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On the Chronology of Vladislaus of Opole's Rule as a Count Palatine of Poland

O chronologii rządów namiestniczych Władysława Opolczyka w Polsce

ABSTRACT

The correct date of the rule of Vladislaus of Opole as a Count palatine in Poland has not yet been established which results in an erroneous explanation of circumstances of their occurrence, but also their progress and significance. The author aims at placing the facts in a correct timeframe. The proposal of dating the rule of Vladislaus of Opole as the Count palatine is based on a contextual analysis of *Chronicle of Jan of Czarnków* and explains hypothetical reasons for a clear chronological disorder in its narrative. It allows to shed new light upon the episode of the governorship of the Duke of Opole in Poland. Determining the sequence of events described in chapters 32–45 of the *Chronicle* proves that its author dated the Duke's nomination to the Count palatine to 1377. He became the Count palatine at the end of February 1377, directly after relinquishing regency in Poland by the Queen Elizabeth of Poland. Although this nomination was immediately protested against by the dignitaries of Greater Poland, the Duke remained in his office and was dismissed, or alternatively, he resigned, not

PUBLICATION INFO			
			e-ISSN: 2449-8467 ISSN: 2082-6060
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SOURCE OF FUNDING: Statutory Research of the Institute of History of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin			
SUBMITTED: 2019.11.30	ACCEPTED: 2020.02.18	PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2020.12.21	
WEBSITE OF THE JOURNAL: https://journals.umcs.pl/rh		EDITORIAL COMMITTEE E-mail: reshistorica@umcs.pl	

earlier than in the middle of April 1378. Even though the abovementioned protest was justified in terms of legality, initially it was not met with an adequate reaction since the protesters were not a sufficient political force from the monarch's point of view.

Key words: Vladislaus, Duke of Opole, Count palatine, Chronicle of Jan of Czarnków

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The Duke of Opole, Vladislaus, known in the Polish historical tradition as 'Opolczyk' (of Opole) played a significant role in the times of reign of Louis I of Hungary in Poland. From 1370 he had fiefdoms in the territories of the Kingdom of Poland¹ and, additionally, in 1371/1372–1378 he was a governor of the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia with very extensive ruling authority². The episode of performing the function of the Count palatine in the Kingdom of Poland has been known to historians for a long time and it has even become a subject of separate studies by Jerzy Sperka³.

¹ J. Laberschek, *Zasięg i charakterystyka rządów Władysława Opolczyka w północno-zachodniej części ziemi krakowskiej 1370–1391*, 'Rocznik Muzeum Okręgowego w Częstochowie' 1985, 1, pp. 7–29; M. Antoniewicz, *Podstawy i zakres władzy księcia Władysława II opolskiego w ziemi wieluńskiej oraz północno-zachodniej Małopolsce*, in: *Książę Władysław Opolczyk – Fundator klasztoru Paulinów na Jasnej Górze w Częstochowie*, eds. M. Antoniewicz, J. Zbudniewek ZP, Warszawa 2007, pp. 195–246; see also: J. Sperka, *Władysław książę opolski, wieluński, kujawski, dobrzyński, pan Rusi, palatyn Węgier i namiestnik Polski (1326/1330 – 8 lub 18 maja 1401)*, 2nd ed., Kraków 2016, pp. 218–219.

² A. Gilewicz, *Stanowisko i działalność gospodarcza Władysława Opolczyka na Rusi w latach 1372–1378*, in: *Prace historyczne wydane ku uczczeniu pięćdziesięciolecia Akademickiego Koła Historyków UJK we Lwowie*, Lwów 1929, pp. 72–105; A. Swieżawski, *Regencja Władysława Opolczyka na Rusi Czerwonej*, in: *Książę Władysław Opolczyk*, pp. 247–290; J. Tęgowski, *Nowe źródła do kwestii daterki objęcia rządów na Rusi przez Władysława Opolczyka*, 'Sredniowiecze Polskie i Powszechnie' 2009, 1(5), pp. 127–137; J. Sperka, *Władysław*, pp. 219–223; J. Szyszka, *Formowanie się i organizacja dóbr monarszych w ziemi lwowskiej od połowy XIV do początku XVI wieku*, Kraków 2016, pp. 89–91; A. Marzec, *Pod rządami nieobecnego monarchy. Królestwo Polskie 1370–1382*, Kraków 2017, pp. 71–76.

