

What was the true identity of Magnus, Count of Wroclaw?

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Which clan of Polish medieval nobility¹ derives its male lineage from Count Magnus of Wroclaw? This man of noble birth, who bore a mysteriously non-Slavic name, was mentioned twice in the Chronicle of Gallus Anonymus².

This vexed question has been debated by several commentators. One of these: Bartosz Paprocki³ suggested that Magnus was an ancestor of the Zarembo line, whereas Tomasz Jurek in his article entitled "Who was Magnus, the Komes⁴ of Wroclaw?"⁵, expressed doubts about the alleged Zarembo descent.

In this paper, my aim is to examine this puzzle in the light of a new methodology. In essence, the mystery of Magnus, who was a foreigner, hailing from lands that were far distant from Poland, is a tantalizing case for the application of genetic genealogy. In genetic terms, we are faced with a case of great strangeness in the form of this personage, who was added to native Polish infrastructure. Magnus, in one paper by T. Jurek was convincingly identified as the son of King Harold II Godwinson of England who met his death in 1066 at the Battle of Hastings. However, he might be shown to have been the father of Skarbimir, the famous Count Palatine of the Polish Duke Boleslaw III Wry-mouth, and thus an ancestor of the oldest branches of the powerful mediaeval Awdaniec clan.

The title of this article is deliberately couched as a provocative question in the form of the words: "true identity". I do not challenge T. Jurek's theory in his article: "Who was Magnus, the Komes of Wroclaw?" To the contrary: I am an avid promoter of T. Jurek's hypothesis that Komes Magnus – whose name featured twice in the Chronicle of Gallus Anonymus – was a son of the ill-fated King Harold II of England, defeated at Hastings. I have added the word "true" to emphasize that genetic genealogy might be a further step in the search for the facts surrounding Magnus Haroldson.

Magnus was born between 1050 and 1052, probably as the third son of Harold Godwinson (Edmund and Godwin preceded him as older sons), crowned much later as the King of England (Harold II), with his concubine Eadgyth / Edith "Swan Neck"⁶. Harold came



¹ Polish language utilizes the word "praszlacha" for the mediaeval nobility which is an equivalent of the German word "Uradel".

² Galli Anonymi Cronica; Gallus Anonymus (Polish variant: Gall Anonim) is the name traditionally given to the anonymous author (fl. 11th–12th centuries) of Gesta Principum Polonorum (Deeds of the Princes of the Poles), composed in Latin about 1115. Gallus is generally regarded as the first historian to have described Poland.

³ B.Paprocki, Herby Rycerstwa Polskiego, wyd. K.Turowski, Kraków 1858, s.677. (The heraldic arms of the Polish Knighthood, printed first 1584 in Cracow))

⁴ Polish word "komes" (derived from Latin "comes") means "count" in a medieval meaning of this title.

⁵ T.Jurek, Kim był wrocławski komes Magnus?, Venerabiles Nobiles et Honesti, Toruń 1997. (Who was Magnus, the Komes of Wrocław?)

⁶ The excerpts on the life of Magnus Haroldson reconstructed here are abstracted largely from the T.Jurek's article.

from an older branch of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty of Wessex, which several generations earlier had lost its rights to the crown of England. Thanks to his great perseverance and talent for political and military affairs, after the death of King Edward the Confessor, the crown of England was restored to the royal branch of Wessex from the time of Alfred the Great. It must be noted, however, that not all historians share the view, first formulated by Alfred Anscombe⁷, and later developed by David Humiston Kelley⁸, that the lineage, from which Harold Godwinson came, was the elder branch of the Wessex dynasty⁹.



MIDDLE EUROPE ABOUT THE YEAR 1000

The descent of Magnus's mother - Eadgyth - is unknown, but at the debut of her relationship with Harold, the latter, together with his father Godwin, lived in exile in Flanders or Ireland. It is possible that Harold met Eadgyth at one of these courts¹⁰.

It is probable, that Magnus, as a teenager, was present on the famous battlefield of Hastings in 1066, where his father - King Harold II - unexpectedly perished. The King's sons managed to escape death. In 1068, his two elder sons organized an Irish war expedition against Bristol directed against their father's slayer - William the Conqueror, who in the meantime had been crowned King of England. It was probably Magnus who, in the following year, 1069, initiated a further Danish intervention targeted at York, which was also unsuccessful.

Given the subsequent relationships of Magnus with Poland, and the marriage of his sister in Kievan Rus, T. Jurek concluded, probably correctly, that it was perhaps Magnus who coordinated

⁷ Alfred Anscombe, The Pedigree of Godwine, [w:] Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 3rd series, vol. 7 (1913), str. 129-50.

⁸ David Humiston Kelley, The House of Aethelred, [w:] Studies in Genealogy and Family History, ed. L.L. Brook, Foundation for Medieval Genealogy, 1989

⁹ This mystery could ultimately be resolved by genetic genealogy, if modern-day descendants of the two genetic lines of the Wessex dynasty could be found and tested.

¹⁰ The County of Flanders appears more likely, given that Harold Godwinson, before he was crowned, frequently resided across the English Channel on the European mainland.

the joint Polish-Ruthenian military expedition against Hungary and the Czech Kingdom in 1075, and that maybe he - a year earlier during the Polish-Ruthenian negotiations – had arranged for his sister Gytha to marry the Ruthenian Duke, Vladimir Monachomach, the future Grand Duke of Kiev – who was very prominent in the history of Rus.

