

= History of Poland during the Piast dynasty =

The history of Poland during the Piast dynasty is the first major stage in the history of Poland . The Piast period lasted from the 10th through the 14th century , when Poland was established as a state and a nation during the Middle Ages of European history . The history of Poland commences with the founding of the Piast dynasty ( Siemowit , Lestek and Siemomys? were listed by the chronicler as its first dukes ) and the rule of the proper founder of the Polish state Mieszko I , from around 960 AD . The indigenous Piast ruling house was largely responsible for the formation of the state and remained in power until 1370 . Mieszko chose to be baptized in the Western Latin Rite in 966 , which established a major cultural boundary in Europe . He completed the unification of the West Slavic tribal lands fundamental to the existence of the new country of Poland .

Following the emergence of the Polish state , a series of rulers converted the population to Christianity , created a strong kingdom and integrated Poland into the European culture . Mieszko 's son , Boles?aw I Chrobry , established a Polish Church province , pursued territorial conquests and was officially crowned in 1025 , becoming the first King of Poland . The first Piast monarchy collapsed with the death of Mieszko II Lambert in 1034 , followed by its restoration under Casimir I. Casimir 's son , Boles?aw II the Bold , brought back the military assertiveness of Boles?aw I , but became fatally involved in a conflict with Bishop Stanislaus of Szczepanów , and was expelled from the country .

Boles?aw III , the last duke of the early period , succeeded in defending his country and recovering territories previously lost . Upon his death in 1138 , Poland was divided among his sons . The resulting internal fragmentation eroded the initial Piast monarchy structure in the 12th and 13th centuries and caused fundamental and lasting changes . Konrad I of Masovia invited the Teutonic Knights to help him fight the Baltic Prussian pagans , which led to centuries of Poland 's warfare with the Knights and the German Prussian state .

The Kingdom was restored under W?adys?aw I the Elbow @-@ high , then strengthened and expanded by his son Casimir III the Great . The western provinces of Silesia and Pomerania were lost after the fragmentation , and Poland began expanding to the east . The period ended with the reigns of two members of the Angevin dynasty . The consolidation in the 14th century laid the base for the new powerful Kingdom of Poland that was to follow .

= = 10th ? 12th century = =

= = Mieszko I ; adoption of Christianity ( ca . 960 ? 992 ) = = =

The tribe of the Polans ( Polanie , lit . " people of the fields " ) of what is now Greater Poland , gave rise to a tribal predecessor of the Polish state in the early part of the 10th century , with the Polans settling in the flatlands around the emerging strongholds of Giecz , Pozna? , Gniezno and Ostrów Lednicki . Accelerated rebuilding of old tribal fortified settlements , construction of massive new ones and territorial expansion took place during 920 ? 950 . The process continued and the Polish state developed from tribal roots in the second half of the century . According to the chronicler Gallus Anonymus , the Polans were ruled by the Piast dynasty . In existing sources , Piast ruler Mieszko I was first mentioned by Widukind of Corvey in his *Res gestae saxonicae* , a chronicle of 10th @-@ century Germany . Widukind reported that Mieszko 's forces were twice defeated in 963 by the Veleti tribes acting in cooperation with the Saxon exile Wichmann the Younger . Under Mieszko 's rule ( ca . 960 to 992 ) , his tribal state accepted Christianity and became the Polish state .

The viability of the emerging state was assured by the persistent territorial expansion of the early Piast rulers . Beginning with a very small area around Gniezno ( before the town itself existed ) , the Piast expansion lasted throughout most of the 10th century , resulting in a territory approximating that of present @-@ day Poland . The Polanie tribe conquered and merged with other Slavic tribes and formed a tribal federation , and later , a centralized state . After the addition of Lesser Poland , the country of the Vistulans , and of Silesia ( both taken by Mieszko from the Czech state during the

later part of the 10th century ) , Mieszko 's state reached its mature form , including the main regions regarded as ethnically Polish .

The Piast lands totaled about 250 @, @ 000 km<sup>2</sup> ( 96 @, @ 526 sq mi ) in area , with an approximate population of under one million .

