

How Humanist Inspiration Entered Medieval Chronicle

The Case of Jan Długosz's Annals

Abstract

In Jan Długosz's chronicle "Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Poloniae" from the second half of the fifteenth century, both medieval and humanist influences can be noted. This paper asks to what degree humanist inspiration could have determined the artistic and historiosophical resonance of the work. First, the circumstances are discussed in which Długosz might have come into contact with elements of Italian humanism. Special attention is paid to the works of the ancient and humanist authors that the chronicler had become acquainted with before he started to compose Annals. Second, a more detailed analysis is devoted to the impact exerted on Długosz by Livy who the Polish chronicler preferred to emulate as writer. The examination concentrates on very specific sections of narrative from each chronicle that reflect the historiosophical viewpoints of its author. The importance of a more in-depth study of the direct influence of Italian humanists on Długosz is also pointed out.

The chronicle of Jan Długosz (1415–1480) "Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Poloniae" is considered to be the most spectacular achievement of Polish historiography written in Latin. It covers the period from the earliest legends of Poland down to the annalist's own time during the reign of the kings of the Jagellonian dynasty. Długosz's activity both as a chronicler and representative of ecclesiastical and political establishments coincides with the reign of Casimirus IV, whose sons he was appointed to educate. The size of his chronicle exceeds that of the conserved part of "Ab Urbe Condita" by Livy by half. It should be noted that Livy was an author whose example Długosz particularly followed as a writer in composing his monumental Annals.¹

1 Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History: 400–1500*, Manchester-New York 2012, pp. 35–36, outlines that Livy belongs to these ancient authors – next to Julius Caesar, Tacitus,

The ideological and artistic background of Długosz's work has caused intense debate throughout the last two centuries – whereas some chiefly see him as representative of medieval historiography, others also lay emphasis on ancient and humanist elements that manifest in his *Annals*. It is striking that each of the former mostly active at the end of nineteenth century, did not provide arguments based on a systematic analysis of the chronicle's text to support their thesis, instead mostly pushing arbitrary judgments.² It was only Tadeusz Sinko who, as late as in the mid-twentieth century, delivered a detailed study of the chronicle's prologue.³ Sinko focused on the influence of ancient authors on Długosz's work. This examination focused on ancient authors was followed by those of other scholars who discussed more in detail systematic borrowings from such authors as Livy⁴ and Sallust⁵ in the chronicle. At the same time, the studies by Ignacy

Suetonius, and Ammianus Marcellinus – who were rediscovered by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century humanists. Prior to this period and at least until the mid-fifteenth century, they were all absent in the medieval canon of ancient historians. So, the fact only that Długosz abundantly used Livy, not to mention other listed authors, shows the importance of humanism for his literary formation.

2 Wanda Semkowicz-Zarembina, *Elementy humanistyczne redakcji 'Annalium' Jana Długosza* [Humanistic elements in redaction of Jan Długosz's *Annalium*], in: Józef Garbacik (Ed.), *Mediaevalia. W 50 rocznicę pracy naukowej Jana Dąbrowskiego* [Mediaevalia. On the 50th anniversary of Jan Dąbrowski's research work], Warszawa 1961, pp. 235–253, at pp. 240–241.

3 Tadeusz Sinko, *De Długossii praefatione Historiae Polonorum*, in: Henryk Barycz / Jan Hulewicz (Eds.), *Studia z dziejów kultury polskiej* [Studies on the Polish cultural history], Warszawa 1949, pp. 105–145. The prologue is composed in the form of a dedicatory letter to Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki, one of the most influential persons on the court of the kings of the Jagellonian dynasty. It is to him that Długosz, his secretary, owed the inspiration for undertaking the challenging task of composing Polish annals.

