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## The origins of the 1320 Angevin-Piast Dynastic Marriage

### Introduction

In the Polish historical perspective the year 1320 acquired special meaning. That year Władysław Łokietek was crowned King of Poland. Thanks to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century generations of scholars, this event was considered as a historical watershed that brought back to the international world (after nearly 200 years of fragmentation) a newly reunited kingdom, governed by the local dynasty of the Piasts. Although more recent scholarship acknowledged the significance of the unification carried out by the Přemyslids in 1300<sup>1</sup>, it did not drop the idea that Łokietek's coronation in 1320 was a new opening and the foundation of a new state, which from then on had to be further strengthened and developed<sup>2</sup>.

Somewhere in the background of this scholarly-established „turning point”, almost half a year later<sup>3</sup>, another significant event occurred — the dynastic marriage between Charles I of Anjou, King of Hungary, and Elisabeth, a daughter of Władysław Łokietek and Jadwiga. This marriage emerged as a springboard for future dy-

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<sup>1</sup> J. Kurtyka, *Odrodzone królestwo: Monarchia Władysława Łokietka I Kazimierza Wielkiego w świetle nowszych badań*, Kraków 2001, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> T. Jurek, *Polska droga do korony królewskiej 1295–1300–1320*, in: *Proměna Středovýchodní Evropy Raného a Vrcholného Středověku: Mocenské Souvislosti a Paralely*, ed. M. Wihoda, Brno 2010, p. 189, 190. See also: M.K. Barański, *Dynastia Piastów w Polsce*, Warszawa 2006, p. 454.

<sup>3</sup> K. Benda, ed., *Magyarország történeti kronológiája: A 1970-ig*, vol. I, Budapest 1981, p. 196.

nastic cooperation between the Angevins and Piasts and laid foundations for a succession project<sup>4</sup>, which took shape most probably in the 1330s<sup>5</sup>, and in 1370 brought the Hungarian branch of the Angevins to the Polish throne. In Stanisław Szczur's opinion, both Łokietek's coronation and subsequent dynastic marriage were pivotal for the future of those two royal houses<sup>6</sup>.

### The Angevin-Piast Marriage in the Source Material

There are basically two sources of information about the marriage: the Hungarian tradition preserved in various chronicles and the Polish tradition represented by notes made in annals and chronicles. There is also a brief account in a Bohemian chronicle (the so-called Chronicle of Pulkava).

Starting with the Hungarian accounts, two observations can be made. First, all of them are very similar in structure and — even more importantly — they ultimately convey the same message: that in 1320 King Charles I took Elisabeth, a daughter of King Władysław of Poland (or of the Poles in other variants), as his wife and that within a year she bore a son, Charles, who died in 1321<sup>7</sup>. Second, all these accounts do not indicate any direct explanation or justifi-

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<sup>4</sup> For the most recent reconsideration of the matter see: S. Szczur, *W sprawie sukcesji andegaweńskiej w Polsce*, RH, 75, 2009, p. 1–53.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 51. There is an opinion in scholarship that points to 1327, which was the moment of a serious illness of Casimir (Łokietek's prospective heir) and of John of Luxemburg's powerful invasion on Łokietek's lordship (stopped by Charles I's diplomatic intervention), as a convenient time for holding the first succession-related negotiations: cf. Kurtyka, *Odrodzone Królestwo*, p. 43, 44.

<sup>6</sup> S. Szczur, *W sprawie*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Anno Domini M-o CCC-o XX-o accepit rex Karolus filiam Ladizlai regis Polonorum, Elyzabeth nomine, de qua anno Domini M-o CCC-o XXI-o habuit rex filium nomine Karolum, qui puer mortuus est eodem anno, quo natus est et in Alba sepultus*: *Chronici Hungarici Compositio Saeculi XIV*, Imre Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum Tempore Ducum Regumque Stirpis Arpadinae Gestarum*, vol. 1 (Budapest, 1937), p. 490. *Anno Domini M-o CCCXX. accepit rex filiam Ladizlai Polonorum, Elizabeth nomine, de qua anno Domini M-o CCCXXI. filium habuit, qui eodem anno mortuus est et Alba sepultus*: *Chronicon Posoniense*, Imre Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum Tempore Ducum Regumque Stirpis Arpadinae Gestarum*, vol. 2 (Budapest, 1938), 50. *Anno M.CCC.XX. accepit rex Karolus Elizabeth filiam regis Polonie, de qua habuit filium Karolum, qui eodem anno mortuus in Alba sepelitur*: *Chronicon Monacense*, *Ibidem*, 2:86. *Nach Cristi gepurt taussent jar, drewhundert jar und in dem czweinczigsten jar do nam der vorgebant kunig Karl*

cation for this particular dynastic contract. If to examine the note about Charles I's previous marriage, concluded in 1318 with Beatrix of Luxemburg<sup>8</sup>, there is no difference in a way both records have been structured. There is a dissimilarity in content (Beatrix died within a year and Elisabeth gave birth to a baby-boy), but in either cases the chronicler did not find relevant to shed light on political or dynastic motivations behind those marriage contracts.

