THE RUTHENIAN COURTS OF THE RURIK DYNASTY

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Abstract: The gradual Christianization of the major dynasties of so-called ‘Younger Europe’ resulted, among other things, in the activation of their matrimonial policy. Throughout Middle Ages, the most active in this regard were the Rurik and the Piast dynasties. The tradition of bilateral marriage relations among the ruling houses of Europe was established in the early 11th century and uninterruptedly continued into the mid-14th century. In the 11th century, there were registered 7 princely marriages; four of them, in Poland – three Ruthenian brides were given in marriage to the representatives of the Piast dynasty; besides, there was one case of concubinage. Two of the marriages were fertile: altogether, six children were born (five boys and a girl). One marriage proved to be infertile. On her way to her husband’s land, each Ruthenian bride was accompanied by an escort consisting chiefly of women; but there had to be some men too, a personal confessor and spiritual advisor in particular. Supposedly, their main function was to prepare the princesses for marriage; later, those persons composed their ladies’ own courts, varying in quantity and duration, within the greater courts of their husbands. In this article, I focus on the quest for probable Ruthenians within the inner circles of the Rurik dynasty princesses married into the Piast dynasty in the 11th century. The main challenges of the quest are the insufficiency of the 11th – the early 12th-century historical sources and the inaccuracy of the late medieval materials on the subject, whose evidence requires critical view and verification. Thus it appears to be almost impossible to establish the names of all those persons who accompanied the Ruthenian princesses to the Piasts’ lands, though their presence can be inferred from historical narratives.

Keywords: the Rurikids, the Piasts, matrimonial relations, dynasty, Rus’, princess, genealogy, Jan Długosz, chronicle.

A search for Ruthenians beyond the medieval Rus’ in the context of matrimonial relations of the elites and migration processes should undoubtedly be started from the analysis of the already known facts of inter-dynasty connections, beginning from the 9th and the 10th centuries, when the Rurik dynasty established themselves on the territories that later received the common name of Rus’.

Throughout the 11th–the 14th centuries, the closest bilateral relations of the Rurikids were those with the neighbouring Piast dynasty of Poland. The contributory factors to the relations were the historical kinship among the representatives of the Slavic gentes (language, traditions, culture) that settled on the territories controlled by the above dynasties; they lived in roughly the same natural and climatic
environments, had common economic interests and gradually got under the control of either the Rurikids or the Piasts. The Christianization of both houses made their heads carefully plan their matrimonial relations; in order to avoid incest through marriage within a family, they sought for good matches for their offsprings abroad, preferably from families of similar status, whose language and mentality were close to theirs.

Thus there was forming a tradition to arrange marriages between young Ruthenian females (seldom, males) and representatives of foreign princely houses; on their way to foreign lands, the princely travellers were typically accompanied by retinues of close persons. The latter, the newcomers’ courts, gradually integrated into the elites of the host country, thus setting the ground for future, much larger-scale migratory movements. The data about the close circles of princely family members are rather fragmentary. According to my estimate, between the 11th and the 14th centuries the Rurikids sent no less than seventeen persons to the lands of the Piasts in the cases of equal marriage alone [3, p. 50–58; 5, p. 7–36; 6, p. 145–147; 7]. There were also awkward incidents when Ruthenian princesses married non-princely members of the Polish elite. It is the highest rate in comparison to that of other lands, Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, the Scandinavian countries, Transcaucasia and others*.

Genealogically speaking, most of the marriages are fully reconstructed. It is not in all cases that we know the names of married females, though some ladies are often mentioned in different sources. The history of inter-dynasty connections is a well-researched field of study; yet the reconstruction of the princesses’ retinues and courts has not been given proper attention so far. In order to fill this lacuna, I have addressed this issue in several articles (some still in press) [8–10].

