

NATIONALISMS ACROSS THE GLOBE

VOL. 2



**The Kashubs:
Past and Present**

Cezary Obracht-Prondzyński and
Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (eds)

Peter Lang

NATIONALISMS ACROSS THE GLOBE

The Kashubs, a regional autochthonous group inhabiting northern Poland, represent one of the most dynamic ethnic groups in Europe. As a community, they have undergone significant political, social, economic and cultural change over the last hundred years. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Kashubs were citizens of Germany. In the period between the two World Wars they were divided between three political entities: the Republic of Poland, the Free City of Danzig and Germany. During the Second World War, many Kashubs were murdered, and communist Poland subsequently tried to destroy the social ties that bound the community together. The year 1989 finally brought about a democratic breakthrough, at which point the Kashubs became actively engaged in the construction of their regional identity, with the Kashubian language performing a particularly important role.

This volume is the first scholarly monograph on the history, culture and language of the Kashubs to be published in English since 1935. The book systematically explores the most important aspects of Kashubian identity – national, regional, linguistic, cultural and religious – from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

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The Kashubs: Past and Present

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PETER LANG

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Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

The Kashubs : past and present / Cezary Obracht-Prondzynski and Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (eds).

p. cm. -- (Nationalisms across the globe ; 2)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-3-03911-975-2 (alk. paper)

1. Kashubes--History. 2. Kashubes--Ethnic identity. 3. Kashubian language--Social aspects. 4. Kashubian literature--History and criticism. 5. Kaszuby (Poland)--History. I. Obracht-Prondzynski, Cezary. II. Wicherkiewicz, Tomasz.

DK4600.K345K37 2011

305.891'85--dc23

2011026376

Cover image © NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center Scientific Visualization Studio

ISSN 1662-9116

ISBN 978-3-03911-975-2

E ISBN 978 3 0353 0184 7

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Hochfeldstrasse 32, CH-3012 Bern, Switzerland

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Printed in Germany

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Acknowledgements

The editors and authors are highly indebted to the University of Gdańsk and the Kashubian Institute in Gdańsk for their financial and organisational support when preparing, translating and editing this volume.

We are also highly grateful to Dr Tomasz Kamusella for encouraging our work, and for providing us with his precious remarks.

We wish to thank wholeheartedly Ewa Michalina Orzechowska (from Baranowo), Justyna Walkowiak and Dr Michael Hornsby, Adam Mikińczuk University in Poznań, for their kind assistance as translators and proof-readers of the original texts.

Last but not least, thanks must go to Maciej Ostoja-Lniski and Jacek Swędrowski for their technical assistance.

Introduction

The reason for publishing the present book seems quite obvious: since 1935 (i.e. since the publication of *The Cassubian Civilisation* by Adam Fischer, Professor of Ethnography at Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów/Lemberg,¹ Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, Professor at the Jagiellonian University of Cracow and eminent expert in Slavonic languages, and the German linguist and ethnographer Friedrich Lorentz, with a preface by Bronisław Malinowski) no substantial, compact publication in English has appeared in print presenting the Kashubs as an ethnic community. Clearly, that book was far from complete, as it focused mainly on ethnography and language, in principle passing over social life, political issues and even historical questions, which were discussed only superficially. Since then a few English-language publications have been brought out (mainly articles or papers edited in Poland); most of them, however, have had quite a limited range of publicity and may hardly have reached readers interested in the ethnic scene of East Central Europe, Poland and Pomerania. It even seems that, except for an inner circle of specialists, in particular linguists, the very fact of the existence of the community of several hundred thousand Kashubs is almost unknown.

Meanwhile, interest in ethnic and regional processes is evidently growing, not only in academic circles (among sociologists, linguists, historians and anthropologists), but also among journalists, educationalists and cultural activists. There are various reasons for this, among them the changes which occurred in Poland and East Central Europe after 1989 related to the so-called 'disclosed multiculturalism' i.e. the renaissance of ethnic communities and national minorities, the restoration of local and regional self-government and various integration processes. These changes stirred up frequent

1 Nowadays Lviv in Ukraine.

disputes and arguments, from the time of the emergence of Euroregions² at the beginning of the 1990s until May 2004, when Poland, together with other countries in that part of Europe, entered the European Union and became subject to the all-European regional policy. The renaissance of interest in regional and ethnic issues can be viewed from a wider perspective – namely, as a sequence of phenomena of global dimension, where on the one hand we have to do with an amalgamation of cultures (the unification of behavioural models and values with a free flow of ideas, finances, and to some extent also people), and on the other hand we deal with the revival of local identity, the verification of ‘rootedness’ and duration, as well as a growing attachment and devotion to the native land and/or home region.

Understandably, this revival of interest in regional and ethnic issues has not passed by the circles interested in Kashubian matters, hence the unambiguous calls addressed to Kashubian scholarship. There is an unquestionable need for a new English-language publication which presents the current state of the art in Kashubian studies, and discusses the present situation of the Kashubian community, taking into consideration its historical context.

An additional incentive for the authors of this book has been a growing interest in their own roots among Kashubian immigrants in Canada and the USA – in 2008, Canada formally celebrated the 150th anniversary of the arrival of its first Kashubian settlers.

The present book is addressed to several groups of potential readers, one of them being academic circles interested in ethnic, sociolinguistic and ethno-historical processes in Central Europe and the Baltic Sea region, including linguists, ethno-linguists, sociologists, social anthropologists, historians and cultural experts.