Nevertheless, this conventional way of concise event-recording was occasionally elaborated with annotations. Instances of this practice can be found in one of the contemporary chronicles of Little Poland: an annotated record appeared right after the report about the 1320 marriage. Namely, in the Cathedral Chronicle of Krakow<sup>9</sup> there is an account that relates, in the consecutive sentences, about the marriage of Elisabeth and Charles I as well as about another union of Casimir, Elisabeth's brother, and Anna, a daughter of Gediminas (c. 1275–1341), a Lithuanian duke<sup>10</sup>. It is striking that the former marriage did not receive any commentary, but the latter was explained in length. The chronicler indicated that Łokietek's (that is, the real contractor of the marriage) aim was to free his people, living in Little Poland, from incursions and atrocities inflicted by the neighboring Lithuanians.

One explanation of the chronicler's disparity in approach could be that he felt uncomfortable with evident dynastic relations between Christian and pagan ruling families, and therefore, he saw himself

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*des kunges tochter von Polan, die hiesz Elizabeth*: Chronicon Henrici de Mugeln, *ibidem*, 2, p. 217, 218.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance: *Anno Domini M-o CCC-o XVIII-o accepit rex dominam Beatricem filiam regis Romanorum, sororem regis Bohemorum de terra Luchumburgensi, que in revolutione eiusdem anni obdormivit in Domino et Waradini in cathedrali ecclesia tumulatur*: Chronici Hungarici Compositio Saeculi XIV, Szentpétery, SRH, 1937, 1, p. 490.

<sup>9</sup> Initially published in the vol. 3 of the Monumenta Poloniae Historica as the Annals of Cuiavia (*Rocznik kujawski*, 204–212) and subsequently re-edited by Wojciech Kętrzyński: cf. W. Kętrzyński, *O rocznikach polskich*, Kraków 1896), p. 185–190. For more details see: W. Drelicharz, *Annalistyka małopolska XIII–XV wieku: kierunki rozwoju wielkich roczników kompilowanych*, Kraków 2003, p. 207–211.

<sup>10</sup> *Eodem quoque anno filiam suam nomine Elizabeth die dominica infra octavas apostolorum Petri et Pauli Karolo regi Ungarie matrimonialiter copulavit in uxorem. Volensque populum suum ab insultibus Litwanorum infidelium liberare in Lublinski [et] Sandomiriensi terris degentem, Gedimini ducis Litwanorum filiam nomine Annam, sanctissimo sacri fontis baptismate renovatam, filio suo domino Kazimiro matrimonio copulavit*: W. Kętrzyński, *O rocznikach polskich*, p. 186, 187.

compelled to provide a coherent justification for such a mismatch. Alternatively, this particular dynastic marriage was an outcome of a more tangible political agenda than it was the case in 1320. For in the subsequent sentence the chronicler pointed that the durability of the marriage of Anna and Casimir directly corresponded with the maintenance of peace between the parties. In his understanding, Anna's death unblocked the mutual enmity<sup>11</sup>. Thus, from the chronicler's perspective there were immediate positive results from the inter-dynastic marriage, of which he could comment in a note. Without speculating about what his reasons could have been, the lack of any form of justification of the Angevin-Piast marriage vividly contrasts with what follows directly in the text.

Alongside the Cathedral Chronicle of Krakow, the information about the royal marriage appeared in a number of annals, which the recent scholarship related to the family of the so-called *Małopolska Annals*, tracing their origins to the currently lost archetype: the *Annales Polonorum deperditi*<sup>12</sup> that were apparently produced between 1306 and 1325<sup>13</sup>. However dispersed and scattered among various copies and manuscripts, the Polish tradition remained equally concise and down-to-earth as its Hungarian counterpart in reporting about the 1320 marriage.

The richest in details is the account recorded in the *Kuropatnicki's Małopolska Annals*<sup>14</sup>. Right after noting Łokietek's coronation, it points to the Hungarian barons who — after Charles I had expressed his consent — on June 29, 1320 arrived at Nowy Sącz and picked up Elisabeth<sup>15</sup>. Other annals simply mention the fact of the marriage,

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<sup>11</sup> *Quo facto eiusdem terre [gentes] nemoribus extirpatis, dulcedine pacis fruentes peroptime locate fuerunt, predicta domina eciam mortua, donec omnium seminator malorum inimicicias iterum inter Polonos et Litwanos suscitavit, sicut plene inferius dicetur: ibidem, p. 187.*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the *stemma annalium* in: W. Drelicharz, *Annalistyka małopolska*, p. 469. See also the English summary of the book: *Ibidem*, p. 493–498.

<sup>13</sup> W. Drelicharz, *Annalistyka małopolska*, p. 453.

<sup>14</sup> I decided to follow the English names of the annals after Drelicharz.

<sup>15</sup> *Rex Wladislaus coronatur in Cracovia auctoritate domini pape per venerabilem in Christo patrem Ianislaum archiepiscopum Gneznensem. Item in eodem anno in octava Iohannis baptiste, die Iovis, in Sandecz Elizabeth filia Wladislai regis Polonie post Karulum regem Ungarorum per suos barones est reverenter accepta: Rocznik małopolski (kodeks Kuropatnickiego), Monumenta Poloniae Historica, vol. III, Lwów 1878, p. 190.*

using stylistic patterns very similar to the Hungarian accounts<sup>16</sup>. With one distinctive variation, though: there is no mention about the offspring that Elisabeth gave birth to in the subsequent years.