The cohabitation between the Polish Prince Boleslaw I the Brave (Boleslaus, †1025) and Predslava (between 984/986 – after 1018 / before 1042)**, daughter of Volodymyr Sviatoslavovych †1015, the first case of concubinage recorded in different narratives, is dated to 1018, ‘Болеслав же бѣжа ис Киева воином имѣнье . и боѣ и бѣглыхъ и сестрѣ его . и Настаса пристави Десиатынѣ іо къ имѣнью . бо бо са ему вѣрить лѣстнѣо’ [12, p. 144; 13, p. 131]. The event is known from a medieval text by Gallus Anonymus, ‘Igitur imprimis inserendum est seriei, quam glorioso et magnifice suam iniuriam de rege Ruthenorum vindicavit, qui sibi sororem dare suam in matrimonium denegavit […]’

Sicut, inquit, in hac hora aura porta civilitas ab isto ense percutitur, sic in nocte sequenti soror regis ignavissimi mihi dari prohibita corrumpetur; nec tamen Bolezlauro thor maritali, sed concubinali singulari vice tantum coniungetur, quatinus hoc facto nostri generis iniuria vindicetur, et Ruthenis ad dedecus et ad ignominiam putetur’ [14, p. 40; 15, p. 35–36; 16, p. 51].

Thietmar, Prince-Bishop of Merseburg, Saxon chronicler, a witness to the events did not doubt that the lady he wrote about was the daughter of the above Ruthenian Grand Prince. The author clearly says, ‘Ibi fuit noverca regis predicti, uxor et novem soreores eiusdem, quorum unam prius ab eo desideratam antiquas fornicator Bolizlavus obita contextali suae iniuste duxerat’ [17, p. 531; 18, p. 177]. The early 12th-century authors must have used a protograph similar to Thietmar’s text – the basic

* The escorts of the Ruthenian brides, who in the 11th century were married into the princely families of so called ‘Older Europe’ in particular, are documented in different sources. Evidently, in 1046 a group of nobility, clergy and commoners accompanied Anastasia, daughter of Vaevelod Yaroslavovych, Prince of Kyiv (1078–1083) married Henry I the Long, Margrave of the Nordmark, also Count of Stade (as Henry III) [2, p. 62]. Similarly, members of the European royal houses had their daughters married to the Rurikids [3, p. 51]. Larger-scale cases of transition are noted, in particular, in the Kyiv-Pechersk Patericon; for example, Varangian Simon ‘who used to be a Varangian and now by God’s grace is a Christian, having been taught by Our Holy Father Theodosius, gave up his Latin impertinence and truly accepted our Lord Jesus Christ, he and all his household of about three thousand persons and his men of the cloth too, being awed by the miracles of Saint Anthony and Saint Theodosius.’ [4, p. 5]. In general, information about regular trips of Ruthenian brides to Catholic countries, though mentioned in different sources, is rather sketchy; typically, there are no detailed descriptions of the bride’s retinue, which can only be inferred from the text of a document.

** The issue was discussed in my presentation The Ruthenian-Polish Marital Relations in the Context of the Matrimonial Policy of the Rurik Dynasty Between the 11th and the 14th Centuries: Selected Statistical Issues at the seminar The Legacy of Rus’-Ukraine organized by Tetiana Vilkul, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Institute of the History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv, December 15, 2017).

*** The name of Yuslav Volodymyrovych’s sister, who was taken as a concubine, can be found only in the 16th-century Chronicle, ‘11 тогда Болеслав положи себе на ложь Предславу, дочь Володимерову, сестру Ярославу’ [11, p. 326].
information is almost identical, though none of them mention the name of the captured Princess. Predsleva was Yaroslav’s younger sister, both being the children of Rogneda, Princess of Polotsk [19, p. 375; 20, p. 272–273]. About 1017, Prince Boleslaw unsuccessfully tried to get her brother's consent to marry Predsleva. After his father’s death and the beginning of the redistribution of the inheritance, the dynasty’s matrimonial policy was not Yaroslav Volodymyrovych’s main concern; besides, one of the Polish Prince’s daughters, unknown by name, was married to Sviatopolk (after 1018), Yaroslav’s elder brother. The well documented history of the Polish-Ruthenian military and political confrontation in the early 11th century is comprehensively and thoroughly researched [21, p. 102–112; 22, p. 26–32; 23, p. 147–151; 24, p. 94–99; 25, p. 38–49; 26, p. 65–66; 28, p. 57–58].