4 Władysław Madyda, *Wzory klasyczne w 'Historii Polski' Długosza* [Classical motifs in Długosz's "History of Poland"], in: *Eos* 49,2 (1957–1958), pp. 177–201; Danuta Turkowska, *Études sur la langue et sur le style de Jean Długosz*, Kraków 1973 (Prace Komisji Filologii Klasycznej – Polska Akademia Nauk. Oddział w Krakowie 13); Michał Rzepiela, *Struktura narracji "Historii Polski" a Długoszowe rozumienie dziejów* [Narrative and understanding structure in Długosz's "History of Poland"], in: Teresa Wolińska / Mirosław J. Leszka (Eds.), *Średniowieczna wizja świata. Jedność czy różnorodność* [The medieval world view. Unity or diversity], Łódź 2009, pp. 251–259; id., *Rola frazeologii w narracji Kroniki Jana Długosza* [The role of phraseology in the narrative of Jan Długosz's *Chronicle*], in: Lidia Korczak / Marek Daniel Kowalski / Piotr Węcowski, *Jan Długosz (1415–1480). Życie i dzieła* [Jan Długosz (1415–1480). Life and works], Kraków 2016, pp. 237–250. I make partial use of the thesis of this article, as well as its Latin examples, which are presented in my 2009 and 2016 publications.

5 Jerzy Schnayder, *Salustiuszowe Echa w 'Historii Polski' Długosza* [Echoes of Sallust in Długosz's "History of Poland"], in: *Eos* 46,2 (1952–1953), pp. 141–160.

Zarębski dealing with early-Renaissance sources possibly utilized by Długosz also started to appear.⁶

Before considering more in detail how humanist inspiration is reflected in the chronicle's narrative, it is worth characterizing the circumstances in which Długosz might have become familiar with the literature of both the ancient and humanist periods. We know that he was definitely sent on diplomatic journeys to Italy at least twice, in 1436 and 1448.⁷ It should be noted that these journeys preceded when he effectively started to write the chronicle.⁸ An unknown contemporary biographer of Długosz – possibly Filippo Buonaccorsi (Callimaco) – wrote that the chronicler brought numerous books from Italy that were previously unknown to Polish readers, and he lists their authors, including Curtius, Justin, Sallust, Livy, and Cicero.⁹ Among the manuscripts that Długosz had at his disposal, particular attention should be paid to that of Livy, because the Polish chronicler made many personal notes in the margins of that work indicating things of special interest to him. It is known that he made use of the places marked in the manuscript while working on the chronicle.¹⁰ It is worth noting that there is a high degree of probability that this manuscript previously belonged to Petrarch, a hypothesis suggested due

6 Ignacy Zarębski, *Problemy wczesnego Odrodzenia w Polsce. Grzegorz z Sanoka – Boccaccio – Długosz* [Early Renaissance Problems in Poland. Grzegorz da Sanok – Boccaccio – Długosz], in: *Odrodzenie i reformacja w Polsce* 2 (1957), pp. 5–52; id., *Długosz a Poggio Bracciolini (w sporze o Długosza argument)* [Długosz and Poggio Bracciolini (arguments used in the dispute on Długosz)], in: *Rocznik Naukowo-Dydaktyczny WSP Kraków, Historia* 14 (1962), pp. 29–44; id., *Humanistyczna Lektura Długosza: Antonio Panormita Beccadelli (w sporze o Długosza argument nowy)*, in: *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej* 17,1 (1965), pp. 5–21; id., *Il Boccaccio nel primo umanesimo polacco*, in: *Studi sul Boccaccio* 3 (1965), pp. 247–296; id., *Iter Italicum. Włoska droga wczesnego humanizmu w Polsce* [The Italian path of the first humanism in Poland], in: *Rocznik Naukowo-Dydaktyczny WSP w Krakowie, Historia* 26 (1967), pp. 69–84.

7 Krzysztof Osiński, *Kilka uwag o działalności dyplomatycznej Jana Długosza w latach 1448–1450* [Some observations on the diplomatic activity of Jan Długosz in the years 1448–1450], in: *Śląskie Studia Historyczne* 20 (2014), pp. 23–34.

8 At the end of 1480, the same year as his death, Długosz declared that he had written it “throughout [the] last 25 years”. So, he must have begun to write it about 1455.