T. Jurek, when writing his article about Magnus, did not notice that the cases of Magnus and Gytha are not the only activities of the children of King Harold II of England in Central and Eastern Europe. In a lesser-known reference, Józef Puzyna¹¹ had highlighted this in one of his Samogitian (Samogitia is a region of modern day Western Lithuania) tales, collected and issued in print in the last quarter of the nineteenth century by Mieczysław Dowojna-Sylwestrowicz¹². It mentions that during the reign of an English King named Edeledoras (probably King Ethelred, 978-1016) lived a dignitary Godwinas, whose son Dausgpringis (identified with the legendary Dowszpring - ancestor of the Gedimin, therefore ancestor of the Lithuanian Gediminids dynasty) was later a ruler in Lithuania. This tallies with the fact that Godwin – the grandfather of our Magnus – was alive at the time of Ethelred. But J. Puzyna concluded that this Godwinas must have been Harold's son Godwin, the grandson of the first mentioned Godwin – who was simultaneously the older brother of Magnus. Further, he concluded that Grand Duke of Kiev, Mstislav-Harald, the eldest son of Vladimir Monachomach and Gytha, Magnus' sister, tried to install his cousin Dowszpring as ruler of the Duchy of Polock. Whether he succeeded, J. Puzyna doesn't say, but in his opinion, Dowszpring's descendants later inherited the principality of Vilnius-Utena.

After the dramatic fall of Bolesław the Bold of Poland in 1079, Magnus probably went with the King into exile in Hungary. If so, he might have returned from exile to Poland in 1083 together with the crown prince Mieszko, son of the King. But equally - especially if he were a brother-in-law, both of the fugitive King and of the later reigning King's younger brother Władysław Herman - he might have remained throughout this period in Poland, in the role of a high noble. It is also possible that, during at least part of that time, he was with his brother-in-law, Vladimir Monachomach in Rus.

Already by this time, Magnus had probably been a recognized as a leader and politician. Gallus mentions him twice - in both cases in a positive context. His role as Komes (Count) of Wrocław could have had its commencement several years prior to 1093, the year in which Gallus makes mention of him for the first time – especially, if he was actually a brother-in-law of the reigning Duke Władysław Herman.



**COAT OF ARMS
OF THE GEDIMINIDS
DYNASTY**

¹¹ Józef Puzyna, *Początki państwowości i dynastii litewskiej według najnowszych badań*, "Nauka i Sztuka", t. VI, 1947. (The beginnings of the Lithuanian state and dynasty according to the latest research)

¹² Mieczysław Dowojna-Sylwestrowicz, *Podania żmudzkie*, Tom II, Warszawa, 1894. (Samogitian tales); Folk anecdotes are admittedly a somewhat controversial source for mediaeval studies. There is indeed some concern as to the manner in which the saga about Godwinas was collected by a 19th century scholar. However, M. Dowojna-Sylwestrowicz was considered a very reliable collector of folk tales, who showed no special mediaeval historical biases. The names of Ethelred and Godwin in these tales are rendered in a Lithuanian form, whilst the tales are imbued with motifs characteristic of the Scandinavian sagas. Godwinas dies of apoplexy caused by gluttony when he swears in front of the King that he is not conspiring against him. He drops dead after saying the words, "Let me not get up from this feast, if I tell a lie." There is a distant echo of accusations, directed, at the time of Ethelred against Godwin's father, Wulfnoth Cild. It is also probably an echo of Godwin's sudden death during a feast at Winchester in 1053, when he had denied accusations of disloyalty to the King of England, Edward the Confessor. The nickname of Godwin's son's - Daug-springis - means in Samogitian "great swallower" (i.e. a glutton), which also is a reference to this legend. In summary, this saga contains a confusion of real events and people, which is typical of true folk tales and sagas.

An important element of T. Jurek's argument is an analysis of the first mention of Magnus in the Chronicle of Gallus, from which he concludes that the chronicler suggested a highly elite, if not dynastic, descent of Magnus. This is a convincing argument.

In 1097 another dignitary, Wojśław, was already Komes of Wrocław, perhaps as a result of Magnus' known support for opponents of the actual Count Palatine, Sieciech. In 1109 Magnus, who was already Komes of Mazovia, had defeated Pomeranian troops, which had invaded Poland. Teresa Kiersnowska¹³ suggests that Magnus was buried in the courtyard of the castle of Czersk in a twelfth-century Norman tomb of a lord of the castle¹⁴. She based this on knowledge that, at the time of Magnus, Czersk temporarily became capital of Mazovia¹⁵. It is quite possible that Magnus died shortly after the campaign of 1109, because he doesn't appear subsequently in the events recorded in the Chronicle of Gallus.

This much is known from available written sources, supported to some extent by archaeological discoveries. It is unlikely that we will elicit more from such sources in the future. It can be said with some certainty that T. Jurek squeezed every available drop from the sources at hand.

The enigma of Magnus' marriage

T. Jurek's thesis that Komes Magnus was the son of Harold II is based on three premises: the name Magnus, which was very rare in Poland, and according the narrative of Gallus, suggestive of a high elite descent of Magnus, in conjunction with his sister's marriage within the Rus dynasty, subsequently to the Grand Duke of Kiev. It is not insignificant that after the failed York uprising, the sons of Harold II disappeared from the view of Western European chroniclers. One supposes that they were not killed in battle, because the death of Harold's sons would surely have been recorded.