Yet little attention is paid to the fate of those who were captured and brought to Poland by Boleslaw the Brave; their names are mostly unknown. It has been established though (compelling pieces of evidence from different sources complement one another) that among those forcibly taken to the foreign land, there were quite a few persons of princely blood. The Saxon chronicler writes in the final chapter of his work, ‘Hac elatus prosperitate Bolizlaus archiepiscopum predicte civitatis ad Irzilzam misit, qui ab eo filiam suam reduce petered et uxorem suam cum noverca et sororibus redd promitterer’ [17, p. 531; 18, p. 178]. The Tale of Past Years says, ‘Boleslaw же бѣжа ис Киева воизма имьне и боеры ёрославль и сестрѣ ет’ [13, p. 131]. Thus it is probable that among the nobility, who were captured in Kyiv and brought to Poland by force, there were the Varangians courtiers of the Prince.

Мужь Корсунинищ иманиемь Настась

Among the captives brought to Poland from Kyiv, there was Anastasia, presumably a bishop; his status at Boleslaw’s court remains unclear. The Tale of Past Years writes, ‘Настаса [Boleslaw. – М. V.] пристави Дескиныя къ имьни ъ. бѣ бой са ему ввѣрѣлъ лѣстю’ [13, p. 131]. The Polish chronicler Gallus Anonymus did not mention the above bishop. But Jan Długosz in his 15th-century Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae gives a detailed description of the group of people brought to Poland, thus encouraging historians to further research the subject. He writes, ‘Boleslaus Polonorum rex […] duas deinde sores Swantopelconis et Jaroslai ducum Russie, videlicet Przeczslawam et Myscziszławam, item boyaros et procuras Russie magis insignes captivat et vincitos, ut obsidum essent loco, onustus Ruthenorum spolis pluresque ordinis captivorum ex Ruthenis secum ducens, in Poloniai, pluribus castris Russie forti militum Polonorum presidio imposito locates, remeabat preificiens thezaurarius suis Anastasiuum Ruthenium, qui se illi in dolo gratum et fidelem insinuaverat, thezaurarium et servitorem’ [29, p. 263; 30, p. 241]. In the following parts of his work, the late medieval author keeps emphasizing the victories of Boleslaw the Brave in the 1018 campaign [29, p. 265–266, 282; 30, p. 242–244, 247–248].

We do not know whether in the lands of the Piasts, Predsleva had her own court composed of the captured gentry. We can presume that the above Anastas performed the role of her confessor and spiritual adviser. His name repeatedly appears in different chronicles [11, p. 109, 116, 121, 124; 13, p. 95, 101, 106, 109]. Undoubtedly, he belonged to Prince Volodymyr’s close circle, though his social status and official duties are still a matter of discussion [22, p. 30; 31, p. 37; 32, p. 69, 80; 33, p. 121]1, which is caused, to a considerable extent, by the late medieval tradition. Most originally, Anastas is presented in the Gustyn Chronicle, ‘Анастасъ же Корсунинну Десятиюму поручи [Boleslaw] все строение киевское, бище бо са ему ввѣрѣлъ лестию’ [35, p. 50].