9 Zarębski, *Iter Italicum* (see note 6), p. 72.

10 Maria Kowalczyk, *Jagiellońskie rękopisy Liwiusza z marginaliami Jana Długosza* [Jagiellonian manuscripts of Livy with marginal notes by Jan Długosz], in: *Eos* 58,2 (1969–1970), pp. 219–230, at pp. 224–227.

to the notes inserted in a few folios in Petrarch's own hand.¹¹ It is not certain, however, whether Petrarch was the owner of the manuscript or only temporarily had possession of it.

Ignacy Zarębski, who examined the possible impact of Italian humanists on Długosz, identified Boccaccio as an author who significantly inspired the Polish historian. Zarębski discovered borrowings from Boccaccio's "Genealogia Deorum" as well as from his historical works "De Casibus Virorum Illustrium" and "De Praeclaris Mulieribus" in the chronicle.¹² Długosz's interest in Boccaccio is also shown by the fact that he brought home editions of the latter two works from 1474 and made many corrections to typographical errors as well as personal notes relating to the most interesting sections of the narrative to him in the margins.¹³ In addition, because of an erroneous note in a volume of Boccaccio's, "De Casibus", attributing authorship of the work to Petrarch, it was suggested by Zarębski (after Wisłocki) that Długosz might have also brought home some of Petrarch's historical works. It is possible that this note, already noticed as erroneous by a contemporary librarian, should be in reality referred to one of Petrarch's historical works – either "De Gestis Caesaris" or "De Viris Illustribus" – which must have then been donated by Długosz, together with the Boccaccio volumes, to the mentioned college of the University of Cracow.¹⁴

Długosz also made use of "Historia Bohemica" by Enea Silvio Piccolomini, with whom he maintained personal contact. It is worth noting that Silvio had a high estimation of the Polish annalist as a writer.¹⁵ Additionally, Długosz knew of Poggio Bracciolini's books and proposed his "De Miseria Conditionis Humane" as required reading for the sons of the king as part of their education.¹⁶

11 *Catalogus codicum manuscritorum medii aevi Latinorum qui in Bibliotheca Jagellonica Cracoviae asservantur*, 3 vols., ed. by Maria Kowalczyk et al., Wratislaviae-Varsaviae-Cracoviae 1984, p. 250.

12 Zarębski, *Il Boccaccio* (see note 6), p. 272.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 273. At the same time, these two volumes are the only ones which have been preserved for our time from the collection donated by Długosz to the college he founded at the University of Cracow.

14 Zarębski, *Problemy* (see note 6), p. 43; cfr. note 13.

15 Marian Chachaj, *Znajomość dzieł Eneasza Sylwiusza Piccolominiego w dawnej Polsce* [Knowledge of the works of Enea Silvio Piccolomini in ancient Poland], in: *Czasy Nowożytnie* 4 (1998), pp. 113–124, at p. 120.

16 Zarębski, *Długosz a Poggio* (see note 6), p. 34.

The beginnings of the influence of Italian humanism in Poland most likely go back some decades further, however, to before Długosz became active as a chronicler – namely, to the Council of Constance (1414–1418). It was there where representatives of the Polish elite had the opportunity to meet – and it is known that they effectively met – Pier Paolo Vergerio and Poggio Bracciolini. The Polish elite brought home from Constance the first copies of Vergerio’s “*De Ingenuis Moribus*” to arrive in Poland.¹⁷ Although it is not possible today to follow the gradual growth of the influence of humanism in Poland, it is almost certain that, in the mid-fifteenth century, the humanist tradition was already fixed in Polish cultural circles.¹⁸ As far as Długosz, he belonged to the tight circle of Gregorius Sanocensis (1407–1477), an outstanding Polish humanist who gathered around himself representatives of the cultural elite. Gregorius owned a luxurious version of Boccaccio’s “*Genealogia*” that Długosz likely made use of. It is worth adding that both Gregorius and Długosz maintained personal ties with Callimaco, previously mentioned, who arrived in Poland as refugee in 1470 and whose influence on the further growth of humanist ideas there cannot be overstated.¹⁹

