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# ***Volunt esse liberi et dominum suum Swidergal habere regem et habere jus imperiale:*** **Švitrigaila's Accession to the Throne of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after Vytautas' Death in 1430 and his Dethronement in 1432**

**Abstract:** After the death of Grand Duke Alexander Vytautas of Lithuania on 27 October 1430, the new Grand Duke became his cousin Boleslaus Švitrigaila. He soon came into open and acute conflict with the Kingdom of Poland, although it was reigned by his brother, King Władysław Jagiełło, who had just reconciled with Vytautas after his failed attempt to create the Kingdom of Lithuania. The main issues of the conflict were the prospects of the union with Poland and the fate of the borderlands Podolia and Volhynia. In 1432, after two years of hostilities and unproductive negotiations with Poland, Švitrigaila was unexpectedly overthrown by a group of nobles and fled to Polotsk, commencing a war against the new Grand Duke Žygimantas Kęstutaitis which lasted till 1438.

The events in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 1430s have been subject to much discussion in scholarly research. In this paper, I concentrate on the developments preceding the dynastic war, which are no less controversial than the war itself. Two questions form the topic of the paper. In the first part, I focus on Švitrigaila's accession to the Lithuanian grand-ducal throne in 1430, and in the second part I discuss his dethronement in 1432 and its background. The discussion is largely based on new evidence – hitherto unpublished letters about the developments in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after Vytautas' death. Their commented publication is provided in the appendix.

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By 1430, the year of the death of Grand Duke Alexander Vytautas (pol. Witold or Witold, rus. Vitovt), the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was comprised of the so-called *Lithuania propria* (present-day eastern Lithuania and western Belarus), Samogitia (Žemaitija, the land between *Lithuania propria* and Prussia), in addition to large areas of Ruthenian lands which formerly belonged to Kyivan Rus' and were subdued by the dukes of Lithuania from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Lithuania's expansion into Rus' was one of the main sources of the wealth and authority of its rulers – (grand) dukes, their relatives (princes),<sup>2</sup> and the warriors called *boyars* (the word borrowed from Old Rus'ian). Simultaneously they had to withstand the wars with the Teutonic Order attacking *Lithuania propria* and Samogitia from Prussia and Livonia. In order to deal with these attacks from the Order, Jogaila, Grand Duke of Lithuania, entered into an alliance with Poland (traditionally called the Union of Krėva/Krewo of 1385) and ascended to its throne in 1386, being baptized under the name Władysław (therefore called Władysław II Jagiełło).<sup>3</sup> In the beginning he was trying to retain the immediate power over the Grand Duchy, but soon had to surrender to his cousin Vytautas, who was attacking Lithuania with the help of the Teutonic Order, and returned him his “patrimony”, the principality of Trakai. After becoming the appanage prince of Trakai, Vytautas took decided measures to strengthen and extend his power: he removed the most influential princes from appanage principalities, who could rival him, and installed his governors (also called starosts and palatines) in their places, recruited mostly from the Lithuanian boyars. He then started granting land to his subjects in return for military service and created his permanent court with a chancery.<sup>4</sup>

1 It is sometimes said that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was stretching “from one sea to another”, i. e. from the Baltic to the Black Sea – somewhat metaphorically, because the sea was not so important in the life of the Grand Duchy, as this phrase may imply, and it had only short strips of coasts almost unexploited economically.

2 I use both terms, dukes and princes, to show the hierarchy within the upper class of society of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, adopting the (inconstant) terminology of the German (*fürst* and *herzog*) and Latin sources and the scholarly tradition. Ruthenian sources call them with the same title *kniaz*'. The title *Grand Duke* was adopted gradually by the rulers of the Lithuanian state; however, in research it is used, somewhat conventionally, for the whole period from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards (except the short period of Mindaugas' reign in 1253–1263, when the Kingdom of Lithuania existed). From the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the rulers of the Lithuanian state descended from the dynasty which was later called the Gediminids. On the Lithuanian rulers' titles, see *Adamus*, O tytule (1930).

3 On the genesis of the Grand Duchy's union with Poland, see *Łowmiański*, Uwagi (1983); *Błaszczyk*, Dzieje (2007), 11–105; *Nikodem*, Jadwiga (2009); *Frost*, History (2015), esp. 3–57. See also the article by Sven Jaros in this volume.

4 On Vytautas, see *Pfitzner*, Grossfürst Witold (1930); *Kiaupienė/Petrauskas*, Lietuvos istorija 4 (2009); *Nikodem*, Witold (2013); *Petrauskas*, Monarcha i wasal (2014); *Frost*, History (2015), 74–150.

pendix according to *Wolff*, Projekt (1957) (for Latin texts), *Thumser*, Zehn Thesen (2008) and *Heckmann*, Leitfaden (2013) (for German texts).

Along with strengthening his position as a monarch, Vytautas retained the union with the Kingdom of Poland. According to the acts of Vilnius-Radom in 1401, he was recognized as the Grand Duke of Lithuania for his lifetime by Jagiełło (who retained a rather vague supremacy and the title of the *Supreme Duke of Lithuania*). The union of Horodło in 1413, concluded a couple of years after the victory over the Teutonic Order at Grunwald (Tannenberg, Žalgiris) and the First Peace of Thorn (Toruń) which sealed it, were also aimed to strengthen Vytautas' ties with Poland. The Polish nobles adopted the Lithuanian catholic boyars to their coats of arms, and the documents issued by both monarchs spoke of the *incorporation* of the Grand Duchy into the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland (at least on parchment), in addition to the introduction of some Polish administrative and cultural patterns into the Grand Duchy. The union of Horodło was aimed not least at solving the succession problem in both states: in 1413 neither Jagiełło nor Vytautas had sons who could inherit their realms. According to the union acts, in the event of Vytautas' death without any male heirs, the Polish king could dispose the fate of the Grand Duchy by incorporating it into the Kingdom of Poland or by appointing a new grand duke according to the advice of the Lithuanian boyars and the Polish nobles.<sup>5</sup>

Vytautas' policies not only helped him solve the problems of defeating the Teutonic Order. He was able to further subjugate Ruthenian lands (which took not only military forms) and strengthen his position outside his realm as well. By the end of Vytautas' reign, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became one of the leading power players in East Central Europe, supported by its ally Poland, and would intervene not only in the struggle for power in the Golden Horde (which was coming to its decline), but also the interrelations between the Rus'ian states – the Grand Duchies of Moscow, Tver', Ryazan', as well as the Republics of Novgorod and Pskov. In 1429–1430 Vytautas was even going to shift his status inside and outside the country by receiving a crown from the Roman King Sigismund of Luxemburg, making his Grand Duchy a kingdom. This provoked a serious conflict with the Kingdom of Poland. For one, the creation of an independent Kingdom of Lithuania would lead to the revision of the Polish-Lithuanian union, which would bring into question the rights of Jagiełło's sons (Władysław and Casimir, born in 1424 and 1427 respectively) to the Lithuanian throne as its “natural heirs” as well as to the Polish crown. In the end, a large group of the Greater Polish nobility defeated Sigismund of Luxemburg's embassy travelling to Lithuania and took away the coronation documents and gifts to Vytautas in August 1430. On receiving the news of this seizure, the second embassy following the first one, consisting of the prelates and highest lay dignitaries of Sigismund's realms and entrusted with the crowns intended for Vytautas and his wife Juliana (rus. Uljana, lit. Julijona), returned to Sigismund. In the meantime,

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<sup>5</sup> The documents of Horodło union are published: Akta unji. Eds. *Kutrzeba/Semkowicz*, no. 49–51; 1413 m. Horodlės aktai. Eds. *Kiaupienė/Korczak*, 19–53 (with translations into Polish and Lithuanian). From the large literature on its context and meaning, see recently *Korczak*, *Na drodze* (2013); *Nikodem*, *Witold* (2013), 295–319; *Frost*, *History* (2015), 109–121.

plenty of rulers of the neighboring countries and their representatives, summoned by Vytautas, gathered in Lithuania to await his coronation. Jagiełło came as well, accompanied by his prelates and barons. On receiving the news of Sigismund's embassy's fate, Vytautas dismissed the guests and reconciled with Jagiełło. Several days later, he fell from his horse and died on 27 October 1430, without leaving a son who could inherit the Grand Duchy.<sup>6</sup>

The situation changed drastically after Vytautas' death. Švitrigaila (pol. Świdrygiełło, rus. Svidrigailo), who was widely known in the Grand Duchy due to his struggle for power against Vytautas which had lasted for almost 40 years, became Grand Duke.<sup>7</sup> The new ruler came into open conflict with the King of Poland (paradoxically, his native brother), Władysław II Jagiełło. The main issues behind this conflict were the prospects of the union with Poland, which Švitrigaila did not want to renew, in addition to the fate of the Grand Duchy's southern borderlands Podolia and Volhynia. Hostilities broke out in the south, and in the summer of 1431 the Poles even besieged the castle of Lutsk in Volhynia. However, both sides accomplished nothing, while Švitrigaila was nearing politically and militarily to the Teutonic Order and delaying the negotiations for an "eternal peace" with Poland. In 1432, Švitrigaila was unexpectedly overthrown by a group of nobles and fled to the city of Polotsk, commencing a war against the new Grand Duke, Žygimantas Kęstutaitis (pol. Zygmunt Kiejstutowicz, rus. Sigismund Keistutovich). Žygimantas Kęstutaitis was supported by Poland and managed to take *Lithuania propria* under his control. Although his positions were not strong at all, he ultimately proved to be more successful than his rival. Švitrigaila at the beginning enjoyed the support of the huge Ruthenian lands and waged several campaigns against Žygimantas, but failed to drive him out of Lithuania. This war lasted until the end of 1438 when Švitrigaila, after his decisive defeat in the battle at Pabaiskas/Wiłkomierz/Święta (1 September 1435) and the failed attempts to establish a separate political entity in the South of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (with the main centers in Kyiv and Lutsk), was pushed out of his last possessions in the South Ruthenian lands (in what is now Ukraine).

The events in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 1430s have been subject to much discussion in scholarly research, both in the specialist circles and in the general works. In this paper, I will concentrate on the developments preceding the dynastic war, which are no less controversial than the war itself. Two questions will form the topic of this paper. In the first part, I will focus on Švitrigaila's accession to the Lithuanian grand-ducal throne in 1430, and in the second part I will discuss his dethronement in 1432. My arguments presented in this article are based to a large extent on

6 On Vytautas' failed coronation, see recently *Błaszczyk*, *Burza koronacyjna* (1998); *Petrauskas*, *Valdovas* (2017); *Bar*, "Krönungsturm" (2017); *Polekhov*, *Kak koronovat'* (2021).

7 On Švitrigaila's biography before 1430 and his struggle for power, see the overview below.

my book published in Russian<sup>8</sup> and amplified with the information of the new sources collected during the preparation of the extensive publication, “Codex diplomaticus Swidrigali”.<sup>9</sup>

## Švitrigaila’s Accession to the Throne in 1430

Several days after Vytautas’ death, his cousin Švitrigaila became the new Grand Duke of Lithuania. He was the youngest son of Grand Duke Algirdas, born between 1369 and 1376, and was Jagiełło’s younger brother.<sup>10</sup> For several decades he had been contesting Vytautas’ power, starting in 1393 when, after the death of his mother Juliana, he murdered boyar Fedor Vesna, the lieutenant of Vitebsk, and tried to establish himself as the appanage prince before he was captured and sent to Cracow. The following decades saw several uprisings against Vytautas led by Švitrigaila – however, all of them had very limited success in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As a result, he was forced to flee to his foreign allies – Sigismund of Luxemburg, who was king of Hungary since 1387 and Roman king since 1410, the Teutonic Order, the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the Golden Horde, and the Moldavian voivode, Alexander the Good. However, these allies were not eager to support Vytautas’ rival and they instead handed Švitrigaila over to Jagiełło, who showed more sentiment to him than Vytautas. The last reconciliation took place in 1419–1420, when Švitrigaila was given not only possessions and incomes in the Kingdom of Poland, but also the vast Principality of Chernigov as appanage. In the 1420s, Švitrigaila was loyal to Vytautas and Jagiełło, taking part in their military campaigns and even in Vytautas’ preparations for the coronation in 1430 (mentioned above).<sup>11</sup> Švitrigaila’s popular characterization is to be found in the work of Jan Długosz:

*Restabat et dux Switrigal Wladislai regis germanus, sed ebrietati et solaciis deditus, ingenii quidem liberalis sed variabilis et vehementis et parum sensati atque dextri. Nihil apud illum ratio aut gravitas valuit, omnia ira vehemens et mutacio crebra animi velut flatu quidam aure gubernabat, ut semper crederes in illo varios et diversos perflare motus, liberalitate tamen maxima et miscendo se ebrietatibus multorum sibi mortalium animos conciliaverat, Ruthenorum singularius, in quorum ritum, licet esset Romane religionis princeps, ferebatur inclinacior.*<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Polekhov, Nasledniki Vitovta (2015). In the present article the research after 2015 is also taken into account.

<sup>9</sup> On this project, see Polekhov, Codex (2019).

<sup>10</sup> On Švitrigaila’s date of birth, see the overview in Nikodem, Data (2000), 48 f.

<sup>11</sup> On Švitrigaila’s biography before 1430, see Polekhov, Nasledniki Vitovta (2015), 129–148; Korczak, Świdrygiełło (2016–2017); Polekhov, Kogda Svidrigailo derzhal Galich (2021); Polekhov, Svidrigailo (2021).

<sup>12</sup> Joannis Dlugossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. Turkowska et al., 303.