Initially a pagan , Mieszko I was the first ruler of the Polans tribal union known from contemporary written sources . A detailed account of aspects of Mieszko 's early reign was given by Ibrâhîm ibn Ya`qûb , a Jewish traveler , according to whom Mieszko was one of four Slavic " kings " established in central and southern Europe in the 960s . In 965 , Mieszko , who was allied with Boleslaus I , Duke of Bohemia at the time , married the duke 's daughter , Doubravka , a Christian princess . Mieszko 's conversion to Christianity in its Western Latin Rite followed on 14 April 966 , and is considered to be the founding event of the Polish state . In the aftermath of Mieszko 's 967 victory over a force of the Velunzani , which was led by Wichmann , the first missionary bishop was appointed . The action counteracted the intended eastern expansion of the Magdeburg Archdiocese , established at about the same time .

Mieszko 's state had a complex political relationship with the German Holy Roman Empire , as Mieszko was a " friend " , ally and vassal of Otto I , paying him tribute from the western part of his lands . It fought wars with the Polabian Slavs , the margraves of the Saxon Eastern March ( Gero in 963 ? 964 and Hodo in 972 , see Battle of Cedynia ) , and the Czechs . The victories over Wichmann and Hodo allowed Mieszko to extend his Pomeranian possessions west to the vicinity of the Oder River and its mouth . After the death of Otto I , and then again after the death of Otto II , Mieszko supported Henry the Quarrelsome , a pretender to the imperial crown . After the death of Dobrawa , Mieszko married ca . 980 a German , Oda von Haldensleben , daughter of Dietrich , Margrave of the Northern March . When fighting the Czechs in 990 , Mieszko was helped by the Holy Roman Empire . By about the year 990 , when Mieszko I officially submitted his country to the authority of the Holy See ( Dagome iudex ) , he had transformed Poland into one of the strongest powers in central @-@ eastern Europe .

= = = Bolesław I ; Church province , conquests , Kingdom of Poland ( 992 ? 1025 ) = = =

Mieszko I died in 992 . Contrary to what the first ruler of Poland had intended , when Oda with her ( and Mieszko 's ) minor sons lost the power struggle , Bolesław , Mieszko 's oldest son , became the sole ruler of Poland . A man of high ambition and strong personality , Bolesław embarked on further territorial expansion to the west ( Lusatia region ) , south , and east . While often successful , the campaigns and the gains turned out to be of only passing significance and badly strained the resources of the young nation . Bolesław lost the economically crucial Farther Pomerania , together with its new bishopric in Kołobrzeg ; the region had previously been conquered with great effort by Mieszko .

Bolesław Chrobry ( ruled 992 ? 1025 ) began his reign by continuing his father 's policy of alliance with the Holy Roman Empire . Bolesław received and helped Wojciech of the Slavník family , a well @-@ connected Czech bishop in exile and missionary who was killed in 997 while on a mission in Prussia . Bolesław skillfully took advantage of Wojciech 's death : the martyrdom of Wojciech gave Poland a patron saint , St. Adalbert , and resulted in the creation of an independent Polish province of the Church with an archbishop in Gniezno . In the year 1000 , the young Emperor Otto III came as a pilgrim to visit St. Adalbert 's grave and lent his support to Bolesław during the Congress of Gniezno ; the Gniezno Archdiocese and several subordinate dioceses were established on this occasion . The Polish ecclesiastical province effectively served as an essential anchor and an institution to fall back on for the Piast state , helping it to survive in the troubled centuries ahead .

Otto died in 1002 and Bolesław 's relationship with his successor Henry II turned out to be much more difficult , resulting in a series of wars ( 1002 ? 1005 , 1007 ? 1013 , 1015 ? 1018 ) . From 1003 ? 1004 Bolesław intervened militarily in Czech dynastic conflicts . After his forces were removed from Bohemia in 1018 , Bolesław retained Moravia . In 1013 the marriage between Bolesław 's son Mieszko and Richeza of Lotharingia , the niece of Emperor Otto III and future mother of Casimir I the Restorer , took place . The conflicts with Germany ended in 1018 with the Peace of Bautzen accord

, on favorable terms for Bolesław . In the context of the 1018 Kiev expedition , Bolesław took over the western part of Red Ruthenia . In 1025 , shortly before his death , Bolesław I the Brave finally succeeded in obtaining the papal permission to crown himself , and became the first king of Poland .

