FOREIGN POLICY INFLUENCE OF CASIMIR AND BOLESLAW II ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF KNYAZ POWER IN KYIVAN RUS’: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This article delves into the foreign policy maneuvers of Casimir and his successor Boleslaw II, prominent rulers of Poland, as they influenced the formation of Knyaz power within the realm of Kyivan Rus’. Anchored in a meticulous analysis of contemporary chronicle sources, this study underscores the intricate interplay of political strategies enacted by these Polish monarchs vis-à-vis their relations with Kyivan Rus’.

Of particular interest is the intricate web of Polish-Rus’ interactions, elucidating the motivations behind the intensification of dynastic unions between the Piast and Rurik ruling families. The research sheds light on several pivotal questions that underpin the nuanced interplay between the Piasts and the Ruriks: To what extent did the tenure of Iziaslav Volodymyrovych as Knyaz of Kyiv rely upon the support and machinations of Boleslaw II, and how instrumental was Poland in shaping the landscape of potential contenders for the Kyivan throne? Furthermore, what catalyzed Boleslaw II’s abstention from aiding Iziaslav Sviatoslavich in his adversarial struggle against his sibling, Sviatoslav Yaroslavich? The study also probes into the origins of discord between Rus’ and Poland during their joint military campaign against the Czechs, while simultaneously analyzing Poland’s role in mediating the reconciliation between Iziaslav and Vsevolod. A pertinent investigation delves into the interplay of Rome’s geopolitical strategies and its contribution to bolstering papal influence within Kyivan Rus’.

Meticulously examining chronicle sources, this article evaluates the efficacy of Casimir and Boleslaw II’s foreign policy initiatives directed at Kyivan Rus’. Central to this investigation is the assessment of the role that dynastic alliances between the rulers of Rus’ and Poland played in shaping these policies. The outcomes of this rigorous analysis converge upon the conclusion that Casimir engineered a comprehensive policy framework aimed at fostering amicable and collaborative relations with the Ruriks. This objective was substantiated by the reinforcement of kinship ties between the ruling families, underscored by matrimonial bonds. Notably, both Casimir and his heir, Boleslaw II, entered into marriages with members of the Rurik lineage, thereby forging familial bonds that transcended mere blood relations. The significance of these alliances is further exemplified by the marriage of Iziaslav Yaroslavich, Knyaz of Kyiv, to Casimir’s sister, a union that granted Iziaslav a lifeline to reclaim his Kyivan throne after his expulsion.
Furthermore, the article examines Boleslaw II’s cautious restraint during the internal power struggle between his maternal uncle, Iziaslav, and his father-in-law, Sviatoslav, deliberately refraining from intervening. The outcome of Boleslaw II’s neutrality led Iziaslav to seek assistance from the German Kaiser, an endeavor that proved fruitless, compelling Iziaslav to subsequently turn to the Pope for support.

A comprehensive scrutiny of the mishaps within Boleslaw II’s joint military campaign with Oleg Sviatoslavich and Volodymyr Vsevolodovych highlights the root cause as a deficiency in strategic coordination, which failed to encompass the entire spectrum of potential military scenarios. Moreover, the role of Boleslaw II as a peacemaker, instrumental in the reconciliation between Iziaslav and his brother Vsevolod following Sviatoslav’s demise, is underscored.

Taking a panoramic view of Poland’s overtures towards Kyivan Rus’, a consistent and purposeful policy trajectory emerges, initiated by Casimir and subsequently upheld by Boleslaw II. This policy pursued amicable relations, buttressed by dynastic concord, aiming to preclude the formation of an alliance between Germany and Rus’ and to mitigate the joint adversarial stance of the latter against Poland. To this end, Poland stood ready to extend military assistance to the Grand Kniaz of Kyiv, thereby bolstering his standing. In summation, despite certain instances of deviation, the pursued policy demonstrated a commendable degree of success.

