

Urszula Augustyniak

History of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

State – Society – Culture

Polish Studies - Transdisciplinary Perspectives

Edited by Krzysztof Zajas / Jarosław Fazan



PETER LANG
EDITION

The book presents an outline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the 16th to the 18th century and offers a view of the realities of political life, organization of the judiciary, the economy, coexistence of different ethnic groups and religions, high and popular culture and achievements of art. While the federal character of the state and multicultural society is often overlooked in the synthesis of this period, the creation of civil society in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the cultural heritage was the joint achievement of its residents, regardless of their state and ethnic divisions.

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A banner with the coat of arms of the Commonwealth of Both Nations from the period of Sigismund August's reign.

The coat of arms of the Commonwealth of Both Nations (that is, of Poland and Lithuania) was a (usually) quadripartite escutcheon with the coats of arms of Poland (White Eagle, fields 1 and 3) and Lithuania (Pahonia, fields 2 and 4). Sometimes a smaller escutcheon with the coats of arms of other united states (e.g. the Kingdom of Sweden, the Electorate of Saxony) was added in the centre.

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Editors' Preface

Language is an intrinsic part of any culture and any history of a given society. Thus, preparing an English version *the History of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* was an immensely difficult task. It was not the first and certainly will not be the last book devoted to this multicultural, multiconfessional, and multi-ethnic area. Yet, the fact of huge diversification, plenty of languages in use, and vicissitudes of East-European history, always made it difficult for historians and other scholars writing in English to render crucial terms in an understandable way.

In the case of geographical names, we tried to use generally accepted English versions (Warsaw, Cracow, Great Poland, Little Poland) whenever possible. In many instances, the names used in the 16th–18th centuries have been changed (sometimes several times), thus we adopted the principle to use modern names (with a few exceptions: for example, Königsberg instead of Kaliningrad) and to give names appearing in the sources in brackets. This is why we opted for Gdańsk instead of Danzig and Wrocław instead of Breslau. For the same reason, the reader of this book will find Kaunas instead of Kowno. The principal reason for this choice is the spread of the new media and, above all, the Internet with its omnipresent Wikipedia, which adopted the same principle. Of course, this principle has some disadvantages (for example, there is the city of Cracow and Kraków Voivodeship).

Most personal names are given in their original language (for example, Jan Zamoyski, Heinrich von Brühl), even though in various Polish sources their names were sometimes slightly differently spelled. There are two major exceptions from this rule: the names of Polish-Lithuanian monarchs and generally accepted Anglicized or Latinized names (John Calvin, Desiderius Erasmus, Justus Lipsius). There is no consensus on the matter of the names of the Polish-Lithuanian kings. For example, in the case of the second Vasa on the Polish-Lithuanian throne we opted for a semi-Latinized version Wladislaus, but there are at least three other versions that the reader may find in other books. To clarify this issue, we included a list of Polish monarchs at the end of the book.

Variety of different names for offices and institutions have been used in the historical writing on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In this book, we have taken “a middle way.” Whenever it could be reasonably explained we rendered Polish terms in their English version; e. g. *podskarbi wielki koronny* is translated as Grand Crown Treasurer, but it would make no sense to render *hetman wielki koronny* as *grand crown general*, which is why in this book we opted for *Grand Crown Hetman*. Such examples can be multiplied. Yet, in many cases we decided to leave the original names, even if some attempts have been previously made to find their English counterparts. Such names include very common words such as *sejm* and *sejmik*; they were sometimes translated as *diet* and *dietine*, but in our opinion such rendering blurs the historical reality and suggests much greater similarities to the institutions of other countries than there actually were.

In order to avoid getting overflowed by italic text, we decided to treat most common Polish words as if they were English and apply English plural form to them. In the case of less common words e. g. *grzywna*, *wilkierz*, we opted for using Polish plural.

We hope that more difficult terms have been properly explained in the glossary at the end of the book. The reader may find it useful to refer to the tables included in the book in order to systematize the terminology.

Jan Burzyński, Iwo Hryniewicz

Introduction

The first version of this book was published by the Polish Scientific Publishers PWN under the title *History of Poland*, which fits in with the Polish historiographical tradition. Adapting the term *Poland* (Polish: *Polska*; Latin: *Polonia*) with reference to the Polish-Lithuanian state between the end of the 16th century and the end of the 18th century is not a manifestation of historical imperialism.¹ It is justified by the fact that, at that time, the name referred to a state/territory and was employed to describe the community of Polish people² – the symbol of familiarity for the Crown nobility in the same way as the name *Lithuania* was for the citizens of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Not only was Poland a synonym of the Polish Kingdom but also of the whole Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in cartography and propaganda texts designed for foreigners,³ and in texts written by urban historiographers from Silesia, Pomerania, and Royal Prussia, where the Renaissance image of *Polonia* played an important role in Polish-German cultural relations. Nevertheless, in the English edition the name *Poland* has been given up in order to emphasize the common and indivisible heritage of all the contemporary nations, whose ancestors inhabited the early modern Polish-Lithuanian state.

Writing about the Polish-Lithuanian state in the 16th–18th centuries we use most frequently a simple term *Commonwealth*, without any adjectives resulting from current fads, such as the *Commonwealth* or *Republic of Many Nations*⁴ – suggesting the existence in the 16th–18th centuries of nations in the modern sense of the term, or *Nobles' Commonwealth*⁵ – attributing to the privileged estate the whole cultural heritage, created also by plebeians.

After the union of 1569 the Commonwealth of Both Nations was neither a state of all Poles nor primarily a state of Poles. The perception of bonds between lands that once belonged to the Piast dynasty diminished and the desire to unite them

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- 1 Andrzej Sulima-Kamiński, *Historia Rzeczypospolitej wielu narodów 1505–1795*, Lublin, 2000, pp. 10–11.
 - 2 Ewa Bem-Wiśniewska, *Funkcjonowanie nazwy Polska w języku czasów nowożytnych*, Warsaw, 1998, pp. 108–133.
 - 3 Marcin Kromer, *Polonia sive de situ, populis, moribus, magistratibus et Republica regni Polonici libri duo*, 1557 (Polish edition: *Polska czyli o położeniu, ludności, obyczajach i sprawach publicznych Królestwa Polskiego księgi dwie*, trans. S. Kazikowski, introduction and preparation R. Marchwiński, Olsztyn, 1977); Stanisław Krzysztanowicz, *Polonia seu brevis descriptio status Regni Poloniae*, Moguncja, 1606; Szymon Starowolski, *Polonia*, 1632 (Polish edition: *Polska albo opisanie położenia Królestwa Polskiego*, trans. A. Piskadło, Cracow, 1976).
 - 4 Andrzej Sulima-Kamiński, *Historia Rzeczypospolitej*, pp. 1–11.
 - 5 Andrzej Wyczański, *Polska Rzecz Pospolitą szlachecką 1454–1764*, Warsaw, 1965; Jarema Maciszewski, *Szlachta polska i jej państwo*, Warsaw, 1981.

deteriorated, superseded by an awareness of a new, federative identity.⁶ The process of legal and mental integration took place within the noble nation crosswise ethnic (community of language, culture, and historical tradition) and confessional bonds. Attempts to impose confessional and ethnic uniformity under the banner of a Pole-Catholic – undertaken since the end of the 16th century by the Catholic Church, and at the end of the 18th century by the state administration – turned out to be unrealistic and often counter-productive.

History of a Society, not of a Nation

Our purpose is to present a full picture of functioning of a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, taking into consideration both what united and what divided it. Thus, if we focus on the nobility and Polish language speaking population, it is the result of the limited space of this book and availability of sources.

Domination of the nobility in public life and of the Polish language in early modern culture of the Commonwealth does not change the fact that its history includes the fortune of all its inhabitants, regardless of economic, legal, confessional, and ethnic divisions. In the social reality of the 16th to 18th centuries they did not live in separate enclaves but coexisted and influenced one another. There is no substantive justification for a “parcelling out” of the common heritage between present Poles, Lithuanians, Belarusians and Ukrainians. The fact that the past weighs heavily on the present is commonly observed as a specific feature of the East-Central European countries. As Juliusz Bardach noticed, “Past difficulties, the memory of harms suffered determine to a large extent – also today – the consciousness of some nations in the region, especially those which have relatively recently developed their political identity.”⁷

Understanding the emotional attitude towards the concept of a nation in the societies that have recently regained their sovereignty, one should not ignore the danger of mistaking nationalism for patriotism and of “intermingling of traditions of discord in the formerly federative states, merged or reconstructing their contemporary statehood in the territories that once belonged to the neighbouring states.”⁸

Nonetheless, it is as natural that Polish historians are interested mainly in Polish contribution to the political and cultural history of the Commonwealth of the 16th–18th centuries as is writing history anew by researchers from the countries that

6 Michał Tymowski, Jan Kieniewicz, Jerzy Holzer, *Historia Polski*, Paris, 1986, p. 115.

7 Juliusz Bardach, “Od narodu politycznego do narodu etnicznego w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej,” *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 37 (1993), no. 4, p. 5.

8 Barbara Maria Topolska, “Z dziejów kultury Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego od XV do XVIII wieku,” in: *Litwa i jej sąsiedzi od X do XX wieku. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Jerzemu Ochmańskiemu w 60. rocznicę urodzin*, Poznań, 1999, p. 171.

once were a part of this multi-ethnic state – Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Belarusian or German historians specializing in the history of Livonia and Courland.⁹

The Question of Nations in the Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

In Polish and – in general – in European historiography a national community is considered to be a superior form of social bonding. At the same time, there is a strong conviction that European nations should be understood as direct heirs of ethnic groups, whose origins can be traced back at least to the Early Middle Ages.¹⁰ According to this view, differences between “modern nations” developed after the English and French revolutions and earlier types of national communities are rather quantitative than qualitative.

Recently, scholars interested in the ethnic developments of East-Central Europe raised an issue of the uniqueness of this region and of limited applicability of Weberian “ideal types” in studying these problems as well as of commonly adapted by Anglo-Saxon political theorists (above all by Ernst Gellner) constructionism, which presupposes that it is impossible for authentic state-wide and society-wide bonds in preindustrial era to emerge.

It is noteworthy that the subject of study of political theorists are not the nations themselves, but it is the concept of nation. Highlighting the instrumental, or even manipulative aspect of nationalist activities and deeming a nation to be the result of 19th- and 20th-century social engineering, a work of political and opinion-forming elites in the age when the old order collapsed, they yet recognize that the modern nation was in a way “moulded” out of varieties of pre-existing supra-local forms of group consciousness and social bonds (tradition, language, religion/confession, customs etc.). In this study we accept Gellner’s general idea that: “It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round.”¹¹ In spite of Tomasz Kizwalter’s sceptical remarks on the issue of the range of influence of Sarmatian ideology,¹² we maintain that there are reasons to believe that already in the mid-17th century Commonwealth, the “Sarmatian” cultural identity of Poles and Lithu-

9 Hienadź Sahanowicz, *Historia Białorusi. Od czasów najdawniejszych do końca XVIII wieku*, trans. H. Łaskiewicz, Lublin, 2001; Zigmantas Kiaupa, Jūratė Kiaupienė, Albinas Kuncevičius, *The History of Lithuania before 1795*, Vilnius 2000; Zigmantas Kiaupa, *The History of Lithuania*, Vilnius, 2002; Natalia Jakowenko, *Historia Ukrainy. Od czasów najdawniejszych do końca XVIII wieku*, trans. O. Hnatiuk, K. Kotyńska, Lublin, 2000; Almut Bues, *Das Herzogtum Kurland und der Norden der polnisch-litauischen Adelsrepublik im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Giessen, 2001.

10 Benedykt Zientara, *Świt narodów europejskich. Powstawanie świadomości narodowej na obszarze Europy pokarolińskiej*, Warsaw, 1985.

11 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford 1983, p. 55.

12 Tomasz Kizwalter, *O nowoczesności narodu – przypadek Polski*, Warsaw, 1999, pp. 42–90.

anians began to emerge. Some traces of this identity can also be found among the plebeians.¹³ At the same time – basing on Jūratė Kiaupienė's, Hienadz Sahanowicz's, Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel's and Natalia Jakowenko's research – it is possible to conclude that already in the early modern period there existed ethnic and cultural identities among Lithuanians,¹⁴ Belarusians,¹⁵ and Ukrainians.¹⁶ Moreover, in the case of the last of them it was not only on the level of social elite.

Already at the end of the 16th century intellectual elites of the Commonwealth's provinces – not only the nobility but also patriciate (regardless of their estate affiliation) – began evolving into “political nations.”

Of course, this does not alter the fact that neither in the Commonwealth, nor anywhere else there were nations in the modern meaning of the term. Lithuanian, Belarusian, Ukrainian or Polish nations – understood as having a society-wide sense of membership – had not yet come into being. Therefore, I consider the term the *Commonwealth of Many Nations*¹⁷ popularized by Andrzej Sulima Kamiński and used also to refer to various ethnic, legal and confessional groups living in the diaspora (Jews, Armenians, the Romani people) and to immigrants (Scots, Vlachs, Olędrzy [German: *Holländer*], and Mennonites) a fancy mental construct, albeit leading to a false picture of the past.

“Parcelling out” of the common cultural heritage of the Commonwealth of Both Nations is contrary to historical reality, in which people of changing ethnic consciousness, shaped by territorial, confessional and linguistic affiliation coexisted and influenced one another. Following the advice of Sir Isaiah Berlin,¹⁸ we must not dis-

13 Urszula Augustyniak, *Koncepcje narodu i społeczeństwa w literaturze plebejskiej od końca XVI do końca XVII wieku*, Warsaw, 1989.

14 Jūratė Kiaupienė, “Mes, Lietuva”. *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaigštystės bajorija XVI a.*, Kronta, 2003; ead., “Litewskie cechy kultury politycznej szlachty Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVI wieku,” in: *Kultura Litwy i Polski w dziejach. Tożsamość i współistnienie. Materiały międzynarodowej konferencji zorganizowanej w dniach 15–17 października 1998*, Cracow, 2000, pp. 67–78; Mathias Niendorf, *Das Großfürstentum Litauen. Studien zur Nationsbildung in der Frühen Neuzeit (1569–1795)*, Wiesbaden 2006 (Polish edition: *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie. Studia nad kształtowaniem się narodu u progu epoki nowożytnej (1569–1795)*, trans. M. Grzywacz, Poznań, 2011, passim).

15 Hienadz Sahanowicz, *Historia Białorusi do końca XVIII w.*, trans. H. Łaszkiwicz, Lublin, 2002, pp. 185–190.

16 Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, *Świadomość narodowa szlachty ukraińskiej i kozaczyzny od schyłku XVI do połowy XVII wieku*, Warsaw, 1985; Natalia Jakowenko, *Druga strona lustra. Z historii wyobrażeń i idei na Ukrainie XVI–XVII wieku*, trans. K. Kotyńska, ed. T. Chynczewska-Hennel, 2010, pp. 263–305.

17 Andrzej Sulima-Kamiński, *Historia Rzeczypospolitej wielu narodów 1505–1795*, Lublin, 2000.

18 Isaiah Berlin, “Nationalism – Past Neglect and Present Power,” in: *Against the Current, Essays in the History of Ideas*, New York, 1980, pp. 341–343.

regard the dangers of patriotism turning into nationalism or of growing tendencies to unify the politics of memory as well as of using the past for one's own interests.

Structure and Periodization

The sequence of the presentation reflects the way of thinking about the 16th–18th-century Commonwealth by its citizens and early modern historians who began their descriptions of *Polonia* with its geographical location, characterization of its natural conditions, and only then presenting its political system and customs of its inhabitants. The fact that we have devoted a separate chapter to the church-state relations and to confessional policy reflects recognition of the crucial importance of this issue, considering the fact the notion of a secular state did not come into being until the 18th century, which entailed that religion influenced all spheres of human life. For history of art and literature, the entire course has been arranged into epochs, with a further division into sub-periods proposed by specialists in these fields.

The State of Research and Literature on the Subject

In our presentation of the history of the Commonwealth we have tried to make good use of the significant progress that has been made in recent years in all the fields of historical study: history of parliamentarism and finances, military history, social history (a theory of clientelism) and political history (especially of the 18th century), history of social communication and culture, of mentality and art, history of churches and confessional relations, ethnic-legal groups (especially Jews) and economic history. It has become a common practice to study the history of the Commonwealth against a broad European background and to draw on the achievements of other disciplines: historical statistics, cultural anthropology, sociology, political science, and linguistics.

Because of the limited space of the book, we had to restrict the references only to the sources and studies quoted in the text. The bibliography includes mainly syntheses and collective volumes, as well as the most important editions of sources – from both present-day and the 19th century – and papers, which are crucial for interpretation of the studied issues. Of course, it was virtually impossible to take into consideration all monographs. Texts in Polish and other languages are treated equally.

Chapter One

Physiognomy of the Commonwealth

1. Names, Emblems, Capitals

1.1. Name

The official name of the Polish-Lithuanian state after 1569 arouses controversies. Introductory formulas of documents written for internal use (for instance, in the *pacta conventa*) refer to the estates of “the Commonwealth of the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Provinces belonging to them” or to “the Commonwealth of Both Nations,” and only exceptionally to “the Crown of the Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian Nations and states belonging to them” (1699). Diplomatic treaties with foreign states, in turn, were concluded on behalf of the Crown and the Grand Duchy, with emphasis on the equal status of both political entities.