³ J. Sperka, *Rządy namiestnicze Władysława Opolczyka w Królestwie Polskim (1377/1378)*, in: *Mieszczanie, wasale, zakonnicy*, ed. B. Śliwiński, Malbork 2004, pp. 245–265 (Studia z dziejów średniowiecza, no. 10), pp. 249–264; idem, *Otoczenie Władysława Opolczyka w latach 1370–1401. Studium o elicie władzy w relacjach z monarchą*, Katowice 2006, pp. 127–134; idem, *Władysław*, pp. 103–110; cf. earlier views: K. Szajnocha, *Jadwiga i Jagiełło 1374–1413*, part I, Warszawa 1902 (original ed.: Lwów 1861), pp. 165–166; J. Szujski, *Ludwik Węgierski i bezkrólewie po jego śmierci*, in: idem, *Opowiadania i roztrząsania*, vol. 3, Kraków 1888 (*Dzieła Józefa Szujskiego. Wydanie zbiorowe*, series II, vol. 7), pp. 241–248; E. Breiter, *Władysław książę opolski, pan na Wieluniu, Dobrzyńniu i Kujawach, palatyn węgierski i wielkorządca Polski i Rusi. Zarys biograficzny*, Lwów 1889, pp. 109–119; J. Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie lata Ludwika Wielkiego (1370–1382)*, Kraków 1918, pp. 380–382. Some corrections to the findings of J. Sperka were tried to be introduced recently by A. Marzec (*op. cit.*, pp. 148–154).

One of disputable aspects of this issue is the dating of the Duke's rule as the Count palatine. In this article I voice a new opinion on this matter. However, it should be emphasised that the correction of previously accepted date brings a necessity to once again explain the circumstances accompanying the Duke's appointment as the Count palatine. I omit, however, the issue of identifying groups and people who supported him or – conversely – opposed his function and demanded his dismissal.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

The chronicler, Jan of Czarnków, was not generous in the case of providing a precise date, being content with a phrase *eodem anno* which he often used and indicated a direct cause-and-effect relation between the appointment of Vladislaus of Opole and Queen Elizabeth's resignation⁴. Chronicler's *eodem anno* could refer both to 1377 and – taking into consideration the location of chapter thirty-eight – to 1378. Perhaps this circumstance engendered a situation in which Jan's account was treated with distrust in publications on the subject.

It is in vain to investigate the work by Karol Szajnocha in search for the date of entrusting the responsible role to Vladislaus but since the author situated the Count palatine's rule after the Duke received the fiefdom of Kuyavia and Dobrzyń (1378–1380) and after the death of Elizabeth of Poland (29 December 1380), since he was to be replaced by a board of magnates (1381), it can be seen that he was in favour of quite a late date⁵. Moreover, it should be noted here that the author stressed the attitudes of the Polish magnates and knights towards the Count palatine rather than precisely placing this episode in a specific timeframe.

Józef Szujski tried to prove that the discussed Count palatine's rule took place within the timeframe between the 13th of January and 21st of August 1379⁶. Although the historian began with the account by Jan of Czarnków,

⁴ Joannis de Czarnkow, *Chronicon Polonorum. Jana z Czarnkowa Kronika Polska 1333–1384*, comp. by J. Szlachetkowski in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 2, ed. A. Bielowski, Lwów 1872 [hereinafter: JC], pp. 677 (chapter 33), 681 (chapter 38).

⁵ K. Szajnocha, *op. cit.*, part I, pp. 164–166. As a curiosity, it is worth to note that already A. Naruszewicz (*Historja Narodu Polskiego od początku chrześcijaństwa*, vol. 7: *Panowanie Węgrów*, Warszawa 1786, pp. 126–127, 156 ff.) tried to establish the facts and their chronology, struggling with later Old-Polish accounts which were full of anachronisms. Giving governorship to Vladislaus of Opole and his later deposition was moved by that author to 1378.

⁶ J. Szujski, *op. cit.*, p. 243; he was followed by his earlier work J. Dąbrowski (*Elżbieta Łokietkówna 1305–1380*, in: *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny*, vol. 32 (57), Kraków 1914, p. 421).

it seemed to be quite confusing to him⁷. Therefore, he tried to verify the account with the help of other sources, seeking in them the titulature for Count palatine or occurrences in which Count palatine's duties were fulfilled, simultaneously tracing the Duke's itinerary. Unfortunately, incomplete source material and insufficiencies in its critique produced poor results. Szujski did not find any traces of Vladislaus' presence as the Count palatine and, additionally, he decided that after the Lithuanian expedition of 1377 the Duke stayed in Ruthenia until the end of that year and for the entire next year⁸. This became a foundation for dating the Count palatine's rule to 1379 and for a 'definite' correction of Jan's date to that year. The core of this reasoning was a conviction that it was not possible to combine the Count palatine's rule in Poland with governing Ruthenia, which was correctly questioned by Ernest Breiter in his biography on Vladislaus of Opole, similarly to questioning the date provided by Jan of Czarnków⁹. The latter was arbitrarily linked by the abovementioned historian with 1378 and thus, according to his suggestion, the period of the Duke's rule as the Count palatine was supposed to take place between November 1377 and the 1st of October the following year¹⁰. Ernest Breiter consciously concluded that in the situation in which the Kingdom of Poland was at the turn of 1376 and 1377, in the face of the resignation of Elizabeth of Poland, King Louis could not leave it without any governance. Nevertheless, he stated that the monarch decided about the nomination only after the retaliatory expedition to Lithuania¹¹.