When going back to supporting arguments for the thesis about the medieval character of Długosz’s chronicle having been formulated from literary principles, the argument most often raised is about its loaded style, which differentiates it from the works of humanist authors.²⁰ Indeed, Długosz’s style is not easy – he often tries to imitate Livy’s periods, but not always successfully.²¹ Additionally, it has been argued that the annalist’s apparently moralistic approach proves his unconditional willingness to protect the church and Christian morality. This is true insofar as he usually put the church’s interests first, basically assigned ecclesiastical power supremacy over secular power,²² and

17 Zarębski, *Iter Italicum* (see note 6), pp. 74–76.

18 Zarębski, *Il Boccaccio* (see note 6), p. 247.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 248–250, briefly characterizes the activity of Callimaco during his ‘Polish period’, pointing out that he never presented himself as a pioneer of humanism in Poland, although that is sometimes ascribed to him. Paradoxically, his own works, especially the biography of Gregorius Sanocensis, “*Vita et Mores Gregorii Sancocensis*”, shows that humanist ideas were rooted in Poland some decades before he arrived there.

20 The discussion on this aspect of Długosz’s literary art mainly taking place at the end of the nineteenth century was summarized by Semkowicz-Zarembina (see note 2), pp. 238–241.

21 On Długosz’s use of Livy’s periods: Turkowska, *Études* (see note 4), pp. 65–66; Marian Plezia, Jan Długosz, in: Stanisława Grzeszczuka (Ed.), *Pisarze staropolscy. Sylwetki* [Ancient Polish writers. Portraits], Warszawa 1991, vol. 1, pp. 132–173, at p. 166.

22 Urszula Borkowska, *Regnum i sacerdotium w pismach Jana Długosza* [Regnum and sacerdotium in the writings of Jan Długosz], in: *Studia Źródłoznawcze – Commentationes* 26 (1981), pp. 3–21,

took a hard stance on the defense of the purity of doctrine (the latter can be seen, for example, in his attitude toward the Hussite movement). Consequently, the chronicler was positioned as an author opposing himself to the unseemly influence of humanism.²³ By contrast, those who support the thesis about the humanist inspiration for *Annals*, especially Zarębski, emphasized that not only the stated linguistic borrowings but also the ideologies themselves emerged under the influence of humanist authors. Zarębski believed that this inspiration especially manifests in the prologue to the chronicle, in the abundant quotations from and paraphrasing of various, primarily ancient, authors.²⁴

Nevertheless, taking into account the enormous size of *Annals*, it is not just the prologue that can shed light on the chronicler's artistic and ideological positions. The prologue to a bigger narrative work is, indeed, a sort of programmatic declaration by the authors, which they follow thereafter more or less consistently. I postulate, however, that by instead studying the course of the narrative throughout the whole work, more reliable results can be generated. A major insight into Długosz's approach as a historian and writer can become clear, I believe, by comparing the narrative strategies utilized by Długosz and Livy – first, because Livy is the author whom Długosz modeled himself after, and second, because Livy's *Annals*, also quite sizeable, offer a large number of samples for the purposes of comparison. Some structural similarities between the annals of Polish and Roman chroniclers are striking at first glance. As far as the chronological aspect, they both relate events according to the sequence of years, with Livy additionally ordering by naming successive consuls. In their initial chapters, both provide accounts about

argues that Długosz's stance in favour of ecclesiastical power was not unconditional and points out the evolution of some of his views on this matter that can be observed across the passage of time.

23 Zarębski, *Długosz a Poggio* (see note 6), pp. 29–32, presents as an example of such an approach Józef Szujski, whose beliefs, he claims, determined the position of subsequent scholars, insofar as they could hardly accept that the humanist inspiration for *Annals* could be equally as important as, if not more important than, the medieval one.

