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**FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO RZECZPOSPOLITA:  
HISTORY OF THE POLISH STATE IN THE RECEPTION OF THE JOURNAL  
"KWARTALNIK HISTORYCZNY" (1887 – 1939)**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the research is to reveal how the process of researching issues related to the origin, formation and development of the Polish state from ancient times to Rzeczpospolita was reflected on the pages of the journal "Kwartalnik Historyczny". The methodology of the research is based on the principles of historicism, systematization, scientificity, verification, authorial objectivity, moderate narrative constructivism, as well as the use of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization) and special historical (historical genetic, historical typological, historical systemic) methods. The scientific novelty is to present a discussion on the pages of the journal "Kwartalnik Historyczny" issues on the history of the Polish state: the origin, formation and its political and legal functioning. The latter is of utmost importance in the context of attempts to create synthesis on the history of Poland at the beginning of the XXth century, which was joined, first of all, by historians*

of state and law. **The Conclusions.** As we can see, many issues from the history of Poland from ancient times to Rzeczpospolita were covered in numerous studies, critical and source materials on the journal's pages. The most numerous group of materials devoted to this epoch were critical reviews and studies of political history, in the study of which scholars appealed to the time of the creation of the state and its greatest power. The authors of the journal dealt with a very wide range of topics: from the ancient state's name genesis, clarifying the history of the persons of the founding princes and builders of the state to the influence of geographical factors on its development features. The Polish statehood's restoration in 1918 forced the researchers of the time to draw parallels: first of all, with the plots of ancient Poland, second of all, with the times of its greatest economic and political power in the XVIth – at the beginning of the XVIIth centuries, inspiring reflection on the development models of the most optimal functioning of the Second Rzeczpospolita.

**Key words:** Polish historiography, historical press, journal “Kwartalnik Historyczny”, history of the Polish state.

### ВІД ДАВНІХ ЧАСІВ ДО РЕЧІ ПОСПОЛИТОЇ: ІСТОРІЯ ПОЛЬСЬКОЇ ДЕРЖАВИ У РЕЦЕПЦІЇ ЧАСОПИСУ “KWARTALNIK HISTORYCZNY” (1887 – 1939)

**Анотація.** *Мета дослідження* – розкрити як на сторінках часопису “Kwartalnik Historyczny” відобразився процес дослідження проблем, пов'язаних із походженням, становленням й розвитком польської держави від найдавніших часів до Речі Посполитої. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на принципах історизму, системності, науковості, верифікації, авторської об'єктивності, поміркованого нарративного конструктивізму, а також на використанні загальнонаукових (аналіз, синтез, узагальнення) та спеціально-історичних (історико-генетичний, історико-типологічний, історико-системний) методів. **Наукова новизна полягає** у представленні обговорення на сторінках часопису “Kwartalnik Historyczny” питань з історії польської держави: зародження, утворення та її політико-правового функціонування. Останнє має особливе значення у контексті спроб створення на початку ХХ ст. синтезу історії Польщі, до чого долучилися найперше історики держави і права. **Висновки.** Як бачимо, на сторінках часопису у численних дослідженнях, критичних та джерельних матеріалах знайшло висвітлення чимало питань з історії Польщі від найдавніших часів до Речі Посполитої. Найчисленнішою групою матеріалів, присвячених згаданій епосі, були критичні огляди та студії з політичної історії, у студіюванні якої вчені апелювали до часів створення держави та її найбільшої могутності. Автори часопису торкалися дуже широкого діапазону тем: від генези назви давньої держави, з'ясування історичності персон князів-засновників та будівничих держави до питань впливу географічних чинників на особливості її розбудови. Відновлення польської державності у 1918 р. нав'язувало тодішнім дослідникам проведення паралелей: по-перше, з сюжетами створення Давньої Польщі, а по-друге – з часами найбільшої економічної та політичної її могутності у XVI – початку XVII ст., інспіруючи до роздумів про вироблення моделей найбільш оптимального функціонування II Речі Посполитої.