Jan Dąbrowski offered another argument¹². He placed the beginning of the Count palatine's rule in 1377 so after the end of the Lithuanian expedition and after Louis left for Hungary. This was, however, not a result of the sources' analysis but an effect of deduction and, perhaps, of reading the work by Ernest Breiter. The author indicated that in reality the Duke had taken over his duties towards the very end of December 1377 when he was supposed to be back from Ruthenia and he ended his role as the Count palatine in September the following year¹³. However, it was pointed out that the Duke's itinerary from September – November 1377 (his constant stay in Ruthenia) seemed to exclude the possibility to take over the duties of the Count palatine directly after King Louis had left

⁷ J. Szujski, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 241–242; cf. J. Sperka, *Władysław*, pp. 326–327.

⁹ E. Breiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–116.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 116–117.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 116.

¹² J. Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie*, pp. 380–381.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 381 and annotation 1 on that page; cf. J. Sperka, *Rządy*, p. 254, annotation 32.

the country¹⁴. Moreover, doubts were raised by the fact that only on the 28th of March 1378, so after seven months, the residents of Greater Poland decided to protest against the monarch's nomination.

In the light of currently accepted findings by Jerzy Sperka, perhaps it was already in December 1377, or rather in January-February of the following year, that the Duke of Opole and ruler of Ruthenia, Vladislaus, became appointed by Louis as his Count palatine of Poland¹⁵. Additionally, in accordance with the arguments of the scholar from Katowice, a few months before the nomination the court in Buda was to probe into the elites in Poland regarding the possibility of elevating the position of Vladislaus of Opole, the symptom of which was i.e. entrusting the Duke with leadership in preparations for the expedition against Lithuania in 1377¹⁶.

Moving the date for a few months was aimed at removing the shortcomings associated with the argument by Jan Dąbrowski, but did it really happen? Vladislaus' stay in Ruthenia was supposed to eliminate the possibility of undertaking the duties of the Count palatine but his stay in Wieluń Land made it already more plausible. I emphasise that apart from the *Chronicle of Jan of Czarnków* there is simultaneously no confirmation of the Duke's presence in the Kingdom of Poland. Seven months seemed to be definitely too long to tolerate the fact of the nomination which was inconsistent with the regulation of the privilege of Košice but three months or one month did not give rise to concerns. However, the latter case, i.e. the lapse of around one month since the moment of taking over power of the Count palatine to the time of protests of Gniezno, is still a time which raises doubts whether one is to hold onto the thesis of previous opinion probing.

If Jerzy Sperka aptly demonstrated the moment of Vladislaus' nomination, then why should the inhabitants of Greater Poland delay the protest until the end of March 1378? If King Louis accepted the legitimacy of the protesters' arguments, why did he not dismiss his Count palatine straight away but only after a few months? Why the royal court – if it indeed probed into the elites' opinion on the perspective of such nomination¹⁷,

¹⁴ J. Sperka, *Rządy*, pp. 253–254; idem, *Władysław*, pp. 326–327.

¹⁵ J. Sperka, *Rządy*, pp. 253–254, 262; A. Marzec, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

¹⁶ See: *Kodeks dyplomatyczny katedry krakowskiej św. Wacława*, vol. 2, ed. F. Piekosiński, Kraków 1883 [hereinafter: KDKK], no. 299 (inserts): (1) pp. 65–66, (2), pp. 66–67, (3) p. 67, (4) p. 67; J. Sperka, *Rządy*, pp. 250–252; idem, *Władysław*, pp. 99–103, 103.

¹⁷ Although J. Sperka (*Rządy*, p. 252) suggested that this probing took place only in the circle of the inhabitants of Lesser Poland during the Lithuanian expedition in the summer of 1377, the stay of the Duke of Opole in Greater Poland in the early spring of 1377 would have been an equally good moment for discerning the moods of the local noblemen.

and thus could have known earlier the negative attitude of the magnates of Greater Poland – decided to go through with it anyway? Perhaps such probing did not take place at all?

Andrzej Marzec has recently commented indirectly on the matter of chronology in the Count palatines' rule of Vladislaus of Opole in Poland. Although the historian did not offer a new dating, he decided to distance himself from the account by Jan of Czarnków on direct relation between the resignation of Elizabeth of Poland and the nomination of Duke Vladislaus. For this purpose he criticised premises put forward by Jerzy Sperka, stating that: a) the invasion of Lithuanians did not include Ruthenia which was ruled by Vladislaus of Opole; b) according to the scholar from Krakow, the Duke of Opole was not so much in charge but rather participated in preparations for the retaliation expedition, and his activity can also be seen in the then negotiations with Władysław the White; c) King Louis was there (in Poland) between July and September 1377 so there was no need to replace him with the Count palatine. The issue of the Count palatine was supposed to become relevant only after the Lithuanian expedition because Louis returned to Hungary and his mother did not want to stay in Poland¹⁸. Putting aside the first two arguments, the usefulness of which I do not see in relation to the issue of dating, there is still a third one which is essentially a reminiscence of argumentation offered by Jan Dąbrowski and, even earlier, by Ernest Breiter.

