



The Public Defense of the Doctoral Dissertation in Medieval Studies

of

**Wojciech Kozłowski**

on

**THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY “INTERNATIONAL” SYSTEM AND THE ORIGINS  
OF THE ANGEVIN-PIAST DYNASTIC ALLIANCE**

will be held on

**Tuesday, 2 December 2014, at 13:00**

in the

**Senate Room – Monument Building  
Central European University (CEU)  
Nádor u. 9, Budapest**

Examination Committee

- Chair                   László Kontler (Department of History – CEU)
- Members               Dániel Bagi – external reader and external examiner (present)  
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## **DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

### **THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY “INTERNATIONAL” SYSTEM AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ANGEVIN-PIAST DYNASTIC ALLIANCE**

#### **General Remarks**

The central question of this study is what inspired Charles I and Władysław Łokietek to establish a dynastic marriage in 1320 and in what context it happened. This inquiry is strongly interconnected with an additional interest in whether (and how) the “international” environment, in which both figures formed and strove to achieve their goals and objectives, can be characterized. The research objectives are achieved by developing and employing theoretical perspective, drawn from International Relations (IR) theories, to historical material in order to generate well substantiated interpretation of the causes and context of the Angevin-Piast marriage of 1320.

How to make sense of the late medieval “international” politics? Is the still upholding stereotype in historical IR valid, when it claims that before the middle of the seventeenth century there was no international system that could be meaningfully investigated with IR methods? More specifically, is it possible to theorize political phenomena that occurred in the thirteenth and fourteenth century in Central Europe and beyond, and avoid being accused with anachronism? Would such theorizing equip historian with new explanatory powers? Is there any scientific value in starting a conversation between a historian of medieval “international” politics and an IR theorist, fundamentally focused on contemporary global affairs? In other words, how an IR theorist would respond to the world of international politics as depicted by various medieval source material? Or, perhaps, medieval political history is an already conceptually exhausted and harvested field with very little issues left after the reapers?

These are the underlying questions that have been guiding and inspiring my scholarly work throughout my PhD program. My research can be approached from two perspectives. In terms of its content, this is a comparative “international” politics, grappling with complexities of dynastic relations in the kingdoms of Bohemia, Hungary and Poland in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. In terms of concepts and methods, however, this is a pioneering attempt to utilize and adapt great potential of IR theoretical reflection in order to render a new image of late medieval “international” politics. The interdisciplinary underpinnings of my project are particularly challenging, because bridging IR scholarship (developed and elaborated in the specific contexts of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century international system) and traditional political history of the late Middle Ages (itself meticulously explored and analyzed by generations of historians) is an innovation that only has to find its place in the scholarly environment and prove its validity.

I would argue, against some criticisms I have already encountered, that this undertaking is very promising in conceptualizing medieval “international” politics as long as it is not done by means of mere theory application. Specifically, in the heart of this project lies the conviction that meaningful investigation of this politics requires new theorization, that is, something more than adapting certain existing theories. The project also builds on another assertion that IR theories “should not be regarded as non-dynamic, a-historical intellectual constructs”, for they “have been created by someone, somewhere and presumably for some purpose”.<sup>1</sup> Since IR scholarship can provide concepts, frameworks, terminologies, and specific ways of reflecting about international realities – in other words, it delivers building blocks for efficient theory-construction – immersing into this field seems to me an opening and essential step to developing necessary abilities to begin theorizing a new field.

Such theorizing determines and recognizes the elements of medieval political culture, seeks values and principles, patterns and routinized practices that forged political interests of medieval actors and shaped their “international” behaviors.

### **A Brief Overview of the Dissertation**

To begin with, in one paragraph I will summarize the historical problem of my dissertation.

In Summer 1320, Elisabeth, a daughter of Władysław Łokietek, freshly made King of Poland, married Charles I of Anjou, King of Hungary. Charles I’s two oldest sons died at young age but Louis, his third son, inherited the Hungarian kingdom and was crowned in 1342. In the meantime, Casimir, Elisabeth’s brother and Louis’s uncle, succeeded to the Polish crown after Łokietek, his father. In the following decades, Casimir and Louis repeatedly discussed the issue of Louis’ prospective succession in Poland in case Kazimierz did not have offspring. The available source material suggests that some prearrangements in this matter had been already made in the 1320s between Charles I and Łokietek or between Charles I and Casimir in the 1330s. As a result, in 1370, shortly after Casimir’s death, Louis was crowned King of Poland. Judging from what happened in the Angevin-Piast relations throughout the fourteenth century, it appears fairly evident that the dynastic marriage of 1320 was a real showdown which laid foundations for the future cooperation of these two houses, and ultimately resulted in a personal union of two Central European kingdoms. At the core of my historical inquiry was to find out what were the circumstances that brought the marriage of 1320 into being. Therefore, on the one hand, my dissertation asks a conventional historical question: what happened in Central Europe between 1300 and 1320 that made the Angevin-Piast dynastic marriage possible? On the other hand, it strives to document and determine principles, values and driving forces that motivated lords in their “international” behaviors.