=== Mieszko II ; collapse of the reign ( 1025 ? 1039 ) ===

King Mieszko II Lambert ( 990 ? 1034 ) tried to continue the politics of his father using Bolesław 's kingdom as an interventionist great power . Mieszko 's actions reinforced old resentment and hostility on the part of Poland 's neighbors , and his two dispossessed brothers took advantage of it , arranging for Rus ' and German invasions in 1031 ; Mieszko was defeated and was forced to leave the country . Later , Mieszko 's brothers Bezprym and Otto were killed and Mieszko partially recovered . The first Piast monarchy collapsed with Mieszko 's death in 1034 . Deprived of a government , Poland was ravaged by an anti @-@ feudal and pagan rebellion , and in 1039 by the forces of Bretislaus I of Bohemia . The country suffered territorial losses , and the functioning of the Gniezno archdiocese was disrupted .

=== Restoration under Casimir I ( 1039 ? 1058 ) ===

The nation made a recovery under Mieszko 's son , Duke Casimir I ( 1016 ? 1058 ) , properly known as the Restorer . After returning from exile in 1039 , Casimir rebuilt the Polish monarchy and the country 's territorial integrity through several military campaigns : in 1047 , Masovia was taken back from Miecław , and in 1054 Silesia from the Czechs . Casimir was aided by the recent adversaries of Poland , the Holy Roman Empire and Kievan Rus ' , both of whom disliked the chaos in Poland . Casimir introduced a more mature form of feudalism and relieved the burden of financing large army units from the duke 's treasury by settling his warriors on feudal estates . Faced with the widespread destruction of Greater Poland after the Czech expedition , Casimir moved his court to Kraków , replacing the old Piast capitals of Poznań and Gniezno ; Kraków functioned as the nation 's capital for several centuries .

=== Bolesław II ; conflict with Bishop Stanisław ( 1058 ? 1079 ) ===

Casimir 's son Bolesław II the Bold , also known as the Generous ( ruled 1058 ? 1079 ) , developed Polish military strength and waged several foreign campaigns between 1058 and 1077 . As an active supporter of the papal side in its feud with the German emperor , Bolesław crowned himself king in 1076 with the blessing of Pope Gregory VII . In 1079 there was an anti @-@ Bolesław conspiracy or conflict that involved the Bishop of Kraków . Bolesław had Bishop Stanislaus of Szczepanów executed ; subsequently Bolesław was forced to abdicate the Polish throne because of the pressure from the Catholic Church and the pro @-@ imperial faction of the nobility . St. Stanislaus was to become the second martyr and patron saint of Poland , canonized in 1253 .

=== Władysław I Herman ( 1079 ? 1102 ) ===

After Bolesław 's exile the country found itself under the unstable rule of his younger brother Władysław I Herman ( ruled 1079 ? 1102 ) . Władysław was strongly dependent on Palatine Sieciech . When Władysław 's two sons , Zbigniew and Bolesław , finally forced Władysław to remove his hated protégé , Poland was divided among the three of them from 1098 , and after the father 's death from 1102 to 1106 between the two brothers .

=== Bolesław III ( 1102 ? 1138 ) ===

After a power struggle , Bolesław III the Wry @-@ mouthed ( ruled 1102 ? 1138 ) became the

Duke of Poland by defeating his half @-@ brother in 1106 ? 1107 . Zbigniew had to leave the country , but received support from Emperor Henry V , who attacked Bolesław's Poland in 1109 . Bolesław was able to defend his country because of his military abilities , determination and alliances , and also because of a national mobilization across the social spectrum ( see Battle of Głogów ) ; Zbigniew who later returned was eliminated . Bolesław's other major achievement was the conquest of all of Mieszko I's Pomerania ( of which the remaining eastern part had been lost by Poland from after the death of Mieszko II ) , a task begun by his father and completed by Bolesław around 1123 . Szczecin was subdued in a bloody takeover and Western Pomerania up to Rügen , except for the directly incorporated southern part , became Bolesław's fief , to be ruled locally by Wartislaw I , the first duke of the Griffon dynasty .