1 The contradictions are caused by the very first piece of information about Anastas – the Chronicle presents him as a resident of Chersonesus (now a suburb of Sevastopol, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine), a skilled archer, ‘Володимеръ стопоше и [е] мужа Корсунинищ стрылъ имыземь Настасъ. напаса свь на стрылъ, кладъ вь сьтъ сь бо ключемь, и сть того вода идеть по трубь’ [12, p. 109]. The man’s ability to combine military skills and the service to God was rightly challenged by historians, ‘Посемъ же Володимеръ жиже, въ законь хъспиенъ, помышли создать прьвлъ престь Быа. [и] пославъ приведе къ мастеръ Грецъ и начающъ же здати и ако скоча лежа, окураси ѣю иконамъ, и поручи ѣ Настасу Корсунину, и попы Кор-сунскяцъ, и пристави служить къ неи. вдавъ ть во ие бѣ ввѣлъ въ Корусинъ, иконы. и сьсуды и крѣты’ [12, p. 121–122]. Yet the Noregorod Chronicle clearly indicates that the man was a priest, ‘[Volodymyr] поручивъ ѣ ерею Анастасу Корсунинну; епископы корсунскяцы’ [34, p. 165]. On the whole, I presume that Anastas belonged to the church circles of Chersonesus and later was ordained in Kyiv on the initiative of Prince Volodymyr.
Several authors of the short biographies of Anastas assume that there is no evidence about his life in Poland [36, p. 23; 37; 38, p. 78]. Some other aspects of his life also require investigation. As to the courtier’s age, researchers build their hypotheses on the available historical data: terminus ante quem 988 – terminus post quem 1018. He stayed in Volodymyr Sviatoslavovych’s lands for about twenty years. When he met the Prince of Kyiv, ‘Мужь Корсунинъ имѣнъ Настасъ’ must at least have attained the age of ordination, as required by the canons of the church (if we presume that by 988, he was a priest in Chersonesus). Thus in 1018, he was about fifty, a man advancing in age. We can hardly doubt that his forced trip to Prince Boleslaw’s lands was a difficult one. Yet we may presume that he stayed alive. In Kyiv, the priest used to hold the position of the Prince’s Treasurer, as stated both by the late 11th – the early 12th-century chronicler (‘Настаса пристави Десятиннаго къ имѣнію’) [13, p. 131] and his later compilers (‘[…] remeatb preficiens thezauris suis Anastasium Rhenenum’) [29, p. 263; 30, p. 241]. It is obvious that such information could not have got into the texts shortly after the Polish Prince left Kyiv. In my opinion, the news reached Yaroslav Volodymyrovych’s court no later than 1041, when the Kyiv ruler’s niece Dobronega Maria (between 1010/1016–1087) married Casimir I the Restorer (Casimirus, 1016–1058).

The ethnic roots of Anastas are a justifiable subject of debate. Jan Długosz calls him Anastasius Ruthenus [29, p. 263]; though in the late medieval tradition it is no more than the designation of belonging to a particular ethnic or social group; in this case, the priest’s belonging to the circles close to the Rurik dynasty and therefore associated with Rus’ in the Polish consciousness. On the other hand, representatives of other regions, who were undeniably present in Crimea in the 10th–the early 11th century, actively participated in the social life and the trade of the Black Sea region [39, p. 121–123]. It is quite probable that some of them had good education, leaned towards Greek culture and actively participated in the life of the polis. The Chronicle clearly indicates the Greekophile views of Anastas and his knowledge of the language; those were things formed by his environment, determined by his place of residence and circle of communication; his outlook did not change after his coming to Kyiv.

According to the Saxon chronicler Thietmar, Boleslaw the Brave sent a letter to Basil II, Emperor of Constantinople (Βασιλείος Β’ Βουλγαροκτόνος, 958–1025), in which the Polish Prince readily promised him ‘[…] bona, si vellet fidelis amicus haberi’ [29, p. 178]. In my opinion, there is every reason to believe that the priest helped in preparing and sending the letter. Maciej Salamon has reached the same conclusion; he assumes that Anastas was one of the probable authors of the letter sent to Constantinople, but not a member of the embassy [40, p. 114–120].

In Polish historiography, a hypothesis was put forward that Boleslaw settled the family of Yaroslav Volodymyrovych, and Anastas, in a specially constructed princely complex on Ostrów Lednicki (now an island on Lake Lednica located west of Gniezno, Greater Poland Voivodeship, Poland). The hypothesis is based on the analysis of an enormous complex of archeological artefacts, some of them being sacred church utensils of Greek origin, found on Ostrów Lednicki. The first researcher to present this idea was Gerard Labuda; he provides a broad historical and archaeological substantiation of the hypothesis in Spróba wyjaśnienia tajemnicy wyspy (An Attempt to Clarify the Mystery of the Island), one of the units of his work Studia nad początkami państwa polskiego (Studies of the Early Polish Statehood) [41, p. 397–411, 424]. The author believes Anastas Korsounian to be of Greek descent and regards him as the warden of the treasures captured in Kyiv and brought to Poland by Boleslaw the Brave [41, p. 406]. Labuda’s view on the problem was supported by some other researchers of the Lednicki complex. But some disagree with this version of the events [42, p. 58]. Marcin Wołoszyn, the last researcher to study the local archaeological artefacts, never mentions that the place was the residence of Yaroslav Volodymyrovych’s family brought to Poland by Boleslaw the Brave [43, p. 595–596, 600].