The longest account in the Polish medieval historiography of the 1320 marriage is a note by Jan Długosz. In his *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, composed between 1455 and 1480<sup>17</sup>, he dedicated a section to Charles I and his interest in marrying Elisabeth<sup>18</sup>. If to take away all Długosz's borrowings from the above-mentioned both Hungarian and Polish sources<sup>19</sup>, what will basically survive — apart from his literary charm and plot-improving additions — is his attempt to make sense of why this marriage was concluded. Since this is the earliest known account that sincerely grappled with this issue, it is particularly worth closer examination.

Długosz began with asserting that Charles I had been successful in his internal wars against powerful barons and that he had managed to curb their usurpations of royal power and authority. Some of the barons died, some were executed, others killed on a battlefield or thrown into prisons — Długosz contended. All in all, Charles I could eventually see his kingdom peaceful and watch himself reaffirmed on its throne<sup>20</sup>. However, as Długosz continued<sup>21</sup>, the king could not

<sup>16</sup> For instance: *Rex Wladyslaus cognominatus Loctek coronatur in Cracovia auctoritate domini pape per venerabilem in Christo patrem Ianislaum archiepiscopum Gneznensem. Eodem anno filia ipsius Elizabeth regi Ungarie copulatur Karolo*: Traska's Annals, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. II, Lwów 1872, p. 854. Or: *Dux Wladislaus dictus Lokethk coronatur in Cracovia auctoritate domini pape in regnum Poloniae per Yanislaum archiepiscopum Gneznensem. Eodem anno Elizabeth filia regis Wladislai regi Ungarie copulatur*: Sędziwój's Annals, *Ibidem*, 2:880. Or: *Rex Wladislaus dictus Loktek coronam in Cracovia auctoritate domini pape per venerabilem in Christo patrem Ianislaum archiepiscopum Gneznensem accepit. Eodem anno filia eius Elisabeth regi Ungarie Carolo copulatur*: Piotr of Szamotuly's Heilsberg Codex, MPH, 1878, 3:191.

<sup>17</sup> T. Michałowska, *Literatura polskiego średniowiecza: leksykon*, Warszawa 2011, s. 451.

<sup>18</sup> *Ioannis Dlugossi Annales Seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Poloniae*, ed. Z. Kozłowska-Budkowa, D. Turkowska, and K. Pieradzka, vol. IX, Varsaviae 1978, p. 113, 114.

<sup>19</sup> *Krytyczny rozbiór Dziejów Polskich Jana Długosza, do roku 1384*, ed. A. Semkowicz, Kraków 1887, p. 341.

<sup>20</sup> This Długosz's assertion seems to follow „sensus de senso” one of the codices of the *Chronici Hungarici Compositio Saeculi XIV*. that for the year 1320 noted: *Rex igitur Karolus in regno Vngarie potestate accepta plenarie et bene roboratus, mortuis primis duabus uxoribus suis, videlicet Maria filia Kasmerii ducis Poloniae et domina Beatrice filia regis Romanorum ac sorore regis Bohemorum*: Szentpétery, SRH, 1937, 1:490.

<sup>21</sup> [Charles I — wk] *orbitatis tamen sue reminiscencia secretis cruciabatur suspiriis. Nam etsi duas illustres matronas, videlicet Mariam Kazimiri <ducis Bitho-*

be fully satisfied, for he suffered from childlessness, his two marriages to noble and respectful ladies notwithstanding. He did not father an heir neither from the first one (due to her barrenness) nor from the other one (because of her miscarriage). Therefore, Długosz noted, Charles I — willing to shake off the disgrace of barrenness and the shame of childlessness (*sterilitatis opprobrium et orbitatis sue dedecus volens excutere*) — set off to arrange with Łokietek a marriage with Elisabeth. Hence, he sent his envoys and, after Łokietek's consultations with his barons, the royal consent was granted. On July 6, 1320 the marriage was concluded and Elisabeth crowned Queen of Hungary. As the story unfolds, by the grace of God she was so lavishly fertile that she gave birth to five sons and this — beside a number of pious deeds and personal humility — won her respect and love of all her subjects.

It has been already observed by the scholarship that Długosz was often inclined to supplement the lack of source material with logic and thinking that was characteristic to his own age<sup>22</sup>. According to Stanisław Kutrzeba (1876–1946), a Polish historian of law, the work of Długosz was completely useless for the period before 1386, because it was based on the otherwise known source material, which was merely augmented with Długosz's assumptions, individual projections and suppositions<sup>23</sup>. Taking this critical stance in its full extension, one could easily refute the chronicler's take of the 1320 marriage.

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*miensis et* <Theschiiensis> filiam et ea obeunte Beatricem Henrici de Luczemburg comitis Romanorum regis filiam et Iohannis Bohemie regis sororem sibi matrimonialiter iunxisset, fructu tamen filiorum in spem Hungarie Regni generandorum ex unius sterilitate, ex alterius vero in partu periclitacione orbatu est. Huius tamen sterilitatis opprobrium et orbitatis sue dedecus volens excutere, ad Wladislaum Polonie regem procis notabilibus missis, filiam eius virginem Elizabeth forma et moribus prestantem et decoram sibi in consortem dari exposcit. Cuius preces de prelatorum et baronum Polonie consilio Wladislaus Polonie rex dum ad gratiam exaudicionis admisisset, firmantur literis et promissis sponsalia et virgo predicta Elizabeth a baronibus et proceribus Polonie cum sufficienti dote et regali apparatu Budam deducta, Karolo Hungarie regi die Dominico in octava sanctorum Petri et Pauli copulatur, quam celebratis ex more nuptiis procurat coronari in Alba Regali in Hungarie regnam: *Annales*, IX, p. 113.