The second potential circle of readers includes members of the Kashubian community dispersed around the world, whose greatest concentration is in the USA and Canada, with smaller numbers also in Australia and New Zealand. We would like to present them with a thorough, accessible and above all reliable source of information on the community which their forebears came from.

2 Transnational co-operation structures between two or more contiguous regions located in different European countries.

Last but not least, the book is addressed to institutions and organisations dealing with minority issues and ethnic studies in Europe. We are convinced that the Kashubian example can have a universal character – exposing the dangers that small ethnic communities encounter when facing the transformations of contemporary civilisation, but also presenting the challenges which these groups envisage and the modern instruments they are provided with, not only to effectively and successfully protect and maintain their heritage, but also to develop and promote it.

The reason for publishing the book within Peter Lang's series *Nationalisms Across the Globe* seems more than justified – especially in light of appeals made by the international expert in Slavonic linguistics, Professor Gerald Stone: 'The question has been frequently asked whether Cassubian is not really a separate Slavonic language rather than just a dialect of Polish. If the answer to this is yes, it implies a further question as to existence of a separate Cassubian nationality. There are no known linguistic criteria for the resolution of such questions, but it is, in any case, clear that the question is not purely linguistic' (Stone 1993 and 2002: 739). As the contributors to the present book attempt to demonstrate, the case of the Kashubs and their language is in this respect quite unique – as the question mentioned by Professor Stone has been answered by developments during the last two decades. In that and many other respects, the Kashubs do constitute a distinctive group in the European ethno-linguistic landscape.

The question of the Kashubs' origin, their ethnic identity, the origins and history of the Kashubian movement, its reasonably successful ideology and the practice of regional development, and the Kashubs' successful struggle to upgrade their linguistic status (from the imminent extinction of their dialect, predicted more than a century ago, to its official recognition as Poland's only regional language) – all these, together with the enduring efforts of the Kashubian elites to maintain but also to modernise the basic Kashubian values, make the group an extremely interesting subject of study.

This book should contribute to further debate on the 'Kashubian issue', or rather on the 'Kashubian model', closely observed by other European groups of a similar kind.

JÓZEF BORZYSZKOWSKI

A History of the Kashubs until the End of Communism

Sources for research into the Kashubs' history

In order to start writing the Kashubs' history at the beginning of the twenty-first century, one should be aware that it is inseparable from the history of the whole of Pomerania – that is, the territory situated between the Baltic Sea in the north and the Noteć and Warta rivers in the south, and between the lower Oder (Polish: Odra) river in the west and the lower Vistula (Polish: Wisła¹) river in the east. This ideological, determined shape of the Kashubian native land was attributed to the Kashubs in the second half of the nineteenth century by their foremost representatives, the architects of the Kashubian-Pomeranian movement and ideology.

A particular phenomenon of Pomerania is its role as an area where various worlds, consisting of different geographical, cultural and political realities, came into contact. This is a land where sea and earth abut, a point of meetings (or frictions) and diffusion between two great cultures: the Slavonic and Germanic worlds. Since the end of the first millennium AD, both Pomerania and its inhabitants, the Kashubs, as well as the whole of Slavdom, became the subject of rivalry between the Germanic states in the west and the developing Polish state in the south. Germanic expansion drove towards the east; the Poles strained towards the north, to the sea, being aware of their common Lekhitic² heritage with the inhabitants of that coastal land, known as Pomerania.

- 1 Where appropriate, the editors provide respective place names in their Polish, German or Kashubian versions.
- 2 The Lekhitic languages are a subgroup of the Western branch of Slavonic languages, associated with the territory of Poland and its north-western borderland, including

The proper name of the land and the original name of its dwellers are 'Kashubia' and 'the Kashubs', respectively (in Kashubian *Kaszëbë*, in Polish *Kaszuby*). The Kashub-Pomeranians, the original inhabitants of Pomerania and the native indigenous ethno-cultural community, participated in the Polish-German struggles, often simply as the objects of international politics. They protected and maintained their culture and identity, sometimes against their own dukes and rulers. Since the Middle Ages they have constituted a riddle for their neighbours, who did not understand their linguistic separateness, and determined to absorb both the people and their land. That lack of comprehension resulted in various, often misleading interpretations of the origin of the names *Kashubia*, *Cassubia* and *Kashubs* by numerous authors.

The question of the etymology of Kashubia and the Kashubs has been discussed both by linguists and historians. Although until now no full synthesis of the Kashubs' history has been compiled, researchers or teachers have at their disposal a few remarkable and comprehensive reference studies. It is worth remembering that they were prepared and published under difficult circumstances, when essential analytical research could hardly be carried out. They had been preceded by numerous noteworthy scholarly articles, mainly by linguists and ethnographers, including such meticulously researched publications as:

1. *Ostatki slavyan na yuzhnom beregu Baltijskogo morya* [Remnants of the Slavs on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea] by the Russian scholar Aleksandr Hilferding (Sankt Peterburg 1862).
2. *Statystyka ludności kaszubskiej* [Statistics of the Kashubian population] by the linguist and ethnographer Stefan Ramułt (Kraków 1990).
3. *Kaszubi giną* [The Kashubs vanish], on the vanishing Polish land and property in Kashubia, by the Polish activist and journalist Konstanty Kościński (Poznań 1908).
4. *Von einem unbekanntem Volk in Deutschland* [About an unknown people in Germany] by a rural teacher and ethnographer from Wdzydze, Izydor Gulgowski (Berlin 1911).