Names used to refer to the state functioning in public life were neither imposed by an administrative decision nor accepted thoughtlessly, but they were changing between the 16th and 18th centuries together with the evolution of social conditions and political system. The term *Polish Kingdom* already at the end of the 16th century was predominantly replaced by the term *Crown*. Contrary to the declaration included in the act of the Union of Lublin that “one common Commonwealth, one people blended and united is made out of two states and nations.”¹⁹ Names *Polish Crown* or simply *Crown* were used alternatively with the term *Commonwealth* to denote the whole polity. Some scholars assume that initially political elites of the Crown wanted the term *Corona Regni Poloniae* coined in the mid-14th century to encompass the whole Polish-Lithuanian state, with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania playing a role of a province. According to Henryk Wisner, only ca. 20 years after the Union of Lublin the unifying terminology was abandoned, and the union of the Crown and Lithuania acquired a character of a federation of two states.

Paradoxically enough, although the practice of calling only the Crown the Commonwealth was abandoned, Lithuanian political elites continued using the term “Lithuanian Commonwealth” in reference to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania itself, in order to emphasize its individuality. This tendency (traditionally regarded in Polish historiography as a manifestation of Lithuanian “separatism”) found its expression even during the debate on the “arrangement of the form of government” during the Great Sejm (Polish: *Sejm Wielki*) in 1789–1790, when the project of adapting a new name – *Polish Commonwealth* – suggesting a greater homogeneity of the state,

19 “Panowie rady i posłowie ziemscy Korony odnawiają unję z Wielkim Księstwem Litewskim,” *Lublin at the sejm on 1 July, 1569*, in: *Akta unji Polski z Litwą od 1385 do 1790 r.*, ed. Stanisław Kutrzeba, Władysław Semkowicz, Cracow–Warsaw, 1932, document 148, p. 234, item 3, p. 343.

was rejected. *Zaręczenie wzajemne obojga narodów* (*The Reciprocal Warranty of Both Nations*) of October 22nd, 1791, in turn, refers to the duty “towards the common homeland, the Polish Commonwealth” as “the one, common and indivisible”²⁰ – although in actual fact, the document emphasized the dualism of the state.

Thus, both these tendencies – centralist and federalist – coexisted until the end of the Polish-Lithuanian federation.

1.2. Emblem and Coats of Arms of the Lands

The national emblem was a combination of the emblems of both states: on the left side there was a white eagle (originally the emblem of the Cracow Land [Polish: *ziemia krakowska*]) – with its head turned to the right and spread wings, under a golden crown against a red background, usually with an initial or coat of arms of the current king on its chest; on the right side there was the Jagiellonian (Lithuanian: *Jogalias*) the *Pahonia* (Polish: *Pogoń*) – a silver mounted knight holding a sword in his right hand above his head, also against a red background. In official representations (seals, royal coins, tombstones, medals, official documents) the emblem was accompanied by a set of coats of arms of the major lands of the Crown (the lion of Red Ruthenia and the black eagle of Royal Prussia). Lithuania was represented solely by the *Pahonia* (originally the coat of arms of Vilnius Land), whereas Archangel Michael (the coat of arms of Kiev Land) first became the emblem of Bohdan Khmelnytsky’s troops, then of Ukraine. In the 17th century the coat of arms of Moldavia disappeared from the set of coats of arms of fiefs, representations of coats of arms of vassalized lands with the king’s monogram, indicating their direct relation to the ruler became a symbol of dynamic territorial development of the state. According to Henryk Wisner: “All that [...] means that it was not the Commonwealth itself, but rather the King of the Commonwealth and the states that composed it, that had the coat of arms.”²¹

1.3. Capital Cities

Until the end of the 16th century, the nominal capital of the state and the residential city was Cracow, but in fact rulers resided most often at the places where the Sejm sessions were held (Piotrków, Lublin) and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; King Sigismund II Augustus in Vilnius, Stephen Bathory (Polish: Stefan Batory) – because of the Muscovite and Livonian wars – in Grodno. “The unfortunate location

20 *Konstytucje sejmu pod zwiazkiem konfederacji w Warszawie*, CCCLVI, in: *Volumina Legum. Przedruk zbioru praw staraniem xx.pijarów w Warszawie, od roku 1732 do roku 1782 wydanego, nakladem i drukiem Jozafata Ohryzki*, Saint Petersburg, 1889 (reprinted in Warsaw, 1980); henceforth VL, vol. 9, p. 316.

21 Henryk Wisner, *Rzeczpospolita Wazów. Czasy Zygmunta III i Władysława IV*, Warsaw, 2002, p. 14.

of Cracow in the very southwestern corner of the state²² discredited it as a place of permanent residence of the king of the state directed towards the east. Thus, although till the end of the First Commonwealth Cracow retained some attributes of a capital city; it remained the place of coronations and burials of monarchs, while the actual capitals were: Vilnius – of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Warsaw – of the Crown, and virtually of the whole Commonwealth.

Warsaw, the capital of the Duchy of Masovia (Polish: *Księstwo Mazowieckie, Mazowsze*), situated at the centre of the Polish-Lithuanian state – that is, at the junction of an important transit road from Germany to the Muscovite state²³ and the Vistula (Polish: *Wisła*), which was the major grain trading route – began growing rapidly after the incorporation of Masovia into the Crown (1526) and (according to Marek Wrede) the town surpassed Cracow already during the reign of Sigismund II Augustus. By virtue of its location, Warsaw became (after 1569) the permanent place of the general Sejms. Already in the second half of the 16th century a new (territorial and political) form and strategic policy of the state determined its being a capital city in that it served both residential and political functions of the decision centre at the scale of the whole Commonwealth and was the seat of the highest offices of the Crown (chancellor, marshal, and treasurer). Thus, a widely held opinion that it was Sigismund III Vasa who “moved” the capital from Cracow to Warsaw in 1596 is untrue, despite the fact that it was after his return from the Muscovite War (1611) that Warsaw became his permanent residence.

The capital position of Vilnius has been occasionally questioned, for in the post-Jagiellonian era the city was not a permanent residence of rulers – in the time of king Stephen Bathory this function was performed by Grodno, where from 1673 on, every third session of the Sejm was to be held, although in practice it was less frequent (by 1793 only eleven Sejms met there).

The capital of Ruthenia, and then of Ukraine, was Kiev, described in the 1569 Incorporation Act as the town: “which was and still is the head and principal city of the Ruthenian Land.” Lviv and Poznań were also called *capital cities* (the constitution of 1674 Sejm), which proves that as late as the 1670s the notion of a capital city was understood not only in legal terms; customarily, it was also used to refer the centres of main provinces of the Commonwealth: Little Poland (Polish: *Małopolska*), Great Poland (Polish: *Wielkopolska*), the Grand Duchy (or Lithuania; Polish: *Litwa*) and Rus (or Ruthenia; Polish: *Rus*) – Ukraine.

22 Aleksander Brückner, *Encyklopedia staropolska*, Warsaw, 1939, vol. 2, p. 354.

23 Called the Grand Duchy of Moscow until 1547, then the Russian Tsardom, and since 1721 Russian Empire – but commonly Muscovy till the end of the 17th c, the name Russia is in use since the beginning of the 18th c.

2. Geographical Position and Natural Conditions

2.1. Geographical Position

Already in the 1560s the geographical position of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was described in a modern way – in degrees of longitude and latitude. According to Marcin Kromer:

[...] Poland at the time we are describing it [after the Union of Lublin], making one Kingdom and remaining within one legal system, spreads over [...] a strip of inhabited land from 38° to 52° or 53° [...] running diagonally from the summer sunset – to its winter sunrise over a distance of more than two hundred Polish miles [...].²⁴

According to Szymon Starowolski:

The Polish Kingdom together with the adjacent provinces spreads length ways between 38 and 54 degree from the summer sunset to the winter sunrise, over a distance of more than two hundred and forty German miles, and breadthways [...] of circa two hundred miles.²⁵

Yet, these data do not conform to reality. The area of the Polish-Lithuanian state in the mid-17th century extended between 15°16' and ca. 36°44' E, and between ca. 46°50' and 59°5' N. The distance between the westernmost and easternmost borders was not greater than two hundred German miles, and between the southernmost and northernmost (from Zaporizhia [Polish: *Zaporozże*] and Livonia) – smaller than two hundred German miles, which was over two hundred Polish miles, that is, ca. 1500 kilometres.

2.2. Natural Conditions

Propaganda descriptions of the Commonwealth – from the 16th century more and more often called *Sarmatia* – depicted it as a happy land (*terra felix*) with fertile soil, luxuriant flora, abundant game and rich mineral deposits:

Almost the whole country is flat and sunny, except for a few highland and forested areas adjacent to the Hungarian border. Yet, the further from here, the more even, fertile and better cultivated is soil. There is only one mountain in the middle of Little Poland, called *Łysa* [Bald Mountain]. [...] Other hills in almost the whole Kingdom are rather knolls than mountains. In olden times dense forests had covered, not only Lithuania but also much of Poland, yet now the land is farmed more thoroughly, pregnant with

24 Marcin Kromer, *Polska, czyli o położeniu, ludności, obyczajach i sprawach publicznych Królestwa Polskiego księgi dwie*, trans. S. Kazikowski, Olsztyn, 1977, pp. 17–18; at the time, one Polish mile equalled the length of ca. 7.4 km; the longitude was counted from the prime meridian specifically located in the Canaries; “the summer sunset” means the southwest, and “the winter sunrise” – the northeast.

25 Starowolski, *Polonia*, p. 60.

vegetables and crops and abundant with meadows. And though the climate is too changeable most of the time, in different parts of the country there are many orchards with endless abundance of pears, apples, plums, peaches, cherries and nuts, which in their multitude of varieties and taste are by no means inferior to Hungarian and Italian ones. There are also grape vines in many places whose grapes are pleasing for palates, especially if the summer and autumn weather is fair, but the wine made from them is too tart. There also grow in the Polish land chestnut trees, mulberries, quinces, figs, almond trees, saffron crocus, rice, watermelons, melons, herbs and flowers of various kind and other delights of Italian gardens and taste allures. There is also plenty of metal and ore [...], namely lead, copper, bronze, silver and gold. There is also abundance of fowl and poultry, then of cattle of various kinds and wild beasts or game, to wit deer, wild boars, bears, wolves, squirrels, roe deer, hares, wild donkeys, wisents, goats, aurochs, lynxes, wildcats, foxes, wolverines, otters and beavers. And a profusion of fish of any possible sort, for there are many rivers, lakes and ponds. The most important of these are: the Vistula, the Dunajec, the San, the Wieprz, the Warta, the Noteć, the Dvina, the Neman, the Dniester, the Prut, the Boh, the Pripet, the Narew, the Drwęca, the Berezina, the Dnieper – almost all suitable for navigation.²⁶

Similarly, to European eyes the Commonwealth of Both Nations was a vast, populous and wealthy country. In 1572 a French envoy Jean de Monluc pointed out to a huge – twice the size of France – territory of Poland, its great fertility and excess of food. Foreigners travelling through the Commonwealth also praised its lowland nature:

Because Poland is a flat country, neither stony nor mountainous, it is easy to travel through it by carriage.²⁷

Starting from the mid-17th century, the admiration for the plain lay of the land and the lack of natural frontiers both in the west and east diminished, and they began to be seen not as a facilitator of contacts with other countries but as a hindrance in the organization of defence. A location in the corridor between the two parts of the European continent – in the narrowing between the Baltic and the Black Sea, widening towards the northeast – encouraged the neighbouring countries (especially Muscovy and Turkey) to invade the Commonwealth.

2.3. Geopolitical Location

Even though the geographical position of the Commonwealth remained unchanged, its geopolitical situation underwent significant changes. It was not only a result of a shift in the centre of gravity of foreign policy from the west to the east and a

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 60–61.

²⁷ Gaspard de Tende de Hauteville, *Relation historique de la Pologne*, 1697, pp. 326–331, quoted after: Jan Antoni Wilder, *Okiem cudzoziemca. Ze wspomnień cudzoziemców o dawnej Polsce*, Warsaw, 1959, p. 39.

gain of territory at the expense of Muscovy, but also of an ongoing reconfiguration of cultural and political divisions in Europe between the 16th and the end of the 18th century. By the end of the 16th and in the early 17th century the main axis of European policy ran – traditionally, since the collapse of Rome – from the north to south: from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from the Scandinavian countries to Italy, from Protestant to Catholic countries. It was as late as the latter part of the 17th and in the 18th century when the division of Europe into the East and the West, so obvious to us today, came into being.

2.4. Region of East-Central Europe

Countries in the North European Plain – that is, not only the Commonwealth but also Germany, Moravia, and Hungary – oscillated between the European poles, expanding and shrinking territorially faster than states in the West. Noticing the similarity of their geopolitical situation, German historians (Gottfried Schramm, Klaus Zernack) used the nineteenth-century concept of *Mittleuropa* (Central Europe) or East-Central Europe – in some geopolitical and journalistic texts described with the pejorative term of *In-Between Europe* (*Zwischeneuropa*) in the cultural sense of being situated on the borderlands of two cultures: Byzantine and Latin – in the north confined by the Baltic, in the west by the line of the Elbe–Saale–Böhmerwald, in the east by the changing territory of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, and in the south reaching to the Balkans.

3. Federative Commonwealth

3.1. Granular Structure of Early Modern Europe

Following Emanuel Rostworowski, one can describe early modern Europe as having a granular structure. The monarchy of the Jagiellons was also a so-called composite state – composed of domains belonging to a dynasty and united only by a personal union – similarly as in the case of Spanish and Austrian Habsburg monarchies, whose homogeneity was much overestimated in older historiography. Only after 1569 a real union included formerly independent territorial units (Royal Prussia, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) as well as buffer provinces (Livonia, Moldavia and Walachia) and fiefs with a legal status changing until the 18th century (Ducal Prussia and Courland). After the age of the Jagiellons, a system of government based on respect for local tradition and autonomy of all territorial units of the Commonwealth, not only the Crown and Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was established. It was of great importance for the development of its political institutions and system of power.

3.2. Federative Structure of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

After the Union of Lublin the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, similarly to other federative states of early modern Europe, constituted a conglomerate of political entities (states), different in terms of constitution and remaining in various relationships with the centre (the king and the Sejm). In legal constitutional terms the Commonwealth consisted of two monarchies; Poland and Lithuania, two feudal principalities; Duchy of Prussia and Courland, as well as of one joint dominion – the Duchy of Livonia.²⁸

Crucial for the shaping of state institutions and the system of government of the elective monarchy was the fact that the Commonwealth inherited from the Jagiellons a federative structure, founded on the respect for local traditions and separate status of territories of which it consisted. It was true not only for two main political entities – The Crown of Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but also for their provinces and feudal territories.

Immediately after the conclusion of the Union of Lublin in 1569 the Commonwealth had to go through the stage of a granular state – united by the person of the king – and to try out the effectiveness of freshly united estate representation. The dynasty – which for almost two centuries, up until the Union of Lublin, was a bridge that spanned over two now really united states – left the stage almost right after the event. It is possible that even had Sigismund Augustus recovered from his illness and left legitimate heirs, the reign of the Jagiellons would have come to an end as a result of the union.

A federative structure of the Commonwealth has until recently been disregarded or assessed negatively: bad effects of the Polish-Lithuanian union had been highlighted; position of Prussia towards Warsaw had been overestimated, which was actually a secondary effect of decentralization of power between 1648 and 1717. Although similar problems were encountered in other European countries, in majority of them a centralized apparatus of royal power was established in the 17th–18th centuries. Meanwhile, in the Commonwealth, the centralization was blocked by a double system of central offices sanctioned in the act of the 1569 Lublin Union – Polish and Lithuanian ones, and gradual paralysis of the legislature (the Sejm).

Apart from the division into provinces and fiefs, there functioned also in the consciousness of the Commonwealth's citizens a division into regions and countries (Polish: *kraj*) inhabited by separate political nations. The division manifested itself in several levels of *ius indigenatus* (Polish: *indygenat* – which literally means: the right of local birth) – of voivodship, province, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and of provinces of the Baltic region: Royal Prussia, Courland and Livonia – defended by the local noble opinion and sejmiks. At the same time, there were (although not

28 Klaus Zernack, *Polska a Rosja. Dwie drogi w dziejach Europy*, trans. A. Konopacki, Warsaw 2000, p. 188.

in a continuous way) strong standardization tendencies, resulting mainly from a formal unification of the legal status of the nobility, which manifested themselves in the adoption of legal norms already tested elsewhere.

Still, differences persisted between provinces historically and ethnically (culturally and linguistically) Polish, united with the Kingdom of Poland already in the Middle Ages or incorporated gradually (Masovia), territorial units with their own historical traditions (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Ruthenia), and separate feeling of regional affiliation (Prussia, Courland, Livonia). The status of the territories making up the Commonwealth underwent important changes during the course of the 17th century: the Grand Duchy of Lithuania lost its position of an equal partner of the Crown and became one of the Commonwealth's provinces, and the degree of emancipation of the southeastern borderlands of the Crown (Ukraine) and the Baltic region increased.