**Ключові слова:** польська історіографія, історична преса, часопис “Kwartalnik Historyczny”, історія польської держави.

**The Problem Statement.** From the beginning of its existence, “Kwartalnik Historyczny”, as an integral part of Polish historiography, reflected its current state with all the changes of both methodological and ideological nature. Created as an official body of the Historical Society in Lviv, the journal very quickly, primarily due to the high scientific level and universality of its content, took the leading positions not only among historians but also in the Polish society united around the idea of restoring their own state. At the end of the XIXth century, after a series of unsuccessful attempts by the Poles to regain their independence by force of arms, it was historiography that became the epicenter of reflections on the past and future of the Polish state. And topics devoted to the history of the Polish state and law began to dominate on the pages of scientific publications.

**The Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications.** The first reflections on the Polish state formation study in the Middle Ages date back to the 30-ies of the XXth century and they were related to the summing up of half a century of activity of the Polish Historical Society (Tymieniecki, 1937, pp. 258–288). Subsequently, a number of works of a generalizing nature appeared, such as the research of E. Maternicki, which in a problematic personalist way represented the study of the history of Ancient Poland and its political and legal system at the end of the XIXth – at the end of the XXth centuries (Maternicki, 1982). Nowadays the above-mentioned issue is raised in works on theoretical and methodological transformations of Polish historical science of the period (Kolbuszewska, 2005), as well as in the context of individual stories from the past of Polish historical science (Lazurko; Luchenko, 2019). The researchers turn to the Polish state genesis in the concepts of Galician historians at the turn of the XIXth – XXth centuries (Wierzbicki, 2015, pp. 63–84). However, there are still no special studies devoted to the pages of the journal “Kwartalnik Historyczny” topics related to the history of the formation and development of the Polish state, especially given that this magazine throughout its publication in Lviv (1887 – 1939) remained the most authoritative tribune of Polish historical science.

**The purpose of the research** is to reveal how the process of researching issues related to the origin, formation and development of the Polish state from ancient times to Rzeczpospolita was reflected on the pages of the journal “Kwartalnik Historyczny”.

**The Main Material Statement.** The main part of the content of “Kwartalnika Historycznego” of Lviv period was occupied by research on the history of Poland, in particular political. In the work “Polish historiography in the Context of the Restoration of the State”, published in the magazine in 1923, S. Zakrzewski, writing about the development of Polish historical science during captivity, noted that during this period researchers focused primarily on disseminating knowledge about history Homeland, dealt with the problem of the relation “The Polish state – the Polish people” (Zakrzewski, 1923, p. 289). A reflection of this state of affairs is, in fact, the content of the magazine “Kwartalnik Historyczny”, on the pages of which we see a large number of materials on political history. In these studies, the scholars tried to find an answer to the most painful for the then the Polish society the question of loss of state independence, and in this context the question of “viability” of the state since its inception.

At the time of the organization of the Historical Society and the founding of “Kwartalnika Historycznego” Polish studies of the Middle Ages already had their own established traditions and moved on the echoed by the scientists of the XIXth century. The magazine presented the political history of medieval Poland in a number of problems: the genesis of the Polish people, the origin of the state, the formation and rule of the Piast dynasty, the foreign policy history of the Piast dynasty, domestic and foreign policy during the Jagiellonian dynasty, the Jagiellonian idea.

On issues related to ancient history, the Polish researchers paid great attention to the problem of the genesis of the Polish people, which was at the intersection of interests not only of historians but also of ethnographers and linguists. The Polish scholars always studied the historical origins of their people actively and, given the breadth of discussion, this historiographical phenomenon was called in science “Lehiada”. Since the creation of “Kwartalnik Historycznego”, the editorial board took an active part in the scientific controversy over these issues. Having a wide literary base and its own long research tradition in the Polish historiography, the problem received a new impetus for development in connection

