiped in various ways. Namely, following the lots, a priest announces a celebration to honour the deities, and then men and women with children gather. They kill oxen and sheep as oblation to their gods, some even kill Christians, claiming that the gods relish Christian blood. Having killed the sacrificed animal, the priest tastes its blood in order to become more sensitive to oracular inspiration. When the sacrifice is fulfilled in the customary way, the people begin to eat and dance. The Slavs have this strange superstition: during feasts they send around a cup into which with the name of the god of Good and Evil they put words, which I will not call sacrifices but swears. They do it because they believe that good fate comes from the good god while bad fate from the evil one. Therefore in their language they call the evil god the Devil, or Zorneboch (the Black-god)." The description characterises the forms of cult found at the Abodrites in a general way, so it cannot be straightforwardly related with a particular sanctuary, but the mention about feasts indicates that there were cult halls in places of worship. Only in Vagria the house of gathering must have been remote from the grove, the main shrine of god Prove. The grove was the most important sanctuary of the Vagrians ruled by Pribislav. The shrine of Radogost must have had an equal rank as the cult centre of the Abodrite group ruled by Niklot. Both sanctuaries might have had oracles. Helmold says that Abodrites regard as the god's medium the priest who fell into a trance after drinking some blood of a sacrificed animal, and he mentions drawing lots, which was always connected with divination.

Helmold's information about the existence of temples in Abodrite territories were verified by archaeology. The cult halls of Oldenburg have already been mentioned here. Two temple-like buildings were excavated in the territory of the Varns - regarded as a group of Abodrites - in Gross Raden and Parchim. The latter one may come from the times contemporary to the events narrated by Helmold.
4. Pomeranian temples in the times of St Otto's mission

The first mention about pagan temples in Pomerania comes from Thietmar (VII, 72). He writes that bishop Reinbern, having assumed his office in the Kolobrzeg (Kolberg) diocese founded during the congress in Gniezno in 1000, "destroyed and burnt down temples with idols and purified the sea inhabited by evil spirits by throwing into it four stones anointed with holy oil and blessed with holy water," through which he "planted the holy shrub of Gospel among the barbarians." The results did not last long. Thietmar gives this information in the context of Reinbern being sent to the prince's court in Kiev as a chaplain of Boleslaus the Brave's daughter, which is interpreted as a proof of pagan reaction and demolition of the bishopric in Kolobrzeg (SSS, vol. 2, p. 447). T. Palm (1937, p. 26) and H. Lowmiański (1979, p. 167) questioned the reliability of Thietmar's mention about destroying temples, which may be conventional. Indeed, the relation lacks any details: the idols are not named, the location of the temples is not specified either. The chronicler begins the relevant text by a reservation that he does not have enough knowledge or eloquence to present the matter in detail, which does not mean that he was not acquainted with the basic facts. The information about a kind of "baptism" of the sea performed in Pomerania by bishop Reinbern proved that his activity was not totally unknown in Germany. Thietmar's relation is contemporary to the events, as he died in 1018. As we know, he was not an ardent supporter of the idea of founding an archbishopric in Gniezno. In the relevant part of his chronicle he made no reference to the Christianization of central Pomerania, which should have been mentioned in connection with Emperor Otto III's pilgrimage to St Adalbert's grave in Gniezno, as a result of which the Gniezno metropoly and the Kolobrzeg bishopric were created. He was not interested in glorifying the hated ruler of Poland and his hardly tolerated archbishopric. It seems that Thietmar added the mention about Reinbern's activity just in passing, as a biographical detail, which makes it more reliable. Thus, we can assume that around 1000 there were some temples in central Pomerania. According to H. Bollnow (1964, p. 93), at least the most important one, the destruction of which was probably related to the magic act of "christening" the sea, was situated in Kolobrzeg. It was not a coincidence that this town was chosen for the seat of the bishop.

Later information about Pomeranian paganism comes from Gallus Anonimus, but he does not describe any forms of cult or sanctuaries. Baszkiewicz's analysis (1986a), however, showed that a special role in the beliefs of the inhabitants of central Pomerania might have been attributed to Bialogard (Belgard), which was regarded as the symbolic centre of the region.

Much more information about the temples of Western Pomerania is available. It is disputable whether this region belonged to Pomerania in the times of the first Piasts. Although Kolobrzeg was an important town, it was undoubtedly inferior to Wolin, described by Ibrahim ibn Jacob (MPHsn, vol. 1, 1964, p. 50) as a formidable port with twelve gates belonging to the Viltzens. If, despite the Piasts' attempts to seize the Oder estuary, Kolobrzeg was chosen as the seat of the bishopric, in 1000 Boleslaus the Brave cannot have controlled Wolin or Szczecin, which belonged to the Lutizens then (Lowmiański, 1963-1985, vol. 5, p. 415; Labuda, 1988). In 1007 envoy came to Henry II from the Lutizens and "the great town called Wolin" (Thietmar, VI, 33). In 1043 Arnór Jarlaskald (Labuda, 1954, p. 306), describing how Wolin was burnt down by Norwegian king Magnus, confirmed that the Wolinians retained their religion.

Only the victories of prince Boleslaus the Wrymouth made Pomeranian prince Vartislav, who controlled the towns at the Oder estuary, surrender to Poland and accept Christianity. The mission in this area was undertaken by bishop Otto of Bamberg. There are three lives of this saint (Ebo's, Herbord's, and the so-called Life from Prüfenings, written probably by Wolfer, librarian of the local monastery), containing a lot of data about pagan sanctuaries, which follows from the fact that such information most effectively glorified the saint as well as from the essence of the matter. The most important towns of Pomerania had temples at that time, although available sources present them only in a several-year span.

In 1123 the first mission in Wolin was undertaken by bishop Bernard, a Spanish monk and ascetic, but it was unsuccessful. In 1124 Otto arrived in Pomerania and christened it for the first time, but when he left a general apostasy occurred. His first expedition was limited to the genuine Pomeranian territories and the area upon the Oder, closely connected with them. Otto neglected the former land of the Lutizens, considered as a part of German dioceses, which was not a coincidence. Bishop of Bamberg's second mission, organised in 1128, covered the whole territory of Vartislav and brought lasting results (Labuda, 1979, p. 10-18; Dziewulski, 1960).

In the times of St Otto Szczecin dominated among the towns at the Oder estuary, also in religious matters. Wolin probably lost its position after the defeat in 1043. It can be argued that the bishopric for Western Pomerania was founded in 1140 exactly in Wolin, but it is a rather telling fact that the Wolinians rejected the first mission, advising Otto to "go and convert those who are considered the leaders of the tribe. If those convert, they
Wolinians] will have no other choice." The author of The Life from Prüfen­
ing (II, 7) thought that it had been a ruse and that the Wolinians had wanted to send the bishop to his doom, as the inhabitants of Szczecin, who were more numerous and powerful than other tribes, were more likely to attack him. This supposition may have been right, but the Wolinians' advice re­
to send the bishop to
flects their belief about the primacy of the centre of the country. The Lives
(Herbord, II, 23; The Life from Prüfenning, II, 7; Ebo, II, 9) say explicitly that
Szczecin was considered the capital of the country and enjoyed the name of
the mother of Pomeranian towns.”

According to Ebo (III, 1) Szczecin was “a very large town, larger than
Julin [Wolin]. It embraced three hills, of which the higher, central one,
devoted to the most important pagan god Triglav, had a three-headed statue
whose eyes and lips were covered with a golden veil. The priests said that the
superior god had three heads because he ruled three realms: heaven, earth
and hell, and that he covered his face not to see human sins and to remain
indifferent.” In another place, however, Ebo (II, 9) claimed that Szczecin
was situated on four hills.

Some details of appearance of the temples and forms of cult are described
by Herbord and The Life from Prüfenning (II, 11). The latter, which
was written earlier and is considered more reliable by historians, reads: “In
(...) the town there were two houses not far from one another, built with
great skill and care. As they contained inside the statues of gods and in
Latin ‘contain’ means ‘continere,’ the ancestors called them continua.”
The identical etymology of the word continua (kaćina), which is incorrect, as we
already know, is found in Herbord (II, 31). “Exactly in that place the stupid
pagan people worshiped their god Triglav. Apart from that, the citizens
usually kept a horse of beautiful shape, called the horse of god Triglav. Also
its saddle, decorated with gold and silver, as becomes a deity, was stored
by pagan priests in one of the continua. The divine horse saddled with it
appeared at a special time and place, when the pagan people, deceived by
superstitions, gathered to hear the divination.” In the oracular ritual the
horse was led over spears (Słupek, 1991c). After its detailed description
the text adds: “They used to offer one tenth of all spoils that they seized,
and in all circumstances they proceeded to the mentioned continua to inquire
about the future with god Triglav.”

Herbord’s text (II, 32–33), which is more elaborate, generally confirms
that relation, adding many significant details, but it contains also a different
piece of information. According to Herbord, there were “four continua” in
the town of Szczecin, but one of them, which was the principal one, had
been built with amazing reverence and skill. Its outside and inside were
decorated with sculptures protruding from the walls; there were effigies of
people, birds and wild animals, pictured with all their features so accurately
that they seemed to live and breathe. What I would consider unusual is the
fact that rain or snow did not manage to blacken or wear out the colours of

exterior pictures, to such an extend had the artists’ skill protected them. In
accordance with ancestors’ old custom they brought to the temple the
plundered wealth and enemies’ weapons and all that they gained in wars on
the sea or land, by the right of one tenth of the spoils. Also gold and silver
pots used for divination and for nobles’ feasts, brought from the holy shelter
on special days, were stored there. They also kept there huge horns of wild
bulls set in gold and precious stones, suitable for drinking, playing horns,
swords and daggers, and many expensive and rare artifacts for the decoration
and honour of their gods. They intended to hand them all to the bishop
and priests when the temple had been destroyed. But he (..., having blessed
them with holy water, ordered the people to divide everything among
themselves. And there was a three-headed statue there, which bore three heads
on one trunk and was therefore called Triglav. Only this, namely the three
adjacent heads, without the trunk, did he [the bishop] take away as a symbol
of victory and later sent to Rome, for the Pope to see the proof of their
conversion (...). The three other continua were less honoured and less
adorned. Inside seats and tables were placed along the walls, as they used to
hold their councils and meetings there, because they gathered in those
buildings on fixed days and hours, both to drink and merrymake, and to
decide about important matters. Moreover, there was a huge oak-tree with
lots of leaves there, and a most pleasant spring near it. The simple people
regarded it as the seat of a deity and held in great esteem. The bishop
wanted to cut the tree after destroying the temples, but the people convinced
him not to do that, as they promised to value neither the place nor the tree
because of the cult anymore, only because of its pleasant outlook and
shadow...” The bishop accepted the promise that the oak will not be wor­
shiped anymore and agreed to leave it, but he set his own condition: he
demanded that the Szczecinians expelled from the town the oracular black
horse of Triglav, which was attended to by a priest in one of the four
temples. The description of divination to which the horse was used brings
further details concerning the oracular practices, omitted in The Life from
Prüfenning. Liquidating the oracle, Otto ordered to sell the horse to another
country. There is also a short mention about “calculations from sticks,” i.e.
lot-casting.

The two texts differ in the fundamental matter of the number of temples.
The Life from Prüfenning mentions two, situated close to each other, without
differentiating between them. Both are described as containing statues, both
were admired and in both Triglav was worshiped. But also this Life contains
the fact recorded by Herbord, that Otto blessed and returned to the
Szczecinians the valuable artifacts from which he did not take anything for
himself, but “when he broke the trunk of the statue himself (..., he took its
three silvered heads, because of which it was called Triglav” in order to offer
them to the Pope (The Life from Prüfenning, II, 12). In this relation two
temples correspond to only one statue, which seems to indicate that Herbord
is more reliable at this point. Quite possibly Szczecin had one temple and three cult halls, one of which might have been situated near the temple.

Christianization was accepted by the counselling assembly in Szczecin, but the decision was taken only after a categorical order from Boleslaus the Wyrmouth, who threatened the opponents with war (The Life from Prüfen­ing, II, 10; Herbord, II, 30). In The Life from Prüfen­ing (II, 12) the destruction of the temple in 1124 is described shortly and schematically. The temples were "pulled down and deconstructed" and "the timber from them was taken by both the faithful and the idolaters (...) for putting up fires and boiling vegetables." The last detail somehow resembles the scene when the statue of Svantevit was chopped and burnt under the kitchen pots, recorded by Saxo Grammaticus. According to Herbord's (II, 31–32) more elaborate relation, bishop Otto asked the Szczecinians, who had decided to convert to Christianity rather than because of Boleslaus the Wyrmouth's threats and power than because of conviction about the new faith, to allow at least him and his companions to destroy the temple, if they were still afraid of their old gods. When they agreed, "the bishop and the priests, having celebrated the mass and received Communion, armed with axes and hatchets, approached the temples, breaking and destroying everything and tearing off the roofs. The inhabitants stood and waited for the gods' reaction and wondered whether they would defend their houses or not. Finally, when they saw that nothing wrong happens to the destroyers, they said: if those whose temples and sanctity are being destroyed had any divine power, they would defend themselves. And if they cannot defend themselves or help themselves, how will they be able to defend or help us? With such words they hastened to demolish and break everything. They divided the wood between themselves and took it to their homes to make fire for baking bread and cooking food. And as it was suitable that those who plundered more got more, all those four temples were pulled down and destroyed with amazing speed." Ebo's mention (III, 1) about "burning the temples of idols" seems a fantasy, as setting fire to a temple in the middle of a wooden town would have been insane, which everyone realised (Ebo, II, 1). But he also says that after the burning (which should be interpreted as 'destroying') the temples "two churches were built, one, whose patron was St Adalbert, on Triglav's hill, the other, under the invocation of St Peter, outside the town walls, (The Life from Prüfen­ing, II, 13, mentiones the Saints Peter and Paul). From this we can infer that the temple of Triglav had been situated at a hill devoted to him in the centre of the town, which is now the Castle Hill, where the prince's manor used to stand. St Adalbert's church, mentioned in the lives of Otto, fell to oblivion. It was probably built hastily of wood and cannot have been an impressive construction, although it was furnished with bells (Kiersnowski, 1953, p. 129–131). The church of Saint Apostles Peter and Paul in Szczecin has survived until now on its original place (Chlopocka, Leciejewicz, Wieczorowski, 1985, p. 58–59).

 Allegedly the pagans saved some fragments of the destroyed temples, not only wooden constructions collected rather for veneration than as fuel for cooking, but also a golden statuette of Triglav and the saddle of his horse. Ebo (II, 13) recorded how bishop Otto learned about it, introducing fantastic or even sensational motives into the text. The story is as follows: after the destruction of the temple the priests secretly carried the statuette to the country and gave it to a certain widow to keep it in hiding. The secret was disclosed by Herman, Otto's companion, who pretended to be Triglav's worshiper wishing to make a thanksgiving oblation to the god for help in a sea adventure. He managed to take the saddle of Triglav's horse from the widow, but had to leave the statuette, which was stuck in a tree trunk. Otto, having consulted his companions, abandoned the plan of gaining the statuette, as he did not want to be accused of greed for gold (cf. Slupecki, 1994).

It is difficult to decide whether the relation is reliable. Other Lives do not contain this story, but it is not entirely improbable, as Otto's fight with pagan priests is a fact and undoubtedly paganism was cultivated outside strongholds. The place where the statuette was hidden was identified as the village Trzygłow near Gryfice, as Jan Bugenhagen (II, 17) did in the 16th c., or in Rügen, which was based on the bishop's envoy's words about "crossing the sea of way" (MPHsn, vol. 7, part 2, 1969, p. 76, gloss 290).

The resistance of pagan priests against Christianity is confirmed in other sources. Although according to Herbord (II, 34), the inhabitants were baptized, but there were exceptions. One of them was "the priest that took care of the mentioned horse. When he had tormented the bishop with great impertinence and contaminated good seed with corn cockle, one day, although induced by everyone with entreaties and defeated by the bishop with numerous arguments, he persistently refused to find consolation in the truth and at that very night (...) died." According to Herbord, this event filled the Szczecinians with the fear of God and strengthened their faith.

It did not last long, as when the bishop left, a general apostasy took place. It was caused by a plague. When it began, "the inhabitants of Szczecin (...) influenced by their treacherous priests came back to their old errors. They rebuilt the temples which he had destroyed not long ago and intended to pull down the churches that he had built. Namely, the priests, aware that with the idols they had lost all prospects for profits, said that gods appeared to them in a terrifying shape and soiled them for worshiping Christ and abandoning them. Then, they said that the plague that incidently broke out at that time and spread over the whole town was caused by divine wrath aroused by their conversion to Christian superstitions and abandonment of the old religion. Thus, the pagans gathered and broke into St Adalbert's church and first threw down the bells that had been hanging in front of the church door. But these remained intact, as if they had not been thrown down, which showed the power of Christ. Then one villainous pagan priest worth of a curse entered the church with great anger
and impudently wanted to destroy the altar which Christ’s servant had erected with holy zeal. He suddenly shook and stiffened, lacking control over his members, amazed at his faintness. This shock brought him to reason, so he went out to the people and announced that the Christian God is really powerful. He also said that they should not destroy His altar, but made offerings to God at one and to demons at the other, serving at both another altar, devoted to idols, near the Lord’s altar. And since then they ought to erect another one for the gods with idolatry made the people more obedient to the Slavs.

A similar, though shorter version is given by Herbord (III, 16). These passages are worth a thorough analysis, as they are the only information in written sources — apart from a literary metaphor in *Versus Lubensis* (MPH, vol. 3, 1961, p. 711) — concerning the existence of altars among the Western Slavs. The records suggest a syncretic cult, the erection of a pagan altar in St Adalbert’s church can be regarded as a result of Christian influence. The reliability of the text can be, however, questioned, as in Beda Venerabilis’s work *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (II, 15), which was one of the mainstays of medieval erudition, there is an almost identical description of a syncretic cult from the period when the Anglo-Saxons were Christianized. Redwald, king of East Anglia, is said to have erected two altars in a temple, one for Christ, the other for idols, after a pagan revival. This, however, does not conclude the matter either. According to Thietmar (VIII, 4), also in Hungary prince Geza worshiped both Christ and idols. The pagan mentality of the Germans and the Slavs was alike, neither the former nor the latter denied Christ’s power, therefore the idea of precursor of the new god in such an unorthodox way might have been conceived in Szczecin entirely independently.

Ebo (III, 1) presented the events in a different manner. In his relation the Szczecinians, induced by the priests, “found the idols and revived the customary ritual of sacrifices and ceremonies, while Christ’s churches were half destroyed.” The temples were rebuilt. A priest urged: “Erect (...) a house for your gods next to the temple of the Teutonic God and worship him along with your gods (...)” and they accepted his teaching.” Ebo does not mention erecting an altar for idols in the church.

The bishop’s return to the town during his second mission in 1128 was not completely smooth. He was attacked by a hostile crowd, but at that time there was already a group of supporters of Christianity in the town and they saved Otto from death which threatened him since his arrival (*The life from Prüfenigen*, II, 7; Herbord, III, 14). Otto showed great courage. A blood-thirsty crowd invaded St Peter and Paul’s church when he was celebrating the Mass. The bishop in liturgical robes went straight from the altar through the centre of the town, and intending to address the people, stopped at “an elevated town square,” where — according to *The Life from Prüfenigen* (III, 8) — a great crowd assembled. The bishop, through an interpreter, called them to repent for sins. Then, “the villainous pagan priest arrived and with great noise interrupted the sermon. Finally he addressed the present, urging them to join their voices in praising the gods, who handed to them the evident enemies of the country and of themselves. Others, he continued, should die in torment, while the bishop, as the main instigator of all calamities, should be cut into pieces. Having said that, he wanted to throw a spear, which he carried with him as they usually do, at Lord’s saint. Encouraging others to do the same, he said: ‘He should die of everyone’s missiles’. But when the crowd of miserable pagans dared to raise their hands against the bishop, they stiffened of this attempt and experienced the power of the One, whose priest they wanted to kill. And together with the instigator they stood rooted to the ground.”

The place from which Otto preached was not chosen by coincidence. According to Ebo (III, 15), the bishop spoke from a mound. He says that there were “large pyramids there, built very high, as the pagans customarily do. Having gathered the people, the pious preacher climbed one of the pyramids with his companions and through his interpreter Adalbert [later bishop of Wolin] he began to show the way of truth to those who were erring...” Then, as Herbord wrote (III, 18), “one of the [pagan] priests, a devilish man (vir Belial), angry, obese and tall, (...) snorting and puffing, came to the steps of the rostrum and struck its pillar two mighty blows,” after which he urged the people to kill the bishop (Banaszkiewicz, 1992). These passages point to another very important element of the cult topography of Szczecin: the mould, situated near the temple, similar to moulds known from Prague and Cracow, not to mention numerous Germanic analogues (de Vries, 1956–1957, p. 345–349). Such a mould was the place where the prince usually sat during ceremonies, counselling assemblies and adjudication. According to Herbord (III, 17, cf. II, 30), in Szczecin heralds and town officials spoke to the citizens from the mould (Chłopocka, Leciejewicz, Wieczorowski, 1985, p. 40; Wachowski, 1950, p. 233; Kieranski, 1953, p. 118). On it or near it there was a pillar and wooden steps, constituting the construction of this sign of authority (Banaszkiwicz, 1990). Otto’s preaching from such a pulpit seems to be an act of seizing a place reserved to the leaders.

All the Lives describe a nut-tree which grew in Szczecin (Niewęgiowski, 1993). Otto, pleaded by the inhabitants, left it intact, providing that they stop worshiping it. When the bishop was renovating the churches after the apostasy and preaching to the converts, “incidentally, there was a man at that time, who owned a nut-tree, to which the stupid pagan people came as if to a sanctity. There was no way to make him allow to cut the tree, especially that he valued it as an object of cult and had profits from it.
The bishop strongly reprimanded him that the trunk had nothing to do with religion, and that he should trust God, whom he serves, and that the tree should be cut down because it is devoted to demons" (The Life from Prüfening, III, 11). Ebo (III, 18) added that there was a spring near the tree. Most of the above passage, as T. Palm (1937, p. 81-82) observed, was copied by the hagiographer from Prüfening from The life of St Martin written by Sulpicius Severus (13, 1). The two texts, however, differ in some fundamental issues. Sulpicius Severus wrote about St Martin's attack on a sycamore pine, which was defended by a pagan priest, who proposed an ordeal to the saint. Martin was tied to the tree, in which an incision was made at Martin's plead, and it fell not on him, but aside. This miracle was considered as a proof of the superiority of Christianity and of Martin's supernatural power. The events in Szczecin are described in a different way. Similarly, the owner of the tree rejected the bishop's argumentation and "started to swear to his gods that he would never allow to cut the tree until he was alive" and "when the bishop tried to cut the tree, he wanted to strike him with an axe, but he missed him and only cut the air." Ebo (III, 18) called the man, probably more accurately, 'the guard of the tree', so he must have been a priest. According to Ebo, he lived on nuts and lived in poverty. When Otto ventured to cut the holy tree, "unexpectedly the guard of the tree came and standing treacherously behind God's servant, tried to reach his holy head with a pickaxe (...), but he miscalculated the stroke and the pickaxe got stuck so deeply in a pole of a footbridge which was there that it was difficult to remove it, which curbed the persecutor." The controversy ended in a compromise. The Szczecinians present at the event asked the bishop to allow them to keep the tree intact, promising that they will renounce the superstition. Otto agreed, when "the mentioned man promised (...) that he would not believe that it deserves any worship." Adalbert, later bishop of Wolin, vowed a pilgrimage to Bamberg to thank God for rescuing Otto from oppression during the event (Ebo, III, 18-19; Herbord, III, 22-23).

None of those details is present in Sulpicius Severus's text. The mention about a wooden footbridge is a very reliable reference to the topography of Szczecin (Kiersnowski, 1953, p. 126). Thus, it is possible that expressions borrowed from The Life of St Martin were used to record an event that really took place. The only doubt results from the fact that allegedly a similar situation happened also during Otto's first mission, when he agreed to spare a sycamore oak growing near a spring. The cult of oak is by no means doubtful, but the records concerning the nut-tree should not be questioned either. The problem is whether the Lives refer to a hazelnut, which with special cultivation can develop into a real tree, or a walnut. Some remains of walnut shells excavated by archaeologists in Szczecin (Moldenhawer, 1951) do not settle the issue, as walnuts might have been imported. Ebo's mention about "an enormous nut-tree" seems to indicate rather a walnut. It might have been connected with the same beliefs as hazelnut, which is very important in Indo-European religions (Niewegowski, 1988), or even constituted a better object of cult, as a larger and stranger, foreign tree.

Archaeological excavations did not discover any traces of pagan temples in Szczecin.

The sources quoted above indicate that before St Otto's mission Szczecin had three cult halls and a temple, which stylistically resembled the shrines in Arcona, Radogość and Gross Raden. Its walls were also decorated with painted figurial images. It is interesting that some of them represented birds and animals, which may be interpreted as mythological scenes. The temple
was situated at Triglav's Hill, where the prince's manor was built as well. We should also place there "the elevated town square" called "the central market," where the mould — "the pyramid" and the constructions connected with it, from which Otto preached to the crowd, stood (Banazskiewicz, 1990). We can suppose that in that square, in front of the temple, the prince's manor and the mould, counselling assemblies and religious ceremonies, such as divination through Triglav's horse, were held. Thus, it would be more of an agora than of a market square.

The Lives mention the statues of Triglav. One of them, with three silvered heads joined to a breakable trunk, stood in the main temple. The information that it was broken may suggest that it had been made of stone or clay, but most probably it had been carved of wood. The golden statue of Triglav — if we believe Ebo's relation — must have been much smaller, though valuable. The existence of that type of statuettes has been confirmed by archaeological finds of figures made of wood or clay. A golden statuette, however, must have been worshiped in the temple or a cult hall in a more private atmosphere, which would point to the development of sophisticated forms of pagan devotion. The statues that were found somewhere by the Szczecinians when they abandoned Christianity might have come from the temple deconstructed by Otto. We might even hypothesize that they were the anthropomorphic poles from the shrine exterior, as the elements of the old building incorporated into the new construction would provide continuity of cult. A similar action was performed by Thorolf, who transferred a pole from Thor's temple in Norway to Iceland. It was not a coincidence that in 1124 bishop Otto admonished the Szczecinians against building temples for idols. After the apostasy the priests promoted their reconstruction and were not unsuccessful, as the relation from the 1128 mission again contains information about destroying temples (The Life from Prüfening, II, 21; Ebo, III, 1; Herbord, III, 22). We do not know whether one of them was "a big house suitable (...) for counselling," situated at Triglav's Hill next to the prince's manor, so quite near to the old temple. In that place, facing the protesting pagan priests, Otto persuaded the nobles of Szczecin to accept Christianity again. In view of the opposition of the priests, who had some right to it, the nobles left the house and the decision about conversion was taken in front of its door (Ebo, III, 16; Herbord, III, 20; The Life from Prüfening, III, 10). It was most probably a cult hall.

In the main temple gold and silver pots were stored. They were used for divination and feasts. The information that the vessels were carried out of the temple for banquets proves that the temple was subject to a taboo. Feasts were organized in cult halls and attended by nobles. The crowd was probably contented with the yard in front of the temple. Other interesting temple artifacts were aurochs horns used for drinking and playing, which indicates that music had some role in the cult. It is worth noting that a lot of weapons were stored in the temple.

The description of Szczecin oracle is the most elaborate relation concerning Slavonic horse divination (Shupecki, 1991c). The horse had to be saddled, which symbolized the divine presence. There is some interesting iconography relevant to the issue: small bronze figures of saddled horses, found by archaeologists in Brandenburg and Wolin, which may present oracular steeds (Grebe, 1969, p. 124; Filipowiak, 1955, p. 182). Triglav's horse, as Herbord says, was bred at one of the temples, probably at the main shrine, as the analogies from Arcona and Radogosz suggest. It was cared for by a special priest. Its saddle, richly adorned with gold and silver, described by The Life from Prüfening and Ebo, was probably stored in Triglav's temple as one of the god's insignia. Horse-divination was always accompanied by lot-casting. The mention about using gold and silver vessels for divination suggests that in Szczecin rituals similar to the ceremony of prophesying from Svantevit's horn in Arcona were held.

The priests of Szczecin seem to be an organized group. In 1124 there were four of them, which corresponds to the number of temples and perhaps of hills, although Ebo was undecided whether there were three or four hills in Szczecin. Four temples and four priests is not an accidental arrangement. The division in four is the perfect way of organizing the life space of a people, apparent for instance from the description of the Lutizian Union, which comprised four tribes.

One of the priests took care of the oracular horse. He died faithful to the old religion, having rejected baptism. The others stepped out of Otto's way, but fanned the pagan opposition outside the town. One of them, whose name is not mentioned, appears in the relations as the instigator and spiritus movens of the pagan reaction that took place after Otto's departure in 1124. All the Lives blame the priests in general for the apostasy, but point to the special role of one of them, who tried to destroy St Adalbert's church and then proposed the syncretic cult. In 1128 Otto's main antagonist was that person, the obese sir belial (devilish man), obviously showing some charisma if he was able to oppose the unusual personality of the bishop of Bamberg. First he called the Szczecinians to cutting Otto in pieces and annihilating his companions, then he tried to organise an assassination (The Life from Prüfening, III, 5, 8, 10; Ebo, III, 1, 16; Herbord, III, 16, 18). According to The Life from Prüfening (III, 12) and Herbord (III, 24), he was rightly punished for that and he expired exactly at the moment when Otto was supposed to be murdered. We can assume that the priests who opposed Christianization were punished with death. The Lives surrounded the death of the pagan leader with an aura of miracle, but The Life from Prüfening gives also a concrete detail: "The second of the priests, who approved of both the [planned] assassination of the bishop and other vile deeds, in a short time died a horrible death on a cross." According to Helmold (I, 52, 84) it was a punishment commonly administered in Polabia, and reserved for the worst criminals. According to Herbord (III, 24), the priest
died instantly, tied to a tree. So, although the sources diverge as to the form of punishment, both confirm the very fact of execution.

The temple had at its disposal a treasury, to which one tenth of the spoils was paid. This custom was used by Ebo (III, 1) to motivate the endowments to Christian churches: “The offerings of great value and variety, which used to be delivered to the priests and temples of idols, were now transferred to Christ’s churches.” It also gave Ebo an occasion to ascribe the pagan reaction to the plots of the priests, who “found themselves instantly deprived of the pleasures of the former magnitude, and looked for an occasion to bring the people back to pagan cult just for their own benefit.” Certainly, the Christianization of the town meant at least social degradation to the priests, but there were some more important reasons for which the people stuck to paganism.

We do not know any dates of pagan celebrations in Szczecin. It is obvious that there were some “solemn days,” when the inhabitants, or rather only the nobles, “on fixed days and hours gathered” in the temples in order to drink, play and hold a council. Also horse-divination had its own “definite time and place.”

Apart from the ritual of oracle, which is described in detail, and an overall characteristics of ritual feasts, the information about the cult is quite scarce. Sacrifices are mentioned only in general, although they are sufficiently confirmed by Ebo (III, 1). The record about bringing oblations to a pagan altar situated in St Adalbert’s church – as the whole containing passage – seems rather unreliable. The method of liquidating Otto (cutting into pieces) suggested by the pagan priest, though expressed in The Life from Prüfenung by a Biblical quotation, reminds of the martyrdom of bishop John in Radogosz, so perhaps also the Szczecinians made human sacrifices.

The name of the god worshiped in Szczecin has not been recorded. Triglav is only a nickname disguising the real name surrounded with a taboo. In Gieysztor’s opinion (1982, p. 121–127), the black colour of the god’s horse and his rule over the realms of heaven, earth and underworld point to Veles. The sacrosanct oak, the tree of the Thunderer, indicates the cult of Perun.

The features typical to many most important sanctuaries, including a temple with a magnificent statue of a god, a treasury, priests and an oracle using a horse, are nearly complete in the case of Szczecin. Only sacrifices are recorded vaguely, but sufficiently. The picture is supplemented with the capital function of the town, which was also an important trade centre, and the counselling assemblies connected with the rituals: meetings of the nobles in the cult halls and of common people in the yard in front of the temple near the mould, which symbolised the power of the authorities (Ślupecki, 1993c).

The rank of Triglav’s sanctuary is evident from the fact that its authority was recognized in Wolin. There are some suppositions that the influence of Szczecin embraced also some shrines of lower status in other settlements. According to Ebo (III, 18), Otto’s companion Udalric by the saint’s order wanted to destroy “a temple very far” from the main site of the events, but had to abandon the enterprise when he was hurled with stones by the idol’s worshipers (Dziewulski, 1960, p. 24). Only after the arrival of Otto himself did the missionaries manage to demolish the temple.

Undoubtedly, the most important town in Szczecin’s sphere of influence was Wolin. Although in the 12th c. this town acknowledged Szczecin’s primacy in political, military and religious matters, it had its own sanctuary. It is difficult to decide whether the privileged position of Szczecin was acquired recently or stemmed from an older tradition reflected in the name of “the mother of Pomeranian towns.” The former possibility is more convincing in view of the fact that Szczecin appeared in written sources quite late, actually at the beginning of the 12th c., while Wolin had been known since the 10th c. and moreover surrounded with the legends about the Vikings from Jom-Wolin (Labuda, 1960–1975, vol. 2, p. 184–190), fantastic tales in which it is called Vineta, and the fame of a thriving port and town (SSS, vol. 6, p. 472, 561). According to Ibrahim ibn Jacob (MPHsn, vol. 1, 1946, p. 50), Wolin was an important port and a “mighty town” with twelve gates. Adam of Bremen (II, 22/19) called it Vineta and described it as the biggest town of Europe. The Germans who lived there were forbidden to practice Christian cult in public, because – as Adam wrote in the mid 11th c. – all inhabitants “still remain pagans.” Adam’s relation shows Vineta in its prime. Less than a century later Helmold (I, 2) wrote about its decline. Although he exaggerates classifying the town as a ruin, the significance of Wolin undoubtedly decreased, which was probably initiated by the defeat in 1043 (Labuda, 1988, p. 73–74).

In the early 12th c. Szczecin had the indisputable primacy, but Wolin still retained some of its former splendour. The first mission after Boleslaus the Wrymouth had enforced the conversion of Pomerania to Christianity was undertaken in Wolin. Bishop Bernard, a Spanish ascetic of high ideals, arrived there two years before the first expedition of bishop Otto (Koczy, 1934a, p. 130), and tried to preach the Gospel barefooted, as the Apostles used to do. According to Ebo (II, 1), the Wolinians treated him as a mad person, commenting that they cannot believe that he is a herald of the supreme God, who is glorious and wealthy, while he is contemptible and so poor that he has no shoes. Driven to despair, the missionary “inflamed with the desire of martyrdom, took an axe and began to cut a great column devoted to Julius Caesar, after whom the town was named Julian. The pagans (...) impassioned with anger, attacked him and then left him cruelly beaten and half-alive.” The obstinate bishop tried to continue his mission, but the priests separated him from the people by force and put him on a ship together with his chaplain and interpreter, forbidding him to reappear in the country. Their lenience towards Bernard, who in their understanding
committed a profanation, resulted on the one hand from the fear of Bole-
slaus the Wyrmouth's revenge, and on the other from the impression of a
harmless madman that Bernard had made; both arguments are quoted
by Ebo. Thus, Bernard did not die a martyr's death, and his experience was
taken into account by Otto, who gained more influence over the Pom-
eranians appearing to them with due ostentation and magnificence.