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<sup>1</sup> Knud Erik Jørgensen, *International Relations Theory: A New Introduction* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 207.

The innovative approach of this study is based on the concept that before individual motivations of Charles I and Władysław Łokietek are elucidated (as elements central for conventional political history), a broad analysis of “international” practices is carried out. In other words, this study advances its argument in two ways. First, by using empirical material, it strives to identify actors, structures, and modes of interactions that were characteristic to the thirteenth-century “international” system in Latin Christendom (with reference to primary neo-realist assumptions). It also seeks to unravel how political interests of individual actors were shaped (by introducing a concept of “lordly identity” along the constructivist strand). Second, having established a broad context for Charles I and Łokietek pursuing their politics, it implements theoretical conceptualizations to solve the puzzle of the Angevin-Piast dynastic marriage of 1320.

### **Dissertation Structure**

This study is divided into five chapters. At the first sight each of them represents a piece of separate research and only two of them are overtly related to the title of the dissertation. Namely, Chapter 2 deals with “international” system of the thirteenth-century Latin Christendom and Chapter 5 is directly devoted to determining the context, in which the Angevin-Piast alliance of 1320 emerged. This possible impression of incoherence and inconsistency can be amended, once the logic of this study is laid down in a structured way. The logic of this work can be succinctly summarized as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces basic terminologies and theoretical concepts, which inform analyses performed in subsequent chapters, as well as puts forward arguments why this theoretically-driven approach can prove useful and contribute to the scholarly field.

Chapter 2 tackles with the problem where does the thirteenth-century “international” politics of Latin Christendom take place. It investigates the arrangement of the “international” environment in order to determine what was the “international” world, into which Charles I and Łokietek were born.

Chapter 3 shifts focus from the “international” environment to lordly identities, which were shaped in this environment through political culture, that forged the political interests and routinized practices of lords. In other words, the chapter seeks to identify how political culture transformed natural “international” environment and what type of thinking about “international” politics it provoked as well as how lords’ behavior responded to this transformation. The scope of its analysis is confined chiefly to the Polish lands between 1200 to 1300.

Chapter 4 attempts to test the findings of Chapter 3 against a different historical setting. It strives to find out how lordly identity determined on the example of the Polish lands correspond with identities and patterns of behavior identified during Charles I and Wenceslas III’s competition over the throne of the kingdom of Hungary in the early fourteenth century. More specifically, the chapter revolves around

the research question whether lordly identities of Charles I and Łokietek are comparable and thus, whether those identities can be generalized and theorized.

Chapter 5 builds on the analyses carried out in the previous chapters and seeks to determine the origins of the Angevin-Piast marriage as perceived with the help of the concept of lordly identity and reflection on the structure of “international” environment.

## **Conclusions**

There is a number of findings that have been made in the course of this study. In this section I will address five of them, which seem to me the most relevant.

First, the context of the Angevin-Piast marriage and presumed motivations, which inspired Charles I and Władysław Łokietek to arrange it, have been determined. The analysis of their “international” agendas showed that between 1300 and 1320 both rulers had in fact little in common and thus, the marriage (that laid foundations for the subsequent alliance) was an outcome of unpredictable developments of family-centered politics, that is, its arrangement derived from Charles I’s determination to produce legitimate male offspring that could inherit the lordship, which he had been already constantly establishing for two decades. Otherwise, Charles I and Łokietek’s political agendas proved to be separated and rather unrelated. It was chiefly their lordly identities as leaders of their families (preoccupied among others with securing prestigious positions for their children) that made Charles I and Łokietek’s interests cross their paths. In consequence, commonly held opinions – particularly popular with German and Polish scholarship – about anti-Luxemburg spike of this marriage and its direct link to the European-wide rivalry between the Habsburgs and Wittelsbachs were refuted.