Until the end of the 18th century the basis for self-identification of the Commonwealth's inhabitants – both plebeians and members of the noble political nation – were territorial ties, rather than ethnic origins. "Nationality" was usually derived from the place of residence. A feeling of attachment to the local community and "little homeland" is also regarded as one of the most important factors in the formation of modern ethnic identities. Thus, a solution to the problem of relations between the centre of power and provinces was extremely important for internal cohesion of the Polish-Lithuanian state.

3.3. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

The issue of Polish-Lithuanian union of 1569 and its consequences has been a subject of debate for over two centuries. In the last fifty years scholars assessing the union and its impact, regardless of their nationality,²⁹ have taken various stands towards it; some emphasized negative (from Poland's point of view) entanglement of the Crown in conflicts with Muscovy and influence of the Lithuanian magnates on Poland's social order, others argued that the union meant not only the birth of a new federative state, but also the loss of Lithuanian statehood.

As distinct from Henryk Łowmiański – who maintained that the Lithuanian nobility, due to the union, lost nothing and received help against Muscovy³⁰, and that we may speak of certain "immaturity" (or even inferiority³¹) of Lithuanian civilization – newer historiography highlights mutual benefits of the union to both the Crown and Lithuania.

29 Henryk Wisner, "Rzeczpospolita obojga narodów – federacja zwycięzców czy zwyciężonych? Unia Litwy i Polski z roku 1569 w aspekcie militarnym," in: *Przegląd Historyczny*, 63, no. 4, p. 606.

30 Henryk Łowmiański, *Uwagi w sprawie podłoża społecznego i gospodarczego unii jagiellońskiej*, Vilnius, 1934, p. 112.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

During the debate, which particularly livened up as the two states were about to join the European Union, it is worth mentioning that the status of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania ceased to be perceived as stable. The questions concerning the relation of Lithuania to the Crown – was it a sovereign state? A member of the federation? Or, perhaps, a province? – were replaced by the one posed by Grzegorz Błaszczyk: what was Lithuania *at certain points* of the common history? Gains and losses began to be treated in a similar way for both the Crown and Lithuania, and – as Henryk Wisner noticed – differences in assessing these issues resulted rather from generation divisions and historians' domain of expertise (military, political or cultural history) than from their nationalities.

The question of evolution of legal regulations shaping the nature of the union is especially interesting, for it allows to better understand the changes taking place in the inner structure of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.³² We should begin by explaining the concept of “union” itself, particularly in its legal and constitutional aspect. There are two basic understandings of the term in historical context: a “personal union” and a “real union.” The former is primarily based on the person of a monarch and is created in an accidental way (by election, dynastic law or marriage); the latter type is characterized by common governing bodies and created as a result of a treaty. In spite of the attempts to strengthen the ties between the two states – in the age of the Jagiellons the union was roughly limited to having a common dynasty and one king. It was in 1569 when on Sigismund Augustus's initiative the nature of the union was changed from personal to real. The Crown aimed at incorporating Lithuania, which opted for a loose federation. In 1569 a compromise was reached.³³ As a result, a union of two states was created; the multinational Commonwealth functioned as one political entity in international relations, while in internal affairs, the division into the Crown and the Grand Duchy was preserved. Foreign policy was common for the whole Commonwealth; diplomatic services as well as (in theory) wars were to be financed by both states. Thus, territorial gains – such as Livonia, incorporated into the Commonwealth – were regarded as joint dominions.

3.3.1. *Terms of the Union of 1569*

Institutions common for both states included: the Sejm, foreign policy, coin (differing only in stamp and place of minting) and the king, who was to be chosen as a ruler of the Crown and the Grand Duchy at a joint election. Chancellery, ministerial offices and treasury were to be kept separate. Sejm constitutions (i. e. bills) passed after 1569 gradually made the constitution of the Grand Duchy more similar to the Crown one, yet leaving out some unique aspects of the Lithuanian political order.

32 Jerzy Malec, “Zmiany w stosunku prawnym Polski i Litwy po unii lubelskiej,” in: *Szkice z dziejów federalizmu*, pp. 39–147.

33 Juliusz Bardach, Bogusław Leśnodorski, Michał Pietrzak, *Historia państwa i prawa polskiego*, Warsaw, 1985, p. 169.

Although Sejm constitutions were usually issued for both states – which was confirmed by the phrase: “they also extend to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania” – they were sometimes issued separately for the Grand Duchy, especially in the field of taxation. Lithuania retained its own judicial law (the Second and the Third Statutes) and the fully separate Lithuanian Tribunal (since 1581). Before attending the general Sejm, Lithuanian deputies and senators gathered at the general sejmik of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (first in Wawkavysk [Polish: *Wólkowysk*]) and then in Slonim [Polish: *Slonim*], where common issues were discussed. When an urgent need arose, or when the Sejm failed to pass any legislation, the king summoned a general Lithuanian assembly, known as the Vilnius Convocation, in which some historians (e. g. H. Wisner) saw a reference to the pre-union Lithuanian Sejm tradition.

The Act of Union of 1569³⁴ confirmed all old privileges of both federated states, and sanctioned a social order – which was different from the Crown order – with a vague division into estates. It also guaranteed that the Lithuanian magnates could retain their old privileges and assets, being exempt from execution of property.

Even after the union of 1569 the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania remained two separate states, differing not only in terms of legal system but also in terms of economic structure, as well as in level of urbanization, and geo-physical and social conditions. As Henryk Litwin put it, “two political bodies remained alive, giving birth to a third one – the Commonwealth.”³⁵ This phrasing suggests a lot more than the Act of Union constituted.

3.3.2. *Consequences and Appraisals of the Polish-Lithuanian Union*

Military importance of the Polish-Lithuanian union was undeniable. The changing of borders – taking into consideration the assumption that each federated state (especially in the first half of the 17th century) was itself responsible for the defence of its borders – resulted in creating two theatres of war. Joint military action was taken only in the defence of the whole Commonwealth – but also in such cases the two states not always cooperated. In the 17th century apart from Stephen Bathory’s wars against Muscovy (1577–1582) and the first years of Sigismund III Vasa’s war against Sweden over control of Livonia (1600–1611), the Crown and Lithuania cooperated during the Khotyn (Polish: *Chocim*) Campaign (1621) and during the Smolensk War (1632–1634), they acted separately in the Polish-Swedish War (1626–1629), during the Khmelnitsky Uprising in 1648 and in the times of the Deluge (1655–1660).

Did the union with Lithuania precipitate Polish-Muscovite wars? Formally, the Crown’s border with Muscovy was established in 1569, but it was prior to the union, due to (legally dubious) Sigismund Augustus’s decisions to incorporate into the Crown the Ruthenian lands belonging to the Grand Duchy. Although hostili-

34 *Unia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego z Koroną*, Lublin 11 VIII 1569, in: VL, vol. 2, pp. 766–778.

35 Henryk Litwin, “Narody pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej,” in: *Tradycje polityczne dawnej Polski*, ed. Anna Sucheni-Grabowska, Alicja Dybkowska, Warsaw, 1994, p. 179.

ties between Muscovy and the Commonwealth began in the territory of the Grand Duchy, they resulted, at least to the same extent, from the interest of the Crown; cutting Muscovy off from the Baltic Sea and breaking its relations with Western Europe were the primary objectives of Polish policy, for they allowed the Crown to wall off from Muscovy with Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian lands. Meanwhile, the integration processes, the willingness to unite all Ruthenian lands by the Grand Duke of Moscow (since 1547 – Tsar), drove Muscovy not only towards the ports of the Baltic region but also westwards.

As H. Wisner aptly noticed on the “excessive” – in the opinion of older historiography – enlargement of the territory:

The fact that a state possesses fertile, economically thriving provinces is not usually considered a disaster, a political defeat. Usually, because in the case of Ukrainian lands it is otherwise. These lands have allegedly led the Crown to conflict with its neighbours (it is difficult to find in Europe, or indeed in the whole world two sovereign states making so many claims: territorial, confessional, constitutional and those arising from the sheer fact of their existence and trying to browbeat each other into accepting their truths), but also to a general shift in foreign policy and internal transformation.³⁶

Is it true that the Crown’s involvement in eastern expansion was so serious that it prevented it from following the events in Western Europe more carefully?

Were the Crown’s profits really the result of Lithuania’s losses? On the whole – they were not, especially not in the military aspect. By virtue of the Crown’s help, it was possible to drive Muscovy from Livonia, recapture Smolensk, and revive in a still impressive territorial shape after 1655.

The decision to incorporate Volhynia and the Kiev region into the Crown alleviated the threat (posed by Muscovy and Sweden) that Lithuania had to face – leaving Tatar-Turkish menace to the Poles. Thus, it is hard to agree with Andrzej Sulima Kamiński’s controversial thesis that it was rather the incorporation of Ukrainian lands than the union with Lithuania that determined the Crown’s fate, for according to said historian it permanently drove a wedge between Polish and Ukrainian nations and, at the same time, landed the Crown with the hard and ultimately lost struggle with Russia reformed by Aleksey Mikhailovich and Peter the Great.³⁷ Today, we judge favourably exactly what contemporaries deemed to be the weakest points of the union: the lack of integrated state organs, the postulate of legal and religious uniformity, freedom of choice to unite. This freedom is attested by the fact of voluntary Polonization without any administrative constraint. What is more, there is no proof that the union led to squander the opportunities to regain the territories of Prussia and Silesia. It was rather a result of leaving the dealing with the fiefs and (de facto) the choice of allies (through marriage) to the elective rulers as well as of the lack of active policy and, finally, the disinterest in Western Europe, increasing

36 Henryk Wisner, *Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*, op.cit., p. 610.

37 Sulima-Kamiński, *Rzeczpospolita wielu narodów*, pp. 54–55.

during the 17th century. It was not caused by the alleged lowering of the level of education and cultural stagnation, as constant wars and the rise of absolutism in Western Europe successfully discouraged the Polish and Lithuanian nobility from maintaining relations with it.

3.3.3. *The Influence of the Union on the Rise of Magnates' Power*

A charge that “the conclusion of the union entailed the future victory of the magnates in internal affairs and foreign policy”³⁸ is based on the fact that most of magnates' great estates developed beyond indigenously Polish lands. Yet, it does not prove that the consolidation of magnates' oligarchy and the weakening of the democratic system of government as well as the lowering of the position of elective kings of the Commonwealth in the 17th century were direct implications of the Crown's union with the Grand Duchy.

3.3.4. *Legal and Constitutional Consequences of the Polish-Lithuanian Union*

Making the status of the nobility equal is considered to be the principal objective of the union – preserving differences in this sphere would shatter any point of the relationship. Crucial with respect to the Commonwealth's fate and Polish-Lithuanian relations was the fact that the real union was at the same time a parliamentary one, which means that it joined the political entities of which it consisted, not only in the matter of common interest (economic, military, diplomatic etc.) but also by means of institutions of estate representation and shared responsibility for undertaken decisions. This solution unavoidably led to higher level of political activity of the nobility and paved the way for a civic society to arise (of course, on the scale of early modern Europe, not of modern parliamentary democracies).

Along with establishing the common Sejm, a way to all sorts of improvements of the system of nobles' democracy was opened. At any rate, the dynasty no longer had to “fasten together” both parts of the state – it was rather representatives of the nobility in the Chamber of Deputies, who symbolized the one and indivisible Commonwealth [...]. Now one nation of the nobles' republic [sic!], *una et eadem nobilitas*, faced a completely new challenge: being in control of constitutional organs, it had to take care of political equality of the estates, that is – the estate of the higher rank. It also had to replace a principle (characteristic for the Jagiellonian period) of renewing and claiming of new privileges through a system of basic rights, which needed to be reaffirmed by an oath of each monarch ascending to the throne. These rights were to determine the future functioning of the political system. Indeed, in this way a constitutional outline in the form of a “cumulative constitution” was achieved.³⁹

38 Kazimierz Lepszy, in: *Historia Polski*, vol. 1, part 2, Warsaw, 1957, p. 254.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 190.

Optimism of the Polish historians on the Crown and Lithuania's equal treatment of each other is not shared by their Lithuanian colleagues, who argue that the Lithuanians have a lot more to complain about in regard to the union.⁴⁰ Privileges granted to both "nations" have been confirmed, which in this case also meant the confirmation of land endowments for Lithuanian magnates and prevented (or at least postponed) execution of property from being carried out. In the federative state the superior role was played by Poland (the Crown of Polish Kingdom), while Lithuania was assigned a secondary status in the Act of Union. For example, the joint election was to take place in Poland, the coronation in Cracow, whereas the separate ceremony of approving the new monarch (known as the elevation of the Grand Duke) was abolished. The absence of representatives of one of the nations was not supposed to prevent the election from happening, the legal and monetary unification was aimed at adapting Lithuanian standards to Polish norms, and the rights of the nobility and the system of nomination for offices were to be common for both states, which opened the door for Polish colonization of the Grand Duchy.

At the moment of establishing the Commonwealth, the unified principles of co-existence had not been specified, which made it possible to interpret the principles of the union differently in many important cases. Lithuanian nobility and magnates were not satisfied with the Act of Union, because of the limiting of independence of the Grand Duchy and due to the loss of the Kiev region, Podlasie, and Volhynia.

The Union of Lublin was by no means the end of the process of arranging the principles of coexistence between the two signatories; experiences of 1569–1588 proved the durable nature of the Lithuanian sense of separateness and showed that the Lithuanian elites did not cease in their attempts to reinterpret the Act of Union as well as to regain from the Crown the southeastern immensely fertile lands, without which the Grand Duchy lost its food security. In the 17th to the 18th centuries, there was a lasting tendency to enhance the Grand Duchy's autonomy in respect to the Crown and to underline differences in the fields of law and customs.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the act *Coequatio iurium* passed by the Sejm in 1697 is a proof that the process of integration of the two states could not be stopped; it concerned a complete unification of Polish and Lithuanian nobility in their rights, adapting Lithuanian offices to the Crown standards and establishing Polish language as a chancellery language also in Lithuania, where to that point Ruthenian was officially used in the borough acts.⁴²

40 Zigmantas Kiaupa, Juratė Kiaupienė, Albinas Kuncevičius, *The History of Lithuania before 1795*, Vilnius, 2000, p. 243.

41 Cf. Mathias Niendorf, *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie. Studia nad kształtowaniem się narodu u progu epoki nowożytnej (1569–1795)*, trans. M. Grzywacz, Poznań, 2011, pp. 49–70.

42 *Confirmatio generalis iurium*, in: VL, vol. VI, p. 9–11, f. 6–10. Cf. Jerzy Malec, *Szkice z dziejów federalizmu i myśli federalistycznej w czasach nowożytnych*, Cracow, 1999, pp. 37–50; Gintautas Sliesoriūnas, "Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaistystės ir Lenkijos

During the reign of the last king of the Commonwealth, Stanisław August Poniatowski, a full integration of both parts of the federative state was in the works (see Chapter Two, 2.2.2.). However, neither the Government Act (known as the Constitution of May 3, 1791)⁴³ nor the *Reciprocal Guarantee of Both Nations* (published a year later) mentions the Lithuania's relationship with the Crown.⁴⁴ Lithuania was promised a permanent role in filling posts in newly created institutions. A commission, whose responsibility was to demarcate territories of the Crown and Lithuania, was also planned.⁴⁵ Yet, these last formal arrangements of the relationship between the two states did not have a chance to be tested in practice.

4. Territory

4.1. Territory of the State

The area of the Commonwealth after the Truce of Yam-Zapolsky (Polish: *Jam Zapolski*) in 1582 is estimated at ca. 867.000 square kilometres (815.000 sq km without the territory of Livonia). The area of the Polish Crown was 570.000 square kilometres, including 312.800 square kilometres of the part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania incorporated to the Crown after the Union of Lublin (Kiev Voivodeship – 200.000 sq km; Bratslav Voivodeship– 59.500 sq km; Volhynian Voivodeship – 40.800 sq km; Podlaskie Voivodeship – 12.500 sq km). The Grand Duchy of Lithuania, cut down by over a half, extended over the area of 297.000 sq km. In the first half of the 17th century the Polish-Lithuanian state increased its territory at the expense of the Russian Tsardom to 990.000 square kilometres in 1637, encompassing the area from Pärnu and Dorpat in the north to Kolomyia and Kamianets-Podilskyi (Polish: *Kamieniec Podolski*) in the south; and from Lębork and Żywiec in the west to the outskirts of Vyazma and the Dnieper Rapids.

4.2. Administrative and Judicial Divisions

The most important thing for the functioning of public life in the Commonwealth was the division into districts of local assemblies known as sejmiks (sometimes translated as *dietines*), from which their deputies to Sejm (The Parliament) were

Karaly stėsteisinų sulyginimo – Coaequatio iurium – įstatymo priėminas 1697 metais,” in: *Lietuvos valstybė XII–XVIII a.*, ed. Zigmantas Kiaupa, Arturas Mickievičius, Jolita Sarcevičienė, Vilnius, 1997, pp. 325–338.

43 *Ustawa Rządowa 5(!) V 1791*, in: *Konstytucje sejmu pod zwiazkiem konfederacji w Warszawie 1788–1792* (tzw. *Sejmu Czteroletniego*), VL, vol. IX, pp. 220–225.