<sup>22</sup> Cf.: R. Sobotka, *Powolywanie władcy w Rocznikach Jana Długosza*, Warszawa 2005, p. 13, 194. See also: T. Michałowska, *Literatura polskiego średniowiecza*, p. 451, 452.

<sup>23</sup> R. Sobotka, *Powolywanie władcy*, p. 27.

But a more mitigated perspective can be proposed here: since the extant source material, as it has been showed above, has given no direct clue about the rationale behind the Angevin-Piast marriage, it is highly probable that Długosz either utilized an unknown to modern scholarship source (perhaps existing in the form of an oral historical tradition) or he simply made it up by reasoning in a way most appealing to his senses. The content of the Hungarian chronicles, which emphasized Elisabeth's fertility by enumerating her sons<sup>24</sup>, can serve as some evidence that the issue of supplying the king with royal heirs did indeed matter. And thus, Długosz's observations can be taken into consideration. It could be argued that Długosz's stance — still reflecting mentality and political culture much closer to the realities of the early fourteenth century than the sensibilities and logics of a contemporarily educated historian — may offer meaningful insight, which shall not be ignored with a wave of a hand. The political culture of the thirteenth century firmly suggests that Długosz's calculations concerned about the welfare of a single family (that of Charles I) could be a strong motivator for political actions. The longing for male legitimate heirs (Charles I had already had Coloman, an illegitimate son from a mistress)<sup>25</sup> could have been a meaningful reason for entering another lawful marriage. This matter will receive more attention later in the text.

A little more data about the 1320 marriage can be drawn from extant charters. Since Elisabeth and Charles I were in the close degree of kinship<sup>26</sup>, it was necessary for Charles to request a formal dispensation from the pope. Two of such papal letters have been preserved (from July 2, 1320<sup>27</sup> and August 2, 1320)<sup>28</sup>. Noteworthy, none of them mentions explicitly Elisabeth's name; instead they refer to a Christian woman the king was willing to marry and who was related to him in the fourth degree of kinship. From the context it seems rather clear that both papal letters related to the Angevin-Piast union. Moreover, according to Gyula Kristó other extant charters confirm

<sup>24</sup> See: Szentpétery, SRH, 1937, 1:490–492.

<sup>25</sup> G. Kristó, „Károly Róbert családja”, *Aetas* 20, no. 4 (2005), p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> Both Elisabeth and Charles I had King Béla IV of Hungary as their common ancestor. Elisabeth was his great-granddaughter and Charles I was his great-great-grandson.

<sup>27</sup> *Anjou-kori oklevéltár: Documenta Res Hungaricas Tempore Regum Andegavensium Illustrantia*, vol. V, Szeged 1998, n. 827.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. V, n. 872.

that between July 8 and 20 Charles I was indeed in Buda (this reasserts July 6 as the date of marriage provided by Długosz) and that on July 20 Bishop Steven of Veszprem appeared for the first time as the chancellor of the new queen<sup>29</sup>.

In sum, there is an abundance of evidence that in the summer of 1320 Elisabeth and Charles I got married. The sources also indicate that this event took place in relatively short time after Łokietek's coronation and after the death of Beatrix, Charles I's previous wife. Moreover, they emphasize that this union generated a number of royal sons and prospective heirs to the kingdom of Hungary. At the same time the earliest sources (produced within a few decades following the marriage) were concise in form and style, and hence, they did not provide any explanation for why this marriage was concluded and who was its instigator. It is only Długosz in the late fifteenth century who interpreted these events by indicating Charles I as the man suffering from the disgrace of childlessness and striving to amend his situation by choosing Łokietek's daughter as his next wife. Judging from Długosz's account, what brought the Angevins and Piasts together were not long-term political calculations and strategic thinking but Charles I's urge to produce heirs. It would be, however, an exaggeration to confine Długosz's perspective to solely dynastic perspective. His remark about Łokietek holding consultations prior to giving his consent reveals the political aspect of this enterprise. Therefore, it was evident to Długosz that this union had entailed major „international” implications, yet — and again it is worth emphasizing — he was totally satisfied with his dynastic elaboration about the origins of the union.

At the end of this section, a few remarks about the Bohemian sources need to be made. The *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, started by Otto of Thuringia but continued and enlarged by Peter of Zittau (the abbot of the Cistercian monastery in Zbraslav from 1316)<sup>30</sup>, mentioned Łokietek's coronation in 1320<sup>31</sup>. The subsequent Angevin-Piast marriage, however, was ignored. This complete lack of interest contrasted with a more-extensive-and-richer-in-details account of Charles I's earlier marriage with Beatrix of Luxemburg, King John of Bohemia's

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<sup>29</sup> Kristó, „Károly Róbert családja”, p. 22, 23.

<sup>30</sup> A.F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, Poznań 2003, p. 103.