Louis' stay in Poland – or rather in the territories of Ruthenia, a site of war theatre – had a thoroughly temporary nature, strictly associated with the realities of the war campaign. It has been noticed long ago that the monarch did not deal with any of the Polish affairs during the expedition because he was focused on the war¹⁹, which is understandable after all. The nature and purpose of his stay in Poland and Ruthenia did not however support any prospective makeup work in settling matters of the northern rulership. The opinion that the office of a Count palatine was suspended during the monarch's presence in the territory administered by this Count is also not obvious. I think that the example of Władysław Jagiełło's stays in Lithuania during the period of co-existence with Grand Duke Vytautas (1392–1430) is instructive in this respect. In the autumn of 1376 no one stood on the way of the Lithuanians during their invasion and thus it was necessary to take care of organising and coordinating a temporary defence. Moreover, one cannot underestimate the situation which developed in Poland after Elizabeth of Poland left the country.

¹⁸ A. Marzec, *op. cit.*, pp. 149–150.

¹⁹ J. Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie*, p. 380.

The retaliation expedition had been planned only for July 1377 so there was still more than half a year left when the issue of the current administration was most certainly no less urgent than in the autumn of the previous year, after the expedition ended and the immediate threat from Lithuania was averted. Besides, there were affairs that apparently could not wait for the monarch's arrival such as the agreement with the Duke of Gniewkowo, Władysław the White, regarding the purchase of rights to his reign²⁰.

One should also not attach too much importance to the statement by Jan of Czarnków – made in chapter thirty-eight – that Louis avoided coming to Poland in order to rule because of the local air²¹. This can be interpreted at most as the chronicler's jibe at the ruler's fundamental stance on the postulate to reside in Poland. It would be difficult to suspect the Archdeacon of Gniezno of being unaware of its fundamental lack of realism. In any case, it should not be inferred from this statement that after the Lithuanian expedition the Poles required the king to remain in Poland while he weaseled out of this with unhealthy air, and that only this matter introduced the issue of the Count palatine's rule on the daily agenda.

On the other hand, after leaving Krakow in January 1377, Elizabeth of Poland probably did not leave Hungary until the autumn of 1378²², and thus it cannot be claimed that she did not want to stay in Poland in the autumn of the previous year. King Louis was aware of his mother's reluctance to be a regent in Poland from the moment of her return to Hungary and nothing indicates that the queen's attitude changed in a few months, particularly taking into consideration the trauma associated with the so-called massacre of Hungarians.

Overall, it seems that the alleged relevance of the issue of Count palatine in the autumn of 1377 resulted neither from Louis' decision on leaving Poland – for no one expected it to be any different – nor from his mother's resistance to stay in Poland because she was not there at that time, and there are no indications that she planned to return to her position at that time. In this situation, one should accept the view that the matter of Count palatine was relevant from the moment of Elizabeth's resignation from the regency in Poland, i.e. from the end of January 1377.

²⁰ *Franciscani Thoruniensis Annales Prussici 941–1410*, ed. E. Strehlke, in: *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*, vol. 3, eds. T. Hirsch, M. Töppen, E. Strehlke, Leipzig 1866, p. 103; J. Śliwiński, *Władysław Biały (1327/1333 – 20 luty 1388). Ostatni książę kujawski, największy podróżnik spośród Piastów*, 2nd ed., Kraków 2011, pp. 99–101.

²¹ JC, p. 681; cf. J. Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie*, p. 380.

²² J. Dąbrowski, *Elżbieta*, p. 420.

PROPOSAL FOR NEW DATING

None of the document sources provide direct information on Vladislaus' rule as the Count palatine²³ and thus, in terms of dating, they can be used only in the role of indirect premises. There is also no dated document of the Duke with the title of Count palatine preserved, which could be used as a point of reference. In this case the basis for dating is the account by Jan of Czarnków, the discussed fragment by whom is nevertheless not unambiguous in terms of chronology²⁴. Problematic fragment is i.e. understanding the chronicler's term *eodem anno* in chapter thirty-eight, entitled: *Qualiter Wladislaus dux de Opol praedictus ad gubernandum regnum Poloniae fuit deputatus*²⁵. It should be examined in the broader context of neighbouring chapters referring to the events from 1376–1379.

Reporting the events relating to the Lithuanian invasion of Sandomierz Land and the so-called massacre of Hungarians (1376), the former vice-chancellor used the phrases *anno eodem*, *eodem quoque tempore*, referring to 1376, included *in extenso* in chapter thirty²⁶. However, chapter thirty-three, beginning with the words *Item eodem anno* does not refer to that year (that is 1376) but to the following one (1377) because the chronicler later wrote: '*priusquam de Cracovia domina regina anno proxime praeterito Ungariam processisset [...]*'²⁷, and then this phrase appears in this passage: '*in principio quadragesimae anno praesentis (1377)*'²⁸. This 'current year' informs on the time in which the account was written.

The usage of the discussed term *Item eodem anno*, unequivocally referring to 1377, suggests that a chapter or information regarding that

²³ There is an exception in a form of a laconic comment in the later document by the captain of Krakow, Sędziwój of Szubin, approving the transaction which was confirmed by the Duke of Opole at the time when he was the governor – KDKK, vol. 2, no. 316, pp. 91–93.