In 1124 in Wolin the bishop of Bamberg was initially equally unsuccess-
ful as Bernard two years earlier. The first successes in Pyryzce and Kamięń
(where the prince resided, which made the situation easier) were succeeded
by a failure. Even an entourage provided by Vartislav did not help much.
When Otto tried to deliver a sermon, the people hurled stones and mud at
him. Only staying in the prince's house saved Otto from martyrdom "be-
cause since time immemorial the pagans had observed the custom that
as long as someone lived freely in the ruler's home, even when accused of
a worst crime, he was not molested by anybody without the ruler's consent"
(The life from Prüfening, II, 5; cf. Ebo, II, 7). This seems to indicate that the
prince's house had some cult functions, as Helmold (I, 84) claims that
asylum was given by Slavonic sanctuaries. Very soon did Otto abuse the
patience of the Wolinians, trying to make a strange deal with this merchant
town. According to The life from Prüfening (II, 6), "until that time the
Julinians (...) held in great esteem the spear of Julius Caesar. But it had been
so deeply rusted that the iron itself was of no use. The bishop, however,
wanted to buy it for fifty talents of silver, in order to free them of such
a great error; (...) the pagans, impious and unfaithful, firmly refused, claiming
that the spear had divine features and could not be compared with
anything transient or trivial, therefore they would not get rid of it for any
price, because it constitutes their shield and the rampart of the fatherland
and a guarantee of victory. When the reverend bishop worth of God splen-
didly addressed the people, some madman from the crowd, inflamed with
rage, attacked the holy priest and hit him with a freshly broken twig which
he had in his hand, so strongly that he fell to the ground and seemed to have
expired" (cf. Ebo, II, 8; Herbord, II, 24).

The bishop had no other choice but to follow the Wolinians' advice and
try his luck in Szczecin. When the Szczecinians were christened, Otto came
back to Wolin and this time he was welcomed. The inhabitants — as The life
from Prüfening (II, 16) recorded — instantly "let the bishop use one continua,
in which among other sacred objects was the sacrosanct spear of Julius
Caesar. In this very place the Lord vouchsafed to cause a great miracle
which glorified His name. Namely, as a result of river floods the place where
the temple stood had turned into a morass, and it was possible to get to the
temple only through a bridge built over the morass. When the pagans turned
to the Lord and the temple was given to the bishop, the place (...) suddenly
dried out." The bishop "ordered to fill up the hollow that had resulted from
frequent floods and to build a dike, and soon after that he erected a chapel
there, which had St Adalbert and St George as the patrons." Ebo (II, 15)
presents the same event in a slightly different way. He says that the church
erected in place of the temple had the invocation of St Adalbert and St
Wenceslas and was situated in the town, while another one, which was later
the bishop's seat, was built outside the town. At another point Ebo (III, 1)
mentions only St Adalbert as the patron of the church. The gothic church
of St Adalbert and St George, destroyed in 1945, stood in an elevated place
within the town walls (Filipowiak, 1982, p. 118). The data are divergent at
this point.

Ebo's relation about the unsuccessful mission of bishop Bernard points
to another important element of the religious topography of Wolin, namely
the sacred pole which the Spanish ascetic tried to cut with an axe. Ebo
(III, 1) comes back to this detail in the narration concerning St Otto's
mission: "Julin, founded and named by Julius Caesar, where his spear,
stuck in a pole of amazing size, is esteemed as his remembrance." T. Palm
(1937, p. 83–88), who was too sceptical about the issue of Slavonic temples,
on the basis of these passages rejected the information from The life from Prüfening
and claimed that there was only an open-air sanctuary in Wolin. Even H. Łowmiański (1979, p. 178)
did not support his view. It is possible to argue in the reverse way. The life from Prüfening mentions
the Wolin temple as the shelter of the spear, so we could also locate
there the pole, which, according to Ebo, was connected with the spear.
As we know from various relations, weapons were stored in the temples
in Arcona, Rethra, Wolgast, Garz and Szczecin, while we lack any mentions
about spears or swords kept in the open air. Thus, it would be possible to interpret the pole to which Ebo referred as a sacrosanct pillar supporting
the temple, but for the problem of its "amazing size" stressed by Ebo.
Moreover, the fragment about bishop Bernard's attack on it straightforwardly
suggests that it stood in the open air.

The problem is solved if we study thoroughly the relevant passage from
Ebo (III, 1), who after the description of the "column" and a mention about
a festival organised in Wolin every summer to worship "a certain deity with
great crowds participating and dancing" adds that "when the town had been
purified with the word of God and the baptism (...) larger and smaller idols,
which had stood in the open air, were burnt by the pious bishop." So, along
with the temple, there was also an open-air sanctuary in Wolin. It was close
to the temple, which can be inferred from the fact that the sources are
undecisive about the location of Caesar's spear. The sanctuary was a high
pole — a non-iconic idol representing the axis of the world and supporting
the sky, similar to Saxon Irmisul, destroyed in 772 by Charlemagne
(de Vries, 1956–1957, vol. 1, p. 387) — and wooden statues of gods, burnt by
Otto, different from the smaller effigies, adorned with gold and silver, which
had been concealed from the bishop. These were probably kept in the temple
together with "Caesar's spear." The spot where the pole and the idols had
stood has not been localised yet. W. Filipowiak (1982, p. 118) supposes that they might have been situated in a large open yard inside the stronghold, about 30 metres from the remains of a building interpreted as a small temple. If he is right, the sanctuary occupied the highest point of the town.

The general apostasy of the Pomeranians after the bishop’s departure surfaced also in Wolin. When Otto was liquidating the idols in 1124, some “stupid people” – as Ebo calls them (III, 1) – secretly hid some small statuettes of gods adorned with gold and silver, “unaware what damage for the town will result from that.” When the people from the town and the neighbourhood gathered for the festival celebrated annually at the beginning of summer “and began banqueting and various games, they showed the people occupied with merrymaking the statuettes which had been hidden until then and drove them back to the old pagan cult.” The life from Prüfening (II, 17) supplements this relation with an interesting detail: “the people(...) reestablished the statues(...) and celebrated their vile and abhorrent rites. One could see at that time how scene performances were organised all over the town with great noise and hubbub.” In this disarray a fire broke out. It destroyed a part of the town, which was considered by the inhabitants as the punishment from God and made some of them convert back to Christianity (Dziewulski, 1960, p. 18).

Archaeological excavations carried out in Wolin by Wladyslaw Filipowiak (1979; 1982; 1993) brought very interesting results. In the highest point of the area enclosed within the walls of the former stronghold a yard
surrounded with hollows was found. It was used since the 7th c. and en-
circled with houses at the turn of the 9th c. As there were no buildings on
the yard, the archaeologist interpreted it as an open-air cult place. In the
9th/10th c. a building was erected in this place. Not all of it has been
explored, but we know that it was orientated along the east-west axis
and had a framework construction. It consisted of two rooms, which is indicated
by the remains of a partition wall. In the smaller room, opposite the entrance
from the other one, in the middle of the floor, there was a square
construction of thick planks, which might have constituted the foundation
of a statue. There was a small fire-place in the south-eastern corner. The
entrance to the yard was probably situated in the eastern side. Numerous
remains of resinous chips used as torches were found stuck in cracks
underneath the fence pales. Other finds, such as fragments of carpets and
silk textiles, and several one-faced wooden figurines representing a bearded
person wearing a pointed cap, come from the time when this temple existed.

The walls were strengthened with joists preventing them from
sinking into the ground, which testifies to their significant height. The temple was sur-
rounded with a fence, which separated its square yard from the town area
densely covered with buildings. Its south-western corner housed a stable.
The entrance to the yard was probably situated in the eastern side. Numerous
remains of resinous chips used as torches were found stuck in cracks
underneath the fence pales. Other finds, such as fragments of carpets and
silk textiles, and several one-faced wooden figurines representing a bearded
person wearing a pointed cap, come from the time when this temple existed.

In the close neighbourhood of the temple the four-faced statuette of "Svantevit from Wolin" (Hensel, 1978) and a mouthpiece of a wind instrument
were found. These are not remains of the temple described in The life from Prüfening, which was situated outside the town walls, probably in the
south, and possibly had its own fortifications. The temple excavated by
W. Filipowiak lay in the very centre of the town and existed in the
9th/10th c. A part of it was a stable, which suggests that Wolin might have
had an oracle using a horse for divination, but no mention about it is found
in St Otto's Lives, so we should assume that it was no longer active at the
east of the 11th c.

The name of Wolin may be derived from owel (convex), which refers to
an island or a stronghold situated on a hill. There are also some other
eytomologies, but this one seems to be supported by the Scandinavian name
of the town, Jom, coming from höme = hill (Labuda, 1960-1975, vol. 2,
p. 188; SSS, vol. 6, p. 561).

Thus, at the beginning of the 12th century there was at least one temple
in Wolin. It lay to the south of the town, but very close to it, and was
surrounded with water and morass. Inside the town there was a sacrosanct
pole and statues which formed an open-air sanctuary. The house of the
prince, which provided asylum, might have functioned as a cult hall. Per-
haps there was another temple near the pole. Excavations show that the
place had been reserved for cult purposes, as two temples were erected there
subsequently, the second one equipped with a stable. The temples were
furnished with statuettes, which was recorded by the written sources and con-
formed by archaeological finds. A group of priests functioned at the
temple described in The life from Prüfening. We know that one of the rituals
was held at the beginning of summer. Analyses of animal bones suggest that
another celebration took place in early autumn, as in Arcona (Filipowiak,
1979, p. 116-117; 1979a, p. 94; 1982, p. 120-121). The celebrations were
accompanied by merrymaking, feasts and even some kind of scene perform-
ances. The torches prove that they were continued at night.

The name of the town - Wolin in Slavonic and Jom in Scandinavian
means "hill." This may symbolise the belief that the stronghold was
situated in the centre of the universe, stressed by the centrally placed pole
- the axis of the world. The stronghold and the sanctuary lay at the western
bank of the arm of the Oder called Dziwna. This name can be derived from
the root div, which has very strong religious connotations (Gieysztor, 1982,
In order to announce his vision. What else can we say? The people believed
astounded at the oracle fell flat to the ground. Then he set out to the town
admonish them to kill the heralds of the new religion, whose coming I fore­
whitish, while the third rages eternally in violent movement of wild waves.”

The only deity connected with Wolin mentioned by name by the written sources is Julius Caesar, after whom the town was allegedly named. Moreover, according to Herbord (III, 26), St Otto openly admonished the Wolinians after their apostasy not to “worship in any way Julius or his spear, or the statuettes of idols, or statues [any more].” It is very difficult indeed to guess what deity is diguised as Julius. The spear attributed to him suggests associations with war gods, such as Sventovit, whose symbol was the divine standard, or SvaroZic, to whom human heads impaled on spears were sacrificed. From the find of three small, one-faced figurines W. Filipowiak (1979, p. 115) concludes that the Wolinians pictured their deity as a bearded man. The four-headed wooden statuette may be a trace of the cult of Sventovit from Rügen, while close connections with Szczezin allow to hypothese about the cult of Triglav.

Otto’s expedition in 1124 omitted the area subject to Vartislav situated west of Szczezin, but the second mission in 1128 began right there. On Whitsunday the 10th of June 1128 an assembly of the nobles and the elders from Vartislav’s land on the left bank of the Oder was summoned to Uznam (Usedom), one of the main residences of the ruler. After Otto’s address the assembly resolved to adopt the new faith, and its participants were baptized. Along with Vartislav, who was obviously present at the occasion, the sources name the prince of Gützkow, Myslav (Ebo, III, 5–6; Herbord, III, 2–3, 9). Kantzow’s (Pomerania, III, p. 117–118) and Bugenhagen’s (II, 21) accounts mention that pagan priests were present at the assembly and only they opposed St Otto. Otto’s Lives, however, do not include this information.

According to Ebo and Herbord (III, 4), the priests undermined the resolutions from Uznam in a very cunning way. When the news spread over the neighbourhood, they tried to use visions and threats in favour of the old religion. In Wolgast one of the priests went at night to a forest, where “he stood in priest’s robes and, exactly at dawn, spoke to a villager who was going to the market: ‘Listen, good man!’ When the man looked in the shield away and escaped, blessing the Lord…” The priest, who came back to the town, first pretended that he did not believe, but was easily persuaded. It was decided that the missionaries would be killed. The same story appears in Ebo’s text (III, 8), but it contains an important variation: the priest who went to perform this alleged miracle was wearing “a cape and remnants of some deity’s dress” so the villager saw him “dissguised in idol’s clothes.” In the speech of the “deity” the assembly in Uznam is straightforwardly mentioned. H. Łomiański (1979, p. 180) supposed that the mystification was organised not by a priest pretending a god, but by the authors of Otto’s Lives, who tried to ridicule their pagan rivals. Certainly, the relation from christening of Wolgast is the most comi­cal fragment of all Otto’s Lives.

Let us now have a look at the temple of the god that had so inventive priests. After the assembly in Uznam Otto’s two companions, Udalric and Albwinus, went to Wolgast, where they learnt that the inhabitants of this town resolved to kill all missionaries. They survived thanks to the friendliness of the town leader’s wife, who hid them in the attic of her house. They were saved from oppression by the arrival of the bishop with a large troop of Vartislav’s warriors. When Otto, backed by the prince’s armed force, was preaching the Gospel, one of his clerics “wished to see the temple that stood in this town, he was not sufficiently cautious. Some of the inhabitants noticed him and thought that he wanted to set fire to the temple.” A hostile crowd of determined people gathered. The tension was relieved by a farcical event. “The cleric, called Dietrich, who had already approached the door of the shrine, did not know where to turn, and finally boldly entered the temple. Seeing a gold shield which was forbidden to touch, devoted to Gerovit, who was their god of war, hanging on the wall, seized this shield and went outside hiding behind it. And they – how great the stupidity of simpletons is – stepped back and fell to the ground in amazement, imagining that Gerovit appeared to them. In view of their madness Dietrich threw the shield away and escaped, blessing the Lord…” This is what Ebo recorded (III, 8). Herbord (III, 6) described the situation in a similar way, adding some details about the shield. It was “of great size, skillfully and artistically covered with gold sheets. No mortal was allowed to touch it and it was considered a source of power of which I know nothing, but which is the greatest in their pagan beliefs, so it was forbidden to move it if it was not wartime. As we later learnt, it was devoted to their god Gerovit, who is called Mars in Latin and [during] each war they believed it to be the sign of victory.” Otto stayed in Wolgast until its inhabitants were baptized, destroyed their temple and erected a church.

Thus, Wolgast had a temple devoted to Gerovit. It was subject to a taboo, as the incident with the shield shows. In the temple there was a statue, probably dressed in human-like clothes if the priest used them to perform a “miracle.” The clothes were white, which suggests a sovereign deity, also priests’ robes were white, in accordance with the Indo-Europeans’
beliefs about the colour suitable for this profession. The shield is the only
insignium of Gerovit mentioned in the sources.

There are two possibilities of localizing the temple, which has not been
identified by archaeology yet. It might have been situated on a hill
towering over the town, where now St Peter's church stands. The walls of
this church contain two reliefs, or rather pictures engraved in stone, one of
which shows a man with a spear in his hand and is sometimes interpreted
as Gerovit’s image. The other picture includes a cross engraved — possibly
later — over the head of a similar figure with a spear (see ch. 11 below).
Ebo’s text, however, explicitly says that the priest disguised as the deity
went out of the stronghold in order to perform the “miracle,” so the
temple should be situated in the town, in an island at the western bank of
Piana where later the castle was built (Buske, 1984, p. 33). Herbord

mentions temples in plural, which suggests the existence of at least one cult
hall, like in Szczecin.

We have no information concerning the celebrations in Gerovit’s shrine
in Wolgast. In Havelberg, where this god was worshiped as well (Ebo,
III, 3), one of the rituals was held at the beginning of May. The military
character of Gerovit, identified with Mars by Herbord, is unquestionable.
We should also point to his strong ties with agriculture, stressed in the
priest’s speech. In Ruthenia the same deity, called Yarila, was a special
patron of agriculture and his holiday, marking the beginning of spring, was
celebrated in late April, nearly as in Polabia. A. Gieysztor (1982, p. 108–115;
cf. Ivanov, Toporov, 1974, p. 180–216) interprets Gerovit-Yarila as one of
incarnations of Perun.

From Wolgast St Otto went to Gützkow, the seat of prince Myslav, who
was baptized in Uznam. According to Ebo (III, 9) in this town there were
“temples richly decorated with admirable art, erected by the inhabitants for
the sum of 300 talents.” They offered much money to Otto to convince him
not to destroy it. Herbord (III, 7) writes in similar words, but about only
one “temple of remarkable size and beauty.” The inhabitants of Gützkow
tried to save it, “as it had been built not long before at great expense and
they were very proud of it, treating it as a valuable ornament of the town.
They tried to bribe the bishop secretly and persuade him to keep the temple
intact, suggesting that it could be turned into a church.” The bishop, how­
ever, was imbruable and argued with the inhabitants until they pulled down
the temple and the idols.

Ebo (III, 10) recorded more information about the statues: “At that
time, when in the town of Gützkow temples built with wonderful skill were
being destroyed (...) indeed it was a joyful sight, when sculptures of amazing
size and incredible beauty, which over a dozen pairs of oxen could hardly
move, were dragged down through the bridge destined for burning, with
arms and legs cut off, eyes gouged out and noses broken, in front of
idolaters who wept bitterly. (...) The idols’ priests tried to instigate a rebel­
lion for their own benefit.” Ebo seasoned the information, which seems
reliable, with a story about repulsive toads of unprecedented size which bred
out of the destroyed idols and, chased away by the sign of cross, found
shelter in Rügen.

As in the case of Wolgast, the sources diverge as to the number
of temples. Herbord writes consistently about one magnificent temple
built at a great expense a short time before. Ebo uses the plural form,
which can be explained if we assume that the temple was accompanied
by a house or houses of meetings. Both Lives localize the temple (or
temples) within the stronghold, both refer to statues of gods, but neither
gives their names. Besides, Ebo mentions priests. The sources do not
allow for any further hypothesizing about the details, except of a supposi­
tion about a temple treasury, derived from the information that the temple
was built for a substantial sum of money. Archaeological excavations in Gützkow have not discovered any remains of cult places (Corpus DDR, vol. 2, 1979, p. 153-155).

The accounts about St Otto's actions in other settlements in Pomerania do not contain any data concerning temples, except of Ebo's passage (III, 5) quoted above, concerning a shrine of the Lutizens, "whose town with a temple was recently burnt by illustrious king Lothar," which caused a retaliatory campaign against Dymin in 1128, repulsed by Vartislav. C. Schuchhardt (1926, p. 56) associated the mentions about the recent destruction of the Lutizian temple and the recent erection of the shrine in Gützkow, and assumed that both concern the old temple in Gützkow demolished by Lothar. This thesis is incoherent, however, as at that time Gützkow belonged to Lothar's ally, Vartislav (Brüske, 1955, p. 97-100).

The Christianization of Wolgast and Gützkow was decided by the assembly in Uznam, which comprised representatives of the territories on the left bank of the Oder, perhaps dependent on Pomerania for quite a short time. It is significant that in Wolgast and Gützkow no one referred to the authority of Szczecin, which still persisted in apostasy during the assembly in Uznam, although Vartislav's authority was recognised. It is impossible to decide which of the two sanctuaries presented above had higher rank. In the discussed period the area west of the Oder was organised as several territories subject to Vartislav, although Vartislav's authority was recognised. It is impossible to decide which of the two sanctuaries presented above had higher rank. In the discussed period the area west of the Oder was organised as several territories subject to Vartislav, but loosely connected with each other. The priests of the whole area, however, are presented in the Lives as a unified group determined to oppose Christianity. In the time preceding their incorporation to Pomerania these territories may have been influenced in both political and religious matters by Radogośc, Arcona and formerly powerful Wolin.

5. Temples in view of excavations

Written sources, although quite abundant, do not testify to the existence of any temple before the turn of the 11th century. All the cult buildings presented so far in accordance with their descriptions were located in northern Polabia and Pomerania, and that area was also the site of most fruitful excavations. Thus, it is not surprising that many historians (K.H. Meyer, 1931, p. 454-456; Łowmiański, 1979, p. 153-154) doubted whether the Slavs erected temples outside that territory. Archaeology, however, gives access to the history of other regions, which is much more documented by written sources, and provides support to the thesis, posed already by L. Niederle (1916, p. 188-195), that temples and cult halls may have been built by Slavs also outside Polabia and Pomerania. We should, however, begin with the latter territories, where cult buildings have been discovered in Gross Raden, Feldberg, Ralswiek, Wolin, Stargard/Oldenburg and Parchim. Only the last one was erected after the 10th c., others existed much earlier.

The most impressive example of Slavonic religious architecture was found in the village Gross Raden in Mecklenburg. Ewald Schuldt (1985) worked there in the years 1973-1980 and excavated remains of a large settlement from the 9th-10th c. at a peninsula of Binnen Lake. In the earlier stage the houses in the settlement were built of wattle covered with clay, later of timber in log construction. The eastern shore of the peninsula was occupied by a large house, separated from other buildings, surrounded by a fence close to its walls. Its corners were orientated to the four quarters of the world. It was connected with the road – the main communication axis of the settlement – by an oblique path paved with wood. There were no other buildings between the house and the lake shore. According to Schuldt, this structure, at least four times larger than the neighbouring huts, belonged to the earlier phase of the settlement. It was conspicuous among the wattle-and-clay huts for its solid construction, nearly as a brick church against the background of wooden cabins in a nineteen-century village. The original house was destroyed and a new one, of identical plan, was founded. The peat of the peninsula has conserved the ground-floors of both buildings in a very good condition. The walls of the older one were constructed of two rows of parallel boards. Some of them have been preserved in the ground because they were used as foundations of the new building. They are mainly
Fig. 22. The location of the stronghold in Gross Raden. 1 - the stronghold in Gross Grônów; 2 - the stronghold in Gross Raden; 3 - the Sternberger Burg stronghold; 4 - Slavonic settlements on the islands on Trennten lake. After E. Schuldt, 1985, p. 6.

Ornamental anthropomorphic planks, topped with schematic images of heads. More than fifty have survived, while the whole construction contained probably over a hundred. Together with other discovered fragments the planks can be combined into a reconstruction of a fragment of the double wall of the original building, whose face was made up of the anthropomorphic planks. The walls of the second house consisted of a single row of boards.

The building from Gross Raden should be interpreted as a cult hall or temple. No traces of dwelling or any secular usage have been found there. No fireplaces have been revealed. Neither statues nor their remnants have been discovered, which however, does not necessarily mean that such objects did not exist there. No proof of any division within this huge building is conspicuous. The plan of the house lacks any hollows left by pillars, which must have supported the roof. The building probably had a roof, which may be inferred from the existence of a five-metre-long beam that might have originally supported the roof, and was later used in paving the road to the new temple. The artifacts found in the site include a unique clay cup, six horse skulls and a bull skull, those from the neighbourhood - two spearheads, a wooden handle of a shield and an etching needle for writing (Schuldt, 1985; Voss, 1991). In another interpretation, which is interesting but less probable, the building from Gross Raden and a similar object from Parchim are reconstructed as enclosures constructed of anthropomorphic planks without roofs (Gabriel 1992), which would resemble the decorative fence around the yard (atrium) of the Grove grove in Vagria, mentioned by Helmod (I, 84). Such a type of yard (this time called vestibulum) is also mentioned in the descriptions of the temples in Arcona and Garz (Saxo Grammaticus, XIV, p. 822-823, 827, 841-842).

In Schuldt's opinion (1985) in the initial phase of the settlement's existence some huts were situated on an island, which is nowadays a part of the...
mainland, but then was connected with it by a bridge. At the beginning of the second stage in that place a small stronghold was built. It was later fortified several times, the entrance was a fortified gate at the south-eastern side. There was a guardhouse on the bridge that led to the gate. The stronghold was not inhabited constantly, which is proved by scarce traces of the culture layer. The interior of the stronghold was not occupied by any buildings, but in the middle of the yard a huge post-hole of one-metre diameter and a substantial heap of stones were found. The yard was encircled by a four-metre-wide row of buildings positioned along the embankment. On the basis of those facts E. Schuldt (1985, p. 211–214) formulated the hypothesis that the object was a temple stronghold with an enormous idol standing in the open air, which took over the function of the cult house from the first phase of the settlement. The stronghold was probably visited by numerous groups of people only during celebrations (which follows from the thick culture layer), but even then the entrance to it was limited, as the guardhouse on the bridge indicates. It is possible that people entered the stronghold only to bring an offering or listen to god’s advice. The name of the village seems to support this supposition. Gross Raden appears in sources for the first time in 1256 as Radim and in 1271 as Magna Radem (Schuldt, 1985, p. 6–7; Kuhnel, 1881, p. 114). Such a name may be a trace of an oracle, as in Radogoče.
predecessors (SSS, vol. 6, 1977, p. 335-336), they must have occupied this territory for a long time. We can assume with high degree of probability that Gross Raden was their main cult centre at the turn of the 10th c. When the excavations were finished, an archaeological open-air museum was opened in the village.

In spite of some rather insignificant reservations concerning the dating of the Gross Raden complex and the division of its history in two phases (e.g. some researchers do not exclude the possibility that the stronghold and the building at the peninsula were contemporary with each other, cf. Herrmann, 1983; Zoll-Adamikova, 1989), it is impossible to overestimate the significance of this discovery. The objection that the complex does not fulfill the category of recurrence, assumed by Makiewicz and Prinke (1981) as a necessary condition for an object to be considered as a place of cult, raised by M. Dulinić and J. Łoźny (1987) was refuted after excavations in Parchim.

Very soon after the discovery in Gross Raden, Horst Keiling (1980; 1982; 1984) found remains of a similar building, unfortunately preserved in a worse condition, near Parchim, which is situated within the area of old Varia settlements as well. Inside a fortified settlement from the 11th-13th c., located in an island in the former (now completely overgrown) Löddig lake, he discovered an outline of a large building with sides orientated towards the four quarters of the world. Its walls, unlike the walls of the older hall from Gross Raden, were constructed of a single row of vertical poles. Also in this case no other constructions, apart from fortifications, intervened between the lake shore and the large building (Beeker, 1991). No traces of any internal division or explicit remains of roof-supporting pillars have been detected. Inside the hall there was a heap of stones, interpreted as remains of an altar, which seems a rather far-fetched conclusion, and two not very distinct post-holes. Movable artifacts were represented by two pottery vessels, pincers for castrating horses, a key and two spearheads. North of the hall a horse skull was found. As in Gross Raden, an oblique path led to the narrow entrance in the western wall.

Some references to the sanctuary upon Löddig-See can be inferred from written sources. The incorporation document of Parchim, which was the capital of one of Mecklenburg dukedoms in the 13th c., issued in 1225/1226 by Henry Borwin, Niklot’s grandson, describes the area of the founded town as “the land devoted to the cult of demons” (MUB, vol. I, 1863, no. 319, p. 311-313). In the 16th c. Mecklenburg erudites even invented a Slavonic god Parchum (Kuhl, 1962, p. 13). We also know the name of the settlement
at Loddig-See. The meadow where the excavations were carried out, called “Schossiner Wiese,” belongs to the village of Neuburg, situated along the field boundary called Scarzyn. This name comes from an abandoned village Scharcyn, mentioned in 1369 (MUB, vol. 16, 1893, no. 9967, p. 435; cf. Becker, 1991, p. 147).

Another type of building has been discovered in Ralswiek in Rügen, south of an early medieval settlement situated on one of the thing adorning islands. The building was probably a log construction divided into two rooms, situated on a platform. The walls were orientated nearly exactly towards the four quarters of the world. In place of that building another, larger one was erected on an extended platform. Both buildings, which existed in the 8th–10th c., are interpreted as cult halls by J. Herrmann (1984, 1993, p. 138). Near the remains ashes of fires burnt at some intervals have been found.

On the other side of the strait that separated Ralswiek from the mainland, exactly opposite the alleged cult hall, there was a beach where archaeologists have found three shipwrecks (the fourth one has been found at some distance), remains of a pole, a horse skull, remnants of broken human skeletons with traces of blows on the skulls, horse and dog bones and ashes. The area is interpreted as a “cult beach” and the finds as oblations (Hefert, 1968, 1973; Herrmann, 1981b). Scandinavian analogies can be quoted here: Thietmar (I, 17) mentions that exactly dogs, horses...
and people were sacrificed in Lejre. East of the “cult beach” there is a huge cemetery situated on hills. Among several hundred barrows, mostly Slavonic, there are also some of Scandinavian character, grouped separately (Warnke, 1981, 1985). One of the finds from the settlement was an eighty-centimetre-long sculpture, or wooden plank, similar to those from Gross Raden, pointed at the base and topped with a picture of human head with well-visible eyes, mouth and teeth. It bears some remains of red, white and black paint (Warnke, 1983, p. 46). This material lends support to
Fig. 33. Feldberg. The location of the Schlossberg stronghold; after the Feldberger Landschaft map, ed. K. Thomas, V. Wittig, Berlin-Leipzig, 1986.
Herrmann's thesis about the cult function of the settlement in Ralswiek, although the full documentation of the excavations has not been published yet.

Ralswiek was at that time an important trade centre, which is proved by the treasure hoard containing three kilograms of silver coins discovered there. The settlement was connected with the nearby stronghold in Rugard, which was one of the biggest towns in the island (Herrmann, 1986, p. 265-266). Later the place did not lose its significance, either. In 1168 it was chosen as the seat of the bishop of Roskild's representative for Rügen (SSS, vol. 4, p. 569).

Let us now come back to the mainland. In the stronghold in Schlossberg near Feldberg, formerly examined by C. Schuchhardt (1926, p. 27-56; Oesten, 1887), who tried to find Radogosz there, in 1967 J. Herrmann (1968, 1969; cf. Engel, 1969) found traces of a building interpreted as a temple. It was situated in a promontory over a 27-metre-high cliff of Breiter Luzin lake, inside the stronghold, but in an area separated from the stronghold by a ditch. It was built along the east-west axis with the walls orientated towards the four quarters of the world. It was a log construction with a small vestibule. Inside there was a fire place. The stronghold and the temple are dated to the 7th-9th c. Feldberg lies in the land occupied at the end of the 10th c. by the tribes belonging to the Lutizian Union, formerly called the Vilizens.

During recently finished excavations in Starigard/Oldenburg remains of three prince halls erected subsequently in the same place were found. The first one, from the 8th/9th c., was sized 20.5 x 7 metres and had a framed construction, like the temple in Wolin. It was divided into several rooms. In the main chamber there was an elongated fire place, similar to those used in Scandinavia. The second hall, from the 9th c., had the measurements 17.5 x 12 m, and its roof was supported by one pillar situated in the middle of a large chamber. The third hall resembles the first one in size (18 x 6.5 m), but it lacks any interior divisions and remains of a fire place. In the 10th c. the area was occupied by a wooden church and a cemetery. When it had been destroyed by the pagan reaction at the turn of the 11th c., on a clay-covered surface sized 2 x 2 m rectangular cobblestones were placed, nearly exactly at the point where the Christian altar had stood. In the middle of the cobblestones there is a substantial post-hole. The layer connected with this object contained many horse skulls and skeleton fragments, some of them surrounded with stones. Following Ingo Gabriel (1988, 1991), who searched in this site, we can suppose that it was a place of cult, initially sheltered by the prince halls, functioning as the home and residence of the ruler and the house of ritual feasts and meetings. When the prince was baptised, a church was founded there. After the reaction a pagan idol was erected in the open air and offerings were made at its feet. Another elongated rectangular house of Scandinavian style was discovered in Mezlin near Anklam (Leciejewicz...
The temple in Wolin, excavated by W. Filipowiak, has been presented above (see ch. 4).

The written sources referring to Lusatia, the area closest to northern Polabia, mention holy springs and groves, but not temples, which served as a motivation for the thesis that temples were not built there at all (Brachmann, 1987). We should not forget, however, that this region was quite early conquered by the Germans. The contrast between the north and the south of Polabia becomes less sharp if we consider the excavations in Tornow. The finds there consisted of a small house from the 7th or early 8th c., situated in a stronghold which was not permanently inhabited, but served the dwellers of a nearby settlement as a refuge. According to J. Herrmann (1963, 1971a) it housed meals shared by the whole community.

In Bohemia, as it has already been mentioned, prince Spitygniev allegedly destroyed "numerous temples of idols" after his baptism. This is not the only reference to temples. The Life of St Wenceslas, written by bishop Gumpold, says that Bohemian nobles gathered to make offerings "to foreign gods in infamous shrines." H. Łomiański (1979, p. 205–206) refutes those records as conventional expressions in which the words "idol" and "temple" were used as synonyms of paganism. He doubts whether the Slavs had any temples outside northern Polabia (Łomiański, 1979, p. 228–234, similarly Palm, 1937, p. 26). Archaeological finds seem to disprove Łomiański's reservations, which, nota bene, have not been shared by all researchers (Hensel, 1987, p. 486, gloss 196). In Bohemia, Moravia and southern Poland several large structures were discovered, which are hesitantly interpreted as "buildings of special function," or as places where princes feasted with their warriors. Some historians point out that the thesis that they were used for feasts does not exclude the assumption about their religious character (Abramowicz, 1962, p. 48). If this line of reasoning is followed, the buildings can be viewed as cult halls.

When Bohemia was under the influence of Great Moravia, in a Bohemian village Stara Kouřim there was a formidable stronghold of Zlíčans trib (SSS, vol. 5, p. 381–384, vol. 7, p. 142). Apart from remains of fortifications, traces of a large hall-type building have been found there. This really substantial construction was 89 metres long and not divided into any smaller parts. Miloš Šolle (1966, p. 109–120), who explored the building, regards it as a house where the prince and his retinue met, similar to Germanic and Slavonic feast halls. W. Hensel (1987, p. 486) expresses the view that it was used for cult purposes. Both theses may be correct; the magnificent building from Stara Kouřim was probably a cult hall. It was situated at the axis...
Fig. 38. Starigard (Oldenburg). The hall building from the first quarter of the 9th c. 1 - post-holes; 2 - the presumed location of destroyed post-holes; 3 - preserved beams; 4 - the presumed arrangement of the walls; 5 - an elongated fire-place; 6 - a stove; 7 - a hollow. After I. Gabriel, 1988, p. 75.