The second Rurik Princess who in the 11th century went to the lands of the Piasts was Dobronega Maria; she married Casimir I the Restorer, the marriage was officially concluded and documented. According to Jan Tęgowski and Kazimierz Jasiński, the marriage was arranged and realized no later |

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* See [44, p. 161–162; 45, p. 32–33] for the discussions concerning the name of Dobronega Maria, as the above Ruthenian Princess is identified in some sources.
than 1041 [5, p. 12; 46, p. 139]. The Tale of Past Years says, ‘[…] в сии же времена, въдясть Ярославъ сестру [in reality niece. – Aut.] свою. за Казимира’ [13, p. 142]. In the same laconic manner, the event is presented in the Polish and German chronicles of the 11th–12th century”. The later texts” do not add much to what we already know, Jan Długosz’s work being the only exception [51, p. 36–37; 30, p. 253]. The matrimonial union was meant to protect the Piasts’ lands against the Přemyslids of Bohemia and Moravia, and the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, whose efforts were directed at dividing the lands of their eastern neighbours. This point of view is shared by the majority of scholars [44, p. 164; 31, p. 39; 22, p. 44–46; 30, p. 387–388; 20, p. 277]. There also exists another version of the story. Stefan Maria Kuczyński maintains that ‘At the end of 1038, the Empire was concerned about the peasant uprising and paganism in Poland and helped Casimir to get back his throne […]. The German embassy could start negotiations about the Polish-Ruthenian union and the marriage between the ruling dynasties’. According to the complex calculations made by the researcher, the marriage took place some time between the early 1039 and March 6, 1039, i.e. before the beginning of the Great Fast [52, p. 129–130].

No details of the marriage are given in any texts contemporary to Jan Długosz. What the chronicles do mention is a great dowry, ‘вѣно’ (cum magnis divitiis) sent with the bride, which implies her having an escort. It is obvious that such property had to be guarded on her way to Poland. The situation in the lands not fully controlled by the Piasts was perilous; several servants, probably several dozen servants had to be sent to keep it safe. It is quite probable that in the 15th century, working on his Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, Jan Długosz could use materials that contained the details of Dobronega Maria’s trip to Poland. It can be inferred from his texts. According to the author, ‘Acceptit autem Kazimirus rex Polonie a Russie principe Iaroslao et pecunie magnam quantitatem et vasa cloendaqu’ [48, p. 485]. See also another version of the story. Stefan Maria Kuczyński maintains that ‘At the end of 1038, the Empire was concerned about the peasant uprising and paganism in Poland and helped Casimir to get back his throne […]. The German embassy could start negotiations about the Polish-Ruthenian union and the marriage between the ruling dynasties’. According to the complex calculations made by the researcher, the marriage took place some time between the early 1039 and March 6, 1039, i.e. before the beginning of the Great Fast [52, p. 129–130].

The porters, grooms, and the Princess’ close circle are ‘read between the lines’, though the names of these people are not mentioned in any source. Oleksandr Holovko is right to describe it as a ‘marriage train’ [22, p. 45]. The protocol required that in such cases, a confessor, as a representative of the court, had to accompany the bride. It may be presumed that some time later, the Ruthenian priest left Kraków, where, according to Jan Długosz, ‘Maria, regina Polonie […] sacro baptismatis fonte denuo in Cracoviensi ecclesia in supplementum eorum defectuum, qui per Ruthenorum presbyteros scripturarum et legumne Divinarum ignaros persepe committuntur, est abluta’ [51, p. 37; 30, p. 253]. There was no conversion of the Ruthenian bride to Catholicism; having analyzed the history of Anna Yanoslavivna, queen consort of Henry I of France, Dobronega Maria’s niece, Aleksandr Musin concludes that such practice was not typical of the 11th-century Europe [53, p. 147–148]. The Polish author just projected the 15th-century concept onto the early medieval context.