44 *Zaręczenie wzajemne obojga narodów 22 X 1791*, in: *Konstytucje sejmu pod zwiazkiem konfederacji w Warszawie 1788–1792*, VL, vol. IX, pp. 316–317.

45 *Rozgraniczenie normalne w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim, 3 XII 1791*, in: *Konstytucje sejmu pod zwiazkiem konfederacji w Warszawie 1788–1792*, VL, vol. IX, pp. 358–359.

elected. There were 44 Crown sejmiks (45 with Chernigov [Czernihów] sejmik): in Little Poland – 16 (17 with Chernigov one), in Great Poland – 20, in Prussia – 8. There were 24 Lithuanian sejmiks (including the ones of Smolensk and Starodub) and one of Livonia. The sejmik districts played a double role; of constituencies and judicial districts (land courts).

4.2.1. *The Crown*

The Crown of the Kingdom of Poland was divided into 26 administrative units: *voivodeships*, also known as palatinates, and lands of status equal to voivodeships (in Great Poland there were the lands of: Dobrzyń, Wieluń, Gostyń, Sochaczew and Ciechanów; in Little Poland there were the lands of: Halych and Chełm). The voivodeships, in turn, were divided into districts (Polish: *powiat*; Latin: *districtus*) and lands (Polish: *ziemia*) equal in status to districts (for instance, the Drohiczyn Land). In regard to Warmia (historical: Ermland) and Prussia, a Polish word *kraj* (German: *Land*) was in use. In 1569 Podlaskie Voivodeship as well as three Ruthenian ones (Kiev, Braclaw and Volhynian voivodeships) were added to the Sejm province of Little Poland, which were joined by the Chernigov one in 1635. Conservatism of the nobility was conducive to the permanence of administrative divisions; and it was only in 1768 when a new voivodeship was created – Gniezno Voivodeship – cut off from Kalisz Voivodeship.

4.2.2. *Great Poland and Little Poland*

In the case of nobility, the sense of unity of two main Crown provinces with the rest of the Crown was very strong already in the 16th century. Although the tradition of regional distinctiveness continued until the end of the Commonwealth, its remnants persisted only in the parliamentary procedures (the choosing of the Sejm marshal interchangeably from Great Poland and Little Poland) and in the judiciary (the Crown Tribunal was located in Piotrków for the inhabitants of Great Poland and in Lublin for the inhabitants of Little Poland). Also in the political practice until the mid-17th century, the offices of land senators were reserved for the magnates of the region in question.

4.2.3. *Masovia*

In Masovia, the process of systemic and legal assimilation to the Crown models had already begun before the incorporation (in 1526) and took over two hundred years, that is to say, until the end of the 17th century, when the Masovian general sejmik ceased to function. Masovian lands (of Rawa, Sochaczew, Płock and Zawkrze) were with the passing of time incorporated into the Crown, as Masovian dukes were dying out, from the 1470s until 1526. Such a course of incorporation resulted in the lack of common institutions and laws in Masovia: voivodeships of the province

(Rawa, Płock and Masovian voivodeships) had separate offices and representatives, and there were no bonds supporting the regional community

The majority of Masovian noblemen were interested in the unification of law and fuller integration with the rest of the Crown. Only a separate public law judiciary system was kept, with differences in legal procedure and criminal law in the form of 46 articles (the so-called Masovian exemptions), confirmed by the parliamentary constitution of 1576, *Customs of Masovian Voivodeship*. In the 17th century the tradition of Masovian unique status was manifested in public life by the fact of adhering to the 1525 anti-dissident edict. Until the early 18th century (as a relic of the Sejm of the Masovian Duchy prior to 1530) there had also been a general sejmik in Warsaw gathering noblemen from four voivodeships (Masovian, Płock, Rawa and Podlaskie voivodeships). The full unification of Masovia was achieved after the king and his court had finally moved to Warsaw.

4.2.4. *Rus (Ruthenia)*

The genesis of the name *Rus* (Slavic for Ruthenian) remains a mystery. Neither its etymology nor its original meaning has been properly established. It was used in different historical periods to denote the people, culture, confession and territory. In early modern times, the name *Rus* was used to indicate both the country and the people (similarly to Poland and Lithuania). In terms of denomination, *Rus* designated the members of Eastern Churches. In geographical and administrative understandings of the term, *Rus* sometimes meant the Ruthenian Voivodeship, and sometimes the Volhynian, Braclaw, Chernihów and Kiev voivodeships taken together. The awareness that Kiev, the largest town in the territories incorporated on the strength of the Union of Lublin, had once been the capital city of the Principality of Kiev strengthened (especially after the Union of Brest) the sense of the region's separateness among parts of the society: the Orthodox clergy, Cossack elders (*starshyna*), and some magnates. The extent and persistence of Ruthenian historical tradition are debatable: they have been emphasized by Ukrainian historians (Natalia Jakowenko) and sceptically assessed by Polish researchers (Andrzej Lipski). Further clarification of this issue requires new research methods in the fields of history, anthropology, and linguistics.

The legal and constitutional unification of Red Ruthenia – consisting of the Ruthenian (lands of: Sanok, Przemyśl, Lviv, and Halych) and Belz voivodeships, as well as the Land of Chełm, which had been incorporated to the Polish Kingdom at the earliest stage – had already taken place in the 15th century. The tradition of distinctiveness of the Red Ruthenian lands was preserved only in onomastics (Ruthenia [Rus], Ruthenian [Rus'] lands, and Ruthenian [Rus'] nobility). The area covered by the general sejmik at Vishnya (Polish: *Wisznia*) was limited to the part of Ruthenian voivodeship; Chełm, Belz and Podolian sejmiks did not send their representatives there.

The term *Belarus* (*White Rus* or *White Ruthenia*) appeared in sources in the 14th century. But it was not until the early 17th century that it became established

as the name of a part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, encompassing the eastern region of today's Belarus – from the Dvina in the north to the Pripet in the south and the upper Dnieper in the east, that is, the area of Minsk, Połock, Witebsk, Mścisław, and Smolensk voivodeships, with the towns of Polotsk, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Gomel, and Smolensk.

Black Rus (Black Ruthenia), which included Brześć Litewski, Troki, and Novahrudak (Polish: *Nowogródek*) voivodeships, and bordered with Belarus in the south and southwest, lost its independent status in the 18th century. According to Szymon Starowolski, the name of *Black Rus* (together with names such as: Asian Sarmatia, Scythia) was occasionally used to designate Muscovy.

4.3. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania

The territorial development of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania did not end until the 1520s. At its heart lay historical Lithuania, *Aukštaitija*, meaning “Highlands,” that straddled the territory between Vilnius and today's Lithuanian-Belarusian borderland. Beyond Troki Voivodeship there laid Samogitia (Lithuanian: *Žemaitija*, literally “Lowlands”), which was also of Lithuanian ethnicity, but which retained a special status within the structure of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after the Union of Lublin as the Duchy of Samogitia (since 1492). Another region of the Grand Duchy, defined by characteristics of the natural environment (forests and swamps) rather than by its historical tradition, was Polesie. The territory of the so-called Lithuania Minor (Polish: *Litwa Mniejsza* or *Mala Litwa*, Lithuanian: *Mažoji Lietuva*), extending northwards from the Neman and the Dvina – originally inhabited by the descendants of Yotvingians (*Jaćwingowie*), and Skalvians (*Skalwianie*), and then populated by emigrants from Lithuania proper (*Aukštaitija*) and Samogitia – after the secularization of the Teutonic Order (1525) remained within the borders of Ducal Prussia, although had a separate administration.

The Ruthenian lands of the Grand Duchy (White and Black Rus [Ruthenia]) – incorporated into the ancestral estates of Lithuanian dukes by various means and at different points – were made part of hereditary land estates (Ruthenian *votchina* or *otchina*) of hospodars. They included territories of Novahrudak, Grodno, Brest, Braslaw, Slonim, Minsk, Babruysk, Mazyr, Mogilev, Rahachow, Gomel, Pinsk, and Kletsk. In 1566 a part of Livonia, known as the Duchy of Livonia (Polish: *Księstwo Inflanckie* or *Księstwo Zadźwińskie*), was incorporated into the Grand Duchy, and was divided into four castellanies (Polish: *kasztelania*) (of Riga, Turaida [Treiden], of Cēsis [German: *Wenden*, Polish: *Kieś*] and of Dyneburg [currently: Daugavpils]). As a result of the 1569 Union of Lublin, Livonia was recognized as Polish-Lithuanian joint domain.

The administrative management of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was thoroughly modernized between 1564 and 1566. As a result of a reform from above, modelled on the Polish solutions, new divisions were created and in 1565 districts were introduced as administrative units with three functions: as the units of noble self-government in its elective and judicial aspects and for the purpose of military

conscription. Owing to this, the result was much better than in the Crown: a uniform and clear administrative system, adapted to new social, political and legal needs.

Before the union, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had been divided into 12 voivodeships (Wilno, Troki, Novahrudak, Brześć Litewski, Podlaskie, Mińsk, Mścislaw, Witebsk, Połock, Kiev, Volhynian, and Braclaw voivodeships); a separate territorial unit was the Duchy of Samogitia (Polish: *Księstwo Żmudzkie*) also known as the Samogitian Starostwo, treated as the thirteenth voivodeship.

Lithuanian voivodeships (except for Mścislaw and Połock ones) were divided into districts, which were called *lands* or *countries*: for example, Nowogródek and Wilno (Vilnius) lands, Brest-Litovsk (Polish: *kraj brzeski*) and Rečyca (Polish: *kraj rzczycki*) countries. The detachment in the spring of 1569 from the Grand Duchy of the southern (the Kiev, Bratslav, and Volhynian regions) and western territories (Podlasie) led to the reduction of the number of voivodeships to nine.

The status of Smolensk Voivodeship was peculiar – it was created as early as 1508, but several years later it was severed from Lithuania, and until 1611 did not, in fact, belong to it. Thus, the reforms of 1564–1566 did not affect its territory. The status of lands conquered during the Moscow Wars waged by Kings Stephen Bathory and Sigismund III Vasa was unclear for several decades. In 1613 Smolensk Voivodeship was officially incorporated to the Grand Duchy. In 1625 a separate District of Starodub with its own sejmik was created, and thereby the total number of sejmik districts was increased to 24.

The Sejm of 1620 put all the regained territories under the personal management of Prince Wladislaus Vasa. This meant the introduction of a double administrative system: self-government (like in the rest of the Commonwealth) and by appointments of the prince as the administrator of the province, represented by a lord lieutenant and his deputy (and, at the same time, the governor of the Smolensk Voivodeship, called *voivode* [Polish: *wojewoda*]); captains in command of the main castles of the voivodeship, namely at: Smolensk, Bila (Polish: *Biała*), Dorogobuzh (Polish: *Dorohobuż*), Roslavl (Polish: *Roslavl*), Serpeysk (Polish: *Sierpiejsk*), Starodub, Nevel (Polish: *Newel*) and Sebez (Polish: *Siebież*), were subordinated to him. This administrative structure was probably in force until 1629.

4.3.1. *Judicial Provinces*

In the 1580s, after the Crown Tribunal (1578) and the Lithuanian Tribunal (1581) were created, a division into three judicial provinces was established. The territory of jurisdiction of the Crown Tribunal with the seat in Piotrków included: Great Poland (Brześć Kujawski, Inowrocław, Kalisz, Łęczyca, Poznań, Sieradz voivodeships and lands of: Dobrzyń and Wieluń), Masovia (Masovian, Płock, Rawa voivodeships) and Royal Prussia (Chełmno, Malbork, Pomeranian voivodeships and Warmia). The territory of jurisdiction of the Crown Tribunal with the seat in Lublin included: Little Poland (Cracow, Lublin, Sandomierz), Rus (Bełz, Braclaw, Chernihów, Kiev, Podole, Rus, Volhynian voivodeships) and Podlasie.

The third judicial province was the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a whole with the Tribunal located, in turn, in Vilnius, Novahrudak and Minsk. Little Poland, Great Poland and Lithuania were Sejm provinces during its sessions as well as during royal elections.

Administrative units of the lowest grade in the whole Commonwealth were known as *starostwa grodowe* (sing. *starostwo grodowe*): in the Prussian voivodeships one in each voivodeship, and in other voivodeships one in each district. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania it was the voivode, who *ex officio* acted as starosta, while in the Crown neither a voivode nor a castellan could hold the office of starosta at the same time. Such administrative and judicial divisions lasted until the last decade of the Commonwealth's existence (Chapter 7.1).

4.4. Ukraine

Ukraine, which basically means “borderland” (Ruthenian: *ugranitche*), was the name of a southeastern part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania incorporated in 1569 into the Crown, straddling both banks of the middle Dnieper and the Bug Estuary. There are reasons to believe that for the very first time the term was used in reference to the Commonwealth frontiers by Kievan Bishop Józef Wereszczyński in his *Przestroga dla Polski (A Word of Caution to Poland, 1589)*.

The extent of Ukrainian territory described in Polish literature differs significantly from that presented in Ukrainian historiography. N. Jakowenko uses the term Ukraine-Rus with reference to the whole territory of historical Rus in 1569–1648, with the division into western Ukrainian lands (Ruthenian, Bełz, and Podole voivodeships) and central Ukraine (Kiev, Braclaw, Volhynian and Czernihów voivodeships).⁴⁶ This is a debatable approach, considering cultural (degree of linguistic Polonization, confession) and ethnic (inflow of Polish settlers from the territories of the Crown) differences between the Ruthenian lands in the 16th–18th centuries, as well as the political context of defining the lands of the whole Rus (all Rus or all Ruthenia) in the official titles of Moscow patriarchs (1589) and rulers of Muscovy, indicating their expansionist plans towards the part of Rus pertaining to the Commonwealth.

Older Polish historiography (Aleksander Jabłonowski) was dominated by the thesis, according to which Ukraine – in the sense of a borderland – did not even include the whole territory of Kiev and Braclaw voivodeships (let alone Czernihów Voivodeship), but only their steppe areas, as opposed to Polesie (from a Slavic root *les* meaning “forest” with a prefix *po* – “beyond”). It was emphasized that the name *Ukraine* had never become official, like Volhynia (between the upper Bug and the Sluch, up to the Pripet in the north) and Podolia (between the middle Dniester and the Southern Bug) – the former Ruthenian principalities, in the 14th century (1366)

46 Natalia Jakowenko, *Historia Ukrainy od czasów najdawniejszych do końca XVIII wieku*, trans. O. Hnatiuk and K. Kotyńska, Lublin, 2000, chap. 4, pp. 153–211.

annexed partly by Lithuania, partly by the Crown, and after the Union of Lublin (1569) incorporated into the Polish Crown.

At present, the name *Ukraine* is used most frequently to describe those Ruthenian voivodeships of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which in 1569 were incorporated into the Crown. These territories melted into stretches of the Wild Fields (Polish: *Dzikie Pola*) and Zaporizhia, which remained under no administration. Contrary to its name (Latin: *campi deserti, sive loca inhabitata*), the Wild Fields of Ukraine were neither treeless nor similar to the waterless Nogai steppes; they were fertile and well-watered lands.

At the time of the Khmelnytsky Uprising the area of Ukraine was estimated to cover at least 2.8 thousand square miles. Its capital city Kiev, together with the lands on the left bank of the Dnieper, was conquered by the Russian Tsardom (1667). The rest was incorporated to the Russian Empire in the span of the 18th century. From that time on, the name *Ukraine* encompassed all Ruthenian lands located south of the Pripet.

4.5. Provinces and Fiefs of the Baltic Region

In recent German historiography (Almut Bues, Erwin Oberländer) a lot of emphasis is placed on similarities in the evolution of ties with the Commonwealth of all Baltic provinces and fiefs: Royal and Ducal Prussia, Courland and Livonia. Both in Prussia and Livonia integrative tendencies were brought about by wars – in Prussia after the Thirteen-Years' War (1454–1466) and Polish-Teutonic one (1519–1521); in Livonia as a result of the Lithuanian-Muscovite Wars then the Seven-Years' War (1563–1570) and the Livonian War (1577–1582).

In both cases, the initiative to establish closer ties with the Commonwealth was presented mainly by the knights (in the Prussian case also by urban elites), and Polish kings had to recognize their traditional laws and country's privileges, transform fief estates into allodial lands, and grant to the local nobility the privileges similar to the ones of the Polish nobility. According to unanimous opinion of Polish and German historians, it was exactly this privileged status of the noble estate that prompted the nobility inhabiting the Commonwealth's peripheries to recognize the authority of its rulers.

4.5.1. Royal Prussia

Casimir IV Jagiellon clearly and formally incorporated Royal Prussia into the Crown, but his decision was not fully implemented, and in 1466–1526 Royal Prussia constituted a separate political entity (German: *Land* 'land, country, estate') within the Crown of the Polish Kingdom. In the Prussian citizens' interpretation the Land was united with the Crown only by the person of the king, but remained separate because of its legal and political system. Initially, Prussian *ius indigenatus* applied also to the nobility of Duchy of Prussia, but from the end of the 16th century on, mutual bonds began to loosen after the sovereignty of Brandenburg Hohenzollerns

in Ducal Prussia stabilized, and in the 17th century there were only residual traces of the bygone ties. After the last homage paid by Frederick William Hohenzollern to King Jan II Casimir Vasa (1641) and the treaty of Wehlau-Bromberg (1657) Ducal Prussia became a *de facto* sovereign state. The Process of Prussian emancipation was completed in the first years of the 18th century.