Fig. 39. Starigard (Oldenburg). The sanctuary erected after the destruction of the church in the place of older hall buildings around 1000. 1, 2 - the presumed arrangement of the walls of houses; 3 - a stove; 4 - a wood-paved road; 5 - a stone block with a post-hole; 6 - horse skulls and bones; 7 - the same in stone circles. After I. Gabriel, 1988, p. 78.
of the main gate of the stronghold, along the internal embankment. East of the hall there was a pond, in the late Middle Ages called “the Lake of Lubuša,” as it was recorded in 1549. There used to be a spring in it. It was artificially enlarged to the size of 40 × 70 metres and had solidified shore on which traces of fire places were found. The pond was separated from the rest of the stronghold with an embankment. Along the north-eastern shore there was a large rich burial ground (Solík, 1966, p. 136–146).

There is also a doubtful find in Mikulčice in Moravia. Zdeněk Klanica (1985) discovered remains of a wooden object built of vertically arranged pales on the hill called Klaštefisko upon the river Morava, 400 metres from

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![Diagram](image_url)
one of Great-Moravian churches. It is not certain whether it had a roof. In its eastern part three horse skeletons were found. The relic is surrounded by a cemetery. Graves from the 9th c. remain outside its outline, but those from the early 10th c. appear both outside and inside it, which allows to date the building to the 9th c. In that time, however, Christianity thrived in Great Moravia. In Mikulčice foundations of churches from the 9th c. were excavated as well, which raises the question whether the building from Klašteřisko, probably pagan, as the buried horse skeletons suggest, was contemporary to them.

Two other examples come from southern Poland. In Chodlik near Sandomierz, during excavations in a large stronghold situated to the east of the old river-bed of the Vistula and to the west of its tributary, Chodelka, remains of a building dated to the 7th–9th c. were found. The construction had been erected in the south-eastern part of the stronghold, between two embankments, with the axis orientated to the north-east. It was divided into two parts: the larger one at the north-eastern side was rectangular, while the south-western one was curved as an apse. At the southern side of the building there was a shallow adjoining hollow. According to Aleksander Gardawski (1970, p. 49, 57–61), the discoverer, the thesis that it was a nine-century Christian church is not sufficiently motivated, as there are no traces of a cemetery around it. Gardawski qualified the mysterious structure as “a special building” and did not exclude the possibility that it had been a pagan temple. A similar outline of a building was discovered in Ljarskógar in Iceland in the 19th c. and is interpreted as a hof (Haraldsson, 1992, p. 73). In the late 30s Roman Jakimowicz (1938, 1939) excavated an outline of a building situated in a stronghold in Lubomia in Silesia. It was a post-and-lintel construction 20 m long and only 3 m wide. Its eastern, entrance part was set deep in the ground, gradually reaching the level of 50 cm below the surface towards the centre of the building. In the central part clay benches were situated along the walls, occupying about 10 metres of its length. The western part was much shallower. The building had been used for a long time, which is proved by traces of repairing, although relatively few remains typical for dwelling houses were found there. Jakimowicz hesitated whether to classify the building from Lubomia as a house where warriors met, or a temple or better a cult hall. He rightly remarked that these two functions are not mutually exclusive, and such an interpretation is most convincing.
The building from Chodlik may be ascribed to the tribe of Lendzans or Vislaniens, while the one from Lubomnia to the Gołęszycy tribe. No objects of that type have been attested in central Poland, which was the core of Piasts' state.

Information about Ruthenian temples is limited to the mention about shrines destroyed by Vladimir which does not refer to any concrete location, and a vague mention about "Turova bozhnisa" in Kiev (Ipatievskaya letopis, year 1146; cf. Rożniewski, 1901, p. 473). Several cases of constructions interpreted as pagan temples have been discovered in Ruthenia, but the finds are not properly documented (Timoshchuk, Rusanova, 1983, p. 165–172; 1984; 1986; 1988; Rusanova, 1986; 1992; Rybakov, 1987, p. 224–230, 250–251). In the territories of Southern Slavs no traces of temples have been found. The alleged remains of a shrine in Ptuj in Slovenia are not convincing, as they have been identified as a cult building by analogy to a plan of Arcona based on Schuchhardt's error (Korosec, 1948; cf. Gieysztor, 1982, p. 174; SSS, vol. 4, p. 418).

The catalogue of finds is constantly supplemented with new objects. In Spandau, a part of Berlin, Adriaan von Müller (1986, p. 280–286) excavated a small building erected in a depression between a stronghold and a settlement at the point where the Spree joins the Havel. It was built of wattle supported by poles. At its eastern wall a spearhead thrust into the ground, and at the south-western corner a figure of duck was found. According to the archaeologist, who did not present any documentation of the excavations, there was a sacrificial place inside. The building, dated to the mid 10th c., was destroyed, and substituted by a small wooden church around 980.

The remnants of a supposed cult building from Góra Chelmska (Golenberg) near Koszalin (Janocha, 1974, p. 130–147; 1988) are too minute to be studied seriously, while interpreting the traces of a stone construction discovered there as remains of a pagan temple seems a misconception (V. Schmidt, 1993, p. 56–59). Most probably they are remnants of the Christian chapel that existed there. The alleged cult buildings from Hanfwerder and Usadel have been discussed above. Some interesting material is contained in the recently published (Filipowiak, 1993, p. 42–44) documentation of amateur excavations carried out in 1934 in Trzebawie (central Pomerania), which revealed a stone outline of a building sized 10 x 11 metres with traces of some construction inside. It was situated in a stronghold on a Woświn Lake peninsula. The object is interpreted as a temple. The pottery found there dates from the 10th–15th c. Certainly, the site should be reexamined in order to confirm the claim about the cult function of the building. It seems to have been a log construction, and that type of construction have not been attested among Slavonic sacred buildings, which were usually palisade or framework constructions, leaving archaeologically detectable traces. The latter types were used in the Scandinavian architecture of the relevant period (Ruszczycy, 1993), and known very well to the Slavs (Schuldt, 1988, p. 102–110).
6. Under the open sky

The holy space contains the *sacrum*. As M. Eliade (1966, p. 363–368) wrote: "A fence signifies the constant presence of hierophany or cratophany in the enclosed space, moreover it is supposed to protect an initiated person (a profane) from the danger that might impend him if he carelessly crossed the border." A sanctuary is an organized space, separated from a surrounding sphere of secular chaos, constituting, like a house or a town, *imago mundi*. There are different ways of separating a place of cult from the surroundings.

Temples, although their aim was to confine the divine power within a special structure, were sometimes additionally enclosed in an appropriate fence, like the temple in Arcona, or the shrine of Rugevit in Garz. Sometimes a whole stronghold was meant to serve cult purposes, as both military and magic protection, which is visible from the example of Radogoč. Perhaps it will be possible to consider the so-called *gorodishcha-svatylishcha* (strongholds-shrines), identified by Russian archaeologists (Rusanova, 1992, p. 58, Timoshchuk 1993), as traces of that type of stronghold, if the relevant finds are seriously documented.

Slavonic open-air sanctuaries were yards and circles marked out in various ways, often with statues or other symbols of gods, groves, which are separated by fences from their environment and usually sheltering no statues, and hills, surrounded sometimes with low embankments. In the case of sacrosanct water it is more difficult to specify the rules of delimiting the sacred space. Cult circles and yards were marked out in places regarded as predetermined for religious functions by their creators, but in this case the form of enclosure of the sacred space may have reflected their beliefs concerning the ideal shape of such a place more explicitly than enclosures of hills and groves. The perfect models were a square (or rectangle) and a circle.

Let us start with some analogies. The square as the ideal model of enclosed space appears in the myth about the foundation of Rome, which is originally *Roma quadrata* (Czarnowski, 1956, vol. 3, p. 232–233; Eliade, 1966, p. 368). We know a type of open-air Celtic sanctuary, called "square earthworks" – *Viereckshanzens* (K. Schwartz, 1958; Schlette, 1987, p. 137–140). A very interesting specimen of the type was discovered in Czech Libence (Rybova, Soudsky, 1962). From Scandinavian examples we should mention a Danish village Gudhagen (which means "gods' grove"), where the sacred space was a square sized 48 × 48 metres with stone-lined entrance (Ström, 1975, p. 226). It seems, however, that the circle was a more common motive. We should mention here the sanctuary of Germanic Hermundurs from Oberdorla, where Günther Behm-Blancke (1973, p. 144–148) discovered a circle surrounding wooden poles (possibly representing gods) and a quadrangular altar. The finds included remains of human and animal sacrifices. Old Scandinavians called such sanctuaries *stafrgardr*, which meant an enclosed yard (gardr) on which a wooden pole representing a deity *(stafr)* was situated. The latter was often a statue, as the word *stafr* soon acquired the meaning of god's effigy (de Vries, 1956–1957, vol. I, p. 374–375; Ström, 1975, p. 215–217). As for Slavonic names, Ruthenian chronicles noted the words *trebishtche* and *kapishhtche*. The former means a place where offering were made *(treba* = offering, recorded in 785 in the Paderborn capitulary and was probably known also outside Ruthenia (Hilarion, 1963, p. 165; Gieysztor, 1982, p. 183; Brückner, 1985a, p. 58; E. Herrmann, 1986, p. 96). The etymology of the latter is not clear, but supposedly it refers to a cult place where a god's effigy stands (Vasmer, 1953–1958, vol. I, p. 522; Gieysztor, 1982, p. 183).

The best description of a sanctuary of that type comes from Ahmad ibn Fadlan. He was probably a Greek converted to islam, one of the envoys sent by caliph al-Muktadir to the king of the Volga-Bulgarians, Almiš. Along with other acute and reliable observations his relation contains a description of the sanctuary of the Varangians (ar-Rus) upon the Volga. It was situated at the estuary of the Melenka river, near a huge market place several kilometres from the residence of the king of Bulgarians. When ships owned by Ruthenians came to the harbour, "each of them descended [the land], carrying bread, meat, onion, milk and *nabid* (alcoholic beverage), and went towards a high pole which is set in the ground and has got a human-like face, around which there are small figures and high poles at the back, [also] set in the ground. Then [the Varangian] comes to the large figure, bows to it and says: 'O, Lord, here I have arrived from a faraway land, I have got slaves, such and such amount, sable skins, such and such amount', until he enumerates all the commodities he has brought with him, 'and I have come to you with this gift.' And he places what he has brought at the foot of the pole. (...) If his sales are poor and he has to stay for a long time, he returns [to the idol] with gifts for the second and third time. (...) He brings a gift to each of the small figures, asks them for help and says: 'These are our Lord's wives, his sons and daughters.' And he keeps asking the figures one after another, humbly pleading for their favours. Sometimes it happens that his trade improves [later] and he sells everything. Then he says: 'My Lord fulfilled my wish, so I must reward Him.' He takes some sheep or cows and kills them. He distributes some of the meet and takes the rest to put it between the large wood [i.e. the wooden statue] and the small ones standing around it. And he hangs the heads of the cows or sheep on the pole set in the ground" (Ibn Fadlan, 208a, 210b, 1985, p. 106, 110).
Ibn Fadlan's relation concerns the Varangians, but archaeological traces of sanctuaries of the type described in it (a large statue of a deity surrounded by smaller idols) have been found also in Slavonic territories. Researchers have also some written source sat their disposal, but none of them contains such a detailed description of the cult practiced in sanctuaries of that type. Ibn Fadlan described the main statue and the lesser idols very comprehensively. It is not very clear how they were fenced, but a mention about “high pales” outside the circle of small figures may mean that the sanctuary was surrounded with high sticks.

Further information about the methods of separating the sacred space is supplied by sagas. In Scandinavia the place of counselling assembly and adjudication was usually separated from the world of profanum, just like the sanctuary. According to Egil’s saga (ch. 56): “the place of adjudication was situated on a flat area surrounded with hazel-tree branches. Moreover, there was a circle marked out with ropes, which was called the border of peace. In that circle the judges sat...” The fact that the judge’s seat was surrounded with lines is also mentioned in the Icelandic Law Code Gragas (72). It is a very old tradition, as the Frank law recorded in Lex Riburaria demanded that oaths were sworn in a circle surrounded with hazel-wood sticks (de Vries, 1956–1957, vol. I, p. 374). Another fenced place was a yard where holmgang, trial by ordeal, was organized (Poetic Edda, Helga vísó Hjorvarðasonar, prose before stanza 35; Kormak’s saga, ch. 10). The place of thing (counselling assembly) and adjudication was also the place of religious offerings. The main character of the aforementioned Egil’s saga (ch. 64–65) brought a case against Atli to Gula-Thing, and it was decided by a holmgang. Before the ordeal “they brought an old, enormous bull, which was to be sacrificed to gods. The winner was supposed to kill it. Sometimes only one animal was brought, sometimes each of the duelers ordered to bring his own beast.” After the victory Egil “instantly ran to the place where the sacrificial bull stood. He seized its snout with one hand, its horn with the other and threw it to the ground in such a way that the legs stuck out upwards and the neck was broken.”

Archaeological excavations carried out by P. N. Tretiakov and E. A. Shmidt (1963) in the Smolensk region, which in the early Middle Ages was probably inhabited by the Eastern Balts, resulted in finding three temple strongholds dated to the 6th–8th century. They were situated in villages Tushemla, Prudki and Gorodok. The stronghold in Tushemla, which was examined most thoroughly, occupied a high headland over a river that surrounded it from the west. In the earlier stage of its development there was a circular sanctuary in its northern part. The central point of the sanctuary was a large column and several smaller poles. Remains of the poles lay within a ditch forming a circle of six-metre diameter, which was – as the analogies from Gorodok and Prudki allow to conclude – a remnant of a palisade formed of half-pales set very densely with the convex side directed to the inside of the circle.
In the later stage a similar sanctuary surrounded with a palisade was located in the western part of the stronghold. Also in this case the middle of the shrine was occupied by an idol, accompanied by smaller poles or sticks. The palisade had a narrow gap which formed the entrance to the sanctuary. The circle of houses arranged densely around the central yard of the stronghold was discontinuous only at one point, near the sanctuary, so that it was possible to see the river flowing below through it. In all the three strongholds, in Tushemla, Gorodok and Frudki, the central point of the circle was a post-hole which was probably a remnant of an image of a deity. The surrounding sticks were interpreted as effigies of lesser gods, which is questionable. They might have been used for impaling heads of sacrificed animals as well. In Gorodok a bear head was found within the circle. Cutting the heads of sacrificed animals is well documented by sources concerning the Balts (A. Brückner, 1984, p. 82). The circular palisades around the sanctuaries were formed of pales set so densely that their reconstruction as free-standing idols by Tretiakov and Shmidt seems unconvincing. Less remote analogues may be the circles in Khodosovitcha and Breclav-Pohansko, and perhaps the decorated walls of the temple in Gross Raden. According to K. Godłowski (1977, p. 15, 22) the peoples of the Koltchin-Tushemla culture contributed towards the emergence of Slavonic culture.

Germanic and Baltic tribes, as well as Ugro-Finnish people, as an example of an analogical shrine described by Rozenfeldt (1967) indicates, created open-air sanctuaries based on similar schemes. The common idea was placing in the centre a pole, statue or fireplace, accompanied by lesser idols or sticks for impaling the heads of sacrificed animals. The existence of altars is much worse documented. The sanctuaries were surrounded with embankments, ditches, or solid palisades, which left traces explicit for archaeologists, or with hazel-wood sticks or ropes, whose remnants are rather transitory. The fence was usually built on circular or oval plan, but examples of quadrangles have also been recorded.

There is a text thanks to which these ideal motives can be traced in Slavonic mythology. Ibrahim ibn Jacob (MPHsm, vol. I, 1946, p. 43–45) recorded that in order to found a stronghold the [Polabian] Slavs “go [intentionally] to meadows with plenty of water and greenery and mark out a circular or square line, depending on the shape and area of the intended stronghold, and then they dig [a ditch] around and pile the excavated soil...” Although this relation concerns strongholds, we can assume that sanctuaries were built in the same way. In both cases a religiously significant act of copying the perfect cosmic model took place.

Sacrosanct groves and hills were to a greater extent predestined to be worshiped in their natural shape, nevertheless they were usually separated from the world of profanum with some constructions. Ethnographic research concerning the Votičaks and Cheremis peoples, whose culture had been influenced by their Slavonic neighbours, shows that their holy groves usually
grew in places elevated over the surroundings and – except of the largest ones – were fenced (Moszyński, 1968, vol. 2/1, p. 251–252). Slavonic holy mountains were encircled with impressive embankments, although as the sources often stress, they had been chosen as signs of sacrum because of their nature and they would not seem to need any man-built statues, altars or constructions, just like sacred waters, stones or trees. Tacitus (Germania, 9) explicitly said about the Germans that “regarding any confinement of gods within walls and representing them in the human shape as shameful, they devote groves and oak forests to them.” Such sanctuaries had no temples or statues, just like the Slavonic grove of god Prove. Nevertheless, groves, mountains, trees, stones and waters were attributed their religious significance by people, which was reflected mainly in various ways in which they were singled out from the world of profanum. Each sanctuary should have at least a yard for gatherings, moreover, we cannot decisively exclude the possibility that inside or near the “natural” sanctuaries statues, poles, altars, fire-places or even roofed buildings stood. Lucian described a Celtic sacred grove near Marseilles, in which there were altars and sculptured effigies of gods (Gąsowski, 1979, p. 133). According to Tacitus (Annales, I, 61), during a campaign undertaken to revenge Verus’s defeat, Germanicus found in Teutoburg Forest altars of the Cherusks situated on a glade.

Roman centurions and tribunes were sacrificed on the altars.

All the Slavonic temples and cult halls mentioned in the previous chapters constituted integral parts of strongholds, towns or important settlements. The location of open-air sanctuaries seem to have followed another pattern. We have no motivation to claim that they preceded temples, as all the sources at out disposal date from the same epoch and show very clearly that in the Middle Ages all the types of cult places coexisted in Slavonic culture. We are not entitled to conclude that groves, mountains, etc., as more primitive forms of sanctuaries had lower rank that temples or circles with statues, if they sometimes enjoyed the status of main tribal sanctuaries.

Only a few cult circles of Western Slavs are mentioned in written sources. Ebo’s text (III, 1), quoted above, refers to some idols standing in the open air in Wolin. We can speculate about another sanctuary in Rügen. In abbot Herbert’s Book of Wonders, written around 1180 in Clairvaux, there is an outstanding series of Danish and Slavonic tales. One of them supposedly describes Arcona, another, entitled “How the demon of evil tried to revenge the insult of his burnt and broken statue,” most probably regards Rügen as well (Szacherska, 1968, p. 80–88). The text brings a description of an open-air sanctuary in which the object of cult was “an enormous statue made of wood and covered with tar on the surface, which stood like a beam set near a tree trunk.” Pagans from a nearby village came there “to pray to it secretly or even to bring oblations.” Two young Christians who found the place (one of the versions specifies it as a grove) by chance, inflamed with “religious ardour (...) broke the cursed statue into pieces and having set fire to it turned it into embers and ashes,” for which one of them was severely punished by the demon (Herberti Thuringiæ... De miraculis libri tres, PLat., 1897, vol. 185, p. 1381; Palm, 1937, p. 44; Szacherska, 1968, p. 80–88). The tar protected the statue from decay, but it also allowed to paint it, while, if the legend is reliable, it remained “sooty and black.” Helmold (I, 52) recorded that Polabian Slavs worshiped Zernoboch (The Black-God). Also in Rügen a deity corresponding to Herbert’s description was worshiped. It was Tjarnoglofi, i.e. The Black-Headed, listed in Knýtlingasaga (ch. 122) among the idols destroyed by king Valdemar and Absalon in Rügen. The saga says that he was “their god of victory, their companion in wars. He had silver moustache. He survived for the longest time, but in the third year after it [i.e. after 1168] they were defeated as well.”

The hypothesis that Herbert and Knýtlingasaga refer to the same sanctuary is very tempting. A. Haas (1918, p. 35–39) localized the shrine of The Black-Headed in the stronghold of Herthaburg, situated near Herthasee lake. These two names are artificial and until the mid 19th c. the lake was called the Black Pond (Schartzwee).

Several other sanctuaries have been excavated. Near Trzebiatów (Trep- tow), 300 metres to the south-east from the Rega river, there is a low hill called David’s Mount (Dawidsberg) situated in a morass area. In the 30s J. Malotki, custodian of the local museum, organized excavations there. Their results were published by W. Filipowiak in 1957. The two oval structures found in the area were interpreted as Slavonic cult circles from the 9th/10th c. The first, sized 10 × 13 metres, was surrounded with a ditch containing some burnt clay, charcoal and fragments of pottery. The middle of the circle was occupied by two fire-places, and in its southern part remnants of three poles were found. Further three pairs of poles stood outside the circle. The other structure lay 65 metres from the first one. It was also an oval ditch, sized 8 × 10 m. with the longer axis orientated to the north, just like in the case of the first one. Apart from charcoal, bones and pottery, a silver coin of Antoninus Pius was found in it. In the middle of the circle there was a fire-place. Three big hollows, possibly left by poles, adjoined the outside of the ditch. Other finds from the area close to the circles include two hollows filled with Slavonic pottery, remnants of poles, a skeleton and five fire-places which remained uninterpreted. The stronghold which might have been connected with the sanctuary upon the Rega was incorporated in the town of Trzebiatów, mentioned as early as in 1208 as a local centre. In Białoboki (Belbuck), situated one kilometer from Trzebiatów, in the late 12th c. – the exact date is disputable – a monastery of Premonstratensian order was founded. According to a late, eighteenth-century record, in spite of an attempt at introducing the German name Peters Burg, the settlement retained its native name, derived “from Belbog, a Pomeranian idol, a god of white colour symbolizing the good.” The mention comes from the history of the Premonstratensians written by...
their chronicler Hugo (PUB, vol. 1, part 1, 1868, commentary to no. 146, p. 112–114), who might have known some motives from the local tradition. Unfortunately, the archives of the monastery were burnt in the 16th c. The name of Trzebiatów may come from the word *treba* (offering).

Two other cult circles resemble the so-called muddy strongholds built by Eastern Slavs. The circle situated upon a sloping shore of Parsteiner lake has the diameter of 25 m and is surrounded by a shallow ditch. 100 metres east of it are ruins of Mariensee monastery, founded in 1258. The fact that the monastery was located there constitutes an argument for treating the circle as a pagan sanctuary, but the circle has never been explored (Herrmann, 1971, p. 527–529; Escher, 1981, p. 132). The circle in Saaringen, which is smaller and preserved in a worse condition, has a similar outline (Herrmann, 1971, p. 527–529). It is situated at the edge of a large area covered with barrows, which arises suspicion that it is just a remnant of one of them.


Stanisław Jasnosz (1970) discovered a slightly different object near Gorzycko. There is some information that in the 19th c. wooden poles were found there on an island at the narrow junction of three lakes, but contemporary exploration did not confirm it. It was discovered, however, that a cape of the island had been artificially levelled and surrounded by a ditch that formed a nearly rectangular yard sized 30 × 40 metres. It lacks any
culture layer, which, according to the archaeologist, points to the cult function of the structure. This supposition can be confirmed or falsified only by further excavations.

At the town of Břeclav in Moravia, near the point where the contemporary borders of the Czech state, Slovakia and Austria meet, a Great-Moravian stronghold of a significant name Pohansko (a pagan place) was discovered and explored in the 60s. The stronghold occupied a substantial hill encircled in meanders of the Dyja river. The relevant find was located to the north-east of the apse of a Great-Moravian church, and consisted of eight hollows symmetrically surrounding the ninth one. They were accompanied by a C-shaped ditch. As this relatively small object (3 x 2.5 m) lay over one of the graves belonging to the Great-Moravian cemetery, we can conclude that it was constructed after the fall of Great Moravia. Bohuslav Dostal (1975, p. 104-110) interprets the hollows as traces of idols. The surrounding ditch may be a remnant of a palisade, as similar constructions, though forming full circles, appeared in Tuhemla. Another Czech discovery comes from Hradisko u Mšena, but attempts at classifying it as a sanctuary are unconvincing (Solle, 1977, p. 358-361).

The next object of that type was found on Tumskie Hill in Plock, 50 metres above the level of the Vistula, by Włodzimierz Szafranski (1983). It consisted of remnants of five fire-places located at the bottoms of circular hollows forming a triangle, with the sixth, deeper, stone-paved hollow situated aside. Near the central fire-place, reaching furthest to the north, a small stone block and traces of a pole were found. According to W. Szafranski, the layer containing these finds was the oldest in the whole site. Only after its destruction was the Piast stronghold, which soon became the capital of the district, founded.

Quite recently remains of another Mazovian sanctuary were discovered on Gaik hill in Radzikowo Stare near Czerwińsk by Iwona Dąbrowska (1988). Only introductory publications concerning the results of the excavations carried out there are available at the moment. Remnants of alleged sanctuaries from Wyszogród (Gierlach, 1980, p. 123-125) and Wrocław (Ostrowska, 1961, p. 185-189) are highly controversial. In the very heart of the Piast state, in Gniezno, traces of a quadrangular fire-place with some bones and pottery were found (Mikołajczyk, Sikorska, 1964, p. 180-181), which, however, is not a sufficient proof that Gniezno had housed a pagan sanctuary.

Further examples of open-air sanctuaries of that type come from Ruthenian territories and seem much more exciting than those presented so far.
7. Ruthenian sanctuaries

Primary Russian Chronicle (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 9) recorded the following myth about the origins of Kiev: "There were three brothers: one was called Kiy, the other Shchek and the third Khoriv, and their sister was called Lybedz. Kiy sat at the mountain where now the Borychevsky entrance is situated, Shchek at the mountain now called Shchekovitsa, and Khoriv at another mountain, named Khorivitsa after him. And they founded a stronghold in the name of their eldest brother and named it Kiev (...). They were wise and cautious men, they were called Polanians, after them the Polanians have lived in Kiev until today." The original version of Primary Chronicle, preserved in the First Novgorod Chronicle, contained a further fragment: "they were pagans, they made offerings to lakes, springs and forests, like other pagans." The stronghold of Kiy, the mythical father of Ruthenian Polanians, appears in the myth as the centre of their domain. It is confirmed by another legend from Primary Chronicle, concerning Apostle Andrew, who allegedly erected a cross on the Kiev Mountain.

The text of the chronicle is set in a cultural context. The described place functioned as a sanctuary, as exactly over the entrance mentioned in the legend, Perun's shrine was situated. Primary Chronicle first refers to it under the year 945, but the narrated events happened a year earlier, when prince Igor Rurikovich, having accepted a ransom, concluded a peace treaty with the Byzantine emperor. The text of the treaty, included into the chronicle, had been negotiated by Ruthenian envoys in Constantinople. The treaty was ratified in Kiev in the presence of the Emperor's representatives (SSS, vol. 6, p. 130–135). On the day after their arrival, "Igor summoned the envoys and went to the hill where Perun stood, and they put their weapons there, their shields and gold, and Igor and his people—as many pagan Ruthenians as there were—swore the peace, while the Christians swore in St Elijah church, which is upon the stream... (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 54). The act of swearing is illustrated on a miniature from the fifteenth-century Radzivilovskaya letopis (1902, 26v, cf. 16r, 45r), in which Perun is shown with a lightning in his hand (Khrenetsov, 1981). The text seems reliable, in spite of the doubts expressed by some researchers. The oath was included in the text of the treaty, copied to the chronicle probably from the Greek original.
The next mention about the Kiev sanctuary in *Primary Chronicle* comes from the year 980, when Vladimir the Great, having conquered Kiev and assumed the supreme power in Ruthenia, erected new idols. This act is interpreted as an attempt at reforming the pagan religion of Ruthenia by a specific codification of the pantheon (Giewysztor, 1982, p. 56-58; Rybakov, 1987, p. 412-454; differently Lomianiska, 1979, p. 119). The chronicle reads: "Vladimir began to rule in Kiev alone, and on the hill" behind the manor he "set up idols: the wooden Perun with a silver head and golden moustache, Khors, Daßog and Sritug, and Simargl and Mokoș. And they made sacrifices to them, calling them gods and led their sons and daughters to sacrifice to the devils and they defiled the soil with their offerings. And the Russian land, and the hill, were defiled with blood. But the most gracious God did not want the sinners to die. In the same place there is St Vasily's church now, of which we shall later speak." (PSRL, vol. I, 1926, p. 76).

Human sacrifices are more explicitly described in *Primary Chronicle* under the year 983 in connection with the martyrdom of two Varangians. After a victorious campaign against the Jatvings, Vladimir "with his people made offerings to the idols. And the elders and boyars said: 'Let us cast lots for a youth and a maiden, the one who will be chosen will be killed for the glory of gods'. There was a certain Varangian, whose house stood where now the church of the Holy Mother of God, built [later] by Vladimir, stands. This Varangian had come from among the Greeks and retained Christian faith. And he had a son of beautiful face and soul, this one was chosen by lot, because of devilish malice. Because the cursed devil hated him (...) and tried to destroy him, and incited the people. And they, sent by the devil, came and said: 'Your son has been chosen by the gods, so we want to sacrifice him'. And the Varangian said: 'These are not gods but wood, now it is here and tomorrow it will rot; they do not eat or drink or speak, but have been made of wood by humans. (...) I shall not give my son to the demons'. And they went away and repeated it to the people. And those took their weapons, attacked him and destroyed his manor. And nobody knows where they were buried. Because these were unenlightened people and pagans. The devil rejoiced in this, ignorant of his end that was so close." (PSRL, vol. I, 1926, p. 82-83).

Several years later, in 988, Vladimir, according to the chronicle, was baptized in Korsun. When he came back to Kiev, "he ordered to pull down the idols: some were cut into pieces, some burnt. And he ordered to tie Perun to a horse's tail and drag him from the mountain through Borychevo to the Stream; twelve men were ordered to beat him with sticks, not because the wood could feel it, but to deride the demon who had been defiling the people with this image (...). When he was being dragged through the Stream to the Dnepr, the unfaithful people cried over him, because they had not received the holy baptism yet. And having dragged him [to the shore], they threw him to the Dnepr. And Vladimir sent people, telling them: 'If he comes ashore anywhere push him away, until he passes the rapids, and then leave him alone'. And they fulfilled his orders. When they let him go and it passed the rapids, the wind threw him to a sandbank, since then called Perun Sandbank." In place of the sanctuary Vladimir "built the church of St Vasily on the hill where the idol Perun and others had stood, where the prince and the people used to make sacrifices" (PSRL, vol. I, 1926, p. 116-118).

Both sanctuaries, the older one mentioned in 945, and the new one, founded in 980, were situated on the Kiev Mountain, at the western bank of the Dnepr. The second one was later substituted by St Vasily's Orthodox church. Interestingly enough, the chronicle stresses that the new place of cult was built outside the manor. E.V. Anichkov (1914, p. 308-328) tried to find a deep motivation for this event in Vladimir's religious reform; in his opinion it meant that the religion practiced by the prince and his suite became the official religion of Ruthenia when the cult centre had been moved outside the prince's residence. If we accept this hypothesis, we should assume that the first sanctuary had lain in the immediate surroundings of the prince's seat. According to *Primary Chronicle*, however, Igor, in order to swear the oath, "went with the Emperor's envoys to the hill," certainly from his residence, so in 944 the statue of Perun did not stand within its area.

Thus, we have to search for an alternative explanation of the puzzling detail. According to *Saga Olaf's Konungs Tryggvasonar* written by the monk Gunnaug (ch. 57), Olaf visited Prince Vladimir's court in Kiev. If this piece of information, drawn from the oral tradition two and a half century later, is true, it may have happened only between 980 and 988. The *Saga* records that Vladimir was so enchanted by the young Olaf, who had already become a Christian, that he treated him as his own son. The only source of disagreement was religion: "There was only one thing which the konung [Vladimir] did not like about him [Olaf], he never wanted to worship the statues of pagan gods, he was always reluctant about all kinds of sacrifices; he always accompanied the konung when he went to the hof, but never entered it with him and he stayed in the yard as long as the konung was engaged in sacrifices." Vladimir admonished Olaf not to draw gods' ire on himself, but Olaf openly questioned their existence and tried to propagate Christianity.

The tradition concerning Olaf's visit in Kiev, and especially the mention about his missionary attempts, do not appear reliable, if around 983 the two Varangians died as martyrs there. On the other hand, the Scandinavians were in very close relations with Ruthenia and must have had good information about this country, so not all the details from the *Saga* should be considered fantasies. The idols and sacrifices in the Kiev sanctuary, mentioned by Gunnaug, are known also from *Primary Chronicle*. A question arises, however, what was the hof in which Vladimir made offerings. It may
be interpreted as a place where idols stood under the open sky, as in Scandinavian sources *hof* sometimes refers to an open-air shrine. On the other hand, the mention about the yard of the *hof* may point to a cult hall.

Obviously, the sacrifices took place *sub iove*. Gunnlaug claimed, however, that Olaf had deprecated various kinds of offering practices common in Kiev. One of them was simply carnal. Trying to fight paganism in Norway, Olaf Tryggvason introduced “the holiday carnival during Christmas and Easter, light beer on St John’s [day], and the autumn carnival on St Michael’s [day],” which replaced the respective pagan ceremonies (Ström, 1975, p. 228–234). Ritual carnivals took place in cult halls, called *hof*. Analogical motives may be traced in the words ascribed to Vladimir by *Primary Chronicle* (year 986): “For the Ruthenians drinking is merrymaking, we cannot exist without it.” The custom did not change after Christianization: Vladimir “ordered to make a feast in the hall of his palace every Sunday, and he ordered boyars, courtiers, officers and distinguished men to come – in the presence of the prince or without him. There was much cattle meat and game there, there was plenty of everything...,” obviously including beverages (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 125–126). The tradition of pagan feasts organized by the prince, connected with the topos of king-the-feeder, was superficially adapted to Christian norms (Banaszkiewicz, 1986, p. 55–56; Sielicki, 1968, p. 55–56). During the banquets the prince, who “loved his suite, deliberated with them over the organization of the state, over wars and country laws” (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 126), which resembles Herbord’s information about the meetings of nobles in the Szczecin temples. Thus, Vladimir’s pagan court may have had a cult hall, similar to the Scandinavian *hof* and the Szczecin temples, where all persons of some importance met and feasted. No traces of *hofs* have been found so far, but Ibn Fadlan’s mention (210a) about huge houses erected by Varangian merchants upon the Volga and remains of such a construction from the end of the 9th c., discovered in Staraya Ladoga, sized 17.4 x 10 m, (Kirkpinchikov, 1988, p. 318–319), support the thesis about the possibility of their existence. The *Primary Chronicle* information about Vladimir erecting the idols outside his manor may mean that they were situated not at the same place as *hof* – the hall belonging to the prince’s residence and other sacred objects connected with it.