**Keywords:** Knyaz Power, Kyivan Rus’, Knyaz’s Policy, Boleslaw II, Iziaslav Yaroslavich, Knyaz’s Hereditary Law.

**INTRODUCTION**

The research conducted holds substantial significance in its contribution toward a comprehensive comprehension of the intricate interplay between Polish and Ukrainian societies. The present study delves into the nascent phase of bilateral relations following Poland and Rus’ mutual embrace of Christianity. The investigation is primarily focused on elucidating the dynamics governing the association between the ruling Piast and Rurik dynasties. The analysis aims to ascertain the extent to which the Piast family’s dominion exerted an influence on the process of Kyivan Rus’ state formation, and concurrently, to expound upon the interconnection between the Piast and Rurik families. Furthermore, the examination seeks to delineate the repercussions of these interrelations on the Polish state’s policy orientation vis-à-vis Kyivan Rus’. A comprehensive scrutiny of these historical ties is poised to enhance our comprehension of the origins and progression of diplomatic interactions between the two nations.

It is noteworthy that the question of state relations between Rus’ and Poland has garnered scholarly attention, with notable contributions from Tatishchev V.M., Hrushevsky M.S., Braichevsky M.Y., Grekov B.D., Rybakov B.O., Voitovych B.O., Tolochko P.P., Shevchenko O.O., Shevchenko A.E., Kudin S.M., and other prominent researchers. Nonetheless, it is imperative
to acknowledge the inherent challenges associated with examining this period. Both sides, driven by their ideological frameworks, sought to present historical events through a subjective lens. This invariably led to the distortion of certain events, wherein some occurrences were exaggerated while others remained inadequately or entirely unrepresented. An additional complexity emerges from the chroniclers themselves, primarily composed of clergy, thereby introducing a distinct ecclesiastical perspective to the historical narrative.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilizes a historical analysis approach to examine the foreign policy impact of Casimir and Boleslaw II on the emergence of Knyaz power in Kyivan Rus’. Primary sources provide insights, including chronicles like the “Primary Chronicle,” and secondary sources by scholars such as Tatishchev and Hrushevsky. Archival records, where available, supplement diplomatic communications. The analysis contextualizes events within the broader historical and regional context, considering limitations in source reliability and scope. This research aims to uncover how the foreign policies of Casimir and Boleslaw II influenced the establishment of Knyaz power in Kyivan Rus’.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Boleslaw’s endeavor to foster amicable relations with Kyivan Rus’ did not yield the desired outcome. Several factors contributed to this outcome. Primarily, the appropriation of the Cherven Cities by Volodymyr Sviatoslavych prompted the Polish response to reclaim the lost territories (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1925:47). Furthermore, Volodymyr’s strategic decision to align the Christianization of Rus’ with Constantinople, rather than Rome, bore significant implications (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1910:14-15). Notably, Rome continued to harbor aspirations of asserting its influence over religious matters within the state, thereby diminishing the sway of Constantinople’s church hierarchs over Kyivan Rus’ (Holovchenko and Matviienko, 2018:48). The geographical proximity of Poland played a pivotal role in facilitating Rome’s objectives. Lastly, the direct military intervention by supporting Sviatopolk in his feud against Yaroslav within Rus’ proved to be a misjudgment. By aligning with his son-in-law Sviatopolk, Boleslaw I forged an alliance that proved unreliable and feeble, while simultaneously forging a perilous enmity with Yaroslav Volodymyrovych (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1921:48-49; Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1843:266). This strategic miscalculation led to an escalating conflict that eventually enveloped Poland and exacerbated Russo-Polish relations.

During Casimir’s reign, Poland aspired to forge closer ties with Rus’. An exemplar of this effort was the marriage arrangement between Yaroslav’s son Iziaslav and Gertrude of Poland, the daughter of Polish King Myszko II and sibling of Casimir (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1862:83), (Voitovych, 2006:311). In 1043, Yaroslav engaged in hostilities against Byzantium (Hrushevskyi, 1954:35-37). With the deterioration of relations between Yaroslav and Byzantium, the ecclesiastical domain became inevitably entwined with political discord. In a significant shift, Yaroslav’s selection of the Metropolitan of Kyiv was carried out without the consent of the Patriarch of Constantinople, receiving the endorsement of Rus’ bishops (Shevchenko, Kudin and Nastiuk, 2020:284-285). Consequently, the rapport between Yaroslav and the Byzantine Church underwent a downward trajectory. Of significance is
the fact that Yaroslav’s spouse had familial ties to the Polish monarch, Boleslaw the Brave, potentially influencing her husband’s policies. However, it is worth noting that Hilaryon’s appointment as metropolitan took place after Ingigerda’s demise (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1863:67). The souring of relations with Byzantium was juxtaposed with strengthening ties with Poland. Yaroslav’s affinity with Poland was accentuated through a series of dynastic marriages with the Piasts. In 1043, these diplomatic overtures culminated in a notable alliance, as Yaroslav bestowed his younger sister Dobronega to Casimir. Concurrently, Casimir facilitated the return of 800 Rus’ individuals previously captured by his grandfather Boleslaw I. A pact was reached wherein Yaroslav pledged military support to Casimir in his campaign against the Czechs, Masovians, and Prussians. In response to Casimir’s entreaty, Yaroslav embarked on a successful expedition against the Mazovians, vanquishing their forces and eliminating their leader, while Casimir seized control over their territories (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1846:109).