The integration of Royal Prussia into the Crown advanced in the times of the last Jagiellons by virtue of the emergence of the voivodship sejmiks (1526) and the monetary union (1528–1531). This course of development continued until the parliamentary union at the Sejm of 1569 in Lublin, when the Royal Prussian Diet (Sejm) was turned into a General Prussian Sejmik, representatives of lands became deputies to the Sejm, and senators took their places in the Senate of the Commonwealth. After 1570, the central authorities of the Commonwealth – the king and the Sejm – began interfering with the internal administrative structures of Royal Prussia. A new state hierarchy emerged, and the inflow of non-indigenous people to the local land offices increased; the former domain of the Teutonic Order was transformed during the Reformation into a royal demesne that included 50 % of the land area – the highest percentage in the whole state. In this area it was the king who appointed officials (regardless of the stance of the Prussian estates), had legal jurisdiction, and freely disposed of its revenues.

There were, however, some forms of local separatism: for example, in the case of taxes (until 1581) imposed by the General Sejmik and controlled by the Prussian treasurer, *ius indigenatus* of the province, which regulated the distribution of offices as well as secular and ecclesiastical benefices, and the judiciary system (with a land court and borough jurisdiction in the hands of a voivode instead of a starosta). Although in 1585 the Prussian nobility recognized the Crown Tribunal as their own appellate instance, some legal and juridical distinctions would remain until the Partitions. However, much more important for the Prussian sense of uniqueness was its local social structure (different from that of the Crown), different relationship between the townsmen and the nobility, and the fact that German was the principal language as well as the free practice of Lutheran faith, guaranteed in the 1560s by the privileges (later confirmed by Stephen Bathory) granted by Sigismund II Augustus for the Prussian cities. In the 1590s Sigismund III Vasa tried to undermine these freedoms and attempted to regain churches, taken over by the Lutherans during the Reformation, for the Catholic Church caused great agitation among Prussians and Polish and Lithuanian Protestants supporting their cause.

In the first half of the 17th century the process of blurring of *ius indigenatus* as the result of the inflow of the nobility from other provinces occurred in Royal Prussia (as well as in Livonia). In the second half of the century the situation remained unchanged, except for the fact of excluding the smaller towns from representation in the lower chamber of the Prussian Sejmik in 1662. Despite progressing assimilation and encroachments of King Augustus II the Strong (August II Mocny) on the political system of Gdańsk (German: *Danzig*) in 1717, Royal Prussia maintained many of its own institutions and political differences. After 1764 there was a clash

of the unification tendencies with the resistance of the province and the desire to renew its autonomy based on Protestantism, legal privileges, and German language.

4.5.2. Warmia (*Ermland*)

Warmia, as a bishop's dominion (similarly to the ecclesiastical principalities of the German Reich), was an administrative and economic unit within the Teutonic state, and then Royal Prussia. After the Second Peace of Thorn (1466), it became a part of the Polish Crown, functioning within the territory of Royal Prussia as a separate, "small land" (Polish: *kraik* – diminutive from *kraj*) with its own public and private law, geographical name, and coat of arms, as well as with the (unexercised) right to mint its own coin. What emphasized the separateness of Warmia within the Prussian lands, were some attempts made in the 17th century to distinguish the *ius indigenatus* of Warmia and Prussia.

From 1513 on, the bishops of Warmia presided over the estates in the name of the king, and then over the (predominantly Lutheran) general Prussian sejmik, with the title of "bishops and first councillors of our Prussian lands" (*Episcopi et primarii consilarii terrarum nostrarum Prussiae*). After the annexation of Royal Prussia into the Republic of Both Nations in the act of the Union of Lublin (1569), the Bishop of Warmia was introduced into the senate with the fifth rank among the ecclesiastical senators.

Bishops, together with the Warmia Chapter, taking care to fulfil the obligations resulting from the fact of Warmia's affiliation to the Polish Crown, consequently acted to counter the full unification with Prussia. They successfully struggled to turn Warmia into a Catholic enclave, with social and ownership structure unchanged since the Middle Ages and such elements of political system, which ensured a privileged position for the Prince-Bishopric of Warmia. Despite the Polonization of both bishops and the chapter, until 1775 the "little land" perpetuated its medieval legal, social, and economic form, being a peculiar relic of a bygone age amidst the Prussian lands around it. The Warmia sejmik functioned, although its significance diminished greatly after 1655, when Warmia became a fief of the electoral prince of Brandenburg on behalf of Sweden.

4.5.3. Fief Territories on the Baltic Sea

The fief territories of the Commonwealth on the Baltic shores were: Ducal Prussia (32.000 sq km in 1525), Courland and Semigallia (26.831 sq km), and Livonia in the Gulf of Riga, whose political status and relations with the Commonwealth were continuously changing from the 16th to the 18th century.

Ducal Prussia was established when the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights secularized the State of Teutonic Order and became a vassal of the Crown of Poland by signing a Treaty of Cracow and paying homage to King Sigismund I the Old in 1525. The feudal status of Ducal Prussia was confirmed by public homage paid by the Duke in Prussia Albrecht Frederick Hohenzollern at the Sejm of 1569 in Lublin,

which also made the succession of the Brandenburg line of the Hohenzollern dynasty possible. During the next two centuries in Ducal Prussia a decentralization tendency prevailed as the result of inconsistent policy pursued by Kings Stephen Bathory and Sigismund III Vasa who made it possible for the representatives of the Brandenburg Hohenzollerns to takeover power in the fief (1605, 1611, 1618) – first as regents in the name of incapacitated Duke Albrecht Frederick, and then independently.

From 1618 on, Ducal Prussia under the rule of the elector of Brandenburg John Sigismund Hohenzollern and his successors was united with Brandenburg by a personal union, and the ruling electors gradually reduced the freedoms and privileges of the Prussian nobility, who repeatedly appealed to the king and the Commonwealth, but to no avail. Under Elector Frederick William Hohenzollern called the Great, who exploited the difficult situation of the Polish-Lithuanian state during the Second Northern War (1655–1660), Ducal Prussia gained recognition of its sovereignty in the Treaty of Wehlau-Bromberg (Bydgoszcz) in 1657, and the resistance of the estates against severing the ties with the Commonwealth was suppressed. The leader of urban opposition Heinrich Roth was sentenced to life imprisonment (1662), the leader of the nobility Christian Ludwig von Kalckstein (Krystian Kalkstein-Stoliński) – was put to death (1672).

The Duchy of Courland became a fief of the Polish Kingdom in 1561, which was confirmed by the Union Sejm in Lublin in 1569. However, the act of incorporation (*Incorporatio ducatus Curlandiae et Semigalliae cum Regno Poloniae*) of August 3rd, 1569 referred only to Poland, without any mention of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – which would lead to negative consequences in the future. In the span of two hundred years of its existence Courland was a fief of the Commonwealth, which only for circa 150 years had any real influence in the country.

The Duchy of Courland was, in fact, a German nobles' republic, with a purely formal authority of the monarch. Only the prince, nobility, and a small part of burghers were of German origin; the native population, Latvians, did not have any political rights. The area of Courland was about one third smaller than today's Belgium: ca. 21.000 sq km (without the abbey of Pilten [Polish: *Piltyń*] and starostwo of Grobin pledged to Prussians). The northern border along the Dvina River and fully open border with Lithuania did not offer any protection and Courland (like Livonia) was a constant arena of wars for the *dominium maris Baltici* and penetrations of troops of the Commonwealth, Sweden, and Muscovy.

A political system, based on the dualism of influences of the prince and the nobility, led in the early 17th century to sharp conflicts between Prince Wilhelm Kettler, who strived for absolutism, and the noble opposition; the conflicts ended with a victory of the estates thanks to the king's interference (*Formula regiminis*, 1617). There was an increased immigration of the nobility from Courland and Livonia to the Commonwealth in search of career, especially in the foreign *autorament* (Western style troops), established under King Wladislaus IV Vasa (1635).

In the 1670s the Kettler dynasty's position rose under the reign of Prince Jacob (1642–1680), who wanted to modernize the system of rule and economy of the

country, adopted a mercantile, or even colonial policy (acquisitions in Gambia in Africa and in Tobago in the Archipelago of Antilles in Central America) and pursued an independent foreign policy, maintaining neutrality during the Polish-Swedish-Russian conflict. Personal homages paid by the Courland princes to the rulers of the Commonwealth at general Sejm sessions (1649, 1670, 1676) ceased. The Commonwealth, in turn, prevented the Courland army from being modernized, and in 1649 the Catholic confession was made equal to the Evangelical-Augsburg one. But there were no administrative changes, and the regional assembly (German: *Landesrat*) was not incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian parliamentary system. In 1658–1660 Courland was temporarily occupied by Sweden. Attempts to acquire it as a sovereign territorial domain first by King Jan III Sobieski, and then by the Wettins, turned out fruitless.

Latin name *Livonia* (Polish: *Inflanty*; German: *Livland*) was not coined until the early modern period when it began to denote (as distinct from its usage in the Middle Ages) not all the territories of today's Latvia and Estonia, but – after the creation the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia in 1561 – only the territories north of the Dvina (and not all of them). Outside their borders lay Northern Estonia, which, during the collapse of the medieval so-called Livonian Confederation, found itself under Swedish influence. The name *Livonia* – in its narrower sense – was employed to designate only the territories lost by the Commonwealth in the 1620s, without Courland and without Polish Livonia with Dyneburg (as the lands on the right bank of the Dvina were called), which remained within the Polish-Lithuanian State until the First Partition of the Commonwealth in 1772.

Although at the Sejm of Lublin in 1569 the decision that Livonia should be the common fief of the two federative states of the Commonwealth (and not a separate fief of Lithuania or the Crown) was made, no concrete legal norms were established. Thus, in practice, the state of parliamentary union with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of 1566 remained, with a separate legal judiciary system, *ius indigenatus* and the office of administrator.

Under King Stephen Bathory (1582) a new legal and political system was introduced, based on the Prussian one (the territorial sejmik with representatives of towns, its own judicial law, land courts, borough courts in the hands of presidents – counterparts of voivodes), also the office of administrator was kept and regional judicial assemblies as appellate tribunals. From the turn of the 16th century on, Livonia became the arena of expansion of Polish and Lithuanian magnates who were seizing former Teutonic lands, and of military colonization, too.

During the reign of King Sigismund III Vasa the so-called *ordinances* – the king's decrees – were implemented, making this province similar to the rest of the Commonwealth. *The Regulation of the Livonian Land* of 1589 regulated the principles of Polish-Lithuanian equality of rights in Livonia, establishing competencies of ministers of both nations and distribution of vacancies between the people from the Crown, Lithuania and Livonia. The ordinances of 1598, 1607 and 1613 increased the integration tendency, gave the Livonian sejmik at Wenden the possibility to participate in the Sejm of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, introduced the ad-

ministrative division into voivodeships with the right of voivodes and castellans to sit in the Senate, recommended the codification of laws and introduction of allodial (hereditary through both male and female lines) tenure of noble estates.

By virtue of the 1598 administrative division into three voivodeships and 26 districts, the Livonian general sejmik was tied to the Polish-Lithuanian system of sejmiks, and Livonian representatives were introduced into the Senate. In 1607 the Livonian nobility was granted the political and legal status, which made them formally equal to Polish nobility. Priority given to the Catholic confession, manifesting itself, among other things, in the establishment of Bishopric of Wenden, was also a sign of the unification tendencies with the Polish-Lithuanian state. When appointing land offices, the rule of *ius indigenatus* was not kept; the king used his prerogatives to freely appoint officials to the posts of judges and to finally settle disputes.

Thus, in practice, the legal unification did not succeed. It also proved impossible to seize the islands in the Baltic Sea, and the conflict with Sweden over Estonia led to the loss (from 1621 on) of a large part of Livonia, up to the Dvina, which was confirmed by the Truce of Altmark (1629) and finally sanctioned by the Treaty of Oliva (1660). The patch of Livonia that remained with the Commonwealth (ca. 13.000 sq km) was granted a constitution under which the Polish political system and Lithuanian laws (the Third Statute of 1588) were adapted. Legal differences resulted from Polish-Lithuanian cooperation within the administration of the province (taxes were, in turn, paid to the Crown and Lithuanian treasures, and all acts were stamped with two seals). The Crown's Livonia became Livonian voivodeship and its tradition of separateness was reduced to the name of the *Duchy of Livonia*.

4.5.4. *Changes in the Relations of Provinces and Baltic Fiefs with the Commonwealth in 16th–17th Centuries*

The process of adaptation of the Baltic provinces and fiefs to the structure of the Commonwealth was, in general, concluded within the first fifty years, but no measures were taken to fully incorporate the region into the federative Polish-Lithuanian system.

In all the provinces and fiefs of the Baltic region there were from the end of the 16th to the end of the 18th century some common traits: the noble estate achieved the status similar to that of the Polish nobility, a replacement of ruling elites or reception of dominant culture of the Polish nobility also took place. After the union or fief treatises, the centre of power aimed at restructuring local administration, which was adapted to Polish models (except for fief duchies) and appointed by the king.

In all Baltic provinces (except for Livonia) during the first fifty years of their ties with the Commonwealth codifications of local laws based on the native, Polish and Roman laws were established, but the territorial law code (German: *Landesordnung*) was introduced only in Ducal Prussia. In all these provinces there were appellations from their local courts to courts of the Commonwealth – from the fief duchies to the royal court, from Royal Prussia and Livonia to the Crown and Lithuanian Tribunals.

In Royal Prussia and Livonia (but not in the fief duchies) the sejmik system was incorporated into the parliamentary Polish-Lithuanian system. All the provinces (except for Livonia) had the right to mint coins and (with the exception of customs houses) there were no limits on trade relations with other provinces of the Commonwealth, which contributed to the prosperity of the region.

During the relationship between the Baltic provinces and fiefs with the Polish-Lithuanian State there had been no serious changes in the social structure: burghers (with the exception of Royal Prussia) did not participate in government, peasants (with the exception of some small groups in the royal part of Prussia and in Warmia) did not have any rights; individual provinces and fiefs maintained their cultural autonomy well into the 18th century.

In 1701 Elector Frederick III Hohenzollern crowned himself in Königsberg (Polish: *Królewiec*) as the “King in Prussia,” Frederick I, and Ducal Prussia as Eastern Prussia was incorporated into the Kingdom of Prussia; Royal Prussia and Livonia were lost in 1772, and only the Duchy of Courland remained formally in fealty to the Commonwealth until 1795.

4.6. Border Territories

There were several entities in the borderlands of the Commonwealth with unregulated formal and legal status. These included the District of Pilten (Polish: *powiat piltyński*) at the frontiers between Courland and the Grand Duchy – a territory that genetically resembled Warmia. It was the land of the former Bishopric of Courland, which in the 16th century fell under Danish influence. The brother of King Frederick II of Denmark, Duke-Bishop Magnus, who was ruling the land, granted the majority of the bishops’ estates to his vassals, thus creating a separate group of the Pilten nobility. As a result, after the Commonwealth had bought the lands of former bishopric in 1585, and new political arrangements were introduced in 1617, the District of Pilten, whose nobility was formally subordinated (since 1611) to the king of the Commonwealth, became (according to Bogusław Dybaś) a *sui generis* nobles’ republic. In 1680 the District of Pilten was formally incorporated into Courland. At the same time, however, the Livonian Bishop Mikołaj Korwin Popławski, basing on the refusal of the Catholic Church to accept the secularization of the Bishopric of Courland, brought about in 1686 a parliamentary decision, which was to turn the district *de facto* into an endowment of the bishops. As late as 1693 King Jan III Sobieski tried (in vain) to take advantage of the uncertain status of District of Pilten and conflicts of its citizens with the Duke of Courland over the right to summon a sejmik as part of his Baltic policy.

Vassals of the Commonwealth from Lębork (German: *Lauenburg*) and Bytów (German: *Bütow*) – situated at the frontiers of the Polish Kingdom and Western Pomerania, inhabited partly by the people of Slavic origin – were Western Pomeranian dukes from the local dynasty known as the House of Griffins (German: *Greifen*, Polish: *Gryfici*). These lands have been leased out by King Sigismund II Augustus to the Griffins as security of a loan amounting to 100.000 thalers (1569). The vassalage

of the Western Pomeranian dukes to the Polish king was the main factor uniting the two states and periodically brought up by the Commonwealth's diplomacy. An initiative in this regard was taken by King Henri Valois before he actually came to Poland, when he summoned the Western Pomeranian princes to do homage on the occasion of his coronation in Cracow – which, in fact, never took place, because the Griffins did not send their envoys to attend the coronation Sejm. After Henri Valois' flight (1574), a possibility of formal recognition of vassalage to the interrex was considered, but the delay in issuing the documents confirming the renovation of the fief of the Western Pomeranian princes lasted during the reign of King Stephen Bathory until the Sejm of 1578, and during the reign of King Sigismund III Vasa until 1589.