All mentions concerning the Kiev sanctuary of Perun agree that it was located on a hill. Hence, we can assume that they refer to the same area, namely the place where in 944 Igor swore the oath, and in 980 Vladimir erected new statues, pulled down eight years later after his baptism to make room for St Vasily’s church. The information about the church seems to provide a key to identifying the location. The only object to which it may refer is the Orthodox church of St Vasily, called also *Trekhsvyatitelskaya*, as two other saints, George and John Chryzostomos, were adored there. It is mentioned by *Ipatievskaya letopis* (PSRL, vol. 2, 1908, p. 634) under the year 1183, as founded then by prince Sviatoslav Vsevolodovich at the
“Great Manor.” The church survived until 1936, when it was pulled down (Karger, 1958–1961, vol. 2, p. 456, 460). It lay within the stronghold from Vladimir’s times, and, furthermore, over Borychevo. According to the chronicle, in 988 Vladimir ordered to draw the statue of Perun “from the mountain through Borychevo.” The information about the building of the church in 1183 suggests that it replaced an earlier temple, mentioned in Primary Chronicle in connection with the Christianization of Kiev. Although B.A. Rybakov (1987, p. 426–427) regards the fragment about St Vasiliy’s church from 988 as an interpolation, the chronicle seems reliable at this point. Vladimir was baptized Basil, i.e. Vasiliy, (SSS, vol. 6, p. 532), therefore the erection of a church under such an invocation in the place of the sanctuary of Perun, the former “patron” of the prince and his country, seems very probable. In the Kiev tradition the Vasilevsko-Trekhsvyatitelskaya church was always regarded as built in Vladimir’s times (Karger, 1958–1961, vol. 2, p. 454). Thus, the traces of Peron’s shrine might have been removed during the construction of the church.

Some Ukrainian archaeologists have recently tried to identify as Vladimir’s sanctuary a mysterious object discovered in 1975 at Vladiimorskaya Street at another point of the Kiev Mountain, which is not entirely convincing. Their hypothesis is contradicted not only by the written sources and tradition, but also by the excavation results themselves, as the supposed sanctuary was allegedly constructed of bricks, taken from a destroyed church at another site (Tolochko, 1981, p. 16-21; 1983, p. 40-42; Rybakov, 1987, p. 412-454). The bricks might have come from a nearby building at the 12th–13th c. (Tolochko, 1981, p. 21). The only Orthodox church in Ruthenia mentioned before 988 is St Elijah (Primary Chronicle, year 945), although we know that Olga had a Christian priest at her court (Primary Chronicle, year 969). Thus, there is a possibility that the princess had also a chapel, although the only mention about it is contained in the so-called Voakimovskaya letopis from the 18th c., whose reliability is overrated by B.A. Rybakov (1987, p. 391–396). Moreover, the remains of an alleged pagan shrine do not bear any resemblance to other Slavonic cult places.

Another construction supposed – this time perhaps on a stronger basis – to have been a cult object was discovered in Kiev in 1908 by V.V. Khvoyka (1913, p. 66). Inside the pre-Vladimirian stronghold dated to the 8th–10th c., called “Kiy’s stronghold,” situated at the Kiev Mountain (Hensel, 1987, p. 426), under a thick culture layer, he found an elliptical contour with the radii measuring 4.2 and 3.5 metres, shaped of raw cobblestones, with four projections orientated to the four geographical directions. As the interpretation of the excavations – which were not properly documented – was questioned (Palm, 1937, p. 143–144), in 1937 verification research was carried out. It was revealed that the ellipsis was not as regular as Khvoyka’s idealized drawing (Bolsunovsky, 1909, p. 5–42 and fig. 1), closer to a reconstruction than to documentation, suggested. The organisation of stones resembled rather a rectangle with curved corners, but the existence of orientated projections was confirmed. Other finds included a layer of clay overlapping with the position of stones, a fire-place near the western projection and a huge clod of scorched clay situated one metre far from the object, formerly noticed also by Khvoyko, who found fragments of pottery and animal bones around it. Unfortunately, the verification research has not resulted in publishing any plan of the object, either (Karger, 1957, p. 45–52; 1958–1961, vol. 1, p. 105–112; Rybakov, 1987, p. 124–126). It might have been a sacrificial altar. If so, it could be interpreted as a zhertvennik of the prince’s manor, which probably stood inside the old “Kiy’s stronghold” before Vladimir’s times. The sacrificial place might have been connected with the cult hall about which we have hypothesized above.
The deities worshiped on the Kiev Mountain do not include Veles. This god, listed along with Perun as a guarantor of Ruthenian loyalty in the treaties with Byzantium in 907 and 971, does not appear in the description of the oath from 944, the only act that undoubtedly took place in Kiev. None of the idols set on the Kiev Mountain in 980 represents Veles, either. All of them belong to Perun’s realm of atmospheric deities: Khors was a lunar (Shupecki 1987, p. 126–128), while Dažbog a solar deity, Striibog was the god of wind, and Simargl – a flying demon (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 137, 140, 142). Mokoš may have been the goddess of rain. As V.V. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov proved (1988, p. 450–453), the Kiev Mountain was not a proper place for Veles. This god, the mythical opponent of the Thunderer, sometimes assuming the shape of a dragon, should be connected with the lower sphere, not with the hill towering over the town. This was the case indeed, Kiev had its statue of Veles, the god of cattle, to the river Pochayna” (Mansikka, 1922, p. 53–54; Golubinsky, 1901, p. 231), which allows to locate the sanctuary in Padol, the lowest part of Kiev, through which the river flowed (Rybakov, 1987, p. 421). Thus, the sanctuary of Perun on the Kiev Mountain had a counterpart devoted to his co-sovereign and opponent, Veles, situated in Padol.

The most important of the deities worshiped in Kiev is Perun, both in his ruling and military aspect. The former role surfaces when Perun is treated as a guarantor of an oath, a guardian of order (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 113–114). Swearing to maintain peace with Byzantium, Igor and his warriors put their swords, shields and golden bracelets in front of Perun’s effigy (Roźniecki, 1901, p. 493). Veles accompanied Perun in this function, although his statue was placed in another sanctuary. As a war god, Perun demanded human sacrifices and we should not doubt that they were real, in spite of a demonic flavour of the relation from Primary Chronicle. Comparative mythology provides us with sufficient evidence of the probability of practicing human sacrifices in any traditional Indo-European society, even much more advanced that Ruthenia in the times of Vladimir; we can take as an example a public human sacrifice decreed by Julius Caesar in 47 BC, and celebrated, which is worth stressing, by a priest of Mars (Gieysztor, 1982, 114–121). We should pay attention to the analogies in the offering rite. The first human sacrifice confirmed by sources took place in Rome in 228 BC, when the town was threatened by Galls’ attack. According to Plutarch (Marcellus, 3), two persons of Greek origin and two of Gallic origin (Jacynowska, 1987, p. 54) were buried alive on Forum Boarium then. In Kiev also a pair of people (a youth and a maiden) was supposed to be sacrificed. By a strange coincidence the lots point to a person of alien religion (a Christian) and origin (from Byzantium). The fact that he is a Varangian, seemingly not a foreigner in Kiev, may point to the possibility that the Scandinavians were perceived as more and more alien, which is well motivated by the proceeding Slavization of the dynasty and the court. Other types of offerings, except of ritual carousals and feasts, escape analysis.

Using intensive comparative methods we could also try to reconstruct the divination practices applied in Kiev. Quite possibly, there was an oracle practicing horse-divination and lot-casting there. Relating the martyrdom of Varangian Christians, Primary Chronicle mentions lots used in religious rituals, which was common among Polabian Slavs. They used to choose the person who was supposed to be sacrificed by lot, and the same method was applied in Kiev in the same context. Such practices are confirmed by an independent, Greek source; Constantine Porphyrogenitus (ch. 9) mentions that Varangians determined the way of making the thanksgiving offering of cocks by lots.

Some important information may be inferred from chronicles texts about half-legendary prince Oleg. In Ruthenian tradition he had a special feature, and a trace of such an opinion is recorded in Primary Chronicle (year 907): “Oleg was called a prophetic (veshchiy) man, because the people were pagans and unenlightened” (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 32). The same chronicle described his death in the following way: “One autumn [the chronicle dates the events to 912] Oleg, who peacefully ruled in Kiev, remembered his horse, which he had ordered to feed but had never mounted. It was because he once asked diviners and magicians [volkhvy and kadesniki] what would be the reason of his death. And a certain magician told him: ‘Prince! The horse that you like and ride will cause your death’. Oleg gave it some thought and said: ‘Nevermore shall I mount it or look at it, then’. And he ordered to feed it but not to bring it close to him, and he lived for several years without a glimpse of it, until he set out against the Greeks. And when he came back to Kiev and four years passed, in the fifth year he remembered his horse, which was destined to cause his death according to the magicians. And he called his Master of the Horse, asking: ‘Where is my horse, which I ordered to feed and look after?’ And he said: ‘It died.’ So Oleg laughed and humiliated the magician, saying: ‘Fortune-tellers don’t prophesy the truth, these are all lies: the horse died and I’m alive.’ (...) And he went to the place where its naked bones and skull were lying, he dismounted his horse and laughed, saying: ‘Is this the skull that was supposed to cause my death?’ And he stamped his foot over the skull, and a viper crept out of the skull and bit his foot. Because of this he got ill and died. And all the people cried bitterly, and they carried him and buried on a mountain called Shchekovitsa” (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 32). Another version of this legend is recorded in Ustyuzhskaya letopis (Ustyuzhskaya letopisn svod 1950, p. 22–23). The difference concerns the fate of the horse: having heard the ominous divination, Oleg “ordered his servants to take it [the horse] far in the fields and cut off its head, and throw its body to the animals of the earth and birds
of the sky.” This chronicle, similarly to the First Novgorod Chronicle, places Oleg’s grave in Ladoga. Moreover, First Novgorod Chronicle (1950, p. 109) says that the Ruthenians knew many versions of this story, in some of them Oleg died somewhere overseas.

The legend about Oleg’s death is one of many versions of the quest motive, known from Byzantium to England, but the Ruthenian variant bears the closest resemblance to the story of Orvar-Odd’s death, told in Orvar-Odd Saga (ch. 2–3, 46), which suggests a common, Varangian source of the two tales (Stander-Petersen, 1934, p. 41, 176–209; Hannika, 1960; Rybakov, 1987, p. 360). The version from Primary Chronicle, however, contains some original elements absent in other variants. As soon as Orvar-Odd was told by a prophetess that he would die because of a snake which would come out of the skull of his favourite horse, he and his brothers killed the animal and buried the corpse deep in the ground. This resembles the story from Ustyuzhskaya letopis. According to Primary Chronicle, Oleg acted differently, he “ordered to feed [the horse], but was not going to mount it.” A prohibition of mounting a sacred horse is known from relations concerning Sventovit’s horse, which could be ridden only by a priest. Triglav’s horse in Szczecin did no work whatsoever, bishop Burhard’s return from Radogosz on the sacred horse was clearly a triumphant violation of the taboo. In Ruthenian tales, Oleg’s horse lived like its kin in the Baltic region for some time. What was its function, then? The answer may be sought in Ruthenian folk rituals in which during divinations Ruthenian girls throw sticks to the ground and “lead a horse over them; if it touches them with a hoof – it is a bad omen, if it passes without a touch – the divination is favourable.” This custom was known in the first half of the 19th c. in Ruthenia, Poland and Lithuania (Moszyński, 1968, vol. 2/1, p. 411–412). It resembles the oracle in Szczecin, where the horse’s passing over spears without touching them was considered a good omen (Slupecki, 1991c).

Oleg was called a prophetic (veshchiy) prince – an epithet that “stuck” to the character – which means that he was attributed some special wisdom refused to others, especially prophetic and magic powers. In Igor Tale the same epithet “veshchiy” is given to Boyan, “Veles’s grandson,” a legendary Ruthenian bard. If we disregard the circumstances of Oleg’s death, drawn from the quest motive, the remaining material from Primary Chronicle is the information about his involvement in prophetic and divination practices, the story about the horse that is kept at the prince’s court and fed but not ridden, and the first mention about diviners and magicians in this chronicle. The diviner belongs to the legend’s structure: someone has to foretell the prince’s death in order to start the plot. For such a role one prophet or prophetess would be enough (like in Orvar-Odd Saga), while in Primary Chronicle and Ustyuzhskaya letopis magicians appear as a group. It is surprising that Oleg, who has the prophetic power himself, asks for their advice. It is possible that the motive of quest was added to the story of Oleg because of his epithet and that the skeleton of the legend was supplemented with local realities, which embraced the sacred horse and the group of diviners, rather supporting than opposing the prophetic prince Oleg. In Ustyuzhskaya letopis Oleg even calls them “our diviners.”

Who was Oleg, then? According to Primary Chronicle (year 879 and 912), he should not be ruling in Kiev as the supreme prince, as Rurik’s rightful heir was his son Igor. But Rurik died “having entrusted the rule and his son, who was still very young, to Oleg, who belonged to his family” (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 22). Apparently, Oleg governed for thirty three years (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 39). Only after his death did Igor Rurikovich ascend the throne. With some help of imagination we could find in Oleg’s rule some elements of theocracy, and interpret his role as a regent priest enjoying a special power. Such a supposition might be supported by Ibn Rosteh’s (12, 269–272) description of Varangians-Ruthenians. He wrote: “There are ‘healers’ among them, who have such authority over their king as if they were lords [of the Ruthenians] themselves. [These people] order them [sometimes] to sacrifice to the Creator whatever they demand: men, women or horses. If the ‘healers’ order something, the only possibility is to follow their orders. Then [such a] healer takes a human or an animal from them, puts a rope around the victim’s neck and hangs him on a beam, until he dies. Then he says: this is the offering to the god.” Other sources concerning the role of priests in Kiev are rather scarce. The story of the martyrdom of two Varangians does not mention them at all, while those who instigate lot-casting in order to choose the victim are called “the elder and boyars.” Primary Chronicle does not mention the fate of magicians after Vladimir’s baptism, either. Only in the 1060s does it record a case of a magician who appeared in Kiev and foretold the following events: “Five gods appeared to me and they said: ‘tell the people that in the fifth summer the Dnepr will flow backwards and the land will move to another place.’” Some people listened to him but the faithful mocked at him and he disappeared (Ipatevskaya letopis, year 1071, PSRL, vol. 2, 1908, p. 164; cf. PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 174; Łomiański, 1979, p. 118; Rybakov, 1987, p. 416). In connection with the above discussion we should point to the rich vocabulary referring to pagan priests in Ruthenia. Apart from the word volkhv (Jakobson, 1985, p. 45–46), there are also kudensnik (Primary Chronicle, year 912), zhrets (Urbaszczyk, 1948), charodey and others (Rybakov, 1987, p. 294–304).

To sum up, the picture of Kiev sanctuaries emerging from written sources is quite impressive. The shrine on the Kiev Mountain had a statue of Perun, notable for its silver head and gold moustache, surrounded with lesser idols. It probably resembled the sanctuary described by Ibn Fadlan. Another, separate shrine, situated in the lower part of the town, Padol, was devoted to Veles. At the prince’s manor there was probably a cult hall and an altar connected with it. The rituals practiced there: well-documented human sacrifices and the alleged oracle point to a special cult role of Kiev,
corresponding to the political primacy of the town's rulers, sovereigns of Ruthenia claiming supremacy over tribal leaders. The Kiev sanctuary was the main cult place not only of the Kiev Polanians, which seems to follow from the Primary Chronicle testimony about Dobrynia's mission in Novgorod, where he erected a statue of Perun.

Several kilometers to the south from Novgorod, the capital of the Slovens' territory, there is an open-air cult place called Perynia, situated at the point where the river Volkhov comes out of Ilmen lake. It occupies a low hill covered with trees, rising above the damp area and changing into an island when the water level is high. The most famous Slavonic cult circles were discovered there. The name of Perynia was probably derived not directly from Perun, but rather from the word *peregnyna* (Old-Church-Slavonic *pregynya*, Polish *przeginia*), which has numerous Indo-European analogues, and refers to a sacred oak forest growing on a hill (Jakobson, 1985, p. 6).

Apart from exceptionally interesting excavation results, the existence of a sanctuary in Perynia is attested by written sources. It is not incidental, as in the early history of Ruthenia the significance of Novgorod was exceeded only by Kiev. The forms of cult practiced there were by no means indifferent to the supreme ruler of the emerging state. Therefore, as Primary Chronicle (year 980) says, when Vladimir erected new idols in Kiev, he also "settled Dobrynia, his uncle, in Novgorod. And Dobrynia came to Novgorod, and set an idol upon the river Volkhov, and the Novgorod people brought offerings to it as a god" (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 79). The idol survived only eight years. Vladimir's baptism replaced the reform of paganism with a religious revolution. In 988 bishop Joachim arrived in Novgorod at the prince's will and order: "he ploughed the trubischche and destroyed Perun, who had stood in Novgorod on Perynia, and ordered to drag [him] to the Volkhov; and tied with ropes he was dragged through mud, whipped and pushed; and at that time the devil went out of Perun and started to shout: 'Ah, woe! Ah, I have fallen to these unmerciful judges! - and he was thrown to the Volkhov. And flowing under a large bridge, he flung his club on the bridge; this is the one with which senseless [people] fight with each other, in which devils rejoice. And [Joachim] forbade anyone to accept him [Perun] anywhere. And one morning a suburb dweller approached the river, intending to take vessels to the town, and Perun drifted ashore." The man "pushed him with a stick and said: "Perun! you ate and drank at satiety, now go away, float from this world to hell and vanish in the impenetrable darkness!" Such was the end of Perynia in the relation of the Third Novgorod Chronicle under the year 988 (PSRL, vol. 3, 1841, p. 207). There is a nearly identical fragment in Sofiyskaya letopis, but under 991 (PSRL, vol. 5, 1851, p. 121).

Another version of the events is found in V.N. Tatishchev's extracts from the so-called Yoakimovskaya letopis. According to that source, "the people in Novgorod, having learned that Dobrynia was coming to christen them, gathered at an assembly and all swore not to let [him] enter the town and pull down the idols. And when he arrived, they destroyed the great bridge and armed themselves. Dobrynia did not manage to convince them. "The highest of Slavonic priests, Bogumil, called Solovey [nightingale] because of his sweet speech, strongly forbade the people to obey [Dobrynia]." A Novgorod officer, Ugoniay instigated the crowd to attack Dobrynia's house and kill his wife and relatives. Dobrynia's army leader, Putiata, crossed the Volkhov up-stream of the town and entered the stronghold. The inhabitants of Novgorod opposed him and a fight broke out, others destroyed the Preobrazhenskaya church and plundered Christians' houses. Finally, Dobrynia won and "destroyed the idols: burnt the wooden ones, broke the stone ones, and threw them to the river," which caused great dismay in the town. The record, whose original version has not survived, was written down as late as in the 17th or early 18th c. It probably relates the common image of the christening of Novgorod rather than the authentic events. It does not mention Perynia at all. The personal names, apart from Dobrynia, seem sheer fantasies. The high priest has the telling name of Bogumil (bear to God), the officer Ugoniay (Rushing) rushes around Novgorod on horse, summoning the people to resistance, while Putiata seems to have been taken over from folk tales and legends, surrounding a real Putiata, a general of prince Sviatopolk II from the turn of the 12th c (SSS, vol. 4, p. 422-423). Therefore, contrary to B.A. Rybakov's opinion (1987, p. 273-275), Yoakimovskaya letopis should not be regarded as a very significant basis for reconstructing the pagan religion of Novgorod.

We shall, however, follow the mentioned historian in pointing out that the tradition of Perynia as a cult place was long-lived. In the 17th c. Adam Olearius (1870, p. 80-81), one of the envoys sent by prince Frederick III of Holstein to Russia and Persia, wrote: "The inhabitants of Novgorod, when still pagans, had an idol called Perun, that is the god of fire, as the Russians call fire *perun*. At the place where their idol had stood they erected a monastery, which preserved the idol's name and was called Perunsky. That deity looked like a man with [a piece of] flint in his hand, which resembled a thunderbolt or a ray. To worship the deity they kept a fire burning day and night, feeding it with oak wood. And if those who served at the fire were negligent and let the fire go out, they were punished by death." The question arises, whether the last detail was not deduced from the stories about the cult of fire practiced by the Lithuanians, popular at the time. Moreover, Olearius's mention was not fully original, as he drew some material from a century older relation left by Sigmund Herberstein (1556, p. 74-75), which is quite close to the information from the Third Novgorod Chronicle. Also Mateusz Hozjusz and Gvagnin (Brückner, 1985, p. 105) wrote about Perynia. The mention about a thunderbolt in the statue's hand may be associated with the representations of Perun from Kiev in miniatures.
from Radivilovskaya letopis. Although the quoted sources are late, they should not be disregarded. The information about the fire in Perun's sanctuary was confirmed by excavations. It is also true that the Perynsky monastery was built in the place of the sanctuary. It was mentioned for the first time in 1386, together with the church under the invocation of the Birth of the Mother of God, and it survived until 1922 (Sedov, 1953, p. 92). Remains of a stone church discovered on Perynia are dated to the 12th c. (Sedov, 1954, p. 106-108).

There is also a native Russian source from the 17th c., which preserved the memories of Perynia in a legendary form. It is a text called Tsvevnik, preserved in a manuscript from 1665. In this version "the founding heroes," Sloven and Rus, having left their fatherland, settled near Ilmer-Ilmen, a lake named after Sloven's sister. They built a stronghold called Slovensk Veliky on the Volkho. No chronicles mention such a town, it appears only in Tatischev's study, which is based on questionable sources (SSS, vol. 5, p. 229). In Tsvevnik Slovensk is identified with Novgorod. The eponymous legend is supplemented with mythical motives: "The older son of prince Sloven, Volkho, a sorcerer and magician, was relentless to the people then, and with devilish tricks produced illusions. He turned into the shape of a cruel beast, the crocodile, and blocked the water route in the river Volkho. And he devoured or drowned those who did not bow to him. Because of that the people (...) called him Thunder or Perun, as in the Belorussian language perun means thunder. And for night illusions and devilish meetingsthe cursed sorcerer created a small stronghold in a certain place called Perynia, where Perun's idol was standing. And naive [people] (...) tell stories about Volkho, the cursed sorcerer and magician," claiming that "he was strangled by devils in the river Volkho and his corpse floated up-stream by devilish tricks and was thrown ashore opposite this magic stronghold, which is now called Perynia." The sorcerer's body was laid in a barrow with due ceremonies. Three days later the ground gaped and the crocodile's grave fell to the bottom of hell, leaving an eternal hole (Rybakov, 1987, p. 259-261). The crocodile was surely imported from some bestiary, but the demonic legend may contain traces of authentic folk tradition. Leaving aside Rybakov's exaggerated interpretations (1987, p. 261-293), we should turn to ethnographic studies, which to some extent confirm the folk origin of the tale from Tsvevnik. According to a nineteenth-century legend from the Novgorod area, in the times of Vladimir the Great a hermitage was established on Perynia, exactly at the place where a dragon called Perun had lived. Fishermen sailing on the Volkho customarily threw coins to the water near Perynia (Sedov, 1953, p. 92, after P. Yakushkin; Roźniecki, 1901, p. 477, after A.N. Popov).

In 1951 Perynia was explored by V.V. Sedov (1953; 1954). At the top of the hill excavations revealed outlines of a ditch, well noticeable in light-yellow sand, surrounding a circular yard measuring 21 m in diameter, with a post-hole left by a huge wooden post in the middle. The latter was probably the last trace of the effigy of Perun, cut down in 988. A small rock was found nearby. The shape of the ditch was very unusual: eight points of its outer edge, orientated exactly towards geographical directions, were situated 7 m from the edge of the yard, while in the narrowest parts it reached only 5 m of width, which made the plan of the cult circle similar to a flower with eight petals. The central parts of the wider portions were deeper than the rest of the ditch; in all of them except of the northern one traces of fire-places (layers of ash and charcoal) were found. The northern fragment,
with less steep walls, was probably the entrance. In 1952 a fragmentary outline of another ditch was discovered to the south-west of the explored circle. It surrounded a yard of 23-metre-long diameter, whose centre lay exactly at the south-west – north-east axis going through the post-hole in the first circle. Its bottom was covered with ash and burnt stones. The second circle has not been fully explored. Two buildings were erected at this place: the earlier one probably of wattle, the later of wood; in V.V. Sedov’s opinion they should be dated to the 12th–15th c. Sedov reinterpreted mysterious remains discovered in 1948 in the lowest layer under the stone ruins of the church under the invocation of the Birth of the Mother of God, located to the north-east of the first circle, as traces of a third cult circle. At this point, however, we should remain skeptical, as the sanctuaries in Khodosoviche and Trzebiatów had only two circles each. The excavations proved that at the end of the 10th c. the Perynia shrine was literally ploughed, just like in the chronicle’s relation. The yard, which had been several dozen centimetres higher than the surrounding ground, was levelled, and the soil taken from it was used to fill up the ditch.

Thus, the excavations revealed the remains of the sanctuary of Perun, ravaged in 988 or 991, which had consisted of two – or less probably three – cult circles. The main circle, situated at the then top of the hill, is exceptional because of its special shape. It probably surrounded the statue of Perun mentioned by chronicles. The centres of the remaining circles (or circle) may have been occupied by other idols. Primary Chronicle confirms the custom of sacrifices, while the Third Novgorod Chronicle characterizes them in greater detail as offerings of food and drinks. The ditches around the circles served for burning fires. It is worth attention that the whole sanctuary was arranged along the south-west – north-east line and that the main circle was geometrically orientated to the main geographical directions of the world, with the intermediate ones included.

No sources – except of late texts – mention any priests connected with the sanctuary. They appear, however, in relations concerning the later history of Novgorod. Primary Chronicle, in the fragment devoted to the activity of magicians and their liquidation under the year 1071, mentions the following event: “In the time of Gleb [Sviatoslavovich] a magician came to Novgorod; he claimed (...) that he knew everything in advance and criticised Christianity, and he said: ‘I shall walk across [the river] Volkhov in front of everyone.’ And there was a rebellion in the town and they wanted to kill the bishop.” The prince and his warriors supported the bishop, while the people followed the magician. Gleb disposed of him in quite a non-chivalrous way. “Having taken an axe under his cape, he went to the magician and spoke to him: ‘Do you know what is going to happen tomorrow and today before the evening?’ And he answered: ‘I know everything in advance.’ And Gleb said: ‘Do you know then, what is going to happen to you today?’ ‘I shall make great miracles’ he said. And Gleb took out his axe and cut him in halves, and he fell dead, and the people dispersed” (PSRL, vol. I, 1926, p. 180–181). This episode is shown in one of the miniatures from Radivilovskaya letopis (1902, 106r, cf. Khrenetsov, 1981, p. 99–112).

The chronicles indicate that the sanctuary on Perynia was the main cult centre of Novgorod, despite some distance between the two places. In the town proper no sanctuary has been discovered so far. It had, however, a street called Volosova, at which allegedly in the 14th c. there was a church devoted to St Blase (Vlasiy), one of the saints who replaced Volos (Veles) in the Christian cult of Routhenia (Rybakov, 1987, p. 252). Novgorod has also supplied some examples of founding offerings and sacrificial deposits (e.g. a hole with two bull heads), interpreted by V.V. Sedov (1956; 1957) as traces of the existence of pagan cult associations.

If we were to treat the chronicle texts literally, we should conclude that Perun’s statue survived only eight, or at the most eleven years upon the Volkhov. The sources, however, do not exclude the possibility that the sanctuary had been created much earlier. This thesis is supported both by archaeological finds and by the long-lasting tradition of the place’s cult function. The beginnings of Novgorod go back to the 9th/10th c., which provokes a question about the gods that had been worshiped there before Dobrynja erected the statue of Perun. B.A. Rybakov (1987, p. 265, 270) assumes that Perun’s cult was a religion of the prince and his suite, enforced on the subjects, and claims that the cult place had been devoted to Jesse-Yashchur (big reptile, the crocodile from Tsvetnik), Lada and Leli. No reliable source contains even a slightest trace of evidence for that construct. The worship of Perun did not have to be completely new and alien to the inhabitants of Novgorod and the Slovians living around the town. The Balts, dwelling close to Novgorod, may have easily identified the old Slavonic
deity with their Perkunas, a god of similar name, while the Varangians might have interpreted him as their Thor. Such a deity was a good patron for a town in which interests of several tribes converged. Moreover, Vladimir, before he gained supremacy over the whole Ruthenia, had been the ruler of Novgorod under the protectorate of his uncle Dobrynia since about 970, and this very town was his base in the struggle against his brother in 980 (SSS, vol. 6, p. 532). The sacred oak grove of the Thunderer, the sanctuary with Perun’s effigy, the monastery called Perynsky—were the milestones of the tradition of Perun’s cult. It was continued by Olearius’s relation quoted above, the seventeenth-century Tsvetnik and ethnographic records, in which the figure of dragon-crocodile might be viewed as the opponent of the Thunderer from the Indo-European myth of their duel. In Slavonic mythology this function was often ascribed to Volos-Veles (Ivanov, Toporov, 1974, p. 4–179). The cult of this deity appeared in Novgorod, which may be deduced from the example of the street named after him.

The mentions about Kiev and Perynia in the chronicles are the only reliable information about open-air sanctuaries in Ruthenia. Let us now supplement them with archaeological finds, which are quite numerous.

First, there is the village Khodosoviche near Rokhachev, with Svyatoye Ozero (Sacred Lake) situated a few kilometers from the Dnepr bank. In 1969 remains of two cult circles were discovered there. The first one, reaching 7 m in diameter, was surrounded with traces of a former palisade. In the middle of the circle a hole left by a post or an idol was revealed. From the south, east and north the circle was surrounded with C-shaped ditches filled with sand, ash and fragments of pottery. The southern ditch was accompanied with a round hollow of 2.25 m diameter, filled with similar material. The western part of the site was not archaeologically explored, washed away by the waters of the nearby lake. Ten metres to the east from the first circle another, smaller one, also with a post-hole in the centre, was found. It was surrounded with C-shaped ditches as well, in this case there were two of them, located to the north and to the south of the object. Several dozen meters to the north of both circles remains of a single hut, probably contemporary with the sanctuary, were discovered. Another finds, situated to the south-east of the shrine, were fragments of a settlement (probably earlier than the circles) and an extensive burial ground with barrows. The discoverers, F.G. Soloveva and A.F. Kuza (1972), date the sanctuary to the 10th/lith c. on the basis of the pottery found there. The lonely hut standing near the circles is worth attention, as it may have been the house of a priest serving at the sanctuary. The three C-shaped ditches around the larger circle, orientated towards geographical directions, bear some resemblance to the similarly orientated fire-places in Perynia and the projections of the alleged zhertvennik in Kiev. The symmetrical arrangement of the sanctuary in Khodosoviche induced V.V. Sedov (1982, p. 287) to suggest that the part of the shrine destroyed by the lake contained a fourth
ditch. We should, however, remember that the smaller circle was accompanied only by two ditches. The C-shaped fire-places discovered in Khodosoviche resemble Daksinagni fire-places, which in the Vedic ritual guarded sacrificial places from demons (Gonda, 1978, p. 138).

Another object was revealed in Pskov. It consisted of a cult circle measuring about 11 metres in diameter, with two substantial post-holes (one still filled with remains of a pole), and a regular arrangement of several smaller post-holes at the western edge of the circle near the presumed entrance. According to the discoverer (Labutina, 1989), the shrine was contemporary with the barrows found around it. There are also claims about cult character of the circle of holes in the site Gorodishche in the village Babka near Rovne (Gusakov, Kulakov, 1991, p. 178).

I.P. Rusanova (1966; 1966a) discovered another interesting sanctuary in the village Shumsk, 7 km from Zhytomir. She found a well-visible outline of a 14.2-metre-long and 11-metre-wide object shaped like a cross, orientated towards the four directions. It was situated on a hillock at the eastern bank of the Khnylopiat. Its centre was occupied by a large post-hole paved with stones. The trace of the idol was surrounded from the east by several hollows left by smaller poles. Between them there was a large fireplace in which the layer of ash reached 50 cm. Another fireplace was found in the southern arm of the cross, together with numerous fragments of pottery, classified by Rusanova as typical for the 9th c., iron knives and bull bones.

A third, small, fire-place was discovered to the east from the great pole. Near a big stone, situated to the north-east of the smaller post-holes, cock bones and a thunderbolt (belemnit) were lying. Belemnit was commonly called "thunderbolt" (Pol. strzałka piorunowa, Ukr. hromova strilka) by Slavs, and regarded as a result of god Perun striking with thunders (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 65). No traces of a fence were revealed, but the sanctuary might have been entered from the south by a broad, dual gate, which is indicated by regular traces of pales at the southern edge of the object. The large central post-hole lies exactly at the axis going through the middle of the presumed gate.

To the south-east of the shrine an enormous fire-place (7.8 m in diameter) containing pottery from the 8th/9th c. was found. To the north of the sanctuary there is a burial ground. The finds from that area include twenty small holes, eleven of them containing fragments of vessels and burnt human bones. At a neighbouring hillock near the river an outline of a hut, sized 3.6 m x 3.9 m, was discovered. It had been situated 60 metres from the sanctuary and may have been a priest's house. Interpreting the accompanying large (7.2 m x 7.6 m) object with a stove in the middle and an enclosed dugout in the corner as a farm building is less convincing (Rusanova, 1973, p. 36, 93). Probably it was a cult house (Szymański, 1973, p. 84).

Rusanova (1966a, p. 237) claims that the shrine upon the Khnylopiat was devoted to Perun, pointing to the thunderbolt accompanying the cock bones and to certain similarities between its plan and the plan of the
zhertvenniki in Kiev. The motivation seems too weak to turn her suggestion into a hypothesis. A thesis presented by Rybakov (1987, p. 213–223), who finds the shape of the shrine similar to feminine curves and interprets it as a sanctuary of Mokoš, Zhyvia or Baba Yaga, the queen of the underworld, belongs entirely to the science-fiction sphere.

The alleged sacrificial altar from Kiev is not a unique object—let us recall the stone plate from Starigard/Oldenburg here—which seems to support the thesis that it was a zhertvennik. A similar object was revealed by I.S. Vinokur and O.M. Prikhodniuk (1969), during the exploration of a large Slavonic settlement in a place called Gniloy Kut upon the Smotrych near Kamenets Podolsky. It was a rectangle sized 2.3 m × 1.5 m paved with stones and covered with ash. It had an adjoining shallow hole used as a fire-place at the eastern edge. Few animal bones and fragments of pottery were found in the hole and among the stones. The axis of the object exactly overlapped with the east-west line. The discoverers interpret it as a “cult yard” (Prikhodniuk, 1975, p. 98–99). It might have been an altar.
Fig. 64. Gniloy Kut near Grodek Podolsky. A plan and profile of "the cult yard" or altar.
1 - stones, 2 - bones, 3 - pottery, 4 - ash, 5 - humus, 6 - rock-bed, 7 - charcoal.