Polish, Kashubian (with extinct Slovincian), and the extinct Polabian. The name derives from the name of Lech, legendary ancestor of the Poles.

The climate and context visible in the wording – ‘remnants of the Slavs’, ‘Kashubs vanish’, ‘unknown people’ – is noteworthy. At that time the people, and in particular their history, were unknown – to the Poles as well as to the German-dominated population of Pomerania.

It was Aleksander Majkowski (1876–1938), a renowned activist, physician, writer, politician and poet, who was the first to write a *Historia Kaszubów* [History of the Kashubs]. He started working on the volume before the First World War, and finished it in the interwar period. It was published as a whole only after his death, in 1938 in Gdynia, and republished with a valuable afterword by Professor Gerard Labuda in 1991 in Gdańsk. Majkowski presented a version of the history of the Kashubs as Pomeranians – whom he also called *Veleti* – inhabiting the territory from the river Vistula in the east to the Peene river in the west (in today’s Mecklenburg), considering also their ethnic links with the Obodrites, Wagri and Polabians, which makes the work a complete history of the whole of Baltic Slavdom in unity with the Poles, and referring to a *Lekhia* as a supra-community comprised of all the above-mentioned Lekhitic groups.

The second work of Kashubian history was *Geschichte der Kaschuben* [History of the Kashubs], published in German in Berlin in 1926, by the most eminent linguist among researchers of Kashubian, Dr Friedrich Lorentz from Mecklenburg (1870–1937). He presented the history of the Kashubs within the so-called Vistulan Pomerania, taking into account the situation of Kashubian and ethnic relations in nineteenth-century Pomerania. In the opinion of the Kashubs themselves, this is not strictly their history, inasmuch as it is the history of their Germanisation.

For more than fifty years, another version of the history of the Kashubs has been in preparation by Professor Gerard Labuda, a Kashub himself and the most eminent mediaevalist among Polish historians. He is the author of the first volume, which encompasses the Middle Ages. His extensive output includes many studies on the Kashubs, published in the volume *Kaszubi i ich dzieje* [The Kashubs and their history] (Gdańsk 1996). When describing the Kashubs, their name and the area where they live, he has addressed the question of where Kashubia – as the homeland of the Kashubs – was located, by quoting the research of Agnieszka Dobrowolska, who stated that ‘the appellation of Kashubs/Kashubia was known in the entire coastal

area from Holstein and Lüneburg to the Balto-Slavonic lands, being used as the name of a land, a people, as a nickname, as an administrative name, as well as a topographic name, familiar also in Poland' (Dobrowolska 1958: 345). Labuda has also drawn upon the later work of Józef Spors, who after thorough research came to the conclusion that the name Kashub/ia was originally rooted in West Pomerania, from where it spread to Mecklenburg and East Pomerania, to finally become associated with the latter region (Spors 1972). Today the Kashubs (i.e. speakers of Kashubian, conscious of their Kashubianness, and for whom Kashubia-Pomerania is their homeland, with Poland being their encompassing, political homeland) can be found in Vistulan (i.e. Eastern) Pomerania. As such, they develop their native culture, identify themselves with Polishness, and cultivate their Kashubian identity embedded within the Polish one. This is the present situation, and we look to history to find answers to questions about the past: in particular, where did the Kashubs and their name come from?

The assumption that the name of Kashub/ia was formed by the Slavs during the Migration period³ between the fifth and the seventh centuries and denoted those Slavonic tribes who settled on the southern Baltic littoral is the most convincing. Why the name did not appear in written sources until the thirteenth century is a riddle for historians, since at that time it was known throughout the whole of Pomerania and among the Poles, and even in remote Muscovy/Russia and Rome. This and other questions are discussed by Labuda (2006) in the monograph *Pomorze – mała ojczyzna Kaszubów. Kaschubisch-Pommersche Heimat*, published as a joint project of the Kashubian Institute and the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association in Gdańsk and the Ostsee-Akademie in Lübeck (Borzyszkowski and Albrecht 2000). It is the most comprehensive overview of the complicated history of the Kashubs in the Pomeranian context, based on abundant sources and the authors' own research.

- 3 The Migration period was a period of human migration that occurred roughly between the fourth and seventh centuries in Europe, marking the transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages. Migrating peoples during this period included mainly the Germanic and Slavonic tribes.

Among numerous other works, two are particularly worth mentioning: Andrzej Bukowski's monumental monograph on Kashubian regionalism as a scholarly, social and cultural movement (1950), and an essay on the history of the Kashubs by Rev. Franciszek (Franz) Manthey, a professor in the theological seminaries in Pelplin and Hildesheim. This was originally written in German for Germans from Gdańsk and Pomerania, and was republished in Gdańsk in Polish, Kashubian and German (Manthey 1997). These two books offer contrasting interpretations of the complex historical reality of the Kashubs and of the Kashubian revival which commenced in the mid-nineteenth century. Bukowski focuses particularly on the literary culture, enriched by consecutive generations of writers, arguing that teachers of Polish and Kashubian should combine literary analyses with an understanding of the Kashubs' historical legacy.