Western Pomeranian dukes, similarly to Albrecht Hohenzollern and his successors, were denied (1576) the right to participate in royal elections, and at the same time conditions, under which they held Łębork and Bytów in hereditary lease, provided the Commonwealth's rulers with no legal basis for interfering in matters of Western Pomerania, except for a general commitment to "friendship, allegiance, and assistance." It was on this basis that King Stephen Bathory, during the so-called Danzig (Polish: *Gdańsk*) Rebellion (1576–1577), and King Sigismund III Vasa, during his struggle for the Swedish throne, made enlistments in the territory of the Duchy and called on the Pomeranian dukes to stand up against the enemies of the Commonwealth.

From the 1620s on, Sweden was posing a growing threat to Western Pomerania, wanting to pave the way for its intervention against the Habsburgs in the German Reich. Finally, Sweden annexed Western Pomerania after the death of the last ruler of the House of Griffins, Bogislaw XIV, in 1637. At the same time, the Commonwealth regained for several years Łębork and Bytów, while the Polish claims to the eastern part of Western Pomerania (Lands of Słupsk [German: *Stolp*], Sławno [German: *Schlawe*] and of Darłowo [German: *Rügenwalde*]) were rejected, and under the Peace of Westphalia the territory was divided between Sweden and Brandenburg. Under the Treaty of Wehlau-Bromberg of 1657 Łębork and Bytów, along with the districts (albeit formally they remained within the borders of the Commonwealth until the partitions), were given to the elector as fief, while Czaplinek (German: *Tempelburg*) and Drahim (currently: *Stare Drawsko*, German: *Draheim*) were put in pledge to Brandenburg.

At the southern border of the Crown, there was the Duchy of Opole and Racibórz, (German: *Herzogtum Oppeln und Ratibor*), formally not associated with the Commonwealth, although under the sovereignty of its rulers. The starting point for the talks initiated in 1638 over the question of transferring the duchy from the hands of the Habsburgs to those of the Polish Vasas was the non-payment by the emperor of the dowry of the first and second wife of King Sigismund III (Anne and Constance) and the wife of King Wladislaus IV (Cecylia Renata). Finally, the son of Wladislaus IV, Prince Sigismund Casimir (1640–1647), and, after his death, the king's brother, Jan Casimir, were given the duchy for 50 years (without the right

to appoint higher officials, bring in the army and impose taxes) as mortgage pawn against the loan granted to the emperor.

At the border with Silesia, the Duchy of Siewierz, bought from the Silesian dukes (1443), became an independent duchy under the bishops of Cracow and – had its own laws, customs, military force, and courts. The nobility of Siewierz did not attend Sejm sessions. The Polish king nominated and appointed the Bishop of Cracow, then the chapter elected him as Duke of Siewierz, and subsequently he was ceremoniously received by the estates. Legally, the situation was similar to that of the Bishopric of Warmia – which, however, had never had the status of duchy. It was not until 1790 that Siewierz was incorporated into the Crown.

4.7. The Danubian Principalities

Attempts of the elected kings of the Commonwealth to maintain the sovereignty over Moldavia and Wallachia, fiefs of the Jagiellons in 1387–1497, were unsuccessful. Affairs related to Muntenia (Polish: *Multany*) – the name was derived from Oltenia, the region on the Olt River, a tributary of the Danube River – were associated with various aspects of European policy.

The Danubian Principalities were an important economic area. Although their significance in transit trade diminished after they had been conquered by the Turks, in the 16th century livestock farming for the needs of the Turkish army and for export to Western European countries developed there greatly. Politically, Muntenia was a fief of Turkey, which treated the region as a base camp for incursions into the West. It was a peripheral country in relation to the main direction of Turkish expansion from the Hungarian lands against the empire. The Habsburgs, however, tried to strengthen their influences in Wallachia and in this way pose a threat to the Sublime Porte.

At the turn of the 16th century, relations with the Commonwealth formed a secondary political front, and for this reason the Sublime Porte did not oppose the Commonwealth's political influences in the Danubian Principalities during the reign of King Stephen Bathory and in the beginning of the reign of Sigismund III Vasa, as long as the Commonwealth's policy towards the region on the Danube River was directed by an enemy of the Habsburgs, Jan Zamoyski. Yet, the Ottoman Empire sharply reacted when it was provoked by magnates' attempts, associated with the king and the Habsburgs, to increase their influence in the territory of the principalities. Although hospodars and powerful nobles maintained the ties with the Commonwealth, wanting to be granted indygenat (naturalization of foreigners and recognition of nobility) and marrying into the Polish magnate families, the defeat at Cecora (1620) put an end to the Polish attempts at interventions in Moldavian affairs. Until the end of the 17th and in the first half of the 18th century rulers of the Commonwealth (Jan III Sobieski and Augustus II Wettin) tried occasionally to regain influences in the Danubian Principalities and to turn them into fiefs for themselves or for their children, but all these attempts proved futile.

5. Mastery of Space

There is no way to tell how the inhabitants of the early modern Commonwealth imagined their state at the time when people used to think with images. Probably, the names of *Respublica* and *Polonia* (less frequently also *Lithuania*) brought up before their eyes images of women seated on the thrones, clad in royal robes, with crowns on their heads and with royal insignia – but occasionally also in a Polish costume and barefoot, to emphasize the republican system – known from drawings in books, frescoes, occasional architecture, and school theatre. They had no chances, however, to realize the full scale of this huge Polish-Lithuanian state, as maps presenting the whole of its territory, or even parts of it, were inaccessible to common people. In such circumstances the geographical horizon of an average nobleman, burgher, and the more so of a peasant was limited to the closest neighbourhood known from personal experience – their “small homeland.”

5.1. Mapping Techniques and the Development of Cartography

The intellectual mastery and measurement of space, as well as its projection onto a map, were not easy tasks. Some essential changes in this regard were made during the Renaissance, when such expressions as “far away” and “near” began to acquire more specific meaning as the mobility of people increased, deepening their knowledge about the world, which became more and more conceivable. The march of the troops began to be measured in miles, instead of itineraries, just like peasants’ transport services. The skill of practical measurement of land became increasingly prevalent in the 1560s, and in 1566 the first handbook of measurements of area written by Stanisław Grzebski appeared. Enhanced understanding of space, its shape, and dimensions made it possible for maps to be drawn and used more commonly.

First maps of the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, based on geographical grid (in the scale of 1:1.000.000), published in Krakow by Bernard Wapowski (1526–1528), were used in the well-known atlas of the world by Mercator together with a map of Lithuania of 1595 and were reprinted many times. Next maps of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were published by Waclaw Grodecki (or Grodziecki) – in 1562 in Basel and Andrzej Pograbius (Pograbka) – in 1570 in Venice. But the most popular source of knowledge about Poland in the mid-16th century were works by Sebastian Münster: *Geographia* (1540) and *Cosmographia* (1544), with maps of Poland and Hungary, which from 1544 to 1598 had 35 editions.

The development of cartography was accelerated by the wars under King Stephen Bathory. During military operations in 1579–1581 Bathory used, among other things, Maciej Strubicz’s map – *Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae, Livoniae et Moscoviae Descriptio* created ca. 1579 and included in the Cologne edition of Marcin Kromer’s *Polonia* of 1589, which encompassed the whole theatre of military operations with adjacent territories.

At the beginning of the 17th century, Tomasz Makowski prepared a detailed map of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The map – published firstly in Gdańsk in 1603 and subsequently in Amsterdam in 1613 on the initiative and the expense of Mikołaj Radziwiłł “Sierotka” (“The Little Orphan”) – was in fact a collective work. A map of the Dniester River and materials for the Kiev region and Volhynia were supplied by one of the magnates of Kiev Voivodeship (probably Constantine Vasilli Ostrogsky) in relation to the Lithuanian claims, still supported under the Vasas, to Podlasie, Volhynia the Kiev and Bratslav regions. Makowski’s map (the so-called “map of Radziwiłł”) was used as the basis for atlases of Willem Blaeuw (1637) and Wilhelm de Beauplan (1651); its distorted copies were published until 1795.

First detailed maps of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were based on sources from the archives of magnates who were most interested in precise measuring of their lands and who could afford to employ professional land surveyors – such as Józef Naronowicz-Narowski, who in 1640–1654 prepared maps of the Radziwiłłs’ estates. The majority of initiatives by magnates over initiatives by the central authorities in surveying and measuring the area of the Commonwealth mirrored the progressing decentralization of the system of governance, also due to the wars of the mid-17th century.

After ca. 1650 the development of cartography in the Commonwealth stopped, and its revival took place only in the mid-18th century. Between 1653 and 1753 there was no original map, either of the whole Polish-Lithuanian state or its part (except for a map of Courland published in Nuremberg in 1747) was published. Under the Wettin kings only a list of geographic locations of the most important towns of the Commonwealth on the basis of new surveys and observations was prepared. Jan Maurycy Brühl’s project to prepare the “Atlas of Sarmatia” failed to materialize, despite the fact that the maps to be included in the atlas began to be engraved in Dresden in 1753–1754.

Intensified cartographic activities at the end of the reign of King Augustus III, and soon after his successor ascended to the throne, brought about a simultaneous publication of numerous maps of the territory of the Commonwealth drawn in the neighbouring countries in the course of preparations for annexations (1769–1771). Although the first atlas of the Polish lands (*Carte de la Pologne*) appeared in 1772 on the initiative of Józef Aleksander Jabłonowski, there were still no correct maps of the whole state on the eve of the partitions – which, as Frederick II of Prussia (the Great) rightly noticed, was not so much his as the Poles’ concern. It was King Stanisław August Poniatowski who tried to set right the situation by commissioning Charles Perthés, a court cartographer since 1763, and the Jesuits: Aleksander Rostan of Warsaw and Marcin Poczobutt-Odlanicki of Vilnius, to conduct modern surveys and cartographic measurements and prepare a map of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The map was published in 1792, but since it had been kept in Riga, Polish historians did not get to know it until the restitution of various materials and documents referring to Poland or Polish affairs (so-called *polonika*) from Russian archives made under the 1921 Treaty of Riga.

A general map of the Commonwealth that included the parts of territory taken away during the partition of 1791 was probably finished in 1796, after the Third Partition of the Commonwealth. Thus, the Republic of Both Nations had its cartographic portrait made after its death, in accordance with the Sarmatian tradition of coffin portraits.

5.2. Distances

There is almost 900 km between frontier city of Smolensk and Warsaw, and ca. 800 km between Warsaw and Kamianets-Podilskyi (Polish: *Kamieniec Podolski*). From Riga to Vilnius there is over 300 km, and then to Warsaw – over 450 km. The distance between Gdańsk and Warsaw is ca. 350 km, between Warsaw and Cracow – 300 km. In the second half of the 16th century, when the average speed of commercial transport, with stopovers, was ca. 25 km per day, and the speed of travel without load was ca. 30 km per day – the journey between these two Crown capitals took around a week, and from Warsaw to the eastern parts of the Commonwealth – one month. Transportation both between smaller administrative units and domains in the magnates' "states" (*latifundia*) in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and in the scale of the whole Commonwealth – between provinces, regions and local communities required overcoming a great deal of technical and organizational difficulties.

5.3. Communication Routes

The latitudinal layout of the Commonwealth's territory made it easy to move across the country not only for military forces but also for merchants; it facilitated transportation of goods as well as educational and touristic journeys. It is worth to remember, however, that the communication routes at that time did not resemble roads in contemporary sense of the term – they were dirt tracks beaten by previous travellers (only exceptionally hardened with fascine, i. e. rough bundles of brushwood and red osier, to cover marshy ground or wet terrain), passable in winters rather than summers. In 16th-century town plans (e. g. the town of Narew of 1560) summer tracks, leading to neighbouring places, were marked separately from those used all year round.

The most important land routes across the Commonwealth started from Cracow, and then run via: the Ruthenian route – through Wiślica, Sandomierz, Lubaczów, Lviv; the Silesian route – through Olkusz, Bytom, Opole, Brzeg, Wrocław (German: *Breslau*); the Hungarian route – through Bochnia, Wiśnic, Czchów, Nowy Sącz, Koszyce (Košice); the Prussian route – through Miechów, Piotrków, Łęczycza, Brześć Kujawski (German: *Brest*), Toruń (German: *Thorn*) to Gdańsk, there was a branch route at Brześć Kujawski leading to Inowrocław, Bydgoszcz (German: *Bromberg*) and Tuchola. The most important Pomeranian route went from Lübeck through Stralsund (Polish: *Strzałów*), and Wolgast (Polish: *Wologoszcz*) to Stettin (Polish: *Szczecin*), from the mouth of the Oder River through Kołobrzeg and Słupsk to Gdańsk. The busiest artery was the so-called *via mercatorum* (*publica strata*)

from Gdańsk through Starogard (German: *Stargard*), Świecie (German: *Schwetz*) and Wyszogród to Poznań (German: *Posen*). Eastern routes led: from Turkey through Kamianets-Podilskyi, Lviv, Lublin, and Piotrków to Wrocław or Olomouc (German: *Olmütz*); from Moscow through Smolensk, Minsk, Slonim, Warsaw, Łowicz to Poznań, and then to Berlin or Wrocław; from Hungary through Przemyśl, Sandomierz, Warsaw, Toruń to Gdańsk; from Vilnius through Grodno, Łomża to Warsaw, and through Brest to Lublin.

The 16th century put an end to the development of network of roads; until the end of the 18th century no important commercial routes were added and the possibility to travel and transport commercial goods was limited by miserable state of the roads. The basic means of transport for longer distances were rivers: the Vistula, the Oder and the Warta in Poland, the Neman and the Dvina in Lithuania, which made it possible to transport forest products and grain to Gdańsk, Königsberg, and Riga. Rivers were crossed at the fords in times of drought and by ferries. Stone bridges were unknown in the Commonwealth, wooden constructions were extremely impermanent, and temporary crossings, the so-called floating bridges, built on riverboats with flat bottoms were usually constructed for the needs of troops during military campaigns. The only permanent bridge built on stilts – was the so-called Sigismund Augustus Bridge in Warsaw. Its construction began under King Sigismund Augustus in 1567 and was completed a year after king's death – in 1573 mainly thanks to Queen Anna the Jagiellon, who funded stone bridge abutments. The bridge was destroyed 30 years after its completion – in 1603 it collapsed under the onslaught of a spring ice floe. From that time on, the Vistula was crossed by ferries that could be ordered for a specific time. It was not until 1775 that the Sejm ordered the Grand Treasurer of the Crown, Adam Poniński, to erect a floating bridge in return for the right to charge the bridge toll. The bridge functioned until 1794 when during the Praga massacre the commander of the Kościuszko Uprising, Tomasz Wawrzecki, ordered to burn the bridge to prevent the Russian forces from crossing the Vistula.

The proverbially wretched condition of Polish and Lithuanian roads resulted partly from the fact that the state was responsible only for main transportation routes. The responsibility for the upkeep and repair of roads, causeways and construction of bridges rested with local governments and private persons who, in exchange, were granted the right to charge tolls (but levied only from plebeians, as the nobility was exempted from payment). This blurred the boundaries between the public and private spheres: according to the right of *Neminem Captivabimus* (granted: 1430, 1433), the permission to pass through a landed property depended on the consent of its owner.

5.4. The Space of Power

Historians agree that size, density of transportation routes and social bonds have a great impact on political constitution of states, and thus, indirectly, on political developments. The pace of integration of early modern European states was influ-

enced both by the extent of their urbanization and the administrative traditions inherited from the medieval times.

As Antoni Mączak noticed, the exceptional character of the Commonwealth's system of government in comparison with other European countries of the early modern period stemmed from, among other things, differences in the mastering of space. The model of a territorial state, characteristic of the Middle Ages, endured here until the end of the 18th century. The area of the Commonwealth was divided into: the royal demesne (at the end of the 16th century it was ca. 25–30 %); Church estates – diocesan and monastic ones (ca. 10–15 %); hereditary private properties – of magnates, middle and petty nobility (ca. 60 %). Small areas of “our royal towns” that were subject to the direct authority of the king and were administrative centres for their districts were sparsely scattered throughout the vast territory of the state and surrounded by private or Church estates, governed almost autonomously.

The Union of Lublin developed and complicated the mastery of public space, because the Polish administrative system transferred to way more extensive territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had brought results different from those in the basin of the Vistula and the Warta, forcing the centre of power – the royal court – to operate through the agency of magnates in contacts with the nobility. Similar situation was in some countries of Western Europe, for instance in France until the Fronde of the Princes in 1653, when the Bourbons ruled in Picardy, de La Trémouille – on the Atlantic coast from Guyenne to Brittany, dukes de Montmorency – in Languedoc, and de Bouillon – in Sedan. The fundamental difference was that in the Commonwealth the evolution of the system of government proceeded in the opposite direction than in the West – not towards the centralization of power, but towards its decentralization.

According to Władysław Konopczyński, under King Jan Casimir Vasa an actual disintegration of territory of the Polish-Lithuanian state into separate magnate lands took place. However, this spectacular thesis is controversial, since the “small states” of the magnates did not form an integrated area, but rather a conglomerate of hereditary estates (occasionally with claims to quasi-sovereignty in the second half of the 17th century), royal lands (in the form of *starostwa niegrodowe*), land that had been bought or obtained as a dowry (e.g. the estates of the Radziwiłłs of Birżai, stretching from the town of Birżai on the border with Courland to the Duchy of Slutsk in Belarus).

