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Rus and Poland in political relations in the middle of the XIIth century

The article considers the progress of relations between Rus and Poland in the 40s - early 50-ies of the twelfth century, takes notice of the gradual evolution of relations between two Slavic countries from mono to polycentric.

Key words: *demesnial fragmentation, Poland, Kyiv Rus, international relations, Boleslavychy, Monomakhovychy.*

At the end of the XIth century in the political development of Poland the trends of demesnial fragmentation definitely began to show. However, the process of state and political disintegration in this country was gradual. Similar processes were characteristic of and proceeded almost simultaneously with Poland's eastern neighbor – Rus.

The statehood era of demesnial fragmentation has passed several stages. For Rus and Poland of the middle twelfth century, the events of relations which we consider in this article, the state development is characterized by the availability of principate – the system of management when the main ruler of the country (the Grand Duke, or Princeps) retains relatively large political prerogatives in comparison with other less powerful rulers. The principate for a long time was closely associated with senyorat when the Princeps' power was handed to the elderly Duke of the most powerful branch of the ruling dynasty. The existence of principate-senyorat system was manifested by the availability of general dynastic domain (Kyiv Land, Malopolske Principality), the substantial economic development of ancestral possessions of supreme rulers who ruled accordingly in Kyiv and Krakow, the nationwide trends to preserve centralism, the legal traditions of the previous period, preserved in the new historical era. Later in the second half of the twelfth century disintegration processes led to strengthening not only large, but also demesnial principalities and the power of major monarchs who influenced the

life of both countries virtually eliminated. In foreign policy, it led to the ultimate approval of polycentrism of international contacts between two countries which within relations of Rus and Poland had the character of relations of separate grand duchy-lands.

Since the end of the twelfth century, as already noted in the historical literature, an important factor that significantly influenced the international life of Central and Eastern Europe, was a military-political alliance of Rus and Poland. This alliance served two functions: helped the supreme rulers of two Slavic countries in relations with other countries, and was the guarantor of political power allies in the fight against domestic opponents. The beginning of the feudal period - the second function prevails, but in the course of time the weakening power of the supreme rulers will lead to the gradual elimination of the grounds for the existence of such a union at all.

Since the mid 30-ies of the twelfth century with the aggravation of contradictions among princes the representatives of the most powerful branches of the ruling dynasties of Poland and Rus seek to revive close political contacts with each other. But dynastic marriages, which were then concluded, have not established a political union. This was due to the fact that in 1138, the eldest son of Boleslaw III Kryvoroty - Wladyslaw (1138-1146) became the supreme prince of Poland, who had difficult relationships with his younger brothers - Boleslaw and Mieszko and have established matrimonial relations with Monomakhovychy (the descendants of Mstyslav the Great, we'll call by the tradition Mstyslavovychy). The war between the latter led to the fact that in 1139, the leader of Chernigiv branch of Rurik-Olgovich, Vsevolod, using the death of Yaropolk, seized the power in Kyiv. Clearly, that Chernigiv Prince hadn't a strong position in the Dnieper because his capturing of Kyiv caused resistance not only by Monomakhovychy, but some dissatisfaction within the relatives of the head of the clan Olegovychy. Under such circumstances, Vsevolod without having opportunities to restore the authority of the Grand Prince in northern Rus, paid the main attention to the preservation of the Kyiv position of the supreme overlord in the southern lands. In 1140 a new Prince of Kyiv

Vsevolod II sent the army to Volyn to expel from there Izyaslav Mstyslavovych, a grandson of Vladimir Monomakh. This action was a part of an overall program of Prince Vsevolod, who wanted to deprive the landshares of all the descendants of Mstyslav the Great. A chronicler reports about the actual Vsevolod's fiasco, who failed to win either Andrei Vladimirovych, or Izyaslav Mstyslavovych. In the campaign against Izyaslav the Polish allies of Vsevolod and Galician princes Ivan Vasilkovych and Volodymyrko Volodarevych had taken part who without getting success went back home. At the end of the year Vsevolod was forced to make peace with Izyaslav Mstyslavych and Vyacheslav Vladimirovych.

Unfortunately, the source does not provide specific information about the appliance of these detachments ("Lyakhov⁵"). B. Vlodyarsky believes that the supreme ruler Vladislav II⁶ gave support to Vsevolod. While agreeing in general with this view, we note that at that time among the representatives of the ruling dynasty – the sons of Boleslaw II Kryvoroty - there was no confrontation, and the younger brothers obeyed Wladyslaw. Due to the further aggravation of the situation in Kyiv Rus Vsevolod Olhovych was forced to seek closer relationships with the Poles, but soon a split arose among them.