<sup>31</sup> *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, ed. F. Palacký, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. IV, Prague 1884, p. 256.



sister, concluded in 1318<sup>32</sup>. Given that Peter of Zittau was an eye-witness of this event, his colorful report can be easily explained. However, omitting completely Charles I's marriage with Elisabeth Piast implies its minor importance for John's affairs (in the chronicler's eyes). And yet, Pribík Pulkava from Radení (d. 1380), an author (or perhaps a co-author with Emperor Charles IV) of his chronicle (written around 1374)<sup>33</sup> drew up an account that in one paragraph mentioned both marriages of Charles I<sup>34</sup>. This remark, by the way with confused chronology (it puts Charles I's marriage with Elisabeth before Łokietek's coronation), did not elucidate why those marriages had been arranged. Nevertheless, by linking them it suggested the significance of the Angevin-Piast dynastic bond notably for Bohemian interests. Reading further in the chronicle provides some implicit arguments about consequences that that union entailed. Namely, for Pulkava Łokietek's coronation, granted by John XXII, was the outcome of Charles I and Robert of Naples's (in general: the Angevin) support<sup>35</sup>. In Pulkava's eyes it made sense that first Łokietek had given Elisabeth to Charles I, and in turn the latter contacted his fatherly uncle, King Robert of Naples, to promote Łokietek's case at the papal court in Avignon. Consequently, Łokietek's strategy for seizing royal crown (to the detriment of the Luxemburgs, obviously) would be to win the Angevin assistance by marrying his daughter to Charles I. However, this is a mere speculation because Pulkava did not make a plain connection between those two events and — more importantly — he was wrong about the chronology<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, 4:249.

<sup>33</sup> Grabski, *Dzieje*, 105. See also: Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, ed., *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 208.

<sup>34</sup> *Hic Johannes, rex Boemie, duas sorores habuit, (filias) 6) septimi Henrici imperatoris, quarum una Karolum, regem Ungarie, maritum habuit, que in partu prime prolis sue una cum fetu occubuit. Post cuius obitum idem Karolus, Ungarie rex, filiam Wladislai, Siradie et Cracovie et Sandomirie ducis, qui Gneznam Surdamque Poloniam habuit, duxit uxorem: František Palacký, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. V (Prague: Nákl. N. F. Palackého, 1893), 202.*

<sup>35</sup> *Qui etiam Wladislaus postea, videlicet anno Dom. M<sup>o</sup>CCCXX<sup>o</sup> ex dicti Karoli Ungarie et Roberti Sicilie regum promociione per XXI<sup>am</sup> papam Johannem in dictis terris suis Polonie rex effectus est et eius mandato etiam coronatus et unctus in regem: ibidem.*

<sup>36</sup> The letter from Pope John XXII giving assent to Łokietek's coronation (with reservations) was issued on August 20, 1319 (see: Ignacy Zakrzewski, ed., *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, vol. II, Poznań: Nakł. Bibl. Kórnickiej, 1878, n. 1013.).

### Context for the Angevin-Piast Marriage

As it has been already demonstrated the source material does not provide much explanation for the Angevin-Piast marriage, except for brief indication that it was Charles I's growing anxiety about his childlessness that compelled him to send envoys to Łokietek requesting Elisabeth's hand.

The years between 1304 and 1320 Łokietek spent on restoring his lordship, upholding it, and striving to legitimize his restored elite status by performing coronation. Throughout the first decade of his rule, his position was repeatedly contested both from within his lordship and from outside. All this resistance links well to the explanatory framework of competing legitimacies, which embraced meaningful alternatives to Łokietek's domination. Only in the lands inherited after his father and brothers, Władysław's rule was never genuinely threatened. Until 1320 and beyond, Łokietek's most important „international” issue (the Luxemburgs' rights to the Polish throne) remained unresolved. In consequence, from January 1320 there were two monarchs who claimed to be kings of Poland (Łokietek and John of Luxemburg). In 1304–1320 Charles I did not really engage to alleviate Łokietek's exertions, and their relations could be best described as neutral. In the 1310s the relations with the Luxemburgs were strained (occasionally intensified by the Teutonic Order's lobbying)<sup>37</sup> but by 1320 there was no armed conflict between Łokietek and John<sup>38</sup>. Instead, there was an unsuccessful dynastic marriage project, which attempted to find a solution for tensions coming from overlapping legitimacies<sup>39</sup>. Charles I was not a side in this antagonism.

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At that time, Beatrix of Luxemburg, Charles I's wife, was pregnant and alive (she died before November 11, 1319): cf. Kristó, „Károly Róbert családja”, 15.

<sup>37</sup> W. Abraham, *Stanowisko Kurii Papielskiej wobec koronacji Łokietka*, Lwów 1900, p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> Noteworthy, that the famous rebellion in Krakow in 1311–1312, which could — if well supported — terminate Łokietek's power in Little Poland, was completely ignored by John of Luxemburg. See: R. Antonín, *Działalność polityczna Jana Luksemburskiego w okresie buntu krakowskiego wójta Alberta i jego ocena w czeskiej historiografii*, „*Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Historica*” 13 (2013), p. 8–18. Cf. W. Iwańczak, *Jan Luksemburski: dzieje burzliwego żywota i bohaterskiej śmierci króla Czech i hrabiego Luksemburga w 21 odstonach*, Warszawa 2012, s. 135.

<sup>39</sup> There is no available source material that would indicate Łokietek's plans to either fight John of Bohemia or pay him off for his resignation from the Polish royal title. However, sometime in summer 1315 Casimir, a five-year-old Łokietek's

In Hungarian historiography it is generally accepted that between the 1310 coronation of Charles I<sup>40</sup> and 1323 it was the period of the king's sustained struggle to re-unify the kingdom by striking down oligarchs, who over recent decades had built powerful lordships throughout Hungary<sup>41</sup>. There is no doubt that this strife was the principal and predominant challenge that preoccupied Charles I for a long time. Although he was the king of Hungary, his power was (practically speaking) significantly diminished by the depth and scope of authority claims made and exercised by nearly a dozen of lords and their followers.