At this time , Christianization of the region was initiated in earnest , an effort crowned by the establishment of the Pomeranian Wolin Diocese after Bolesław's death in 1140 .

== = Fragmentation of the realm ( 1138 ? c . 1314 ) = = =

Before he died , Bolesław Krzywousty divided the country , in a limited sense , among four of his sons . He made complex arrangements intended to prevent fratricidal warfare and preserve the Polish state's formal unity , but after Bolesław's death the plan's implementation had failed and in reality a long period of fragmentation was ushered in . For nearly two centuries the Piasts were to spar with each other , the clergy , and the nobility for the control over the divided kingdom . The stability of the system was supposedly assured by the institution of the senior or high duke of Poland , based in Kraków and assigned to the special Seniorate Province that was not to be subdivided . Following his concept of seniorate , Bolesław divided the country into five principalities : Silesia , Greater Poland , Masovia , Sandomierz and Kraków . The first four provinces were given to his four sons , who became independent rulers . The fifth province , the Seniorate Province of Kraków , was to be added to the senior among the Princes who , as the Grand Duke of Kraków , was the representative of the whole of Poland . This principle broke down already within the generation of Bolesław III's sons , when Władysław II the Exile , Bolesław IV the Curly , Mieszko III the Old and Casimir II the Just fought for power and territory in Poland , and in particular over the Kraków throne .

The external borders left by Bolesław III at his death closely resembled the borders left by Mieszko I ; this original early Piast monarchy configuration had not survived the fragmentation period .

== = Culture = = =

From the time of the baptism of Poland's ruling elite , foreign churchmen had been arriving and the culture of early Medieval Poland was developing as a part of European Christendom . However , it would be a few generations from the time of Mieszko's conversion until significant numbers of native clergymen appeared . After the establishment of numerous monasteries in the 12th and 13th centuries , Christianization of the populace was accomplished on a larger scale .

Intellectual and artistic activity was concentrated around the institutions of the Church , the courts of the kings and dukes , and emerged around the households of the rising hereditary elite . Written annals began to be generated in the late 10th century ; leaders like Mieszko II and Casimir the Restorer were considered literate and educated . Along with the Dagome iudex act , the most important written document and source of the period is the Gesta principum Polonorum , a chronicle by Gallus Anonymus , a foreign cleric from the court of Bolesław the Wry @-@ mouthed . A number of Pre @-@ Romanesque stone churches were built beginning in the 10th century , often accompanied by palatium ruler residencies ; Romanesque buildings proper followed . The earliest coins were minted by Bolesław I around 995 . The Gniezno Doors ( 1170s ) of Gniezno Cathedral ( bronze low relief ) are the finest example of Romanesque sculpture . Bruno of Querfurt was one of the pioneering Western clergymen spreading Church literacy ; some of his prominent writings had been produced in eremitic monasteries in Poland . Among the preeminent early monastic religious orders were the Benedictines ( the abbey in Tyniec founded in 1044 ) and the Cistercians .

= = 13th century = =

= = = State and society ; German settlement = = =

The 13th century brought fundamental changes to the structure of Polish society and its political system . Because of the fragmentation and constant internal conflicts , the Piast dukes were unable to stabilize Poland 's external borders of the early Piast rulers . Western Farther Pomerania broke its political ties with Poland in the second half of the 12th century and from 1231 became a fief of the Margraviate of Brandenburg , which in 1307 extended its Pomeranian possessions even further east , taking over the S?awno and S?upsk areas . Pomerelia or Gda?sk Pomerania had been independent of the Polish dukes from 1227 . In mid 13th century , Boles?aw II the Bald granted Lubusz Land to the Margraviate , which made possible the creation of the Neumark and had far reaching negative consequences for the integrity of the western border . In the south @-@ east , Leszek the White was unable to preserve Poland 's supremacy over the Halych area of Rus ' , a territory that had changed hands on a number of occasions .