In the conditions of poorly urbanized Eastern Europe, its territories could have been brought under control of autocracy – as illustrated by the example of the Grand Principality of Moscow. Nevertheless, there still remains a disputable and unresolved question of whether the estate society of the Commonwealth was unable or did not want to establish a strong central power and pay the social costs of centralization. To be sure, it does not mean that its inhabitants did not experience the waning efficiency of the system of government that left all decisions concerning local communities in the hands of the noblemen's local government, and those concerning the whole state to the Sejm, with the king present as one of the estates, the representative of the centre, and noble deputies representing the country. The

efficiency of this system was largely dependent on that whether the senators at a given point were representatives of the king and the royal court or regarded themselves more as the representatives of their provinces.

6. Borders

6.1. Technical Aspects of Boundary Delimitation

To delimit an area and establish borders, natural landmarks were used, most often rivers. The boundaries (or the so-called *dukts*) of private estates and demesnes had been established in the Commonwealth until the 18th century by commissar courts composed of two senators, two land official and a Chamberlain (Latin: *subcamera-rius*; Polish: *podkomorzy*). Border disputes were settled by the Chamberlains (from the 15th century on), with their special border assistants, the so-called *limitants* (Polish: *komornik graniczny*). Demarcations between the neighbouring states, between the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania or between the provinces of the Commonwealth, were negotiated by special commissars appointed by the Sejm. The boundary delimitations, unresolved since the Sejm of 1569 until the 1770s between the Crown and Lithuania, Royal Prussia and Courland, the whole Commonwealth and Muscovy/Russia, tell of the difficulties, which parliamentary commissions encountered when establishing boundaries faced with conflicts of interests and technical problems. Land surveyors were responsible for professional demarcations of boundaries. They had at their disposal (from 1566) a handbook in Polish written by Stanisław Grzejski, and sometimes they had graduated from foreign universities.

The boundaries were marked by earth mounds, blazes on trees, posts driven into the mud, ditches, or boulders. Allegedly, it was already in the 12th–14th centuries that the state boundaries were marked by iron posts with state coat of arms. Family coats of arms were used to mark out boundaries of noble and magnate estates. New demarcations of old boundaries resulted from changes in natural landmarks (e. g. a river bed), shifted man-made landmarks (re-made mounds) or change of the owner of a land. A characteristic feature of public life in the Commonwealth was to refer – when in doubt – not to maps but to the eyewitnesses of demarcations. According to Aleksander Brückner, “Occasionally, the young were given a hiding near mounds to preserve memory.”⁴⁷ Thus, borders were not lines drawn on maps but long-lasting elements of collective memory and social relations, and their establishment was the result of a compromise or triggered bloody conflicts for several generations.

6.2. Cultural and Administrative Borders

Also external boundaries of European states until the 18th century resulted more from the natural relief of the continent rather than artificially made administrative barriers symbolized by national emblems and sentry posts. The epoch of demarca-

47 Aleksander Brückner, *Encyklopedia staropolska*, Warszawa, 1939, vol. 1, pp. 285–286.

tions drawn with “a ruler” on maps and of cutting off the territories of conquered states without any respect for proprietary rights began only in the second half of the 18th century, together with the (dubious in this regard) progress of the Enlightenment period. From the perspective of the people of the early modern period civilization differences, measured in the development of a region, its urbanization, quality of roads, public order, and finally dress, language and customs, were probably more important than symbolic boundary marks.

It was quite possible for a traveller entering the Commonwealth from the northwest not to notice the border that cut across the regions of similar population structure, language, and customs. The noble families at Lębork and Bytów as well as at Puck and Mirachów were related to each other, towns and cities on both sides of the frontier had a developed textile craft, and economic contacts were more dynamic than political ones. In the east, on the other hand, the Orthodox noblemen and townsmen of Ruthenian lands belonging to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania underwent cultural Polonization, but in regard to religion (especially after the Union of Brest), they gravitated towards Orthodox centres in Muscovite lands. Also here economic, religious, and linguistic bonds as well as family ties united people on both sides of the border that was changed several times during the period between the end of the 16th to the end of the 18th century and divided mutually related noble families whose one generation was on the Polish side while the next one – on the Russian side of the border.

6.3. Defence of Borders

In theory, the security of the borders of the Commonwealth along their entire length should be maintained by a system of castles and starostwa on the frontiers that were responsible, among other things, for intelligence service and counter-espionage. It resulted from the system of alliances and political ties between the Commonwealth rulers and the Habsburgs that there was no need to build modern strongholds on the western border; until the mid-17th century Poznań played an important strategic part.

In the southwest, the border with Silesia was defended by a royal castle at Krzepice, and in the south – a natural barrier in the form of mountains, although quite easy to cross for travellers and brigands both from the Crown Podgórze, and from Silesia, Hungary and Slovakia. The defensive complex of Cracow (the Wawel Castle and the city itself) was of fundamental importance.

The southeastern border with Turkey ran along the lower Dnieper, which, however, was not an obstacle for either Tatars ravaging the lands of the Crown or the Cossack raids against the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish frontier was protected by a perfectly located but not modernized Kamianets-Podilskyi (Polish: *Kamieniec Podolski*), a system of larger and smaller castles (e. g. a small stronghold of Trenches of Trinity, built after the Turks had seized Kamianets-Podilskyi; Kudak Fortress on the Dnieper built in the 1630), and fortified towns, among which only a few were able to withstand a more serious siege.

On the eastern border, the passage between the Dvina and Dnieper basins were protected in the first half of the 17th century by Smolensk (regained in 1611 and then lost again in 1654); its starosta played the most important part in providing information about operations conducted by Muscovy, garnered from merchants travelling along the Smolensk trade route and spies recruited from among the nobility, but also among the peasants inhabiting the frontier area on both sides of the border. On the north, the same role was played by two towns on the Dvina River: Vitebsk and Polotsk.

On the northern border, the Commonwealth was defended by the fortified Prussian towns (Gdańsk, Toruń, Elbląg [German: *Elbing*], Puck [German: *Putzig*], Malbork [German: *Marienburg*], Tczew [German: *Dirschau*], Brodnica [German: *Strasburg in Westpreußen*], Braniewo [German: *Braunsberg*]). In 1635, to protect the coast against pirates, fortresses at Kazimierzów and Władysławowo were built of earth and wood at the root of Hel Peninsula, but in 1643 the Sejm refused to finance their garrisons. In the territory of Ducal Prussia the defensive function was performed by the capital city of Königsberg and seaside fortresses: Pillau (today's Baltiisk) and Klaipeda, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – Riga and Dyneburg. However, they turned out to be a weak barrier against the Swedes who controlled the sea border after the capture of Pernov (today's Parnü) in 1617 and Riga in 1621, and in 1626 they seized Prussian towns with ease (except for Gdańsk).

An integral part of the defensive barrier along the state borders of the Commonwealth was also made by magnate fortresses and fortified private towns. In the Crown they included: on the southwest border a bastion castle at Zbąszyń and numerous small magnate castles (Danków, Pilica). In the eastern part of Little Poland: Zamość of the Zamoyski family (since 1580), Brody of the Koniecpolski family (since the 1630s), Stanisławów of the Potocki family (since the early 1660s), Halych, Sieniawa and Brzeżany of the Sieniawski family (fortified in the 1660s–1670s) and – in the back of Kamianets – fortified Szarogród of the Zamoyski family, bastle houses (Jazłowiec, Trembowla, Buchach) and bastions (Zbarazh, Dubno, Olyka), and in Volhynia – Połonne of the Lubomirski family. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, on the northern border, after the Swedes had seized Riga, the importance of Radziwiłłs' Biržai increased; on the line of the Dnieper, the state system of defence included: Kopyś of the Radziwiłł family, Szklów of the Sieniawski family, and a fortress at Stary Bychów of the Sapieha family. In the interior of the Grand Duchy, in the boundary area of the Dnieper and Niemen basins – Sluck and Nesvizh (Nieśwież) of the Radziwiłł family.

A similar function was performed by Church strongholds – fortified cloisters at Częstochowa, Wiśnicz, Biecz, or the primate's castle at Łowicz. During the wars with the Swedes throughout the 17th century a new practice emerged above the political law to subordinate all frontier fortresses to the hetmans of the Commonwealth (the parliamentary constitutions: *Fortresses of the Commonwealth* of 1658, *Frontier Fortresses* of 1676).

In a time of war, the duty of protecting the borders of the state, capturing spies and plunderers and delivering them to the nearest starosta fell on people of “all

condition,” also the peasantry. On the other hand, rightful owners and leaseholders of royal, ecclesiastical and private estates were to be protected against incursions of the enemy by “all the forces of the Commonwealth” (the 1673 Constitution). The nobility almost obsessively strived for cutting the Republic off the world, regarding this as a guarantee first of a safe interregnum, and subsequently, with the increase of their xenophobia, as a guarantee of internal peace.

7. Territorial and Border Changes to the End of the 18th Century

One of the striking features of the territorial development of the Commonwealth is a difference between the East and the West. The western border between the Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466) to the First Partition (1772) was almost static. But the eastern border was almost constantly undergoing dynamic changes, starting from a crucial change in the proportion of territory between the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after the Union of Lublin in 1569. Owing to the fact that after the union both these states retained their territorial individuality, separate offices, state treasuries, and, above all, the armies, they had to defend against external enemies mainly with their own forces. Thus, the external border was, in fact, either Polish or Lithuanian, and stability of the border depended on their individual relations with neighbouring states.

In the period of the greatest expansion— after having regained in 1608–1618 the duchies of: Chernigov, Siversk, and Smolensk (belonging in the 15th century to Lithuania) and defending them against Muscovy's attempts at their repossession in 1633–1634 – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the second largest state in Europe, twice as large as France, second only to the Grand Duchy of Moscow. The Truce of Deulino, which, among other things, defined the borderline, was concluded on December 11th, 1618.

An impossibility to retain such a vast territory, and at the same time a lack of expansionistic aspirations, were proven by the fact that after the greatest military success in history the border was pushed back westwards – after the Permanent Peace of Polyanovka (Polish: *Polanów*) in 1643, obtained by the Polish-Lithuanian Republic at the price of 12.000 sq km, in 1644 King Wladislaus IV Vasa handed over to Muscovy (with no compensation whatsoever) the Principality of Trubetsk (Russian: *Trubchevsk*) with the area of 2.350 thousands sq km, hoping in vain that in this way he would be able to drum up the support of Muscovy against Turkey. Lithuania, as compensation for the litigious territory that had belonged to it, was given by the Sejm of 1646 two Crown starostwa: Liubech and Loyew. After a dynamic territorial development of the Republic in the first half of the 17th century, other losses followed in the second half of the century: the peace treaty with Sweden (1660) legitimated the border in Livonia according to its actual state of 1629; the 1667 Truce of Andrusovo (Polish: *Andruszów*) defined a new eastern border of the Commonwealth which lost two voivodeships: Kiev and Chernihów ones,

left-bank Ukraine of Kiev voivodeship and (*de facto* permanently) Kiev (although the truce provided for its return to the Polish-Lithuanian State in the undefined future). This borderline was finally authorized by Eternal Peace Treaty of 1686 (Polish: *Pokój Grzymułtowskiego*).

At the border with Turkey the Commonwealth had to temporarily cede (1672) to Turkey Braclaw and Podole voivodeships and a southern part of the Kiev one. A part of these lands was won back in 1676, and the rest after the Peace of Karlowitz (Polish: *Karłowice*) in 1699. From that time to the First Partition, the state borders remained formally unchanged, but in actual fact they were constantly encroached on by troops of the neighbouring states: Austria, Prussia and Russia, who in the 1760s began their preparations for a planned elimination of the Polish-Lithuanian state.

7.1. Administrative Changes at the Decline of the Republic

The sweeping changes in administrative division of the Commonwealth territory were brought about by the legislation of the Four-Year Sejm (1791) and Grodno Sejm (1793).

7.1.1. Administrative Reform of the Four-Year Sejm

The territorial changes after the First Partition, but also a tendency to make uniform the administration of the state evident in reforms of sejmiks and the Sejm related to the Constitution of 1791 bore fruit in the form of act on: *Distribution of Voivodeships, Lands and Districts with Marking of Towns and Cities, and in these of Constitutional Places for Sejmiks in the Districts of the Crown and Grand Duchy of Lithuania* (October 1791). The act standardized the number of representatives – there were to be 68 of them from each province. Thus, the province of Great Poland had two more deputies, of Little Poland – eleven more, and Lithuania (together with Livonia) – fourteen more, through adding seven districts (resulting from the previous divisions) and a restitution of the sejmik of Witebsk Voivodeship. Under the unification, each sejmik had to elect two representatives; for this reason, in voivodeships with more numerous representatives, voivodeship sejmiks were replaced by district sejmiks.

7.1.2. Grodno Sejm Legislation

The overall shape of a project of future state defined at the Grodno Sejm was determined by the fact that the Second Partition reduced the territory of the Crown more than that of Lithuania and it became impossible to maintain a political system based on the division of the Commonwealth into three provinces. Thus, the Commonwealth had to be made of two provinces: of the Crown and of Lithuania. A new, proportional division into voivodeships was introduced (10 in the Crown and 8 in Lithuania), each made of three lands. Each voivodeship was to have one governor called voivode, one castellan and one sejmik, at which six representatives were to be elected (two from each land). There were separate sejmiks kept for Masovia that

remained Polish (although divided into three voivodeships), Podlasie and Lithuania, and in the latter the term *land* was to replace former districts. All these regulations remained only on paper.

7.1.3. *The Partitions of the Commonwealth (1772, 1793, 1795)*

In total, the partitioning powers seized as a result of the Three Partitions: Russia – ca. 462.000 sq km, Prussia – ca. 141.000 sq km, Austria – ca. 130.000 sq km.

The Polish-Lithuanian Republic disappeared from the map of Europe for 123 years. The fact that the demarcations of the areas seized by the partitioning powers were based on natural barriers (rivers) opened the possibility to permanently maintain the *status quo* of 1795. At the same time, the possibilities of expansion at the expense of the Polish-Lithuanian state of competing in the European arena Russia, Austria, and Prussia, reached their limits. From that time on, any attempt at a revision of borders meant a conflict between the partitioning powers, and at the same time supported the cause of the revival of the Commonwealth as a buffer state that would relieve tensions in this region of the continent.

Chapter Two

Political System and Form of Government

To the people living in the 16th–18th centuries, the Commonwealth was a social community (*communitas*), making a “united society of people through nature and laws, with the right to participate in a council, courts, and offices.”⁴⁸ To separate, and even more, to oppose the state and society would have been at that time incomprehensible, since the word *state* meant only a rulership – territorial power, also at the local level. In the Polish language there was no term to define the state as a supreme power and the main subject of law until the Enlightenment, when in this sense the term *estate* (Polish: *stan*; Latin: *status*) was introduced.

1. Political Terminology

There has been an aggregate of misconceptions that over time have plagued the understanding of the political system of the Commonwealth, resulting from the lack of distinction between the form of political system and the form of government – the system of wielding power. From the perspective of classic political terminology, the Commonwealth was a peculiar variety of the estate monarchy, in which the king shared power only with the noble estate. Thus, some historians (Juliusz Bardach, Andrzej Wyczański, and Jarema Maciszewski) termed the Polish-Lithuanian state of the 16th to the first half of the 18th centuries as *nobles’ Commonwealth* or *nobles’ democracy*, as distinct from the *magnate oligarchy* (Zdzisław Kaczmarsczyk) or *magnate patronage* (Antoni Mączak) of the second half of the 17th and the 18th centuries. Both these terms: *estate monarchy* and *nobles’ democracy* have been questioned; the first one – because in the parliament of the Commonwealth (unlike in other states) there had been no representations of the other estates, apart from the nobility (Wacław Uruszczyk); the latter one – due to the unjustified reduction of legal foundations of the Commonwealth to privileges serving only the interests of the nobility, while in reality the texts of the Crown statutes represented *raison d’état* (Anna Sucheni-Grabowska), and the concept of common good went beyond freedoms of the nobility.

As regards the ways of electing its rulers, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was an elective monarchy, much like the papacy and monarchies of the Habsburgs. Despite formal analogies, the Polish-Lithuanian and Habsburg states had developed from different ideologies of power: in the first case, the ruler chosen by the will of people was incorporated into the parliament, his independence was curtailed and he was deprived of the possibility to concentrate all power in himself; in the

48 Sebastian Petrycy z Pilzna, “Przydatek do Księgi Trzeciej Polityki Arystotelesa,” 1605, in: *Pisma wybrane*, ed. W. Wąsik, Warsaw, 1956, vol. 2, pp. 208–209.

second – the king sat on his throne by the will of God and he maintained a position independent of the assembly of estates, which made centralization possible. When in the empire the so-called *absolute monarchy* emerged, the Commonwealth evolved into the direction of a different political system, known as *mixed monarchy* (*monarchia mixta*) – because of the makeup of the elite making decisions at the central level (the king, senate, and the nobility), or *parliamentary monarchy* – because of the way those decisions were made in the parliament (Sejm), but in fact more and more often outside it. Thus, the discussion between the advocates of the term *mixed monarchy* (Jolanta Choińska-Mika, Jan Dzięgielewski, Mariusz Markiewicz, Edward Opaliński) and those who prefer to speak of *parliamentary monarchy* (A. Sucheni-Grabowska) seems to be sterile, for it pertains to two aspects of the same problem and to different periods of the state's history. The term “parliamentary monarchy” is correct from the perspective of the 16th century, but it does not reflect the realities of the 17th and 18th centuries, when sessions of the Sejm more and more often concluded with no resolutions made or were broken up, and yet the state functioned without its legislature. The designation “mixed monarchy” disregards changes in the political ideology, in which there was a strong republican trend starting as early as the 16th century and prevailing in the end of the 17th and the 18th centuries.