If T. Jurek could be reproached for anything, then it is for not fully utilizing the accounts of Orderic Vitalis¹⁶ regarding the Danish assault on York in 1069. In this action, aside from the Danes, Poles were also present. They are listed by Orderic Vitalis as being the first to follow after the Danes, and before the Saxons, Frisians, and Lutycy (Veleti). T. Jurek does cite and give attention to this record, but does not expand on its implications, which are important for understanding the relationships of the son of the King of England with Eastern and Central Europe. Given that Poles were mentioned in the second position after the Danes of Sven II, who formed the backbone of the expedition, the Polish participation cannot be only reduced merely to a small group of volunteers. A journey from Poland to Denmark, in those days, required a hard and wearying expedition; and it is evident this war party had travelled to England from a very

¹³ T.Kiersnowska, Płock, Czerski i Błonie – trzy ośrodki wczesnomiejskie z XI-XIII wieku na Mazowszu, [w:] Miasto zachodniosłowiańskie w XI – XII wieku, Społeczeństwo - Kultura, Wrocław 1991, str.45. (Płock, Czersk and Błonie – three early municipal centers from XI-XIII century in Mazovia)

¹⁴ The tomb is located in the castle of Czersk - within the stone remnants of the long-vanished castle church, which was built probably in the days of Magnus. The burial - with a wooden housing - was constructed according to burial customs of Scandinavia. The 50 to 60 year-old occupant of the tomb had a powerful build and a Teutonic skull, which qualifies him as being a foreigner from Northern or Western Europe. On his left hand he wore a gold ring with a polygonal cross-section - which is unusual for finds in Poland during this period. A similar one was found in Lübeck, Germany. Close to him was placed a spear (blade downwards) and a sword, with its pommel held in the corpse's palm. Close to his feet were placed a bucket with a decorated bronze plate, and two brass bowls (typical of Norman graves.) The church was built of stone blocks (partially suggesting a West-European style of stone-cutting) transported to Czersk from the Świętokrzyskie Mountains (about 100 miles away). The fact that this stone temple required a considerable effort of construction at this time, symbolizes the high status of the lord who was buried in the castle, and who was probably the founder of the church.

¹⁵ L.Śłupecki, Dzieje Czerska w XI-XIV wieku, [w:] Wschodni Rocznik Humanistyczny, Tom III, 2006. (History of Czersk in the XI-XIV century)

¹⁶ Orderici Vitalis Historia ecclestica, Lib.IV, cap.7, edit. P.Migne [w:] Patrologia Latina, t.188, Paris 1890, str. 317.

distant country. It is possible that the delay in the assault on York, which led to its failure, was due the other forces having waited for the arrival of these significant Polish forces. All this indicates that the Polish participation in this expedition could not have taken place without the authorization of the King of Poland. But even a Polish-Danish treaty of alliance, if such had existed at the time, would not constitute grounds for any meaningful participation by Polish forces in such a remote and adventurous journey.

The circumstances of this expedition can be logically explained only by assuming that the initiator of the expedition (in this case probably Magnus), the organizer of it (Sven II), and the Polish ruler who supported it, were all linked by ties going much further than just a temporary alliance. Such ties would have involved intermarriages of wives and daughters of all three parties, thus obliging Bolesław to give strong military support for the right of Magnus to the throne of England - despite a most difficult trajectory journey Poland and the British Isles, as it would have been in the 11th century.

Hence, it can be postulated, that Magnus might have at one time been married to one of the many daughters of the Danish King Sven II - thereby sealing an alliance with him. But it could be the case, that at the time, Magnus was already a brother-in-law of Bolesław the Bold and Władysław Herman, through a marriage to one of their sisters (unknown to historians) that would adequately explain his later political position in Poland. Both these possibilities are likely, but unfortunately unverifiable via written sources. These are only indications, albeit important ones - in any endeavor to explain the development of events.

T. Jurek does not reach such conclusions - probably because he does not seem to share the view of the aforementioned D.H.Kelley as regards Magnus's descent from the royal Wessex dynasty. Such a descent would, however, explain the drive to regain the crown of England, and the extraordinary lengths to which Magnus and his brothers were prepared to go in order to try to oust the usurper of the British throne, and to regain power in England. These factors shed a wholly different light on Magnus, than the context T. Jurek has ascribed to his relations with Sven II, Bolesław the Bold and Rurikids, attributing to him (and his brothers) an excellent motive for intermarriage with the families of such rulers. They also account for Magnus arranging of his sister's marriage with the Duke of Ruthenia. In this light, the term "Nomen ducatus" which Gallus gave Magnus, becomes rather poignant.

There is another possibility - observed by Krzysztof Benyskiewicz¹⁷, that the wife of Bolesław the Bold, a wife never definitively identified by historians, came from the Danish dynasty. Perhaps the wife of Magnus (or one of his brothers) was the sister of the wife of Bolesław and at the same time the daughter of Sven II. That would make the ruler of Poland and Magnus brothers-in-law. However, in such a case, the relationship with Bolesław's successor - his brother Władysław Herman - would be weaker. This complicates the interpretation of Magnus's career during the reign of the latter.

The suggested marriage of Magnus would have serious consequences for yet another reason. Any offspring from it, on the distaff side, descending from the Kings and Dukes of Poland, would automatically obtain a legitimacy to inherit Poland. Just a few decades later, we do indeed find that Count Palatine Skarbimir was endeavoring to gain the controlling power in Poland. Given the fact that the Piast dynasty was already strongly in control of the Polish throne, he must have had a sufficient legitimacy to obtain the support of followers, and have a real chance to claim the role. It is curious that, after the collapse of his rebellion against the lawful ruler of Poland, he was not killed in the cruel way prescribed for such insurgents. Instead he was blinded (he was already one-eyed at the time). This means that he was treated identically to Duke Zbigniew a few years earlier - the brother and former competitor of Bolesław the Wry-mouth. This seems to confirm the blood relationship of Skarbimir with the Piast dynasty. Moreover, there are grounds

¹⁷ K.Benyskiewicz, Mieszko Bolesławowic (1069-1089), Kraków 2005. (Mieszko, son of Bolesław)

for suspecting that the blinded Skarbimir still held the palatine office, although probably through sons acting on his behalf. For unclear reasons, the marriage of Skarbimir or his son with Maria, Ruthenian Duchess of Chernihov, did not materialize, but the fact that such a marriage had been pre-approved by the Rurikids, implied that the descent of Skarbimir presented no hindrance to the dukes of Rus. Probably he was a descendant of one of the European dynasties.