Looking for the most satisfactory way of presenting the Kashubs' history, Gerard Labuda has stated:

From a completed outline of the historiography of Kashubia, understood as a political and historical community arisen in the course of history, two possible ways of presenting their history arise, namely, either as the people who inhabit the land called Kashubia, or as the Kashubs who gave their ethnonym to Kashubia – the land of their residence, more or less between the lower Oder and lower Vistula on the one side and between the Noteć and Warta rivers and the Baltic Sea on the other side. According to the second option, the history of Kashubia would be identical with that of Pomerania, which in turn would be the geographical and political counterpart of the Pomeranians. Initially, the Kashubs were, thus, ethnically and culturally identical with the Pomeranians. However, in the course of historical development the latter notion has gained a multinational meaning due to the processes of migration and denationalisation, following the influx of populations of Polish, German(ic), Scandinavian, Scottish, English and Baltic origins. Having lost their own statehood, in the thirteenth century the Kashubs ceased to be the rulers of their lands and became just one of their ethnic components. Originally an active subject of Kashubian history, over time they have become its object. Thus, until the end of the thirteenth century, it was predominantly the 'history of Kashubs and Kashubia', while since then to this day it has been solely the 'history of the Kashubs within the history of Pomerania'. (Labuda 2006: 37)

Cassubia-Kashubia and the Kashubs in the medieval history of Pomerania

Kaszuby/Kashubia is an ethnic, supra-tribal term, which was introduced to the annals of history by the Dominicans and Franciscans. It was recorded for the first time in 1238 in a document by Pope Gregory IX (Wachowiak 2006, vol. I: 225). After that it occurred commonly in the Latin titles of the West Pomeranian dukes, initially in the designation ‘dux Slavorum et Cassubia’. Barnim III (1320–68) used the title of ‘dux Cassuborum’ or ‘duke of the Kashubs’, while his successors appeared as the dukes of the Slavs, Pomeranians and Kashubs, the titles having been adopted by the Brandenburg-Prussian Hohenzollerns after the extinction of the Gryfit dynasty. The dukes of Gdańsk used the title of ‘duces Pomeraniae’, while the name of Kashubia was attributed to West Pomerania, denoting the newcomers to Gdańsk and the river Vistula as Kashubian people. At that time there was no awareness of linguistic and cultural bonds, even though they were quite obvious and pivotal. Only once the Germanisation of West Pomerania and the resulting decline of Kashubian had been perceived was the appellation and community of the Kashubs fully revealed in the documents and written sources concerning East Pomerania. Therefore, the Kashubs’ history is part of the history of Pomerania, and since the Middle Ages also part of the history of Poland and Germany.

At the end of the first millennium, Pomerania – the native land of the Kashubs, for a short period of time belonging as a whole to Poland – saw the development of three supra-tribal political territories with centres in Gdańsk, Kołobrzeg and Szczecin-Wolin. Gdańsk had already in 997 received the Prague bishop Adalbert (Wojciech), who on his missionary journey to the Prussians, under the auspices of the Polish duke, Bolesław the Brave, spent Eastertide in Gdańsk and baptised scores of the town’s inhabitants. In the year 1000 the first Pomeranian episcopate was located in Kołobrzeg-Kamień and included the entire territory of the Kashubs-Pomeranians, from the Vistula to the river Oder. However, Christianity was not easy to introduce along the Oder, as local and tribal communities,

who stood out from other Baltic Slavs in the spiritual and material richness of their pre-Christian religion, defended themselves far longer against forced Christianisation, which was brought mostly on the swords of their neighbours – Germans from the west and Poles from the south (Labuda 1993).

The pagan religion on the Baltic Sea was based on belief in the deities of war and peace – Świątowit (Svantovit) and Trzygłów (Triglav) – as well as the worship of nature. An important role was played by priests, who exercised significant influence on daily and political life. With time, the main centre of Kashubian West Pomerania became Szczecin (Stettin). The native Gryfit dynasty, whose name originated from the griffin on their coat of arms and whose primogenitor in the twelfth century was Duke Warcisław, ruled there for several centuries. As a result of devastating military expeditions, Warcisław was forced to recognise the authority of Poland and its duke, Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed, whose patronage, supported by armed troops, enabled the ultimate Christianisation of his state by Bishop Otto of Bamberg. Warcisław, who was not stripped of his authority, enlarged his domains with land belonging to the Alliance of Liutizians, who were close relatives of the Kashubs. His successors also ruled over the isle of Rügen, originally a separate duchy, with a splendid temple in Arkona. This symbol of the pre-Christian era, and of the glory days of Baltic Slavdom in general, was destroyed during the Danish conquest in 1168, under the command of Bishop Absalon. In the tenth and eleventh centuries Pomerania became a bridge in relations between Poland and Scandinavia (Labuda 2006: 75).

In the twelfth century the whole of West Pomerania came under German rule. In 1181, Duke Bogusław I paid homage to the emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, which meant a break in formal relations with Poland for many centuries. Besides Szczecin, the ducal capital was also Wołogoszcz (Wolgast), especially after the division of the duchy into two – the two parts named after the two capitals. At the same time, the Słupsk-Sławno duchy of the Raciborzycs (Ratiborids), prior to 1238, came under the rule of the Gdańsk dynasty of Subisławics (Samborids), who then also became independent from the Polish dukes, although they stayed closely connected with Poland (Śliwiński 1997).