On the one hand, Długosz is right to some extent, depicting Švitrigaila as attractive and hasty. These qualities may be to some extent substantiated with Švitrigaila's behaviour, such as his cruelties directed against his leading and most talented partisans, such as the Voivode of Kyiv, Prince Michael Holshanski (pol. Michał Holszański), who was drowned in 1433, or the lieutenant of Eastern Podolia, Prince Fedko Nesvitski (pol. Fedko Nieświcki), who was arrested in 1434.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, Długosz, as well as his patron Zbigniew Oleśnicki (Bishop of Cracow and later cardinal), accused Švitrigaila of inclination to *Ruthenians and their rite*, i. e., orthodoxy. This was a popular tool of propaganda during the time.<sup>14</sup> As a matter of fact, contemporary sources testify to his Catholic devotion and attempts to conclude the church union. It is undoubtful that, by 1430, Algirdas' youngest son was about 60 years old but remained unmarried and had no children – a very important circumstance in the dynastic politics.<sup>15</sup>

It is not exactly known how Švitrigaila became grand duke. The scarce and inconsistent source information on what was happening in Lithuania after Vytautas' death will be discussed below in detail. Vytautas was buried in the cathedral of St. Stanislaus and St. Vladislaus in Vilnius on 3 November 1430,<sup>16</sup> and only four days later, on 7 November, Jagiełło and Švitrigaila concluded an agreement in Trakai to keep peace between their realms and to summon an assembly together with their counsellors on 15 August 1431. Whereas Jagiełło in his document entitled himself as *Dei gracia rex Polonie Lithwanieque princeps supremus et heres Russie etc.*, Švitrigaila's document surviving in original omitted the Lithuanian part of the king's title. Both documents

<sup>13</sup> Polekhov, *Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 341 f., 383 f., 581 f., 586 f.

<sup>14</sup> Apart from Długosz's characterization quoted above, see his remarks on Švitrigaila in the other parts of his work: Joannis Długossii Annales 1370–1405. Eds. *Turkowska et al.*, 253–255; Joannis Długossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska et al.*, 85 f.; Joannis Długossii Annales 1445–1461. Eds. *Turkowska et al.*, 123, as well as Oleśnicki's letter to Giuliano Cesarini, the president of the Council of Basel, written at the beginning of 1432 (Codex epistolaris. Ed. *Lewicki*, vol. 2, no. 204). Oleśnicki's letter survived in a manuscript once belonging to Długosz and may have been one of his sources.

<sup>15</sup> Probably at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Švitrigaila could have married a daughter of prince Yuri Sviatoslavich of Smolensk. This marriage can be deduced only from indirect source evidence and may have existed for a very short time, without leaving any children. See Polekhov, Braki (2014), and, critically of my hypothesis about Švitrigaila's first marriage, *Nikodem*, O zawartym i domniemanym małżeństwie (2018). In both articles the unpublished letter of supreme marshal Martin von Kemnate to grand master Michael Kuchmeister written on 28 January 1422 is overseen, informing about the rumors that Jagiełło and Švitrigaila allegedly married recently in Lithuania. According to this letter, their wives *seyn tochter und muter, und sullen seyn us der Podolyen adir us der Walachie, und das der koning czu Polan dy muter nympt, und herczog Swiddrigal die tochter* (GStAPK, OBA 3663). The real event behind these rumors was Jagiełło's coming marriage with Sophia Holshanskaia (Zofia Holszańska), contracted a month later (*Tęgowski*, *Pierwsze pokolenia* [1999], 130; *Czwojdrak*, *Zofia Holszańska* [2012], 19 f.); Švitrigaila remained single.

<sup>16</sup> Joannis Długossii Annales 1413–1430. Ed. *Turkowska et al.*, 301 f.



named Švitrigaila *magnus dux Lithuanie*, which meant that this dignity was recognized by the king as well.<sup>17</sup> Practically at the same time, on 9 November 1430, Švitrigaila sent an embassy to Sigismund of Luxemburg, informing the Roman king of his enthronement and proposing an alliance with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Teutonic Order (the same proposal was made to its authorities) and the Kingdom of Poland, “agreeing” to receive the crown intended for Vytautas and asking for Sigismund to consent to Švitrigaila’s marriage with the daughter (not known by name) of the Moldavian voivode.<sup>18</sup>

At some moment shortly after Švitrigaila’s accession to the throne, the Polish-Lithuanian conflict broke out in Western Podolia, a region on the Polish-Lithuanian border. The Western part of “Great Podolia”, with the castles of Kamianets’, Smotrych, Skala, and Chervonohrod (respectively pol. Kamieniec, Smotrycz, Skala, and Czerwonogród) had been given by Władysław Jagiełło to Vytautas for the duration of the remainder of his life in 1411. Although after his death this region had to return to the Kingdom of Poland, Vytautas sought to strengthen his power by various means, e. g. by granting land to local nobles. However, on hearing of Vytautas’ death a group of Polish nobility residing in Crown Ruthenia, but probably also connected to Podolia, Hrytsko Kierdeyovych (pol. Hryćko Kierdejowicz), the three Buczacki brothers Teodoryk, Michał and Michał Mużyło, as well as Jan Kruszyna of Gałowo, accompanied by the Catholic bishop of Kamianets’ Paweł of Bojańczyce, arrested by deception the Lithuanian lieutenant of Western Podolia Jonas Daugirdas (pol. Jan Dowgird), seized Kamianets’ and other aforementioned western Podolian castles. In doing so, they put

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17 Codex epistolaris Vitoldi. Ed. *Prochaska*, no. 1461 (Jagiełło’s document surviving in contemporary copies sent to the grand master of the Teutonic Order by Švitrigaila); AGAD, Zbiór dokumentów pergaminowych, No. 4450; *Buchyns’kyi, Kil’ka prychnkiv* (1907), 130 f. (Švitrigaila’s document surviving in the original and published from the 18<sup>th</sup>-century copy). In my review of Baranauskas’ book I insisted that Švitrigaila sealed his document of this agreement with his Chernigov seal used since 1420, not waiting for a new, grand-ducal seal to be ready (*Polechov*, Pabaisko mūšis [2020]), 193; *Palekhau*, Bitva [2020], 269). This conclusion turned out to be too hasty: in fact the seal I referred to was attached to Švitrigaila’s document of 1420, when he became prince of Chernigov. This Polish-Lithuanian agreement was subject to analysis many times, see esp. *Nikodem*, Wyniesienie (2003), and *Błaszczuk*, Dzieje (2007), 624 f.

18 Švitrigaila’s proposals are known from the summary of Sigismund’s embassy to the grand master of the Teutonic Order as well as the king’s answers to the grand-ducal envoys (GStAPK, OBA 5542, 5543). The first of these documents was published in inaccurate retellings and quotations from the texts (Codex epistolaris Vitoldi. Ed. *Prochaska*, no. 1464; *Whelan/Simon*, Moldavian Lady [2015], 115; *Whelan/Simon*, Changes [2015], 153 f.). In their recent articles, Mark Whelan and Alexandru Simon made an attempt of analyzing its “Moldavian” part but oversaw Švitrigaila’s credentials allowing to date the whole embassy, which is published below, Appendix 1, as an important contribution to Švitrigaila’s legitimization rhetorics. On Švitrigaila’s proposals to keep and strengthen the alliance with the Teutonic Order see: Liv-, esth- und curländisches Urkundenbuch, vol. 8. Ed. *Hildebrand*, no. 366, 398; Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren, vol. 4.1. Ed. *Forstreuter*, no. 226.

the whole of Western Podolia under their control and the obedience to the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland (*Corona Regni Poloniae*).<sup>19</sup> This perhaps caused the detention of Jagiełło, who was still in Lithuania, by the discontented Švitrigaila. In any case, the new agreement regulating the fate of Podolia was concluded on 29 November. The rulers agreed that the king would order Kamianets', Smotrych, Skala, and Chervonohrod to be handed over to the grand duke and that they would remain in his hands, unless the Polish barons did not approve his decision and the participants of the assembly on 15 August do not come to terms, or the king dies before it could be executed. The grand duke promised not to punish the Polish nobles who took part in the seizure of the Podolian castles. Švitrigaila's entourage issued a special document guaranteeing this agreement.<sup>20</sup> According to Długosz's vivid narration, the king sent a letter to Michał Buczański ordering him to hand over the Podolian castles to the Lithuanian envoy, prince Ivan Baba of Drutsk. However, the king's messenger brought him a secret message hidden in a candle, which instructed him to not follow that order (a plot borrowed from the work of the Roman historian Justin). This secret message was sent by the Polish noblemen Andrzej Tęczyński and Mikołaj Drzewicki, who were staying with the king in Lithuania.<sup>21</sup> The fact that the king did not punish them, as well as the royal servants' dispatch to Kamianets' with cannons on the king's order at the end of November,<sup>22</sup> show that the decision to retain Western Podolia was made (or at least approved) by the king, who could plead to his nobles in his traditional manner.<sup>23</sup> The king's detention ended only after the convention of the Polish nobility in the town of Warta near Sieradz on 6 December. This put the Polish troops on alert, and at the same time an embassy of the highest Polish prelates and lay dignitaries was sent to the grand duke. Although the king was released and returned to Poland, it neither put an end to Lithuania's breach with Poland nor to the hostilities in Podolia. In June of 1431 a full-scale war started also in Volhynia but ended only after a couple of months in confirming the *status quo ante bellum*.

The discussion on how Švitrigaila became grand duke of Lithuania has lasted since the late autumn of 1430. The accounts of his accession are rather numerous.

<sup>19</sup> On Podolia and its fate, see *Kurtyka*, *Podole w średniowieczu* (2011), esp. 128–132; *Mykhaylovskiy*, *European Expansion* (2019), esp. 83–115.

<sup>20</sup> The texts of the agreement surviving in 16<sup>th</sup>-century copies are published in: *Polekhov*, *Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 513–517.

<sup>21</sup> Joannis Dlugossii *Annales 1413–1430*. Eds. *Turkowska et al.*, 311–313; *Sperka*, *Szafrancowie* (2001), 198–202; *Nikodem*, *Wyniesienie* (2003), 27–29. On Justin, see *Turkowska*, *Ślady* (1961), 166. The embassy may have been sent to Kamianets' before 29 November 1430, since Prince Ivan Baba of Drutsk is not mentioned among the nobles guaranteeing the agreement between Švitrigaila and Jagiełło (however, his omission may be the 16<sup>th</sup>-century scribes' mistake as well).

<sup>22</sup> See below, fn. 46.

<sup>23</sup> On this feature of Jagiełło's behavior, see e.g. *Nikodem*, *Witold* (2013), 387 f.



Since they have already been analyzed recently by several scholars,<sup>24</sup> I will outline the main versions of the developments they offer.

Švitrigaila based his legitimization strategy on four points: (1) his hereditary rights, since he was the son of Grand Duke Algirdas, (2) the last will of his father (allegedly, because he had died in 1377), (3) the election by his subjects, and (4) the consent of the king of Poland. These moments appear in several accounts of Švitrigaila's allies, but are most comprehensively presented by the grand duke and his partisans. In a letter to Sigismund of Luxemburg written several days after that, Švitrigaila presented the circumstances of his accession in the following manner:

*Wir tun ewer gnaden zu wissen, das von Gotes geschicht und hulfe und von der fursten und herren und des gantzen gemeynes willen des landes zur Littin zu eynen grossen fursten uns dirwelt und erkoren haben, und uf den stul, den unser vatter und unser bruder der hertzog Wytold dem Got gnad besessen hatten, gesatzit uns haben.*<sup>25</sup>

The role of the dynastic factor and the grand duke's subjects was also stressed in the speech of his advocates to the Council of Basel in 1433:

*Proposuit autem et specialiter querelam contra fratrem suum Ladislaum Poloniae regem (...) patrem ipsorum quatuor filios habentem disposuisse, quod et ipse Ladislaus iuramento firmarat, vt, si contingeret eum aliquod regnum adipisci, ducatus ipse Lithuanie in personam veniret dicti Witrigaldi; accepto autem Polonie regno quod ordinacionem ipsam nunquam voluerit obseruare, sed dedrat ducatum tercio fratri, illoque mortuo et quarto, ac post eius obitum nepoti suo Witoldo (...) Mortuo tandem Witoldo omnes procures et populus dicti ducatus eligentes assumpserunt eum in dominum suum, et rex ipse in signum plene donacionis tradiderat anulum in manus eius.*<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The versions of different sources are quoted and analyzed by Nikodem, Wyniesienie (2003), 7–10 (the majority of sources); Korczak, Monarcha (2008), 22–26; Polekhov, Nasledniki Vitovta (2015), 149–152. The unpublished list of the Teutonic Order's requirements for the peace with Poland, compiled for the mediation embassy of the Council of Basel in May 1433, may be added here: ... *illustris princeps Boleslaus alias Swidrigal, magnus dux Litwanie et Russie, frater carnalis dicti domini regis Polonie, qui naturalis est eciam heres huiusmodi Magni Ducatus et eleccione concordie ducum, baronum et nobilium terrarum Litwanie et Russie etc. volente et consenciente rege Polonie est assumptus ...*, GStAPK, OBA 6311.

<sup>25</sup> See below, Appendix 1.

<sup>26</sup> Joannis de Segovia Historia. Ed. Birk, 619–620; Berichte der Generalprokuratoren, vol. 4.2. Ed. Forstreuter, no. 606. The statement of Švitrigaila's supporters in their missive to the Council of Basel written on 22 March 1433, the so-called "Vitebsk manifesto", is also instructive: *Et duce Witardo sublato de medio, de consilio et assensu illustrissimi principis et domini, domini Wladislai regis Polonie etc. et nobilium et illustrum Ducatus Lithuanie et terre Samagittarum concorditer elegimus illustrem ducem Boleslaum alias Swidrigal in ducem magnum, verum heredem et dominum nostrum et iuramentis firmatis pro tali ipsum reputavimus et promissimus tenere et reputare*, Bullarium Polonie, vol. 5. Eds. Sułkowska-Kuraś/Kuraś, no. 1361.

Concerning Jagiełło, the Lithuanian part insisted that he had lost his rights to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and “abandoned” it by receiving the crown of Poland in 1386.<sup>27</sup>

According to the contemporary Polish version, Švitrigaila seized power in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Apparently, the Polish politicians formulated in that way what was said above, i. e., that the action of Švitrigaila and the nobles of the Grand Duchy was carried out without asking the king or waiting for his decision.