Fig. 65. Nizhny Vorgol. An alleged sanctuary. The location. A plan and profiles.
1 - sod; 2 - mould; 3 - clay; 4 - burnt clay; 5 - sand; 6 - ash. The black square marks the location of the sanctuary within the stronghold. After A.N. Moskalenko, 1966, p. 204, 205.

A.N. Moskalenko (1966) qualified as remains of a sanctuary also a clay-paved yard, sized 12 m x 6 m, discovered upon the river Vorgol (the upper Don basin). The yard was surrounded with a semi-circle of six fire-place hollows, in which ash, fragments of pottery and many animal bones were found. There was also a post-hole, a possible trace of an idol, in the yard. The complex was situated on an uninhabited headland, separated from the cliff by a rampart and a trench.

B.O. Timoshchuk (1976, p. 82-89) discovered an object interpreted as a stronghold-shrine in Rzhavintse (southern Bukovina). He found two concentric ramparts around a yard of twenty-four-metre-long diameter, situated on a hill towering over a settlement from the 9th/10th c. The inner rampart rested on a layer of ash, which was a result of burning or covering with embers the area prepared to erecting this construction. The rampart was surrounded by a stone-paved platform, similarly to the outer one. Fires were lit at the rampart tops. In the inter-rampart area there was a former spring, encircled with stone plates, while on the inner rampart slope - a stone post, reaching 2.5 m in height, split in two, without any traces of sculpturing. Timoshchuk supposes that the post used to stand in the centre of the sanctuary and only later, in the process of its destruction, did it get to the rampart, but the exploration of the centre of the yard did not result in finding its original location. Supplementary excavations carried out in 1982 revealed some traces of stronghold constructions. The discoverer claims that they were long, C-shaped buildings adjacent to the outer rampart, which he qualified as khramy (pagan temples) functioning as gathering places for the congregation. The remains of the alleged temples were, unfortunately, found only in one excavation site of limited size, while the results have not been properly documented so far (Timoshchuk, Rusanova, 1983, p. 170-172; Sedov, 1982, p. 262). Therefore Rybakov's attempt (1987, p. 223-228) at constructing a holistic view of Ruthenian sanctuaries, based on that research, seems very hasty. Another object interpreted as a sanctuary is the stronghold in Zimne in Volhynia (Aulich, 1969; 1972; Szymański, 1973, p. 84).

Unfortunately, our discussion of Slavonic sanctuaries cannot include the so-called "mud strongholds" of the Smolensk region and Belorussia, or the objects referred to in Russian literature as gorodishcha-svyatylishcha (Rusanova, 1992, p. 52-60). There are striking resemblances between them and the circles in Perynia or the alleged sanctuary in Rzhavintse, nevertheless those objects have not been properly explored or convincingly dated. Mud strongholds are usually circular, although some have plans close to rectangles. They are located on low hillocks in morasses. They are surrounded with low, sometimes double, ramparts of no military significance, and ditches forming yards of 20-30 m diameters (Pobol, 1974, p. 31-33; Rybakov, 1987, p. 148-151; Rusanova, 1992, p. 52-60). Only the stronghold in Krasnogorsk was explored in the 20s, which resulted in revealing a fragment of yard paved with rough stones, sized 3.5 x 3 m, controversial remains of some wooden constructions, and - as would follow from Sedov's reconstruction (1982, p. 287) - a post-hole in the centre.
8. Sacred groves, waters and stones

A sacred grove is a cult place known to all Indo-Europeans. In ancient Italy, for instance, the grove in Ariccia, devoted to Diana of Nemos, was highly venerated (Frazer, 1962). Thanks to Strabo (XII, 5, 1) we know that for Celts groves sometimes constituted sanctuaries of super-tribal significance. Such a situation occurred with the Galatians all the people gathered for the counselling assembly and adjudication in Drunometon, the sacred oak grove. Tacitus (Germania, 9–10) claimed that the Germans regarded woods and forests as the most appropriate places to worship the gods, forecast the future and breed oracular horses. The Roman historian presented in greater detail the holy groves of the Semnons and Nahanaarvals. The Semnons considered themselves "the most ancient and glorious" among the Sweds and — according to Tacitus (Germania, 39) — "the belief that they are so ancient is confirmed by a kind of cult. At a fixed time all the peoples of the same blood, represented by envoys, meet in a forest sanctified by ancestors' divination and eternal awe of religion, in order to sacrifice a human being on behalf of the state and celebrate the horrendous ritual of the barbaric cult. (...) Nobody enters the place in any other way than tied, which symbolizes his own inferiority and the power of the deity. (...) This whole superstition is supposed to show that the place is the cradle of the tribe and the seat of the omnipotent god to whom everything is subject and obedient." It is evident that the Sweds had a sanctuary common to the whole people, and the Semnons, who immediately controlled it, claimed primacy among them. The grove of the Nahanaarvals was probably located in the territory of the present Poland (Lomziański, 1963–1985, vol. I, p. 230–232, 250–255). According to Tacitus (Germania, 43), they had "a grove which is the place of an ancient cult celebrated by a priest in female clothes. Following Roman ideas, scholars compare their gods to Castor and Pollux, such is their nature, and their name is Ales. No statues are devoted to them..."

There is also much evidence concerning the sacred groves of the Balts. According to Peter of Dusburg (III, 5) it was forbidden to cut or use them for any gains, and profanes were not allowed to enter them. There is an excellent description of such a grove from the times of king Władysław Jagiełło (A. Brückner, 1984, p. 78–79; Kosman, 1976, p. 73). According to Długosz (Annales, XI, Opera Omnia, vol. 13, 1887, p. 159–160; cf. Annales, Sedov (1962) tried to ascribe several object of that type, discovered in the Smolensk area, to the Kryviches. The so-called gorodishcha-svyatishishcha from the East Carpathian region, located on hills in Babin, Kulishevka and Gorodok have not been satisfactorily documented (see Rusanova, 1992, p. 58). A few similar objects exist in West Slavonic territories.

The claims about the existence of other Ruthenian sanctuaries are based on even weaker, unsatisfactory evidence. The list of such places includes the Piatunka mountain in Kaniov, near the stronghold Kniazha Gora (Mezentseva, 1968, p. 129–138), and Pskov, where traces of pagan altars were allegedly discovered in the 40s (Tarakanova, 1950; 1957).
which refers to groves of local status of worshiped gods of the Samogitians adored groves as sacred places both the mentioned forests and wild animals and birds living in them as sacred, and everything that entered [the forest] was supposed to become sacred. Probably St. Adalbert, the patron saint of Poland, died a martyr's death in a Prussian grove, because he was not killed after a sudden attack, but tied and struck with a spear by a priest on a forest glade (Jan Canaparius, I, 30; Bruno of Querfurt, S. Adalberti vita altera, 32; Adam of Bremen, IV, 18). Sacrifices made by Prussians in forests are mentioned in the Chrisburg Treaty from 1249, while the location of some sacred groves is recorded in the reports of The Teutonic Order spies (Mieżyński, 1892-1896, p. 90-105).

As far as the Slavs are concerned, the information about holy groves are not very elaborate, if compared with descriptions of temples and cult yards. Only the relation concerning the grove of Prove contains some details. Sacred groves were sanctuaries of various rank. Helmond (I, 52) says that the Abodrites "apart from groves and gnomes in which fields and towns abounded" -- which refers to groves of local status -- worshiped gods of all-tribe importance, one of which was "Prove, the god of the Starigard region." Such deities were served by priests, and, as Helmond says, honored by sacrificial feasts. In 1150 bishop Wicelin went to Starigard, which once had been the capital of a diocese. He was met by "the barbarous inhabitants of the land, who worshiped god Prove. The priest who celebrated the idolatry was called Mike. The prince of the land was called Rohel and was descended from the Kruto family, and he was the worst idolater and pirate." Wicelin did not succeed in reestablishing the bishopric in Starigard, although the pagans allowed him to build a chapel in the town (Helmond, I, 69). At the beginning of January 1156 Wicelin's successor, bishop Gerold, set out to Starigard despite severe frost. Prince Pribislav, inclined to accepting Christianity, hosted the bishop. Helmond accompanied the latter in this journey and he witnessed the events. When Gerold left the prince's house in order to travel to farther regions, on the 8th of January 1156, as Helmond (I, 84) narrates, "we happened to encounter on our way a grove which is the only one in that country, which is generally level. Among very old trees we saw there the sacred oaks devoted to the god of that country, called Prove. They were encircled by a yard and a dense wooden fence with two gates. Apart from home deities and gnomes in which separate settlements abounded, that very place was a sanctuary for the whole country, had its own priest, holidays and various offering rituals. Every Monday inhabitants from the whole country with the prince himself gathered to dispense justice. The entrance to the shrine was forbidden to all except of the priest and those who wanted to bring offerings, or were in danger of death, because the latter were never refused asylum. The Slavs revere their shrines so much that they do not allow to desecrate the enclosure of the temple even with enemy's blood. They hardly permit swearing oaths, as for a Slav to swear means nearly to draw a curse on himself, because angry gods revenge it." Comparing the cult practiced in the described grove with the temples, Helmond stated that the deities that "inhabit forests and groves, such as the god Prove from Starigard (..), are not pictured in any effigies." Helmond relates also the destruction of the grove, in which he participated: "When we came to the mentioned grove, which was a devilish place, the bishop admonished us to destroy it courageously. He himself dismounted his horse and smashed the decorated fronts of the gates. Then, having entered the shrine, we heaped all the wood from its fence at one place near the holy trees in order to burn it, although we were afraid that the inhabitants might surprise us and attack with stones. But God saved us."

Thus, we know that the grove of Prove lay near Starigard/Oldenburg, not far from the town, in a desolate area. It grew on an elevated place. There are very few hills in the neighbourhood of the present Oldenburg near the Baltic coast. W. Struve (1988, p. 39-40) supposes that the grove hill might have been Weinberg (possibly derived from weih = saint). The sanctuary was formed by old oaks surrounded with a fence. There were two gates in it, but profanes were forbidden to enter, so probably the adjudication held there every Monday and the counselling assembly took place outside the enclosure. The grove of Prove was undoubtedly the main sanctuary of the Vagrians, as Helmond explicitly says. The priest from this shrine "celebrated the idolatry" of the tribe and was the most influential priest in Vagria. He is mentioned in the texts from 1150 and 1156 along with the prince, with whom he jointly dispensed justice. Mike, mentioned as the priest of Prove in 1150, is the only Slavonic priest whose name is known.

The name of the deity worshiped in that grove troubles researchers. The reference to adjudication provokes its reconstruction as Prawo (Law), but the fact that the epiphany of the god of Vagria are oak trees, attributes of the Thunderer, suggests that it may be a version of the name Perun, distorted by the prominence of the judicial function, probably stressed by Helmond's informants (Giczyśtor, 1982, p. 50-51; Jakobson, 1985, p. 17; Łowmiański, 1984, p. 390; SSS, vol. 4, p. 368; an alternative explanation in K.T. Witzczak, 1993, p. 120).

Another grove appears in Thietmar's chronicle (VI, 37). Referring to the achievements of his predecessor, Wigbert, bishop of Merseburg, Thietmar comments: "(..) tireless in preaching, he dissuaded the sheep entrusted to his care from the errors of futile superstition, and having cut down a grove called Zutibure (the Saint Forest), which the natives used to treat as sacred and inviolable, he built a church to honour the holy martyr Roman in the same place." Linguists (Eichler, 1981, p. 204) identify Zutibure or Saint Forest (Swiety Bór) with the settlement Schkeitbar (now a part of the village Rapitz) near Leipzig. The mention indicates that the holy forest was subject to a taboo. In Slavonic bör means a resinous coniferous forest, or (as in Czech) a forest situated in a damp area, the Polish word borowina (a kind of
mud from forest areas, used in balneological treatment) is worth mentioning here (A. Brückner, 1985a, p. 36; Sławski, 1952–1956, vol. 1, p. 40; Machek, 1968, p. 60–61). The word is not free of some “demonic” flavour, it is contained in the name of a Polish forest demon, Boruta (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 260). There was also a Slavonic prince of that name, who lived in the 8th c. (Brückner, 1985a, p. 36).

Rügen had its holy grove as well. According to Knytlingasaga (ch. 121), near the present Stralsund, at Strelasund, the strait between Rügen and the mainland, in 1165 king Valdemar found “a holy grove, called Boku, where everything was burnt and destroyed, and many people and spoils were captured…” The sanctuary, described as biotlând (a sacrificial grove), appears under its Slavonic name in the saga, as Boku should be derived from buk (beech). A document from 1320 refers to this spot as Bukowe (Beech Place) (PUB, vol. 5, part 2, 1905, no. 3424; cf. Wieniecke, 1940, p. 35–42). The word biotlând suggests that offerings were made there, and the mention about burning and destroying some constructions indicates that it was fenced.

Our list should also incorporate the sacred forest around Radogóś, mentioned by Thietmar (VI, 23). Sacred groves outside Polabia are only generally mentioned (Kosmas, I, 4, III, 1; Primary Russian Chronicle, year 986; cf. Łowmiański, 1979, p. 136, gloss 307), so all the groves described in some detail in written sources were located in Polabia. Surprisingly enough, no researchers have claimed that they occurred exclusively in the area west of the Oder, as it has been imputed in the case of temples. Thus, the hypercritical historians have been able to admit the possibility of existence of sacred groves in all Slavonic territories, while they have doubted the analogical distribution of temples, despite the identical basis of evidence. The common Slavonic name for a sacred grove is gaj. The etymology of this word includes the idea of enclosed space (Linde, 1951, vol. 2, p. 15–16; Sławski, 1952–1956, vol. 1, p. 249; Machek, 1968, p. 155; A. Brückner, 1985a, p. 132), so a grove acquired religious significance through being separated from the secular space. Gaj was not the only word referring to a holy wood: the Slavonic grove from the region of Leipzig was called Bör (forest), while Primary Russian Chronicle (year 986) uses the word roschene.

Among the trees worshiped by Indo-European peoples as symbols of sacrum the most common are undoubtedly oaks, Slavonic example of this being the grove of Prove. Moreover, we know an example of a beech grove situated at Stralsund in Rügen. No other tree species, of which the linden would be the most interesting as a symbol of feminine sacred power opposed to the masculine connotations of the oak, known from Baltic sources, are attested in writings. In the previous chapters we have mentioned the trees connected with other types of sanctuaries: the oak and the nut-tree adored in Szczecin, and the tree growing next to the statue under the open sky in Rügen.

The spring at the foot of the sacred oak in Szczecin was not a random element. For Bulgarians – as A. Gieysztor says (1982, p. 169) – “a sacred place had to contain water and a tree, sometimes supplemented with a stone, which are the three fundamental elements of the sacred microcosm established in comparative religious studies.” A religious complex consisting of a tree and a spring occurs several times in the sources concerning the Slavs. In Stargard in Vagria, for instance, the reverend Bruno (who was said to have written sermons in Slavonic), appointed by bishop Gerold, managed to “forbid the Slavs to swear by trees, springs and stones” (Helmold, I, 84). The model microcosm is clearly visible here. Kosmas (III, 1) says that trees were worshiped in Bohemia, listing them along with groves, springs and stones. At the end of the 12th c. Cyril Turovsky (Mansikka, 1922, p. 302–303) rejoiced at the end of the cult of trees and springs in Ruthenia.

There are also some more concrete accounts. As Constantine Porphyrogenitus (ch.9) wrote, in the 10th c. the Ruthenians (by which the Varangians are meant), having crossed the rapids of the Dnieper, “come to an island called after St George and make their sacrifices there; an enormous oak grows in that place. They bring living cocks as offerings and arrange arrows in a circle, others bring pieces of bread, meat and whatever they have, according to their custom. As for the cocks, they decide by lot whether to slaughter and eat them or to set them free…” There was also a large oak devoted to Perun near Khalich, mentioned in a description of the border, as a document issued in 1302 testifies (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 51; Ivakin, 1979, p. 109–111). Ipatevskaya istorija (year 1169) mentions “Dobryj dub” (a good oak). In 1331 in Friul in Isonzo valley, in a place called Cavoreto, a Frankish monk discovered that “in the mountains very numerous Slavs worshiped as a god a certain tree and a spring at its foot” (Wieniecke, 1940, p. 33–35). In Poland Księga Henrykowska (1, 2, 33–35) devotes a whole chapter to a story about cutting of a tree qualified as “famous” or “notorious.” The story reads: “in the old days there was a large tree, in Polish called jawor [sycamore], in the village of Januszów. At the foot of the tree a spring gushed; it was called Jaworzyca because of the tree.” The village had belonged to a man named Henry, who exchanged it for another estate with Nicholas, one of the most outstanding nobles of Silesia at the time, who ordered to cut the tree. Although the text does not refer to any cult, it was probably a sacrosanct tree, which is suggested by its relation to the spring and the name of the spring derived from the tree, the epithet “famous,” and finally by the very fact of devoting so much space to the cutting of one tree.

Although the mentions quoted above are not very extensive (see also Tyszkiewicz, 1972; SSS, vol. 2, p. 557–558), they allow us to conclude that the idea of the cosmic tree was not alien to the Slavs.

“Water – as M. Eliade wrote (1966, p. 189, 211) – symbolizes the totality of all possibilities, it is fons et origo, the mother of each possible existence.”
The role of water “is to precede the creation and reabsorb it, while it [water] can never surpass its own manner of being, that is it can never appear in any form.” Water has existed since the beginning of the universe. According to many mythologies it surrounds the world, which emerged from it (de Vries, 1956-1957, vol. 2, p. 373). Is it possible to confine such an elusive element in descriptions of cult places? It turns out that there were sanctuaries in which the cult was concentrated around a spring, lake or river. To quote some Germanic examples, Tacitus (Annales, XIII, 57) recorded a conflict between Hermundurs and Chatts over the right to a certain river. It was believed that the gods listened most gladly to the prayers and wishes sent from its banks. The Allemans, Franks and Saxons celebrated sacrifices at springs or river banks (de Vries, 1956-1957, vol. 1, p. 347-350). We should devote special attention to human sacrifices made by the Germans in morasses (Tacitus, Germania, 12, 1937, p. 149; Dieck 1965). We know some remains of Germanic sanctuaries situated at waters (Jankuhn, 1965, p. 135-146). An object of that type, coming from the Roman period (3rd–5th c. AD) was discovered in Otałążka in Mazovia (Bender, 1969, 1972; Bender-Stupnicka, 1974; Makiewicz, 1993). According to Landnamabók, Thorstein, one of the pioneers of the Scandinavian colonization of Iceland, made a certain Icelandic waterfall sacrosanct (de Vries, 1956-1957, vol. 1, p. 347-350; Ström, 1975, p. 215). Springs were attributed healing power, which is related to the aquatic symbolism of resurrection and rebirth. The conviction about their healing properties was deeply rooted among the Celts (Eliade, 1966, p. 188-211; de Vries, 1977, p. 228). The relationship with the element symbolizing the primordial chaos from which everything emerged, connects the man, with the mythical dawn and provides him with prophesying power. According to Plutarch (Caesar, 19) “the holy women” of the Germans “foretell the future looking at rivers, from their whirs, currents and the roar of the waves.”

The role of water in the pagan cult of the Slavs was stressed by Procopius of Caesarea, who wrote (III, 14) that Slavimians and Ants “worship (…) rivers, nymphs and some other spirits. They bring them offerings and make divination during the ceremony.” In Thietmar’s relation about Radogoš (VI, 24), where a boar emerging from the nearby lake foreshadows a civil war, water appears as the scenery in which gods’ will is revealed through the oracle or another sign.

Thietmar (I, 3) described also the holy spring of the Dalemincs, and this is the best account concerning a Slavonic cult place connected with water. According to the bishop of Merseburg, the future king Henry I, then only a son of the Duke of Saxony, “when his father sent him with a great army to the land of the tribe that is called Daleminci in German and Glomaci in Slavonic, he returned victorious, having completely destroyed and burnt the country. Now I must relate how the country got its name. Glomaci is a spring situated not more than two miles from the Elbe. Its waters create a large morass, on which, as the people from the area and witnesses claim, strange events happen. As long as the natives enjoy the blessing of peace and the soil is not short of harvest, the morass is covered with wheat, oats and acorns and gives joy to the neighbours who crowd around. Whenever a war rages, blood and ash inevitably mark the future. Each inhabitant reverses and respects that spring more than any church, although what he can expect from it is so uncertain. The whole country spreading from the Elbe to the river Canimizi got its name from the spring.”

In his relation Thietmar contaminated two campaigns of Henry I, king of Germany since 919. As follows from Widukind’s chronicle (I, 35) the first of them took place between 906 and 919; the Daleminco was reinforced by the Hungarians then. The second one was organized around 928/929, when a ten-year peace treaty between the Germans and the Hungarians, concluded in 926, was operative. During that campaign Gana, the capital stronghold of the Daleminco, was captured and its defenders were exterminated (Lowmiański, 1963-1985, vol. 5, p. 262). Widukind does not mention the sacred spring, but we can assume that it lay near the main stronghold of the tribe. Its name has been preserved in the name of the present village Lommatsch in the Oschatz district (Eichler, 1981, p. 206; 1975, p. 67-72). W. Coblenz (1977) interprets the stronghold Burgberg, 7 km from Lommatsch, as remains of Gana, the capital of the tribe. The thesis is supported by such evidence as the size of the object, traces of a fire and the location upon the river Jahna, whose name corresponds to the name of the stronghold that is searched for (Jahna < Gana).

Allegedly Glomac was covered with wheat, oats and acorns in the time prosperity. It is possible to explain this miraculous phenomenon by pointing to the forms of cult that probably gave rise to the mention. According to Kosmas (III, 1), Bohemian villagers, “still half-pagan,” in the times of Břetislav observed the following customs: “on Tuesday or Wednesday of Whitsun tide they killed sacrificial animals at springs or strewed flour and salt for the devils.” Some traces of similar rituals were discovered at the spring in Biskupin (Rajewski, 1970). Thietmar’s text may refer to offerings made in Glomac; we can hypothesise that wheat was supposed to assure the well-being of people, oats – of horses, while acorns – of pigs.

In the fragment concerning Glomac the motif of the spring as a source of fertility, which is one of the most important properties ascribed to water, appears. It is significant that in Midsomer rituals Slavonic girls floated wreaths down the water, which was connected with foretelling marriages (Moszyński, 1968, vol. 2/1, p. 393–398). In this case the fortune-telling is intertwined with the wish for fertility. Primary Russian Chronicle (PSRL, vol. 1, 1926, p. 13–14), describing the customs of Ruthenian tribes, glorifies the Polanians and does not favour their neighbours: “The Drevlans lived like animals and beasts (…) and they had no weddings, but kidnapped maidens at the water.” The method is specified in the description of the
customs of the Radymichs, Viatychs and Severians, who did not practice
weddings either, but organized “merry-making for various settlements; they
met for merry-making, dancing and singing devilish songs, and here they
kidnapped their girls with whom they had arranged it previously.” Kidnap-
ping a wife was a way of marriage typical for Indo-European warnors. The
regarded as a model of Midsummer rituals known from ethnographic
studies. In the Ruthenian sermon Siovo nekoego Khrisotolubtsa there is
a fragment concerning a wedding rite strongly dissaproved by the
Orthodox metropolitan John II condemned those who made sacrifices
to devils morasses and wells (Lowmianski, 1979, p. 136). W. Baumann
(1971) discovered an object interpreted as a lakeside place of sacrifices
at the overgrown Göttwitzer Lake. We have already mentioned the alleged
cult lake from the lowmianski, 1979, p. 136). W. Baumann
(1971) discovered an object interpreted as a lakeside place of sacrifices
at the overgrown Göttwitzer Lake. We have already mentioned the alleged
cult lake from the overgrown Göttwitzer Lake. We have already mentioned the alleged
cult lake from the Little Poland. Traska’s Annales (year 1278) recorded a story about a lake in the Cracow diocese, in which the devil resided disturbing the fishing. In winter a procession with crosses and church banners approached the lake and a monster with a goat’s head and red eyes was caught, but the people fled in panic at the sight of it, leaving the crosses, so the monster managed to escape. Other sources only generally refer to the
worship of water (Kosmas, I, 4; III, 1; Homiliariun de Opatovitz,
vol. 138b, 225b; Löwmiavski, 1979, p. 136).
Thus, the Slavs had sanctuaries in which the main sign of sacrum was
water. One of them, Glomač, functioned as the central shrine of a tribe, but generally water only accompanied other cult objects. Such was the
situation in Radogož, where the role of the lake in the myth and cult was
recorded by Thietmar. Waterside location seems to have been a recurrent feature of Slavonic temples, and this pattern reappeared in some open-air
sanctuaries.

Medieval written sources, except of very general references (Helmold,
I, 84; Kosmas, I, 4), do not bring any information about sacred stones.
Numerous rocks surrounded by folk legends await studies. Some of them
are marked with mysterious signs, viewed by folk mentality as footprints or
handprints of a saint, or on the reverse, traces of devil’s claws (Baruch,
1907; Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego, 1890, vol. 1, p. 465; Moszyński, 1968, vol. 1/2, p. 248–249; Fischer, 1928, p. 206; Wienecke,
1940, p. 42–49; Haase, 1939, p. 177–180; Gieysztor, 1982, p. 170; SSS, vol. 2, 359; Makarov, Khrenesov, 1988). Some were called “divine feet,” which is
an old expression. In the document from 1281 in which prince Mestvin
endowed the Cisterian nunnery from Zarnowiec with the village Słwićin,
the border of the land bestowed on the nuns was delimited “straight through
the grove to a certain stone (...) called divine foot [Bozistopka]” (Pomme-
Thus we also mention a large rock called Buskam, which means “a god’s stone,” standing out from the sea 300 m from the coast of Rügen, near Göhren (Witkowski, 1970, p. 376). It was the subject of many legends written down in the 19th c. (Holstein, 1947; Haas, 1921, p. 53–54).

Stones played an important role in the enthroning ceremonies of Slavonic rulers (Shupecki, 1992a). A prince sat on a stone, whose tough matter symbolized eternity and permanence, and which marked the centre of the cosmos as omphalos, the hub of the universe (Eliade, 1966, p. 230–233), sanctifying the ruler by placing him in the centre of his domain. The stone throne gave the ruler majesty and power. Such stones were usually located on hills and mounds, quite often situated not in strongholds, but – at least originally – in fields serving as places of gatherings for all the subjects (Banaszkiewicz, 1986a, p. 458–459; Treščik, 1985, p. 291; Labuda, 1966; Eliade, 1966, p. 231; de Vries, 1956–1957, vol. 1, p. 345–349; Jedlicki, 1927, p. 483).

From Slavonic examples, most information about the enthroning stones
of Carinthian princes and Bohemian Pfémydyl dynasty is accessible. In Carin-
thia the prince was initially elected by the assembly of warriors-free peas-
ants. Since 828 the Emperor imposed the ruler, but in the enthroning ritual,
presented in the old form, an important part was performed by the Slavonic
kosezi, half-peasants, half-nobles. The throne of the Carinthian princes cons-
ists of several stone plates which support a base of a Roman column,
come from the ruins of the former town Vrinum, on the foundations of which Knski Grad, the Slavonic centre of Carinthia, the land named after
this town, was built. The throne had stood in a suburb of Knski Grad,
from where it was transferred to a museum in Klagenfurt in the 19th c.
(Grafenauer, 1952, p. 146, 242; P. Korošce, 1986, p. 104; SSS, vol. 2, p. 139,

The enthroning rite of Carinthian princes is described in various
sources, which have been exhaustively studied by B. Grafenauer (1952). Schwabenspiegel says that the prince should be elected by free peasants.
They appointed one of themselves as a “judge” (rihter), who asked whether
the candidate proposed by the Emperor “seems suitable and good and
whether he is desirable for the country.” When the majority decided that it was the case, the enthroning ceremony took place during the
assembly: “And they dress him in a grey robe and gird a red belt on him,
adding a large red sack (...), to which he puts his cheese, bread and
his provisions, and his hunting horn fastened with red thongs. They also
dress him in shoes decorated with red embroidery and a grey cape
and a Venetian hat with a grey cord selvage. Then they mount him on a horse which has never been used for work and lead him to a certain stone, lying between Glanegg and the inn at St Mary's church. They walk him three times around the stone and everybody, children and adults, women and men, sing their Venetian songs, praising the Lord and Creator for giving them a ruler at their will" (Labuda, 1954, p. 116-118, 120-122; cf. Schönbach, 1900). John of Victring (II, 13) added that the first person to seat on the enthroning stone was "a free peasant holding with one hand an ox of mixed colour and with the other a mare of akin colouring, wearing country clothes, shoes and hat. The new prince comes (...) deprived of his clothes and dressed in a cape, hat and shirt of grey wool, thong shoes, and with a stick in his hand." The peasant asked "whether he is a righteous judge, concerned with the well-being of the country and worthy of the honour?" When the present agreed, and the elect paid a ransom consisting of money, the cattle held by the peasant, his clothes and the promise to free the peasant's farm from tribute, the latter, having lightly snapped the prince on his face, made room for him on the throne. "The prince, standing on the stone throne, turns to all directions with a naked sword, assuring everyone that he will administer justice honestly.

There are several dozen of such thrones preserved in Slavonic territories (Lešny, 1990; Kurnatowska, 1977, p. 153).

The throne of the Přemysl dynasty has not survived, but according to Kosmas (I, 36), in Prague there was "an elevated place, called Žiží, in the middle of the town." Probably from that place, in 1004, a trumpeter sent by the Bohemian prince summoned the inhabitants to rebel against the invading Polish army of Boleslaus the Brave. The stone throne was probably situated in that area. It is mentioned in the ninth-century legend about St Wenceslas, who assumed the throne of his ancestors, which means that it had existed at least since the times of his grandfather Bořivoj (Třeštík, 1985, p. 290). Then the throne appears twice in Kosmas's chronicle (I, 42, II, 50).
It is described in detail in *Annales* written by the Prague canon Vincent. In 1142 Vladislav II fought with rebelling nobles, and leaving Prague, charged with the task of its defense his brother Theobald “and a number of knights who were very eager to defend the town and the prince’s throne, which was a stone, still located in the middle of the town, for which not only now, but for a long time many thousands of warriors have died in battle” (*Vincenti Pragense Annales*, year 1142). The location in the middle of the town suggests that the throne stood on the Žiží mound, to which Kosmas referred in identical words. Near the place Bofivoy founded St Mary’s church. Archaeological excavations proved that it had been situated outside the original stronghold of Prague. According to D. Tfeštik (1985, p. 290–291), this means that Bofivoy, christened by St Methodius, erected the church before the construction of the stronghold, through which he entrusted the place of enthroning and assemblies to the power of Christian God. Then he surrounded it with the ramparts of his stronghold, founding Prague and terminating the period of tribal democracy.

The myth of the Přemysl dynasty (Kosmas, I, 5–8) exposed the fact that its founder, the ploughman Přemysl, had been of peasant origin. A straight analogy to the enthroning rite of Carinthian princes can be drawn here. Hence, we should also expect a stone throne in Gniezno, where Gallus Anonimus (I, 1–2) sets the similar legend about the peasant origin of the Polish Piast dynasty. Unfortunately, the only trace of a throne in Great Poland recorded in written sources comes from Poznań. It was situated on the island in front of the Holy Virgin’s church. In 1247 Přemysl II was seated during the assembly there and issued one of his documents “*in trono ad sanctam Mariam*” (*Kodeks Diplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, 1877, vol. 1, no. 264, p. 221; Kürbis, 1980). The Wawel Hill in Cracow had its mound, possibly also with a throne. On the 27th of January 1229 prince Henry the Bearded adjudicated the conflict between the abbot of Tyniec and comes Žegota “in the town of Cracow, when we set as the jury with out nobles on the mound near St Michael’s church” (*Kodeks dyplomatyczny klasztoru tynieckiego*, 1876, vol. 1, no.7, p. 14–15). T. Wojciechowski (1951, p. 269–272) hypothesised that it was an ancient place of adjudication, going back to the pagan tradition, and it was the site of the trial and execution of bishop Stanislaus (the 11th c.), who opposed the king, and in the 13th c. was cannonized and recognized as a patron saint of Poland.

On the basis of the document issued by king Přemysl Ottokar in 1228, mentioning “*Kralov stol*” (kings’ throne) preserved until now (Pojsl, 1979), we can also suppose that enthroning stones existed in Moravia. Nineteenth-century legends refer to the Koningsstuhl rock in Rügen as the place where the rulers of the island were enthroned after their election by the assembly (Haas, 1896, p. 172–173). Also the Norman rulers of Ruthenia had a throne (ibn Fadlan, 212b).
9. Sacred mountains

“A mountain – as M. Eliade wrote (1966, p. 101-102) – is close to the sky and this fact sanctifies it in two aspects: on the one hand the mountain participates in the spatial symbolism of the transcendental (ideas such as “high,” “vertical,” “the highest,” etc.), on the other it is an area strictly reserved for atmospheric hierophanies and thus the seat of gods. Each mythology has its holy mountain, a variant of the Greek Olympus.” The mountain is also connected with the mythical arrangement of the world in the horizontal dimension, as it stands at the intersection of the four directions, the point through which the axis mundi goes (Eliade, 1988, p. 4). Mountains often functioned as sanctuaries. According to Herodotus (I, 131), the Persians “customarily bring offerings to Zeus, climbing the highest peaks.” The Normans settled in England worshiped Odin by sacrifices on high hills (de Vries, 1956-1957, vol. I, p. 345). In Slavonic territories many mountains whose peaks had been surrounded with low stone walls interpreted as constructions enclosing the sacred space were found.

A very good example is Ślęża, the peak of the largest massif in Silesia north of the Sudeten. It seems that this elevated mountain strongly impressed the German army marching against Boleslaus the Brave. Thietmar (VII, 59), on the basis of the relations of the participants of the events, with his own hand wrote in his chronicle about Niemcza that “this stronghold lies in the country of Silesia, which was once named after a large and very high mountain,” and further dictated to a scribe: “That mountain was greatly respected by all inhabitants because of its enormity and of destiny, as the cursed pagan rituals were held there.” The sanctuary had been destroyed by the times of Boleslaus the Brave (early 11th c.), which follows from Thietmar’s using the past tense (Leciejewicz, 1987, p. 125). His chronicle provides us with the only unquestionable information about this sanctuary. All other mentions, as well as archaeological, ethnographic and toponomastic sources used in the extensive discussion over the issue of Ślęża as a pagan cult centre, if disconnected from Thietmar’s words, do not constitute conclusive evidence. Hence, Thietmar has to be treated as a basis for all further deliberations.