In 1258, Warcisław III, as recorded in the *Kronika Wielkopolska*, ‘... went to war against Świętopełk, the Duke of Pomerania, with the troops sent from Greater Poland by Duke Bolesław and with the bishop of Kamień. And having come to the vicinity of Słupsk, called also Stolp, he left the bishop and his troops (...) himself bravely harrying Świętopełk’s lands with a great army’ (*Kronika* 1965: 264). Nonetheless, the victor remained Świętopełk, and until 1307–8 the lands of Słupsk and Sławno belonged to Gdańsk Pomerania, which Labuda calls the ‘Kashubian-Kociewian duchy’ to distinguish it from the ‘Kashubian-Liutizian’ duchy in West Pomerania, the latter being under Danish domination until it came under the influence of the Brandenburg Marches.

The above-mentioned Kashubian duchies in Pomerania had never been united into one state. The western duchies surrendered to Germans while the eastern ones fell increasingly within the sphere of Polish influence. Of growing significance in the east was the organisation of the Catholic Church, Christianisation progressing from the west and south. The eastern part of the Kashubian-Pomeranian lands was included in the Kuyavian-Włocławek episcopate established in 1124, and its subunit, the Archdeaconry of Gdańsk and Pomerania. The central part, from the holy Chełm Mountain (‘Gollen-Berg’ in German) near Koszalin to the eastern confines of the duchy, belonged to the Archiepiscopate of Gniezno and formed the Archdeaconry of Słupsk (Stolp). The territories west of the Chełm Mountain, which in the Middle Ages made up the greatest Marian sanctuary in northern Europe (Szultka 1993), came under the rule of the Episcopate of Wolin (Wollin), founded in 1140, with the seat moved in 1176 to Kamień (Cammin). During the period of Polish-German rivalry in Pomerania, the bishop of Kamień became independent of Gniezno, and from c. 1188 he came under the direct rule of Rome. Next to Kashubian and liturgical Latin in all parts of Pomerania, under the influence of the Church it was Polish in the east and German in the west which became the significant – and later dominant – languages on an everyday basis. The West Pomeranian bishops preferred German, when managing Christianisation and combining it with a settlement action/colonisation based on German town law (the so-called Magdeburg rights). So did the dukes, defending themselves against political dominance by their German neighbours, particularly the

Brandenburg margraves, and considering direct feudal subordination to the Emperor to be more bearable and dignified. With time, the knight and burger classes, as well as the clergy, were represented predominantly by Germans; the native Slavonic Kashubian populace and its upper classes, including the ducal families, were subject to Germanisation too – having preserved, however, their Kashubian names and symbols, and an awareness of their Slavonic pedigree. Therefore, until 1945 (i.e. the end of German rule in West Pomerania, often called German Pomerania) the wealthiest and most influential families were ancient Kashubian houses with Slavonic-sounding names such as Podkomorzy/von Puttkamer, Cycewic/von Zitzewitz, Bork/von Bork, Mach/von Mach, etc.

All of these families cultivated the memory of the Pomeranian Duchy, once under the reign of the Slavonic Gryfits, and above all the eminent Bogusław X Great (1474–1523). In 1478 Bogusław X succeeded in unifying the whole of West Pomerania (Rymar 1995), and when reforming his state and defending it from the possessiveness of Brandenburg, he sought a rapprochement with Poland.

German colonisation and settlement based on German town law also proceeded in East Pomerania during the rule of the native ducal dynasty of Świętopelk the Great and Mściwój/Mestwin II, who for many years defended their independence against Polish dukes and struggled against German domination, represented there mainly by the Order of Teutonic Knights.

In the west, Germans early dominated the local Kashubian population, for whom colonisation and relocation according to the Magdeburg laws brought an improvement in their existence and a civilising influence, accompanied however by discrimination and the decline of Kashubian (for example, in the so-called ‘Wendish clause’ the Slavs-Kashubs were denied most of the rights of the Germans). As a result of colonisation and Christianisation, Kashubian lost its position as first language, and became the third language after German and Latin. This was reflected also in the social and economic situation of the native Pomeranian populace, who remained faithful to Kashubian. From the thirteenth century, Kashubs became second-class citizens in a state which was still Kashubian-Pomeranian in name, but more and more German in essence.

In East (Gdańsk) Pomerania, following the death of the last duke, Mściwój/Mestwin II, at Christmas 1294, power was assumed by Przemysł II, Duke of Greater Poland. This was due to the 1282 Treaty of Kępno, known as *Zôpis Mestwina* or 'Mestwin's legacy' (Zielińska 1968 and 1990). It was this unification of Gdańsk Pomerania with Greater Poland that underlay the renewal of the Kingdom of Poland in 1295.