According to the last version provided by contemporaries,<sup>28</sup> Švitrigaila was appointed grand duke by his brother, king Władysław Jagiełło of Poland. This view is expressed most vividly in the work of Jan Długosz, who wrote about the Lithuanians’ request to the king to grant them a new grand duke; its supporters also refer to the Bychowiec chronicle, the Lithuanian chronicle composition created in the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, most probably in the milieu of Albertas Goštautas (pol. Olbracht Gasztold), which states that the appointment was on Jagiełło’s initiative. This version seems logical at first glance: Švitrigaila was Jagiełło’s brother, the king’s consent to Švitrigaila’s accession is also mentioned by other sources (Švitrigaila-friendly as well), and the king may have had a dynastic reason to preserve the independent or at least autonomous Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In doing so and appointing his unmarried and childless brother, Jagiełło could retain the Lithuanian throne for his sons who could thus be elected to the Polish throne despite the tensions with the nobility of the Kingdom of Poland reluctant to accept them as the heirs to the throne.<sup>29</sup> Długosz was 15 years old in 1430, but theoretically could have learned some details from elder contemporaries, especially his patron Zbigniew Oleśnicki, Bishop of Cracow, who was then at the beginning of his forties and participated in the events of 1430.

However, as it has already been noticed, Długosz’s account is highly contradictory in itself. In another place in his “Annales”, he writes about the seizure of power by Švitrigaila, mentioning how annoying it was for Jagiełło that Švitrigaila’s people occupied the Grand Duke’s estates when Vytautas lay on his deathbed, as well as the dying Vytautas’ speech to his cousin Jagiełło.<sup>30</sup> The Cracow historian could learn about the seizure of the grand-ducal estates from Jagiełło’s letter to the Grand Master of the Teu-

<sup>27</sup> Codex epistolaris. Ed. Lewicki, vol. 2, no. 208.

<sup>28</sup> The version developed by Ludwik Kolankowski and Bronius Dundulis, that Švitrigaila was designated as grand duke by the dying Vytautas who was interested in retaining the independent Grand Duchy of Lithuania, is not substantiated with contemporary sources, moreover, it is contrary to their evidence (Polekhov, Nasledniki Vitovta [2015], 152–154).

<sup>29</sup> On Jagiełło’s struggle for succession of his sons, see Kurtyka, Tęczyńscy (1997); Sperka, Szafraniec (2001); recently also Zawitkowska, Walka (2015), criticized by Szybkowski, Jagiełło (2016).

<sup>30</sup> Joannis Dlugossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. Turkowska et al., 300. See also the sermon on Vytautas’ death by Jan of Kęty: *Quod autem hoc sit finem ipsius advertite, quomodo moriturus, sua castra et possessiones in manus regni tradidit, thesauros reliquit, precipue principum et dominorum omagium ordinavit*, Šv. Jono Kantijaus pamokslas. Ed. Raulinaitis, 100.

tonic Order Paul von Rusdorf sent on 21 July 1431<sup>31</sup> (however, Długosz provided his narration with details lacking in the king's letter). Accusing Jagiełło of raising Švitrigaila to the Lithuanian throne, the Polish historian and contemporary explained the king's short-sighted behavior with his love to his fatherland Lithuania and his younger brother. It is connected also with Długosz's notion of the Lithuanian nobility as an object of the Polish politics, with the opposition of his patron Zbigniew Oleśnicki to the elderly king, as well as the historian's idea of the instructive task of history writing.<sup>32</sup>

As for the Bychowiec chronicle, it generally defends the independence of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania against the Polish concepts (not directly against Długosz, but rather against Maciej Miechowita who built on Długosz's work), at the same time demonstrating the loyalty to Zygmunt I (Sigismund the Old) who was ruling both realms in the time when it was composed. By ascribing the initiative of appointing Švitrigaila to the king, the author of the Bychowiec chronicle showed his loyalty to the Jagiellonian dynasty and the catastrophic consequences of the decision of the ruling king's grandfather made without consent of the Lithuanian princes and boyars.

The source evidence concerning Švitrigaila's accession to the throne was a topic of research for many times. The most detailed analysis was provided in the last decades by Jarosław Nikodem, Grzegorz Błaszczyk und Lidia Korczak, who came to the conclusion that Švitrigaila seized power, whereas Jagiełło had to recognize it post factum.<sup>33</sup> I supported this conclusion with some additional arguments. Nevertheless, it is sometimes still stated that Švitrigaila was appointed by Jagiełło who was pursuing his dynastic aims. Although this idea promoted by Ludwik Kolankowski<sup>34</sup> and based on a straightforward understanding of Jagiełło's dynastic interests has since fallen under criticism, it was accepted by some historians (Ewa Maleczyńska, Jerzy Ochmański) and revived recently by Wioletta Zawitkowska and especially by Tomas Baranauskas. However, this idea is contrary to the source information: it is largely based on Kolankowski's idea that Vytautas' coronation was inspired by Jagiełło's eagerness to accomplish his dynastic aims, while the sources state the contrary; it is very characteristic that Zawitkowska's analysis is largely based on the narrations of Jan Długosz and of the Bychowiec chronicle, and Baranauskas totally ignores the recent Polish research on the Polish political scene and the dynastic situation in the Kingdom of Poland. It would be rather naïve to expect, as Zawitkowska seems to do and Baranauskas does (thus following Długosz who depicted Jagiełło as highly short-minded) that Jagiełło,

31 ... *castra civitates thezauros opida et villas possessionesque ceteras et dominia Lythwannie et Russie terrarum violenter occupavit nosque dominum verum legitimum et naturalem ab eisdem exclusit ...*, Codex epistolaris. Ed. Lewicki, vol. 2, no. 191. The text has survived in the manuscript once belonging to Zbigniew Oleśnicki, also used by Długosz.

32 For the analysis of Długosz's narration, see Nikodem, *Wyniesienie* (2003), 11–14, and Polekhov, *Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 155.

33 Nikodem, *Wyniesienie* (2003); Błaszczyk, *Dzieje* (2007), 619–621; Korczak, *Monarcha* (2008), 22 f.

34 Kolankowski, *Dzieje* (1930), 145–169.

with his political experience of several decades, appointed Švitrigaila as Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1430 because he was unmarried and had no sons, and then encouraged a plot against him in 1432, after he married and his wife was expecting a child – although it was not known, whether a son or a daughter was expected.<sup>35</sup>

In any event one must consider not only direct evidence when analyzing the problem of Švitrigaila's accession to the Lithuanian throne. What is of no less significance is the development of the situation in Lithuania. At the end of October we see the dying Vytautas reconciling with the king of the neighbour and ally state, his cousin, leaving to him the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and entrusting the wife to his care. At the beginning of November we observe the new Grand Duke Švitrigaila, who is in an acute conflict with the same king, his brother, and his realm, and is getting into contact with other European forces. Literally a couple of days after Vytautas' funeral the king had to conclude an agreement with the new grand duke, which set the date of their meeting that had to settle all the controversial points on 15 August. It shows that the king had to react to Švitrigaila's actions. The fact that the king actually lost control over the situation in Lithuania only in a few days after Vytautas' death implies that he had no plan of implementing the Horodło treaty as well as Vytautas' last will. Theoretically, according to the union of Horodło, Jagiełło could appoint his vicegerent to rule the (former) Grand Duchy of Lithuania after Vytautas' death. However, it is highly doubtful that in practice its elites would have recognized this solution after almost four decades of Vytautas' reign, even more so since that practice had been already criticized at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, before Vytautas came to power.<sup>36</sup> Nothing is known about Jagiełło's efforts to establish contacts with the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at that time. The Polish part did not appeal to their will; on the contrary, later the princes and boyars stated that they elected Švitrigaila because Jagiełło had chosen another throne and thus abandoned Lithuania. Nothing is known about the princes who were (or at least could be) treated as Jagiełło's possible candidates to the Lithuanian throne after Vytautas' death either. The candidates named in the research are based either on Długosz's mention *ex post*, like Žygimantas Kęstutaitis,<sup>37</sup> or on speculations of historians, like the Or-

35 Zawitkowska, Walka (2015), 244–254; Baranauskas, Pabaisko mūšis (2017), 15 f.; Baranauskas, Pabaisko mūšis (2019), 47–77. See my review of Baranauskas' book: Polekhov, Pabaisko mūšis (2020); Palekhau, Bitva (2020). The recent articles (Osiński, Przejęcie [2015]; Osiński, Rządy [2016]) are based on the same sources and scholarly literature; they add nothing new to the state of research.

36 Litskevich, Pra nekatoryia spisy (2011), 218 f.

37 Cf. Nikodem, Dłaczego (2013), 167 (assuming that Vytautas rejected his coronation plan in October 1430 and was reconciled with in exchange for the king's consent for Žygimantas' accession to the Lithuanian throne after Vytautas' death) and, critically, already Buchyn'skyi, Noviishi praci (1907), 135. Długosz confirms that Žygimantas had little chances for his late brother's throne: ... *restabat quidem germanus ducis Withaudi dux Sigismundus, sed is obscurus se in vita Withaudi gerens non aliquod dederat bone sue indolis monumentum*, Joannis Długossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. Turkowska et al., 303. Before 1430 Žygimantas had spent several years as duke of Starodub situated in the periphery of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

thodox Gediminid princes Semen Lengvenis or Oielko (Alexander).<sup>38</sup> Švitrigaila's attempt to marry a Moldavian princess shows how he was beginning to pursue the goal of creating his own dynasty, which was apparently contrary to Jagiełło's dynastic interest (let alone the fact that due to a marriage he acquired new allies). These circumstances make the hypothesis of Švitrigaila's appointment by Jagiełło highly doubtful.

These arguments were presented in my book published in 2016. Now I can strengthen my argumentation basing on the sources found in an unexpected place – in a manuscript of the 1430s preserved in the Bavarian State Library in Munich, which probably once belonged to the Bishop of Augsburg, Peter von Schaumberg, a person from Sigismund of Luxemburg's entourage, in a set of texts about the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of the same time.<sup>39</sup> In the context of the present paper, two letters are of major interest. The first of them<sup>40</sup> is written in Latin and was sent by Duke Siemowit V of Mazovia, the elder son of the late Siemowit IV, one of the most important politicians of the region;<sup>41</sup> the addressees are not mentioned by name, but the substance of the letter indicates they were from the Kingdom of Poland. The duke addresses them with the words *Eximie presul paterque in Christo reverende et magnifice ac strennue miles, amici nostri carissimi*. From this formula we may conclude that the addressees were two men – a prelate and a lay dignitary, close enough to each other to be addressed in the same letter. The people meeting these criteria were two brothers from the Szafraniec family: Jan,

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On his biography before accessing the grand-ducal throne, see *Barvin'skyi*, Zhygyomont Keistutovych (1905), 2–21; *Tęgowski*, Pierwsze pokolenia (1999), 220–224.

38 E. g. *Varonin*, Kniaz' Iuraj (2010), 15 f. It would be hard to imagine that the most influential Catholic nobles of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where Catholicism was privileged, would have accepted an Orthodox prince, even a Gediminid, as their ruler. In 1433, the princes and boyars supporting Švitrigaila, both the Lithuanians and the Ruthenians (!), stated that they had obliged to obey only a Catholic prince as their grand duke: ... *presentibus fatemur nos ante tempora iurasse, et ita velle conservare, nunquam habere dominum, nec obedire, nisi esset verus catholicus et fidei ecclesie Romane, et secundum iuramenta et homagia nostra, domino nostro duci magna facta, volumus sibi servire et obedire ...*, Bullarium Poloniae, vol. 5. Eds. *Sułkowska-Kuraś/Kuraś*, no. 1361.

39 München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 22372. The manuscript was described several times, see: *Piotrowicz*, Polonica w Niemczech (1934), 115; *Wolny/Markowski/Kuksewicz* (Eds.), Polonica (1969), 156 f.; *Trede/Freckmann* (Eds.), Katalog (2018), 239–254. A hitherto unknown version of Sigismund of Luxemburg's document proclaiming Vytautas the king of Lithuania was published in my article, where further texts of the manuscript are mentioned: *Polekhov*, Kak koronovat' (2021). On Peter von Schaumberg, see *Uhl*, Peter von Schaumberg (1940); *Rummel*, Schaumberg (2001).

40 See below, Appendix 2.

41 On his biography, see *Supruniuk*, Siemowit V (1996–1997); *Jasiński*, Rodowód (1998), 106–111; *Grabowski*, Dynastia (2016), 462–464.

Bishop of Kujawia (Włocławek), and Piotr, Starost of Cracow: both belonged to the leading Polish politicians of the age.<sup>42</sup>

The copy of the letter contains no date, but this may be deduced from its content. Siemowit communicated to the Polish dignitaries the news he learned from his messenger Gerhard Maytzowsky whom he had sent to Lithuania because of his anxiety about the king's fate. Since Švitrigaila was demanding from the king to give him the land of Podolia and "to attach it to the Grand Duchy in perpetuity", it was already known in the moment of Gerhard's visit about the capture of Kamianets'. The king was detained in Lithuania by the new Grand Duke Švitrigaila and was asking to free him: Švitrigaila didn't let Jagiełło's embassy to his counsellors and the queen, he also did not let anyone into Lithuania (by the way, it is one of the reasons why so little is known about the events in Lithuania at the end of 1430).<sup>43</sup> According to the king's words, Švitrigaila was willing to liberate him under several conditions, including the dissolution of the Polish-Lithuanian union treaty.