We know nothing about the court life of Dobronega Maria of Kyiv, nor do we know anything about her inner circle. All we know are the dates of birth of the royal offsprings [51, p. 43, 48, 55, 59, 70; 30, p. 254–257]. Our knowledge of the 11th-century diplomacies of the Piasts does not allow us to reconstruct Dobronega Maria’s participation in the production of official documents, where the people of her close circle could have been named as witnesses. Her marriage lasted to the death of Prince Casimir in 1058. The widowed Princess took an active part in the social life of her children and influenced the policy of the Piasts, of her son Boleslaw II the Bold (Boleslaus, 1058–1079) in particular.

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See the earliest notes about the marriage, ‘Postea vero de Rusia nobilem cum magnis divitiis uxorem accepit’ [14, p. 80; 16, p. 53]; ‘Kazimer filius Misiconis duces Polanorum […] duxitque uxorem Regis Ruscie filiam’ [47, p. 379].

*** The 13th (or the 14th) century Wielkopolska Chronicle (The Chronicle of Greater Poland), the next one to appeared after the above sources, gives a wrong filiation by calling Dobronega Maria the daughter of the Ruthenian Prince Roman, son of Odon [in reality Borys Volodymyrovych, which baptismal name was Roman. – Aut.]; ‘[…] duxit uxorem, filiam Romani principis Russiae filii Odonis nomine Dobronegam, alias dictam’ [48, p. 485]. See, ‘То ж обыо дает великих княз Ярославъ сестру свою за Казимиръ’ [59, p. 129]; ‘Того же лета дает Ярославь сестру свою за Казимиръ’ [50, p. 82]; ‘Ляхи собравшися, взяша Казимира королевича […] и постали его королем в своей Лядской землі. 11 Иш дана бысть ему жена Мария Володимеровна, рождение от Анны, царевны Греческой, есми Ярославъ, иже остави свою вѣру греческую мужу к воли, и проименоваше ю Доброгнѣва’ [35, p. 50].
There is a laconic note in the *Annales Capituli Cracoviensis* (the *Annals of the Kraków Chapter*) saying, ‘Dobronega, uxor Kazimiri obiit’ [54, p. 796].

It is highly probable that Bolesław II the Bold, also known as the Generous, son of Casimir I married a Ruthenian Princess; according to the historical tradition, her name was Vysheslava Sviatoslavivna († 1089). The lady’s filiation is based on the text by Jan Długosz [51, p. 95], who states that the marriage took place in 1067. Some researchers agree with the Polish chronicler [30, p. 393; 20, p. 374]. In the 16th century, the idea was actually repeated by Vasily Tatishchev; in his *Hemopis Pocciiucess* (*Russian History Dating Back to the Most Ancient Times*), he dates the marriage to 1065, ‘That same year, Vysheslava, daughter of Sviatoslav of Chernihiv was given in marriage to Boleslaw of Poland’ [55, p. 84]. The reliability of the Russian historian’s sources is open to question; at least some of his texts are justifiably criticized [56, p. 477–483]. No wonder Tatishchev’s version, which partly coincides with that of Jan Długosz, is doubted: the theory does not agree with the history of the Rurik dynasty in the later part of the 11th century. The statement in the *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae* that the girl was ‘[…] principis Russie filia et patris sui unica, cui magna pars Russie ex succession paterna deebatur’ [51, p. 95; 30, p. 260] can hardly be referred to any of the Rurik princes. Sviatoslav Yaroslavovych, ruler of Chernihiv (1054–1073), whom Tatishchev calls Vysheslava’s father, had at least one more daughter, Predsla, who died in 1116, ‘[…] томъ же лѣтъ и Предславна черница Сѣославна представись’ [13, p. 284]. It means we cannot state that by the time of marriage, Vysheslava was the only daughter in the Prince’s family. It was Iziaslav Yaroslavovych (1024–1078), Sviatoslav’s elder brother who had only one daughter, Yevdokia Iziaslavivna. Iziaslav Yaroslavovych sat on his father’s throne in Kyiv between 1054 and 1068, and then between 1069 and 1073. Yevdokia Iziaslavivna was given in marriage to Mieszko II, son of Bolesław II (see below); about this event the text is also unclear. Vsevolod Yaroslavovych (1029/1030–1093), Prince’s younger brother, who ruled in Kyiv between 1078 and 1093, also had several daughters [20, p. 457]. Aleksandr Nazarenko rightly states that Jan Długosz’s record cannot be referred to any of the Ruthenian princes of that period [57, p. 581], at least to any of those known to genealogy today.