The Norman origin of the Awdaniec clan is already established beyond question by historians. But we need also an explanation for the illustrious careers in the Kingdom of Poland of the first Polish generations of Awdaniecs – in fact recent immigrants. Over more than two generations, three nobles named by historians as being in this family (Skarbimir, Michał the Old and Michał the Younger) were promoted to key positions, although they were recent immigrants. Such an honor, in those days, could only be bestowed on dignitaries of dynastic descent¹⁸. Thus, the identification of Komes Magnus with the son of Harold, linking him with the ruler of Poland by marriage, and indicating Skarbimir as an issue of this marriage - all of these factors would, in combination, provide a plausible explanation for the illustrious careers of the first exponents of the Awdaniec clan.



**COAT OF ARMS
OF THE AWDANIEC CLAN**

Earlier authors had a variety of opinions about the descent of medieval dynastic families. Franciszek Piekosiński¹⁹ saw in them various branches of dynasties – branches which did not inherit a ruling power. Representatives of these branches, if they did not find security in their livelihoods through awards and dignities in their home country, were often forced into exile. Some faced physical liquidation, and would have sought support and maintenance in service at foreign courts. Their dynastic descent, their blood affinities, as well as their leadership qualities and ambitions, gave them a certain advantage at these courts. In reality, this view by F.Piekosiński was not verifiable, and lacked evidence in the historical references.

Another aspect comes into play in the context of the rebellion of Skarbimir, and that is the suggested father-son relationship between him and Magnus. Janusz Bieniak²⁰ tackles a question once raised by Karol Małczyński and Bronisław Włodarski, as to whether Skarbimir's rebellion was synchronized with other military activities. These occurred simultaneously in Volhynia (Rus) relating to the person alleged to be Magnus' brother-in-law – namely Duke Vladimir Monachomach (who according to my theory, was in fact, Skarbimir's uncle). This refers to an armed conflict between Vladimir and Bolesław the Wry-mouth. The

¹⁸ There is an unsettling question of the lack of dynastic names among the first generation of the Awdaniec clan. Perhaps, an exception here are the names Henryk and Theodoryk (Szczedrzyk), and the name of Skarb / Skarbimir derived from Old Norse Audo, which occurred in the tenth / eleventh century in the form of the name Eudo among the counts of Brittany. Is this a justifiable concern? It seems that dynastic names were given mainly to the sons of rulers whose fathers, at the birth of a son, already held a ruling title. Above all, the names were given to first-born sons – the nominal successors to the throne. In this way, the right of succession to the throne was emphasized. In other cases, dynastic names were rare. Also, the name of Komes Magnus was not of dynastic character. Magnus was born long before his father assumed the throne of England, and in addition, there was a first-born son before Magnus. Also, Skarbimir, even if he was a first-born son of Magnus, would have been one among several pretenders to the throne of England - a political exile seeking the support of friendly rulers. By contrast, giving Skarbimir a Polish or Danish dynastic name based on his mother's lineage would have labeled him as a rival for the succession to the royal seat of Poland, and would have exposed him to being "neutralized" at an early age.

¹⁹ F.Piekosiński, *O dynastycznym polskiej szlachty pochodzeniu*, Kraków 1888. (About the dynastic descent of Polish nobility)

²⁰ Janusz Bieniak, *Polska elita polityczna XII wieku, cz.II – Wróżda i zgoda*, [w:] *Spółeczeństwo Polski Średniowiecznej*, Tom III, 1985, p. 45. (Polish political elite of the XII century, part II – Conflict and concord, [in:] *Society of Medieval Poland*)

conclusion of J. Bieniak is that Skarbimir's rebellion was not motivated by any factors in Rus. This would not be surprising if the Vladimir's military action could simply have been a response to Skarbimir's revolt in Poland, and the sudden attack on Wry-mouth's ally in Rus - the Volhynian Duke Yaroslav Sventopelkovich - would have been in support of his wife's nephew.

Genetic references

The question of Magnus's descent can be solved only using a very new approach. Mediaeval historical research, because of its core principles, is based on a scrupulous analysis of written sources. It therefore has serious limitations which can not be bypassed. Opportunities for further progress are afforded only by archaeology, supported by new methods. In the last few decades, great advances in historical research have resulted from new methods of dating archaeological finds - the method of using the carbon isotope C14, and dendrology. The methodology of genetic genealogy is a similarly an innovation which is growing very rapidly. It shows much potential, being a new field, although its methodology is a work in progress.

I will focus on the method of genetic analysis²¹ based on the pattern of Y chromosomes (called Y-DNA), a pattern that is inherited from father to son, and is not transferred to women²². Thus, the method applies solely to male line descent. That is rather advantageous, because in our culture many legal powers - and the use of surnames - are inherited from the father.

The Y chromosome method (otherwise known as the Y-DNA method) allows us to analyze the branching of paternal lineages, and to determine whether two men with a known Y-DNA test result had a common ancestor in the last few millennia. It also allows us to calculate with some probability, the approximate date when their most recent common ancestor lived. The latter is hampered by a somewhat limited accuracy, at present, as defined by the rules of probability calculus. With the so-called deep test result of two men, we can determine within an accuracy of 4 to 5 generations and with a fairly high probability, how many generations ago their recent common ancestor lived. The accuracy of 4 to 5 generations is unsatisfactory for testing family relationships in the past two or three centuries, but is viable for Mediaeval research - especially if it can determine the branching of lineages in the Middle Ages.

Haplogroups and subclades

Only certain genetic haplogroups are strongly represented in Europe. Two dominate: one is called for the sake of convenience "Celtic" and labeled as "R1b", the second - "Slavic" and labeled as "R1a". The first prevails in Western Europe, and the second in Central and Eastern Europe, having a larger proportion in Poland, where almost 60% of the population belongs to this haplogroup. The names "Celtic" and "Slavic" are simplifications, but are accepted in use.