24 As far as the traces of humanist authors in the prologue to the chronicle, Zarębski, *Il Boccaccio* (see note 6), pp. 281–282, concentrates on those of Boccaccio. It should be added that the influence of humanists on Długosz's *Annals* has newly become an object of research within the project 'Długosz 2.0', which aims to provide an electronic corpus of *Annals* and the chronicler's other works. The project is being carried out by the team for the Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Polish Sources (*Lexicon Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis Polonorum*) at the Institute of Polish Language at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow. The preliminary research of my colleague, Zdzisław Koczarski, based on stylometric methods, revealed, surprisingly, Petrarch as the humanist author Długosz preferred to utilize: Zdzisław Koczarski, *The early knowledge of Petrarch's works in medieval Poland. The case of Jan Długosz*, in: Roberta Dolce / Sofia Martini / Roberto Del Monte (eds.), *VI Ciclo di Studi Medievali. Atti del Convegno*, Firenze 2020, pp. 392–398.

legendary times and, on many occasions, present these as the source of moral inspiration for successive generations. In my opinion, however, the most exciting question is not precisely what passages Długosz takes from Livy but, rather, how the ideological and philosophical presumptions as well as historiosophical concepts observed in the Annals of the latter are reflected in those of the former. The opposition drawn here can also be viewed as a confrontation between ancient pagan and medieval Christian historians.

The first observation resulting from a comparison of the narrative techniques used by each author is that Długosz, similar to Livy, presents the sequence of events according to the decisions of individuals. Both chroniclers focus their attention on scrutinizing the motives behind the protagonists' actions. It is apparent that Długosz shares a common standpoint with ancient historians that a factor with the most decisive impact on the course of events is human nature. It is interesting to observe how this approach manifests at the phrase level. In Długosz's Annals, as in Livy's, when the intentions of the protagonists are being discussed, phrases using the noun "animus" ("mind") as a central component are often used. These phrases can mostly be spotted in the narrator's introductory comments to violent incidents – as in Examples 1) and 2).²⁵

1) "... moleste ferens se de Ducatu magno Lithuaniae deiectum et expulsus Sigismundi Romanorum imperatoris et Hungarie regis animatus et persuasus consiliis et promissis repetere eundem ducatum in animum inducit": "... hardly bearing that he was moved and expelled from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, stimulated and persuaded by advice and counsels of Sigismund, the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Hungary, he decided to regain the Duchy".

2) "... quo quidem tempore vesania quedam et insolentia hominum, precipue in regno Polonie commorantium, animos occupaverat": "... at that time, the minds of people, especially of the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Poland, were captured by certain madness and arrogance".

Example 1) describes the motives of Prince Świdrygał in regaining the throne of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The accumulation of the protagonist's negative sentiments is signaled by the narrator with the phrase "moleste ferens" ("hardly bearing"). It is followed by the participles "animatus" and "persuasus", indicating that the escalation of

25 All the English translations of the examples given in this paper are my own. Examples 1), 2), 3), 5), and 7) use the edition: Joannis Dlugossii Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, Liber 11–12 (1431–1444), ed. by Krzysztof Baczkowski / Czesława Pirożyńska / Lidia Korczak, Varsaviae 2001, respectively pp. 156, 176, 203, 197, 208.

these sentiments was instigated by someone else – namely, King Sigismund. The moment when the prince is making the decision is also used by the narrator to emphasize what is occurring in the protagonist’s mind. The phrase “in animum inducit” can be translated literally to “he brings into his mind”. In 1438, Długosz penned a story about the riots started by Spytko of Melsztyn in the village of Uszew. The narrator views a collective outbreak of emotions distant from rationality and deviating from accepted social norms as the primary cause of the turbulence – as in Example 2). With the phrase “animum occupare” (“to capture the mind”), the narrator underscores how unexpectedly these kinds of emotions appeared.

In attempting to gain insight into Długosz’s historiosophical stance using an analysis focused on phraseology, the phrase “moleste ferens” – as in Example 1) – certainly merits special attention. Długosz, Livy, and other Roman historians used it often, in addition to a few variants with the same meaning. Długosz preferred “moleste ferens”, whereas Livy preferred “aegre ferens”, and both used “iniquo animo ferens”, but only Długosz used “graviter ferens”.²⁶ This phrasing says a lot about Długosz’s way of reading history, in how it was inspired by Livy. His protagonists are also mostly stimulated by anger and injury. Michèle Ducos finds, however, that the manner of presenting historical events seen in Livy’s work constitutes a recurrence of a concept that goes back to Pythagoras, Plato, and the New Academy, according to which the human soul is divided into two parts – rational and irrational. Consequently, both the rational and irrational components manifest in human nature. As Ducos outlines, the former can be identified in Livy’s work with nouns such as “ratio” (“reasoning”) and “consilium” (“deliberation”), whereas the latter can be noted in nouns and phrases about impetuosity and vehemence, such as “impetus animi” and “ardor animi”.²⁷ Similar elements are seen in Długosz’s work, as illustrated in Example 3).