²⁴ This has been already noticed by J. Szujski (*Ludwik Węgierski*, p. 241).

²⁵ JC, p. 681 (chapter 38).

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 674 (chapter 31), 675 (chapter 32), 671 (chapter 30). The editor erroneously solved the annual date of the Krakow's incident from the 7th of December 1377 (*ibidem*, p. 675 on a margin).

²⁷ JC, p. 677 (chapter 33). The chronicler did not state directly the date of Elizabeth's departure and handing over the power in Poland to her son although – as can be derived from the fragment on the departure from Krakow a few days after the disastrous Sunday of the 7th of December 1376 (*ibidem*, p. 677, chapter 32) – he thought that the fact had taken place already in 1376. Determining the correct date (after the 9th and before the 28th of January 1377) is due to J. Dąbrowski (*Elżbieta*, p. 419; *idem*, *Ostatnie*, p. 379); see also: KDM, vol. 3, ed. F. Piekosiński, Kraków 1882, no. 888; KDKK, vol. 2, no. 296; *Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vasenkeő. A Zichy és vásenkeői gróf Zichy-család idősb ágának okmánytára*, vol. 4, eds. Im. Nagy, Iv. Nagy, D. Véghely, Budapest 1878, no. 10, p. 9.

²⁸ JC, p. 677 (chapter 33).

year should appear earlier, constituting a chronological point of reference for the incipit of chapter thirty-three. However, this is not the case. We deal here rather with the disturbance of chronology which resulted perhaps from anachronistic placing of chapter thirty-five – describing the death of the Duke of Słupsk, Każko, under the exact daily and annual date of the 2nd of January 1377²⁹ – only after a short chapter thirty-four which was on a slightly later event, i.e. the capture of Bełz by Louis, and dated in a relative way, i.e. with the help of the phrase *eodem quoque anno*³⁰. Consequently keeping onto the chronology of the succession of events, the obituary of Każko of Słupsk should be placed before chapter thirty-three.

Directly after chapter thirty-five, where the year 1377 appears, chapter thirty-six follows with the description of circumstances related to the loss of Ruthenia by Vladislaus of Opole and the obtaining of fiefdoms after the Duke of Słupsk, which took place towards the end of 1378³¹. Nevertheless, even in this case the chronicler began his description with the words *eodem anno*³². Immediately afterwards he left strictly political matters for a while and in chapter thirty-seven – correctly dated by him to 1378 – he firstly mentioned that the Apostolic Camera had imposed extraordinary burdens on the Polish Church, and then he moved to presenting circumstances of the schism after the death of Pope Gregory XI which took place that same year³³. Finally, Jan of Czarnków returned in chapter thirty-eight to the issues abandoned after passage thirty-six, repeating information he had already mentioned before³⁴, i.e. about the Queen Mother relinquishing the reign in Poland to King Louis³⁵ who in turn was supposed to hand it over *eodem anno* to the Duke of Opole.

Returning to the information previously described under 1377 (surrendering the power by the Queen Mother into the hands of her son after arriving in Hungary)³⁶, but extending to the end of the previous year

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 679 (chapter 35).

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 678–679 (chapter 34).

³¹ JC, p. 680; cf. *Akta grodzkie i ziemskie z czasów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z Archiwum tak zwanego bernardyńskiego we Lwowie*, vol. 5, eds. O. Pietruski, X. Liske, Lwów 1875, no. 14; *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, vol. 6, eds. A. Gąsiorowski, H. Kowalewicz, Poznań 1982, no. 259.

³² JC, p. 680.

³³ JC, pp. 680–681 (chapter 37); on the chronicler's knowledge on the papal affairs: J. Wyrozumski, *Horyzont polityczny Janka z Czarnkowa*, 'Studia Źródłoznawcze' 1990, 32/33, p. 59.

³⁴ JC, p. 677 (chapter 32): '[...] Ungariam rediens, filio suo, domino regi regnum Poloniae gubernandum iterum resignavit'.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 681 (chapter 38): '[...] ipsumque regnum filio suo domino Lodvico Ungariae et Poloniae regi, iam tertio commiserat gubernandum [...]'].

³⁶ JC, p. 677 (chapter 32); cf. J. Dąbrowski, *Elżbieta*, pp. 419–420; idem, *Ostatnie*, p. 379.

(making a decision on changing the staff of the Kuyavian county)³⁷, seems to suggest that the fact of its direct consequence (giving power into the hands of Vladislaus of Opole), provided with the phrase *eodem anno*, refers also to that same year, 1377. Visible breakdown of chronology in relation to the neighbouring chapters, the previous and the following, clearly referring to 1378³⁸, could be a result of mixing their original order in the process of copying the *Chronicle* by Jan of Czarnków or rather the entire collection of the *Great Chronicle*³⁹.

Dating the nomination for the period not long after Elizabeth returned from Poland, and with the observation of the then itineraries of the king and Vladislaus of Opole, leads to a conclusion that their meeting and making key decisions could have taken place towards the end of February 1377, perhaps in upper Hungarian Rosenberg (Hungarian: Rózsahegy; currently Ružomberok in the territory of Slovakia), where on the 27th of February the Duke's presence was recorded by the sources⁴⁰, or the next day in the southernmost residence of Louis in Zvolen (Hungarian: Zolyóm)⁴¹. The ruler was back to Visegrad already on the 1st of March.