There is also a haplogroup labeled as "I1" - much less numerous than the earlier mentioned, which is found only on the European continent. It is found mainly in Denmark, Northern and Western Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries, England, and Southern and Western areas of Scandinavia and in Finland²³. It is sometimes called "Norman" or "Nordic"²⁴, and is regarded as a remnant of the oldest inhabitants of Europe, those hunter-gatherers living on the continent before the influx of Indo-Germanic tribes. In fact, haplogroup I1 is not predominant in any single

²¹ Colleen Fitzpatrick, Andrew Yeiser, DNA & Genealogy, 2005.

²² Genetics also provides other methods, apart from Y-DNA as mentioned above. However, such methods are less useful to genetic genealogy - and in particular, to the era of documented historical records.

²³ The author administers the genetic project „Normans of Continental Europe“, focused on haplogroup I1 <http://www.familytreedna.com/public/Normans-CE/default.aspx> .

²⁴ The name "Norman haplogroup" is used, because - based on extensive tests of the population of England - this haplogroup was associated with the influx to England of Danish and Norwegian Vikings, as well as Anglo-Saxon and Norman conquerors. The association is clearly generally correct, though not absolutely verified.

country, but is significantly represented - at least at a regional level – in the above countries and areas.

The Norman Haplogroup in Poland

In Poland the share of the Norman haplogroup is only a few percent. A rough insight into databases containing haplotypes of people tested in Poland and belonging to this haplogroup leads to the conclusion that most of them are probably descendants of so-called "Olenders", i.e. mainly German and Dutch settlers (farmers), who migrated in large swathes over the course of centuries from the West into Poland.

Haplogroup I1 is divided into a number of subclades compiled by grouping mutually close haplotypes. There are subclades, known as "Olender subclades"²⁵, which include a vast number of haplotypes of the Norman haplogroup from the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, that are easily identifiable to an experienced eye. Probably a small percentage of people with Norman haplotypes derived from Scandinavia²⁶, but their haplotypes are more difficult to classify.

Genes of the Polish mediaeval nobility

The case of Komes Magnus is a perfect candidate for the application of genetic genealogy. Here we have a case of an immigrant noble who carried a Norman haplotype into a fairly remote area of Europe, where the haplogroup I1 was unrepresented, in contrast to its proliferation in the same area today. Magnus was probably a descendant of the King of Wessex, Aethelwulf, who died in 858 and was the father of Alfred the Great. Alfred took the title of King of the Anglo-Saxons, and started a lineage that ended with Edward the Confessor – the predecessor of King Harold II on the throne of England. It is thought that Magnus was not only a carrier of haplogroup I1, but also a carrier of one of the subclades identified with Anglo-Saxons²⁷.

Among descendants of the Polish nobility belonging to the haplogroup I1, one can distinguish two subclades characterized by lack of features that are inherent to the previously discussed Olender subclades:

- subclade I1-ASP - firmly represented in Poland, but with Anglo-Saxon connotations, and outside of Poland, apparent in England and Denmark,
- subclade I1-T2 – also reasonably well represented in Poland, but more densely scattered around Europe than I1-ASP and associated with Denmark and areas of Danish conquest in the Middle Ages.

Both these subclades are found today among descendants of families belonging to the Awdaniec clan. They are also found in descendants of noble families that are not considered as being in the latter clan²⁸. The most recent common ancestor of both subclades is estimated to have lived 1500 - 2000 years ago, which rather undermines the possibility that such an ancestor had a connection with the much later territory of the Piast Kingdom.

²⁵ That does not mean that the "Olender" clades have no documented links to families of the Polish nobility. These do occur, but rather sporadically.

²⁶ Perhaps, among them are also descendants of Goths, who in first centuries AD moved southwards along the Vistula river. These might also include descendants of eleventh-century Ruthenian Varangians participating in war campaigns in Poland.

²⁷ Such subclades are typically labeled with the prefix "AS".

²⁸ The author also administers the genetic project of the Awdaniec-Skarbek clan.

http://www.familytreedna.com/public/skarbek_awdaniec/default.aspx .

An analysis of subclade I1-ASP conducted by Peter Gwozdz²⁹ has shown that all the tested people from Polish territories present in this subclade had a most recent common ancestor who lived about ten centuries ago. At a slightly earlier point, they had a shared ancestor belonging to other members of this subclade from Denmark and England.

Among the carriers of this subclade, one can detect well-documented descendants of Awdaniecs from the Mazovian region of Poland. The Norman descent of the Awdaniec clan is not in dispute among modern historians, and thus, the fact that their descendants fall into the Norman haplogroup is of no surprise.

Carriers of the subclade I1-ASP are descendants of the clan's main branch, bearing the nickname Skarbek. Genealogists derive the origin of the Skarbeks from the Palatine Skarbimir, who in 1118 unsuccessfully tried to usurp the Piasts' crown. One interesting coincidence is that this Skarbek line of Awdaniecs from the Kozietyły^{30 31} estate in the area of Czersk since time immemorial (at least from the thirteenth century), inherited these estates which lie close to the castle of Czersk. That is where T. Kiersnowska claimed she had found the tomb of Count Magnus, and close to the town Magnuszew on the Vistula river, whose surname and origins are usually associated with Count Magnus³².

Subclade I1-T2 has been less studied than that of I1-ASP. There are numerous problems of ambiguity about the dating of its various branches. A rough analysis leads to a conclusion that, during the Middle Ages in the territories of the Kingdom of Poland, as well as in the adjacent territories of Lithuania, Pomerania, Bohemia and the Elb-Slavic territories, a number of carriers of this subclade had settled. They were ancestors of lineages with living descendants there (There is further comment later in the article about Awdaniecs who descend from this subclade).

Palatine Skarbimir – Was he in fact a son of Count Magnus?