Reinstating peace and order across the kingdom was the pressing matter of his status and reputation as a lord-king. Charles I's greatest

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son and Jutta, John's freshly newborn daughter, were betrothed. According to Bierniak and Jasiński, this dynastic project aimed at mitigating the dynastic tension over the competing legitimacies by putting the Luxemburg-Piast couple on the Polish throne and making sure their children would continue to rule there. This undertaking eventually failed when in 1316 and 1318 sons were born to John. Although short-lasting, it was a genuine attempt to deliver an „international” compromise into the region. See: K. Jasiński, *Polityka małżeńska Władysława Łokietka*, in *Genealogia: Rola związków rodzinnych i rodowych w życiu publicznym w Polsce średniowiecznej na tle porównawczym*, ed. A. Radziwiński and J. Wroniszewski, Toruń 1996, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> *Quapropter cum prefati nobiles extra cimiteria corpora iacentia conspicerent defunctorum* [due to the interdict by Gentilis — wk], *amaro spiritu perturbati, anno Domini M-o CCC-o X-o congregati in campum Ratus circa Pesth Carulum sepe dictum in regem concorditer susceperunt et Albam properatnes feria quinta in octavis sancti regis Stephani sollempniter cum letitia coronarunt cum sancta corona a Ladizlao voyuoda restituta*: Szentpétery, SRH, 1937, 1:486. See also: Pál Engel, „Az Ország újraegyesítése. I. Károly Küzdelmei Az Oligarchák Ellen (1310–1323)”, *Századok* 122, no. 1–2 (1988): 133. and Gyula Kristó, „I. Károly Király Harcai a Tartományurak Ellen (1310–1323)”, *Századok* 137, no. 2 (2003): 345.

<sup>41</sup> There have been a number of studies recently carried out that attempted to provide a detailed and chronological account of this decade of fighting: G. Kristó, „Die Macht Der Territorialherren in Ungarn Am Anfang Des 14. Jahrhunderts”, in *Etudes Historiques Hongroises 1985*, vol. I, Budapest 1985, p. 597–614.; Engel, „Az ország újraegyesítése”; B. Brezováková, „Konsolidačné Snahy Karola I. v Uhorsku Po Zvolení Za Kráľa (1310–1317)”, *Historický časopis* 41, no. 4 (1993): 361–378.; S.A. Sroka, „Methods of Constructing Angevin Rule in Hungary in the Light of Most Recent Research,” *Quaestiones Mediaevi Novae* 1, 1996, p. 77–90; Kristó, „I. Károly király harcai”. Also in the late 1980s appeared more descriptive accounts targeting a wider-audience that had sections dedicated to those issues: G. Kristó and F. Makk, *Károly Róbert Emlékezete* Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1988, 21–27. and Gyula Kristó, *Az Anjou-Kor Háborúi*, Budapest 1988, p. 28–65. For an English account, see: P. Engel, *Realm of St Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895–1526*, London 2001, p. 130–134.

allies were his cousins, the Habsburgs, but in fact he rather effortlessly managed to retain good relations with John of Luxemburg, and he came to terms with his fatherly uncle King Robert of Naples. Noteworthy, throughout the decade of fighting, his lordship was virtually free from aggressive acts coming from the neighboring rulers (an occasional conflict in 1317 and 1319 with King Milutin of Serbia was a regional dispute, and yet again Charles I proved effective in defending his claims to the contended land)<sup>42</sup>. This relative peace at its borders evidences that at that time, as an „international” entity, the kingdom of Hungary barely suffered from issues of the competing legitimacies. In this sense, the realm was safe from „international” aggression. As indicated above, Charles I’s relations with Łokietek were vague; the extant material indicates no hostilities between them and suggests their neutral co-existence. They did not have common interests and shared no common enemies. Both sides were preoccupied with their own matters and hardly ever sought cooperation on the „international” arena.

Charles I and Łokietek’s „international” agendas seem to explain little about why the 1320 Angevin-Piast marriage was concluded. One possible reason, i.e. Łokietek’s plausible war with John of Luxemburg over the Polish crown, not only was not imminent<sup>43</sup>, but also it was difficult to believe that Charles I could be lured into such conflict. Łokietek’s struggle for coronation can be actually considered as an attempt to avoid conflict with the Luxemburgs by transforming the duke’s *de facto* authority in the kingdom into the kingship *de iure*. By doing this, he could hope to come to terms with John and overcome the problem of competing legitimacies in a non-violent way (and disarm the Teutonic Order’s rhetoric describing him as an illegitimate claimant to the Polish throne). Assuming Charles I’s perspective, in the 1310s he had no reasons to fear John, for the latter had been rather help than impediment in Charles I’s efforts to secure his own lordship.

Hence, for upholding their respective lordships or for solving mutual controversies (of which there were none), this marriage was unnecessary. There were other options at hand and dynastic marriage was not the only means of conducting „international” politics.

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<sup>42</sup> Engel, „Az Ország újraegyesítése,” p. 114, 115, 127, 134, 135.

<sup>43</sup> John’s military intervention in Little Poland in 1327 may make historian walk into the trap of anticipatory reasoning.