³⁷ JC, p. 677 (chapter 33).

³⁸ Chapter 37, partly repeating information included in chapter 29 (*ibidem*, p. 668), has an undoubted annual date of 1378 (*ibidem*, p. 680); on the other hand chapters 39–45 do not have the dates and they all begin with various combinations of the phrase: 'in that year'. Chapter 39 deals with i.e. a synod convened in Kalisz, which the chronicler had already mentioned earlier, before the year of 1378 (*ibidem*, p. 681 – chapter 37). Another one (chapter 42) mentions the death of Emperor Charles which happened, as is known from elsewhere, on the 29th of November 1378 (F. Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV. za jeho císařství (1355–1378)*, vol. 2, Praha 1993, p. 240). On the other hand, events described in chapter 45, despite the phrase *eodem namque anno*, belong to the following year – 1379 (see: J. Śliwiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–104).

³⁹ The problem concerns the fragment of the *Chronicle of Jan of Czarnków* between chapters 32 and 45. The order which is in agreement with chronology – taking into consideration the sequence of events and correction of dates – is presented as follows (I provide the numbers of chapters, dates in the text are in round brackets; relevant annual dates are presented in square brackets in places where instead of them were the phrase *eodem anno* etc.): 32 (7th of December [1376]), 35 (2nd of January 1377), 33 (Lent [1377]), 38 (8th of March [1377]), 34 [1377], 37 (28th of March and 7th of June 1378), 39 (9th of April and 6th of June [1378]), 40–44 [1378], 36 (25th of December [1378]); 45 (20th of October and 1st of November [1379]).

⁴⁰ M. Wertner, *Itinerar des Königs Ludwig I*, 'Vjestnik Kr. Hrvatsko-Slavonsko-Dalmatinskog Zemaljskog Arkiva' 1903, 5, p. 141; J. Sperka, *Władysław*, p. 325 and annotation 6. The Duke of Opole arrived quite quickly in the Upper Hungary straight from Ruthenia (22nd of February: Przemyśl – 27th of February: Rosenberg).

⁴¹ The itinerary of King Louis from the 2nd half of February – known by M. Wertner (*op. cit.*, p. 141) – one should add the stays in Visegrad on the 24th and 25th of February 1377 – Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár [hereinafter: MNL], Diplomataikai Fényképgyűjtemény [hereinafter: DF], ref. no. 207416; *ibidem*, Diplomataikai Levéltár, ref. no. 87502.

The proposed date corresponds with the opinion of Jan of Czarnków on the direct relation between the nomination of Vladislaus of Opole and the resignation of Elizabeth of Poland from ruling Poland after returning to Hungary. Therefore, it is worth to briefly mention the circumstances associated with this change. The first one was the Lithuanian attack on the territory of Lesser Poland which took place in September 1376, causing considerable losses in Lublin and Sandomierz Lands⁴². According to Jan of Czarnków – who was aversed to Elizabeth of Poland – the queen did not rise to the task as a person responsible for the Kingdom's defence⁴³. On the other hand, the memorable 'massacre of Hungarians' in Krakow took place on the 7th of December 1376⁴⁴. This latter event in particular was supposed to make Louis' mother decide to leave Poland⁴⁵. Thus, the problem of governing the Vistula dominion had to be revised again. The King who had never taken into consideration his personal residency in Poland, decided to hand over the rule to Vladislaus of Opole as the Count palatine. It seems that his first task was to undertake preparations to respond adequately to the Lithuanian aggression, in which he was to be supported by newly appointed captains⁴⁶.

Dating the nomination of Vladislaus of Opole to the end of February 1377 also allows to deal with the objections put forward by Andrzej Marzec, and to view the Duke's activity in Poland – documented in the sources for the first half of 1377 – in a new light. It is otherwise known that at that time he was involved in preparations for the retaliatory expedition announced for summer against Lithuanians and in talks with the Duke of Gniewkowo, Władysław the White, regarding the purchase of his duchy⁴⁷. I believe that accepting the fact that Duke Vladislaus of Opole was acting at that time in Poland as the local Count palatine is more probable than considering these facts as manifestations of probing the opinion or 'fitting' into the governorship.

⁴² JC, pp. 674–675; more on the invasion: J. Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie*, pp. 303–305; G. Błaszczak, *Dzieje stosunków polsko-litewskich od czasów najdawniejszych do współczesności*, vol. 1: *Trudne początki*, Poznań 1998, pp. 67–68.

⁴³ JC, p. 674.

⁴⁴ JC, p. 677. On the events in Krakow: J. Dąbrowski, *Elżbieta*, pp. 418–419.

⁴⁵ JC, p. 677.

⁴⁶ More broadly on the nominations for captains at that time: D. Wróbel, *Na pierwszym planie – możni i szlachta wobec bezkrólewia po śmierci Ludwika Andegaweńskiego*, Lublin 2020, s. 34–39.