In Kyiv chronicle till the early 40-ies two references of marriage of Vsevolod Olhovych's daughter Zvenyslava and Boleslaw Vysoky, a son of Wladyslaw II are kept. Under 6649, the source said: "Приведена бысть дщи Всеволожа в Ляхы", but under 6650 : " Того же лета отда Всеволод дчерь свою Звениславу в Ляхы за Болеслава"⁷. The researcher of timeline chronicles M.G. Berezhkov believes that it is difficult to establish the exact date of the conclusion of the marriage⁸. Some historians, without giving reasons, refer its conclusion to 1141⁹.

It seems to us, the task of establishing the correct date of Boleslaw Vysoky and Zvenyslava's marriage can be solved. To do this, it is worth mentioning that at that time Kyiv chronicle was conducted collaterally and in relationship with Pereyaslav', and entries from the codes of one principality sometimes got into the codes of another. In

Laurentian Chronicle, which reflected the materials of Pereyaslav chronicle, there is no information about our event, but it should not confuse us: the message could be reduced by the further editors. Something else is important. The Pereyaslav evidences had been recorded a year earlier than the Kyiv's¹⁰, which means that a Kyiv Chronicler, having taken a message from his Pereyaslav colleagues under 6649, saved it in his chronicle, as he didn't compare two pieces of information. Therefore, one and the same event at different dates twice appeared in Kyiv Chronicle. The notice of "putting" Pereyaslav Bishop in Kyiv's chronicle under 6649 immediately after notification of the dynastic union¹¹ may serve as the argument in favor of our assumption, which also tells about Pereyaslav's origin of this part of the monument. Thus, we can assume that the marriage of Boleslaw Vysoky and Zvenyslava was concluded in 1142.

The clarification of the time of dynastic union's conclusion gives an opportunity to present events in Poland more clearly. In 1141 the relations between Wladyslaw and his younger brothers became worse. It is possible to assume, that at this time Boleslaw Kucheriavy and Mieszko the Old found out some information about the backstage negotiations between the Polish princeps and Kyiv prince. The German chronicle by Optliebus Zwifaltensis reports that the other Boleslavychy gathered for a convention in the town of Łęczyca in reply to some acts of hostility of their elder brother. During the meeting they decided to marry their three-year-old sister Agneta to the son of "the king of Rus". B.Vlodarsky considers that younger Boleslavychy wanted this marriage to strengthen the relations with Monomahovychy. However, such supposition is debatable. At that time the group of Chernigiv princes stood at the head of Rus, the head of which, to our mind, was called by a Germanic chronicler «the king of Rus». The correlation of information from Ortliebus's chronicle and the chroniclers' mentioned messages about the marriage of Boleslaw Vysoky (The High) and Zvynyslava affirms that younger Wladyslaw's brothers wanted to restore family connections with Vsevolod Olhovych. Ortliebus writes directly that Wladyslaw's brothers with the purpose

of « outstripping him in friendly connections » had made some steps. But it did not give a desirable result, so far as in the same year a matrimonial union was executed between the families of Wladyslaw II and Vsevolod Olhovych. Everything said above gives a reason to support the opinion of historians about the desire of Boleslaw Kucheriavy and Mieszko the Old to set allied relations with Kyiv.

In 1142 the contradictions between the princeps of Poland and his brothers resulted into war. Wladyslaw, not relying probably on his own forces, applies for support to the ally in Rus. Kyiv prince Vsevolod sends a large army at the head with his son Svyatoslav, Chernigiv prince Iziaslav Davydovych and Galych prince Volodymyr Volodarevych against mazovetsky prince Boleslaw Kucheriavy. The opponents met near Czersk, where after the battle the competitors divided: «посла Всеволод сына своего Стослава Изяслава Давыдовича с Володимером с Галичьским во помочь зятоу своему Володиславоу на боратью его, на меншую на Болиславиче и снышася вси оу Чернечьска и възвратишася». Probably, the negotiations commenced between conflicting parties during which younger Boleslavychy promised Wladyslaw II and his Ruthenian allies to submit to their seignior. During the battle Ruthenian soldiers managed to seize a lot of trophies and captives, besides that «вземше боле мирных, неже ратьних»¹⁸.