As suggested earlier, Skarbimir could have been a son of Magnus, either by the daughter of Sven II, or by an unknown sister of Bolesław the Bold and of Władysław Herman, or by a yet unknown wife of Bolesław. The ensuing affinities would provide a logical explanation of the rapid career-path of Skarbimir. In the case of the great-grandson of Bolesław the Brave (by Bolesław's daughter Storada or unknown daughter of Casimir the Restorer) it would have given him the necessary legitimacy for taking by force the ruling position in Poland, had his rebellion against Bolesław Wry-mouth not failed in 1118.

Skarbimir's birth, assumed to be around 1069 or a little later, would make him half a generation older than Duke Bolesław the Wry-mouth, whose custodian he was at the beginning of his career.

²⁹ Peter Gwozdz, Y-STR Mountains in the HaploSPACE, Part 1: Methods, [w:] Journal of genetic genealogy, 5(2):137-159, 2009, Part 2: Application to common Polish Clades, [w:] Journal of genetic genealogy, 5(2):159-185, 2009.

³⁰ Władysław Semkowicz, Ród Awdańców w wiekach średnich, Poznań 1920, p.204 (The Awdaniec clan in medieval ages)

³¹ Adam Boniecki, Herbarz Polski, Warszawa 1905, vol. 12, p. 82: Kozietyulscy h. Habdank.

³² In the Czersk land there is a strong representation of Awdaniec families. According to W. Semkowicz (Ród Awdańców w wiekach średnich, Poznań 1920, p.208) an Awdaniec family, probably a Skarbek branch, because the name Skarbek occurred among them, inherited Brzumin which is at a crossing of the Vistula river – close to the Czersk castle. W. Semkowicz also noticed Awdaniecs at Osiemborów close to Magnuszew, 20 kms further along the Vistula river. Also on the right bank of the river – on the opposite side to Magnuszew – the estate of Lewików – had its descent, since ancient times, from the Skarbeks Lewikowski's (see Adam Boniecki, Herbarz Polski, Warszawa 1905, vol 14, p. 200: Lewikowscy h. Abdank), who were of the same family as the Kozietyulski's. In this part of the Czersk land there is a major clustering of Skarbeks. We should also add to the previously mentioned group of Skarbeks, the families of Woyczyński's, Słanka's (both of the latter being of the same family as the Kozietyulski's), and also the Krakowiński's and Rudzki's.

Who was Michał the Old?

As a result of extrapolation, Komes Michał the Old was, until recently, assumed to be the father of Skarbimir. Michał the Younger, Chancellor of the Kingdom and Bishop of Poznań, the initiator and sponsor of Chronicle of Gallus Anonimus – was assumed to be brother of the Palatine Skarbimir³³. J. Bieniak went as far as to suggest that Skarbimir and his sons were inheritors of the patronage rights to Lubin Abbey (from Michał the Old), and this was one reason for perceiving Skarbimir as a son of Michał the Old³⁴.

Reconstruction of medieval family trees by extrapolation is generally accepted by medieval historians, although the premises for it, dependent, as they are, on flimsy written sources, are extremely weak. In the context of the times of Magnus, sources mentioned the names of a small group of dignitaries, who probably represented a small yet important share of the contemporary elites. To understand better the complex political mesh of this period, Polish medieval historians have extensively used the concept of the so called "Gallus camp"³⁵. That is composed of all the dignitaries mentioned by Gallus in a positive context – all probably members of the same political camp. This concept was instrumental in creating a family tree of the core members of the Awdaniec clan and their relatives. This was done based on a not unreasonable assumption that members of this "camp" were linked by close kinship ties. Komes Magnus was included in this camp, which underlines the possibility of a father-son relationship with Skarbimir – another member of this camp – and makes it worthy of consideration. In this context, it would be useful to try to verify these relationships by a method unrelated to written sources. Genetic genealogy would appear an appropriate tool for this purpose.

Assuming that Skarbimir could be a son of Magnus, one could speculate whether the two Michałs (the Old and the Younger) were perhaps their relatives on the distaff side (e.g. on the side of Magnus's mother - Edith "Swan Neck"). In this scenario, all of them would have been regarded by their contemporaries in Poland as one family. It is also difficult to exclude the descent of Michał the Old in his paternal lineage from the Wessex dynasty, but it would complicate the explanation as to why among present-day descendants of the Awdaniec clan there are two independent "non-Olender" Norman lineages. Their most recent common ancestor lived at least 1500 years ago. The fact that two independent Norman lineages occur within one heraldic clan, cannot be accidental, when we consider the tiny portion of Haplogroup I1 individuals that must have existed in the Polish population at the time.

It is therefore likely that the Michałs were also of Norman descent, being from another family in the paternal lineage. Does the Norman lineage of the Magnuski's^{36 37}, belonging to the subclade I1-T2, rather than being of I1-ASP lineage, derive from the Michałs? The Magnuski's never used the surname Skarbek, and therefore, one can assume, they were not descendants of Skarbimir in the male line. On the other hand, the name Magnuski was derived from the estate Magnusy (Magnusze) located next to the town of Lutomiersk³⁸, which is known for its excavated eleventh-century Norman tombs. The name of this estate was undoubtedly derived from the name Magnus³⁹.

³³ Władysław Semkowicz, *Ród Awdańców w wiekach średnich*, Poznań 1920

³⁴ Janusz Bieniak, *Polska elita polityczna XII wieku, part II – Wróżda i zgoda*, [in:] *Spółeczeństwo Polski Średniowiecznej*, Tom III, 1985, p. 71.

³⁵ Janusz Bieniak, *Polska elita polityczna XII wieku, part II – Wróżda i zgoda*, [in:] *Spółeczeństwo Polski Średniowiecznej*, Tom III, 1985, p. 26.

³⁶ Władysław Semkowicz, *Ród Awdańców w wiekach średnich*, Poznań 1920, p.223.