When Przemysł II lost his life in the same year, his successors did not manage to ensure the continuity of the Kingdom or the affiliation of Vistulan Pomerania to Poland. In 1308–9 the territory came under the control of the Teutonic Knights, who had been settled in Chełmno Land for a long time. Their rule, which lasted for over one and a half centuries, contributed to the development of the local economy, and strengthened Germanisation, mainly through intensified colonisation with the help of genuine German settlers, both in the towns and the countryside (Biskup and Labuda 1986, 2000). The position of the local knight and magnate elites was also reduced, so that the language of Kashubian functioned mainly in the rural environment, in particular among the yeomanry and peasantry. It had no opportunities to develop into a public language, with a unified form, or to be more than a regional dialect within a geographically and economically diversified country. Therefore the Kashubian community within Pomerania, dominated by strangers, did not create a supra-tribal standard, or a basis for Kashubian nationality. The delayed development of the Kashubian language, and the numerous difficulties faced by those who used it under Teutonic rule, not only caused a setback in the Polonisation process which had started earlier in Vistulan Pomerania, but allowed sweeping unification through the Prussification of the Teutonic state. The name 'Prussia', appropriated by Germans from the extinct Baltic population, survived the Teutonic era.

The importance of the Reformation and the autonomy of Ducal Prussia for the preservation of Kashubian

The Reformation and consequent Counter-Reformation were turning points of great importance, and had far-reaching consequences in Kashubia and the whole of Pomerania. The Reformation first reached West Pomerania, where it changed the face of the region for many centuries and was extremely important for ethnic, national and cultural processes throughout the whole of Pomerania. The dukes of Szczecin (Stettin) observed the Reformation ideas entering their country from Wittenberg with great tolerance and prudence. The fact that the reforms strengthened the position of the dukes in relation to the Church, and that one of the leading reformers in the north of Germany was Johannes Bugenhagen, himself from Pomerania, was not unimportant. In his 1518 work 'Pomorania' he wrote about the language changes that were occurring in his native land: 'Truly, having adopted the [Christian] faith, the Pomeranian towns soon began neglecting their Slavonic language and becoming Teutonic and Germanic, so those [towns located] beyond Köslin as far as Poland, commenced nursing a grudge towards their brother Pomeranians, who had become German' (Bugenhagen 1900: 38; Szultka 1992: 18). 'Slavonic' here should be read as 'Kashubian'.

The ideas of the Reformation quickly reached all the inhabitants of West Pomerania, including both the German- and Slavonic-language speakers, and were particularly well accepted by the rural and urban middle classes, often heavily indebted to monasteries and other Church institutions, and at the same time quite eager to take over Church properties. Thanks to Bugenhagen, who was supported by the dukes and initially even by the bishop of Kamień, who accepted the need for reform within the Church, Reformation ideas quickly spread to the Oder Pomerania. According to the duke's wish, in 1535 Bugenhagen edited the Church Regulations, a document which was to become the constitution of the Lutheran Church in Pomerania.

The western and central parts of the country were quickly converted to become uniformly Protestant and German. However, its eastern part – located east of Jamno Lake (Jamunder See) and the Unieść (Uniesta) river – and especially the borderland with East Pomerania, which as Royal Prussia had belonged to Poland since 1466, remained Kashubian and also partly Catholic. This is where the first religious books complying with Luther's teachings appeared in print in the Wendish-Slavonic (i.e. Kashubian) language. At the end of the sixteenth century, Simon Krofey, a pastor from Bytów (Bütow), published Luther's Catechism and Psalm Book (Krofey 1586, 1858). However, they were not written in Kashubian but in Polish with abundant Kashubianisms. The Kashubs were generally devoid of proper pastoral care in their native tongue, hence the decline of religious culture, soon reinforced by the Thirty Years' War, which spread into Pomerania. At the same time, among some of the local nobility and peasantry, Protestantism triggered new forces in the struggle for the maintenance of Slavonic Kashubian, not only in daily life, but also in the Lutheran Church (Szultka 1993, 1994).

Simultaneously, although at a slower rate, the Reformation was reaching East Pomerania, becoming popular predominantly in urban centres populated by Germans, as well as among the nobility, including those of Kashubian-Polish descent. East Pomerania belonged to the Polish crown and the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, preserving its political autonomy as Royal Prussia until 1569. One of its three provinces, known as Pomerania, included all lands located on the left bank of the Vistula, including the poorest ones, densely populated by Kashubs, whose distinctiveness made some contemporary chroniclers extend the Kashubian-language area to the entire province, or even to all the Prussian lands – 'since the Kashubs are here far and wide', as Charles Ogier, a French diplomat, recorded in his 1635–6 diary of his journey to Poland (Ogier 1953: 137). In the Kashubian lands there were sparsely distributed small towns, as the majority of population earned their living from farming, fishing and forestry, in the shadow of the great town of Gdańsk. All the citizens of Royal Prussia regarded themselves as Prussians by birth and identified with Polish nationality, regardless of the culture or daily language of the extremely diversified local ethnic groups.