3) “... velut amens et exacerbatus, plus furori et indignacioni, quam consilio amicorum id sibi magnopere dissuadencium tribuens hospicium Wladislai episcopi ... ingressus illud depredatus est”: “... as if he were mad and exasperated, following more his rage and anger than the advice of his friends dissuading him to do so, he entered inn of Bishop Vladislaus and plundered it”.

26 These conclusions arise from verifying the electronic corpora of both historians – ‘Corpus Corporum’ (URL: <http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS>; 14. 3. 2022) in the case of Livy and the preliminary (not yet published) version of the corpus “Długosz 2.0”.

27 Michèle Ducos, *Les passions, les hommes et l’histoire dans l’œuvre de Tite-Live*, in: *Revue des Études Latines* 65 (1987), pp. 132–147, at pp. 141–144.

In this example, the commentary of the narrator is quoted about the motives behind the actions of Spytko from Melsztyn, who made an incursion into the inn of Bishop Vladislaus in the city of Nowy Korczyn. The narrator here uses the participles “amens” and “exacerbatus” and the nouns “furor” and “indignatio” to denote violent, uncontrolled emotions, which he juxtaposes with the noun “consilium” (“advice”), denoting reasonableness. As such, Długosz apparently rehashed Livy’s previously described historiographical concept. Of course, the question remains whether he did it consciously or whether he copied this concept more or less casually by referring to certain vocabulary regularly used by Livy in specific narrative circumstances.

Długosz’s focus on scrutinizing individual and mass behaviors can be observed in his emphasis on psychological and even neurological protagonist reactions. A very characteristic element of his narrative is descriptions of the state of torpor touching the protagonists, as a consequence of an unexpected traumatic event, as in Examples 4) and 5).²⁸ The Polish chronicler also took inspiration from Livy on this point.²⁹

4) “Nemo in ecclesia fuit, qui vel subito terrore percussus non corruit vel obstupefactus in oblivionem sui non venit”: “There was nobody in the church who, startled by sudden fear, would not hit the deck or, numb, would not lose consciousness”.

5) “... audivit hanc visionem magister Iohannes de Elgoth et obstupuit”: “... As soon as master John Elgot heard this vision, he was struck dumb”.

Example 4) shows the reaction of people gathered in Sandomierz Cathedral at the moment they were surprised by a lightning strike. The lightning damaged the church, killing one person and leaving others injured. The phrase “terrore percussus”, the participle of “obstupefactus”, the phrase “in oblivionem sui venire”, and the perfect verb tense of “obstupuit” – in Example 5) – clearly illustrate the ‘psychological’ orientation of Długosz’s narrative. The accumulation of words and expressions describing traumatic psychological states is a stylistic tool he repeatedly uses.

Another peculiarity of Długosz’s style, which, again, is owed to Livy and other Roman historians, but which should, at the same time, be viewed as his own way of reading history is his predilection to point out the universal nature of human behaviors,

28 Example 4) uses the edition: Joannis Dlugossii Annales Seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Poloniae, Liber 12 (1445–1461), ed. by Krzysztof Baczkowski / Danuta Turkowska / Krzysztof Ożóg, Cracoviae 2003, p. 63.

29 Ernest Dutoit, Silence dans l’œuvre de Tite-Live, in: Mélanges Jean Marouzeau, Paris 1948, pp. 141–151, at p. 149.

as observed in certain given circumstances. This approach is demonstrated by such phrases as “*ut fit*” (“as it happens”), “*ut plerum fit*” (“as it often happens”), and “*ut solet*” (“as it usually happens”) inserted in the narrator’s commentary time and time again³⁰, as in Example 6).³¹

6) “*Ita bonum publicum, ut contingere frequencius solet, a privato depravatum est Wladislao Polonie rege non ex suo, sed ex aliorum propter habitudinem tam factivitatis quam ingenii arbitrio singula in bellicis et domesticis rebus administrante*”: “Thus, as quite often happens, the public welfare was sacrificed for private interests, since the king of Poland, Ladislas, due to his sluggishness in governing both the affairs of war and those of internal policy, followed the opinions of others instead of standing by his own”.