with the publication of A. Maletsky's work "Lechites in the Light of Historical Criticism" (1897). A review of A. Maletsky's research, which actualized a critical consideration of the question "Why is the name "the Poles" associated with the older name of the Lyakhly – Lechites?", was carried out in the journal by K. Potkansky. The reviewer emphasized that the author revised the existing theories of the genesis of the Polish people, subjecting them to professional scientific criticism in the spirit of the classical positivist method. In his own scientific hypothesis, A. Maletsky composed elements of historical and historical literary criticism successfully (Potkański, 1898, pp. 291–300). Furthermore, being closely connected with the era of "Kwartalnika Historycznego" humble beginnings and the creation of the "face" of the magazine, this work conducted by A. Maletsky led to the creation of a special column called "Lechica" (Lechica), which the editorial board established for scientific discussion and invited to discuss the above-mentioned issue all interested persons (Redakcyja Kwartalnika Historycznego, 1898, p. 1). One of the first responses to the editorial board's call was the intelligence of the Russian historian E. Kunik "Lechica" – a kind of critical view on the previous interpretation of the Lechica issue. E. Kunik outlined the main research periods in the history of the scientific "Lechiada", addressed the Slavic onomastics' issue and the names of Poles' variants in the languages of different European nations (Kunik, 1898, pp. 3–20). In addition, the renowned linguist Jan Baudouin de Courtenay also took part in the discussion, translating E. Kunik's work from German into Polish for the magazine and publishing fragments of personal polemical correspondence with the Russian scholar on the pages of "Kwartalnika Historycznego".

It should be mentioned that the traditions in the "Lechica" section, which were laid down during the magazine's thematic priorities formation, carried on in the interwar period. Thus, the topic of "Lechiada" on the pages of "Kwartalnika Historycznego" of that time was addressed by T. E. Model in his work on medieval onomastics. He made a number of critical remarks concerning the names of Greater Moravia, Greater or White, Croatia and White Serbia, which were mentioned in the work, written by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Flavius Porphyrogenitus "On the Governance of the Empire" (the Xth century). The researcher E. T. Modelski dwelled on the Slavic (Polish) tribal union of the Lendians issue, which was mentioned by Constantine, on purpose. The term "Lendians" ("Lendizi"), derived from the word land (ląd), meant a plot of arable land. According to E. T. Modelski, such ethnonyms came from the "Lendians" and were used in different nations in order to describe the Poles, such as "lyakh" – the Russians, "lenkas" (lenkas) – the Lithuanians, and lendel (lendyel) – the Hungarians (Modelski, 1920, pp. 1–29).

Furthermore, another issue that became the subject of lively discussion on the pages of the magazine was the genesis issue, along with finding out the Polish state's name origin. In particular, much attention was paid to issues related to the legendary Piast activities, whose name gave the name to the dynasty of Polyany rulers, who ruled in Poland until 1370. It is noteworthy that these issues became the subject of research not only historians, but also philologists and ethnographers, which indicates the interdisciplinary orientation of the publication. Thus, the work of one of the most authoritative medievalists of the time, T. Wojciechowski, which was devoted to the Piast dynasty establishment, received a positive review. T. Wojciechowski dwelled on the problem of finding out the Piast identity. Consequently, the author reoriented the reader from the traditional for his time study of writing in other areas – in the world of legends and retellings, using in his studies a method different from the traditional positivist. In his opinion, there was no proper name for the

“Piast”, but there was a strong government of the Piast. Hence, the author made a conclusion that the father of Zemomysl (or himself) was the Piast (literally – the right hand, majordomo, manager) of the previous prince (Piekosiński, 1897, pp. 137–147).

In addition, A. Brickner, the famous historian and philologist, devoted a study to the philological aspect of this issue, which was called “On the Piast” (1897). Like T. Wojciechowski, A. Brickner substantiated his research with the oral folk art materials. The author put forward his own original interpretation of the origin of the Piast name and, unlike T. Wojciechowski, proved the historicity of his person. One more researcher, K. Potkański also reviewed the study for the journal (Potkański, 1900, pp. 2–16).

