

Wojciech Kozłowski, *The Thirteenth-Century Inter-Lordly System: Lordly Identity and the Origins of the Angevin-Piast Dynastic Alliance*, Kiel: Solivagus-Verlag, 2020, 439 pp.

The subject of this review, a book by Wojciech Kozłowski, is based on his PhD thesis, which he defended at the Central European University in 2015 and which was published in Kiel, Germany in 2020. The Polish author dedicated his work to a special aspect of Medieval Polish-Hungarian relations; his research focused on the marriage of the Hungarian king Charles I of Anjou (also known as Charles Robert; 1301–42) and Elizabeth (Elżbieta Łokietkówna), the daughter of the new Polish king, Władysław Łokietek (1320–33). Nevertheless, Kozłowski's research covers a relatively wider spectrum of time and a wider topic as well. As he stresses himself, his aim is to investigate the origins of the aforementioned marriage, and thus the alliance between the two houses and the circumstances which led to it. The author looked at the marriage from a retrospective point of view in regard to its later effect on the cooperation of the two dynasties, which eventually led to the succession of Charles I's son, King Ludwig of Hungary, or in other words the Hungarian Angevins, to the Polish throne.

Kozłowski's approach is partially traditional insofar as he analyses the events of the previous decades, although he has also applied theories from the field of international relations (IR) to determine the motives behind the well-known historical events. The author himself sees this method as the main novelty of his research, which in his view could eventually lead to a better understanding of the chain of events. Apart from the motivation of the main characters, namely King Charles I of Hungary and King Władysław I Łokietek of Poland, this approach also covers the so-called 'inter-lordly' relations of thirteenth and fourteenth century Poland during the period of fragmentation, as does the analysis of the so-called 'lordly identity' of the actors of this era. To achieve his goals Kozłowski applies the neorealist and constructivist theories of IR, so he claims that the assumptions and the intuition of historians can be replaced by empirical evidence.

The book starts with a preface, followed by acknowledgements and the introduction. In the latter the author offers, beside general remarks, a brief overview of his book, the sources he used, and the way he formulated his arguments. The main part of the work is divided into five chapters, and the book ends with the author's conclusions and a bibliography. Unfortunately the book lacks an index, which would be useful to its readers.

The first chapter of the book is dedicated to issues of terminology, the medieval concepts of 'international relations', and the introduction of the main aspects of the research. The author makes an effort to give precise definitions of the terms and notions he uses in the book. For instance in the case of 'lordship' he emphasizes, they were 'generally monarchically-governed units ruled by a lord (or occasionally by a group of a few persons) who claimed domination over a given territory and people living there'. Furthermore, Kozłowski

underlines that 'lordships' in the Middle Ages were more human-dependent than in the case of modern states, while noting that in the selected era, that is in the thirteenth century, there were various kinds of lordships to be found in Christian Europe and they were hardly identical; the sole common feature was their monarchical concept of lordly power. Beside the questions of power, the author also focuses attention to the so-called 'lordly-identity' as a cultural and shared phenomenon as well.

Kozłowski stresses many times how the international relations of the Middle Ages diverged from those of later centuries. These statements are probably meant to reach the readers coming from the direction of IR theories, since they can hardly be seen — from the perspective of medievalists — as a novum. It has to be emphasized that the author was well aware of the dual nature of his own approach as well as the expected readership. As regards the applicability of IR theories, he notes that medievalists generally show a tendency to rely on interpretation of the sources rather than on a synthesis of the available data, even if the latter could lead to a better understanding of the patterns and attitudes behind events. According to Kozłowski IR theories can contribute to this goal. Nevertheless, the order is crucial in our opinion, as the analysis of the sources should always come first, which can be followed by an interpretation with the help of certain theories.