Thanks to the progress of the Reformation and influx of various ethnic and religious communities to Vistulan Pomerania, the region kept changing its cultural profile, becoming more and more a mosaic of religions and cultures. The progress of Lutheranism was only limited during the Counter-Reformation, which followed the 1545–63 Council of Trent, and also due to the Jesuits, who took over the education of diocesan clergy. At this time numerous representatives of the nobility and members of rural parish communities returned to the Catholic Church, especially in the Kashub-populated areas. The activity of other monastic orders, such as the Benedictine nuns from Żarnowiec (Zarnowitz) or – to an even greater extent – the Franciscans from the new Calvary sanctuary of Wejherowo (Neustadt), was also of some importance. For a long time religious diversity and the accompanying economic differences influenced the Kashubs' daily life, and they were much tried by wars, in particular between Poland and Sweden, leaving persistent negative traces in the Kashubs' historical memory. This was not the case with the Polish-Turkish wars, especially the 1683 Relief of Vienna, in which Kashubian noblemen and even peasants took part, hence the traditional Kashubian memory of the 'good king' Jan III Sobieski. At that time, numerous members of the Kashubian nobility began to identify themselves with Poland, and some even acquired aristocratic status and were granted such positions as Polish senators or voivodes (governors) in Royal Prussia. The autonomy of that province, and the related right of peerage (in which Polish citizenship was granted to foreign noblemen), as well as separate general provincial assemblies, made the Kashubian nobility in general active in politics. Even the local yeomanry identified themselves with Poland, while still harbouring ambitions to preserve their distinctness within the Commonwealth (Odyniec 1972, 1983). Of equal importance was their experience in representing the Prussian towns in the provincial assembly, where they had greater independence and power than Polish townspeople in general.

The fall of the Republic in the eighteenth century also had an impact on the situation of the Kashubs in Royal Prussia. Already, during the first partition of Poland, Royal Prussia had been seized by its rapacious neighbour the King of Prussia, who had wielded power in West Pomerania since 1637 when the Gryfit dynasty died out. In 1648, after the Thirty Years' War,

the West Pomeranian Duchy was divided between Sweden and Brandenburg, which joined together later as the protestant Kingdom of Prussia, a state which included all Pomeranian lands between the lower Oder and Vistula rivers.

The Kashubs in the Protestant state of Prussia

In the Prussian state Protestantism became the official religion, and as such it served the policy of Germanisation, directed essentially against the native Kashubian or Polish population. One of the representatives and implementers of that policy, Christian W. Haken, a superintendent from Stolp (Słupsk), wrote at the end of the eighteenth century:

The Kashubs' great national pride is the main reason for their longstanding resistance against the complete extinction of the Sarmatian⁴ tribe. It is that pride that does not allow them to mix with German blood in any way, all the more so as they treat the Germans as plunderers of their hitherto fatherland. This pride also contributes to the shame felt when using the German language (...). There exists a prescript ordering preachers to get rid of the Kashubian language as far as possible, and to impose solely German teachers, and not to confirm children who cannot read German. This, however, requires certain wisdom, caution and attention, to not make them aware that their language is to be eradicated, since the Kashubs would certainly rebel against and resist such a plan. One should also make Kashubs, who communicate in German with difficulty on an everyday basis, able to understand religious instruction in the German language (...). Both reasons together have been an obstacle for eliminating Kashubian in my synod. After ten years of my stay here, with my pastors' assistance, I have caused the parishes with vacancies to appoint preachers without knowledge of Kashubian, provided the local patrons are not too stubborn, as within the next five to six years the elderly people, who are illiterate in German, will die out. Some parishes will need some fifty years for that.

4 A reference to the legendary relationship of the Polish gentry to the Iranian tribe of Sarmatians.

The parishes where sermons are delivered in Kashubian can be divided into two groups:

1) where the pastor has to preach in Kashubian, as a half or even two-thirds of the listeners do not understand German sufficiently; these are the parishes of Gardna Wielka [Groß Garde], Rowy [Rowe] Smółdzino [Schmolsin], Główny [Głowitz], Cecenowo [Zezenow], Skórowo [Schurow];

2) where Kashubian will disappear soon; these are the parishes of Damno [Dammen], Łupawa [Lupow], Mikorowo [Mickrow], Nożyno [Groß Nossin], Budowo [Budow]. (*Gryf* 1908/9: 204-5).

These were prophetic utterances, although the process of the extinction of Kashubian in this area lasted half a century longer, as a result of the attitude among the Lutheran Kashubs themselves and those few pastors who understood the need to preserve Kashubian, pastors who were recruited from among the local communities or who came from Sorbian Lusatia. In general, however, pastors went to any lengths in order to eliminate Kashubian from local churches. These actions were also described by the Swiss scholar Johan Bernoulli, who in 1777 visited the Prussian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Otto Christoph von Podewils, a landlord in Zipkow (Szczypkowice) near Stolp (Ślupsk):

The Kashubs understand Poles quite well, but the latter have problems with understanding the former. The count's cook, who had served in Lusatia, where Slavonic is much spoken, can understand Kashubian quite well. Moreover, the great difference between that language and German is unpleasant to the nobility, who possess landed property in Kashubia. Therefore, the landowners do everything, although so far with no remarkable success, in order to spread the German language and to eliminate Kashubian. They ordered sermons to be delivered in German immediately after Kashubian, and the congregation had to listen to them; German-only sermons, however, would be premature, as it is not yet commonly understood. Gradually, the expected changes will probably come, partly because the Kashubs increasingly blend with the Pomeranians, partly because of many German colonists settling in the country as a result of the reclamation of swamps and thickets. (Bernoulli 1779: 139-40)

That document, a foreigner's account, shows the common identification of Pomeranian with German in West Pomerania, and describes Protestant Kashubs as persistently maintaining their native language, customs and traditions.