Ślęża (Zobtenberg) is the highest peak of the massif. Stone walls surround also two neighbouring peaks: Radunia (Geiersberg) and Wieżyca.
(Mittelsberg, called Mount Kościuszko in the 50s). Apart from the circle around the very top of Ślęża, there are also some other constructions on it, including a "half-moon-shaped embankment" in the middle of its slope. There is also a unique group of impressive stone sculptures in the area. It is most intriguing that some of them, as well as movable stone blocks and rocks, bear the sign of an early medieval stronghold and barrows were discovered. The nearby Sobótka is mentioned as a market place as early as in the mid 12th c. In the 12th c. (the exact date is disputed) a monastery of Regular Canons was founded on the top of Ślęża, but at the end of that century the monks left the place, retaining their nearby estates. Later the mountain bore a chatelaine stronghold and a castle. From the place on top of the massif and the anthro­morphic figures. The anthropomorphic statues from Ślęża lack any convincing analogy whatsoever (Slupecki, 1993, p. 52–55).

If at the present stage of research no conclusive evidence of the pre-medieval origin of the Ślęża cult centre is available, we are entitled to assume that the walls at the peaks of the Ślęża Massif and the anthropomorphic sculptures belonged to the sanctuary mentioned by Thietsmar (Slupecki, 1992). This thesis is supported by the etymologies of the names Radunia and Ślęża. The former has not been devoted due attention so far. The name of Radunia appears for the first time in the aforementioned document issued by Henry the Bearded in 1209, in the description of the borders of the Augustian estate. Interestingly enough, Ruthenian sources bring several mentions about the holiday of Radunisca, one of the stable points of the calendar, which was the second Thursday after Easter. The celebration was a springtime homage to the dead, undoubtedly resulting from pagan tradition. Stoglav says that "near Easter they call [everyone] to dance, jumping, clapping and singing devilish songs" (Mansikka, 1922, p. 112, 129–131). The original location of none of the sculptures is known.
The ritual of worshipping the dead (p. 97, 257-258, 312). We can assume that the name of the peak resulted from the ritual of worshipping the dead celebrated there, similar to the Ruthenian Radunytsa, possibly called Radunia by Western Slavs, which is confirmed by several other local names, for instance of the river Raduna flowing through Gdańsk (Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego, 1888, vol. 9, p. 150-152). The etymology of Ślęża does not show any religious connotations. Attempts at deriving this name from the Germanic tribe of Silings are not convincing. W. Semkowicz (1933, p. 8-12; cf. Korta, 1988, p. 155-156) proposed a better etymology, observing that Ślęża comes from the Slavonic stem slegen, meaning rain and humidity. The identical name, recorded in 1204 as Slężegore (Nalepa, 1956), was given to a hill at the Lutizian border. Ślęża received such a name because of rain and fog prevailing at its peak. Thietmar claims that Silesia (Śląsk) was named after the mountain and his opinion can be trusted. As the example of Dalemician-Giomače shows, some Slavonic tribes inherited their names from their main sanctuaries. If so, the first, indirect proof of the existence of the sanctuary on Ślęża is the record of a pagan sanctuary on this mountain. He who had defeated the great Alexander at this mountain, and ordered to worship himself as goddess Diana. But for such a terrible blasphemy she was immediately punished by God, she found her castle destroyed by thunder and herself with all the servants humiliated. Until now large heaps of stone have been lying there. There was also a temple of three idols, called Lada, Boda and Léi, in this place. Simple people came there on the first day of May to pray and bring offerings. Therefore Dąbrówka, having pulled down their shrine, ordered to erect a church devoted to the glory of the Holy Trinity. She imported six monks from Sazawa and “built for them a small monastery,” later “in the sixth year after the coronation endowed with a greater name and rebuilt in stone” by her son, Boleslaus the Brave (Powieść rzeczy istwy; Krzyzanowski, 1956, p. 269-270; Piekarski, 1930; Slupecki, 1991; Derwich, 1991).

As J. Gacki (1873, p. 18) remarked, the mention about “Diana” from Lysiec corresponds to an episode from the legendary account of Polish history in Master Vincent’s chronicle (I, 9), the story about the war between queen Wanda and Alexander the Great, who allegedly invaded Poland from Moravia, conquering Silesia and the Cracow region. He was defeated by a nurse devised by Lestek, who ordered to prepare silver imitations of shields and to “bring them to a high mountain peak opposite the sun, so that they glittered immensely.” The invader, appalled at the view, was defeated, while the cunning Lestek was elected king. A fifteenth-century Galaxy of Polish Kings (MPH, vol. 3, p. 216) locates Lestek’s victorious battle with Alexander near Lysiec. It is rather logical – if Alexander had earlier conquered Silesia and the Cracow region, nearby Lysiec, visible from a distance, might have been the summit on which the shields glittered. Vincent was understood in this way by his commentators, although it is difficult to decide whether he himself thought so, but such a possibility is worth arguing for.

For Długosz (Annales, I, vol. 1, 1964, p. 101) Lysiec is the most important mountain in Poland. He wrote: “Among mountains I assign the highest position to the Calvary because of its fame and notoriety, and I call it the prince of mountains.” Only afterwards did the Cracow historian list the Cracow Wawel Hill, although it was the royal seat. According to Długosz (Annales, II, vol. 1, 1964, p. 255), Lysiec is the highest peak of the country, “the summit of the mountains called Calvary whose height is unrivalled in
Poland." The central position of the mountain was even more profoundly stressed by Marcin Kromer (Polonia, I, 1589, p. 484), who claimed that Łysiec was situated in the middle of Little Poland (cf. Derwich, 1992, p. 21-22). The mountain is symbolically identified with Calvary (Golgotha), because of the relics of the Holy Cross, the Christian cosmic tree, possessed by the monastery since the 14th c. (Rutkowska-Plachcinska, 1987; Derwich, 1992, p. 438). A sanction of sacrum for such an identification was found. In the vision of St Emeric, recorded in Powieść rzeczy istey (this motif is present also in Długosz and other sources, cf. Derwich, 1992, p. 238-260), which allegedly inspired him to handle the relics of the Holy Cross to the monastery, an angel tells him: "You should know that on the mountain called Golgotha, which translates as Łysa Góra, the Saviour suffered on the cross, which was blessed with His blood, and it is the same which you bear on your chest. Therefore, on behalf of God I tell you to bring the wood of the Holy Cross to the monastery on Łysa Góra" (Slupecki, 1991, p. 378-379). Such an identification must have converged with the older tradition, according to which Łysiec was regarded as the central point of Poland or a part of Poland. Probably Łysiec was not transformed into Holy Cross by coincidence. Hence, Master Vincent might have located the legendary battle of the Poles with Alexander the Great at the foot of this mountain, through which the fight acquired a mythical dimension in the microcosm organized around the peak.

Powieść rzeczy istey lists three deities, Łada, Boda and Leli, and a temple devoted to them. Długosz, however, does not mention any pagan rituals held on Łysiec, although he knew something about Łada, if in his "Polish pantheon" he identified a deity of this name with Mars and devoted much space to Diana, who, according to Powieść rzeczy istey, ruled the Łysiec castle. After A. Brückner, we should probably classify the trinity from Łysiec as a construct of an erudite, modelled after the original invocation of the monastery, and qualify it as a late tradition, echoed in the Polish Olympus created by Jan Długosz. Subsequent chroniclers of the monastery added further names to the list. Wojciech Rudin (1611, card 174), misinterpreting the chronicles of Joachim Bielski (1597, I, p. 51) and Maciej Miechowita (II, 2, 1521, p. 24), equalled Boda and Leli with Castor and Pollux, providing them with a mother, Łada, identified with Leda. Marcin Kwiatkiewicz (1696, p. 1-17) enlarged the original trio from Powieść rzeczy istey with Pogoda (Weather) and Gwizd-Pogwizd (Whistle), drawn also from Miechowita. The only part of Powieść rzeczy istey that withstands criticism is the very core of tradition, i.e. the conviction that Łysiec was a pagan sanctuary. It is confirmed by an excellent description of pagan relics in the merrymaking organized in front of the monastery on Whitsun, when during a fair "trumpets, drums and whistles and other music played, dances and merry capers and other [enjoyment] took place; besides there were many cases of theft, murder and other crimes and disturbances." In 1468 king Casimir Jagiellon at the abbot's wish forbade to hold this fair, which - as was stressed - had not been confirmed with any privilege (Kodeks dyplomatyczny Polski, 1858, vol. 3, no. 222, p. 444-446; cf. Wojciechowska, 1991; differently in Derwich, 1992, p. 272, 488-489).

There is, however, a tentative proof of the existence of some statues on Łysiec. Drzewo żywota z raju (The tree of life from the paradise) by Jacek Jabłoński (1735, p. 10) supplements the motives presented above with the following information: "in the year 1686, picking the rock at a side in front of the Church door [they] incidentally found a place or a bed in which an old Idol in coals rested." The information about that find has been often quoted from Niemcewic's (1858, p. 11-12) relation of his journey to the Cracow region in 1811, which is evidently based on Jabłoński's text. Another possibility is that the sculpture was of Christian provenance. In view of the vivid tradition of Łysiec's pagan past, each statue found in the ground, if it was dilapidated, might have been taken for a confirmation of the legend about idols. It is difficult to guess whether the statue resembled the stone figure of the "Pilgrim," standing at the road from Nowa Słupia to Łysiec, mentioned for the first time in sources in the 18th c. (Derwich, 1992,
Fig. 71. The stone walls around the peak of Góra Dobrzeszkowska. 1 - the internal wall; 2 - the middle wall; 3 - the external wall; 4 - the wall across the ridge; 5, 6 - steps hewn in rock. After E. Gąssowska, 1979, p. 124.

This sculpture is an intriguing problem unsettled until the present day (Reinfuss, 1989, p. 26-29, Gąssowska, Kuczyński, 1975), it seems that the closest analogies are the baba-stones of the steppe peoples and similar sculptures from Podolia, probably of Slavonic origin.

The excavations carried out on Łysiec by J. and E. Gąssowscy (1970, p. 28-43), severely criticised by historians (Déwich, 1992, p. 176-179) resulted in a plan of the walls and established that the culture layer around them was formed between the 7th and 9th c. According to J. Gąssowski, thanks to a clear stratigraphy of one of the sites, it was also possible to delimit that the wall was built between the 8th and mid 10th c. According to E. Gąssowska and Z. Woźniak (1980), in 1979 traces of a transverse wall were also found there. No traces of holes, houses or fire-places from the Middle Ages were discovered (although many pottery fragments were found), which allowed to exclude the dwelling character of the structures on Łysiec. The attempts at dating this site to earlier period (Gąssowska, 1975; Łowmiański, 1979, p. 231) are unconvincing, as they are based on the analogy between the wall on Łysiec and the walls on Ślęża (Déwich, 1992, p. 37), whose early dating is doubtful.

There are also several other peaks surrounded with stone walls too low to be regarded as any defense structures, not mentioned in any sources. We can list the archaeologically explored walls on Góra Dobrzeszkowska (Gąssowska, 1979), Góra Puszcza near Przysucha (Déwich, 1982), and remains of walls on Góra Grodowa in Tümlin (Kuczyński, Pyzik, 1967), all dated to the early Middle Ages. No excavations have been carried out in the interesting walls around Góra Chelmno (Kamińska, 1958), which according to Długosz (Annales, I, vol. I, 1964, p. 104), was "the mountain of the Sieradz region" with "a brick church surrounded with seven deep moats, founded by Peter, comes of Skrzyño." All those hills belong to the Świętokrzyskie Mountains. There were some suppositions concerning a similar function of the walls encircling Palenica in the Silesian Beskid Mountains (Szydłowski, 1968) and the hill Grodzisko near Jaworzno, on which no
traces of settlement activity were found (Nowogrodzka-Gedlowa, 1969). Several objects with plans resembling those of the Polish mountain sanctuaries have been recently discovered on high hills of Podolia. The most interesting of those finds seems the mountain Bokhod upon the river Zbruch, where, in the opinion of the Ukrainian researchers, the original place of the statue called Sviatovid from Zbruch was found (Timoshchuk, Rusanova, 1983; 1986). The same archaeologists (Timoshchuk, Rusanova, 1988; Rusanova, 1989, p. 60–63; Timoshchuk, 1993) discovered another object of alleged cult function on the mountain Zamczysko-Zvenigorod.

Fig. 73. The alleged sanctuary on Bogit mountain. The stronghold. The cult circle. The alleged base of Sviatovid from Zbruch. From B.A. Rybakov, 1987, p. 238 (after B.A. Timoshchuk & I.P. Rusanova).

Fig. 74. An old plan of the area where Sviatovid from Zbruch was found. After G. Leńczyk, 1964, p. 10.
Further three hills viewed as sacred mountains are situated in Pomerania. In Rowokol, where a chapel of St Nicholas recorded in 1281 existed, some constructions interpreted as remnants of a sanctuary were excavated, but the results have not been properly published (Filipowiak, 1967, p. 9-10; Buske, 1970, p. 35-39; Malinowski, 1986; SSS, vol. 4, p. 560). Góra Chelmska appears in written sources as early as in 1214, when prince Boguslaus II endowed the monastery in Białoboki with the village of Koszalin, located “near Chelm,” in 1263 there was already a chapel there (PUB, vol. 6, part 2, 1907, no. 3958; Buske, 1970, p. 17-35). Excavations carried out by H. Janocha (1966; 1974; 1988) disclosed obscure remnants of an alleged sanctuary, but attempts at interpreting them as a temple are unconvincing. The existence of a pagan cult place on a mountain near Polanów is a sheer fantasy (Buske, 1970, p. 17, 39-40). German researchers would like to interpret as sanctuaries the hills Landsberg and Petersberg near Halle in Saxony (Brachmann, 1987, p. 49-52). Other supposedly sacred mountains are Bielboh and Czorneboh in Lusatia (Wiebecke, 1940, p. 277-280; Nedo, 1964; Łomiański, 1979, p. 189; Gieysztor, 1982, p. 81).

Not all the objects presented in this chapter can be regarded as explored to a degree that would justify their interpretation as sanctuaries. Many, including Ślęża, call for further investigation. Nevertheless, both written sources and excavations carried out so far point to the fact that mountains had an important function in Slavonic pagan cult. They were often separated from the surroundings with stone walls, some of them closed, some only marking the half-circular borders of the taboo space. Moreover, many sanctuaries of other types were situated in elevated points. Thus, the universal idea of a mountain constituting the centre of the world was not alien to the Slavs. It appears also in Slavonic mythical traditions.

10. The sacred mountain in the Slavonic myths of settlement

The conviction that a mountain is the centre of the world appears in Slavonic myths about taking possession of a country (Slupecki, 1993b). The seizure of the symbolic centre opens a possibility of ruling over the whole territory (Banaszkiewicz, 1986a). It is not a coincidence that – as we remember – in Ruthenian tradition Kiy founded his stronghold on the Kiev Mountain, where a sanctuary of Perun, mentioned by the Primary Russian Chronicle (year 945, 980, 988), had existed. The chronicler tried to add the Christian sacrum to the place by recording the legend that Apostle Andrew established the cross on the Kiev Mountain.

In the mythical tradition of Bohemia, southern Little Poland and perhaps also Great Poland, the act of settlement was accomplished by capturing the peak that marked the centre of a territory. In Bohemia the central point from which the country was taken into possession was the mountain Rip. As Kosmas (1, 2) wrote about the origins of his country, the man “looking for places suitable for dwelling sites (...) founded the first settlements and built the first houses near the mountain Rip, between the rivers Ohřa and Vltava, and he rejoiced in the idols set on the ground, which he had brought on his shoulders. Then the elder, accompanied by others as a sovereign, spoke to those who followed him in this way: ‘Friends, many times you have endured hardship [going] thorough wild forests with me; stop and make thanksgiving offerings to your gods, who helped you to reach this fatherland destined for you for a long time.’” Kosmas described it as a land of milk and honey. The leader urged the assembly: “‘If such a beautiful and large country came to your possession, think about a suitable name for it.’ They immediately said, as if induced by divine oracle: ‘Could we find any better name than Bohemia, as you, father, are called Bohemus?’ The name Rip is of Germanic origin and means simply “a mountain” (SSS, vol. 4, p. 637). Rip is an elevated hill, reaching 436 metres, standing alone at the bank of the Elbe in the very heart of the Czech Valley, between the estuaries of the Vltava and Ohřa rivers, very close to the most important Old-Bohemian strongholds: Levy Hradec, Prague, Libušín, Tetín, Libice and Kouřim (Vana, 1985, p. 29-30). The summit of Rip is topped with
a rotunda under the invocation of St George since 1126 (earlier possibly of St Adalbert), erected probably at the turn of the 11th c. (SSS, vol. 4, p. 637–638).

The symbolic centre of the southern Little Poland was Wawel in Cracow. This low hill does not seem to have the status of a “mountain,” but the mythical significance of mountains does not follow from their height. Jan Długosz Annales (1, vol. 1, 1964, p. 101) considered Łysiec-Święty Krzyż (Holy Cross) the most important mountain of the Polish Kingdom, but as the second one he listed “Wawel, as it houses the highest authority and bears the royal castle.” The significance of Wawel (and Cracow) is evident from the fact that apart from Gniezno it is the only spot in Poland connected with legendary traditions and myths. The main figures of Cracow legends are Krak and the Dragon. The earliest source concerning the subject is Master Vincent, who probably did not record all the myths that had survived in the oral tradition until his time. Kronika polska-śląska (Polish-Silesian Chronicle, MPH, vol. 3, 1961, p. 609), relating the legend about Wanda, Krak’s daughter, comments that “numerous fantasies” were told about her. Most probably the same could be said about Krak. Master Vincent (Chronica Polonorum I, 1, MPH, vol. 2, 1961, p. 251–252) was interested in the following problem: “in whose times, can we conclude, did our state system originate?” Moreover, as Brygida Kūbris suggests (1976, p. 166), he used the legend of the origins of Cracow for a specific literary and didactic purpose. Therefore, it was unnecessary to present all the details of the oral tradition.

This is what Master Vincent selected: Krak, to whom he gives a literary name of Gracchus in accordance with the taste of the epoch, first appears in the chronicle as the leader of the Poles, who are fighting in Panonia. After battles with Galls and Romans, while organizing the conquered territories, which reached from the land of Parthians to Bulgaria and Carinthia, the Poles appoint governors and “elect as their prince a certain man called Gracchus.” But the conquerors soon grow indolent, some of them die of poison, some fall under the influence of the natives. Then, Gracchus with his people sets off to another country. Although Krak enjoys the position of the prince, at that time Poland is allegedly ruled by a primitive democracy in which the main authority is the counselling assembly. This phase, however, is soon over. “Many men desired a share in power. Therefore, Gracchus, returning from Carinthia (...), summons all the people to the assembly (...), promises that if they elect him, he will not be the king, but the associate of the kingdom (...). So everyone salutes him as the king. And he decides about the order, proclaims laws. In such a way the origin of our state law emerged and was born” (Master Vincent, I, 3–5, MPH, vol. 2, 1961, p. 254–255). The above is a description of an assembly which elected a fully sovereign ruler, a dynast who proclaimed law. The act concerned the tribe, the community that was gathered at the assembly.

The issue of territory appears in the myth immediately after that episode. Until that moment Master Vincent did not associate the Poles with any particular and stable country or stronghold, only Krak’s election can be located on Wawel or in the neighbouring area, which, however, had to be gained. “Because in the windings of a certain rock lived a terribly cruel monster, whom some called Whole-eater (Holophagus). His greed had to be weekly satisfied with a specified amount of cattle in accordance with the number of days. If the inhabitants did not supply the cattle, as if some offerings, they would be punished by the monster by losing the equal number of human heads. Gracchus, unable to bear such a calamity, as he was a more loving son of his country than a father of his sons, secretly called his sons and presented [to them] his plan, supplying the advice. He says: ‘Bravery does not agree with cowardice, white hair with foolishness, youth with indolence. (...) So you, our favourites, who both have been raised in accordance with our principles of conduct, you should arm yourselves in order to kill the monster, you should step forward to fight with it, but without endangering yourselves [too much], as you are a half of our life, and you will inherit this kingdom.’ To which they answer: ‘Indeed, we could be regarded as poisoned with stepsons’ hatred if you did not appoint us with such a honourable task! It is your privilege to order and our duty to obey’. So, when they experienced the honest combat and vain contest many times, they were finally forced to resort to a ruse. Instead of the cattle they left in the usual place animal skins stuffed with burning sulphur. And when the Whole-eater devoured them greedily, he suffocated because of the flames inside. And immediately did the younger [son] attack and kill his brother, the partner in victory and the kingdom, not as a comrade, but as a rival. He follows his corpse shedding crocodile tears. He lies that the monster killed him, and the father welcomes him joyfully as the victor.” He was the one to succeed Krak. Further, Master Vincent (I, 5, 7, MPH, vol. 2, 1961, p. 256–257) writes that he was longer defiled with fratricide than awarded with power, as his deception was soon discovered and he was banished for his crime. Only then was old Krak properly honoured: “on the Whole-eater’s rock the famous town was founded, and named Gracchovia [Cracovia, Cracow] to immortalize the memory of Gracchus. And no sooner were the burial ceremonies finished than the building of the town was completed. Some called it Cracow because of the croaking of crows, which flew to the monster’s carcass. And the senate, the nobles, and the whole tribe felt such a great love for the dead king, that they chose his only daughter, called Wanda, as his successor.”

Master Vincent’s tale is not a simple etymologic legend. Krak, whom we would expect to kill the dragon and found the town, does not play this role. The dragon is killed by his sons. The name of the town (Kraków in Polish) is explained by two divergent etymologies: one derives it from Krak’s name, the other from the croaking (krakanie) of crows. Master Vincent opts for the
former explanation, but notes also the latter one. The founding of the town is preceded by the extermination of the dragon.

B. Kūrbs (1976, p. 165) differentiated three motives in Master Vincent's story: the most important didactic motive of the state, the motive of the struggle for power leading to fratricide, and the motive of killing the dragon by ruse. The dragon is a pretext to show Gracchus's care for his subjects and to reflect on the duties of a good ruler, whose figure is contrasted with the figure of the son overwhelmed with the desire to rule. In the tale dominated by rhetoric, the motive of the fight with the dragon is rather weakly exposed. The moralistic and didactic character of the story prevailed over the mythical value.

It seems, however, that another motive is central here, as the legend of Krak is a myth about the origin of the Cracow state. Krak is allegedly the first ruler and legislator of the Vistulian state. The beginnings of the royal rule and the law are in a way connected with the foundation of the town of Wawel. It is first found in The chronicle of Great Poland (Kronika Wielkopolska, I, 1, MPH, vol. 3, 1961, p. 608) follows exactly the scenario provided by Master Vincent, but the author tried to explain why Krak had not fought with the Dragon himself, saying that he had been very old. The chronicle of polish princes (Kronika książąt polskich, ch. 3, MPH, vol. 3, 1961, p. 431) makes Krak the author of the idea of stuffing animal skins with saltpetre. In none of the texts mentioned so far did the name of Wawel appear. It is first found in The chronicle of Great Poland (Kronika Wielkopolska, I, 1, MPH, vol. 8, 1970, p. 8), which claims that Krak was the founder of Cracow, but does not include the motive of the dragon in the story. According to this chronicle, the Lechitians, who initially did not know the institution of the ruler and chose from themselves "twelve wiser and richer [men], who adjudicated their conflicts and governed the country (...), afraid of an attack from the Galls, unanimously elected a very venturesome man called Krak, whose seat was then near the Vistula, their starost or leader of the army (...), as in Polish translation the leader of the army is called wojewoda; (...) the mentioned Krak, who is called corvus in Latin, as the victor, was elected king by the Lechitians. He built a stronghold, which was named Kraków after him, and earlier had been called Wąwel. Wąwel is the name of a certain swell that people living in the mountains usually have because of drinking water; therefore the mountain where the stronghold of Kraków is now situated was called Wąwel (...). People say that this [Krak] had two sons and one daughter; one of them, called Krak the Younger, deceitfully and secretly killed the elder brother to succeed after his father, but he died childless, so only the sister survived, who was called Wanda, which in Latin means hamus or fishing-rod ['wpda]." Krak's advancement from the rank of the army leader in the primitively democratic community of the Lechitians to the institutionalized, hereditary royal rule, is described here in accordance with Master Vincent's record. Only the motives of the dragon and migrations to Panonia disappeared, and the whole myth was firmly set at the Vistula.

The name of Wawel is also mentioned in the text of the same legend by Jan Długosz. In accordance with Kronika książąt polskich, he makes Krak the author of the saltpetre ruse, but he separates the motives of fratricide and the killing of the dragon. According to Długosz (Annales, I, vol. 1, 1964, p. 125–127), Krak himself erects a castle on Wawel and locates his throne there, and founds the town of Cracow at the foot of the hill. Unfortunately, "in a cave under the Wawel hill, where Krak erected the castle, an enormous monster lived. He looked as a dragon or Whole-eater (Holophagus), and to satisfy his greed he snatched cattle and swine that were thrown to him, and even attacked people. When tortured by prolonged hunger he could not find an accidental or offered victim, he rushed out of his hiding with terrifying roars at daylight and swooped on the most robust cattle, horses or oxen drawing carts or ploughs, he murdered and killed them, and harassing also the people if they did not hide in secure [place], he filled his stomach with their massacred bodies. His greed threatened the inhabitants of Cracow to such an extent that because of such a dangerous destroyer they were more inclined to leaving the town than to dwelling there any further. By the order of prince Krak, who grieved for the outflow of inhabitants which hampered the development of the town that he had founded, every day three animal carcasses were given to the monster, whose satiety secured not only the people themselves, but also other creatures. But finally it became more troublesome for the prince than for the inhabitants, and he was afraid that the town would be totally deserted after his death, so he ordered to stuff the carcasses prepared for the dragon with sulphur, rot, wax, resin and tar, set on fire, and threw them to the beast, which, having devoured them with usual greed, immediately fell and died of the heat of flames consuming his inside."

Another issue stressed in this version is the motive of Krak-legislator. He provides the Poles with their laws, and after his death his grateful subjects erect a high sand grave in the memory of the founder of the town (Długosz, Annales, I, vol. 1, 1964, p. 126–127; cf. Jan Dąbrowka, ed. M. Zwiercan, 1969, p. 126). The existence of Krak's mound is a significant piece of evidence for Cracow being the most important political centre in Little Poland in tribal times (H. Łowmiański, 1963–1985, vol. 4, p. 456–457). Already in the times of Długosz (the 15th c.) the famous "Krak's mound" was referred to by this name. The so-called mounds of Krak and Wanda, existing until the present moment, are dated to the 8th c. (Jamka, 1965, p. 183–233; SSS, vol. 2, p. 513; Kotlarczyk, 1979, p. 52–62). As late as in the 15th c. Krak's mound was the scene of relic pagan rituals incorporated into the folk culture, called Stado (Potkański, 1924, p. 3–42). Długosz (Annales, I, vol. 1, 1964, p. 127–132), who knew Bohemian chronicles, identified Krak with Kroki, so he mentioned Lubaś as his daughter ruling over Bohemia together with Přemysl. Krak's elder son, called Lech by Długosz, when struggling for the throne, murders his brother, Krak the Younger. Then he
is banished, and as the male line is extinct (the chronicler notes the version that Lech was sterile), the throne is inherited by Wanda. Hence, Długosz, like the author of Kronika Wielkopolska, regarded Krak as the founder of Cracow, contrary to Master Vincent, Kronika polsko-ślaska and Kronika księży Polskich, in which the town is founded to commemorate him. Did he revert to the authentic Cracow tradition neglected by Vincent, or was it a secondary attempt at adopting the tale to the canons of the epic dimens? It would seem, however, that Długosz adopted the ever-greener motives of the old tradition, as his version does not conclude the list of the legend's records.

Marcin Bielski (1551, p. 161), who was the first to write the story in Polish, supplemented it with the motive of the dragon dying of drinking too much water, which has been functioning in Polish folk tales until now. The beginning of his story follows Długosz's version, but the end of the dragon is different: "which [the dragon] having spotted the calf, devoured [it], and when it was burning inside him, he drank water until he burst out." The late Gracchus was allegedly "buried on the Lasotna mountain according to the pagan custom. On his grave they heaped a large round hill and sodded it, and it still stands in front of Kazimierz [part of Cracow]." Marcin Bielski, like Długosz, separates the fratricide from the issue of the dragon, saying that the crime was committed during a hunt. Joachim Bielski (1597, p. 30) added the motive of shoe-maker Skub and recorded the names of Wawel and Smocza Jama (Dragon's Cave). In his relation it was Krokr, who "founded the Castle on the mentioned rock of Wawel. He transferred the royal capital from Gniezno to Cracow, as the latter place seemed to him more suitable and easier to defend." This version tries to combine the Cracow tradition of Master Vincent, according to whom Poland originated in Little Poland, with the dominant vision of Gniezno as the cradle of the state. In order to liquidate the dragon, Krokr ordered "to stuff a calf skin and to put it in front of the cave in the morning, which he did following the advice of Skub, a certain shoe-maker, whom he later generously rewarded. He [the dragon] went out of the cave, saw something like a calf and devoured [it] altogether; when it was burning inside him, he drank so much water that he died. There is still his cave beneath the castle, called Dragon's Cave." According to the legend of the Abdnak coat of arms, recorded by Bartłomiej Paprocki (vol. 1, 1858, p. 216), Skub, who received the coat of arms with the letter W because of the dragon-snake (wąż), was the ancestor of the Abdanec family. Marcin Kromer (Polonia, II, 1589, p. 20), a contemporary of Marcin and Joachim Bielski, did not include the version about shoe-maker Skub and the dragon bursting because of the excess of water. The legend of the Wawel Dragon was known also outside Poland (Piezia, 1971, p. 21-32).

It is evident that until the late 16th c. the legend reappears in new variants. If Długosz's version may be suspected of a literary character, motivated by his wish to arrange the episodes logically, the same cannot be claimed about the texts of M. and J. Bielski, who added new motives of clearly folk provenance, rooted in topographic details. Multitude of motives is a natural feature of oral tradition and it is unnecessary to reconstruct the "development" of the Cracow saga about the dragon. A more interesting problem is its structure.

The legend comprises the following motives: 1) Krak-legislator, the first ruler and founder of the state, who never appears as a warrior and never fights with the dragon face to face; 2) the founding of the town - connected with the figure of Krak and the killing of the dragon; 3) struggle with the dragon - the monster ravages the land and only after he is killed is it possible to found Cracow, or, in those variants in which Cracow already exists when the dragon appears, the death of the monster makes the development of the town possible. The dragon is defeated by the king's sons, but they manage to succeed only by a ruse, which is a common mythical motive. The ruse is a stable element of the legend, also in the variants in which the king's sons do not face the beast. In the latest records the cunning antagonist of the dragon is shoe-maker Skub. The struggle with the dragon is sometimes connected with fratricide, but some variants separate these motives.

Let us now analyse the legend. The Dragon does not oppress a particular settlement (in some versions Cracow is still non-existent at the time of the beast's appearance), but the whole country. His tyranny is nearly religious in character: in Vincent's words if the inhabitants did not supply the monster...
with a specified number of cattle heads, "as if some offerings," they would be punished "by losing the equal number of human heads." The country, haunted by the monster, is inhabitable. The dragon resides in its centre, in the cave beneath the Wawel Hill, which towers over the wide bed of the Vistula. According to the etymology proposed by W. Taszczynski (1955), the name of Wawel means a mountain situated upon a river (SSS, vol. 6, p. 341–342). Thus, the struggle with the dragon is located in the sacred centre of the area and influences the whole microcosm orientated in relation to Wawel.

The motive of fighting with a dragon, common in Slavonic culture, belongs to the universal mythical store. Karol Potkański (1965, p. 208–209), commenting on the Cracow legend, referred to the struggle of Indra with Vritra. So what kind of creature was the Wawel Dragon and what was his Slavonic name? Master Vincent does not use the Latin word draco, but consistently calls the monster holophagus (Whole-eater, that who devours the victims whole), which is probably his own Greek-style coinage. It may be just Vincent's erudition show-off — Grecisms belonged to his favourite style — or the name holophagus better corresponded to the sense of the Slavonic word that appeared in the legend, which does not entirely exclude the former explanation. The Bielski, who were the first to write the tale down in Polish, call the Wawel monster smok (dragon), while Latin texts later than Vincent show significant variations. The word smok is known in Old Church Slavonic; A Brückner (1885a, p. 503–504) connected it with the verb smoktat (suck), claiming that the very nature of the mythical beast was swallowing everything (cf. Linde, 1951, vol. 5, p. 351; Moszyński, 1968, vol. 2/1, p. 468; Kurbiis, 1976, p. 170–174). If so, the expression Holophagus renders the sense of the Slavonic word better than draco. A similar creature was called Zmij (He-Viper). K. Potkański (1965, p. 209), referring to folk legends, wrote that in the Ukraine "an enormous Zmij devours people. It wrestles with them and imprisons a smith. Zmij, already captured, drinks all the water of the Boh and then Dnepr, and finally runs to the sea, but it has swallowed so much water that it dies. In Poland the folks in some areas call the rainbow a dragon which drags water from the earth to the sky." Similar information is quoted in K. Moszyński (1968, vol. 2/1, p. 468). In Bulgarian legends Zmij fights with the demons of thunder and hail, but if it settles in a village, drought comes and it has to be ceremoniously expelled by a ritual in which fire plays the main role.

Ryszard Tomicki (1974, p. 490; cf. Kowalczyk, 1977, p. 192–212) proposed a structural interpretation of the role of dragon (Smok) in Slavonic folk mythology. In his account Zmij is Smok's opponent, but they share many features. Two names, however, signify two different creatures. The opposition between Zmij and Smok is followed by a number of structural contrasts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zmij</th>
<th>Smok</th>
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<tr>
<td>fire up light</td>
<td>water down darkness</td>
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Elements of this network can be detected in the legend of the Wawel Dragon (Smok Wawelski). In all the versions his death is caused by fire and heat coming from the salt petre and sulphur with which he has been fed. He bursts of the excess of water, which he "drinks like a dragon" to extinguish the fire, just like the Ukrainian Zmij (Moszyński, 1968, vol. 2/1, p. 624). As M. Plezia (1971, p. 25–31) proved, the motive of the "sulfuric" ruse may be of literary origin, but no source related to the Cracow legend mentions the drinking of water. The dragon lives in the lower sphere, in a cave under Wawel. After the victory Krak builds the stronghold in the upper sphere, "on the dragon's rock." The dragon represents the powers of darkness and chaos, the fact that he snatches people "at daylight" — as Długosz puts it — arises astonishment. Krak, a legislator and mythical hero, represents the "light" side of the opposition, law and order. The dragon, a calamity for the whole local microcosm, has to be defeated at the dawn of the history, to make the land habitable and the building of the town possible.

But who is the killer of the dragon? The legend does not mention Zmij. V.V. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov (1988, p. 11–12; 1974, p. 175–177) claim that the name of Wawel can be included into toponyms connected with Veles, whom they view as the opponent of the god of thunder, consequently they interpret Krak as a figure similar to Perun, the Thunderer and killer of the dragon. Although this conception is really exciting, it has got a weak point. In none of the legend's versions Krak is the killer of the Dragon or faces the monster in battle. In the Cracow myth the role of the ruler and legislator honoured with the full power and majesty was not to fight, but to govern. According to Dumézil's classification he is an obvious representative of the secular, legal aspect of the leading social function.