V. Bruchnalski, who treated these issues from a philological and ethnographic point of view, also focused on elucidating Piast’s personality in his study published in the journal. Based on the works, written by T. Wojciechowski, A. Brickner and S. Ciszewski, devoted to the historical, philological and ethnographic aspects of the Piast issue, V. Bruchnalski built his own concept, close to T. Wojciechowski’s concept. According to the researcher, since the name Piast was not later repeated in this dynasty, it was rather a term meaning the government or the governor. In addition, it was suggested that the name was invented a bit later, was of ethnological origin and meant the same thing as the Pole. Based on another version, it could be a nickname of non-aristocratic origin, which because of this later in the dynasty could not be repeated (Bruchnalski, 1906, pp. 626–663).

A milestone in the reconstruction of the history of this dynasty was the appearance of the fundamental work of O. Balzer “The Piasts Genealogy”, which to this day remains the most accurate, encyclopedic study of the topic. The above-mentioned study, devoted to the dynastic ties of the Piasts, was published by S. Laguna on the pages of the journal “Kwartalnik Historyczny”. O. Balzer created the most complete register of names of the Piast dynasty at that time, which began with the name of Zemomysl, Meshko’s father. Omitting legends about Piast, he clarified and corrected a number of dates and names, covering and “plowing”, as S. Laguna noted, six centuries of the Polish history. Due to the limitations of the review article, the reviewer focused on only some issues of this work, which for the virtuoso use of a huge number of materials equated to a large-scale Venetian mosaic (Łaguna, 1897, pp. 745–788).

Since none of the above-mentioned hypotheses received general acceptance, the interwar period was marked by the introduction of new approaches to the Polish state principles interpretation. In particular, the pages of the magazine contain a review of K. Krotoski’s work “Historical Echoes in the Legends of Ashes and Piast”, where he even suggested Kyivan-Rus origin of the Polish state founders. K. Krotoski tried to prove that expansion, as everywhere, and not his own evolution of tribal relations, was the impetus for the rise of the Polish state, and this allowed him to expand the time limits of the beginnings of Polish history (Krotoski, 1925, pp. 33–69).

Along with research on the Polish state founders, we find intelligence and critical materials about their successors on the pages of the magazine. Hence, in “Kwartalnik Historycznym” was noted a study of the person of the first historical leader of the Polish state, actually its builder, Bag I, conducted by S. Zakrzewski. A native of Krakow historiographical environment, he was a prominent Krakow medievalists representative in Lviv. The work, conducted by S. Zakrzewski was considered by critics to be one of the best devoted to the problems of the Polish statehood formation. Describing it, K. Krotoski wrote in a review on the pages of the magazine: “Perhaps Lviv historian did not recognize Meshko’s exceptional political abilities as

much as A. Maletsky did, but he built the most accurate monument to the builder of the Polish state” (Krotoski, 1923, pp. 201–205). In addition, S. Zakrzewski also addressed the problems of studying the history of Poland during the time of Bolesław I the Brave. In this context, he cited in the journal a large and well-commented list of sources and literature on the era and outlined the main program areas of its further research (Zakrzewski, 1925, pp. 1–32).

A report delivered by W. Semkowicz at a meeting of Krakow Circle of the Polish Historical Society and the Polish Historical Society was devoted to the geographical features of Poland during the time of Bolesław I the Brave (including the natural elements role study – the surface morphology, the hydrographic factor) and their influence on the political formation of the state, its borders and territorial expansion were devoted to a report delivered by Semkowicz (Semkowicz, 1925, pp. 258–314).

As an independent detailed study on the history of the struggle for the monarchy in 1288 – 1294, A. Semkowicz’s introduction to his work on the Piast history was published in the “Kwartalnik Historycznym”. The author focused on the circumstances of the struggle for the throne of Krakow, which unfolded after the death of Leszek Chorny in 1288 and in which the Czech King Wenceslas II took an active part. According to the Czech legend, Leszek Chorny’s widow, Wenceslas II’s aunt, inherited the lands of Lesser Poland, Krakow and Sandomierz. In his work, A. Semkowicz highlighted how the Czech king, supported by the Bishop of Krakow, burghers and numerous German settlers, conquered these lands (Semkowicz, 1891, pp. 727–778).

