

**AGNIESZKA TETERYCZ-PUZIO, BOLESŁAW II MAZOWIECKI. NA SZLAKACH  
KU JEDNOŚCI (OK. 1253/58 – 24 IV 1313) [BOLESŁAW II OF MASOVIA.  
ON THE WAY TO UNIFICATION (CA. 1253/58 – 24 IV 1313)], KRAKÓW:  
WYDAWNICTWO AVALON, 2015, ISBN 978-83-7730-151-7, 194 P.**



In recent years, a number of biographies of Polish princes, living in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, have been published.<sup>1</sup> For researchers of Czech history, probably the most interesting will be the biography of Bolesław II, the Mazovian duke, married to Kunhuta (German: Kunigunde, Polish: Kunegunda), the sister of the Czech and Polish king Wenceslaus II (Czech: Václav II, Polish: Waclaw II). The author of the biography is Agnieszka Teterycz-Puzio, a medievalist, professor at the Pomeranian University in Słupsk, formerly associated with the Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin, where she defended her PhD in 1999, and in 2013 became a habilitated doctor.

The reviewed book is divided into six chapters. The first chapter largely deals with the politics of Siemowit I, prince of Mazovia, father of Bolesław II. He was killed in 1262 during the Lithuanian invasion, leaving behind his young sons Konrad II and Bolesław II. In the second chapter the author presents the beginning of independent rule of Bolesław II, and his marriage in 1279 to the Lithuanian princess Gaudemunda Zofia. The author also discusses the seals of both sons of Siemowit I and their fratricidal struggles in the 1280s. The third chapter deals with the part that Bolesław II played in the conflicts over the Cracow throne after the death of his cousin Leszek Czarny (the Black), who died in 1288. Although Bolesław II was elected prince by Cracow's nobility, he did not take the throne, and eventually formed an alliance with the Czech King Wenceslaus II. This ruler, taking advantage of the disputes between Piast princes, managed to conquer Cracow. In the fourth chapter, the political activity of Bolesław II in the years 1294–1313 was discussed, during which time he broke his alliance with Wenceslaus II and formed a long-standing alliance with his cousin Władysław Łokietek (Elbow-high). The fifth chapter lists the personal environment of Bolesław II, mainly princely officials, and the sixth discusses his titles and his activity in the sphere of economy. In the end — in addition to a summary of the prince's achievements — there was a short fragment about the literary depictions of Bolesław II in the novels of Karol Bunsch and Elżbieta Cherezińska, which is a great addition to the book. The book also contains an annex — a list of all documents issued by Bolesław II (there were 29 of them).

The work in question is a solid compendium of knowledge about the Mazovian prince, in particular when it comes to his political activities. The author scrupulously analyzes the views of researchers, but often stops at this, not taking a position on a given issue, such as the date of death of Volodymyr Vasylykovich (Polish:

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1 E.g. W. DOMINIĄK, *Ostatni władca Górnego Śląska. Władysław I, pan na Opolu i Racibórz (1225–1281)*, Racibórz 2009; M. HLEBIONEK, *Bolesław Pobożny. Wielkopolska na drodze do zjednoczonego królestwa (1224/1227–6, 13 lub 14 IV 1279)*, Kraków 2010; B. ŚLIWIŃSKI, *Leszek, książę inowrocławski (1274/1275–po 27 kwietnia 1339)*, Kraków 2010; J. OSIŃSKI, *Bolesław Rogatka. Książę legnicki. Dziedzic monarchii Henryków śląskich (1220/25–1278)*, Kraków 2012; B. ŚLIWIŃSKI, *Ziomomysł Inowrocławski. Książę kujawski, brat Leszka Czarnego i króla Władysława Łokietka (ok. 1247 — początek października/25 grudnia 1287)*, Kraków 2017.



Włodzimierz Wasylkowicz), Prince of Halych (page 67) or the date of the town of Sieciechów joining Mazovia (page 68). This is particularly surprising in the matter of the existence of Bolesław II's daughter named Berta (Perchta) (pp. 103–104), because currently almost no one doubts that Berta was not a child of Kunhuta, the Czech princess and second wife of the Mazovian prince, but rather her dwarf.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the bibliography, Teterycz-Puzio has extensively used the Polish literature and individual foreign studies. It is a pity that she did not use the edition of the *Passional of Abbess Kunhuta*,<sup>3</sup> and the articles of Kazimierz Jasiński on the marriage policy of Wenceslaus II<sup>4</sup> and Dariusz Karczewski's on the aforementioned second wife of Bolesław II.<sup>5</sup> This is not just about quoting for quoting's sake. With the current flood of publications (*Bibliografia historii Polski [Bibliography of Polish History]* itself records several thousand entries a year), it is often impossible to capture all publications on a given topic. However, the above mentioned publications were quite significant from the point of view of Bolesław II's biography (eg the case of his participation in 1297 in the coronation of Wenceslaus II as the king of Bohemia).