Another similar figure is the Bohemian Krok. When the Bohemians settled around the Řip mountain showed the desire of possession, which calls for authority, they came to a person, who was considered more refined in manners and affluent (...) without any official or seals, out of free will — and preserving their freedom they debated over controversial matters and the harms that they did to each other. Among them there was a distinguished man called Krok, whose name is known as the name of a stronghold, now overgrown with trees, in the forest near the village of Zbeeno." He was a rich man, "constant in deliberating over judgments, to whom like bees to the hives all people, both of his own clans and of the tribes of the whole province, came for adjudication" (Kosmas, I, 3). Krok had no sons, but in the legend his three daughters were endowed with supernatural powers: Kazi was a herbalist and witch, Tetka a priestess of pagan rituals, while the youngest Lubuša a diviner (Kosmas, I, 4). The dynasty of Přemyslids allegedly descended form the latter (so in the female line from Krok) and the ploughman Přemysl. Krok bears some resemblance to Krak. He is not the first dynast and legislator (just like Piast, the legendary ancestor of the Polanian dynasty) — the legend ascribes both those functions to his
son-in-law, Přemysl — but he is presented as the ideal judge, a tribal leader. Krok, like Krak, does not leave a male heir, but his daughters resemble Wanda because of their magic powers. It is not him, but the father Bohemus (Čech), who gave the name to the country, still there is a stronghold named after him.

The myths concerning the origins of various Slavonic countries and dynasties were drawn from the common thesaurus of traditions and images, transferred into various local versions, undoubtedly with a contribution of some foreign influence. It seems that this tradition produced the two variants of Krok-Krak, a hero connected with the legal order, who could also be the mythical legislator and the sovereign ruler and state founder as well as the ancestor of the dynasty, though only in the female line. Hence, contrary to some reservations (SSS, vol. 2, p. 521), Krok is not an artificial character. The name Krak is well known in West-Slavonic territories (e.g. in Pomerania), just like the local names derived from it: apart from Kraków (Cracow) upon the Vistula, there is Krakow in Western Pomerania/Vorpommern and the Czech Krakovec (SSS, vol. 2, p. 506). The meaning of the name Krak has not been sufficiently explained so far, it is sometimes derived from kruk (crow) or oak (Latin quercus) which is supposed to motivate the identification of the Wawel hero with Perun (SSS, vol. 2, p. 506, Ivanov, Toporov, 1974, p. 174–177; E. Kowalczyk, 1976, p. 240–245).

Krak commands his sons to kill the Dragon, and they answer in the words that Vincent borrowed from Gratian’s Decrees: “It is your privilege to order and our duty to obey.” It is also their duty to fight. The motive of the opposition between the sovereign old age (Krak) and the active, courageous youth (his sons) is very important. It can be found for instance at Livius (I. 3, 5–6), who contrasts the completely powerless Numitor with the brave twins, Romulus and Remus. Imitating Master Vincent’s style we could say that indolence does not become the youth while fighting does not become the old age. Therefore, the young heroes are obliged to struggle with the monster, which is a typical test of military abilities (Shippeki, 1987, p. 145). They have to demonstrate their value as warriors in order to gain the honour of succeeding their father.

The struggle with the monster is meant to enable the tribe to inhabit the area around the centre, which is Wawel. The fact that the motive of the consecration of this place is intertwined with the fratricide reminds again of the legend about the origins of Rome, in which one of the brothers had to die for some important reason (Livius, I, 7). The lack of space does not allow us to analyse this motive properly. The main character of the Cracow myth is Krak: the hero, the founder of the town and the state, the legislator with the full power of the secular sovereign. He lacks the magic power, which, however, is represented by his daughter, Wanda. Krak’s sons represent the war function. The story is set in the moment of the beginning, its core is the foundation of the state and the origin of the legislation organiz-
vol. 2, 1961, p. 258), “the Allemanian tyrant” (Banaszkiewicz, 1984), who attacked Wanda’s kingdom as her unsuccessful suitor, struck with the queen’s power, threw himself to his sword, saying: “Let Wanda govern the sea, the earth, the sky, let Wanda make sacrifices to eternal gods for her [people], and I am making a solemn sacrifice for you, my dignitaries, so that (...) you grew old under the female rule.” Although Wanda, like Gracchus, has got an artificial name, she is an authentic character of the Cracow myth. The only problem is that while her father can be easily identified with Krak, Wanda’s Slavonic name has not been recorded. H. Łowmiański (1963–1985, vol. 5, p. 322–324) supposes that its original shape was Wisłąwa. As we have already mentioned, Krak’s daughter with her magic power resembles the three daughters of the Czech Krok, with whom eponimic legends are connected. According to Kosmas (I, 4), Tetka was the lady of Tetin and Libuś of Libuśin. From Wanda “allegedly the name of the river Wandal comes, as it constituted the centre of her kingdom, therefore all her subjects were called Wandals” (Master Vincent, I, 7, MPH, vol. 2, 1961, p. 258). According to H. Łowmiański, the relation between this construct of Vincent’s erudition and the authentic Slavonic myth is as follows: Wanda corresponds to Wisłąwa, Wandal to Wiśla (Vistula=Wandalus) and Wandals to Wiślanie (Vistulanians=Wandles).

Łowmiański’s hypothesis quite convincingly reconstructs the basic elements of the myth about Wanda-Wisłąwa, connected with the river considered the centre of the state, and the name of the tribe. The legends refer to sacrifices. The “Allemanian tyrant’s” words may be interpreted in two ways: either Wanda sacrifices herself, or just makes a sacrifice to the gods. The sacrifice to “the underworld gods,” made by her opponent, would be logically paired by her own death. Master Vincent (I, 7) is vague at this point: Wanda, “as she did not want to marry anyone, and valued virginity higher than marriage, passed away leaving no heir.” It is not stated how and when she died, although the text suggests, that Wanda lived a long and virtuous life after the triumph over her opponent. Kronika Wielkopolska (I, 1, MPH, vol. 8, 1970, p. 9) explicitly says that she sacrificed herself to the gods and drowned herself in the Vistula. Długosz says that this act was preceded by thirty-days-long prayers in shrines and mentions a mound erected in Wanda’s memory in the village Mogila near Cracow (Długosz, Annales, I, vol. 1, 1964, p. 131–132; Długosz, Liber beneficiorum, vol. 3, p. 422–423; Jan Dąbrówka, ed. M. Zwiercan, 1969, p. 126; cf. SSS, vol. 6, 1977, p. 314). In these versions the victory is bought for a self-sacrifice, while Wanda’s relation to the river named after her attains a tangible, magically motivated sense.

Thus, Wawel and the Vistula marked the mythical centre and axis of a certain area, which should be interpreted as the Vistulanians’ state. The Wawel rocks, mirrored in the waters of the Vistula, saw their “very powerful pagan prince,” who sitting “on the Vistula abused Christians very much and did much harm to them” (The life of Methodius, XI, 2). Perhaps the abuse and harm included pagan cult practised in a presumed sanctuary on Wawel.

The motive of the settlement of a formerly nomadic community – without any mention about a mountain – reappears in the late record of the legend about the foundation of Gniezno (Długosz Annales, vol. 1, 1964, p. 105–106, 110). The existence of some tradition concerning the origins of this town is also confirmed earlier, by Gallus Anonimus (I, 1; cf. Dalewski, 1991).

Wawel and Rip symbolized the central points of Little Poland and Bohemia respectively. Both mountains were the scene of taking the surrounding land in possession by the settling tribes. Traces of a similar myth are present in the tradition of Great Poland. The myth of the origins of Kiev, on the other hand, although refers to the foundation of a stronghold on a mountain, lacks the motive of the tribe migrating from another area.

Mountains, having the role of the axis of the world, were believed to facilitate the contact with supernatural powers. On Rip thanksgiving sacrifices for the successful settlement were held. The Wawel Dragon’s cave suggests relations with the underworld. Both Wawel and Rip may have functioned as sanctuaries, like Śleza or Łysiec. While Rip soon lost its role in the living tradition, Wawel has retained its rank of a magic centre of cult and authority in the consciousness of the Poles throughout centuries until now.
11. Statues of gods

Not all religions allow to picture God, gods, saint or heroes: judaism and islam forbid it, while Orthodox Church permits icons but not sculptures. In pagan religions, however, like for instance with Celts, images of deities appear regularly. Only Germanic peoples are sometimes claimed to have avoided picturing their gods (Ström, 1975, p. 114), which is based on the words of Tacitus (Germania, 9) who stated that the Germans did not erect gods' effigies. The same Tacitus (Germania, 40), however, mentioned an effigy of the goddess Nerthus. Some, although not abundant, information about statues of Germanic gods comes from early medieval sources (de Vries, 1956-1957, vol. 1, p. 385-389). Scandinavian records bring much more ample data, some of which have been mentioned above in connection with temples. Many Scandinavian images of gods and heroes have been preserved until today, mainly in the form of reliefs on stone steles from Gothland (Nylen, Lamm 1991). Scarce wooden relics, such as the famous boat from Oseberg, richly decorated with carvings, confirm the information contained in sagas, that in pagan Scandinavia valuable compositions were created also of wood (Piekarczyk, 1979, p. 105, 111, 112, 129).

The thesis that the old Balts did not erect effigies of gods, advanced by A. Brückner (1984, p. 167), seems doubtful. The so-called Prussian baba-stones, known from the territory of Warmia and Mazury (north-eastern Poland), can be interpreted as Baltic idols. The view that they were images of the dead, prevailing until the recent time, was based mainly on their resemblance to the classical stone figures from the Euro-Asiatic steppe zone (Demetrykiewicz 1910; La Baume, 1927; Lęga, 1929, p. 414-426; Daszkiewicz, Tryjarski 1982; SSS, vol. 1, p. 66-67). If, however, we assume the existence of the effigies of heroes (if the dead were represented in sculptures, they attained the status of heroes), we should also consider the presence of gods' statues possible. Some Slavonic and Prussian sculptures show certain resemblances: there are striking analogies in the arrangement of hands and identical attributes - a drinking horn and a sword (SSS, vol. 4, p. 243). All Prussian baba-stones are one-headed and one-faced.

The stone figures of the Prussians and many Slavonic examples are impressively similar to the stone sculptures of Turkish steppe peoples, which have the form of characteristic one-headed statues of sandstone, limestone
or granite. The male figures usually wear caps or helmets, sometimes cuirasses, and almost always weapons: a sabre, a bow and a quiver. That type of effigies occurs throughout the territories stretching between the Chinese Great Wall and the basin of the Dnestr. According to J.P. Daszkiewicz and E. Tryjarski (1982), they were sculptured in far Asia since the 6th to the 9th c. AD, while in central Asia and Europe even until the 13th-14th c. In Russia and the Ukraine that type of figures is referred to by the word baba (= old woman, crone), which seems to be of clearly Slavonic provenance, but it may have been a secondary folk etymology. The statues of old Turks were accompanied by schematically carved stones, called balbal, representing the enemies whom they had killed. The name is derived from the Persian word phalavan (= hero, warrior, his statue but also - log and fool). The all-Slavonic word balwan, attested in Igon Tale as a term for “statue,” may also mean a pagan idol, a log, a fool and a snowman. It is generally believed to have come from the East and grouped with the Persian phalavan, Kirghizian palwan and Turkish balbal. Also baba may be derived from the same root (Daszkiewicz, Tryjarski, 1982, p. 12, 25-26; Slawski, vol. 1, 1952-1956, p. 26; Machek, 1968, p. 44; Gieysztor, 1982, p. 186). The Turkish influence, probably mediated by the Avars, does not equal sheer imitation. The Slavonic sculptures clearly differ from the Turkish ones, the former are often multi-headed, which is never the case with the latter.

There were many words for “statue” in Slavonic languages. The word balwan has already been mentioned. As far as Eastern Slavs are concerned, we should pay attention to the word kumir. Primary Russian Chronicle uses it when referring to the statue of Perun in Kiev (year 980, 983, 988; cf. Srezeznovskiy, vol. 1, 1955, p. 1362-1363). No clear etymology of the word has been established (Vasmer, 1953-1958, vol. 1, p. 692). It might have been known also in Poland, as the name of the village Komierowo near Bydgoszcz indicates (Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego, vol. 4, 1883, p. 309). The word that meant both “prayer” and the image of a deity to which prayer was addressed was modla, the equivalent of “statue” in Old Polish (Witkowski, 1970, p. 379-380; Gieysztor, 1982, p. 160; A. Brückner, 1988a, p. 343; Jakobson, 1983, p. 4-5). Finally, effigies of gods could be designated as posag (= statue, etymologically - a wooden log) and slup (= pole). Similar words of identical meaning appear in Germanic and Baltic languages (A. Brückner, 1988a, p. 483, 502; Gieysztor, 1982, p. 187; de Vries, 1956-1957, vol. 1, p. 375). At least balwan, modla and slup may have been pan-Slavonic terms for idols. The thesis that the Slavs had no common name for “statue” (Gaüssowski, 1971, p. 565; Urbanczyk, 1962, p. 151-152) is based on false assumptions (like the analogical view concerning the word for “temple”).

Statues have not been discussed in the previous chapters, as a mention about an image of a deity or a fact of discovering a sculpture do not settle

the question of the type of shrine in which it was worshiped. A mention about an idol may point to the existence of a sanctuary, but it is not always a reliable proof. In Latin texts mentions concerning the worship of statues appear as synonyms of idolatry in general and then they are merely formulaic expressions (Wienecke, 1940, p. 190-192, 241-256; Łomiański, 1979, p. 158-159, 192-214). Despite that, some fragments concerning idols in general, coming from the time close to the moment of Christianization, are worth attention (Kosmas, I, 4; III, I; Helmold, I, 84; Homiliariu de Opatowis, 138b; Primary Chronicle, year 986; FHRS, 1931, p. 7, 12-13, 58; cf. Łomiański, 1979, p. 205-206). The formulas, although schematic and subject to the vision of paganism presented by the Church, were nevertheless used to describe reality, an element of which were statues. Their occurrence in Slavonic territories was attested not only by Latin, but also Scandinavian, Ruthenian and Arabic sources, as well as by archaeological finds (Szpecki, 1993).

Most of the available data concerns the statues of the Polabian Slavs. Some of them have been mentioned in connection with the survey of the
Henry of Antwerp wrote:

Brandenburg, after the times of pagan princes, ( ... ) called times, only two centuries the pagan tribe of the Bear, margrave of Brandenburg, to keep the throne at the price of accepting Albert as priest at relevant temples. Now we should add some information about the statue of Triglav from Brandenburg - Slavonic Brenna (Nalepa, 1952; Strzelecky, 1991). The beginnings of this sanctuary may date back to the Slavonic uprising of 983. According to Thietmar (III, 17), when the town, the seat of the bishop, had been captured, "instead of Christ and his virtuous fisherman Peter, various idols conceived of devilish heresy were worshiped, and this miserable change was praised not only by pagans but also by Christians." Apparently, brutal German rule had been hard on everyone. Although in the subsequent period the stronghold changed hands many times, only two centuries later did the Slavs lose it definitely. Since 1127 Brenna was the seat of prince Pribislav-Henry, a Christian who ruled the pagan tribe of Stodorans until his death in 1150. He had a Christian priest at his court and built a chapel under the invocation of St Peter in his capital. Threatened by the danger of conquest and forcible Christianization of his people, he based his policy on an alliance with Albert the Bear, margrave of Brandenburg, which allowed the childless prince to keep the throne at the price of accepting Albert as his successor. As Henry of Antwerp wrote: "many years after the foundation of the town Brandenburg, after the times of pagan princes, (...) Henry, called Pribislav in Slavonic, a worshiper of Christ's name, (...) was elected prince of this stronghold and the whole adjacent territory (...). In this town an abhorrent idol with three heads was worshiped and generally adored as a deity in deceit of the people." In this relation Pribislav-Henry "persecuted idolaters and put to death various frauds and (...) with his loyal spouse Petriissa struggled for desired peace in the name of God." When he died, his wife concealed this fact from the subjects for three days, until Albert's army arrived, and as "she knew the inclination of this land's inhabitants to worship idols, she surrendered the country to the Germans, because she was far from approving the wicked cult of idols." The margrave "expelled from the town the pagans notorious for crimes and frauds and poisoned with the impurity of idolatry" (MGH Scriptores, vol. 25, 1880, p. 483; Kahl, 1964, vol. I, p. 486-495). After struggles with Jaza of Köpenick, who regained Brenna for a short period, Albert the Bear managed to defend his succession after Pribislav-Henry, and definitely seized the stronghold in 1157 (Kahl, 1964, vol. I, p. 334–339). Henry of Antwerp's text indicates that at the moment of Pribislav's death the sanctuary of Triglav was still functioning, which is proved by the mention about Petriissa, who could not bear the cult of idols. Consequently, it must have been Albert the Bear who destroyed it.

Henry of Antwerp describes the sanctuary rather laconically, but he mentions a specified, three-headed statue. Chronica Episcopus Brandenburgensis Fragmenta (MGH Scriptores, vol. 25, 1880, p. 484-485) provides its name, stating that Pribislav, "when he became a Christian, destroyed the idol with three heads that stood in Brandenburg, which was called Triglav in Slavonic and worshiped as a god, and other idols." Although in the matter of the idol's destruction and Pribislav's role in this act Henry of Antwerp should be considered as the older, more reliable, source (in which, nota bene, Pribislav is presented as a Christian even before his accession to the throne), the identification of the three-headed idol with Triglav cannot be questioned. According to Henry of Antwerp, the statue stood in the stronghold. Another location follows from The Chronicle of Saxonian Princes (MGH Scriptores, vol. 25, 1880, p. 481), in which we read that Albert the Bear "destroyed the idol which had stood in Brandenburg in front of the old town, on a hill, and numerous other [idols]." It seems that for Henry of Antwerp the word "town" signified the whole urban complex of Brandenburg, including the stronghold, the suburbs and the hill close to one of them, which was initially devoted to Triglav, later called Harlungsberg, and finally, after the foundation in 1222 of St Mary's church (which survived until 1945), renamed Marienberg. The excavations carried out in the area by Horst Geisler (1960, 1962) revealed only minute traces of a layer with scanty relics of the late Slavonic epoch. In later tradition Triglav turned into the goddess Trigla, which was mentioned by Monachus Pinnensis, Sabinus and Petrus Albinus (Kirfel, 1948, p. 86-94; Łowmiański, 1979, p. 177, note 448).
Other written sources bring less information. Saxo Grammaticus (XIV, p. 763) mentions that in 1160 king Valdemar “burnt Rostock, which had been cowardly abandoned by the inhabitants, without any trouble. He also ordered to burn a statue, which pagans (...) had held in highest respect like a heavenly deity.” Rügen had other statues aside from the effigies from Arcona and Garz. Knytlingasaga (ch. 122) says: “The fifth god [of the Rans] was called Pizamar, he was in Asund, [because] such is the name of this town, this one was also burnt.” In this town after the baptism of Rügen a church, mentioned in 1250 as “ecclesia de Yasmund,” was erected (PUB, vol. 1, 1868, no. 522, p. 404). The name has been preserved in the names of the Jasmund Peninsula and Jasmund Bay. Remains of Asund were searched for in this area and now it is assumed that it was located near the present settlement of Sagard (probable Slavonic name Zagrodzie), which was mentioned in 1318 in connection with some relics of a stronghold (PUB, vol. 5, part 2, 1905, no. 3234; Corpus DDR, vol. 2, p. 113–114; Haas, 1918, p. 30–32).

The most significant examples of Slavonic sculpture were found in Fischerinsel. Already in the 19th c. this island intrigued researchers who supposed that Radogošć had lain there. In that time the remains of a bridge that had used to connect the island with the mainland were discovered (L. Brückner, 1887; Schildt, 1887). The foundation act of the monastery in Broda, forged in the 13th c. (after 1244), allegedly issued in 1170, mentions as a possession of the monks “the stronghold Wustrowe [Ostrowie] with the village,” which was probably situated in Fischerinsel, while the continuation of the village-suburb is the settlement Wustrow, existing until today opposite the island. The exploration of Fischerinsel carried out by Eike Gringmuth-Dallmer and Adolf Hollnagel (1970, 1971, 1973) revealed two wooden statues in two locations far from each other. They were found in the culture layer dated to the 11th–12th c. Unfortunately, the reconstruction of the full plan of the settlement or stronghold is still rather remote. Most of the formerly larger island is now under water, which conserved the statues, but impeded the excavations. Both statues were found at the border of the layer accessible to excavation work. No traces of a sanctuary to which the statues might have belonged were discovered.

The first idol, reaching 1.78 m in height, represents a double male bust with two heads, with clearly visible abundant moustache, large eyes and noses, set on a hewn wooden column. The heads seem to be covered with caps. It is the first – and so far the unique – Slavonic example of monumental multi-headed wooden sculpture. The other figure, which appears more
primitive, is 1.57 m high. It shows a female with clearly exposed breasts. Both are carved in oak wood. They are the only monumental Slavonic wooden sculptures discovered in archaeological excavations and dated thanks to the culture layer (Jahrig, Gringmuth-Dallmer, 1973). The statue of "twins" is interpreted as a trace of a Slavonic version of the Indo-European cult of Dioscuri-type deities (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 152-153), which were often accompanied by a goddess. We should recall here the anonymous war goddess mentioned by Thietmar (VII, 64).

Other presumable Slavonic sculptures unfortunately lack well explored archaeological context. At the end of the 19th c., during amateur excavations in Behren-Lübchin, an oak-wood pole, sized 15 cm x 15 cm x 1.5 m, topped with an image of human head with clearly visible face, was found.
(Beltz, 1910, p. 381-382, fig.70). E. Schultd (1965, p.9) supposes that the site where the sculpture was discovered was a stronghold and dates it to the 11th–12th c. It resembles the planks from the shrine in Gross Raden, so it might have been an element of the interior of a temple (cf. Hensel, 1969, p.366; Kostrzewski, 1962, p.351). Behren-Lübchin is one of the best explored strongholds of Polabia. It was a stronghold of the Zirzipans situated on an island. It is dated between the end of the 10th c. and 1171, when it was destroyed by the Danes. After the reconstruction it was besieged again in 1184, and therefore it appeared in the text of Saxo Grammaticus’s chronicle (XIV, p.884, XVI, p.982) under the name of Lubekinca. Another find analogical to the poles from Gross Raden is the plank from Ralswick, mentioned above.

In 1857, during the regulation of the river Rhin, a sculpture of tough oak wood, 1.62 metre high, representing a man, was found in Altfriesack. Radiocarbon dating of a sample of the wood allows to conclude that it was sculptured in the 6th–7th century AD. The nearby stronghold, from which it might have come, is dated to the 7th–8th c. (Herrmann, 1980a, p.24; Corpus DDR, vol. 3, p.114).

Two heads of wooden statues were found in Poland. In Jankowo near Mogilno, during the cleaning of a canal separating an island on Pakoskie Lake from the mainland, an oak-wood male head with a beard and moustache, sized 22.5 cm, was found (Stwuka polska przedromancka i romanska, 1971, vol.1, p.316, vol.2, p.397). The neck of the sculpture contained a hollow, which served to fix the head on a corpse sculpture or a post. Near the place of the find on the island there is an early medieval devastated stronghold (Hensel, 1953, p.187-193). A similar head with a fragment of bust, preserved in a worse condition, was found near the village Dąbrówka near Radomsko in 1950. The sculpture, thrown ashore by the Warta river, represents a male face with moustache, eyes and a trace of a broken-off nose. The head is 29 cm high, while the whole fragment reaches 45.5 cm. The figure was carved in alder wood (Gozdowski, 1951). Both Polish finds of presumed heads of idols might be interpreted as results of destroying sanctuaries – Ruthenian sources bring relations about pulled down sculptures being drowned in rivers – but it is only a supposition. There are no finds of monumental wooden sculptures from Ruthenian territories; only recently was the information about a statue from Kiev published (Vindukur, Zabasht, 1989, p.68). The circumstances of this discovery are not known.

We could also mention two sculptures without dating, found in Braak near the town Eutin in former Vagria, ascribed to the Slavs (Jankuhn, 1957, p.130–133). Another wooden sculpture was probably the statue found at the border of the villages Maliszewo and Trzebiegoszcz near Lipno in the area of Dobrzyń, now known only from a description. K. Jazdzewski (1936) collected several fragments of the sculpture destroyed by peasants in 1936. They "contained (...) pieces of charred wood in tar mass." This concludes the list of monumental wooden sculptures that can be ascribed to the Slavs.

There are many examples of stone sculpture in Slavonic territories. We have already mentioned the statues from Ślez, which are of uncertain origin. H. Łowmiański (1979, p.158) expressed the view that "it is possible to eliminate from Slavonic mythology all non-wooden figures (...) diligently collected by archaeologists," basing this conviction on the description of Slavonic statues expressed by a Christian Varangian in Primary Chronicle (year 983): "these are not gods, but wood." This thesis should be rejected, as it is based on a Biblical catchword. More significance should be ascribed to other texts, even to the semi-fantastic Life of St Avraamly Rostovskiy, compiled in the 14th–15th c., which mentions a stone statue of Veles, destroyed by the saint by a stroke of his magic stick (Mansikka, 1922, p.290–293).
We know several stone figures from Polabia. First, there is a granite plate sized 1.19 x 1.68 m, incorporated into the thirteenth-century wall of the vestry of the church in Altenkirchen. The relief on the plate represents a man with moustache, wearing a long robe, with a large horn in his hands. As David Chytreus (1586, p. 35) testifies, already in 1586 the plate was in its present place and was called Jaromirstein (Jaromir's stone). The interpretation of this relic as a primitive Christian gravestone - possibly from the grave of Tetislav, Jaromir's brother, baptized in 1168 (Holtz, 1966, p. 20) - is unconvincing. The way in which the plate is set in the wall depreciates the represented figure, which is situated upside down. The relief lacks any Christian symbols, while the large horn, Sventovit's attribute, stands out very clearly. Following a local legend, David Chytreus interpreted the Altenkirchen plate as an effigy of Sventovit. In the 18th c. the relief was accompanied with painted words: "Sanctus Vitus oder Svantevit," which is now hardly visible. This tradition survived in the folk culture until the 19th c. (Haas, 1896, p. 7).

Another plate of similar size is built into the exterior surface of the wall of the Holy Virgin's church in Bergen. It shows a man with his hands crossed on his chest, holding a cross, which, however, replaced an earlier, removed carving (Holtz, 1966, p. 10, 19).

Two granite plates built into St Peter's church in Wolgast contain not reliefs, but pictures, engraved in stone in a rather primitive manner, presenting human figures. One of the stones, sized 193 x 117 cm, lies in the foundations of the late-Gothic tower and is called Gerovit's stone (Gerovivstein). The drawing represents a man with a spear, sitting or standing on a hill. Over his head there is a Maltese cross, which was carved later than the whole composition and effaced the spearhead. A similar stone (84 x 44 cm) is situated in the passage around the church choir; it shows a man with a spear, wearing a long robe with fringes. Over his head there is a cross added later (Holtz, 1966, p. 11–12; Buske, 1984, p. 30, 41). A similar drawing in stone, sized 125 x 66 cm, was built into the wall of St Peter's church in Slupsk (Holtz, 1966, p. 14; SSS, vol. 5, p. 308). Another, less renowned stone with reliefs exists in Stolpe near Anklam. One side of it bears an image of a man, the other - of a cross and a horn (Holtz, 1966, p. 13; Filipowicz, 1993, p. 40).

No analogical monumental relics have been discovered in southern Polabia, Bohemia and Slovakia. The statue from Holzgerlingen belongs probably to Celtic culture (Schlette, 1987, p. 159), the idols from Bamberg resemble stone "crones" (Leńczczyk, 1964, p. 42), while late records concerning the statue of Triglav from Meißen (Kryfel, 1948, p. 88; Łomiański, 1979, p. 177) and the sculpture from Zadel (Coblenz, 1960, p. 8) are rather controversial. Polish and Pomeranian territories, besides the aforementioned engraving from Slupsk, supplied several finds. In 1856 in Łeńno near Kartuzy an engraved stone reaching 80 cm in height, now kept in the Archaeological Museum in Gdańsk, was discovered. The reliefs covering three sides of it show a rider, a standing man and a man with a horn in the right hand (Lega, 1929, p. 419–421; Łuka, 1973, p. 78). Two small statues come from Powiercie near Koło: one of them is a figure holding a vessel or a ritual cake in front...
Fig. 88. Sculptures from Braak near Eutin. After H. Jankuhn, 1957, table 7.

Fig. 89. Sęta. "The maiden with a fish". The archives of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

of her (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 198; Sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska, 1971, vol. 1, p. 315, vol. 2, p. 747; SSS, vol. 4, p. 243). Further examples come from Łubowo near Szczecinek (Staliński, 1957), Malocin (Grzymkowski, 1976), Żydowo near Sławno and Słupca near Szczecin (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 198). K. Jażdżewski (1936a) recorded the discovery of a four-faced stone statue “as tall as a fourteen-years-old child,” which the owner of the field broke in pieces and sold as material for the construction of a road. All those finds can hardly be qualified as monumental sculptures. This type can be, however, represented by the aforementioned statue of “Pilgrim” from Łysiec.

Some information about statues may be also traced in late written sources. Maciej Miechowita in his chronicle (1521, p. 24) follows Długosz’s story about the destruction of pagan statues in Poland, and claims that in his youth he saw three pagan idols broken into pieces next to the Holy Trinity church in Cracow. In the 19th c. Chećiny near Kielce had two sculptures called Baba (Old Woman) and Dziad (Old Man), now lost (Sokołowska, 1928, p. 131; Gioger, 1978, vol. 1, p. 88; cf. Reinfuss, 1989, p. 26-29). Some new finds of that type were reported (Glosik, 1986).

Ruthenia abounds in stone sculptures. They were found in the areas of Novgorod, Sebecz, Pskov and Akulinino (Sedov, 1981, p. 71; 1982, p. 264-265; Gurevich, 1954. An interesting two-faced statue reaching 1.7 m was found near Yaryvka in Bukovina (Timoshchuk, 1976, p. 91-91). From the former Polish territory (now the western Ukraine) we know the stone idol from the village Kalusz (Kalus), representing a man with a horn in his hand, as well as many other examples, some of which seem to belong to the Turkish-type “crones” (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 192-194; Vinokur, 1967, p. 139-141; 1970; 1972, p. 107-108). In 1939 a stone idol head was discovered near Slonim (Stabrowski, 1939), while in 1970 two other sculptures were found near Kobryń (Nikitina, 1971). I.S. Vinokur and P.V. Zabashta (1989, p. 66, 68) reported further finds from Kreminne, Yagniatin, Yurkevise and Shklov. In Łopuszna near Rohatyń there is a large sculpture,
which originally reached 5 m, and was reshaped into a cross, so only the feet of the original figure have survived. It probably used to represent two bodies leaning against each other's back, which can be induced from the two pairs of legs visible up to the knees (Antoniewicz, 1921, p. 98-101; Sokolowska, 1928, p. 126-128).

Two stone statues were found in Stavchany in Podolia. The bigger one shows a bearded man in a cap, holding a horn in his hands. The back surface of the sculpture realistically imitates the shape of human back, under which a horse is engraved, so in a way the person is "sitting" on a horse. The other, smaller object only vaguely resembles a human figure. The style of the sculptures, which suggests early medieval dating, questions the relationship between the statues and the settlement of the Cherniakhov culture revealed around the place of the find (Vinokur, 1967; 1970; 1972, p. 109-113; SSS, vol. 4, p. 241-242).

In 1950 in Ivankovtsi near Kamenets Podolsky a four-sided pole with images of human faces preserved on three sides was discovered. It was set vertically in the ground, only slightly slanted. It was 1.8 m high and reached the depth of 70 cm below the ground level. Braychevsky and Dovzhenok's excavations (1967) revealed a number of scattered holes and traces of huts around the statue. The discoverers interpret the object as a sanctuary belonging to the Cherniakhov culture from the 3rd-4th c. AD, although apart from the pottery typical for that culture, the site contained also Slavonic pottery of the Luka Raykovetska and Pastyrsko type. The relation between the statue and the holes around it has not been proved. Probably the sculpture was erected over the remains of a former settlement. As it shows close resemblance to the so-called Sviatovid from the Zbruch, it should be classified as a Slavonic relic. Other finds from Ivankovtsi included a herm with the top modelled as a head reaching 2.35 m, and a similar broken figure nearly 3 metres long.

The most magnificent example of Slavonic stone sculpture is the so-called Sviatovid from the Zbruch. It was found in this river near Liczkowice...
in 1848, and later transported to Cracow, where it has survived until today. Identifying the place where it had originally been situated seemed impossible until the recent excavations carried out in the area of the river Zbruch by B.O. Timoshchuk and I.P. Rusanova which suggest that it had stood in an impressive sanctuary surrounded with ramparts on the Bogit (Bohod) mountain. The base of the statue had probably been set in the middle of a stone circle with eight hollows, which is believed to have been a cult circle. The statue, described in the most exhaustive way by G. Lenczyk (1986), is made of limestone, reaches 2.57 m in height and has got a square cross-section. The reliefs decorating it form three layers of pictures. The four top sculptures are connected by the common four-faced head covered with a broad-brimmed cap. On each side of the pole another aspect of the deity is presented. On side A the deity is shown as a figure (regarded as female by some researchers) with a horn in the right hand; it is paired by a female figure in the middle layer. Side B contains also an allegedly female representation, with a ring or bracelet, and a female figure below. Side C shows a man with a sabre and a drawing of a horse, under which a male figure is situated. Side D is a man without any attributes and another figure of the same sex beneath. The bottom layer represents Atlas, whose portrait does not extend to side D, on which only a trace of a small circle was detected.
Oil side A Atlas is presented en face, which indicates that this side should be regarded as frontal.

J. Kollarczyk (1988; 1993) interprets the pole from the Zbruch as a solar deity. A. Łapiński (1984; 1987) and Z. Krzak (1992) claim that the composition of the idol represents the cosmic axis organizing the world. The symbolic model that he proposes stresses that the Zbruch pole in its horizontal plan projects the four quarters of the world, while in the vertical one – three spheres. Łapiński’s other thesis that they are the spheres of fixed stars, the sun and the moon is, however, questionable. There is a simpler, older and more convincing interpretation, according to which the upper figures, larger than the rest, are gods or a god, those in the middle are people, while the bottom treble one – a chthonic deity (Gieysztor, 1982, p. 187). A. Łapiński constructs also another model, in which the relief’s symbolize Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring. Although personifications were not alien to the pagan mentality of the Slavs, the attributes present at the Zbruch sculpture are known from other statues, which suggests that we should rather try to identify the figures as effigies of gods. From Łapiński’s sophisticated concepts only the idea of the axis of the world establishing the four directions and three spheres, withstands criticism.