The social status was becoming increasingly based on the size of feudal land possessions . Those included the lands controlled by the Piast princes , their rivals the great lay land owners and church entities , all the way down to the knightly class ; the work force ranged from hired " free " people , through serfs attached to the land , to slaves ( purchased or war and other prisoners ) . The upper layer of the feudal lords , first the Church and then others , were able to acquire economic and legal immunity , which made them exempt to a significant degree from court jurisdiction or economical obligations ( including taxation ) , that had previously been imposed by the ruling dukes .

The civil strife and foreign invasions , such as the Mongol invasions in 1240 / 1241 , 1259 / 1260 and 1287 / 1288 , weakened and depopulated the many small Polish principalities , as the country was becoming progressively more subdivided . The depopulation and the increasing demand for labor in the developing economy caused a massive immigration of West European peasants , mostly German settlers into Poland ( early waves from Germany and Flanders in the 1220s ) . The German , Polish and other new rural settlements were a form of feudal tenancy with immunity and German town laws were often utilized as its legal bases . German immigrants were also important in the rise of the cities and the establishment of the Polish burgher ( city dwelling merchants ) class ; they brought with them West European laws ( Magdeburg rights ) and customs which the Poles adopted . From that time the Germans , who created early strong establishments ( led by patriciates ) especially in the urban centers of Silesia and other regions of western Poland , had been an increasingly influential minority in Poland .

In 1228 , the Acts of Cienia were passed and signed into law by W?adys?aw III Laskonogi . The titular Duke of Poland promised to provide a " just and noble law according to the council of bishops and barons . " Such legal guarantees and privileges included the lower level land owners ? knights , who were evolving into the lower and middle nobility class known later as szlachta . The fragmentation period weakened the rulers and established a permanent trend in Polish history , whereby the rights and role of the nobility were expanded at the monarch 's expense .

= = = Teutonic Knights = = =

In 1226 Konrad I of Masovia invited the Teutonic Knights to help him fight the pagan Baltic Prussian people , who lived in a territory adjacent to his lands ; substantial border warfare was taking place and Konrad 's province was suffering from Prussian invasions . On the other hand , the Old Prussians themselves were at that time being subjected to increasingly forced ( including papacy @-@ sponsored crusades ) , but largely ineffective Christianization efforts . The Teutonic Order soon overstepped the authority and moved beyond the area granted them by Konrad ( Che?mno Land or Kulmerland ) . In the following decades they conquered large areas along the Baltic Sea coast and established their monastic state . As virtually all of the Western Baltic pagans became

converted or exterminated ( the Prussian conquests were completed by 1283 ) , the Knights confronted Poland and Lithuania , then the last pagan state in Europe . Teutonic wars with Poland and Lithuania continued for most of the 14th and 15th centuries . The Teutonic state in Prussia , populated by German settlers beginning in the 13th century , had been claimed as a fief and protected by the popes and Holy Roman Emperors .

= = = Reunification attempts ; Przemys? II , Václav II ( 1232 ? 1305 ) = = =

As the disadvantages of national division were becoming increasingly apparent in various segments of the society , some of the Piast dukes had begun making serious efforts aimed at the reunification of the Polish state . Important among the earlier attempts were the activities of the Silesian dukes Henry I the Bearded , his son Henry II the Pious , who was killed in 1241 while fighting the Mongols at the Battle of Legnica , and Henry IV Probus . In 1295 Przemys? II of Greater Poland became the first , since Boles?aw II , Piast duke crowned as King of Poland , but he ruled over only a part of the territory of Poland ( including from 1294 Gda?sk Pomerania ) and was assassinated soon after his coronation . A more extensive unification of Polish lands was accomplished by a foreign ruler , Václav II of Bohemia of the P?emyslid dynasty , who married Przemys? 's daughter and became King of Poland in 1300 . Václav 's heavy @-@ handed policies soon caused him to lose whatever support he had earlier in his reign ; he died in 1305 .