Before he turns his attention to East-Central Europe, in the second chapter of his book Kozłowski deals with the inter-lordly relations of the Western part of Latin Christendom. From a methodological point of view, we have to add that the circumstances in various regions of East-Central Europe are sometimes not comparable with one another, therefore a historian has to be especially cautious with Western parallels and their application to Polish or Hungarian affairs. The author seeks an answer to the question of how the system can be described from the point of view of IR theory: was it determined by anarchy or rather by hierarchy; or it was in fact a hybrid variation of both? Kozłowski's analysis is based on his own selection of relevant political events and he comes to the conclusion that the collected data offer a picture of a hybrid system, which has both anarchical and hierarchical components. The author stresses several times that not each and every IR theory is sufficient to explain the events and processes of thirteenth–fourteenth century East-Central Europe and the so-called *inter lordly* mechanism of this period.

The third chapter of the book covers the formation and the characteristics of the so-called *lordly identity*, based on internal Polish relations of the thirteenth century. The aim of this approach is to uncover the motives behind Władysław Łokietek's actions. As in the previous chapter, the research is based mostly on secondary literature. Regarding the results of this analysis it can be stated that according to Kozłowski almost every male member of the Piast dynasty over the age of twelve received their own territory to rule, and political relations in Poland were shaped by their claims for lordship and their lordly identities. The research also considers conflicts between members of the dynasty; the instances

are classified according to four categories based on the relations between the actors. In the view of the author each and every case can be interpreted as competing legitimization within the dynasty, therefore it caused only limited aggression. Kozłowski agrees with criticism of the traditional view that Poland was characterized by anarchy in the thirteenth century, which therefore can be understood as an era of crisis. The author pays attention to the parallel situations in Bohemia and Hungary. The lordly relations of Pomerania and the state of the Teutonic Order are also touched upon.

Kozłowski focuses in the fourth chapter on the rivalry between King Charles I and the later Bohemian king Wenceslas III for the kingdom of the Saint Stephen. He bases this endeavour on the conclusions drawn from his analysis of the thirteenth century Polish situation. From a Hungarian point of view perhaps this is the part of the book which could benefit the most from a deeper analysis and use of recent results of Hungarian Medieval studies, especially since several works, including in languages other than Hungarian, have been published on this topic in recent decades.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless it has to be stressed that Kozłowski's interpretation is quite valuable. The introduction of the possible candidates for the Hungarian throne and the analysis of the motivations behind the decisions of the pretenders to compete, or not to compete, for the crown of Hungary are especially important. It is also praiseworthy that the author used royal charters to analyse the strategies of Charles I, although this part could also have profited from the results of recent studies published on this topic.

The last chapter of the book is devoted to the synthesis of the results of Kozłowski's research, and the focus is on the exploration of the roots of the Angevin-Piast marriage. According to the author's analysis of narrative sources it

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<sup>1</sup> For example Enikő Csukovits, 'Le innovazioni istituzionali nell'età angioina e i loro parallelismi napoletani', in *L'Ungheria angioina*, ed. idem, Rome, 2013, pp. 59–119; Renáta Skorka, 'With a Little Help from the Cousins — Charles I and the Habsburg Dukes of Austria during the Interregnum', *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 2, 2013, 2, pp. 243–60; Attila Zsoldos, 'Kings and Oligarchs in Hungary at the Turn of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 2, 2013, 2, pp. 211–42; Victória Kovács, 'Causae coram nobis ventilatae: Beiträge zu der Jurisdiktionstätigkeit von Papstlegat Gentilis de Monteflorum in Ungarn (1308–1311)', *Specimina Nova Pars Prima Sectio Mediaevalis*, 7, 2013, pp. 39–69; Gergely Kiss, 'Les légats pontificaux en Hongrie au temps des rois Angevins (1298–1311)', in *La diplomatie des états Angevins aux XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles / Diplomacy in the Countries of the Angevin Dynasty in the Thirteenth–Fourteenth Centuries: Actes du colloque international*, ed. Zoltán Kordé and István Petrovics, Rome and Szeged, 2010, pp. 101–16; Péter Báling, 'Personal Network of the Neapolitan Angevins and Hungary (1290–1304)', *Specimina Nova Pars Prima Sectio Mediaevalis*, 8, 2015, pp. 83–107; Miloš Marek, 'Missions of Papal Legates in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary I. Niccolò Boccassini (1301–1302)', *Slovak Studies: Rivista dell'Istituto Storico Slovacco di Roma*, 2016, 1–2, pp. 7–23; Ágnes Maléth, 'The ambassadors of Charles I of Hungary in the papal curia (1301–1342)', in *Formations et cultures des officiers et de l'entourage des princes dans les territoires angevins (milieu XIII<sup>e</sup>–fin XV<sup>e</sup> siècle) / Percorsi di formazione e culture degli ufficiali e dell'entourage dei principi nei territori angioini (metà XIII–fine XV secolo)*, ed. Isabelle Mathieu and Jean-Michel Matz, Rome, 2019, pp. 165–86.