⁴⁷ KDKK, vol. 2, no. 299; JC, p. 689; *Franciscani Thoruniensis*, p. 103; *Abschnitten aus der Chronik Detmar's von Lübeck*, ed. E. Strehlke, in: *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*, vol. 3, eds. T. Hirsch, M. Töppen, E. Strehlke, Leipzig 1866, p. 101. In the light of the Duke's itinerary from that time (see: J. Sperka, *Władysław*, p. 326 – stay in Opole on the 12th of March 1377), the possibility of the Duke's participation in the meeting organised in Brześć Kujawski appears to be problematic but it is not ruled out.

PROTEST OF GNIEZNO

Handing over the prerogatives of Count palatine of Poland to Vladislaus of Opole was a decision which remained in conflict with the law and spirit of the privilege of Košice from the 17th of September 1374. In the privilege, the monarch promised that he would not appoint any duke a captain over the nobility or he would not hand over any castle in the Kingdom to a duke⁴⁸. The contradiction of the privilege expressed in this way and the Count palatine's nomination for Vladislaus of Opole was well recognized by the king, the nominee, but also all the Polish noblemen. Hence, it is no wonder then the monarch's decision agitated resistance in Poland and provoked a formal protest issued by the dignitaries of Greater Poland, who gathered at a rally in Gniezno which was convened exactly for that matter⁴⁹.

Taking into consideration the correction of the date – provided by Jan of Czarnków – of convening the meeting in Gniezno (Sunday *Laetare* which in 1377 fell on the 8th of March)⁵⁰, it is easy to see that the reaction of anonymous *proceres maioris Poloniae* was very quick, if not too quick to accept the possibility of making the decision on nominating Vladislaus of Opole without prior announcements (not consultations) from the royal court's perspective. If Louis, as I believe, had made the decision on the Count palatine immediately after seeing his mother towards the end of January 1377, he had a sufficient amount of time to communicate his will both to the Duke who was in Ruthenia at that time and to Polish people. In this case, the corrected date of the initiative of the inhabitants of Greater Poland raises no doubts.

Despite the contradiction of the nomination for the Duke of Opole and the laws of the Privilege of Košice, the ruler decided to take this step so apparently he must have felt very confident because it was not the first time that he disregarded agreements with Polish subjects. He would allow this

⁴⁸ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, vol. 3, ed. I. Zakrzewski, Poznań 1879, no. 1709, p. 426: '[...] promittimus, quod nullum baronem, militem seu nobilem, vel alium quemcunque cuiuscunque condicionis existat extraneum hospitem seu alienigenam, preterquam nacione Polonum, in capitaneum, in vulgo starosta dictum, preficere debemus, nisi talem, qui sub eadem corona et de gente Polonica sit oriundus, dummodo non descendat de stirpe ducali'. As noted by J. Dąbrowski (*Ostatnie lata*, p. 380), there was no explicit mention on giving away the country's reign in the privilege's passage but, despite that, 'the king was right only literally and not substantially'.

⁴⁹ According to Jan of Czarnków the protesters referred to Louis' promises from the Privilege of Košice (1374) – JC, p. 681: '[...] supplicantes ut nullum ducem in praefectum eorum praeficere deberet [...] promiserat etenim dominus rex et litteris suis firmaverat, nullum ducem Poloniam in capitaneum praeficere debere [...]'].

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 681.

because a vast majority of the elites in Poland was inclined to turn a blind eye to activities contradicting the laws and spirit of the issued privileges. As was correctly noted by Andrzej Marzec, the inhabitants of Greater Poland were the only ones amongst the Polish noblemen who protested against breaking the terms of Košice⁵¹. This circumstance explains why the protest went initially unnoticed. It turned out to be an isolated voice so the royal court decided to gloss over it. Perhaps the monarch managed to temporarily convince the elites in Poland that the mission of the Duke of Opole would be only of a casual nature, associated with war preparations which – at least for some time – managed to calm down the mood in Greater Poland. The protest of Gniezno, standing at the foundation of legalism, ended in failure also because the inhabitants of Greater Poland surprised by the king's decision did not manage, or did not have time, to mobilise other land communities to their reasoning.

However, according to Jan of Czarnków, the March protest of the inhabitants of Greater Poland engendered the Duke's dismissal from the office of the Count palatine⁵². It follows that the chronicler wrote chapter thirty-eight already after Vladislaus of Opole was dismissed but it is still not known when this dismissal took place. It is clear from previous arguments that the protest did not have an immediate effect since the Duke of Opole acted as the Count palatine already on the 9th of April 1378⁵³, and that is more than a year after the convention in Gniezno. It is also known that his deposition had taken place before the 1st of October of that year when the role of a regent was once again played by Elizabeth of Poland⁵⁴. From the point of view of the administration's continuity, it should be accepted that the Duke's dismissal happened when the Queen-Mother arrived in Poland. If her arrival had previously been announced and awaited, the Duke of Opole could wait for her in Krakow⁵⁵. However, it cannot be ruled out that Silesian Piast ceased to be the Count palatine shortly after the 9th of April 1378. In this case, an indirect indication – although not a forgone conclusion – is the information by Jan of Czarnków in the fortieth chapter of his *Chronicle* on independent organisation of retaliatory expeditions

⁵¹ See: A. Marzec, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

⁵² JC, p. 681 (chapter 38).