An important factor in the unification process was the Polish Church , which remained a single ecclesiastical province throughout the fragmentation period . Archbishop Jakub ?winka of Gniezno was an ardent proponent of Poland 's reunification ; he performed the crowning ceremonies for both Przemys? II and Wenceslaus II . ?winka supported W?adys?aw ?okietek at various stages of the duke 's career .

= = = Culture = = =

Culturally , the social impact of the Church was considerably broader in the 13th century , as networks of parishes were established and cathedral @-@ type schools became more common . The Dominicans and the Franciscans were the leading monastic orders at this time , and they interacted closely with the general population . A proliferation of narrative annals characterized the period , as well as other written records , laws and documents . More of the clergy were of local origin ; others were expected to know the Polish language . Wincenty Kad?ubek , the author of an influential chronicle , was the most recognized representative in the intellectual sphere . Perspectiva , a treatise on optics by Witelo , a Silesian monk , was one of the finest achievements of medieval science . The construction of churches and castles in the Gothic architecture style predominated in the 13th century ; native elements in art forms were increasingly important , with significant advances taking place in agriculture , manufacturing and crafts .

= = 14th century = =

= = = Reunited kingdom of the last Piast rulers = = =

W?adys?aw the Elbow @-@ high and his son Casimir the Great were the last two rulers of the Piast dynasty in the unified Kingdom of Poland of the 14th century . Their rule was not a return to the Polish state as it existed before the period of fragmentation , because of the loss of internal cohesion and territorial integrity . The regional Piast princes remained strong and for economic and cultural reasons some of them gravitated toward Poland 's neighbors . The Kingdom lost Pomerania and Silesia , the most highly developed and economically important of the original ethnically Polish lands ( a disputable designation in case of Slavic Western Pomerania ) , which left half of the Polish population outside the Kingdom 's borders . The western losses had to do with the failure of the unification efforts undertaken by the Silesian Piast dukes and the German expansion processes .

These included the Piast principalities developing ( or falling into ) dependencies in respect to the German political structures , settler colonization and gradual Germanization of the Polish ruling circles . The lower Vistula was controlled by the Teutonic Order . Masovia was not to be fully incorporated into the Polish state anytime soon . Casimir stabilized the western and northern borders , tried to regain some of the lost territories , and partially compensated the losses by his new eastern expansion , which placed within his kingdom regions that were East Slavic , and thus ethnically non @-@ Polish .

Despite the territorial truncation , 14th century Poland experienced a period of accelerated economic development and increasing prosperity . This included further expansion and modernization of agricultural settlements , the development of towns and their greater role in briskly growing trade , mining and metallurgy . A great monetary reform was implemented during the reign of Casimir III .

Jewish settlement was taking place in Poland since very early times . In 1264 Duke Bolesław the Pious of Greater Poland granted the Statute of Kalisz privilege , which specified a broad range of freedoms ( of religious practices , movement , trading ) and rights for the Jews , creating a legal precedent of official protection from local harassment and exclusion . The act also exempted the Jews from enslavement or serfdom and was the foundation of future Jewish prosperity in the Polish Kingdom ; it was later followed by many other comparable legal pronouncements . Following a series of expulsions of Jews from Western Europe , Jewish communities were established in Cracow , Kalisz and elsewhere in western and southern Poland in the 13th century ; at Lviv , Brest @-@ Litovsk and Grodno further east in the 14th century . King Casimir received Jewish refugees from Germany in 1349 , helping accelerate the Jewish expansion in Poland that was to continue until World War II . German urban and rural settlements were another long @-@ lasting ethnic feature .

= = = Władysław I the Elbow @-@ high ( 1305 ? 1333 ) = = =

Władysław Łokietek ( ruled 1305 ? 1333 ) , who began as an obscure Piast duke from Kuyavia , fought a lifelong , uphill battle with powerful adversaries with persistence and determination . When Łokietek died as the king of a partially reunited Poland , he left the Kingdom in a precarious situation . Although the area under King Władysław 's control was limited and many unresolved issues remained , Łokietek may have saved Poland 's existence as a state .

