CHAPTER TWO

SUBMISSION AND RECONCILIATION

Zbigniew would have avoided the tragic fate that befell him, if – as Gallus argues – he had fulfilled the conditions of the agreement with Bolesław. In our chronicler’s presentation, Bolesław was inclined to give consent to Zbigniew’s return because of the humble requests he had received from his banished brother. The duke decided to receive the exile back on condition that he persisted in humility and obedience. Zbigniew, however, “non humiliter sed arroganter est ingressus”. As a result, the monarchical entry of Zbigniew set in motion an entire sequence of dramatic events which ultimately led to his misfortune. “For if Zbigniew came humbly and prudently, like a man intending to ask for mercy and not like a lord who wants to rule with the rod of vanity, he would not have incurred irreparable damage on himself and drawn others into a lamentable crime” – argues the chronicler.¹

Gallus’ statement that Zbigniew’s humble attitude appropriate of a person asking for mercy could have led to a real reconciliation between the two brothers and guarantee Zbigniew a lasting favour of Bolesław merits some more attention. It plays an important role in the chronicler’s argument, reinforcing the reader’s belief in Bolesław’s innocence and Zbigniew’s guilt, and blaming the latter for having caused his own misfortune as a result of inappropriate behaviour. Once more, the chronicler refers here to the monarchical entry of Zbigniew whose arrival sicut dominus undoubtedly demonstrated his intentions to reach for the ducal power in defiance of the promise of obedience he had made to his brother. However, formulating charges against Zbigniew and shifting onto him the responsibility for the tragic course of events, Gallus did not limit his description to the image of the ducal brother arriving cum ense precedente

but contrasted the monarchical entry which led Zbigniew to ruin with a 
humble arrival *sicut homo misericordiam petiturus* which could have ensured him Bolesław’s mercy and forgiveness of his past sins.

By including the description of Zbigniew’s entry in the story of the 
conflict between the Piast brothers, Gallus referred to forms of ritual 
behaviour belonging to the ceremony of *adventus regis* – discussed in the previous chapter. Thanks to these clear references to the ceremony of 
royal entry his account of Zbigniew’s return inspired a whole set of rele-
vant associations which enabled the chronicler to lend this event a new 
meaning, suitable from his point of view. However, the sense and effec-
tiveness of the interpretative procedures Gallus used to place the scene of 
Zbigniew’s return in the narrative of the wickedness and ungrateful-
ness of the ducal brother was determined and justified by the use of the 
rituals he described in the actual political practice of the Piast monarchy of 
the early 12th century. To sum up, the fact that in the political reality 
of the earlier-medieval Poland the rite of advent was thought to be one of 
the most important forms of ceremonial manifestation of the Piast 
dukes’ monarchical majesty ensured that the readers of the *Chronicle* would understand the meanings it carried and thus enabled Gallus to 
use it to construct his narrative. It is therefore plausible that the words 
expressing the royal entry’s opposite – the humble arrival *sicut homo misericordiam petiturus* – were not merely a rhetorical fi gure, either. 
Most probably, similarly to the term *sicut dominus* Gallus used to describe Zbigniew’s arrival, the phrase he employed to define what he thought would be the appropriate attitude the exile should have adopted entailed a specific ritual reality explicitly understood by the readers of his chronicle. Let us, therefore, take a close look at this set of ritual acts 
and examine their importance in Gallus’ line of reasoning.

A good starting point for investigating the meaning of the image of 
humble advent depicted by Gallus seems to be his account of the earlier 
dispute between Bolesław Wrymouth and Zbigniew. In 1106, the grow-
ing conflict between the two brothers turned into an open war. Bolesław 
resolved to reach for full power over the entire monarchy divided in 1102 
by their father and drive Zbigniew out of the country. Having made peace 
with the Czechs and enlisted the help of Rus’ and Hungary, Bolesław col-
lected his army and set off against his brother. Zbigniew, however, did not 
take up the challenge and withdrew to the other side of the Vistula river. 
Only the garrison of Kalisz, loyal to Zbigniew, tried to repulse the attack. 
After a short siege, however, Bolesław’s army conquered Kalisz. At the 
same time his followers seized Gniezno. Having imprisoned archbishop