After the campaign it is observed the maintenance of active mutual relations between Kyiv and Krakow, strengthening of relations among the participants of the interstate union. Thus, in 1143 the Polish grandees were present at the wedding of Svyatoslav, in this connection the Kyiv chronicler writes that on the feast «скупшася братья вся и безбожнии Ляхове и пиша у Всеволода и тако разидошася»¹⁹. The negative attitude toward the Poles, which is obvious for a reader, brings some authors to the conclusion of that time's hostility of the Ruthenians to the Poles, considerable religious intolerance to each other. However, in our view, the contents of the chronicle probably testified the negative attitude of the Old Rus' bookman – the author of

the entry - toward prince Vsevolod Olhovych, his son Svyatoslav and their entourage, which was caused by the tension in the political life of Kyiv of that time .

Vigorous efforts of Kyiv Prince Vsevolod Olgovych in 1142-1143, aimed at the strengthening of the central power in Rus, have not given the desired results. And in 1144, Prince Vsevolod had to overcome a conflict with the former ally of the Galician Prince Volodymyr Volodarevych, who supported Volynian princes Izyaslav and Rostislav Mstyslavych. This circumstance forced Vsevolod to seek support of Krakow. The military assistance of Wladyslaw II to Ruthenian ally, probably, was not large, as the Polish ruler then should consider the possible performance of his younger brothers.

In 1145 the political situation both in Rus and in Poland for their supreme rulers escalates. Vsevolod Olgovych, wanting to preserve the capital throne for his generation, convokes in Kyiv the Prince Congress, which declared the heir of Vsevolod - his brother Igor. The balance of forces made one of the most powerful opponents of Kyiv Prince – Volynian prince Izyaslav Mstyslavovych agree with the decision («и много замышляв Изяславу Мстиславичю но уже быс целовати крест»²²). During the Prince meeting or shortly after its completion a message from Wladyslaw II comes to Kyiv prince, which refers to the beginning of a new conflict in Poland. The reason for that was the dispute among the princes of Poland over the landshare, which was freed after the death of Princess Solomiya, the widow of Boleslaw II Kryvoroty. Wladyslaw's message appeals for help from Vsevolod, and he again decided to support his ally. The entourage of Vsevolod quite seriously regarded preparation for the military exercises. In addition to solving the problems of Poland, it had to strengthen the position of Olegovych's camp in Rus.

For participation in the military campaign, which was headed by brother of Kyiv Prince Igor Olegovych, many of the southern princes of Rus were involved. In particular, Volynian Prince Izyaslav Mstyslavych was invited, but he, according to the chronicler “разболеся не иде из Володимеря”²³. Some historians believe that the refusal of

Volynian Prince was caused not by his disease, but his unwillingness to support Vsevolod. Perhaps here the relations of Izyaslav with younger Boleslavych played a certain role.

Coming of the army to Poland greatly increased the opportunities of Wladyslaw II. Krakow chronicler Vincent Kadlubek who had a negative attitude to the supreme prince of Poland Wladyslaw II and his allies directly writes that Krakow ruler's distrust to his own soldiers forced him to accost to foreigners. According to Russian and Polish sources, the meeting of the opponents was held in the central region of Poland ("на серед земли Лядское", according to Kyiv Chronicle) on the river Pilica, but it got different assessment in the monuments. Vincent Kadlubek writes about the terrible defeat of the Ruthenian troops as a result of the battle, contrary to his own evidence about further participation of Wladyslaw's allies in the fight in Poland. More objective evidence of the Ruthenian chronicle, even though it was written among the rivals of Vsevolod Olgovich. The chronicler notes: ... наидоша брата два Владиславле Болеслава и Мъжеку, стояча за болотом, и перехавше на сю сторону и поклонистася Игореву и с братьею его, целовавъше крест межи собою и тако рекоша: «Аще кто переступить крестное целованье, на того быти всим», – и даста брата своему Владиславу 4 города, а Игореву с братьею Визну и тако узвратишася в свояси, мног полон взявше"²⁸. We will note for the sake of interest that the contradictory presentation of events by Kadlubek felt later a Polish chronicler Jan Dlugosh, who referred the defeat of Wladyslaw's allies to later time - namely, to the time of his last defeat of the brothers, which occurred in Poznan in February - March 1146 ²⁹. Definitely there were no major military units from Russia in Poland at that time.