When was Siemowit's messenger in Lithuania? His visit must have taken place between the two Polish-Lithuanian agreements concluded on 7 and 29 November 1430. The first of them was an attempt to settle the conflict – the fact showing that it broke out with increased intensity after Švitrigaila's accession to the throne. The second one was devoted to the fate of Western Podolia. According to the tone of the letter, when Gerhard was leaving Lithuania, Jan Głowacz of Oleśnica was still staying there and hadn't left for Poland with the grand duke's gifts and the king's request to free him.<sup>44</sup> Jan Głowacz arrived in Cracow before 24 November, when the expenditure records of the town of Kazimierz indicate the sending of Jan Wałach, a knight from Lesser Poland whom the king especially trusted due to his military talents, with cannons and gunners to Kamianets' by the king's order, while the king himself was still staying in Lithuania.<sup>45</sup> If Jan Głowacz was travelling fast enough, it could take him about 8–10

<sup>42</sup> About them, see *Sperka, Szafrancowie* (2001); *Knappek, Szafranec Jan* (2009–2010); *Sperka, Szafranec Piotr* (2009–2010). Another pair were Zbigniew Oleśnicki, bishop of Cracow, and his brother Jan Głowacz, marshal of the Kingdom of Poland. However, the latter was staying in Lithuania with the king (Joannis Długossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska et al.*, 319 f.). Duke Siemowit and bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki initially accompanied the king in Lithuania, but left for Poland, as he insisted, on 16 October (Joannis Długossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska et al.*, 299). I thank professors Adam Szweda and Sobiesław Szybkowski who shared their opinion on this issue with me.

<sup>43</sup> This fact is also mentioned in Jagiełło's letter to Paul von Rusdorf of the 21 July 1431 (Codex epistolaris. Ed. *Lewicki*, vol. 2, no. 191).

<sup>44</sup> Joannis Długossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska et al.*, 319 f.

<sup>45</sup> On the next day the same source (expenditure records of the town of Kazimierz near Cracow) notes the sending of a certain Peter to Kamianets' by the queen's order: *Item Johanni Walach XI equos cum pixidibus et balistis versus Camencz castrum ad mandatum regium sabbato in vigilia Katherine (24 Novembris) (...) Item Petro II equos versus Camencz in Wyeliczkam ad mandatum graciose regine ipso die sancte Katherine (25 Novembris)*, Podwody kazimierskie. Ed. *Krzyżanowski*, 440; Podwody miast małopolskich. Eds. *Schmidt/Starzyński*, 58. On Jan Wałach's biography, see *Bukowski, Jan Wałach z Chmielnika* (1997).



days to get from Trakai to Cracow (ca. 750 km), so he had to leave around 15 November. If we assume that Gerhard left the grand duke's court a day before, on 14 November, then he could have been in Mazovia (most probably, in Płock) at the end of the second or the beginning of the third decade of November. This date can be assumed as an approximate date of Siemowit's letter. An indirect testimony of the contacts between Siemowit V, Jagiełło and the latter's Polish counselors can be found in the same source, the expenditure records of Kazimierz. On 29 November 1430, it contains the record probably referring to the same mission: *Item familiari ducis Semouiti una et Rubino dicto ad Bochnyam III equos ad mandatum regis in vigilia Andree*.<sup>46</sup> It was probably this *familiaris* of the Mazovian duke who brought his letter published below to Poland.

The second letter from this dossier<sup>47</sup> was written in German at the beginning of January 1431 in Oels (Oleśnica) in Silesia by Thomas Mas, the canon of Breslau (Wrocław), and addressed probably to the owner of the manuscript, the Bishop of Augsburg Peter von Schaumberg. This letter provides invaluable information about the hostilities on the Polish-Lithuanian border in Podolia and Volhynia, but also mentions the grand duke's demand to dissolve the Polish-Lithuanian treaties, reflecting the state of information probably in the middle or the second half of December 1430. The Latin phrase quoted in the title of the present article is taken from the postscriptum of this letter: the Lithuanians *volunt esse liberi et dominum suum Swidergal habere regem et habere jus imperiale* (the last phrase most probably means the "sovereign" character of the power of the king of Lithuania, according to the principle "rex est imperator in regno suo").<sup>48</sup>

As a result, we can attempt a reconstruction of the chronology of events – and, accordingly, the evolution of the Polish-Lithuanian relations – as follows. On 3 November 1430, Vytautas' funeral took place in Vilnius. On 7 November, the king and the new grand duke concluded an agreement and set the term for the meeting on 15 August. It was maybe at this moment that Jagiełło recognized Švitrigaila's power over the Grand Duchy of Lithuania without a solemn ceremony, by sending him a ring

<sup>46</sup> Podwoły kazimierskie. Ed. Krzyżanowski, 440; Podwoły miast małopolskich. Eds. Schmidt/Starzyński, 58.

<sup>47</sup> See below, Appendix 3. The excerpts from this letter provided in Whelan/Simon, Changes (2015), 150–152, are transcribed so imperfectly and commented without knowledge of the Polish-Lithuanian context, that they can hardly be used in research.

<sup>48</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Nikolai N. Naumov who pointed out the words of Ambrose of Milan: *Noli te gravare, imperator, ut putes te in ea quae divina sunt imperiale aliquod ius habere* (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 82. Ed. Zelzer, 119). It must be also borne in mind that the author of the letter had studied at the Universities of Prague and Bologna (on his biography, see below, Appendix 3, a note with references to further literature).

with noble Jan Mężyk of Dąbrowa who enjoyed the king's especial confidence.<sup>49</sup> Even if the Podolian castles were already captured, it was not known in Lithuania yet. The distance between Vilnius and Kamianets' is more than 800 km, and several days would be too short a term even for the couriers who could inform the nobility of the Crown Ruthenia about Vytautas' death, and later Jagiełło and/or Švitrigaila about the seizure of Kamianets', let alone its organization and carrying out. Furthermore, the agreement concluded on 7 November does not mention the capture of Kamianets'; it would have certainly mentioned it, as the agreement of 29 November does, if the fact had been already known in Trakai. Since some of the plotters probably didn't reside in Western Podolia (the possessions of Michał Buczański and Michał Mużyło Buczański lie rather in Halych land,<sup>50</sup> and those of Jan Kruszyna in Lesser Poland<sup>51</sup>), it took them some time to get together and to carry out their action. I suppose that they began discussing and preparing it when they got news that Vytautas was mortally ill, not waiting for the news of his death (just like Švitrigaila, as has already been mentioned above, started occupying the grand-ducal estates, when Vytautas was still alive). In the meantime, on 9 November Švitrigaila sent an embassy to Sigismund of Luxembourg, proposing to conclude an alliance with him and the king of Poland, asking for the hand of the Moldavian voievoda's daughter and "agreeing" to accept the crown intended for Vytautas (although it was not even offered to Švitrigaila). Approximately at the same time Švitrigaila sent an envoy to the Livonian master (*Landmeister*) of the Teutonic Order, Cisso von Rutenberg, with a proposal to conclude an alliance (Rutenberg's letter about it is written on 20 November).<sup>52</sup>

The change of the situation was witnessed by Siemowit's messenger, who visited Lithuania around the middle of the second decade of November. By that time the developments in Podolia became known in Lithuania. Accordingly, the grand duke modified his demands: he insisted on returning Podolia to Lithuania, denouncing the Polish-Lithuanian union and releasing the voivode of Moldavia from the vassal oath to the king of Poland. Jagiełło was detained in Lithuania, but was trying to keep the situation under control even in this situation: approximately at the same time Jan Głowacz of Oleśnica arrived in Poland with the grand duke's gifts and the king's request

49 Joannis Dlugossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska* et al., 304; Joannis de Segovia Historia. Ed. *Birk*, 619 f.; *Polekhov*, *Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 173–176. On Jan Mężyk's position, see *Czwojdrak*, *Jan Mężyk z Dąbrowy* (2011).

50 *Mykhailovsk'yi*, *Elastychna spil'nota*, 126, fn. 6.

51 *Sperka*, *Nieznane fakty* (2009), 169.

52 *Liv-, esth- und curländisches Urkundenbuch*, vol. 8. Ed. *Hildebrand*, no. 366. Since Siemowit sent his messenger to Lithuania because of the lack of news from the king, it is not improbable that the tensions between the two rulers were going on but didn't reach their peak yet. On the other hand, the king may have not informed his prelates and barons in the Kingdom of Poland and in Mazovia of the developments in Lithuania (and, moreover, may have sent some of them to Poland in the middle of October), because he was deliberately trying to solve the Lithuanian problems without their participation.

to release him,<sup>53</sup> the same request was sent to the Polish dignitaries through Siemowit V. The activities of Jan Wałach on behalf of the king in Western Podolia point out an attempt to hold the region and the king's participation in it. On 29 November the agreement between the grand duke and the king seemed to be reached. However, this agreement wasn't fulfilled by the Polish side, hostilities broke out in Podolia; the grand duke's order to torture Jan Kruszyna taken to captivity there shows that Švitrigaila was involved in the attempt to hold Western Podolia for Lithuania. The king had to stay in Lithuania, although not imprisoned, as stated sometimes; judging from Thomas Mas' letter, Jagiełło was allowed to go hunting, but his contacts with Poland were strictly confined. In January 1431, the news of his detention reached Sigismund of Luxemburg,<sup>54</sup> pope Martin V,<sup>55</sup> and even Florence.<sup>56</sup> The Polish nobility extended the range of the actions aimed at releasing the king. They sent an embassy to Lithuania from the convention in Warta (held on 6 December), tried to come into contact with the Teutonic Order and the Hussites, planned to enthrone prince Sigismund Korybut (pol. Zygmunt Korybutowicz, lit. Žygimantas Kaributaitis) staying in Bohemia, and menaced Švitrigaila with mobilization. As a result, the king was released; Vytautas' agreements with Poland were broken up, and the Lithuanians continued insisting on Švitrigaila's coronation.

It is not quite clear when Švitrigaila and Jagiełło went to Navahrudak to "honor" metropolitan Photios who was staying there on his way to Moscow from Vytautas' coronation assembly.<sup>57</sup> The information is reliable, since it survived in the chronicle based on the notes made in the metropolitan of All Rus' chancery, although the chronology is a bit confused. The way from Vilnius or Trakai to Navahrudak (150 km) could take about three or four days; maybe the visit took place around the 29 November, if *Geleny Dwor* is near Navahrudak.<sup>58</sup> The latter was an important center of the metropolitan's administrative structure in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, even more important than Kyiv (although he was still entitled traditionally *Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Rus'*), so that Photios could dwell there for a long time.<sup>59</sup> Maybe it was

53 Joannis Dlugossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska* et al., 319 f.

54 In his letter to king Sigismund written on 23 January 1431, the German Master of the Teutonic Order Eberhard von Saunsheim reacted to the king's question about the circumstances of Jagiełło's detention in Lithuania in his letter from Constance, where Sigismund was between 26 December 1430 and 20 January 1431 (GStAPK, OBA 5574; *Engel/Toth*, *Itineraria* [2005], 126).

55 On 27 January the pope addressed Sigismund of Luxemburg, Švitrigaila, Jagiełło and the latter's prelates and barons on this issue (Joannis Dlugossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska* et al., 313–318).

56 Notes et extraits. Ed. *Iorga*, seconde série, 291 f.

57 Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei, vol. 18, 170.

58 See the localization options: *Polekhov*, *Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 543, fn. 6.

59 On the role of Navahrudak, see e.g. *Zhemaitis*, *Spiridonii* (2010). The question of the Lithuanian-Novgorodian treaty of 1431, which is sometimes misinterpreted in the research because of lack of knowledge of its context, must be touched upon here as well. Since the treaty of good neighbourliness between Novgorod the Great and Švitrigaila as the new grand duke of Lithuania was concluded in

in December, especially as we notice that, according to Thomas Mas' letter, Švitrigaila was trying to present the king's stay in Lithuania as traditional Christmas hunting, just like it was in the times of Vytautas.<sup>60</sup>

Judging from this review, in November and December 1430 the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland were already in an acute direct conflict, which they managed to avoid in the lifetime of Vytautas, despite all the menaces and tensions. When did that conflict arise? If we try to follow the narration of Długosz, who stated that the king appointed Švitrigaila as the grand duke of Lithuania, and that the conflict broke out as the reaction of the king's hot-tempered and inconstant brother to the developments in Podolia, we should await an abrupt change of his position in November 1430 and acknowledge that the king was not ready for it. However, although the news from Podolia were probably the reason of Jagiełło's detention by Švitrigaila, both letters from the Munich manuscript show that the reason for the Polish-Lithuanian conflict after Vytautas' death was not only territorial claims, but also – and first of all – the relations of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Kingdom of Poland and other realms.

Fortunately, the sources allow us to trace the evolution of Švitrigaila's position by comparing his propositions to Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Teutonic Order with his demands to Jagiełło and the Poles.

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Vilnius on 25 January 1431, the Novgorodian embassy must have left for Lithuania in the first decade of January (Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova. Eds. Valk et al., no. 63). By that time it was probably already known for certain in Novgorod about the fate of the grand-ducal throne after Vytautas' death. Such treaties were concluded between Novgorod the Great and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at least since the beginning of Vytautas' reign till the end of Novgorod's independence in the 1470s (*Ianin*, Novgorod i Litva [1998]). It is interesting that Švitrigaila is entitled in this treaty, surviving in an original issued by the grand-ducal chancery, as "Grand Duke of Lithuania, Samogitia and many lands of Rus'" (the title was reconstructed due the examination of the damaged original in infra-red rays; I would like to thank Igor' Yu. Ankudinov for providing me with its photos). Especially important is the "Samogitian" part of the title, since it is not characteristic of Vytautas' entitlement (*Halecki*, Litwa, Ruś i Żmudź (1916), 236–242), but finds parallels in Švitrigaila's supporters' missive to the Council of Basle of 1433 (quoted above, fn. 27) and Casimir Jagiellon's treaty with Novgorod the Great concluded between 1440 and 1447 (Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova. Eds. Bałk et al., no. 70). Thus, there is no reason to consider Švitrigaila's title in this document as a sign of his special relations with the peripheries of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

<sup>60</sup> On this tradition, see *Jaworski*, Łowy (2001).

Švitrigaila's embassy to Sigismund of Luxemburg (9 November 1430) and his agreement with Jagiełło (7 November 1430)	Švitrigaila's demands to Jagiełło (the middle of November 1430)
Avoiding of wars and devastation of the lands subject to the king of Poland as well as to the grand duke of Lithuania.	The restitution of Western Podolia to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.
The alliance of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Kingdom of Poland, the realms of Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Teutonic Order.	The denunciation of the union between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland.
Švitrigaila's acceptance of the crown intended for Vytautas.	The elevation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the rank of a sovereign kingdom.
Švitrigaila's marriage to the daughter of the Moldavian voivode.	The release of the Moldavian voivode from the vassal oath to the king of Poland.