Second, the theorized characteristic of the thirteenth-century “international” environment, into which Charles I and Łokietek were born, has been provided. Noteworthy, this description – although it has been researched and substantiated with historical evidence – still needs to be perceived as a tentative, because with this contribution a vast field for debate has been opened. Here I have demonstrated that the thirteenth-century “international” system was principally built of lordships. These lordships varied in size, wealth, and power (as kingdoms, duchies, free cities, bishoprics, counties, marks and noble domains did in relation to one another) yet they were identical in nature, that is, they all can be defined as units seeking domination of one or a few over a piece of land and people living there. These lordships were basically arranged into the two-dimensional hybrid structure of the “international” system that emphasized the lack of system-wide government (and thus induced the conditions of constant fear of aggression and encouraged mutual suspicion) co-existing with powerful cultural component that engendered hierarchical ordering of “international” units (lordships), underlining prestige, elite-standing and legitimate domination as central principles that governed behaviors of lordships.

Third, the reflection over the specificity of the thirteenth-century “international” system and the way how units in this system were positioned towards one another, allowed to conclude that political culture was a considerable factor capable of shaping lords’ interests and objectives on the “international” stage. Furthermore, it revealed that lords of Latin Christendom acted with noticeable conformity to the standards, values and principles determined by this political culture and expressed as patterns of behavior and routinized practices. Building on constructivist approach, borrowed from IR theories, it has been concluded that the inter-subjective lordly identity (that is, the collective understanding of being a lord without focusing on individual peculiarities) induced a few objective political interests: 1) to hold and sustain a lordship; 2) to produce male offspring and provide it with lordship that guarantees adequate social elite-standing; 3) to enlarge one’s lordship, claim new titles, build power and prestige; 4) to retain a successful degree of conformity with rules and principles that make one a member of Christian society and allow for climbing the ladder of social hierarchy by creating honor and prestige. The concept of lordly identity and its content has formed the vital tool for elucidating the central problem of this study by shedding light on what sort of social role Charles I and Łokietek presumably subscribed to.

Fourth, the overview of national scholarly literatures concerning the Angevin-Luxemburg and Angevin-Piast marriages showcased how researcher-specific and context-contingent an analysis of medieval “international” politics can be. This study attempted to prove that such arbitrariness, which derives from the influence of the scholar’s currently held assumptions about how international politics operates in general, can be mitigated, and that by reaching out for more theoretically-informed approaches one can interrogate medieval politics in its complexity and otherness in an inspiring, meaningful, and thought-provoking manner.

Fifth, this study has been a risky experiment, for it strove to bridge medieval studies with IR theories, which had been hardly ever done before, and if so – to my best knowledge – then solely by few IR scholars. Thus, this project had to swim against the current, because the standard IR account claims unlikely to theorize medieval politics and the medievalists could say that if such inter-disciplinary bridge has not been established yet, this is perhaps because the gap in-between is an abyss. However, despite all flaws and incoherencies observable in this study, I argue that engaging in theoretical reflection about the nature of the thirteenth-century “international” system, its structure and dominating political culture, is a promising endeavor and worth continuing.

# CURRICULUM VITAE

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### EDUCATION:

- 2009 – 2014** PhD Candidate, Department of Medieval Studies, CEU, Budapest, Hungary  
**Dissertation Title:** The Thirteenth-Century “International” System and the Origins of the Angevin-Piast Dynastic Alliance
- 2007 – 2008** Master of Arts in Medieval Studies, Department of Medieval Studies, CEU, Budapest, Hungary  
**MA Thesis:** Prelude to the Angevins: Marriages of the Árpáds and Piasts Reconsidered, 986 – ca. 1250.
- 2000 – 2005** Master of Arts in History, University of Warsaw, Institute of History, Warsaw, Poland  
**MA Thesis:** The Political Impact of Witold, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, in the Kingdom of Poland, 1377-1430

### AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS:

- 2014 Henrik Birnbaum Memorial Scholarship Award.
- April 2013 Associate Researcher at the Department of History, Harvard University.
- 2013 The CEU Award for Advanced Doctoral Students.
- 2012-2013 The New Europe College International Fellowship, Bucharest, Romania.
- 2012 Henrik Birnbaum Memorial Scholarship Award.
- 2011 The Caucasus and Byzantium Teaching Fellowship funded by the Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Central European University.
- 2009 - 2010 A Scholarship from the International Visegrad Fund.
- 2007 - 2008 A Scholarship from the International Visegrad Fund.
- 2004 - 2005 A Scholarship from the Polish Ministry of National Education.
- 2004 The Best Student Written Assignment Award in the Institute of History at the University of Warsaw.
- 2001 - 2005 A University of Warsaw Scholarship for Outstanding Academic Records.