Dobronega, through her lineage, gave birth to the subsequent Polish monarch, Boleslaw II the Generous. Boleslaw II’s kinship ties are traced back to Yaroslav Volodymyrovych, rendering him the grandson of Yaroslav and a cousin to Iziaslav, Sviatoslav, and Vsevolod (Voitovych, 2006:278). The integration of Rurik’s bloodline into the Piast family found culmination through Boleslaw II, a development not realized during the era of Boleslaw the Brave, as the latter’s daughter did not produce any heirs with Sviatopolk. The Piast lineage endured through the descendants of Iziaslav Yaroslavich. The periods under the reigns of Yaroslav and Casimir marked a progression towards enhanced rapport, facilitated by collaborative military ventures and cemented through matrimonial alliances.

The passing of Yaroslav Volodymyrovych in 1055 resulted in the ascension of his eldest son, Iziaslav, as the ruler of Rus’. Iziaslav’s elevation to authority in 1055 bolstered Poland’s influence within Kyivan Rus’ (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1863:151). It is worth noting that Iziaslav’s marriage to a Polish princess, the sister of Polish sovereign Casimir, was a contributing factor to this dynamic. Furthermore, the familial network extended deeper as Casimir’s spouse, Dobronega, was Iziaslav’s aunt. Boleslaw the Brave, Casimir’s son and future king of Poland, stood as the nephew of Iziaslav’s wife. Intriguingly, Boleslaw’s mother was the daughter of Volodymyr Sviatoslavych and the sister of Yaroslav Volodymyrovych, thereby establishing intricate kinship ties within the Grand Knyazes of Kyiv, the ruling Rurik family and custodians of Rus’.

Tragically, the demise of Casimir, the reigning Polish monarch, occurred in 1058. This event heralded the elevation of Boleslaw II to the preeminent position within the family (Voitovych, 2006:278). The genealogical lineage connecting Boleslaw II to the Ruriks traversed through the maternal line, endowing him with Volodymyr Sviatoslavych as his grandfather and Yaroslav Volodymyrovych as his uncle. As Kyiv was governed by Iziaslav during this period, Boleslaw II and Iziaslav found themselves in a cousinly relationship. This juncture signaled the commencement of a new chapter in the evolving dynamic of Polish-Rus’ relations.

According to Tatishchev’s account, in 1065 (with alternative sources citing 1067), Boleslaw entered into matrimony with Vysheslava, the daughter of Chernihiv Knyaz Sviatoslav II, a sibling to Sviatoslav Iziaslavich (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1851:119). This strategic marriage marked a shrewd diplomatic maneuver by the Polish ruler, a continuation of his father’s strategy to fortify familial bonds with the Rurikid dynasty. Boleslaw, capitalizing
on his aunt’s influence, effectively exerted his sway over Rus’ ruler Iziaslav, wherein the Piast lineage coursed. His union with Sviatoslav II’s daughter conferred elevated status within Kyivan Rus’, given her father’s position as a prominent figure in the hierarchy.

1067 an uprising surged through Kyiv (Polnoe Sobranie Russkykh Letopysei, 1846:72). Fueled by dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the conflict against the Cumans, the populace compelled Iziaslav Yaroslavich’s retreat from Kyiv, electing Vseslav Bryachislavich, the captive prince of Polotsk, to power instead (Arkas, 1912:50).