It is evident from this comparison that both before and after getting news from Western Podolia, Švitrigaila and his entourage were interested in solving the same set of problems – the elevation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the rank of kingdom (that Vytautas had failed to do) and the alliance with Sigismund of Luxemburg, the Teutonic Order and Moldavia. Moreover, in his embassy to Sigismund of Luxemburg Švitrigaila already outlined a possible way for it to happen – a marriage with the Moldavian voivode's daughter, which could give him prospect of birth of a son to whom he could pass the Lithuanian throne. This prospect posed a natural threat to the dynastic interests of the king of Poland. However, Moldavia was also important for Švitrigaila as a land “corridor” to the realms of Sigismund of Luxemburg.<sup>61</sup> The latter was eager to partition Moldavia with Jagiełło; Vytautas also insisted on it, without neglecting his own interest in the region. It was one of the main issues of the famous Lutsk congress in 1429. By making an alliance with Alexander the Good, Švitrigaila could protect him from the partition of his realm; he could also expect the allies' assistance against the Ottomans.<sup>62</sup> By the middle of November there was one more reason for Švitrigaila's interest in the alliance with Moldavia – it could help him, at least theoretically, regain control over Western Podolia situated between Moldavia and Volhynia which belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Whereas in his embassy to Sigismund Švitrigaila stipulated the participation of the king of Poland in the alliance (thus ensuring that the relations with his realm might be broken off, but reshaped crucially), several days later he insisted on the offi-

<sup>61</sup> On 17 February 1432, Švitrigaila wrote to Paul von Rusdorf about his eagerness to send an embassy to king Sigismund: ... *zo habe wir ouch mit rothe unsern herren unsere merkliche botschafft dirkorn und irwelt hynawszurichten, die wir off Walachey* [sc. Moldavia] *und vorth dorch Ungern bedochten zu senden*, GStAPK, OBA 5964.

<sup>62</sup> Czamańska, *Moldawia i Wołoszczyzna* (1996), 67–82. See also Dragnev et al. (Eds.), *Oчерки* (1987), 47–50.

cial denunciation of the union with Poland both by returning the treaties and by releasing the Lithuanians from the oath to the Poles. Nevertheless, it seems that the Lithuanian part still expected the assembly on 15 August 1431 or a bit earlier.<sup>63</sup>

As the letter of Thomas Mas shows, it was only in November or December 1430, after Švitrigaila's enthronement, that the Poles tried to establish contacts with Sigismund Korybut. Since Sigismund Korybut was in Hussite Bohemia for a long time, they had to negotiate the religious issues. The circumstances of these contacts is but another testimony that an attempt to find a pro-Polish candidate to the Lithuanian throne was nothing but a belated and enforced reaction to Švitrigaila's actions, and thus the Polish side had no real vision of the Grand Duchy's future before Vytautas' death.

Another circumstance inconsistent with the hypothesis about the abrupt change of Švitrigaila's position is the role of his entourage in its formation. Although nothing is known on the procedure of Švitrigaila's "election" and/or acclamation, the sources testify that he "inherited" from Vytautas the majority of his entourage, i. e., the most influential people of the Grand Duchy, upon whom his "election" and establishing of power ultimately depended.<sup>64</sup> In November 1430, as well as later, the new grand duke was surrounded by the same princes, boyars, and bishops, who supported Vytautas during the so-called "coronation storm". All the four boyars who witnessed Vytautas' granting land to the Bishopric of Vilnius on 21 October 1430 (called, somewhat metaphorically, his last will) and belonged to the most influential nobles – the palatine of Vilnius Jurgis Gedgaudas (Jerzy Giedygołd), the palatine of Trakai Jaunius Valimantaitis (Jawnuta Wolimuntowicz), the land marshall Rumbaudas (Rumbold) and the court marshal Jonas Goštautas (Jan Gasztold) – also took part in concluding the agreement with Jagiełło on 29 November; according to Długosz, Gedgaudas and Rumbaudas were sent by Vytautas to Jagiełło together with the grand duke's scribe Mikołaj Sepieński to inform the king that Švitrigaila was occupying the grand-ducal estates.<sup>65</sup> The account of the events of 1429–1430 written in the chancery of the grand master of the Teutonic Order describes their position as follows:

63 On Švitrigaila's attempts to negotiate the term of his assembly with Jagiełło, see his letters: *Polekhov/Naumov*, Tatarskaia tematika, no. 1 (29 April 1431); *Codex epistolaris*. Ed. *Lewicki*, vol. 2, no. 189 f. (9 May and 4 June 1431). Cf. the note in the manuscript of the grand master's chancery (*Ordensfoliant 14*) contextualizing the letters and documents copied in it: *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*. Eds. *Hirsch/Töppen/Strehlke*, vol. 3, 495.

64 *Petrauskas*, Lietuvos diduomenė (2003), 64, 176–178; *Polekhov*, K voprosu o prichinakh (2008) (an article written before I got access to the materials of the grand masters' archive). That is why the speculations on "who elected Švitrigaila as grand duke" (e.g., *Jankauskas*, Kunigaikščiai Svirskiai [2016], 40–44) seem to have little cognitive sense, especially in the situation of the lack of evidence which would allow to answer this question. It was not enough to seize the grand-ducal estates and the main castles, it was necessary to establish the new ruler's position among the ruling elite.

65 *Kodeks dyplomatyczny katedry i diecezji wileńskiej*. Eds. *Fijatek/Semkowicz*, no. 109; Joannis Długossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska et al.*, 300; *Polekhov*, Nasledniki Vitovta (2015), 515–517. On their careers and position, see *Petrauskas*, Lietuvos diduomenė (2003), 231 f., 241–243, 247 f., 286.



*Dye herren von Lyttawen unde Rewsen goben vor, das sye von angenge unde y weren freye herren gewest, eynen grosfursten sye vor eren herren hylden, wen der abegynghe, sye eynen andern mochten yrwelen, den vor eren herren welden halden, unde dye land ny keynen Polan hetten gehort, sye welden noch in suttir freyheyt bleyben unde von der nymmer treten.*<sup>66</sup>

Could they apply to the king of Poland for a new grand duke after Vytautas' death or merely recognize his candidate after two years of his conflict with Poland and his attempts to receive the crown? The question is nothing but rhetoric. As before, they were holding key positions, taking part in embassies to foreign rulers and witnessing/guaranteeing international treaties.

Summing up, we can conclude that neither Vytautas nor Jagiełło seem to have had a clear vision of the future of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in case of Vytautas' death, despite the prescription of the Horodło Union act. These circumstances were used by Švitrigaila who had been competing with Vytautas for almost forty years and found the support of the Lithuanian nobles who were interested in preserving the independent Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On occupying the Lithuanian throne due to this social group, Švitrigaila alleged not only his hereditary rights, but also his late father Algirdas' last will and his brother Jagiełło's consent. However, the latter must have been given post factum, and in this case we cannot speak of any dynastic unity. After his accession to the throne, Švitrigaila immediately tried to carry out the policy aimed at maintaining the independence of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and turned against his brother. It was formed both with "political" and dynastic means: in November 1430 he tried not only to make an alliance comprising his Grand Duchy, the Kingdom of Poland, the Teutonic Order, and Sigismund of Luxemburg's realms, but also asked the latter whether he could marry the Moldavian voivode's daughter. The seizure of the Western Podolian castles and thus putting the region under the control of the king and the Kingdom of Poland, and later the Poles' reluctance to accomplish the king's promise to return Western Podolia, made the Polish-Lithuanian conflict more acute, but did not change it drastically. In the next months, Švitrigaila continued his conflict with Poland. The borderland hostilities did not stop, and in the summer of 1431 the Poles even made an attempt to conquer the Lutsk land, unleashing the so-called Lutsk war. He also rejected its compromise proposals, insisting on returning Western Podolia to him, and married princess Anna from the Tver' branch of the Riurikides, who bore him a son at the end of 1432, already in Žygimantas' captivity; at the same time her cousin, grand duke Boris Aleksandrovich of Tver', sent troops for Švitrigaila's campaign against his rival.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*. Eds. Hirsch/Töppen/Strehlke, vol. 3, 493.

<sup>67</sup> On Švitrigaila's marriage, see Halecki, Anna (1935); Polekhov, Braki (2014), 251–268; Nikodem, O za-wartym i domniemanym małżeństwie (2018), 414–417.

## Švitrigaila's Deposition in 1432

*Švitrigaila reigned two years without two months and did not rule the land well.*<sup>68</sup> In that way a contemporary Ruthenian chronicler writing in Smolensk characterized Švitrigaila's reign, as he wrote about his removal from the throne and the subsequent accession to the throne of Vytautas' brother Žygimantas Kęstutaitis. On the eve of the coup one could hardly say that Švitrigaila's reign was "failed". He was on the road to the new meeting with his brother, the king of Poland, when conspirators unexpectedly fell upon him in the night and he had to flee to Polotsk with a small retinue. The attack was so unexpected that he was unable to take his pregnant wife with him. In this part of the article I will discuss Švitrigaila's dethronement.

The reasons for this event are also an old research problem. The plotters and Žygimantas himself insisted that the Christian (i. e., Catholic) faith in the Grand Duchy came into decline during Švitrigaila's reign, he allowed his wife to live according to her "Greek faith" and caused much disadvantage to his subjects.<sup>69</sup> This explanation of the reasons for what happened in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1432 is preferred by historians, primarily due to the work of Jan Długosz, who wrote that Švitrigaila favored the Ruthenians and their religion (i. e., Orthodoxy). The author of the first special monograph on the topic, Polish historian Anatol Lewicki, as well as the Russian scholar Matvey Lyubavsky, came to conclusion that Švitrigaila's "pro-Orthodox" politics caused the discontent among the Catholics who did not want to lose their privileged position. Another cornerstone of the theory enmeshed in the historiography is a famous letter of Cracow Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki, to Giuliano Cesarini, the Italian cardinal who presided the church council of Basel. The letter was written in 1432 and published by Lewicki.<sup>70</sup> In it, the Polish bishop insists that Švitrigaila distributed the main castles in his Grand Duchy among the "Schismatics", so that they dominate his council meetings. The letter surviving in a manuscript once belonging to Jan Długosz was apparently one of the sources of his information about Švitrigaila. Scholars also drew attention to the list of the guarantors of the alliance between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Teutonic Order, which was extended with the Ruthenian dukes, boyars and cities in 1432. Finally, this conclusion was substantiated by the fact that in 1432 the Grand Duchy of Lithuania split into two parts – the "Lithuanian" and the "Ruthenian", or Žygimantas' "Grand Duchy of Lithuania" and Švitrigaila's "Grand Duchy of Rus", as the contemporary chronicler called them.

<sup>68</sup> Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei, vol. 35, 34, 57, 76.

<sup>69</sup> These accusations are listed in the letter of the *Vogt* of Brattian Heinrich Holt, an old friend of Švitrigaila, who was in Lithuania at the moment of the coup, written to Grand Master Paul von Rusdorf on 4 September 1432 (published in: Polekhov, *Nasledniki Vitovta* [2015], 518–521). See also: *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*. Eds. *Hirsch/Töppen/Strehlke*, vol. 3, 498, Anm.; *Halecki*, *Z Jana Zamoyskiego inwentarza* (1919), 214; *Codex epistolaris*. Ed. *Lewicki*, vol. 2, no. 261.

<sup>70</sup> *Codex epistolaris*. Ed. *Lewicki*, vol. 2, no. 204.

However, there are no reasons to believe that Švitrigaila was protecting the Ruthenians and/or their faith. No evidence on his donations to the Orthodox Church of this period is known,<sup>71</sup> and the composition of the ruling elite practically didn't change since the last years of Vytautas' reign. It is true that in 1413, the Horodło Union act explicitly prohibited the "Schismatics and adherents of other sects" to hold the highest state offices and to be present at the grand duke's council meetings. The act also continued excluding the Ruthenian nobles from estate privileges granted by grand dukes to Lithuanian boyars since 1387.<sup>72</sup> But there is evidence that the prohibition referred only to the four offices in the territorial administration – those of the palatines and castellans of Vilnius and Trakai. They were occupied by Lithuanians from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and the first Ruthenian to be appointed castellan of Vilnius was prince Konstantin of Ostroh (Ostrožsky) at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It should also be borne in mind that the grand-ducal council cannot be regarded as an institution at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The monarch was formally free to invite higher ecclesiastics and nobles to consult on crucial issues, but if he wanted to keep and strengthen his position, he had to reckon with the most prominent people in his realm who were Lithuanians. The list of the guarantors of the alliance with the Teutonic Order was extended on request of its grand master Paul von Rusdorf, who did the same to secure the support of Prussian estates for his foreign policy implying the conflict with the Kingdom of Poland, as Klaus Neitmann has convincingly shown. The information about Švitrigaila's favourites does not change the picture as well. As a matter of fact, we know only a few of them, and their identification is not unproblematic.<sup>73</sup> As the closer examination has shown, in some cases it depends on the integrity of the sources mentioning those people: e. g., it turned out recently that one of Švitrigaila's ambassadors to Jagiełło, Rahoza, whom I considered to be Švitrigaila's man, was a "higher scribe" in the Ruthenian department of Vytautas' chancery mentioned already in 1418 and 1424.<sup>74</sup> In principle, nothing threatened the position in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of such influential people as lieutenant of Navahrudak Petras Mangirdaitis (Pietrasz Montygierdowicz) or court marshall Jonas Goštautas who was freed from the Polish captivity due to Švitrigaila. The four highest offices mentioned above were held by Lithuanian boyars, and even if in Ruthenian regions there were some lieutenants of local origins, it was by no means Švitrigaila's innovation. The only appointment of a Ruthenian duke instead of a Lithuanian noble took place in Eastern Podolia, where duke Fedko Nesvitski was made lieutenant instead of Jonas Daugirdas, who had been captured by the Poles. The aim was to retain the periphery

<sup>71</sup> Only Švitrigaila's confirmation of a private donation to the church is mentioned in a recently published 16<sup>th</sup>-century document, which is discussed below.