Supported by his Hungarian allies , Władysław returned from exile and challenged Václav II , and after his death Václav III in 1304 ? 1306 . Václav III 's murder terminated the Přemyslid dynasty and their involvement in Poland . Afterwards Władysław Łokietek completed the takeover of Lesser Poland , entering Kraków , and took the lands north of there , through Kuyavia all the way to Gdańsk Pomerania . In 1308 , Pomerania was conquered by the Brandenburg state . In a recovery effort , Łokietek agreed to ask for help the Teutonic Knights ; the Knights brutally took over Gdańsk Pomerania and kept it for themselves .

In 1311 ? 1312 , a rebellion in Kraków instigated by the city 's patrician leadership seeking a rule by the House of Luxembourg was put down . This event may have had a limiting impact on the emerging political power of towns .

In 1313 ? 1314 Władysław conquered Greater Poland . In 1320 , Władysław I Łokietek became the first King of Poland crowned not in Gniezno , but in Kraków 's Wawel Cathedral . The coronation was hesitantly agreed to by Pope John XXII , despite the opposition from John of Bohemia , who had also claimed the Polish crown . John undertook in 1327 an expedition aimed at Kraków , which he was compelled to abort ; in 1328 , he waged a crusade against Lithuania during which he formalized an alliance with the Teutonic Order . The Order was in a state of war with Poland from 1327 to 1332 ( see Battle of Płowce ) ; the Knights captured Dobrzyń Land and Kujawy . Władysław was helped by his alliances with Hungary ( his daughter Elizabeth was married to King Charles Robert in 1320 ) and Lithuania ( 1325 pact against the Teutonic State and the marriage of Łokietek 's son Casimir to Aldona , daughter of Lithuanian ruler Gediminas ) , and from 1329 by a peace agreement with Brandenburg . A lasting achievement of John of Luxembourg ( and Poland 's

greatest loss ) was forcing most of the Piast Silesian principalities , often ambivalent about their loyalties , into allegiance ( 1327 ? 29 ) .

= = = Casimir III the Great ( 1333 ? 1370 ) = = =

After Łokietek 's death , the old monarch 's 23 @-@ year @-@ old son became King Casimir III , later known as Kazimierz the Great ( ruled 1333 ? 1370 ) . Unlike his father the new king had no inclination for the hardships of military life . Casimir 's contemporaries did not give him much of a chance for overcoming the country 's mounting difficulties or succeeding as a leader . But from the beginning , Casimir acted prudently , purchasing in 1335 John 's claims to the Polish throne . In 1343 , Casimir settled several high @-@ level arbitration disputes with the Teutonic Order by a territorial compromise , culminating in the Treaty of Kalisz , a peace treaty that concluded the Polish @-@ Teutonic War of 1326 ? 1332 . Dobrzy? Land and Kuyavia were recovered by Casimir . At that time Poland started to expand to the east and through a series of military campaigns between 1340 and 1366 Casimir had annexed the Halych ? Volodymyr area of Rus ' . The town of Lviv there attracted newcomers of several nationalities , was granted municipal rights in 1356 , and had thus begun its career as Lwów , the main Polish center in the midst of a Rus ' Orthodox population . Supported by Hungary , the Polish king in 1338 promised the Hungarian ruling house the Polish throne in the event he dies without male heirs .

Casimir , who in 1339 formally gave up his rights to several Silesian principalities , unsuccessfully tried to recover the region by conducting military activities against the Luxembourgs between 1343 and 1348 , but then blocked the attempted separation of Silesia from the Gniezno Archdiocese by Charles IV . Later until his death he pursued the Polish claim to Silesia legally by petitioning the pope ; his successors had not continued his efforts .