The name of Bolesław II’s wife was not known till the 15th century; for the critics of the *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, the question of her identity remained an unsettled issue; yet her Ruthenian descent was never fully denied [44, Tablica II; 46, p. 155–156]. I assume that the Polish chronicler has made a mistake about the filiation and the dynastic background of the wives of some Polish rulers of the 12th century since his narratives contain almost identical information concerning the two latter cases. The hypothesis that the lady belonged to the family of Prince Sviatoslav contradicts canon law; hence, it has to be rejected [57, p. 582]. On the whole, according to Jan Długosz, the Polish Prince ‘Missis itaque solennibus procos prefatam virginem [Viszeslawam. – the author added the bride’s name later. – *M. V.*] accipit in uxo, nupcias quoque Cracouie pro more regio, sponsa advecta, celebra et per dies plures ludis militaris et hastarum instauratis solennitatem peragit nupciarum’ [51, p. 95; 30, p. 260]. Probably, after the Ruthenian Princess got married, some ladies, whose names and descent are unknown to us, stayed with her and formed her own court; the inference can be drawn from the Polish chronicler’s words: at the funeral of her son Mieszko II in 1089 she ‘[…] sinibus quoque matronarum aliquando tempore fota’ [51, p. 166; 30, p. 281]. We do not know any other details of the couple’s married life, nor do we know anything about the Princess’s court; according to Jan Długosz, she died on March 11, 1089.

The next one to take a Ruthenian wife was Mieszko II (*Mestko, 1069–1089*), grandson of Dobronega Maria, son of Bolesław II the Brave, also known as the Generous. In 1088, a year after his grandmother’s death, Mieszko married a Princess of the Rurik dynasty on the advice of his uncle, Władysław I Herman (*Ladislaus, 1040–1102*), son of the late Ruthenian Princess. The event was noted by Gallus Anonymous, though the name of the bride was not mentioned; the chronicler called her *Ruthena puella* [14, p. 100; 11, p. 59, 12, p. 54], which is somewhat strange, taking into account the short chronological distance between the event and the time when the Chronicle was written. The late medieval Polish
tradition notes the bride as Princess Yevdoksia (Yevdokia) [51, p. 161; 30, p. 280]; that is why in historical sources she is often called the daughter of the Ruthenian Prince Iziaslav Yaroslavovych. But there is disagreement among historiographers as to the lady’s descent, the main factor behind it being the intricacies of the narrative in the *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*. Neither Oswald Balzer nor Kazimierz Jasiński mention her name, thus leaving the matter open for further discussion [44, Tablica II; 46, p. 181], while Vladimir Pashuto, Natalia Shchaveleva, Leontiy Voitovych and others share Jan Długosz’s point of view [31, p. 43; 22, p. 59; 16, p. 69; 20, p. 354]. Though there are other opinions on the matter [57, p. 547–548, 563, 565; 23, p. 404]. For instance, Krzysztof Benyskiewicz suggests that the name of Mieszko’s wife was Kateryna and that she was the daughter of Vsevolod Yaroslavovych (1029/1030–1093) [58, p. 160]. In Jan Długosz’s *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, the wives of Mieszko II and Mieszko III the Old (Miestko, 1122/1125–1202) are noted under the same name, which makes it difficult to reconstruct the events. Such confusion is not uncommon for the texts of the major work of the late medieval historian. But we cannot reject the possibility that Iziaslav Yaroslavovych’s daughter was married to Mieszko II, bearing in mind very close matrimonial relations between the Ruthenian and the Polish dynasties in the later half of the 11th century [30, p. 53].