<sup>72</sup> Akta unji. Eds. *Kutrzeba/Semkowicz*, no. 51; 1413 m. Horodlės aktai (2013). Eds. *Kiaupienė/Korczak*, 37–42.

<sup>73</sup> See (already a little bit outdated) *Polekhov*, *Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 240 f.

<sup>74</sup> *Polechow*, *Rahoza* (2020).

region in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and to regain Western Podolia, using the official's resources. However, the appointment of a Ruthenian/Orthodox duke to an office of lieutenant ("palatine") was by no means an innovation unique to Švitrigaila. It seems that the only Ruthenians/Orthodox who could compete with them were the members of several princely clans, related to Vytautas by birth or by marriage. It is hard to imagine that Vytautas did not admit a prince of Holshany or Drutsk to his council meeting just because of their Orthodox faith. Moreover, members of these princely clans held important offices such as lieutenants of Kyiv or Polotsk.

The example of the Holshanski family is also instructive in another respect: it is one of several examples of how a noble clan split during the dynastic war in Lithuania. Whereas Prince Semen Holshanski was one of the leading conspirators against Švitrigaila, his brother Michael, the lieutenant of Kyiv, supported the overthrown grand duke, as well as Semen's son Daniel (rus. Daniil). Some Lithuanian clans split as well: among those highest nobles who fled with Švitrigaila to Polotsk were the palatine of Vilnius Jurgis Gedgaudas and his nephew Jonas Manvydaitis (Iwaszko Moniwidowicz), both catholic Lithuanians. It is also noteworthy that Žygimantas' privilege of 1434 extending the Ruthenians' rights<sup>75</sup> didn't lead to the immediate end of the war with Švitrigaila (it lasted for more than four years), and there are only a few careers of Ruthenian nobles at the grand-ducal court till the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus, the sources do not confirm Oleśnicki's accusations. Nor do they confirm the accusations against Švitrigaila's wife. Contemporary evidence, such as papal bulls, testify to her conversion to Catholicism. Referring to religious issues was one of the main traces of ecclesiastics' political rhetoric. The same historians who paid so much attention to the letter of Oleśnicki gave no credence to similar accusations pronounced by the Teutonic Order against Vytautas and Jagiełło.

It is also supposed that during his short reign Švitrigaila acted against the interests of the Lithuanian nobility. In 1434 the Lithuanian boyars claimed that Švitrigaila had not been as generous as Žygimantas, and showed the Prussian envoy Hans Balg the privileges issued by the latter: *Unde sy sprechen: sich, wy lip hot uns unser herre [sc. Žygimantas]; das tate Switrigalle nicht; vor den wille wir sterben.*<sup>76</sup> This conclusion seems to be supported by a lack of Švitrigaila's privileges or donation documents issued between 1430 and 1432, when he was grand duke; the mentions in later confirmations refer to his documents concerning Volhynia, where he was appanage prince in 1442–1452, or in the best case the regions staying under his control between 1432 and 1438. However, the following objections may be raised. If the abuse of the interests of the nobles from the grand-ducal entourage was so embarrassing that it led to the coup, the sources would have reflected it in some way and the plotters would have included it into their explana-

<sup>75</sup> An earlier one, dating back to 1432 and often mentioned in historiography, did not come into force. Both are published from the 18<sup>th</sup>-century copies (Codex epistolaris. Ed. Lewicki, vol. 3, ppendix, no. 17, 22).

<sup>76</sup> Liv-, esth- und curländisches Urkundenbuch, vol. 8. Ed. Hildebrand, no. 855.

tion of the coup.<sup>77</sup> The seeming lack of Švitrigaila's land donations and confirmations turned out to be a result of the poor situation in source studies and editions. For instance, the privilege granted by Grand Duke Aleksander Jagiellończyk to the land of Samogitia in 1492 mentions *donationes, quas nobilibus et boiaris duces Vitovdus, Svidrigal et Sigismundus ac genitor noster* [sc. Casimir Jagiellon] *donaverunt*.<sup>78</sup> The document of the Drohiczyn voivode Mykolas Goliginaitis (Michał Goliginowicz) confirming the land donation of Grand Duke Casimir Jagiellon of Lithuania to noble Florian of Kuczyno and issued on 6 December 1445 mentions his *constanciam et servitium* (...), *quod exhibuit serenissimis principibus ab antiquo, videlicet Vitoldo, Svidrigald, Sigismundo, Cazimiro*.<sup>79</sup> Both regions, Samogitia and Podlachia, remained under Švitrigaila's control only from 1430 to 1432, when he reigned in Vilnius and Trakai. One document issued by Švitrigaila and known only from a mention without specification of date can be dated almost exactly. In 1513 priest Hryn' of the church of St. Cosmas and Damian in Brest produced to the judges Švitrigaila's document confirming that a certain parcel of land belonged to that church.<sup>80</sup> Švitrigaila could issue that document only between 1430 and 1432 when he had control over Brest, most probably at the end of January or the beginning of February 1432, when he was in Brest awaiting for the assembly with Jagiełło and his counsellors (which never took place),<sup>81</sup> so that the priest of a local church could address him without going to Lithuania. Another evidence seems to be "hidden" in a confirmation of Švitrigaila's land donation made in 1600, which I analyzed in a special article.<sup>82</sup> Although Švitrigaila's document is apparently forged, some of its peculiarities imply that it was based on an original document for some Podolian landowner issued in the summer of 1432, in the period of the most acute Polish-Lithuanian debate on Podolia and granting a village at the

77 E.g., Žygimantas Kęstutaitis and his dignitaries wrote to Jagiełło in 1433, that Švitrigaila had starved Vytautas' widow Juliana to death (*Halecki, Z Jana Zamoyskiego inwentarza* [1919], 211; *Polekhov, Nasledniki Vitovta* [2015], 532). However, Juliana's death is used in these letters only as an example of Švitrigaila's perfidity after his oath to Jagiełło to take care of her, and not as a direct reason for his dethronement.

78 Žemaitijos žemės privilegijos. Eds. *Antanavičius/Saviščevas*, no. 9, § 7.

79 Warszawa, AGAD, Terr. Droh. 2, k. 378v. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Tomasz Jaszczolt who pointed out to this document.

80 Moscow, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA), f. 389, op. 1, kn. 13, l. 51v–53, recently published in: *Mikul'skii, Sobor Sv. Nikolaia* (2022), 288–290. It should be added that the scale of the land donation confirmed by Švitrigaila is rather small, especially as compared with the donations made by the grand dukes of Lithuania and then by their subjects to the Catholic church; similar small donations and confirmations to the Orthodox church may be found in the times of Vytautas as well. I thank Dr. Mikola Volkau and Professor Aliaksandr Hrusha who pointed out to this document and provided me with its little-known publication.

81 *Polekhov, Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 220–225, 545.

82 AGAD, dok. perg. no. 6962; *Polekhov, Novye dannye* (2019). On the localization of the village of Dohovtse (Dolhovtsi), present-day Rudans'ke (Zhornivka) in Vinnytsia region of the Ukraine, see *Mykhailovs'kyi, Istoriia* (2021), 210 and fn. 12. I thank Professor Vitaliy Mykhaylovskiy for pointing out to the identification he provided in his study.

eastern edge of Western Podolia (to the West of the Murafa river which divided, at least later, the “Great Podolia” into the western and the eastern part<sup>83</sup>). In my opinion, the reason for the lack of Švitrigaila’s documents is that they were later confirmed by Žygimantas in his own name – a widespread practice aimed at erasing the memory about Švitrigaila.

According to the argument of the Lithuanian historian Jonas Matusas, the Polish dignitary Wawrzyniec Zaremba instigated the Lithuanian and Ruthenian boyars and princes to the coup against Švitrigaila. As a matter of fact, Zaremba visited Lithuania twice in 1432 and got into contact with the local nobles; he was also known to be a good friend of Prince Mykolas (pol. Michał, or Michałuszko), the son of Žygimantas Kęstutaitis. However, it would be naïve to assume that the Lithuanian nobles let a foreign dignitary convince them to overthrow their own ruler. The Lithuanian boyars and princes were too independent for it. It is more likely that Zaremba learned about the spirits of the Lithuanians and acted as a connecting link between them and the Polish royal court.

This is why we must search for the main reason of the coup not in the inner situation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but in its foreign policy. As already mentioned, Švitrigaila’s accession to the throne was accompanied by the glaring contradiction with the Kingdom of Poland. In the summer of 1431, half a year later, the war in Volhynia broke out. After concluding the truce Švitrigaila rejected all the reconciliation propositions made by the Poles. The meeting of the two rulers at the beginning of 1432 stipulated by the Czartorysk armistice did not occur; Švitrigaila also did not agree to rule the Grand Duchy of Lithuania on the conditions of the late Vytautas. Moreover, the grand duke answered the Polish claims for the whole of Podolia, stating that it had always belonged to the Grand Duchy. In general, he was reluctant to reconcile with Poland, but was nearing politically to the Teutonic Order and building an anti-Polish coalition. The Czartorysk armistice was to last till 24 June 1433, but the question emerges repeatedly in the correspondence, whether the Poles would observe it or attack one of the allies – either the Teutonic Order or the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. By delaying the peace negotiations with Poland (or helping the grand duke do so) the Lithuanian ruling class didn’t gain anything, neither a settlement of the problem nor personal security, because a feeling of an approaching new war was in the air. We cannot but suppose that it was the danger and the shadow of the war that created the prerequisites for the discontent with Švitrigaila as the grand duke of Lithuania. Anyway, in general, Švitrigaila was lacking political skills and experience gathered by Vytautas during his 40 years reign.

This hypothesis may be supported by comparing the policy of the two grand dukes of Lithuania, Švitrigaila and his rival Žygimantas. One of Žygimantas’ first steps

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<sup>83</sup> On the territory of Eastern and Western Podolia, see *Kurtyka*, *Podole w średniowieczu* (2011), 137–139 and map on p. 523; *Mykhailovs’kyi*, *Istoriia* (2021), 119 (map).



was the concluding of the new union treaty with Poland. It is remarkable that he sent his envoy to Poland immediately after his accession to the throne, when Švitrigaila's fate after his dethronement and the dynastic war prospect were still not clear; thus, the aim was not a request for help, but the long-awaited reconciliation. Almost simultaneously Žygimantas sent his envoy Georg Butrim (Jurgis Butrimas) to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order Paul von Rusdorf to relativize the treaty with Poland and to offer a confirmation of the Grand Duchy's treaty with the Teutonic Order.<sup>84</sup> Thus, what he and his entourage needed was not the break with the Teutonic Order, but the modification of the international position of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Summing up, we may conclude that Švitrigaila's removal from the throne and his subsequent war against Žygimantas Kęstutaitis show vividly that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was on its way from a state based on personal ties (*Personenverbandsstaat*) to a transpersonal state based on institutions. The Catholic baptism of Lithuania and the subsequent spread of the Christian culture as well as Vytautas' reforms gave impetus to this transformation just several decades before 1430. On the one hand, Švitrigaila was initially supported by those who did not take part in the conspiracy and could treat his deposition as a riot against the legitimate ruler, mostly the Ruthenian princes and boyars, although there were some Lithuanian nobles in his milieu. Žygimantas was very little known and had spread his whole life in the shadow of his great brother Vytautas. Švitrigaila's grouping was additionally strengthened by personal connections: some of his active partisans were his old "friends" (or, to put it in modern terms, political allies) he had won during his political career. Besides, very much depended on his relations with the most prominent Ruthenian princes and boyars (the latter were sometimes called *pany* meaning "higher nobles"), whose influence in their regions was deeply enrooted in their origins, land property, and personal qualities. There are numerous facts "inconvenient" for the adherents of the traditional explanation of the conflict, namely, that such influential individuals and even regions *en masse* would change their monarch, leaving Švitrigaila for Žygimantas Kęstutaitis and vice versa. The reasons were neither actual participation in ruling the state nor estate privileges issued by Žygimantas, though these measures were used by both rivals to win new adherents and win back the former ones. Indeed, the relations between the nobles and a grand duke were perceived in a personalized way: in other words, it was necessary for the princes, boyars, and prominent townspeople to have a "good" and "merciful" ruler who would rule in accord with them and grant them lands and serfs and would not punish them without guilt.

On the other hand, even after Švitrigaila's flight to Polotsk the Grand Duchy of Lithuania didn't cease to exist. It is also quite obvious that his partisans were not going to create a separate state, their aim was to help him regain power over the whole Grand Duchy of Lithuania (indeed, he continued using the title "Grand Duke of

84 Polekhov, *Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 518 f.; GStAPK, Ordensfoliant 14, 705–706.

Lithuania, Rus' etc." till the end of 1438 when he had no power in both regions<sup>85</sup>). The famous and spectacular notion of the "Grand Duchy of Rus'" mentioned by the Smolensk chronicler remains his own explanatory scheme of the past reality. It shows that the Grand Duchy was not so much torn apart by religious or national contradictions, as the latter chroniclers and historians wanted it to be, but rather shows the effects of Vytautas' reforms. The regional elites were active enough but they did not struggle for access to decision-making on the state level as well.