Confronted with the loss of Kyiv, Iziaslav sought military assistance from his kinsman, the Polish ruler Boleslaw II. Through Boleslaw II’s military backing and the collaborative efforts of Polish forces, Iziaslav managed to reclaim Kyiv (Polnoe Sobranie Russkykh Letopysei, 1977:37-38). Drawing a parallel to his great-grandfather Boleslaw I’s actions, Boleslaw II of Poland also orchestrated the restitution of Kyiv to the Kyivan Knyaz. Both instances underscore the concept of Piast assistance being extended to their kin to address internal challenges.

The year 1073 witnessed a rupture within Kyivan Rus’, delineated by a conflict between the siblings: Iziaslav of Kyiv and Sviatoslav of Chernihiv. In this conflict, the younger brother Vsevolod of Pereyaslav aligned with Sviatoslav’s faction (Letopys po ypatkomu spysku, 1871, p. 128). Vsevolod’s alignment with Sviatoslav finds its origin in the latter’s bestowal of Chernihiv to Vsevolod, while Sviatoslav assumed his place in Kyiv. Recognizing his precarious position, Iziaslav once again sought refuge and aid from Boleslaw II. Upon his arrival in Poland, Iziaslav presented tributes to Boleslaw II and his retinue, envisioning their support in his confrontational undertakings against his fraternal rivals (Tatyshchev, 1773:126-127).

This scenario bears semblance to past occurrences, from which Poland gleaned crucial lessons. A prior instance saw Poland’s intervention in a fraternal feud within Rus’, yielding animosity from Sviatopolk and entangling Poland in a protracted conflict against Yaroslav Volodymyrovych. However, the present context presented a distinct situation wherein both sides were relatives of Boleslaw II. Notably, Iziaslav’s wife shared a fraternal bond with Boleslaw II’s father, while his mother served as an aunt to both Iziaslav and Sviatoslav. Boleslaw II faced a pivotal choice between endorsing his cousin Sviatoslav II, whose daughter he had wed and supporting his adversary, his cousin Iziaslav, who was married to Boleslaw’s aunt.

Iziaslav’s plea for military reinforcement posed a challenge to Poland’s overarching foreign policy vis-à-vis Rus’, which aimed to sustain harmonious relations and mutual military backing. The reigns of both Casimir and Boleslaw had fostered closer ties with the Ruriks, yet Iziaslav’s bid sought to embroil Boleslaw II in internal fraternal strife. Mindful of the misstep of Boleslaw I, Boleslaw II opted for a judicious course of action. Discerning that Iziaslav’s sway in Rus’ remained tenuous and that he lacked favor among his siblings and the populace, Boleslaw II, likewise recognized by Iziaslav himself, abstained from overt intervention in his kin’s conflict, opting for neutrality. In doing so, he safeguarded his aunt Gertrude’s interests. Meanwhile, Iziaslav and his son Jaropolk found themselves compelled to seek refuge in Germany, seeking the Kaiser’s support (Voitovych, 2006:310). Responding to their plea, the German Emperor dispatched an envoy to Sviatoslav Yaroslavich in 1075, urging him to cede the Kyivan throne to his brother. In this negotiation, Sviatoslav demonstrated his substantial wealth, indicative of his robust power, even against the imperial might (Polnoe
Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1862:107). The German emissaries gleaned from this display that Sviatoslav possessed ample resources to contend even with the emperor himself.

The strategic maneuver orchestrated by Iziaslav, entailing an alliance between Rus’ and Germany, bore inherent risks for Boleslaw II. Poland was averse to the prospect of fortifying German-Rus’ ties, given the implications for its interests. The potential elevation of Iziaslav to the princely seat through the Kaiser’s intervention could have substantially bolstered German influence within Kyivan Rus’. In retrospect, Iziaslav perceived himself to have been betrayed by Boleslaw II, for despite accepting financial aid, the anticipated assistance was not rendered. While Iziaslav could have held gratitude toward the Germans for reinstating him to Rus’ leadership, the perceived deceit by Boleslaw II in the eyes of Iziaslav fundamentally altered their amicable relations to a hostile tenor.