7) “*Ita Latini, dum Graecos unire cupiunt, ipsi pestifero scimate scinduntur*”: “Thus, Latins [Latin church representatives], while aiming to establish unity with Greeks, produce a destructive schism among themselves”.

The quote in Example 6) was taken from the narrator’s commentary about the decision of King Ladislaus II to cease the siege of the fortress Malbork, into which the troops of the Teutonic Order withdrew after their defeat at the battle of Grunwald. The narrator suggests that the king made this decision under the influence of his brother, Grand Duke Alexander Withaudus of Lithuania, who hoped to negotiate the recuperation of his lost region of Samagitia in Western Lithuania with the Teutonic Order.

It is worth noting that the phrase “*ut contingere frequencius solet*” is part of a larger sentence, which begins “*Ita*” and ends in “*depravatum est*”. Długosz almost literally quotes Sallust (“*Bellum Iugurthinum*”, 25). Combining maxims with moral reflections, especially for the purpose of moral instruction, has a long tradition in Latin literature.³² Nevertheless, Długosz’s use of the maxims seems to be more about emphasizing paradoxes among related events or even their ironic meaning than providing moral instruction. This

30 For Livy cfr. Ernest Dutoit, *Quelques généralisations de portée psychologique et morale dans “l’histoire romaine” de Tite-Live*, in: *Revue des Études Latines* 20 (1942), pp. 98–105, at p. 100. The most frequent phrase of this type that Livy used is “*ut fit*”, whereas Długosz most often used “*ut erat*” (“as it usually happened”).

31 Examples 6), 8), and 9) use the edition: *Ioannis Długossi Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, Liber 10–11 (1404–1412)*, ed. by Krzysztof Baczkowski/Danuta Turkowska/Franciszek Sikora, *Varsaviae* 1997, respectively pp. 145, 103, 136.

32 Kempshall, *Rhetoric* (see note 1), pp. 125–126.

is illustrated by the narrator's decisive comment – Example 7) – about the behaviour of the participants on the Council of Basil who, discussing the question of unity with the Eastern Church, started fighting with each other.

The narrator's reflection on the forces driving history is not limited to the motives behind the protagonists' actions but also addresses the cosmic and supernatural force majeure. The narrator regularly points out the role of both fate and divine providence. In so doing, however, he presents divine providence (in the Christian sense) and entities from Greco-Roman antiquity as two complementary forces – as in Examples 8) and 9).

8) “... quem pugnae eventum divina propiciacio et presentis diei fortuna est assignatura, confidens furori Cruciferico superis dari eos exitus, quibus ... domabitur illorum tam ... impia superbia. Superos enim compertum habeo pro iustiori causa staturos ... talemque hostium meorum superbiam ... campus ... in quo concurrendum est et Mars comunis belli et equus iudex conteret humiliabitque, sperans Deum mihi et genti mee presentis certaminis solacia prebiturum”: “Divine mercy and the present-day fortune will determine the result of the battle. I trust that those above will give to the Teutonic fury the result by which their impious arrogance will be punished. Those above, I am sure, will take the side of the right cause, while the battleground in which the battle will take place and Mars, common and just judge of war, will humiliate and wear out the arrogance of my enemies. I hope God will provide me and my people with victory in this battle”.

9) “... maxima ... strage ... et Ordinis nostri domiti, adversa quoque fortuna in quam superos inferosque ... constat consensisse”: “... [it was a] huge slaughter of our defeated Order, but also a lack of [good] fortune, allowed, it is obvious, by the gods of the upper and of the under worlds”.