³⁷ Adam Boniecki, *Herbarz Polski*, Warszawa 1905, vol. 16, p. 250: Magnuscy h. Abdank.

³⁸ Teresa Kiersnowska, *O pochodzeniu rodu Awdańców*, [w:] *Spółeczeństwo Polski średniowiecznej*, T.V, 1992, p.57. (About the descent of the Awdaniec clan, [in:] *Society of medieval Poland*)

³⁹ In the immediate vicinity of the Magnusze estate, W. Semkowicz (*Ród Awdańców w wiekach średnich*, Poznań 1920, pp.222-223) found an Awdaniec family of Puczniewski's, who had inherited Puczniew on the

In the light of the historical connection of Lubiń Abbey, founded by the Awdaniec clan probably in the 1070's, with the Benedictine Arch-Abbey of St. Jacob in Leodium (Liege in Belgium) one can surmise that one of the above mentioned lineages had family ties to the region of Brabant and Flanders. It has been mentioned earlier that the grandfather and father of Magnus fled together into exile – most likely to the court of the Counts of Flanders. This might support the possibility that Magnus's mother was a cousin of the Counts of Flanders. Perhaps, the lineage of Michał descended from them, and this family was a link binding the two lineages – of Michał's and of the Magnus-Skarbimir's. The oldest records of Lubiń Abbey connect Michał the Old with Lubiń, but on the other hand, mention Skarbimir and his sons at the top of the lists of brothers and benefactors, immediately after the rulers of Poland⁴⁰. Possibly Michał did not live at a time when ceremonies occurred, and which prompted other eminent participants to appear in written records.

There is a possibility that even in the days of the Battle of Hastings, Michał the Old might have served as the custodian of Magnus. This does not preclude a close kinship relation between them, but rather supports it. In this scenario, their fate would be closely linked. Judging by the fact that Gallus called Michał "the old", and yet in relation to Magnus, he did not use that term, one could conclude that Michał must have been at least half a generation older than Magnus. As adults, Magnus and Michał could hold high offices independently of their earlier "custodian-ward" relationship. Along with the rest of their sons and relatives, they could also have constituted the "camp of Gallus", and become the start-point of a dual-headed clan.

The coat of arms of the Awdaniec clan remains an enigma. The silver sign of "Łękawica" on the red coat resembles the letter "W". It is usually associated with the runic symbol for "horse" - emphasizing the Nordic roots of the clan. However, on the oldest images of the coat of arms is a letter "M" - interpreted as the first letter of the name "Michał." But this is also the first letter of the name "Magnus."

Methodological Remarks

The intent of this article is to present a working hypothesis, which could be proven by genetic genealogy. As yet, the methodologies in this domain, and the sum of data in the databases of haplotypes of descendants of the nobility, are insufficient to provide convincing proof of the Magnus-Skarbimir relationship. Any exploration of this hypothesis will probably require several years, as well as testing of many of the descendants of mediaeval noble lines. My intention was primarily to draw attention to the potential of this method, as well as to provoke discussion about the pros and cons. Permit me to make some remarks on this topic.

I have already mentioned that the number of generations to the most recent common ancestor of two tested males, calculated by use of the genetic method, is not strictly determined, but is defined only by a probability. This obviously reduces the accuracy of calculations, however, it allows us to cross-check and adjust the configurations alleged in the written sources, and possibly to provide family trees with completely new options that are not visible without genetic testing.

Inaccuracy of dating and the small reference sample of results is not the only weakness. A frequently raised objection is the uncertainty about the linear purity in terms of continuity of the father-son relationship over many centuries. This may be due to many different events⁴¹ - such

Ner River. One of the Magnuski families was the Kozubski family from Kozuby near Widawa. From Widawa came the Widawski's – also an Awdaniec family. None of these families used the epithet of Skarbek, which allows for a possibility that they did not descend from the Skarbek branch of the Awdaniec clan.

⁴⁰ Janusz Bieniak, *Polska elita polityczna XII wieku, cz.II – Wróżda i zgoda*, [w:] *Spółeczeństwo Polski Średniowiecznej*, Tom III, 1985, p. 67.

⁴¹ Such events are called Non-Paternal Events (NPE)

as marital infidelity, rape, adoption, as well as acquisition of a father-in-law's surname by a son-in-law.

Therefore, some methodological safeguards are needed to ensure that inferences will be free of such factors. In fact, the best mode of protection is to seek results from many branches of clans and families, and, whilst tedious, such comparisons and corroborations are indispensable.

There are three scenarios where a genetic result of a given person, who has at least partly documented roots in the mediaeval nobility, allows us to validate him as a descendant of mediaeval nobility:

- * If the genetic result of this person is a close match to the result of another person with genealogically documented roots, and genetic calculations indicate with a high probability that the common ancestor lived during the middle ages,
- * If the genetic results of this person are a close match to the genetic material extracted from remains of a presumed noble ancestor buried in the middle ages, when the context of the tomb strongly supports a likelihood of a proper identification of the buried person⁴²,
- * If the tested person is indeed a descendant of a noble family regarded as being of post-medieval or indeterminate roots, but his genetic results indicate that in the middle ages he had a common ancestor with another person of a noble descent⁴³.

The probability is highest when the coats of arms and the names of the compared persons are the same or similar.

Verification via the genetic route

The accuracy of the statement about the descent of some branches of Awdaniecs from Komes Magnus could be to a large extent verified, if remains of the Wessex dynasty could be tested from the Y-DNA angle. The Wessex's were undoubtedly Anglo-Saxons⁴⁴ – and they carried the actual title of Kings of Anglo-Saxons. If their test results confirmed that they carried the subclade I1-ASP which was a match with the genetic results of Awdaniec's, then it would help to provide the necessary evidence for this hypothesis⁴⁵.