A joint military endeavor by Germany and Rus’ against Poland had the potential to yield adverse repercussions for the Polish state. Yet, the German authorities chose to forgo the military support of Iziaslav’s cause, a decision potentially grounded in their avoidance of undue risks. Concurrently, the matrimonial union between Iziaslav’s progeny, Yaropolk, and a German princess bore latent implications for subsequent Polish diplomatic efforts, as Yaropolk could have ascended to the Kyivan knyaz position. Nevertheless, Yaropolk never secured the Kyivan throne, thereby vindicating the calculated risk undertaken by Boleslaw II in his decision-making process.

In 1076, a series of diplomatic contradictions emerged between Rus’ and Poland. Notably, this was the year when Sviatoslav dispatched his son Oleg and nephew Volodymyr II to bolster Boleslaw II’s military campaign against Bohemia. Learning of the imminent Polish incursion backed by Rus’, the Bohemian ruler Vratislaus opted for a peaceful resolution, offering a tribute of 1000 hryvnias of silver to Boleslaw in exchange for a cessation of hostilities. In concurrence, Boleslaw II acceded to the peace arrangement with Vratislaus, leading him to convey to Oleg and Volodymyr that the rationale for their conflict with the Czechs had been quelled. Instead, Boleslaw proposed a joint campaign against the Prussians and Pomeranians, asserting a cause independent of Rus’ engagements.

In response, Oleg Sviatoslavich and Volodymyr Vsevolodovych, while acknowledging the peace accord with the Bohemians, upheld their commitment to the prior military arrangement against the Czechs. Crucially, they highlighted that Rus’ had not been in conflict with the Prussians and Pomeranians and, thus, lacked the requisite preconditions for initiating hostilities against them. This position was grounded in the fact that foreign policy decisions rested with their parents, Sviatoslav and Vsevolod. Consequently, Rus’ persisted in the campaign against the Czechs, compelling them to accept peace terms, disburse the stipulated tribute, and offer generous rewards to the Rus’ forces.

The ensuing discord and incongruities engendered by these events precipitated a deterioration in the Rus’-Poland relationship. Analysis suggests that Boleslaw II erred in his decision to negotiate independently with the Bohemians without accounting for Rus’ interests. Additionally, his proposition for a Prussian-Pomeranian campaign bore misguided assumptions, as Rus’ was not a party to any belligerence with these entities. The decision-making authority over matters of war and peace resided with Oleg and Volodymyr’s parents, not the princes themselves.

Boleslaw II’s actions may have been premised on an expectation of gratitude from Sviatoslav for abstaining from supporting Iziaslav, possibly anticipating favor from the
Kyivan ruler. Yet, Boleslaw should have recognized that Rus’ pursued distinct objectives in this particular conflict. Furthermore, his engagement with Sviatoslav and Vsevolod directly, rather than through intermediaries, would have been more judicious in resolving these intricate matters.

The complex predicament that unfolded could be attributed, in part, to the relative immaturity and inexperience of young Oleg and Volodymyr. Their directive to engage in hostilities with the Bohemians precipitated a conundrum, as concluding the war without the concurrence of Rus’ was untenable. The proposition of launching a fresh campaign against the Prussians and Pomeranians, as advocated by Boleslaw II, contravened pre-existing agreements. The knyazes, acting under their parents’ mandate, fulfilled the assigned task. Boleslaw II’s oversight lay in neglecting the jurisdictional limitations of Oleg and Volodymyr; necessitating consultation with their parents. However, driven by expediency and an apparent eagerness to undertake military action, Boleslaw bypassed diplomatic avenues with Kyiv to find a resolution.

Deprived of assistance from the Kaiser, Iziaslav Yaroslavich sought refuge under Dedo II, the Margrave of the Eastern Mark. In 1074, a matrimonial alliance was forged between Iziaslav’s son, Yaropolk, and the daughter of a Meissen Count. Bolstered by kinship, Iziaslav, and his son managed to garner the attention of Pope Gregory VII regarding their plight. The Pope assented to lend support to Iziaslav Yaroslavich and extended an invitation for a personal audience. Cautious of direct engagement, the exiled Kyivan Knyaz dispatched his son Yaropolk as a representative. In the presence of the Pope, Yaropolk Iziaslavich was bestowed the authority of Rus’ and granted a distinct pontifical decree. This concord held the potential to elevate the relationship between the Ruriks and the Roman Church to an unprecedented echelon.