The quote in Example 8) constitutes the answer given by King Ladislaus II to the messengers of the Teutonic Order who, shortly before, made some arrogant statements in front of him. Their dialogue took place the day before the battle of Grunwald, which was to be decisive for both sides. In the king's utterance, “divine mercy” and “present-day fortune” are both called upon, as are a unique (Christian) God and the ancient god of Mars. The question remains how the “superi” (“those inhabiting the upper world”) should be interpreted in this quote – whether this refers to “gods on high”, “celestial deities” in the ancient and pagan sense, or the Christian inhabitants of Heaven (“saints”, “angels”, and similar). This latter meaning is attested to in Christ-

ian and medieval Latin.³³ Example 9), however, is significantly less ambiguous in this regard. It quotes the opinion of the humiliated commander of the Teutonic Order during his peace talks with King Ladislaus. Długosz quoted the commander with words that paraphrase Livy (31, 31, 3 and 32, 21, 21), who, in turn, used both plural and accusative “superos” and “inferos” in a polytheistic sense. The question then arises how it is possible that a Christian author – a clergyman to boot – assigned some collective divinities the power to decide the course of events and human fates. Even assuming, theoretically, that the “superi” in Example 9) might denote the inhabitants of (Christian) Heaven, one must ponder who the “inferi” (“inhabitants of the underworld”) would be in that case, whether it refers to demons or possibly how a Christian historian might have equated the power of the inhabitants of hell to govern history in the way that the inhabitants of Heaven would.

This surprising approach Długosz took to the question of the influence of fortune (and also celestial bodies) on human fates and the relation between fortune, fate and divine (Christian) providence has been noted by Urszula Borkowska. She believes that this resulted not so much from the chronicler’s reinterpretation of the hierarchy of causation as much as from contradictions and inconsistencies in his language, of which he might not have been aware.³⁴ Such an explanation is worth considering. It is possible, as I suggest, that although Długosz may have utilized ancient texts, at the same time, he reproduced their ideological resonance. On the other hand, according to Matthew Kempshall, from at least the time of Boethius, a well-defined vocabulary based on the analysis of causes “which he [Boethius] had developed in the course of distinguishing between the terms ‘fortune,’ ‘chance,’ ‘providence’ and ‘fate’”³⁵ started to crystallize. There is no evidence that Długosz used Boethius, but that does not mean that he was not inspired by any other (assuredly medieval) author proposing some framework for causation in history.³⁶

33 Cfr. *Lexicon Latinitatis Nederlandicae Medii Aevi*, ed. by Olga Weijers/Marijke Gumbert-Hepp, Leiden-Boston 2003, fasc. 60, pp. 1090–1091; *The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. by Richard Ashdowne/David Robert Howlett, Oxford 2013, fasc. 16, p. 3320.

34 Urszula Borkowska, *Prodigia i myślenie zracjonalizowane w “Rocznikach” Jana Długosza* [Prodigy and rational thought in the Annals of Jan Długosz], in: *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza* [Elite culture and mass culture in late medieval Poland], Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1978, pp. 231–241, at p. 240.


35 Kempshall, *Rhetoric* (see note 1), p. 272.

36 This matter requires further analysis. It is worth noting that Długosz’s preferred phrase to denote (the Christian) God was “divina propitiatio” (“divine mercy”). According to the ‘Corpus Corporum’,

Conclusion

This analysis focuses on exploring the sections of narrative in Długosz's Annals that reveal the chronicler's principal points in constructing relationships among historical events and illustrating his way of interpreting history. A particular emphasis has been placed on the narrator's commentaries about the motives behind the protagonists' actions and, especially, his 'psychological' descriptions. As has been shown, a humanist inspiration (chiefly identified here by the utilization of ancient authors' concepts) is significant in Annals. Consequently, the question arises as to whether this should be considered a medieval or, to a greater degree, a humanist work. An examination of electronic corpora aiming to establish the effective impact of Italian humanists on Długosz should provide a more definite answer to this question. At the same time, a further inquiry into the chronicler's ideological inspirations should be pursued, as it is important to understand to what extent the Italian humanists had a direct impact on Długosz's historiosophical insights as well.

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this phrase, which is not attested to by Boethius, appears mainly among medieval authors. It was most frequently used (still only a few occurrences) by Alan of Lille.