Jan Długosz describes the wedding as a grand event, attended by many courtiers [41, p. 161; 30, p. 280]; the representatives of the Ruthik dynasty must have been invited too. The wedding was celebrated in 1089; next year the husband died; his widow was never mentioned again. L. Voitovych suggests that she was poisoned together with Mieszko [20, p. 354]; though the Ukrainian historian has other versions as well. At one place in his book, the author expresses the idea that Mieszko could marry Kateryna Vsevolodivna (*sic!*); it is quite probable that after her husband’s death, the widow entered a convent [20, p. 457].

This Ruthenian-Polish matrimonial union was a short-termed one (1088–1089); yet its preparation, the celebration of the event and the court life of the married couple presuppose the involvement of other persons, the ones of non-princely origin. Unfortunately, the narrative of the 15th-century Polish chronicler does not allow to reconstruct the biograms of the members of the Ruthenian Princess’ court. Probably, it is the narrator who is ‘responsible’ for the marriage being so ‘brief’ because he did not provide unequivocal evidence of the bride’s belonging to the family of Prince Iziaslav Yaroslavovych; the latter fact is reasonably doubted by A. Nazarenko and J. Tęgowski because it clearly contradicts canon law [57, p. 580; 5, p. 12]. There is much less doubt as to the Ruthenian origin of the lady and of her close female friends; in the context of a four-generation-long matrimonial tradition of the Piast and the Rurik dynasties, this claim seems convincing enough.

Even in the absence of direct historical evidence, the continuity of the Ruthenian presence at the Polish Princesses’ courts is beyond doubt. Probably, it was a common phenomenon and this *overt* presence did not require any special attention on the part of the narrators. But for researchers, this absence of evidence poses many problems; it is something of a mystery that has to be resolved. Historians have justifiable doubts concerning the two latter cases, the reason for this being the confusion in Jan Długosz’s texts, the only source that gives the ladies’ names.

Thus in the 11th century, four Princesses of the Rurik dynasty were given in marriage to the Piasts and moved to their lands, the matrimonial policies of both sides being aimed at establishing and cementing the inter-dynasty connections. The contemporary and later chronicles hardly mention the names of the persons who accompanied the Ruthenian Princesses as the members of their retinues and courts; yet in all the four cases, their presence is clearly implied. Anastas Korsounian looks a lonely figure in the court of Predsla, concubine of Boleslaw the Brave. Who the confessor was in terms of ethnicity is uncertain. It is highly probable that at the courts of the Ruthenian wives of the Piasts there was a certain number of lady companions and priests, the latter heard the Princesses’ confessions and gave them Communion. The available sources do not provide any data regarding either the number of these persons or the length of their residence abroad. The quantity of the 11th – the early 12th-century documented evidence is low. The detailed narratives in Jan Długosz’s *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae* are not of much help for the purpose of this research either – his information is not always accurate; besides, the comments of the 15th-century historian are ‘denominationally biased’. 
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шлюбів було плідних із народженням шістьох дітей (п’ятеро хлопчиків і однієї дівчинки). Один шлюб виявився безплідним. У супроводі кожної з руських наречених при виїзі на батьківщину чоловіка та подальшого там перебування мусіли бути особи (мабуть здебільшого жінки, але й також чоловіки, зокрема – особистий духівник), котрі готували дам до заміжжя, а згодом складали більш чи менш тривале та більш чи менш чисельне її оточення при дворі. У даній статті автор намагається відшукувати та реконструювати ймовірне руське коло наближених до Рюриківських осіб, виданих в XI ст. за польських князів. Складність вирішення поставленого завдання пояснюється відсутністю належної кількості джерел з XI – початку XII ст., недостовірністю пізньосередньовічних свідчень до теми, котрі потребують верифікації та критичного аналізу. Відтак, персоніфікувати абсолютну більшість “між рядками” занотованих наративами осіб видається неможливим, хоча такі постаті безперечно “читаються”.

Ключові слова: Рюриковичі, Пясти, матримоніальні зв’язки, династія, Русь, княгиня, генеалогія, Ян Длугош, літопис.