Allied with Denmark and Western Pomerania ( Gda?sk Pomerania was granted to the Order as an " eternal charity " ) , Casimir was able to impose some corrections on the western border . In 1365 Drezdenko and Santok became Poland 's fiefs , while Wa?cz district was in 1368 taken outright , severing the land connection between Brandenburg and the Teutonic state and connecting Poland with Farther Pomerania .

Casimir the Great considerably solidified the country 's position in both foreign and domestic affairs . Domestically , he integrated and centralized the reunited Polish state and helped develop what was considered the " Crown of the Polish Kingdom " ? the state within its actual , as well as past or potential ( legal from the Polish point of view ) boundaries . Casimir established or strengthened kingdom @-@ wide institutions ( such as the powerful state treasury ) , independent of the regional , class , or royal court related interests . Internationally , the Polish king was very active diplomatically , cultivated close contacts with other European rulers and was a staunch defender of the Polish national interest . In 1364 he sponsored the Congress of Kraków , in which a number of monarchs participated , and which was concerned with the promotion of peaceful cooperation and political balance in Central Europe .

= = = Louis I and Jadwiga of the Angevin dynasty ( 1370 ? 1399 ) = = =

Immediately after Casimir 's death in 1370 , the heirless king 's nephew , Louis of Hungary of the Angevin dynasty , assumed the Polish throne . As Casimir 's actual commitment to the Angevin succession seemed problematic from the beginning ( in 1368 the Polish king adopted his grandson , Casimir of S?upsk ) , Louis engaged in succession negotiations with Polish knights and nobility starting in 1351 . They supported him , exacting in return further guarantees and privileges for themselves ; the formal act was negotiated in Buda in 1355 . After the coronation , Louis returned to Hungary ; he left his mother and Casimir 's sister Elizabeth in Poland as a regent .

With the death of Casimir the Great , the period of hereditary ( Piast ) monarchy in Poland came to an end . The land owners and nobles did not want a strong monarchy ; a constitutional monarchy was established between 1370 and 1493 ( beginnings of general sejm , the dominant bicameral parliament of the future ) .



During the reign of Louis I , Poland formed a union with Hungary . In the pact of 1374 ( the Privilege of Koszyce ) , the Polish nobility were granted extensive concessions and agreed to extend the Angevin succession to Louis ' daughters , as Louis had no sons . Louis ' neglect of Polish affairs resulted in the loss of Casimir 's territorial gains , including Halych Rus ' , recovered by Queen Jadwiga in 1387 . In 1396 , Jadwiga and her husband Jagiełło ( Jogaila ) forcefully annexed the central Polish lands separating Lesser Poland from Greater Poland , previously granted by King Louis to his Silesian Piast ally , Duke Władysław of Opole .

The Hungarian - Polish union lasted for twelve years and ended in war . After Louis ' death in 1382 and an ensuing power struggle , the Polish nobility decided that Jadwiga , Louis ' youngest daughter , should become the next " King of Poland " ; Jadwiga arrived in 1384 and was crowned at the age of eleven . The failure of the union of Poland and Hungary paved the way for the union of Lithuania and Poland .

== Culture ==

In the 14th century , many large scale brick building projects were undertaken during Casimir 's reign , including the construction of Gothic churches , castles , urban fortifications and homes of wealthy city residents . The most notable architecture of the medieval period in Poland are the many churches representing the Polish Gothic style ; medieval sculpture , painting and ornamental smithery are best expressed in the furnishings of churches and liturgical items . Polish law was first codified in the Statutes of Casimir the Great ( Piotrków ? Wiślica Statutes ) from 1346 ? 1362 . Accordingly , conflict resolution relied on legal proceedings domestically , while bilateral or multilateral negotiations and treaties were increasingly important in international relations . By this time , the network of cathedral and parish schools had become well developed . In 1364 , Casimir the Great , based on a papal concession , established the University of Kraków , the second oldest university in Central Europe . While many still traveled to southern and western Europe for university studies , the Polish language , along with the predominant Latin , is increasingly present in written documents . The Holy Cross Sermons ( ca. early 14th century ) constitute possibly the oldest extant Polish prose manuscript .