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 682 (chapter 39).

⁵⁴ KDM, vol. 1, no. 341; E. Breiter, *op. cit.*, p. 117; J. Dąbrowski, *Elżbieta*, p. 421; idem, *Ostatnie*, p. 383. It was on the 15th of September 1378 that the queen issued a document in Buda – MNL, DF, ref. no. 269302. It means that she could have arrived in Krakow towards the end of that month.

⁵⁵ The gap in the Duke's itinerary between his stay in Lvov on the 25th of August and the 1st of November (J. Sperka, *Władysław*, p. 327) allows for the possibility of his travel to Lesser Poland to resign his governorship.

against the Pomeranian family of Borek by the general captain of Greater Poland, Domarat of Iwno, if their timing was in fact close to the fire of the town of Wałcz, on the 17th of April 1378, mentioned in that chapter⁵⁶. Had Vladislaus of Opole still remained the Count palatine of Poland, it seems that it would be him who should coordinate the abovementioned military action. Meanwhile, it is known that around that time, after entering into an agreement with Bartosz Wezenborg, the Duke left for Ruthenia⁵⁷.

Unfortunately, in this case one cannot go beyond conjectures. If one was to accept an earlier date then it would be possible to cautiously presume the delayed effect of the protest of Gniezno and the development of lawlessness for a few months before the arrival of Elizabeth of Poland. However, even if Vladislaus of Opole was not dismissed in April 1378 but later, his stay in Ruthenia for a few month still brought the actual lawlessness in Poland.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the *Chronicle of Jan of Czarnków* allows to state that he claimed that the moment of granting power to the Duke of Opole was in 1377. Consequently, the protest of the inhabitants of Greater Poland – issued at the meeting in Gniezno on Saturday *Laetare*, the 8th of March – should be dated to the same year. Vladislaus as the governor: a) took part in preparations for the Lithuanian campaign, b) negotiated the terms of agreement with the Duke of Gniewkowo, c) certified documents presented to him by the Polish subjects of King Louis, d) gave orders to captains regarding the collection of taxed from church properties, and e) participated in the campaign against Lithuania. His authority as the Count palatine was respected by the royal officials (captains), the episcopate, and the majority of land communities in the Kingdom of Poland. Nevertheless, his appointment to the Count palatine was inconsistent with the privilege of Košice and as such it was opposed by the residents of Greater Poland. Their initiative remained unnoticed at least for a year and thus it is not certain whether it played any role in the deposition of the Duke-Count palatine between mid-April and the end of September 1378.

(translated by Anna Miączewska)

⁵⁶ JC, pp. 683–684.

⁵⁷ J. Sperka, *Władysław*, p. 326.

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STRESZCZENIE

W dotychczasowych badaniach spotykane są różne propozycje datacji namiestnictwa Władysława Opolczyka w Polsce. Starsza historiografia opowiadała się za datacją późniejszą (1378, 1379). J. Dąbrowski przyjmował rok 1377, po wyprawie litewskiej, a w najnowszej literaturze mowa jest o przełomie 1377/1378 r., a ponadto kwestionowany jest związek nominacji księcia z rezygnacją z regencji Elżbiety Łokietkówny. Mnogość propozycji wynika z braku źródeł dokumentowych i z problematycznej chronologii *Kroniki Jana z Czarnkowa*. Analiza określeń chronologicznych kronikarza (*eodem anno* itd.), w połączeniu z informacjami datowanymi w sposób bezwzględny, prowadzi do wniosku, że kładł on nominację Opolczyka przez króla Ludwika na początek 1377 r., lecz omawiany fragment dzieła ma zaburzoną kolejność rozdziałów. Z kolei z analizy itinerariów monarszego i książęcego z początku 1377 r. wynika, że do ich spotkania doszło pod koniec lutego, który jest prawdopodobnym momentem przekazania namiestnictwa w ręce księcia. Datacja ta koresponduje z relacją Jana z Czarnkowa o związku tej nominacji z ówczesną decyzją królowej Elżbiety o wyjeździe z Polski, co było związane z krytyką jej rządów po najeździe litewskim z 1376 r. i z tzw. rzezią Węgrów z 7 grudnia tego roku. Decyzja o powierzeniu rządów namiestniczych Opolczykowi została oprostowana przez możnych wielkopolskich (8 marca 1377 r.), lecz nie spowodowało to natychmiastowego odwołania księcia, którego autorytet uznawali starostowie królewscy, episkopat polski oraz dostojnicy małopolscy. Mimo to, między połową kwietnia a końcem września 1378 r. książę opolski przestał pełnić funkcję namiestnika.

Słowa kluczowe: Władysław książę opolski, namiestnictwo, *Kronika Jana z Czarnkowa*

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