The question arises whether the Zbruch pole pictures one or more deities. B.A. Rybakov (1987, p. 236-251), who detected phallic symbolism in the sculpture – which is somewhat surprising in view of its square cross-section – simultaneously concluded that on the whole it represents Rod, while the separate sides of the top layer show: Mokoš with the horn of plenty (A) as the mother of harvest, Lada with the ring (B) as the goddess of spring, love and marriage, Perun with the sword and horse (C) as the god of thunder and war, and finally Dažbog (D), interpreted as the god of the sun and light on the basis of the barely visible circle. The figure of Atlas is supposed to be Veles, who in one of his incarnations is identical with Triglav and connected with the underworld. The two latter hypotheses appear highly

Fig. 94. Wolgast. Gerovitstein. St Peter’s church. After Kunst und Kultur der Slawen in Deutschland, 1965, fig. 70.

Fig. 95. Wolgast. The picture from a stone incorporated into the wall of St Peter’s church. After N. Buske, 1984, p. 30.

Fig. 96. Slupsk. The picture from a stone plate from St Peter’s church. After SSS, vol. 5, 1975, p. 308.
Fig. 97. The rock from Leżno, presently in Archeological Museum in Gdańsk. Left: the “horse-rider”, right: the human figure. After W. La Baume, 1927, table 3.

Fig. 98. Left to: Statues from Powiercie near Kolo, presently in Archeological Museum in Cracow (after A. Gieysztor, 1982, p. 165, 167). Right: The statue from Lubowo near Szczecinek (after A. Staffński, 1957, p. 217).

Fig. 99. Łysiec. The stone statue called St Emeric or Pilgrim, standing at the foot of the mound in Nowa Słupia. Photo A. Ring.

probable, but the proposed identification of the effigies from the top layer is rather doubtful. The fact that the idol, although four-faced, has got one head, indicates one deity with four aspects (Kotlarczyk, 1987, p. 38; 1993, p. 57–58). No one has interpreted the four-headed, not only four-faced, statue of Sventovit from Rügen as a representation of four deities. The horn, held by figure A, is known as Sventovit’s attribute. The supposition that A is a female portrait is based only on the assumption that the figures from the upper and the middle layer are of the same sex. The alleged shape of breasts may have been a by-product of sculpturing the horn. If so, we have to reject the intriguing possibility that the Żbruch deity was androgynous (Szymański, 1973, p. 160). Figure C has got a sword and a horse, which appear at the images of war gods of Perun’s type, like Sventovit and Rugievit.
Fig. 100. Stone statues from Ruthenian territories. 1 – the area of Novgorod, 2 – Slonim, 3 – the area of Pskov, 4 – Sebezh, 5 – Akulinino, 6 – the two-faced idol from Yarivka. The faces arranged as in images of Janus. (From V.V. Sedov, 1982, p. 287–288). 7 – the statue from Kalus (After J.S. Vinokur, 1972, p. 108).

Fig. 101. The statue from Łopuszna near Rohatyn, turned into a cross. A pair of legs which remained from the former sculpture is visible in the front. After J. Sokolowska, 1928, p. 127.

Figure B has been qualified as female only because of the accompanying picture from the middle layer. The ring in its hand, eagerly interpreted as a symbol of marriage, is rather a bracelet, one of the Germanic symbols of priesthood (de Vries, 1956–1957, vol. 1, p. 386–390). The Scandinavians decorated statues of gods with bracelets, they were worn by priests during rituals. Bracelets were also known in Ruthenia, which is mentioned in Primary Chronicle (year 945). Thus, the Zbruch deity shows the four aspects of its nature: the absolute, though passive sovereign (figure D without any attributes), the warrior (figure C with the sword and horse), the priest and cult patron (figure B with the bracelet), and the patron of harvest, similar to Sventovit in his agrarian function. If we accept the reconstruction of the Slavonic pantheon proposed by A. Gieysztor, the only god of such features can be Perun. Traces of red paint on the Zbruch idol (Kozlowski, 1964, p. 64) supply another argument for this thesis, as red is the colour of war deities.

Quite recently, in an alleged sanctuary on the mountain Zamczysko-Zvenigorod, a steep hill upon the Zbruch several kilometers from Bogit, a primitive stone idol of square shape was found. Only fragmentary results of the excavations undertaken there have been published so far (Rusanova, 1992, p. 62; Timoshchuk 1993).
Fig. 102. The idols from Stavchany and the place where they were found. a – stones; b – burnt soil; c – traces of burning; d – charcoal; e – animal bones; f – fragments of vessels. After I.S. Vinokur, 1967, p. 138.

Fig. 103. Ivankovtse. 1 – the excavation site where the standing statue was found; 2 – the broken statue; 3 – the statue found in upright position; 4 – the stele. After M.Y. Braychesky, V.I. Dovzhenok, 1967, p. 244 (the site in Ivankovtse); I.S. Vinokur, 1972, p. 108 (the drawings). A – the standing statue.

The statues were hewn of stone, not only of soft limestone, like Sviatovid from the Zbruch, but also of tough granite. The wooden examples were usually made of oak, like the statue of Rugevit in Garz. The sculptures
The vision of Slavonic idols made of rough wood or stone is as close to reality as the conviction about white marble statues of ancient Greece. We know that idols were covered with tar. The plank from Ralswiek was painted white, red and black. Remains of red paint have been detected on the so-called Sviatovid from the Zbruch. According to Herbold (II, 32), the façade of the temple in Szczecin, decorated with sculptures, shone with the full range of colours. Moreover, Ebo’s story (III, 8) about the priest from Wolgast who disguised himself using the god’s clothes, means that some idols may have been dressed. We know that Scandinavian statues were dressed and adorned with jewels. According to Thietmar (VI, 23) the idols from Radogość had helmets and cuirasses, which were probably not carved in wood, but genuine. Finally, we should pose the question whether the Slavs produced monumental metal statues. The sources answer in a peculiar way. Some sculptures were made of wood, but for instance the Kiev Perun had “silver head and golden moustache.” The face of Tjarnoglof (the Black-Headed) from Rügen was decorated with silver moustache, while Triglav from Szczecin had three heads covered with silver (Śłupecki, 1993, p. 64–65). The statue seized in Starigard by the Saxons was moulded of copper, while Adam of Bremen claims that the effigy of Radogost in Radogość was golden. Sagas describe Scandinavian idols in a similar way (de Vries, 1956–1957, vol. 1, p. 386–389). Therefore, we should suppose that some wooden sculptures in the main sanctuaries had the faces covered with valuable metals. Some statues may have had eyes of glittering materials, such as glass, amber or jewels, which may be inferred from Ebo’s mention (III, 10) about gouging the eyes of the statues from Gütkow before burning them.

Deities were represented with one or many heads, or with one multi-faced head. Attempts at questioning the texts concerning that issue are unconvincing (Wienecke, 1940, p. 142; Łomiableń, 1979, p. 195–200). Polycephalism of gods is not a unique feature of Slavonic religion (Lamm, 1987; Krzak 1992; Kotłarczyk 1993). There is a fragment of Helmold’s chronicle (I, 84), which refers to polycephalism of Slavonic deities in general, and concrete descriptions of multi-headed idols in the Lives of St Otto, Saxo Grammaticus and Henry of Antwerp. The reliability of those texts was proved by the sculpture from Fischerinsel. The characteristic shape of adjacent heads found there points to the existence of a specific style of Slavonic sculpture, at least in northern Polabia. Some confirmation of that claim may be found in Herbold’s information (II, 32) about “three heads touching each other,” belonging to the statue of Triglav from Szczecin, and in Saxo Grammaticus’s description of Sventovit (Hensel, 1983). Possibly there was some correspondence between this style and the manner in which anthropomorphic planks from temples were ornamented. I. Gabriel (1988a, p. 184–194) showed that some of them had been sculptured with moustache, eyes and nose on the face.

from Altfriesack, Fischerinsel, Behren-Lubchin and the head from Jankowo were also carved in oak wood, only the head from Dąbrówka – from alder wood. Oak wood is very difficult for sculpturing, but exceptionally resistant. Moreover, we could point to the special role of oak as the tree attributed to Perun. Interestingly enough, no sculptures of linden wood have been attested.

Fig. 104. Sviatovid from Zbruch. After A. Gieysztor, 1982, p. 94.
The four-faced pole statues from the Zbruch and Ivankovtsy belong to a separate style.

Written sources mention polycephalic statues only in connection with Western Slavs. As far as Ruthenia is concerned, they are known thanks to such finds as the double-faced idol from Yaryvka, completely different from the Fischerinsel "twins," as its heads are arranged as in statues of Janus, the sculpture from Łopuszna, probably similar, the sculpture from Ivankovtse, and the Zbruch pole, which has got four faces in the upper part and three in the lower one. All these examples come from the territories close to the land of Western Slavs. Only vague mentions preserved information about multi-headed sculptures, which allegedly existed in the 19th c. in other Ruthenian territories (Krzak, 1992, p. 32).

Conclusions

When the Slavs entered the history of Europe, they had a religion with a pantheon of deities worshiped in sanctuaries, including temples and statues. There are more data concerning late shrines, from the 9th c. onwards, than earlier ones, but this state of affairs reflects the general state of our knowledge about Slavonic culture. Also the fact that Polabian and Pomeranian sanctuaries are described in written sources more extensively than any other group seems to result simply from a larger number of relations concerning those territories which are available. Although reliable relations about sacred groves concern only Polabia, no one has ever claimed that such shrines did not exist in other Slavonic territories. As for temples, however, the identical state of sources has eagerly been interpreted as a proof of their absence. We are not able to distinguish a period in Slavonic pagan history in which natural objects were worshiped exclusively. Only the introduction of Christianity as the official religion altered the situation. The deities, expelled from strongholds and villages, found shelter in groves, near waters, at stones and on mountains.

The present study divides places of public cult into roofed temples and cult halls, and various open-air shrines, including groves, waters, stones and mountains, adopted by humans to the role of the signs of sacrum. Statues have been discussed separately. As all classifications, this grouping is arbitrary. Groves and hills were sometimes enclosed with man-made fences. Temples often stood on hills and were accompanied by open-air yards of assembly guarded by idols. The borderlines between various types of sanctuaries are fuzzy.

Not all the alleged shrines can be decisively classified as sanctuaries of gods. In some cases of archaeological research a striking lack of criteria for the identification of pagan cult places can be observed. There are whole categories of sites, for instance the so-called "mud strongholds" or gorodishcha-svyatylshcha (strongholds-shrines), which are included into the discussion of sanctuaries, although they have been hardly explored or insufficiently documented. When authors claim that they have discovered enormous cult halls by small probing excavations, without presenting any picture documentation (Rusanova, 1992; Timoshchuk, Rusanova, 1983, 1986; Rybakov, 1987) such reports should be treated with utmost caution. Many
objects whose function could not be satisfactorily explained by economic or military considerations, have been arbitrarily classified as sanctuaries by researchers, to whom they seemed shrines of gods. Such practices made other historians over-critical. In the context of numerous explored strongholds and settlements, the relatively small number of discovered sanctuaries, especially in the area where they were common according to written sources, is rather surprising. Just as many non-sacred objects have been precipitously identified as cult places, similarly some shrines might have been classified as secular constructions, which may be exemplified by the traces of some large buildings which possibly served as cult halls.

Written sources do not answer the question how the locations for sanctuaries were chosen and marked. Primary Chronicle mentions that Vladimir founded some statues in Kiev, while Dobrynia erected an idol representing Perun in Novgorod, but in both cases they were added to the already existing shrines. The new temple in Gützkow was probably built in the place of the old one. We should not disregard legends concerning the origins of Slavonic towns and states. The stronghold and the tribal land were also fragments separated from the rest of the world and needing consecration (Czarnowski, 1956, vol. 3, p. 221-236). We should pay some attention to what Kosmas wrote (I, 2) about the Czechs taking possession of their land, which was completed on the mountain Říp. Ibrahim ibn Jacob informs us about the Slavonic technique of building strongholds, but not about accompanying rituals. Thus, we have to turn to archaeological sources. Cult buildings and constructions do not reveal many traces of founding offerings. The case of Gross Raden indicates that the category of eternity and continuation was especially significant. According to Erbyggjasaga, Thorolf transferred a pole with an image of Thor from his old temple in Norway to Iceland, similarly the inhabitants of Gross Raden used the anthropomorphic planks from the old shrine as foundations of the new one.

Temples and cult halls were certainly constructed in northern Polabia and western Pomerania, as written sources from the late 10th c. onwards prove. The thesis that the Slavs started erecting temples in the 11th–12th c. is incorrect. Excavations have shown that roofed cult buildings existed in Polabia as early as in the 8th c. The data concerning the remaining territories of Western Slavs and Eastern Slavs are much scarcer, but some mentions come from the 11th c. As excavations revealed remains of several roofed buildings that might have served as cult places in Bohemia, southern Poland and Ruthenia (the latter poorly documented), we are entitled to conclude that the view that the occurrence of temples in Slavonic territories was limited to Polabia and Pomerania has been questioned, although not definitely disproved.

Temples in the strict sense, i.e. roofed seats of deities subject to an absolute taboo, existed in Arcona, Radogoś, Szczecin, Garz, and Wolgast. Apart from that, Szczecin had several cult halls. In other cases the distinction between a temple and a cult hall is not obvious. The example of Szczecin allows to assume that cult halls may have existed in Wolgast and Gützkow, as the descriptions of these places suggest the presence of some cult buildings along with the specified, main shrines, in the territory of the Abodrites, whose ritual feasts are mentioned in Helmold, and in Ruthenia, as Primary Chronicle mentions prince Vladimir’s feasts. It is evident that the Szczecin cult halls were reserved for the nobles. Some buildings may have functioned as both temples and cult halls. The fact that some constructions (like in Chodlik and Ralswiek) consisted of two rooms leaves space for such a possibility.

All temples established location of an were situated close to water: a lake, river or sea. Moreover, with the exception of Garz, water occurs always at the eastern or north-eastern side of the sanctuary, which reminds of the principle of orientation of sacrificial places in the Vedic religion (Gonda, 1978, p. 132). The role of the temple as the centre of the world was sometimes stressed by situating it on a hill or a cliff. The tribe that controlled the main temple, for instance the Redars among the Lutizens, regarded themselves as living in the centre of the world, and thus related in a special way to gods or the most powerful god, which is evident from the Rans’ attitude to Sventovit.

All the temples were built on the rectangular plan and their corners or walls were orientated towards the four quarters of the world. If a building has got a definitely longer axis, it is sometimes orientated to the north-east, like in Gross Raden and Chodlik, but in Stara Koufim the situation is exactly reverse. Presumably, there was a principle governing the location of the entrance: in Gross Raden, Parchim, Feldberg, and probably Ralswiek, Chodlik and Stara Koufim, it was at the western side. In Parchim, Gross Raden, Stara Koufim and the first temple in Wolin, no traces of internal walls were found. In Arcona the cela was supported by four pillars and covered with curtains. The temple in Garz lacked exterior walls and the statue was sheltered only by the roof and curtains stretching between the pillars. The type of wall construction using anthropomorphic poles, known from Gross Raden, was related to the interior decoration of the shrines in Arcona, Radogoś, Szczecin and perhaps Gützkow, if descriptions in sources are accurate. Also in Parchim the poles forming the temple walls might have been topped with anthropomorphic heads.

In Arcona and Radogoś the shrine constituted the main element of the surrounding temple stronghold. In Arcona it was additionally separated from the rest of the area by a ditch, like in Feldberg. The temples in Arcona and Garz stood in the middle of special yards. Traces of a similar arrangement have been discovered in Wolin. The cult halls in Gross Raden and Parchim were situated at a certain distance from the rest of the settlement. The temple in Wolin, described in The life from Prüfenig, could be entered only through a special bridge. There were also other elements...
of cult topography. Radogošć was surrounded by a sacred grove, in Szczecin an oak and a nut-tree were worshiped. Wolin had a pole symbolizing the axis of the world and idols standing under the open sky in the centre of the town. Radogošć lay on the shore of an oracular lake. The name of the river Dziwna (probably derived from the root div = sacred, strange, cf. Gieysztor, 1982, p. 34) flowing through Wolin, and the legend about its colourful currents, allow to assume that water had some sacred function.

Effigies of gods are inseparable elements of temple interiors. All the temples which are described in sources in some detail contained a statue or statues, in the case of Radogošć texts inform even about a hierarchy of idols. Along with monumental sculptures small figurines are mentioned, some made of valuable metals. The divine presence was also expressed by symbols, insignia, swords, shields, spears, banners, saddles, drinking horns and valuable vessels, stored in temples. Aurochs and horse skulls found during excavations might have hung on the walls or over the entrances, like in Saxo Grammaticus’s description of Arcona. Similar artifacts, including statues, might have been kept in cult halls, but they must have contained also benches for the participants of feasts, mentioned by Herbold in connection with the shrines in Szczecin. During excavations in Lubomia some clay benches were found.

Temples differ from other Slavonic sanctuaries because they were strongly connected with main settlement centres. All roofed shrines of established location were situated in towns, strongholds and larger settlements or very close to them, forming their integral parts. The same does not apply to cult circles, sacred groves, waters and mountains. Sanctuaries of the latter type were also connected with important centres, but these relations are looser. For instance: the circles in Perynia are situated 4 km from Novgorod, the Prove grove grew near Starigard but according to Helmold, the inhabitants did not notice that its fence was on fire, Glomač was 7 km from Gana the capital of the Dalemincs. The Kiev Perun with surrounding idols, on the other hand, stood in the close proximity of “Kiy’s stronghold,” while the pole and idols in Wolin occupied the very centre of the town. In both cases it is evident that the statues were located under the open sky. In the case of Triglav from Brandenburg, the idols described in Knytlingasaga, and the statue from Rostock it is not certain whether they stood in temples or outside.

Among open-air sanctuaries we have distinguished man-made sacred circles and cult yards, as opposed to natural objects adopted to religious purposes, which was usually marked by enclosing them. Almost all cult circles are situated near water. It has been noted above that water occurs to the north-east of temples. The most important open-air sanctuaries, Kiev and Perynia, follow the same principle which, however, is not operative in case of many other shrines. The two sanctuaries connected with burial grounds, Khodosovie and Knyloplat, are surrounded by water from the west. Cult yards and circles were located on hills and cliffs more often than temples.

Written sources do not mention fires in temples or open-air sanctuaries, which is surprising in view of the strongly stressed cult of fire practiced by the Balts, the closest neighbours of the Slavs. Remains of fires in cult buildings were discovered only in Feldberg, the first temple in Wolin and the hall in Starigard, whereas in most open-air shrines excavations revealed traces of fires arranged in various ways. The fires lit in Trzebiatów, Perynia and Pskov in ditches, and in Khodosovie c-shaped hollows, seem to form magic circles, guarding the sanctity of the enclosed space. The fire-places from Khodosovie have interesting Indian analogues. According to Vedas, C-shaped fireplaces in Daksinagni were supposed to guard sacrificial places from demons, but they were situated only at the southern side (Gonda, 1978, p. 138).

Altars, which are never mentioned in connection with temples, may have existed in open-air sanctuaries. The “zhertvennik” from Kiev, the square stone from Gniloy Kut and the heap of stones from stronghold in Gross Raden might have functioned as altars, although the ritual of bringing oblations to an altar was described only in connection with Starigard/Oldenburg.

There are three sanctuaries in which more than one cult circle was found: Khodosovie and Trzebiatów had two, Perynia probably also two, as the alleged third circle should be considered only hypothetical. In some cases it is possible to notice the orientation of the fire-places, symmetrically arranged around the centre of the circle, towards the geographical directions. In Perynia even the intermediate directions were marked. The poles in Bčeclav-Pohansko were orientated in the same way. Other objects orientated towards the four main directions were the fire-places around the circle in Khodosovie and stone projections of the “zhertvennik” in Kiev. The suggestions concerning the possible archaeo-astronomic orientation of some Slavonic sanctuaries (Kotlarczyk, 1987; 1988; 1993) seem too frail to be considered conclusive.

In Perynia and Trzebiatów the sacred space was enclosed by ditches in which fire was lit. In the alleged sanctuary at Parsteiner Lake this function was also performed by a ditch. In Khodosovie the circles were surrounded by palisades, similar to the constructions known from Baltic strongholds-sanctuaries. There was also a small, open palisade in Bćeclav-Pohansko. Thus, we can contrast the sanctuaries with some constructions separating the sacred space from the surroundings and those which lacked fencing.

Other fenced objects were groves. It may be inferred both from etymology and from the description of two gates and a fence around the grove of the Grove. Probably, a similar construction surrounded the grove Boku. Sacred groves were mainly oak forests (e.g. the grove of Prove and the presumed grove in Perynia), but we know also about a beech grove (Boku). The name of Święty Bór – Zutibure (Holy Wood), recorded by Thiemar, allows to suppose that it was a coniferous wood or a wood growing in a damp area.
The groves, subject to taboo, bestowed their sanctity on all creatures that entered them, therefore asylum was sought there. Single trees were usually connected with springs. We know one example of an oak tree connected with a temple, in Szczecin. There was also a bridge next to the nut-tree in this town, a construction that may have served cult purposes.

Least of the available information concerns worshiped waters. Only Glomać, surrounded with myths, is known as a separate sanctuary. As for rocks, none has been convincingly related to a shrine so far, but we know the role of enthroning stones, originally situated in open fields, like the throne of Carinthian princes.

Sacred mountains were surrounded with stone walls lacking any military significance, which formed full or – as in Slezá and Lysiec – semi-circles. The walls remain the only well-examined elements of mountain sanctuaries, except of a fire-place from Góra Puszczew, the sculptures from Slezá, which are of unsettled provenance, and the constructions on the mountains Bokhod and Zamczysko-Zvenigorod, which are still being explored.

Another type of special cult places, which have been left aside here so far, were burial grounds, located at the borders of the inhabited area, at some distance from human settlements, most often at the fringes of woods (Zoll-Adamikowa, 1979, vol. 2, p. 250). We have left out of the present discussion also the places of private cult: home and croft, as well as cross-roads, frontiers, field-borders and similar spots, which were always attributed special significance and inhabited by multitude of lower-rank spirits, worshiped in various ways. This area, like the problem of burial rituals, calls for a separate study.

Some shrines, regardless of their type, functioned as main cult centres of tribes, tribe unions or states. They could be temples (e.g. Arcona, Radogość, Szczecin), but also groves (Prove grove), water shrines (Glomać), sacred mountains (Slezá) or open-air sanctuaries with idols (Kiev). The main sanctuaries often housed public oracles, which decided about the common affairs by lot and horse-divination. They were also scenes of the most important rituals, including human sacrifices: Vladimir celebrated the victory over the Jarvings by sacrificing some Varangians, chosen by lot, in Kiev. The triumph of the Abodrite uprising in 1066 was marked by offering the head of bishop John to Svarožic-Radogost. Human sacrifices in Rügen are mentioned in connection with the cult of Sventovit in Arcona.

We can try to delineate the spheres of dominance of some main shrines. In the cases of Arcona, Radogość and Szczecin they are delimited: firstly, by the area where the relevant deity was worshiped, enlarged sometimes by force, and secondly, by the extent of political authority of the priests, which was recognized at least by the tribes that participated in the all-nation assembly at the temple yard, and temporarily by allied tribes (which may be inferred from the fact that bishop John, seized by Abodrites, was executed in Lutizian Radogość). Following K. Modzelewski (1987, p. 261) we should note that foreign rulers “treated the leading pagan temples as subjects of international relations.” Thirdly, we should mention the sphere of the temple's fiscal influence. The main shrines had treasuries, which functioned as state financial resources, collecting the due share of spoils from the dependent tribes (in Rügen even a regular poll-tax), tributes from the dependent tribes, political gifts from allies, and offerings from the deity's worshippers. The main temple controlled sanctuaries of lesser rank, whose priests recognized its authority. Such temple influenced the policy of the dependent tribes through divination. The media were horses led by priests, and in the case of the Abodrites a priest in oracular trance. Other methods of foretelling the future were lot-casting and divination from beverages. The cult of gods from supreme sanctuaries is sometimes remotely reflected in toponomastics (e.g. the stream Radegast and perhaps the village Trzyglów near Gryfice).

Many of those elements may be traced also in Vagria. Prove, worshiped in the grove near Starigard/Oldenburg, was regarded as the sovereign god of the country and his priest enjoyed the supreme authority. In front of the grove justice was administered, consequently it must have been the seat of counselling assembly. Such events cannot have taken place without the advice of the oracle. In Ruthenia the most important shrine was undoubtedly the sanctuary of Perun in Kiev. The mention about Dobrynia, who erected a statue of Perun in Novgorod by Vladimir's order, may be regarded as a proof of Kiev's supremacy in Ruthenia in religious matters. The fiscal role of temples, however, seem to have been limited to Polabia and Pomerania (Modzelewski, 1987, p. 263).

The main cult centres were simultaneously tribal capitals or places very close to them. Arcona was considered the capital of the Rans. Radogość dominated among the Lutizens. There are no doubts about the primacy of Szczecin in the twelfth-century Pomerania, or of Kiev in the tenth-century Ruthenia. The grove of Prove grew at a short distance from Starigard/Oldenburg, Glomać lay near Gana, and Perynia was near Novgorod, the most important town of northern Ruthenia. Smaller tribes and towns had their own shrines as well, those that joined tribal unions retained their sanctuaries. As the example of Kessiners and Zirzipans shows, such state of affairs could facilitate their emancipation from the overwhelming influence of the supreme temple. The sanctuaries in Wolgast and Gützkow seem to have been independent shrines belonging to small towns. Abbot Herbert in De miraculis libri tres mentioned a statue under a tree, which was the shrine of a small village, supposedly situated in Rügen.

Written sources supply the following names of gods worshiped in temples: Sventovit (Arcona), Svarožic-Radogost (Radogość), Triglav (Szczecin), Rugevit, Porenut and Porevit (Garz), Gerovit (Wolgast) and Podaga (Plön). Some of them were accompanied by other, unnamed deities, among which we should note the anonymous war goddess of the Lutizens. The god of Wolin is hidden behind the mask of Julius Caesar. In Kiev and Novgorod
Perun was worshiped, in Kiev together with idols called Khors, Dažboğ, Striboğ, Simargl and Mokoș and the statue of Veles in a separate shrine. The Rugian gods, Pizamar and Tjarnoglofi, Triglav from Brenna (Brandenburg) and Gerovit from Havelberg were adored in shrines of unspecified type. Many figures of the Slavonic pantheon may have been just incarnations of pan-Slavonic deities, whose proper names were hidden by a taboo: Perun (Sventovit and Rugevit) and Veles (Triglav). The case of Svarožić, nicknamed Radogost, confirms that this way of thinking is correct. Gods were represented by anthropomorphic statues, often multi-headed or multi-faced, which was especially characteristic for Western Slavs.

Gods were worshiped by rites, offerings and feasts. Of the rituals celebrated in temples we know the harvest festival organized in Wolin at the end of summer, and the summer festival in Arcona (possibly analogous to Sobótka, Midsummer). It is evident that in Arcona and Szczecin the rituals were connected with feasts and merrymaking, and in Wolin also with some kind of stage performances, which may have been similar to the Polish folk custom of masquerading or the rite of drowning the effigy of Marzanna, the symbol of winter. During rituals human sacrifices were made, mainly or exclusively of Christians; in Radogost the offerings were first of all heads. Sacrificial animals included cattle and sheep, excavations allow to supplement the list with horses, although written sources do not mention them in such a role. In one of the celebrations in Arcona a ritual cake was placed in front of the temple and wine or mead from Sventovit’s horn was sacrificed. Written sources did not record the place of blood-sheding offerings. Himmel (I, 84) says that the Slavs respect cult places so highly that “they do not allow to desacrate the temple area even with an enemy’s blood.” This may explain why excavations revealed traces of human sacrifices near the temple in Ralswiek but not in its closest surroundings.

Old Slavs prayed to their gods. The word modlitwa (= prayer), the Old Polish mod/a, included the meaning of religious invocation and appeal (Giese, 1982, p. 159). Slavonic prayers, eliminated by Christianity and forgotten, are practically unknown. We know, however, that the priest from Arcona asked Sventovit “in solemn words” for the well-being of himself, the country and the citizens. The prayer was said during the harvest festival. According to Ibn Rosteh’s (11, 205–209) description of a similar harvest ritual, the Slavs “at the time of harvesting take millet to a scoop and raise it towards the sky, saying: O, Lord, who give food, give it to us now in the full measure.”" Helmd (I, 52) mentions the words of sacrifice uttered over a cup in the name of the god of good and evil. As in most religions, raising hands was a gesture of prayer. In such a pose a man standing in front of an idol is shown on a vessel from Schultzendorf (Gustavus, 1979). Thus, prayers were present in Slavonic cult, along with offerings, oracles and feasts.

The presence of priests is attested in the temples in Arcona, Radogošt, Wolin, Szczecin, Garz, Gützkow and Wolgast, as well as in the Abodrite cult of Radogost. We have some information about the priest from the grove of Prove. As for Ruthenia, Primary Chronicle before Christianization mentions priests only in connection with Kiev, but during the pagan reaction in the 11th c. they appear also in Novgorod. According to Kosmas (III, 1), at the end of the same century prince Břetislav banished “diviners and fortune-tellers” from Bohemia. Archaeology cannot prove or disprove the existence of priests, but should not neglect the secluded huts discovered near the sanctuaries in Khodosoviche and upon the Khnyloplat, which might have been houses of people responsible for the cult practices. The words źrec-źytec (the person who makes an offering), volkhv, kudesnik and czarodziej (wizard) constitute linguistic proofs of the existence of priests (Urbańczyk, 1948; Giesztor, 1982, p. 40; A. Brückner, 1985, p. 51–52; Lowmiański, 1979, p. 159–161; Rybakov, 1987, p. 296–304; Rajewski, 1975, p. 503–508; Jakobson, 1985, p. 45). In the Lutizian Union and in Rugen priests actually took over the rule from princes. As the events in Szczecin prove, in Pomerania the priests were very powerful, although not omnipotent, as in the critical situation the decision lay with the nobles and the assembly. The power of the pagan clergy in Polabia and Pomerania is astonishing. W. Lammers (1979) claims that among pagan Scandinavians and Saxonian priests did not enjoy equal authority. One of the sources of this state of affairs was undoubtedly the violent confrontation between paganism and Christianity, often identified with the Slavs’ struggle against the Germans, in which the royal rule sometimes let down the tribe, which then turned to the priests entrusting them with leadership. In Ruthenia, in spite of some traces of a considerable influence of priests, the prince handled the matters of cult: Vladimir decided to erect new idols in Kiev and Novgorod, and he ordered to pull them down after Christianization. None of the decisions was opposed. The fact that Christianization was not openly resisted in Poland, Bohemia and Moravia seems to indicate that in those countries the position of priests was closer to situation in Ruthenia than in Polabia. Everywhere except of Polabia and Pomerania pagan reactions occurred rather late and did not manage to alter the course of history.

The principal sanctuaries marked the centre of the universe for the Slavs. The Redars, who controlled Radogošt, considered themselves the most powerful people occupying the centre of the world. The plan of Perynia and some other objects testify to the special role of the four directions, which may be also detected in the symbolism of the so-called Sviatovid from the Zbruch and the statue of Sventovit form Arcona, and in the plans of temples, called kćeminy because of the four, probably orientated, corners (kqt). It is intriguing that the Lutizian Union, centred around Radogošt, comprised only four tribes, which exactly corresponds to the number of temples in Szczecin. The ideal organization of space is the division of the world in four quarters, orientated towards the four directions from the central axis. According to Duklanin’s chronicle (ch. 9), Sventopolk-Budimir
organized his country during the legendary assembly at Duvanske Pole by dividing it into four parts orientated towards the four main directions from the place of counselling which constituted the axis (Banaszkiewicz 1987). A sanctuary was the tribal centre of the world, which was often stressed by locating it on a hill. Slavonic myths of settlement are connected with a mountain regarded as the centre of the land taken in possession, like Říp in Kosmas’s chronicle. The peak of Říš, surrounded with walls, was considered the centre of Little Poland, while Śleża gave its name to Śląsk (Silesia).

If sacred places are supposed to reflect the cosmic order and its elements (Eliade, 1966, p. 361–380), it seems that Slavonic mythology was familiar with the ideas of the axis of the world, the four directions, the cosmic mountain and the hub of the world, the tree of life and the primeval water. Moreover, it is possible that the temples, in which gods were believed to reside, were meant to picture their heavenly houses, built on the ideal square plan, near which they sat at beautiful meadows, ruling over the earthlings from stone thrones. Perhaps they were surrounded by circular ramparts of the divine stronghold, which was as formidable as Asgard of the Scandinavian Ases and located on a high mountain as Olympus. Maybe, the foot of the stronghold was washed by current of the primeval ocean, on whose coast a magnificent grove grew, beyond which there was the world of the dead (Bylina, 1992, p. 15). The latter was sometimes located in the underground (Bylina, 1992, p. 7–31), as the axis of the universe has also its underground end. The idea of three spheres: the sky, the earth and the underground, confirmed by the recorded legend about Triglav from Szczecin, may be also traced in the triple division of the reliefs on the statue from Zbruch. In the human world the axis was present wherever there was a sanctuary, which, through its consecration, was included into the construction of the cosmos. The world of the Slavs, the mir, had its mythological shape reflected in the social order, called mir too (Třeštík 1988). The fact that the same word expressed the two notions was by no means incidental.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASB  Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek
AP  Archeologia Polski
AuF  Ausgrabungen und Funde
Balt. St.  Baltische Studien
BMJ  Bodendenkmalpflege in Mecklenburg, Jahrbuch
Corpus DDR  Corpus archeologischer Quellen zur Frühgeschichte auf dem Gebiet der DDR
FHRs  Fontes Historiae Religionis Slavicae
IF  Islenzk Fornerit
KH  Kwartalnik Historyczny
KHKM  Kwartalnik Historyczny
KSJM  Krak\'{}e, Studia z dziej\’\{}w kultury materialnej
MGH  Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MHMW  Magazyn Historyczny. Mowa Polska
MJF  Jahrbuch des Vereins für mecklenburgische Geschichte und Altertumskunde
MPH  Monumenta Poloniae Historica
MUB  Mecklenburgisches Urkundenbuch
MZp  Materialy Zachodniopomorskie
NF  Neue Folge
PLat  Patrologia Latina
PSRL  Pohony Sobranie Ruszkich Letopisey
PUB  Pomorsches Urkundenbuch
SA  Sovietskaya Archeologiya
SIA  Slavia Antiqua
SIO  Slavia Occidentalis
Sn  series nova
Spraw. arch.  Sprawozdania archeologiczne
SSS  Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich
St FA  Zeitschrift für Archäologie
ZJE  Zeitschrift für Ethnologie
ZOW  Z oczki Wieków

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