Alliances, agreements and treaties could work well without reaching for inter-dynastic unions (as Łokietek's military pact with the king of Denmark in 1315 indicates)<sup>44</sup>. Every-day „international” politics efficiently utilized oaths and written word, and thus, it did not require long-term commitments that included marriage contracts.

### The Origins of the Angevin-Piast Marriage

As lords, both Charles I and Łokietek were leaders of their families, that is, it was expected of them to generate male offspring and determine their success by providing them with powerful and prestigious lordships. This was precisely the area where Charles I and Łokietek's interests met.

In 1320, Władysław Łokietek had four living children: ten-year-old Casimir (the prospective successor), and three daughters: Kunegunda (ca. 1310 married to Duke Bernard of Świdnica)<sup>45</sup>, approx. fourteen-year-old Elisabeth and max. nine-year-old Jadwiga<sup>46</sup>. While he was securing his lordship for Casimir, it was his socially-enforced duty to marry off his daughters well. Jadwiga was still a minor, and thus, his only daughter available for marriage was Elisabeth. Since among lords it was a practice to marry their daughters in early age<sup>47</sup>, the moment when Charles I requested her hand was basically a great coincidence.

Leaving aside these sheer biological considerations, Łokietek could put much hopes in giving Elisabeth to Charles I. As noted above, their relations were practically without tensions and through this marriage they could be only enhanced. Moreover, it was an unusual situation for the Piasts, who throughout the thirteenth century maintained dynastic relations with the Árpáds but chiefly in the opposite configuration, that is, they married Hungarian princesses. Hardly ever they gave their daughters to the kings of Hungary (with

<sup>44</sup> E. Długopolski, *Władysław Łokietek na tle swoich czasów*, Wrocław 1951, p. 176. See also: KDW, vol. II, n. 976.

<sup>45</sup> K. Jasiński, *Polityka małżeńska*, p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. K. Jasiński, *Genealogia Władysława Łokietka i jego najbliższej rodziny*, „Zapiski Kujawsko-Dobrzyńskie. Historia”, 6, 1987, s. 13–32. For problems with chronology concerning Jadwiga, cf.: K. Jasiński, *Rodowód Piastów małopolskich i kujawskich*, Poznań 2001, p. 160–163.

<sup>47</sup> K. Jasiński, *Genealogia Władysława*, p. 29.

the exception of the marriage of Andrew III and Fennena, a daughter of Duke Siemomysł of Inowrocław, concluded in 1290)<sup>48</sup>.

Marrying Charles I promised a prominent future for Elisabeth and at the same time it welcomed Łokietek in the elite milieu of the early fourteenth-century ruling houses. Besides, the Angevin-Piast marriage functioned as a form of recognition of Łokietek's newly acquired royal dignity and established an additional and meaningful reason to seek Charles I's *auxilium et consilium* when necessary. The sources do not reveal any details concerning the union. However, the marriage surely created a bond between the families of Łokietek and Charles I that devised the platform for working together. It is important to emphasize that the marriage itself did not have to be designed against an enemy or a group of enemies; it could operate well as a tool for making mutual support and assistance easier and more accessible. Długosz, who reported about Łokietek taking advice from his lord-subjects in regard to this marital project, did not disclose arguments and reservations that could emerge during discussions. After all, it was a serious decision in terms of strategy, which way of expanding Łokietek's kindred should be taken. In the light of the entire „international” context, Łokietek's consent to Charles I's proposal was a favorable step forward that came in a genuinely right moment.

Since dynastic politics was prone to natural disasters, one more aspect in Łokietek's reasoning has to be taken into consideration. Namely, in 1320 Władysław Łokietek was entering his sixties. Not only did he outlive all his brothers, but he also reached an age unattained by his father, and by all his family members as far in the past as his great-grand father Casimir the Just (d. 1194), with the exception of his grandfather Konrad of Mazovia (d. 1247). There is no data about the state of Łokietek's health but, on the whole, at the time of coronation one could expect that the king's death was approaching. Since Władysław's successor, Casimir, was only ten, there was a threat of a succession crisis to erupt in relation to the disputed throne rights (the Luxemburgs' claims). It was, therefore, essential for Łokietek to secure some sort of shared responsibility for Casimir's future with the king of Hungary (ideally, Charles I would not ignore any disturbances in the kingdom of Poland due to the allegiance to his brother-in-law).

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<sup>48</sup> K. Jasiński, *Polityka małżeńska*, p. 20.

Charles I had his reasons too. No matter if Kristó was correct about the king's four marriages (Halich-Ruthenia, Opole-Silesia, Bohemia, and Poland) or there were only three of them (without the Ruthenian spouse)<sup>49</sup>, Charles I's marital policy seems quite clear: at all times he sought to marry within the region and thus, his initial idea for starting his own family branch was concentrated on rooting into the local ruling houses. Originally he wanted his sister, Clemence, to participate in this policy. Around the beginning of 1310 he urged Robert of Naples not to marry her to anyone, because he was planning to give her to someone in the kingdom of Hungary and thus gain some extra support<sup>50</sup>. This scheme did not work out, but the direction in his thinking remained unchanged. This approach made sense, for all Charles I's marriages were concluded during the stormy period of his lordship-building process (1301–1323)<sup>51</sup> and, therefore, engendering regional affinities and allegiances was a reasonable tactics for enhancing the chances of success.