There were some minor mistakes in the work regarding secondary issues, but it is necessary to note them. Siemowit I, father of Bolesław II, was the third and not the fourth son of Konrad I of Mazovia (p. 15). Bolesław II's son-in-law was Władysław, the Duke of Oświęcim, and not Władysław, the Duke of Opole (p. 86, footnote 115). Siemowit of Dobrzyń, brother of Władysław Łokietek, was mentioned as Siemowit I (p. 97), while the only Siemowit I was the father of Bolesław II. Possibly due to absent-mindedness on the part of the copyreader, the date of Władysław Łokietek's coalition against Brandenburg is 1215 instead of 1315 (p. 101). The statement that Bolesław II was influenced by his grandfather, Konrad of Masovia, in allowing his sons to rule (p. 102) is imprecise in that many Polish district princes made similar decisions, and therefore it is difficult to suppose that the hero of the book was inspired by his grandfather, and not simply following common practices. Eufrozyna, daughter of Bolesław II and wife of Władysław, prince of Oświęcim, after the death of her husband, did not co-rule the Cieszyn–Oświęcim principality (p. 103), but only Oświęcim. The younger brother of her deceased husband, Kazimierz I, ruled in the Duchy of Cieszyn. It is a bit surprising that the author would quote the prominent genealogist Kazimierz Jasiński's notes (which are available online) for *Rodowód Piastów mazowieckich* — his monograph of the same title has been available since 2008 (which is, by the way, also cited by the author).<sup>6</sup>

2 However, according to J. S. VLČEK SCHURR, *The Passional of Abbess Cunegund: protagonists, production and a question of identity*, MPhil(R) thesis, University of Glasgow 2009, <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/1575/>, pp. 49–51, Berta was daughter of Bolesław II and Kunhuta.

3 E. URBÁNKOVÁ — K. STEJSKAL, *Pasionál Přemyslovny Kunhuty*, Praha 1975.

4 K. JASIŃSKI, *Polsko a snatkova politika Vaclava II*, in: *Zpravodaj. Klub Genealogu a heraldiku Ostrava*, Vol. 26, 1986, pp. 34–39. Available on-line: <http://www.historie.hranet.cz/heraldika/zkgho/zkgho26.pdf> [cit. 30-10-2018].

5 D. KARCZEWSKI, *Kunegunda Przemysłówna. Przypadki życia królowny czeskiej*, in: W. IWAŃCZAK — D. KARCZEWSKI (Eds.), *Zwycięzcy i przegrani w dziejach średniowiecznych i wczesnonowożytnych Czech i Polski*, Kraków 2012, pp. 81–89.

6 K. JASIŃSKI, *Rodowód Piastów mazowieckich*, Poznań — Wrocław 1998 [recte: 2008].



At the end, I would like to voice an opinion which concerns not just this book. It is often said that the gap between scientific and popular science works is becoming wider.<sup>7</sup> This is not just a problem regarding Polish historiography. I am convinced that it is possible to write science books addressed to an audience wider than just a handful of specialists. Unfortunately, most academic historians do not even try to make such an attempt. This also applies to the discussed biography, which does not stand out from other books devoted to Polish princes of the Middle Ages. Having said that, there is not much information on Bolesław II (unlike his famous cousin Władysław Łokietek), which limits the author's room to maneuver. Nevertheless, the biography of the Mazovian prince abounded in interesting events: the tragic death of his father, his marriage to a Lithuanian raised in a pagan faith, the war with his brother, and a failed second marriage with the Czech princess. This potential has not been used. One may wonder whether it would be better to present the fate of Bolesław II on a broader background of the era (a great example in Polish historiography is the monograph of Benedykt Zientara, *Henryk Brodaty i jego czasy*).<sup>8</sup> However, even with a conventional biography, it was possible to try to catch the attention of the reader, eg starting the book with a description of the dramatic death of Siemowit I, father of Bolesław II, killed during the Lithuanian invasion.

To summarize, this book is a valuable source of information on Bolesław II, a somewhat forgotten Piast prince who nevertheless played an important role in the history of Poland at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but it will be of interest mostly to a small group of researchers.

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7 A. CURTHOYS, *Crossing Over: Academic and Popular History*, in: *Australian Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 7–18.

8 B. ZIENTARA, *Henryk Brodaty i jego czasy*, Warszawa 1975.