On the contrary, the Lithuanian nobility was especially active in the developments of the 1430s. Although it played pretty much an independent role in the epoch of Vytautas (that is sometimes still underestimated in the research), it made another step towards its emancipation by electing Švitrigaila to the Lithuanian throne in 1430 without consultation with the king of Poland and his prelates and barons, and deposing him two years later. The milestones further along the way were the assassination of Žygimantas in 1440, the nonage of Casimir Jagiellon and his absence in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after his coronation in Poland. In that time, the heirs of the Lithuanian nobles who once acted with Švitrigaila or against him already called themselves the representatives of the *communitas consilii terrae Ducatus Magni Lithuaniae*.<sup>86</sup>

As for the dynasty, it did not show much unanimity during the events of the 1420s and 1430s in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The conflict between Švitrigaila and Žygimantas Kęstutaitis may be traced back to the rivalry of the two Gediminid branches, the posterity of Algirdas and Kęstutis, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Both grand dukes were acting according to their own dynastic interests, conducting marriages with princesses from the neighboring realms and trying to secure the succession for their sons (especially Žygimantas Kęstutaitis, whose son Mykolas died only in 1452). King Jagiełło was especially concerned with his own legitimization in the Kingdom of Poland and succession problems.<sup>87</sup> He tried to play a Lithuanian card, appealing to his "patrimony", but with little success, being far away from Lithuania, the more so because its society was interested in their own ruler – the grand duke, and confirmed its interest after Vytautas' death. In this sense we may agree with Lithuanian nobles who stated that the king "had abandoned Lithuania" by receiving the Polish crown. Jagiełło's son Władysław III retained the title of the "supreme duke of Lithuania" as well, but had relatively little influence on the developments in it. It was only in 1440, after the assassination of Žygimantas,

<sup>85</sup> Cf. his title in the letter written on 6 December 1438, already in Przemyśl in the Kingdom of Poland: *Swidrigal, von Gots gnadin grosfurste zcu Lithawen und zcu Rewsin etc.*, GStAPK, OBA 7530.

<sup>86</sup> A phrase used by Lithuanian nobles in the letter to grand master Ludwig von Erlichshausen, published in: Rowell, Trumpos akimirkos (2004), 49.

<sup>87</sup> Here I am not touching upon the problem of political groupings in the Kingdom of Poland and their role in the developments in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 1430s. The sources published below, as well as those prepared for publication, may shed new light on this problem discussed in the Polish literature (first of all, see *Sperka, Szafraniec* [2001] and *Szybkowski, Jagiełło* [2016]).

that the Lithuanian nobles asked the king of Poland for the new grand duke, thus reviving the dynastic Polish-Lithuanian union.

## Appendix

### 1

Trakai, 9 November 1430

*Grand duke Boleslaus Švitrigaila of Lithuania informs the Roman King Sigismund of Luxemburg that the dukes, lords and the whole land elected and installed him on the throne of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania once held by his father [Algirdas] and cousin [Alexander] Vytautas. He will repay the Roman King all the good he has bestowed on him. Now he is sending Sigismund Roth for negotiations and is asking that he be trusted.*

**Copy:** *GStAPK, OBA 5542 (olim XVII 84), in the instruction for Sigismund of Luxemburg's embassy to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Paul von Rusdorf.*

**Publ.:** *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi. Ed. Prochaska, no. 1464 (in fragments).*

**Reg.:** Voigt, *Geschichte Preussens*, vol. 7 (1836), 563. – *Skarbiec diplomatów. Ed. Daniłowicz, vol. 2, no. 1519. – Index actorum. Ed. Lewicki, no. 1628.*

Unsern willigen stetin dinst zuvor. Allerdurchleuchtiger furste und gnediger herre! Wir tun ewer gnaden zu wissen, das von Gotes geschicht und hulfe und von der fursten und herren und des gantzen gemeynes willen des landes zur Littin zu eynen grossen fursten uns dirwelt und erkoren haben, und uf den stul, den unser vatter und unser bruder, der hertzog Wytold, dem Got gnad, besessen hatten, gesatzit uns haben. Dorch des willen mögen wir nu ewer irlawchtheit grossern dinst thun und bewisen, wenn wir yr gethan haben, und der gutte, die uns ewer irlawchtheit beczeugt hat, und ewer gnaden brotes, den wir gessen haben, wollen wir nymmer vergessen seyn, sunder zu allen tziiten ken ewir irlawchtheit verdienen. Dorumb senden wir zu ewer gnaden den edeln Sigmund Roth, unsern lieben getrewen,<sup>88</sup> bittende, daz ewer irlawchtheit geruche in liblich awshoren, und was redin wirt von unserntwen, im gantz und gar glauben, samp wir selber vor ewer irlawchtheit müntlich retthin. Gegeben zur Trackin am donnerstag nechsten vor sant Martini tag, anno Domini etc. tricesimo.

Boleslaus anders Swidrigal, von Gots gnaden grosfurste zu Littawin und zu Reswin etc.

<sup>88</sup> Sigismund Roth († 1435), a German from Silesia, Vytautas' courtier (*familiaris*) and his agent during the negotiations on his coronation in 1429–1430, later served Švitrigaila, but was captured by Žygimantas Kęstutaitis in the battle at Wilkomierz on 1 September 1435 (*Petrauskas, Didžiojo kunigaikščio institucinio dvaro susiformavimas* [2005], 29).

Dem allerirlawchtigestem fursten und hern, hern Sigmund, Romischen kunig, zu allen tzeiten merer des Richs, zu Ungern, Dalmatie und zu Behem etc. kunige, unserm gnedigem herren.

## 2

[c. 20 November 1430]

*Duke Siemowit V of Masovia communicates the news about King Władysław Jagiełło of Poland [to the bishops and dignitaries of the Kingdom of Poland] brought by his messenger Gerhard Maytzowsky, who had been sent to Lithuania to [Grand Duke Boleslaus] Švitrigaila and has now returned from there with the king's credentials. Jagiełło told that Švitrigaila was detaining him in Lithuania and didn't want to let him go until he would hand over Podolia to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for full ownership, officially denounce the Polish-Lithuanian treaties and the Lithuanians' oath to accept the King of Poland as their lord, and release the Moldavian voivode [Alexander the Good] from his vassal oath to the King of Poland. Duke Siemowit, to whom the King committed the defence of Podolia and other Ruthenian lands of the Polish Crown, asks the addressees for information and advice. He also asks them to hold a consultation with the Queen [Sophia Holshanskaia] and the royal counsellors to put the troops of the Kingdom on alert and to deliberate on how to free the King from Lithuania as soon as possible. The King ordered to ask the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order [Paul von Rusdorf] as soon as possible if he was going to stay with the Crown of Poland according to the peace treaty [of Melno]. The King asks Siemowit not to send anyone to him, because all envoys will be detained. This request also concerns the addressees: the King wanted to send his envoys to them, but they weren't allowed to pass. [Mikołaj] Słaka is sent to Volodymyr [in Volhynia] and [Mikołaj] Małdrzyk to Lutsk, both are under the command of [Alexander?] Nos (?).*

**Copy:** BSB, Clm 22372, fol. 466 – 466v.

**Reg.:** Trede/Freckmann (Eds.), *Katalog* (2018), 253.

*On the dating of the letter, see above.*

Symonicus <sup>a</sup> Dei gracia dux Masonie <sup>a</sup>.

Eximie presul paterque in Christo reverende et magnifice ac strennue miles, amici nostri carissimi! A[mici]as v[estras] cupimus non latere per presentes, quod die datum presencium post occasum solis feria 3<sup>a</sup> hora ad noctem, nobis existentibus in venacionibus, venit ad nos celeri cursu cum littera credenciali domini regis nobilis fidelis noster dilectus Gerhardus Maytzowschky, nuncius noster dilectus,<sup>89</sup> quem miseramus ad partes Litwannie et dominum regem Polonie, dominum nostrum gratiosissimum; et ydem nuncius <sup>b</sup> noster litteram nostram <sup>c</sup> credenciam ad dominum Swidergal habuit

<sup>89</sup> Gerhardus Maytzowschky is not known from other sources.

ratione istius, ut pertransire posset, quia aliter non pertransisset, quia novitates nobis ex parte domini regis, domini nostri prestantissimi, voce viva retulit, et quod dictas <sup>d</sup> novitates a[miciciis] v[estris] mittere debeamus, quas et lamentabili ac doloroso animo percepimus. Quomodo dominus Swidrigal dominum regem, dominum nostrum graciosissimum, tenet detentum, ipsum nolendo prius de partibus Litwannie mittere, nisi ut det sibi dominus rex primo terram Podolie et ut adiungeret ipsam perpetualiter ad Ducatum Litwannie; secundo, ut daret sibi literas inscriptionum, que erant inter Regnum Polonie et Ducatum <sup>e</sup> Litwannie scripte, ita quod domini Litwannie et // tota terra Litwanica post mortem ducis Witoldi, olim magni ducis Litwannie divine recordacionis, cum Corona Polonie stare deberent et a Corona non recedere;<sup>90</sup> tercio, ut dominus de iuramento, qui Litwaneos, qui iuraverant domino regi Polonie fideles fieri et ipsum pro domino temporum receperant, mittere libere deberet; quarto, ut recederet a woyewoda Walachorum<sup>91</sup> seu resileret; et primo ipsum tunc de partibus Litwannie mittere vellet. Dominus rex, dominus noster graciosissimus, per eundem nuncium nostrum nobis intimavit et commisit, ut terram Podolie et alias terras Russie ad Coronam spectantes cum aliis terris Regni Polonie tueri et defensari deberemus, ad cuius mandata tamquam domini nostri graciosissimi id, quod facere possumus, facere non negligemus, nisi in hoc nobis informacionem et consilium a[micicie] v[estre] dare velint, quomodo hoc congrue ad effectum deducere possumus, quia sine consilio et iuvamine vestro nullo modo Coronam Polonie tueri et defensare possemus, nam semper nos ostendere prout fideles servitores domino regi, in quibus magis possimus, volumus. Quocirca a[micicie] v[estre] cum <sup>f</sup> domina regina<sup>92</sup> et aliis dominis consiliariis eo celerius velit consiliare, quid facere in tempore debeatis, quia post elapsum temporis negligentes committitur, facient enim a[micicie] v[estre] cum domina regina et aliis dominis consiliariis, ut omnes terre Regni Polonie ad Coronam spectantes essent parate ad expedicionem, ut dum et quando a[micicias] v[estras] et dominam reginam cum aliis dominis consiliariis per nuncios nostros ... <sup>g</sup> quod nobis in tempores iuvamen dare possitis. Insuper ut eo celerius cogitaretis, quomodo et qualiter dominum regem de partibus Litwannie deducere et habere possumus, quia ipse super dictos articulos superius descriptos sine dominis consiliariis nequaquam dare et recedere vlt. Ideo amicie vestre in prompto cum domina regina ceterisque consiliariis consiliare velit, et nos sine omni dilacione velit informare, quid facere debeamus. Magistrum generalem de Prussia quomodocumque et qualitercumque eo cicius <sup>h</sup> avisare dominus rex precepit, an stat circa Coronam Polo-

90 The Union of Horodło concluded on 2 October 1413 (Akta unji. Eds. *Kutrzeba/Semkowicz*, no. 51; 1413 m. Horodl's akta [2013]. Eds. *Kiaupienė/Korczak*, 37–42).

91 Alexander the Good († 1 January 1432), voivode of Moldavia in 1400–1432 (*Czamańska*, Mołdawia i Wołoszczyzna [1996], 67–87; *Rezachevici*, Cronologia [2001], 471–476).

92 Sophia Holshanskaia (Zofia Holszańska; † 21 September 1461), daughter of Prince Andrei Holshanski (pol. Andrzej Holszański), since 1422 fourth wife of King Władysław Jagiełło, bore him two sons who later became King Władysław III and King Casimir IV (*Czwojdrak*, Zofia Holszańska [2012], passim).

nie, an non, iuxta inscripcionem literarum ipsius.<sup>93</sup> Dominus rex precepit, ut nullum hominem ad eum mittere debeamus, quod quicumque ad eum vadit, quilibet detinetur, ideo non mittatis quemquam. Misisset enim nuncios suos ad a[micicias] v[estras], sed pertransire non potuerunt, nisi noster nuncius, qui literam credenciam nostram ad dominum Swidrigal habuit, prout superius vidistis. Slanka<sup>94</sup> missus est in Wlotzmytz<sup>a</sup> iacere et dominus Maldrzik<sup>i</sup> <sup>95</sup> in Lutzkam, qui sunt sub obediencia domini Nusch.<sup>96</sup> Quid facere debeatis, faciatis in prompto.

<sup>a</sup> Sic! <sup>b</sup> Written above the struck out dominus. <sup>c</sup> Written above the line. <sup>d</sup> c corrected from r. <sup>e</sup> Further struck out Polonie. <sup>f</sup> c corrected from d. <sup>g</sup> A space is left – 16 mm, about 6 letters. <sup>h</sup> Further struck out two letters – maybe no. <sup>i</sup> r written like i.

### 3

Oels/Oleśnica, 4 January [1431]

Thomas Mas informs [Peter von Schaumberg, Bishop of Augsburg], that the Kingdom of Poland appointed Duke Siemowit V of Mazovia commander of the field troops. Prince Fediushko [Lyubartovych], subject to the King [Władysław Jagiełło] of Poland, with the help of the Poles, is waging war against the Lutsk land belonging to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. [Jan] Kruszyna is holding Podolia for the King of Poland, the Poles sent him a supply of 300 “spears”. Prince Alexander Nos captured him in the castle of Bakota; Kruszyna was tortured by order of the Grand Duke [Boleslaus Švitrigaila of Lithuania]. Alexander Nos is besieging Kamianets’. The embassy of the Kingdom of Poland consisting of the Bishop [Zbigniew Oleśnicki] of Cracow, the Bishop [Jan Szafraniec] of Kuja-wia/Włocławek, the Voivode [Sędziwoj] Ostroróg [of Poznań] and the [Voivode] Jan Lichiński [of Brześć] is travelling to Lithuania. It will respond to the Lithuanian embassy which had insisted that the king wasn’t detained in Lithuania, but was hunting with his brother [Švitrigaila], as in Vytautas’ times, and the Grand Duke was keeping

93 The “eternal peace” of Melno (Meldensee, Melno-See) of Poland-Lithuania with the Teutonic Order, concluded on 27 September 1422 (Dokumenty strony polsko-litewskiej. Eds. Nowak/Pokora).

94 Mikołaj Słaka of Ławszów and Rudka of the Kopaszyna coat of arms († after 1444), a Polish noble from the Sandomierz land, served as a counsellor and secretary of Grand Duke Vytautas in 1428–1430, Standard-Bearer of Sandomierz in 1435–1444 (Dokumenty pokoju brzeskiego. Ed. Szweđa, 162, fn. 197).