In the late 1319, Charles I's conflict with the Hungarian lords was far from over. Máté Csák remained unbeaten, not unlike a few other lords scattered around the realm. Although things seemed to develop into the right direction and after the successes of 1317 he could look forward to brighter future, Charles I's fundamental problem was related to the lack of legitimate successor. According to the source material, it is the very reason why he kept re-marrying. On the one hand, he did not have to fear natural death as perhaps Łokietek had to. On the other hand, his continuous strife with numerous enemies could at any time result in sudden death, either on a battlefield or by assassination<sup>52</sup>. Any outbreak of disease or plague could have fatal consequences both for him and his lordship, which he had been constructing with so much effort. Apparently, in 1320 he had no children except for an illegitimate son, born in 1317 or 1318<sup>53</sup>. For Charles I having an heir meant three added values: it stood for the prospect of stability in the kingdom, implied God's grace resting upon him, and improved his status of a lord in the eyes of other lords.

<sup>49</sup> Kristó, „Károly Róbert Családja”.

<sup>50</sup> *Anjou-kori oklevéltár: Documenta Res Hungaricas Tempore Regum Andegavensium Illustrantia*, vol. II (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 1992), n. 821, 822.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Kristó, „I. Károly Király Harcai”.

<sup>52</sup> For instance, on April 17, 1330 Felician Zach attempted to strike down Charles I with a sword at the dinner table. For basic details, see: Benda, *Magyarország Történeti Kronológiája*, 1:201.

<sup>53</sup> Kristó, „Károly Róbert családja”, p. 28.

Why Charles I asked for Elisabeth's hand, it can be only speculated. The fact that he sought to have legitimate offspring justifies his want to re-marry but does not explain the particular choice of Łokietek's family. It may be rightly suggested that for Charles I the Piast option was merely the second choice, for the „plan A” was plainly linked to the Luxemburgs. Beatrix's untimely death in childbirth, although foreseeable as a possible scenario of pregnancy at this level of medical standards<sup>54</sup>, was unexpected and must have brought some confusion. Elisabeth by no means was the only choice, though. Theoretically speaking, in late 1319 Charles I could turn to John of Luxemburg for Mary, Beatrix's sister, who at the time was still unmarried; or search for a wife among his cousins, the Habsburgs. In comparison to these families, Łokietek's was rather peripheral. Also, further alternatives could be sought out.

To avoid too much speculation, I will point to a few elements that could play a role in Charles I's decision-making process. First, he did not need to marry back into the Habsburgs or Luxemburgs to maintain good relations with them. He already had strong bonds with them and if a new royal marriage was intended to expand Charles I's dynastic network and entrench him even more into the regional dynastic kindred, it was justified to go for Elisabeth. Second, a new king emerged in Central Europe, to whom Charles I had been tied very little. Hence, this marriage could serve as a start for establishing another allegiance in the region. Third, there was a long tradition of Árpád-Piast dynastic ties (especially with the rulers of Krakow) that was worth perpetuating. Fourth, there was Árpáadian blood flowing in Elisabeth's veins.

## Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis above I argue that the foremost reason for concluding the Angevin-Piast marriage was the premature death of Beatrix Luxemburg (in November 1319)<sup>55</sup>. There was no teleological necessity that could be identified from the development of „international” affairs. Quite the contrary, from a historical perspective

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<sup>54</sup> For instance, in 1399 Queen Jadwiga of Poland in her correspondence with King Władysław Jagiełło allegedly noted about her pregnancy as the state at the point of death, for childbirth often used to cause it: Długosz, ks. 10, p. 301.

<sup>55</sup> Kristó, „Károly Róbert Családja”, p. 22.



it was a sheer coincidence that at the time when Charles I was searching for a new wife, Elisabeth was available. Also, the king of Hungary was not compelled by external circumstances to make Łokietek's daughter his choice and for a time being his politics remained unaffected by it. There is, however, a great deal of reasons that ultimately justify his decision. In other words, the Angevin-Piast marriage was fundamentally caused by Charles I's determination to produce an heir to his lordship. He hopelessly awaited one from Mary, failed to receive one from Beatrix, and looked forward to conceiving one with Elisabeth. The origins of the future formidable Angevin-Piast alliance were, therefore, based on an outcome of unpredictable developments of family-centered politics.

### **The Origins of the 1320 Angevin-Piast Dynastic Marriage**

#### Abstract

This study addresses the issue of the 1320 Angevin-Piast marriage contract between Charles I of Hungary and Elisabeth, a daughter of King Władysław Łokietek of Poland. In time this marriage emerged to be the fundament of the Angevin-Piast alliance, which over decades transformed into a succession project. Louis the Great of Hungary's ascension to the Polish throne in 1370 and the materialization of the Hungarian-Polish monarchy was a watershed in medieval Central European constellations, and it retrospectively made the 1320 marriage acquire special significance. Seeking the origins of the marriage, the primary source accounts are collected and interpreted. Subsequently, the contexts of Charles I and Łokietek's political actions in the early fourteenth century are briefly summarized. This is followed by a reconsidered exposition of the dynastic and political motivations and objectives that may have inspired the marriage. Contrary to conventional explanations available in the Polish scholarship (emphasizing the role of the Europe-wide rivalry between the Habsburgs and Wittelsbachs in stimulating political behaviors on the regional level to balance the power of the competing political blocks), the study argues that the marriage is sufficiently explained within the framework of dynastic logic, which expected of lords (kings, dukes and other members of the elites) to produce legitimate offspring and provide it with adequate lordships.