Characterizing the military campaign of Ruthenian princes to Poland and its impact on the course of the internal political events in that country it is difficult to give a definite assessment. Clearly, Wladyslaw and his allies have been successful over younger Boleslavychy. Krakow Prince-Princes had in his possession a significant landshare

(apparently the possession of Solomiya), Russian princes besides significant military booty, took an important strategic point Viznu³⁰, that states the attention of Kyiv to the Baltic situation. But the fact of the collision itself, the articles of agreement at Piast actually show on the elimination of principality-seniorat in Poland since the de facto equality of Boleslavychy was recognised, the guarantor of what became not only the Polish princes, but Ruthenian princes who were in Poland. Therefore, the agreement in 1145 had indefinite nature and unlikely to satisfy at least one of the parts of the conflict³¹. Therefore, in our opinion, it is impossible to exaggerate the success of Wladyslaw and his Ruthenian allies in the campaign of 1145.³²

Strengthening of the younger brothers of Wladyslaw II showed later after the Ruthenian princes' returning home (according to Kadlubka's facts, that we do not have reason not to trust, certain number of mercenaries from Rus remained in Poland after the retirement of the main army of Igor Olhovycha³³). The starting point of a new phase of confrontation was connected with Wladyslaw's repressions against the powerful Polish magnate (baron) Peter Vlasta³⁴. The transition of many representatives of the nobility on the side of the opposition, which took place after this event, soon led to a complete collapse of the camp of the prince-princeps, and in March 1146 he was in exile in Germany³⁵.

The son of Wladyslaw Boleslaw Vysoky, who arrived in Rus before the proscription of his father, was warmly greeted by the Kyiv court, complied some orders of Vsevolod Olgovych (in particular, Vsevolod sent him as an Ambassador to Izyaslav Vsevolodovych), but Kyiv did not interfere with the events in Poland any more. This was caused not only by the absence of any kind of serious real support for Wladyslaw II (since that time he received the nickname "Wygnaniec") and Boleslaw Vysoky in Poland, but also by the complex development of the events in Rus for Vsevolod himself. In the first half of 1146 Kyiv Prince again comes into conflict with Galician Prince. Young Polish Prince took part in the campaign against Vladimirca Volodarevycha³⁶ and in such

a way probably wanted to provide support in a future war for the return of Krakow. However, the events of the mid-1146, showed the futility of hopes of Boleslaw Vysoky.

After the death of Vsevolod Olgovych and short duration rule of his brother in Kyiv (14 days!), the Prince of Volyn Izyaslav Mstyslavovych came to power in the capital of Rus. Invitation of Monomakh's grandson to Kyiv didn't lead to the renewal of former "empire of Monomakhovychy". A new Prince of Kyiv had completely complicated relationships as with Prince Yuriy Volodumyrovych Dovgoryky of Rostov-Suzdal, so with Prince Volodymyrok Volodarevych of Galicia. In such conditions Izyaslav aimed at keeping in touch with the Polish Piast, with those, who were in power in that country, that is with Boleslaw Kycheryavy and Mieszko the Old.

A new Polish supreme ruler Boleslaw IV Kycheryavy and his entourage were also aimed at the creation of crammed military and political federation with Kyiv, and it was held in 1147. At that time Poland suffered from the attacks of Prussian tribes. Therefore not by coincidence the allies decided to realize a joint campaign to the Baltic states. Some annals of Magdeburg inform, that Prince of Poland Boleslaw IV "з величезним військом виступив проти пруссів, безжалъних варварів", and during this campaign he was supported by Ruthenians "з численними озброєними загонами"³⁷. In three months the Prussian detachments were completely defeated. There is no information in the sources concerning whose interests were presented by the Ruthenian detachments in the Baltic states, which led to some debates on this issue in historiography. The Polish historian B. Vlodarsky denotes, that the condition of sources do not allow to clarify this question. According to V. T. Pashuto Smolensk and Volyn armed forces took part in the campaign. The author of these lines expressed the idea, that Ruthenian military contingent to the Baltic states was directed by the Prince of Kyiv Izyaslav Mstyslavovych and his brother the Prince of Smolensk Rostyslav. According to Belarussian scientist G. Saganovych, Volyn and west-Rusian armed forces were Polish allies against Prussians in the campaign. It is considered that the action of Polish and Ruthenian armies took place

in the second crusade.