95 Mikołaj Małdrzyk of the Róża (Poraj) coat of arms († before 1439), a Polish noble from the voivodeship of Sieradz, studied at the University of Cracow in 1401, served as scribe and later as secretary of Grand Duke Vytautas between 1412 and 1430, took over the castellanate of Bełz in 1426–1436, was Vytautas’ ambassador to the Teutonic Order and the Kingdom of Poland, had land possessions in the lands of Bełz and Lutsk, and eventually left the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after Vytautas’ death (Kosman, Małdrzyk Mikołaj [2016–2017]; Dokumenty pokoju brzeskiego. Ed. Szweđa, 357; Mikulski, Gramota [1995]; Janeczka, Osadnictwo [1993], 341).

96 Alexander Nos, about him and his participation in the events in Volhynia at the end of 1430 see below, no. 3.



him to avoid conflicts between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. Švitrigaila asked the King and the Polish magnates to recognize Podolia as a part of the Grand Duchy, as in Vytautas' lifetime. If the Polish embassy has no success, the troops of the entire Kingdom of Poland as well as Mazovia will be put on alert by 14 January 1431. The Poles want to take Duke Sigismund [Zygmunt Korybutowicz] from Gliwice and send him to Lithuania to install him as Grand Duke or to sow discord there. The Poles also negotiate the Taborites' help in exchange for their right to preach their faith, their leaders Prokop and Vilém (William) Kostka will come to Jedlnia for further negotiations with the King or his counsellors on 14 February 1431. The Taborites secretly promise the Poles more aid, but the details are unknown; they handed over Kluczbork to [Dobiesław] Puchała, who is holding it only with the Poles, without any Czechs. – In the postscriptum, Thomas Mas adds that the King of Poland had left Lithuania and all of Vytautas' treaties with the King and the Kingdom of Poland would now be denounced, the Lithuanians wanted to be free, to have Švitrigaila as their king and „to have imperial law“.

**Copy:** BSB, Clm 22372, fol. 467r–467v.

**Reg.:** Whelan/Simon, *Changes* (2015), 150–152 and fn. 9 and 15. – Whelan/Simon, *Moldavian Lady* (2015), 113–129. – Trede/Freckmann (Eds.), *Katalog* (2018), 253.

Erwirdiger <sup>a</sup> in Got vatter, lieber herre und bruder! Uwer liebe wir schreiben die leufte, die wir haben erfaren von solichen worhaftigen luten, den es wol zu globen stet und die uns nicht lügen sagen noch empieten.

Czum ersten, daz hertzog Symke aus der Masaw daz konigrich zu Polan uffgeworffen hat zu einem hauptman im felde, und hertzog Fedusko, der under dem konige zu Polan sitzet,<sup>97</sup> crieget ytzund allzit mit dem lande zu Lawtzck, daz zu dem Grossen Furstenthum gehort gen Litwan, und die Polan im helffen. Item so heldet man die Podoley uff den konig zu Polan, nemlich <sup>b</sup> Cruschyna,<sup>98</sup> und die Polan haben ytzunt der Podoley zu hilff gesant wol drey hundert spisse, so hat hertzog Allexander, den man nennet Noss,<sup>99</sup> mit den Litwan und Rewßen eyn haus gewonnen, daz heisset

<sup>97</sup> Fedor (Fyodor, Fediushko) Lyubartovych (Lubartowicz) († 1431), Prince of Lutsk in 1383–1386, Prince of Volodymyr in 1386–1393 and 1431, Prince of the Severian land (between 1393 and 1398?), Starost of Zhydachiv (pol. Żydaczów) (and possibly Stryj?) in 1411–1431 (Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia* [1999], 240 f.; Szyszka, *Formowanie i organizacja* [2016], 139–142; *Kelembet*, Fedir-Fedot [Fediushko] Liubartovych [2018]).

<sup>98</sup> Jan Kruszyna of Gałowo of the Mądrostki coat of arms († after 1454), a noble from Lesser Poland, took part in the seizure of Kamianets' castle in late 1430, was captured by the Lithuanians but soon released, at first provisionally (cf. GStAPK, OBA 5934 mentioning him as a captive in early 1432 though he had already payed homage to Jagiełło in April 1431), Vice-Steward of Kamianets' in 1439–1441 and probably also in 1454; in 1434, the King granted him several villages and revenues in the Smotrych district (*Sperka*, *Nieznane fakty* [2009], 169; *Kurtyka*, *Z dziejów walki szlachty ruskiej* [2010], 62, fn. 7).

<sup>99</sup> Alexander Nos († before 16 October 1436), prince, great-grandson of Narimantas Gediminaitis (Narimunt Giedyminowicz), took part in liberating Švitrigaila from Kremenets castle in 1418, served as

Bakotha, gelegen in der Podoley, und haben doruff gewonnen Cruschyna den hauptman in der Podolei, und den hat der großfurst lossen koleyen, und ligen im vor Kempnitz in der Podoley, nemlich herczog Alexander mit des großen fursten luten.<sup>100</sup>

Item der byschoff von Crakow,<sup>101</sup> der byschoff von der Koye,<sup>102</sup> Ostrorag <sup>c</sup> woyewoda<sup>103</sup> und her Jon Lichynsky,<sup>104</sup> die ziehen gen Littawen in bottschaft von des gantzen konigrichs wegen zu Polan umb irn herren den kung uff ein solichs, daz der grossfurste hertzog Swidergeil und die Litwan ire botschaft hirauf gehabt haben bei den bischoven und Polonischen herrn, wer irn herrn zeihe den großfursten oder sye, daz her den kunig gefangen hette oder hilde, der tete im und in ungutlich und luge sie an; sunder der großfurste hielde sinen liben bruder by im und <sup>d</sup> reitet mit im iagen, als er vor gepflogen hat mit synem lieben bruder hertzog Witold dem Got gnade, und halden in auch dorumb, daz nicht zwitrecht wurd zwischen dem großfursthin und dem kongrich zu Polan. Auch hat <sup>e</sup> hertzog Swydrigil zum kunge und zun herren von Polan gefordert die Podolei zum Großfurstenthum, also sy hertzog Witold dem Got gnade gehalten hat. Und get es denn den bischoven und den boten wol noch irm <sup>f</sup> willen, so mogen sie alle unwillen legen; get es in aber nit noch irm willen, als man sich des versihet, so sol daz gantze konigrich uff sein und alle Masawer mitt und alle die, die zu der Kron gehoren und vornigent und vor alder togent von suntag uber acht tag, og daz sie der botschafft sint harrend, die in die herrn von Polan wider sollen bringen, yedoch ist das anheben zitlich under in geschehen.<sup>105</sup>

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Švitrigaila's lieutenant (starosta) of Lutsk in 1433–1434 and 1436, thus being one of his main commanders; in 1433 and 1434, he supported Žygimantas Kęstutaitis (*Polekhov*, *Nasledniki Vitovta* [2015], 570 f.).

**100** On the hostilities at the Polish-Lithuanian border in Volhynia and Podolia in the first months of 1431, see *Polekhov*, *Nasledniki Vitovta* (2015), 181 f.

**101** Zbigniew Oleśnicki (5 December 1389–1 April 1455), Bishop of Cracow in 1423–1455, one of the most influential politicians in the Kingdom of Poland (*Koczerska*, Oleśnicki Zbigniew [1978]; *Koczerska*, Zbigniew Oleśnicki i Kościół krakowski [2004]; *Kiryk/Noga* [Eds.], Zbigniew Oleśnicki książę Kościoła i mąż stanu [2006]).

**102** Jan Szafraniec of the Sarykoń coat of arms († 28 July 1433), vice-chancellor in 1418–1423, chancellor in 1423–1433, Bishop of Kujawia/Włocławek in 1428–1433 (*Sperka*, Szafraniec [2001]; *Knappek*, Szafraniec Jan [2009–2010]).

**103** Sędziwoj of Ostroróg of the Nałęcz coat of arms († 1441), Standard-Bearer of Poznań in 1400–1406, Voivode of Greater Poland in 1406–1441, General Starosta of Greater Poland in 1411–1415, 1419–1426, 1432–1434, Starosta of Brześć Kujawski in 1427–1432 (*Polechow/Szybkowski*, Królewski dokument [2017], 164).

**104** Jan of Licheń and Gosławice of the Godziemba coat of arms († 1448 or 1449), Cup-Bearer of Kalisz in 1412–1422, Castellan of Śrem in 1422–1430, Voivode of Brześć Kujawski in 1430–1448, Starosta of Konin in 1411–1413, Starosta of Brześć Kujawski in 1430–1438 (*Polechow/Szybkowski*, Królewski dokument [2017], 165).

**105** The embassy of the Polish dignitaries sent to Švitrigaila in late 1430 as well as the alert of the Polish troops for the expedition to Lithuania, planned for 14 January 1431, are also mentioned in: Joannis Długossii Annales 1413–1430. Eds. *Turkowska* et al., 320.

Auch ist daz die Polan zyhen, als si es vorhaben, so wollen sy hertzog Sygmund<sup>106</sup> von Gleywitz mit in nemen und meynen den gen Littawen zu setzen, ob sy in zu großfürsten machen oder ob sy sust zwytracht machen mochten im land zu Littwan.

Item so haben die Polan mit den Tabern tage gehalten und synt hyin <sup>b</sup> gewesen, under vil ander rede und worten, die sich zwischen in haben verlouffen, also das die Taborn das konigrich etzlicher moße hetten angegriffen, also daz die Taborn irn dienst und hulfe angeboten haben dem konigreich zu Polan, ydoch also das die Taborn den Polan helfen // worden, so sollen die Polan in gestaten und gemien, iren glouben zu predigen, und trete denne yemant zu demselben irm verdampften heiligen glewben in dem konigrich zu Polan, dem sol es nymant weren, sonnder gonnen und gestaten. Nun ist es uffenn solichen beliben, das Procop,<sup>107</sup> Wilhelm Kostke,<sup>108</sup> die purg und annder herrn uff die vasnacht gen der Gedelne zum konige kommen sollen, also verre, ob her do sin wirt;<sup>109</sup> wurde er denn alldo nit sein, so sollen sie kommen zu den herrn von Polan, wo sy in bescheyden werden; wes sie denn also do eyne wurden, daz stet zu dem almechtigen Gotte. Und kommen si zusammen oder nicht, wil ein teil dem andern ycht ergen <sup>g</sup>, daz sol dem andern teyle acht <sup>h</sup> wochen davor ein solichs zu wissen thun. Sunder sie meynen yo an beyden teyln zusammen kommen, ydoch haben dy Thabor dem konige und dem kungrich vil große dinste und globde heymlich gelobt, und waz daz ist, konnen wir noch nit wissen.

Auch haben die Thabor Puchalen<sup>110</sup> Crutzberg eingeben und dohin furet man in zu von Polan allerley notdorfft, und wurde er nicht also hoch gespiset von Polan, er konnde aldo nicht geharren noch bleiben, und hat auch nymant von Behem by im zu Crutzpurg, denne Polan.

Andere czyttungen wissen wir ewr liebe uff dißmal nit zu schreiben.

Geben zur Olsen am dinirstag nehst noch dem jarstag.

In una cedula:

**106** Sigismund Korybut (pol. Zygmunt Korybutowicz or Zygmunt Korybut, lit. Žygimantas Kaributaitis) († after 1 September 1435), Prince of Novhorod Siversky in 1418–1420, was sent to Bohemia by Vytautas on Hussite invitation in 1422 (*Grygiel*, Zygmunt Korybutowicz [2016]; *Tęgowski*, Pierwsze pokolenia [1999], 110–113; *Nikodem*, Polska i Litwa [2015]).

**107** Prokop Holý (also Veliký – the Great) († 30 May 1434), Hussite cleric, commander of the Taborites, won victories over the crusaders at Usti-nad-Labem on 16 June 1426 and at Domažlice on 14 August 1431 (*Macek*, Prokop Veliký [1953]; *Šmahel*, Prokop der Grosse [1995]).

**108** Vilém (William) Kostka of Postupice († 9 November 1436), from the lower nobility of the Kingdom of Bohemia, one of the Hussite leaders (*Sedláček*, Kostka z Postupic [1899]; *Zap*, Vypsání husitské války [1866], 372; *Halada*, Lexikon české šlechty, vol. 1 [1992], 78 f.; *Šmahel*, Hussitische Revolution, vol. 2 f. [2002], 1144, 1362, 1473, 1510, 1643).

**109** 13 February 1431. The Hussite delagation visited Poland only in March 1431, when the King was in Cracow (Joannis Dlugossii Annales 1431–1444. Eds. *Piwożyńska* et al., 18–22).

**110** Dobiesław Puchała († 1435), Starosta of Bydgoszcz from 1418, Hussite (*Nowak*, Puchała Dobiesław [1986]).

Item von dez konigs wegen zu Polan, der ist außkomen mit grossem gedinge, und als ich verneme, waz hertzog Wytold sich mit dem konige und konigrich von Polan verschreiben hette, daz ist alles annulliret, et volunt esse liberi et dominum suum Swidergil habere regem et habere ius imperiale. Ich weis nit anders news.

Thomas Mas<sup>111</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Further struck out herre. <sup>b</sup> n corrected from m. <sup>c</sup> g corrected from ch. <sup>d</sup> n initially written with a line (an abbreviation sign) over it, letter d added next to it. <sup>e</sup> hat het Kop. <sup>f</sup> m corrected from n. <sup>g</sup> Above the word with smaller letters written argen. <sup>h</sup> t corrected from s.

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**111** Thomas Mas († before 9 April 1432), originated from Elbing (pol. Elbląg) in the Diocese of Warmia (Ermland), studied at the Universities of Prague (1396) and Bologna (1413), worked at the Roman curia since the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the second and third decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, he resided mostly in Breslau (Wrocław), serving as canon (since 1411), chancellor of the bishop (1419–1423), vicary general and administrator of the diocese (1419–1424), archdeacon (1427) and dean of the cathedral chapter (1427–1432) (*Schindler*, *Breslauer Domkapitel* [1938], 284–286; see also *Dola*, *Wrocławska kapituła katedralna* [1983], 371 and index). I am indebted to Dr. Radosław Krajniak for providing me with information on Mas' biography.

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