That Kashubian persistence worried even Frederick II, who otherwise esteemed the somewhat disdained Kashubs – and all the Pomeranians – as a recruiting base for his army. With that aim he established cadet corps in Stolp (Słupsk) and Culm (Chełmno), where Kashubian youth, especially from the local yeomanry, were trained in strict obedience and commitment to the king. The Stolp school gave the Prussian army many officers, even generals from Kashubian families, known in Poland to this day, and who originated predominantly from the lands of Bütow (Bytów) and Lauenburg (Lębork) (Szultka 1992). That Kashubian part of West Pomerania bore the name of the Azure Country, referring to the natural cheerfulness and cultured aspect of its populace – the image, however, was far too heavily idealised. The living standards among its inhabitants actually differed significantly from the all-Prussian standards. Of crucial significance in improving the conditions of Kashubs' existence in Pomerania were the Prussian enfranchisement reforms, which regulated the ownership situation in the countryside and granted freedom to peasants, and hereditary tenure of land to some of them, often in the form of quite large farmsteads. This was a consequence of the French Revolution and the victorious Napoleonic War against Prussia, where the wiser representatives of the Junker ruling class, who wanted to save the state, showed concern for granting freedom and property to peasants, and reforming the government system in towns, in public education and in military service.

The Napoleonic Wars marked the start of the nineteenth century, in the history of the Kashubs and Pomerania (as well as the whole of Europe) a period of transition from feudalism to capitalism, from class society to civic society, and from monarchies to democracies, even if – as was the case in Prussia – a monarchy was preserved. It was a period of ethnic and national awakening, with the formation of numerous societies in East Central Europe whose activities aimed at regaining independence or creating their own state. The changes in culture and consciousness were conditioned by social and economic changes, the participation of the hitherto 'oppressed masses' in the progress of civilisation, and decision-making when introducing representative institutions into self-government and entire states.

The formation of a modern society was determined mainly by changes occurring in the first half of the nineteenth century within property relations

in the countryside and also methods of farming. The enfranchised peasants, like the noblemen-landowners, had become a part of the huge organism of the Prussian and later all-German state, where the development of a free market required more and more education and economic administration. Every landowner of a larger farm, like each craftsman, merchant and manufacturer, became an entrepreneur, who managed the work of the people they employed: family members and workers. Their prosperity was dependent to a large extent upon the development of the entire national economy, where Pomerania, together with Greater Poland and Mecklenburg, provided a food base for Germany's growing industrial regions.

In the lives and mentality of the Kashubs, huge changes took place. From being inhabitants of villages, parishes and neighbourhoods, tied to their land and dwelling place, more and more of them were becoming citizens of towns and countries, citizens of quite an alien state, however – sometimes almost citizens of the world, when wandering far from their homeland as free persons in search of work and livelihood, and a better future. The starting point for these huge changes was the previously mentioned enfranchisement of the peasants.

Only through enfranchisement did the Kashubian peasant become the legal owner of his farmed land, and his properties were entered into the real-estate register under his name. The real-estate register had been introduced in 1776 by Frederick the Great, at first in relation to noblemen's properties. The nobility of Royal Prussia had to document their rights of usufruct in front of civil servants of the king – their new lord. Some of them were evicted from their properties during that regulation process, in cases where they did not own the required documents or could not provide a neighbour's testimony. To this day, some families and estates in Kashubia own such documents and mortgage registers from the end of the eighteenth century.

Farmsteads were not given their entry in the mortgage registers until the enfranchisement process. These registers contain interesting materials concerning everyday life, and besides the registration acts of new owners also contain sale and purchase contracts, documents of lease and rent, liabilities and mortgage debts, wedding contracts, property inventories, last wills, and sometimes even records of court proceedings. (A folk proverb

says: 'if you want to know the character of the Kashubs – have a look at the records of court proceedings'.) Without an analysis of these mortgage and legal documents, the image of the history and everyday life of the Kashubs and of Pomerania would not be complete.

The enfranchisement included firstly the regulation of property relations. In royal and state demesnes this followed the 1808 edict, and in private properties the 1811 law, complemented by the 1816 government declaration. In noblemen's properties, the proprietary rights were originally given only to the richest peasants, who owned their own draught teams. Others were granted their right after the Springtime of Nations, while most of the smallholders were ousted by noblemen and became ordinary workers, who were not covered by the enfranchisement. The regulation of property relations was followed by the abolition of peasants' obligations towards the manor (*corvée*, rent, tribute in kind) and noblemen's obligations towards the village (construction and repairs of peasants' buildings, emergency assistance in case of crop failure). As the value of the peasants' obligations was higher, they had to buy themselves out, most often through repayments spread over many years or with part of their farm land. The latter form of repayment was prevalent in noblemen's properties throughout the whole of Pomerania, and resulted in the increase of noblemen's acreages.

Separate laws and agreements at the end of the nineteenth century regulated the buying out of peasants' and estates' obligations towards the Church – the so-called tithes or 'mass-donations'. According to the law, the tithes were to be submitted on St Martin's day,⁵ but actually they were collected during the priests' Christmas visit. Whereas the inhabitants of larger villages used to submit a definite amount of rye or oat grain, sometimes also eggs, those who lived in isolated settlements or single farmsteads far away from the church had more diversified tithes. For instance, in the parish of Brusy (Bruss), the villagers of Gieldon, besides rye and eggs for the priest and rye for the organist, submitted sixty silver groschen a year in cash, dinner during the Christmas visit, eight units of oats for the priest's horse, and four units of oats for the organist's horse. The agent during the

5 On 11 November.