It is known that in the middle of the 12th century a leading religious figure Bernard of Clairvaux vigorously advocated for the spread of Catholic faith about what he notably wrote to Krakow Bishop Matthew. But these calls were ineffectual. However, some representatives of the Polish clergy accused their present prince Wladyslaw II for the use of "schismatics» in the fight with the brothers⁴⁴. The speeches of Polish church hierarchy were, above all, albeit in a religious form, a manifestation of political struggle that took place in the mid 40's of the 12th century in Poland. After advent to power of Boleslaw Kycheryavy, who also supported the relationship with Ruthenian princes, such accusations disappeared. However, those religious differences were not a major obstacle for the contacts of Rus with Latin West countries, evidenced by the above quoted material from Magdeburg annals. Describing the campaign of the Poles and the Ruthenians to the Baltic states, a chronicler writes about the latter that they " хоча і в меншій мірі, ніж католики, але відзначені ім'ям християн"⁴⁵.

In the second half of the 12th century there is a tough competition for the leadership in Rus between Izyaslav Mstyslavych and Yuriy Dovgoruky. In this struggle the rulers of the most ancient lands-principalities were involved. In August 1149 Prince Izyaslav was forced to leave the capital and went to his patrimonial possessions in Volyn. Being in Volodymyr Izyaslav felt the limitations of his own forces to return to Kyiv, so in the autumn of 1149 he appealed for the support to Hungarians, Czechs and Poles. The Boleslavychy' s situation at that time was quite difficult. The country threatened with a new attack of Prussian armed forces and also the authenticity of instoration of Wladyslaw II did not disappear, who found refuge at the court of German Emperor Conrad III. But Boleslavychy could not refuse their allies in assistance. Perhaps that consent to participate in the feudal war in Rus was associated with overestimation in Poland of real military and political capabilities of Izyaslav Mstyslavovych and desire to receive trophies in the military campaign to the east. Kyiv chronicler described in great detail the

negotiations between Izyaslav and Polish prince Boleslaw, Mieszko and Henry: «Лядський же князи рекоша: "Мы есмь у тебя близ, а одного себе оставим, стеречи землю своєю, а два к тебе поедета"⁴⁶. Shortly thereafter, the Polish army led by Prince Boleslaw Kycheryavy of Krakow and Sandomierz Prince Henry entered the Volyn land. "Болеслав же сам, - continues the story chronicler - поеха с братом Индрихом, полкы своими, а Мъжеку остависта стеречи земле своєю от Прус"⁴⁷. Interestingly that at the same time there was Boleslaw Vysoky by the invitation of Volyn Prince Izyaslav, who in Lutsk devoted to knights ("па саше... мечем") many local men at arms.⁴⁸

In some time to Lutsk, where were Polish and Volyn regiments, a message about the approach of strong army of Yuriy Dovgoruky came. This message and the received news about Prussians' attack on Poland, dramatically reduced the morale of Polish princes ("uboyalasya Lyakhov"⁴⁹). Under the pressure from allies Izyaslav Mstyslavych agreed to start negotiations with the rival. Prince Yuriy, feeling his advantage, made a requirement, that the foreigners would leave Rus and Izyaslav would refuse from claims for Kyiv and remain the ruler only of Volyn lands. The Polish and Hungarian allies, using this turn of affairs, left the camp of Volyn prince and returned to their motherland. In 1150 Izyaslav Mstyslavych again takes for some time the capital of Rus, and then after loosing it during another clash with Prince Yuriy, once again asks for help of Poland and Hungary. But the Hungarians responded to this request largely due to the special interests of Hungary in the south-western Rus. This time the Chronicler says nothing about help of Polish Princes. The same situation repeated itself in 1152 when, after information about another Izyaslav's appeal to Boleslavychy, the chronicler succinctly and simultaneously capacitantly writes: "Ляхове не идоша".⁵¹ In 1155, after Izyaslav's death, his son Mstyslav asked for Polish court's help, but the result was negative.

The decrease of the Ruthenian-Polish contacts was associated not only with difficult internal situation of Boleslavychy in Poland, that didn't allow them to provide the necessary assistance for Izyaslav Mstyslavovych's camp, and to a greater extent, with

unstable nature of power of Ruthenian allies of the Piasts. The position of Polish princes, was probably due to the fact that under circumstances of cruel feudal war in Rus, they could not count on good support from Volyn princes in response. The given analysis of events doesn't give grounds to agree with V. Vlodarsky's characteristic, who wrote that the Piasts and Mstyslavychy in the 40-50's maintained close allied relations.

Переклад на англійську Гурман Тетяни Леонідівни