In 1075, the Pope dispatched a missive to Boleslaw, asserting, “By illicitly appropriating the riches of the Rus’ Knyaz, you have transgressed Christian virtue.” He implored Boleslaw to restore all seized property to its rightful owner, cautioning that failure to do so might imperil one’s path to salvation. Further, the Pope enjoined Boleslaw II to aid Iziaslav’s restitution to power in Rus’. Boleslaw, however, extended military support to Iziaslav only in 1077, after the sudden demise of Sviatoslav II. In the wake of these events, Iziaslav’s brother Vsevolod, observing the assistance extended by the Poles, relinquished his control over Kyiv and acceded to Iziaslav’s authority, retaining governance over Chernihiv.

Boleslaw II’s adept diplomacy played a pivotal role in facilitating reconciliation between Iziaslav and Vsevolod, ultimately resulting in Iziaslav’s reinstatement in Kyiv and the allocation of Chernihiv to (Tatyschev, 1773:93). This intricate diplomatic maneuver by Poland exemplified its astute political pragmatism, as it declined to intervene in defense of Chernihiv for the progeny of Sviatoslav, notwithstanding their status as his wife’s brothers. The ascendancy of Iziaslav, orchestrated with Poland’s involvement, fostered improved relations with the Grand Knyaz of Kyiv and concurrently bolstered Rome’s influence in the region. This ascendant trajectory of Roman influence was underscored by the fact that, in consonance with the Pope’s directives, Iziaslav’s eldest son, Yaropolk, was envisaged as the prospective ruler of Kyivan Rus’. The strategic intent behind this initiative was to potentially effect a transition from Constantinople’s ecclesiastical dominion to that of Rome. However, this intended outcome did not come to fruition, as the pivotal figure, Yaropolk, met an untimely demise, precluding his ascent to the Knyaz position in Kyivan Rus’.
Throughout his reign, Boleslaw II orchestrated two military campaigns targeting Kyiv, both with the overarching aim of restoring power to Iziaslav Yaroslavich. A comprehensive analysis of the available evidence does not substantiate the contention that Boleslaw II's military endeavors bore aggressive intent towards Rus’. Boleslaw II, driven by his state’s interests, embarked on these campaigns to ameliorate the predicament of his kinsman, Iziaslav Yaroslavich. Significantly, Boleslaw’s predilection for kinship alliances prevailed over strict legal considerations, as he unequivocally aligned himself with his closest relative in the Iziaslav-Sviatoslav dispute. Additionally, it is noteworthy that Boleslaw II exhibited steadfastness in refraining from antagonism against his father-in-law, Sviatoslav, despite ecclesiastical pressures. The sagacious foreign policy orchestrated by Boleslaw II averted a recurrence of the pitfalls encountered by Boleslaw I, forestalling protracted military confrontations with Rus’. Boleslaw II’s subsequent foray into Rus’, undertaken in support of Iziaslav against Vsevolod, demonstrated strategic rationale for both entities. We contend that Poland’s endorsement of Iziaslav’s cause precluded Vsevolod’s inclination for conflict, thereby facilitating the transfer of Kyiv’s governance to his elder sibling and averting an extended intra-dynastic rivalry.

The tradition of cultivating dynastic alliances between the Piasts and Ruriks persisted in subsequent periods, with Polish rulers purposefully interweaving Rurik lineage into their family lineage. Boleslaw III, for instance, solidified such connections by marrying Zbyslawa, the daughter of Sviatopolk Iziaslavich (Polnoe Sobranye Russkykh Letopysei, 1846:118). Mieszko III, similarly, established a matrimonial bond by wedding Eudoxia, the daughter of Iziaslav Mstislavich (Voitovych, 2006:469). Boleslaw, who governed over Silesia, entered into matrimonial ties with the daughter of Vsevolod Olgovich (Voitovych, 2006:401). The union of Odon Mieszkowic with Vysheslavna, daughter of Yaroslav Osmomysl, further reinforced the interconnectedness of the Piast and Rurik dynasties (Voitovych, 2006:350). Boleslaw IV the Curly, meanwhile, married Maria-Anastasia, the daughter of Volodymyrko Volodarovich, and subsequently entered into a second marriage with Viacheslava of Novgorod, daughter of Vsevolod Mstislavich (Voitovych, 2006:346, 464). This trend extended to other Polish rulers as well, exemplified by Leszek the White’s marriage to Grzymisława from the Rurik lineage (Voitovych, 2006:496).