In addition to domestic history, the magazine’s editorial staff tracked the foreign policy history of the Piast era. Hence, B. Włodarski’s research was devoted to the problem of clarifying Polish-Ukrainian relations during the time of Leszek Bily (Włodarski, 1924, pp. 29–36). In addition, the magazine’s editorial staff published a journal and the work written by A. Prochaska on the political relations between the State of the Order of the Crusaders and Poland at the end of the XIIIth century (Prochaska, 1896, p. 1–66). According to the magazine’s observers, the two main results of L. Koczy’s historical research on the Polish-Danish union during Wladyslaw Loketko’s time were to clarify the circumstances of the union’s formation in 1315 and to establish the Polish-Brandenburg clashes chronology in 1316 (Zajączkowski, 1932, pp. 181–184). The journal also noted the research of S. Zajączkowski and J. Karwasińska, devoted, respectively, to the relations between Poland and the Teutonic Order during the reign of Wladyslaw Loketko, as well as to clarify the role of Pomerania in their confrontations in the XIIIth – XIVth centuries (Zajączkowski, 1928, pp. 633–637; Karwasińska, 1930, pp. 213–229).

Furthermore, along with issues on the history of the Piast dynasty, much of the journal’s content was covered by the history of the Jagiellonian dynasty. Hence, the Historical Society established in 1886 coincided with a significant date in Polish history – the five hundredth anniversary of the accession to the Polish throne of the Jagiellonian dynasty, which ruled Poland until 1572 continuously. The journal, in particular, responded with a thorough review of the synthetic study “anniversary” of the famous Krakow medievalist historian S. Smolka. In the above-mentioned work on the events of 1386, he analyzed the significance of the “Russian cause” for the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Union. A. Prochaska, the work’s reviewer, noted its high scientific level, dwelled on the description of the innovative, at that time, the psychological method used by the author in characterizing the personality of Queen Jadwiga (Prochaska, 1887, p. 101). We can come across reviews on a number of other works, written by S. Smolka, also devoted to the Jagiellonian period in Polish history in

the journal. For instance, the work “Algirdas and Kęstutis”, in which the author focused on the confrontation between Wladyslaw II Jagiello and the Lithuanian opposition. A notable feature of the above-mentioned work, as the critics noted, was the clarification of a number of historical dates, honest criticism of sources and special attention of S. Smolka to the analysis of the internal structure of Lithuania at that time (Prochaska, 1890, pp. 176–179).

In the context of European politics, A. Lewicki told the story of Svydrygail’s uprising against his brother King Wladyslaw II Jagiello. The critics called this work a “Polish historical literature pearl” and noted that “the author, coloring the work with sentimentalism, broke with the tradition of K. Shainoha” (Prochaska, 1893, pp. 537–545). Consequently, the observers and S. Smolka’s research on the monarchical marriages during the reign of King Jagiello (the XVth century) were highly appreciated (Lewicki, 1897, pp. 601–603). In the interwar period, the personalist studies on the history of the Jagiellonian dynasty also continued. Thus, a new wave of interest in the person of Queen Jadwiga was aroused by the question of her canonization. In particular, the journal put emphasis on V. Matsievska’s and A. Strzelecka’s historical explorations (Pieradzka, 1935, pp. 401–411).

A. Prochaska paid great attention to Jagiellonian history in his works. In the magazine, we may come across numerous reviews on his works concerning the history of this era. For example, the critics welcomed his work on Kazimir Jagiellonchik’s foreign policy (Prochaska, 1898, pp. 250–290). It should be mentioned that Lviv researcher’s intelligence on the parliamentarism’s development during the first Jagiellonians also received positive reviews from the magazine’s columnists (Rembowski, 1900, pp. 274–292). And in response to his study “The desire for church union under Jagiello”, the main leitmotif of which was the implementation of the civilizational mission of Poland in the East, the magazine published a polemical article by A. Lewicki (Lewicki, 1897, pp. 310–337). The analysis of Polish-Russian relations of the late Middle Ages was devoted to the work of F. Pape “The Jagiellonians and Moscow”, where the author, like A. Prochaska, emphasizing the cultural confrontation between the two peoples, defended the civilizational mission of Poland in the East (Papeé, 1922, pp. 41–50).