### SELECTED ARTICLES:

- In press: “Theorizing Late Medieval Politics. Report from the Field.” *Studia z Dziejów Średniowiecza* 19 (2014).
- In press: “Power-Winning Contexts and Strategies. Charles I and Wenceslas III and a Comparison of Their Quest for the Hungarian Throne.” *The New Europe College Annual* (2014).
- In press: “„Nowa” historia polityczna średniowiecza, nauki polityczne i historyczne kształcenie akademickie. Od konwencji przez konfrontację po inspirację” [“New” Political History of the Middle Ages, Political Science, and History in Higher Education. From Convention through Confrontation to Inspiration.] *Proceedings from the International Interdisciplinary Conference “Możliwości poznawcze i wartość badań historycznych w oczach młodej kadry naukowej”* [Cognitive Possibilities and Value of Historical Inquiry in View of Young Faculty.]

“Developing the Concept of “Succession Crisis”: New Questions to Social and Political Circumstances of Łokietek’s Rise to Power, 1304-1306” *Studia Mediaevalia Bohemica* 2 (2011), 231-248.

*The Marriage of Boleslaw of the Piasts and Kinga of the Árpáds in 1239 in the Shadow of the Mongol Menace.* In: *Capitulum VI. “In my Spirit and Thought I Remained a European of Hungarian Origin.” Medieval Historical Studies in Memory of Zoltan J. Kosztołnyik.* Szeged: Szegedi Egyetemi Kiado, 2010, 79-100.

“The Dynastic Horizons of the Árpáds and Piasts, ca. 1150-1250.” *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 15 (2009): 85-102.

#### **SELECTED REVIEWS:**

“Alister E. McGrath. *Christian History: An Introduction.* Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. XVIII, 374 pages.” *European Review of History* 21 no. 5 (2014): 786-787.

“Zsoldos, Attila. Magyarország világi archontológiája 1000-1301 [Secular Officials in Hungary, 1000-1301.] Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, História, 2011. ss. 384.” *Studia Źródłoznawcze* 49 (2011): 201-202.

“Az Árpád-házi hercegek, hercegnők éskirálynék okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke = Regesta ducum, ducissarum stirpis Arpadianae necnon reginarum Hungariae critico-diplomatica. Ed. Attila Zsoldos on the basis of the manuscript of Imre Szentpétery. Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2008. ss. 226.” *Studia Źródłoznawcze* 48 (2010): 337-338.

“Visegrád 1335. Ed. György Rác. [Bratislava]:International Visegrad Fund; [Budapest]: State Archives of Hungary; Pázmány Péter Catholic University, 2009, 184 pp.” *Studia Mediaevalia Bohemica* 2 (2010): 30-31.

#### **SELECTED PAPERS:**

*From Rags to Riches: Unravelling Ups and Downs of Władysław Łokietek’s Political Career.* [in the panel:] “Power, Expansion and Domination in Medieval Poland, 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries” at the International Medieval Congress, Leeds, 10 July 2014.

*Succession Crisis in Central Europe in the turn of the Fourteenth Century and the Ways to Tackle It. From Practice of War and Diplomacy to Theoretical Approaches to Inter-Lordly Politics.* [in the panel:] “Early Diplomacy”, at the International Conference “Splendid Encounters: Diplomats and Diplomacy in Europe, 1500-1750”, Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, 20-21 September 2013.

*Theorizing Late Medieval Politics – Report from the Field.* [in the panel:] *Periodizations and Key Dates in International Relations*, at 8<sup>th</sup> Pan-European Conference on International Relations, Warsaw, 18-21 September 2013.

*The Logic of Medieval Politics. An Example from the Piast Poland.* [in the panel:] *Rules and Rulership in Medieval Central Europe*, at the International Medieval Congress, Leeds, 9 July 2012.

A “Succession Crisis” in Central Europe. *Understanding Łokietek’s Coming to Power at the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century from a New Region-centered Perspective* [in the panel:] *Power, Space and Interaction between Ruler and Ruled in Medieval Poland (10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> c.)* at the 46<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo 12 – 15 May 2011.