The dynastic bonds also extended beyond the borders of Poland, as exemplified by Konrad I of Masovia’s alliance with Agafia, daughter of Sviatoslav III Igorevich, the ruler of Volyn and Przemyśl (Voitovych, 2006:411). Their son, Boleslaw I of Masovia, continued this pattern by marrying the daughter of Oleksandr Vsevolodovich of Belz (Voitovych, 2006:503). Siemowit I of Masovia, the offspring of Konrad I of Masovia, solidified ties with Danylo Romanovych Halychskyi’s lineage through his marriage to Pereyaslava, Danylo’s daughter (Voitovych, 2006:501). Siemowit of Dobrzyń, the son of Casimir I of Kuyavia, further intertwined the Piast and Rurik families through his union with Anastasia, daughter of Lev Danylovych, the Knyaz of Halych and Volyn (Voitovych, 2006:506). These instances stand as a testament to the recurrent dynastic agreements forged between the Piasts and Ruriks.

Diving deeper into the lineage of Danylo Halychskyi, the monarch of Volyn and Halychyna, one encounters the intertwining threads of the Piast and Rurik dynasties. Danylo’s grandfather, Mstyslav II Iziaslavich, was married to Agnes of Poland, a daughter of Boleslaw III, a Polish monarch from the Piast lineage (Voitovych, 2006:470). Thus, the maternal lineage of
Danylo’s father is traced back to the Polish ruling house. Continuing this interconnectedness, Danylo’s descendant, Yurii, forged matrimonial bonds with Euphemia of Kuyavia, yet another member of the Piast family (Voitovych, 2006:506). This intricate web of familial ties between the Piast and Rurik dynasties underscores the enduring political strategy of leveraging dynastic alliances to consolidate power and forge diplomatic relations in the medieval Eastern European context.

CONCLUSION

The phase of positive bilateral relations between Casimir and Yaroslav is considered the second stage, marked by their strong connection resulting from a dynastic marriage involving Casimir’s sister. The union of Iziaslav Yaroslavich, later recognized as Knyaz of Kyiv, with Casimir’s sibling further solidified the Piast-Rurik alliance. During this juncture, Rus’ provided crucial military support to Casimir’s endeavors. This policy of fostering ties was perpetuated by Casimir’s son, Bolesław II, who not only continued but expanded upon his father’s efforts by marrying into the Rurik House through Knyaz Sviatoslav II’s daughter. This matrimonial alliance reinforced the familial bonds with influential branches of the Rurik dynasty.

Bolesław II played a vital role in establishing Kyivan Rus’ power structures. He lent his aid to Iziaslav’s return to Kyiv after the latter was exiled by the populace. Bolesław’s stance in the confrontation between Iziaslav and Sviatoslav for the Kyivan throne was neutral, abstaining from involvement. Bolesław II’s approach compelled Iziaslav to seek assistance from the German Kaiser, but those efforts proved futile, prompting Iziaslav to appeal to the Pope. In support, the Pope bestowed the territory of Rus’ upon Iziaslav’s son, Yaropolk, aiming to fortify Rome’s influence. Despite the Papal endorsement, Bolesław declined to oppose his father-in-law Sviatoslav II. It was only after Sviatoslav’s demise that Bolesław extended his backing for Iziaslav’s reign in Kyiv. However, this backing was the outcome of deliberations between Iziaslav and Vsevolod, resulting in a compromise.

Bolesław II acted as a mediator in this complex scenario. The Polish rulers played a pivotal role on three occasions in aiding Kyivan Knyazes to regain control over Kyiv. Throughout the rule of Casimir and Bolesław II, family bonds held paramount importance, and active support was extended to their close relatives. This historical epoch witnessed the avoidance of conflict with the Ruriks and the cultivation of a military partnership with Germany by the Piasts. The overarching policy of the Polish rulers also sought to sustain the interconnectedness with the Ruriks through the challenging eras of the Mongol-Tatar incursion and the subsequent decline of Kyivan Rus’, along with the weakening and eventual decline of the Halytsko-Volynske Kingdom.

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