The phenomenon of the “Jagiellonian idea” was also hotly debated in the pages of the magazine. Highlighting the above-mentioned issue, Polish historians tried to answer the question: what was the leading idea of the epoch that lasted two centuries – from Krewa to Lublin – and united and made an amorphous Piast Poland a strong state. The term “Jagiellonian idea” was introduced into historiography by the Warsaw publicist, historian and literary critic S. Ksheminsky, who used it in the article “The Jagiellonians” written for the Great World Illustrated Encyclopedia in 1902. In his understanding, the main Jagiellonian idea was the program of unification of Poland. Lithuania into a single state body based on political and social freedom and equality of the peoples of both countries, religious tolerance, broad self-government.

Active reflections on the Jagiellonian idea date back to Polish historiography in the 1980-ies and 1990-ies and associated with the emergence of systematic source studies on this era. At the turn of the century, the idea of rethinking the history of Polish-Lithuanian relations and selecting everything that could be used to build a synthesis emerged. The process of conceptualization of the Jagiellonian idea in science began in the works of V. Abraham, J. Fijałek, S. Smolka, A. Lewicki, S. Kutrzeba, O. Balzer, devoted to various, mainly legal and administrative aspects and problems of the Polish-Lithuanian Union. They tried to avoid extremes, but still represented a rather one-sided view of the union process, supporting the traditional apologetic view of the coexistence of the Poles, the Lithuanians and the Ukrainians

within a single state (Maternicki, 1996, pp. 55–69). As a result, in a study called “Poland Union with Lithuania”, S. Kutrzeba, whose views were typical of Polish historiography at the time, argued that Lithuania had some autonomy in building internal relations and that its ties with Poland ensured its acceptance of Western culture. At the same time, Lithuania received support in the fight against the Crusaders, and later with Moscow. According to S. Kutrzeba, Lithuania always looked for opportunities to unite with Poland, renewed the union in the face of the military threats (*Sprawy Towarzystwa*, 1914, p. 138).

The Jagiellonian idea received a new impetus in its development with the independence of Poland, which was due to the need to prove the historical legitimacy of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian territories within the ancient Polish state. On the pages of the magazine, O. Halecki analyzed the Polish historiography achievements concerning the above-mentioned issue, finding out whether the Jagiellonian idea is just a beautiful slogan or a strictly defined scientific term. O. Halecki painted an apologetic image of the Jagiellonian Union in national and religious relations in the ancient Rzeczpospolita (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). As a supporter of the idea of a “historical” Rzeczpospolita (within the borders until 1772), he believed that the Union with Lithuania not only did not provoke the decline of Poland, but also saved it. According to him, if not for the expansion of Poland, it would have divided the fate of other small states east of the Roman Empire, such as the Czech Republic or Hungary. As for Lithuania, O. Halecki believed that the Union provided it with cultural progress and preservation of independence (Halecki, 1937, pp. 486–510).

**The Conclusions.** As we can see, many issues from the history of Poland from ancient times to Rzeczpospolita were covered in numerous studies, critical and source materials on the journal’s pages. The most numerous group of materials devoted to this epoch were critical reviews and studies of political history, in the study of which scholars appealed to the time of the creation of the state and its greatest power. The authors of the journal dealt with a very wide range of topics: from the ancient state’s name genesis, clarifying the history of the persons of the founding princes and builders of the state to the influence of geographical factors on its development features. The Polish statehood’s restoration in 1918 forced the researchers of the time to draw parallels: first of all, with the plots of ancient Poland, second of all, with the times of its greatest economic and political power in the XVIth – at the beginning of the XVIIth centuries, inspiring reflection on the development models of the most optimal functioning of the Second Rzeczpospolita.

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