

No.16 Polish history: Piast Dynasty - succession conflict.

My previous post about Polish history ended in the year 1025. It was a very important year in the history of the country – it marks the coronation of its first king, Boleslaw I the Brave, and the first crisis which followed his sudden death shortly after his coronation.

Boleslaw I the Brave had three sons: Bezprym, Mieszko and Otto. Bezprym was the eldest and his mother was a Hungarian princess, Mieszko and Otto were sons from the king's marriage to a Slavic princess Emnilda. Traditionally, the kingdom was supposed to be divided between all three sons, however, it was the king's middle son – Mieszko who was crowned as Mieszko II Lambert shortly after his father's death and he expelled his two brothers from Poland. Next, he organized invasion of Saxony but this soon led to conflicts with neighboring countries. After suffering few setbacks, the king's authority in Poland had weakened. Two banished brothers took advantage of this situation: Bezprym allied with Kievan Rus, Otto with Germany, and both invaded Poland. In 1031 Mieszko II fled the country to Bohemia and Bezprym took over the throne. However, brutal persecutions against the followers of Mieszko II caused rebellions and his bloody reign didn't last long - he was murdered in 1032. It seemed that Poland will be divided between Mieszko II and Otto, but the latter one suddenly died in 1033 and Mieszko II was able to reunite the whole country in his hands. His reign wasn't long as he died in 1034. Long succession conflict and foreign invasions left his country very weak.

The hard task of improving the country's situation became the responsibility of Mieszko II's son, Casimir I. From the beginning he faced multiple problems such as pagan revival and a revolt among the nobles. To make matters worse, the Bohemian Kingdom's army invaded Poland in 1039 and ravaged the country reaching as far as to the Greater Poland region and the capital city of Gniezno. Casimir fought back and in the end was able to unite the country again, securing back regions previously lost like Masovia, Silesia and Pomerania. He is known now as Casimir I the Restorer, due to his efforts to unite and strengthen the country after a period of turmoil. That's it for today.

Here is a summary of the most important events:

- 1025 - the death of Boleslaw I the Brave; coronation of Mieszko II
- 1025 - 1033 – succession conflict
- 1033 - Mieszko II reclaims the throne
- 1034 - death of Mieszko II
- 1034 - 1058 – Casimir I the Restorer`s rule

Until next time! Hanna