seems that the contemporary accounts were not aware of the significance of the marriage. Nonetheless, over the course of time this evaluation has changed: the fifteenth century chronicler Jan Długosz saw the marriage already as the origin of the Angevin succession to the Polish throne. Besides the data of the narrative sources Kozłowski also utilized the results of German, Czech, Slovak, Polish and Hungarian historiography on this topic. The path of Władysław Łokietek to the Polish throne is analysed by the author, whereas the relevance of the desired royal titles for both sides in their pursuit of the marriage also has to be taken into consideration. It should be underscored that Kozłowski himself acknowledges that it is hard to reach beyond speculations regarding these questions, even if – according to him – IR theories can be applied in order to help find the necessary answers. In Kozłowski's view it was an integral part of the lordly identity to try to keep one's lordly state and to hand it over eventually to the male descendants. The lords also pursued the expansion of their territories, the acquisition of new titles, and made concerted efforts to maintain good relationships with other rulers. It cannot however be stated that this diagnosis can be understood as a complete novelty provided by IR theory for research into the Middle Ages.

Kozłowski's work is indeed a valuable contribution to the history of thirteenth-fourteenth century East-Central Europe. Among other features, the analysis of the prelude to the struggle for the Hungarian throne, the investigation of the motivations behind the pretenders' decisions, their strategies to gain power, and the roots of the Piast-Angevin marriage are all important and essential parts of the book. The utilization of certain IR theories in dealing with a topic of Medieval history is especially valuable and can help the reader to gain a better insight into a special episode of the Hungarian-Polish past.

Nevertheless, a handful of further considerations can be offered regarding the book. For instance, the analysis could have benefited from the results of certain respected German historians, like Harald Zimmermann and Johannes Fried. The former wrote an excellent monograph on the Hungarian episode in the history of the Teutonic order, while the latter covered the topic of papal protections in his fundamental book.<sup>2</sup> These two particular topics could have been extended with further data in the book, as they are quite important in Kozłowski's argumentation.

The style and the language of the book is distinguished, although in the case of personal names a certain inconsistency can be seen. Kozłowski kept the Polish forms in almost every case, but he used the English versions of the German and Hungarian names, and hybrid versions, like 'Duke Jerzy I of Halich' can be found in the text as well. For Hungarian readers the mention of 'Steven the Great of

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<sup>2</sup> Harald Zimmermann, *Der Deutsche Orden in Siebenbürgen: Eine diplomatische Untersuchung*, 2nd edn, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2011, *Studia Transylvanica*, vol. 26; Johannes Fried, *Der päpstliche Schutz für Laienfürsten: Die politische Geschichte des päpstlichen Schutzprivilegs für Laien (11.–13. Jahrhundert)*, Heidelberg, 1980.

Hungary' seems odd, while the usage of the form 'Máté Csák' (*Mateusz Czak*) is questionable in the case of an English book, and the version 'Matthew' would probably have been a more correct choice.

To sum up it can be stated that Wojciech Kozłowski's work is, despite the above-mentioned criticisms, a valuable contribution to the history of Poland and Hungary and the relations between the two territories in the high Middle Ages. The book offers helpful insights for both Polish and Hungarian readers, even though it is definitely aimed above all at an international readership.

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