⁴² Genetic tests of remains of well-identified individuals may prove invaluable for genetic genealogy. Namely, they offer possibility to make a precise yardstick for genetic calculations - also on the aspect of timescales, when a burial can be accurately dated.

⁴³ In this case, it can be concluded that although the genealogical roots of such a person are not mentioned in written sources, there is a high probability that his ancestors were mediaeval nobles, and the lack of written sources can be attributed to a lack of evidence of its roots among the mediaeval nobility.

⁴⁴ It is interesting that in England among the carriers of haplotypes close to I1-ASP, there is a significant group of present-day families bearing the surnames of Childers and Childress. The history of these families has not yet been studied. There are suggestions that their ancestors from ancient times lived in Viking-ruled Yorkshire, long before the Battle of Hastings in 1066. (<http://www.houseofnames.com/xq/asp.fc/qx/childers-family-crest.htm>). In the context of the name Childers / Childress it is puzzling that some members of the Wessex lineage, from which Komes Magnus originated, sometimes bore the nickname "Cild". This nickname was borne by his ancestors: 2. great-grandfather Aethelmar Cild, great-grandfather Wulfnoth Cild, and Wulfnoth's brother - Ælfric Cild.

⁴⁵ DNA tests of the remains of Wessex nobles have already been done, but only maternal DNA (mtDNA) was examined – which is not useful for the genetic identification of the paternal line. The study of mtDNA in England has included the remains of Edith the English, grand-daughter of Alfred the Great, wife of Emperor Otto I, buried in the Cathedral of Magdeburg. It is planned to find and test the remains of her brother, King Athelstan, buried at Malmesbury Abbey in Wiltshire.

Due to the aforementioned Samogitian sagas, it would be useful to perform Y-DNA testing on descendants of the Lithuanian Gediminid⁴⁶ dynasty, who, according to these sagas were themselves, descendants of Godwin, the elder brother of Count Magnus.

Other evidence might be obtained by testing the aforementioned remains of the lord of Czersk Castle. Even if they proved not to be a genetic match with both of the Norman lines of the Awdaniecs, this would not refute my thesis. We have no definite assurance that this is Count Magnus's tomb. However, if the results were to genetically match the I1-ASP line, it would strongly support such a hypothesis. A match with the I1-T2 line would necessitate a major modification of the hypothesis. However, as long as the genetic membership of the Piast dynasty remains unknown, any conclusions based on genetic testing from ancient aristocratic mediaeval tombs in Poland will be controversial. Thus, testing of the Piast descendants remains a priority⁴⁷.

It is also necessary to test many more descendants of various branches of the Awdaniec clan to further define their distribution among various subclades.

No less important is genetic testing of other families of the mediaeval nobility. Probably many surprises will surface there. The aforementioned two Norman subclades may also feature in other major clans, and that already likely. Especially, the descendants of the Zaremba clan should be genetically tested to verify the legend about their descent from Magnus⁴⁸.

An interesting case for genetic genealogy might be the Łabędź-Dunin clan. In Skrzynno and Żuków in Southern Mazovia (Zapilcze), and especially nearby Końskie, eleventh-century tombs were discovered with stone-built housings and pavements typical of Scandinavian burials. T.Kiersnowska⁴⁹ associated the buried riding warriors with ancestors of Piotr Włast, the direct Skarbimir's successor as the Palatine. In particular, the most interesting would be comparing Y-DNA taken from these tombs with test results of genealogically documented descendants of the Łabędź -Dunin clan living today.

If genetic tests were conducted on the remains of the royal dynasty of Denmark⁵⁰, given that it was probably a branch of the aforementioned subclade I1-T2⁵¹ that could shed light on the mysteries that are presented here.

This brings to a close my paper, which I trust will have brought to the forefront, certain issues regarding the origin and identity of a nexus of highly enigmatic 11th century figures, including that of Komes Magnus.

⁴⁶ The genetic identification of the Gediminids is still unknown. There are some signs they could belong to the subclade I1-T2. Genealogically documented descendants of Gediminids (e.g Princes Sanguszko) who are living today have so far not been tested genetically.

⁴⁷ In Czech Republic there have been Y-DNA tests of the remains of the Přemyslid dynasty from the royal necropolis of Hradčany in Prague. These results have not yet been published. Andrzej Bajor (Rurykowicze, Bolesław Śmiały i genetyka, [in:] *Mówią Wieki*, 7 / 2008, p. 24) spent several years examining the Y-DNA of genealogically documented descendants of Rurik. The Rurikid descendants who were studied did not belong to the Norman haplogroup I1. Some of them belonged to the Slavic haplogroup R1a, and the second and major portion to the Finno-Ugric haplogroup N – who had a significant distribution in Northern Russia and Scandinavia.

⁴⁸ The originator of the hypothesized identification of Komes Magnus as the son of Harold II, as presented by T. Jurek was Mr.Christopher Mańkowski – a descendant of the Zaremba clan, which, according to Paprocki descended from Komes Magnus. The fact that Zaremba's have survived down to our present times, means that we can attempt a verification of this legendary story by means of Y-DNA testing.

⁴⁹ Teresa Kiersnowska, *Jeszcze o Piotrze Włostowicu i pochodzeniu rodu Łabędziów*, [w:] *Spółeczeństwo Polski Średniowiecznej*, T.IX, 2001, str.55. (Regarding Piotr Włostowic and the descent of the Łabędź clan)

⁵⁰ Such tests have been already been taken in Denmark, but unfortunately only of the maternal DNA, which is not very useful in genetic genealogy. There were tests done on the remains of the aforementioned King Sven II, who was the putative father-in-law of Komes Magnus.

⁵¹ To the subclade I1-T2 belong certain sub-lines of the British families of Hamilton and Harris who according to their clan legends derive in their male lineages from Kings and Dukes of Denmark.