What seems to be the best term to describe the political system of the early modern Commonwealth is *mixed state* (ancient *politeia*), or the so-called in the 17th century *free republic* (*libera respublica*):

where not one but three estates reign and rule *simul et semper*, not a single one more than any other. And they rule under common law, called common because all accept it of their own free will. [...] And *in summa* in this Commonwealth nothing can be decided by anyone but by the free will of all and consent of these three estates. The said Commonwealth consists of these three manners: *ex monarchia, aristocratia et democratia*.⁴⁹

There were some other states considered free in the 17th century, namely Venice, the Netherlands, England, and then Sweden after the fall of absolutism (1719). Regardless of the political system, they shared the principle that decisions concerning all citizens should be made by sovereign representatives of the estates, and in actual fact by the oligarchies of patricians or aristocrats. In their majority, these states were small, with favourable geopolitical position, as well as developed trade and industry. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth stood out among them all by its inland location, open frontiers, huge area, the permanent agricultural character of its economy and maintenance, till the end of its existence, of the political monopoly and formal equality within the nobility – which, in practice, hampered the free system of government and contributed to the collapse of the state.

49 *Pisma polityczne rokoszu sandomierskiego*, ed. J. Czubek, Cracow, 1916–1918, vol. 2, p. 403.

2. Legal Political Orders of Mixed Government

It is now a generally accepted opinion in recent historiography (M. Markiewicz, E. Opaliński) that there were three legal and political orders of the Commonwealth of Both Nations: the rule of the king with the Sejm (regnum), interregnum, and confederation. Interregnum was a period during which the normal system of government was suspended and the state with no king was governed for the time of convocation Sejm by a general convocation – the role was played, as in the state with the king, by the Sejm – and the sovereign (the nobility) had been undertaking actions designed to update the mixed system of government through the indications of specific violations that accrued under the dead king (*exorbitances*) and ways to remedy them.

It should be remembered, however, that inasmuch as regnum and interregnum were the elements of the political system described by the law, confederations – based on tradition, custom, and precedent, filling in the legal gaps in the periods of interregnum – during the regnum played occasionally an anti-system role; they had been gradually evolving to the rank of juridical order, equivalent to the other two, from the mid-17th century until the period of the Wettins.

2.1. Interregnum

The election made at the 1529 Sejm and Sigismund Augustus's coronation in the following year, with his father King Sigismund I the Old still living (*vivente rege*), spurred the counteraction of the nobility who at the Sejms of 1530 and 1538 obtained a guarantee that future elections would be held only after the death of the ruling king, and the election would be free and general (announced in advance and allowing for the participation of any representative of the nobility who might wish to attend). The principle of common election of the king by two political nations, Polish and Lithuanian, at Sejm in Warsaw was introduced at the Sejm of Lublin in 1569; later on, it was repeatedly confirmed, first by the Constitution *The Freedom of Election* (1593) and *Condition of Free Election* (1607). The procedures of free *viritem* election and the institutions of interregnum after the death of the king emerged during the interregnum after Sigismund Augustus's death, and became established during the first three interregna (1573–1587).

2.2. Institutions and Proceedings of the Interregnum

Interregna, occasionally lasting for many long months, interrupted normal functioning of the system based on the cooperation of three political and structural elements. Thus, for the period when one of the elements was missing – the king – during the periods of first three interregna (1573–1587) the following procedures were developed.

The supreme authority over the state was exercised by the Gniezno archbishop as the Primate of the Polish Kingdom presiding over the senate, from the period of the first interregnum called interrex, who till the election of a new ruler dealt with

current matters: preparations for the election, safeguarding the security of the state, receiving foreign legations. The fact that the function of interrex was entrusted to the primate did not result from the legal tradition associated with the office of primate but from a precedent, preserved by practice that took place during the first interregnum – a victory in the competition for this position of the Primate Jakub Uchański over Voivode of Cracow Jan Firlej. Functions of local organs of the executive and judicial authorities were acquired for the period of interregnum by special assemblies of the nobility, called *hooded confederations* or just *hoods*,⁵⁰ which hold summary courts for criminal matters and offences against public security.

Successive phases of interregnum were marked by: convocation, election, and coronation Sejms. At the Convocation Sejm, the noble deputies elected at the pre-convocation sejmiks summoned by the interrex gathered to form the general confederation and compositions of local hooded confederations for the interregnum were confirmed.

The proceedings for the Election Sejm were established during the first three interregna. The Sejm was usually held in the fields of Wola near Warsaw, which was finally sanctioned by the Pacification Sejm under King Augustus II Wettin (1736). The Sejm was attended by the nobility who came to participate in the election and the delegates of the largest cities. The participation of townsmen in the election and convocation Sejms (from Lviv in 1658, Lublin in 1572, Poznań in 1573) was of formal character – they put their signatures on the final documents after the noble deputies, but did not actively participate in the election of a new monarch. The cities aspiring to participate in the election had to prove their privileged status (constitutions of the 1648 and 1733 Sejms).

For the period of election special order regulations were imposed (ban on serving alcoholic beverages, on carrying weapons, etc.). At plenary sessions (attended by the primate, Senate and Chamber of Deputies) foreign envoys were heard presenting their candidates to the throne, smaller groups (deputies from the Senate and Chamber of Deputies) specified their special conditions for the claimants to the throne, but the fundamental purpose of the Sejm, of course, was to perform the election of a new ruler.

The proceedings implemented during the election of the king resulted from the principle valid in all old-Polish parliamentary system that all decisions should be made through individual voting. Since the Election Sejm, attended by the nobility either *viritim* (which means personally, man by man) or by *levée en masse* (Polish: *pospolite ruszenie*; Latin: *motio belli*), initially was characterized by a great number of participants (according to Jan Dzięgielewski, from ca. 40.000 during the first interregnum to several thousand noblemen after 1669), a single, one-time vote was impossible. Thus, in the first instance a candidate had to be chosen within the circles

50 The genesis of the name arouses controversies, to derive it from the hoods worn by the friars attending the funeral ceremonies after the death of the king does not sound convincingly; it might have been derived from the Latin term *capto criminis* meaning “caught in the act of crime.”

of individual voivodeships, and then the voting results were presented in the general circle. If there had been no decision on the first stage, there had to be next ones, with appeals made to the followers of candidates whose chances were unlikely to back up those who enjoyed greater support – until the selection of a person who could be accepted by everyone. In the case when the attempts to gain unanimous agreement on one candidate did not bring results, there were in theory some other possibilities for him to be selected, i. e. through the drawing of lots. The freedom of election and nature of the Election Sejm that could be attended by all representatives of the nobility, who wanted to participate, legalized any decision made on the matters of proceedings and results of the election as well as the obligations of the elect in general legal matters (Henrician Articles; Polish: *Artykuły henrykowskie*) and individual ones (*pacta conventa*).

The Henrician Articles, drawn up at the same time as the first *pacta conventa*⁵¹ (May 16th, 1573), were of general character and they established the founding principles of political system of the Commonwealth regarded as an important step towards the limitation of royal power. While some historians (Władysław Sobociński, Andrzej Sulima-Kamiński) regard them even as the very first fundamental law, a kind of constitution regulating the political system of the Commonwealth until the Constitution of 1791, others (Stefan Gruszecki) think that the articles for two hundred years had hampered the development of social and political system of the state.

It seems that the importance of the Henrician Articles at the time of their formulation stemmed not as much from their novelty as from the fact that they uniformly embodied, interpreted, and confirmed both the practice and the letter of older laws.

Among the most important of the confirmed regulations were: principle of free royal election, relinquishing by the king of the title of heir, exemption of the nobility from taxation, financing of the quarter army (Polish: *wojsko kwarciane*) from the income of the Crown lands, hereditary rights of lands that had earlier been endowed to the nobility (together with metal ores, which had been a royal monopoly once); summoning the *levée en masse* and deciding on war only with the consent of the Sejm, ban on sending the *levée en masse* outside the borders of the state (unless paid for, 5 *grzywnas* per each unit called lance or *kopia*) and ban on dividing it into separate regiments; issuing of official writings only by the Chancellery (Crown or Lithuanian) and with the signature of the Grand Chancellor or Subchancellor (Crown or Lithuanian one), and not with the private seal of the king; traditional right of the Senate to have a say on foreign affairs policy and a marriage of the king, which was considered a matter of the Commonwealth. The articles also recognized the right of the nobility to renounce allegiance to the king (*de non praestanda oboedientia*) if he did not fulfill his obligations, and to honour their rights and privileges.

What was new was the duty imposed on elected kings to convoke the Sejm every two years and their obligation to maintain internal peace “among the dissenting in religion” (*inter dissidentes in religione*) and a firm ban “for all eternity”

51 *Articuli pactorum conventorum*, VL, vol. II, pp. 133–134, fols 860–862.

on discriminating anyone of the noble origin “on the pretext of religion” (*sub praetextu religionis*) – formulated for the first time in the Warsaw Confederation at the convocation Sejm of 1573.

During the first interregnum the king-elect had promised to accept the proposed restrictions but then he did not swear to the articulated during his coronation – except for the freedom of religion. The Henrician Articles were sworn to for the first time by King Stephen Bathory; his successor, King Sigismund III, took a separate oath to the Henrician Articles, and to the *pacta conventa*; starting from the election of King Wladislaus IV Vasa (1632) both groups of obligations were sworn to by kings-elects together at their coronations.

The *pacta conventa* – formulated by the election Sejms individually for each elect – were a contractual agreement between the nobility and the newly elected king, a kind of contract of employment – in this case concerning the ruling of the state. They comprised the obligations of the elect, confirmed by the oath upon which he had to swear before ascending to the throne. They included especially matters of foreign policy, army, or financial obligations.

The article of the right to renounce the allegiance to the king was included in the coronation oath of Polish kings and was to be used not only in the case when the king violated the Henrician Articles or did not fulfill his obligations imposed by the *pacta conventa* but also in the event of his intentional infringement of other rights. Thus, it severely limited the authority and freedom of action of the monarch – and did so more on behalf of the royal council, that is, magnates, rather than of the nobility as such. The procedure of renouncing the allegiance to the king provided for in the Sejm constitution (1609) was so complicated that the legal implementation of this right in practice seemed almost impossible and usually took form of a rebellion against abuse of power by the king, called *rokosz*.

The period of interregnum was ended by the coronation Sejm in Cracow. The coronation act was supposed to be held by the Primate (in fact, there were some exceptions from this rule) during a solemn service, after the religious ritual of anointing had been performed, symbol of the divine conferral of royal power. Then, the king-elect solemnly promised and swore to abide by the rights of the kingdom and privileges of his subjects. The first to make the *confirmatio iurium* act – the confirmation of “rights, statutes, freedoms, privileges, both common and every one individually of all conditions”⁵² – was Henry of Valois during the first interregnum, through the *pacta conventa*, and then at the coronation Sejm (April 22nd, 1574).

Next, foreign courts were notified that the king-elect had sworn the oath and been crowned, and then examinations began of the resolutions of the general confederation called together after the death of the preceding king for the period of interregnum, especially exorbitances. The coronation Sejm could also deal with other matters related to internal peace (e.g. religious ones) and defense in the case of external threat (e.g. the 1633 Coronation Sejm of Wladislaus IV Vasa).

52 *Confirmatio iurium Henrici regis*, VL, vol. 2, p. 136, fol. 867.

The role and importance of institutions and proceedings of the interregnum period – initially regarded not as an absolutely valid norm but a model to be followed – evolved under the influence of various external and internal factors.

The importance of convocation Sejms increased, and they occasionally began – contrary to the limits assigned initially to their authority within which they were supposed to set the date and place of the future election – to make some important legislative decisions. Together with changes in interpretation of the origins of power: of the will of God or will of the people, that is, the nobility, in the 17th century a belief was becoming more and more common that the only right sovereign in the Commonwealth was the nobility, and not the king, and therefore an election was of deciding importance for the assumption of the office of king. For that reason, the role of sacral rituals accompanying the coronation diminished. Whereas the fact that the function of interrex was entrusted to the primate contributed to the introduction of a rule that only a Catholic could ascend the throne of the Commonwealth (1669). The election procedures at the so-called free election became in the 17th century a ritual covering up corruption and backstage intrigues of magnate factions (coteries), and in the 18th century – an armed intervention of the neighbouring states.

3. Institutions of Central Government

In those states where a tendency to strengthen power of the king prevailed, the government of the country was in the hands of one person only, while in free states the victorious estates were disposed towards collegial governing bodies. But, inasmuch as the Venetian doge performed mainly representative functions, the importance of the office of *stadtholder* in the Low Countries and king in the Commonwealth depended greatly on individual abilities and authority of the people holding the office.

The position of the elected king as the keystone of the state was high until the voluntary abdication of King Jan Casimir in 1668. The separation of power, between an executive, a legislature and a judiciary, was unknown until the Enlightenment period; instead, power was divided into two spheres: the legislation (*iurisdictio*) – wielded by the monarch together with the estates as “the king in the Sejm,” and the administration – the government of the state (*gubernaculum*). Organs of the administration directly responsible to the king were: at the central level – the court and the highest offices (administrative and honorific, that is the court ones) and institutions of the royal judiciary, and at the local level – starostwa. Territorial offices (called land offices), including judicial ones, were reserved for the nobility – although it was the king who appointed officials to these offices from among the candidates proposed by territorial sejmiks. Legislation was made by the institutions of representation of the nobility: at the central level – the Sejm, and at the local level – sejmiks.

3.1. The King's Authority

Originally, the basic power of the ruler was to make law, which was gradually ceded to parliament (Sejm) during the course of the estate monarchy. However, the

kings remained responsible for acts being passed in the parliament and heads of the judiciary, and under the Jagiellons the position of the highest judge significantly raised their authority.

At the same time, the principle of generality and superiority of the law was established, and that applied also to the kings:

Since Polish kings are not born but are elected by all estates, therefore they are not being left to the freedom of their own will either to make laws or impose taxation, or legislate once and for all. Whatever they do, they do it either with the consent of their estates or according to the letter of the law.⁵³

Thus, the supreme power in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was given to the king conditionally – to the extent that he acted according to the will and in the interest of the noble society, and at the same time as one of the three estates in the parliament. In those fields of administration that were regarded as the prerogatives of the ruler (*regalia*), such as: treasure rights, supreme command of the army and chancellery, tendencies to their full centralization (represented by Polish political elites) were slowed down as a result of the decision made at the Lublin Sejm to maintain after the union the separate central institutions of the two federalized states (treasures, chancelleries, and the offices of hetman – of the Crown and Lithuania).

A thesis, firmly established in the literature on the subject, that the king's power at the local level was limited by the introduction of starosta to the group of territorial officials in the constitution of 1611, is highly controversial. Diminished importance of the starosta grodowy (city starosta) as an instrument of the royal superiority in the 17th and 18th centuries resulted not from the formal limitation on the king's power but from decreasing possibilities of effective functioning due to the lack of staff and material resources.

Within the scope of legislation, the king retained his independence towards the royal towns and cities, Jews, peasants in the Crown lands, and in mining matters. He also wielded a nominal authority over the fief lands (Ducal Prussia, Courland) that formally were subordinated directly to the king, and to the Commonwealth. The king was also a commander in chief – in practice restricted by the powers of hetmans – and conducted foreign policy in consultation with his council (the Senate). In the name of the king sejmiks and Sejms were called, parliamentary constitutions were issued and international treaties were concluded – hence such a meticulous adherence to his title as an important element of the prestige of the state.

In fact, the monarch acted as ruler (the supreme judge and superior of executive power) only towards his noble subjects. As regards the rest of secular population (townsmen and peasantry from 1518 on), he held direct authority over them only in royal towns and estates, regarded by the nobility as the property of the Commonwealth in perpetual use by an elected king.

53 Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, "O poprawie Rzeczypospolitej," in: *Dziela*, ed. S. Bodniak, trans. by E. Jędrkiewicz, Warsaw, 1953, book III: *O obyczajach*, chapt. 9: *O królu*, pp. 121–122.

This stemmed from the division established under the last Jagiellons of the territory of the state into the king's lands (in fact, the lands belonging to the state), the Church properties (diocesan and monastic ones) and private lands (of magnates, middle- and petty nobility as well as urban patricians). This, obviously, diminished the prerogatives of the ruler in his capacity of supreme judge and superior of executive power in the country and had disastrous consequences for the functioning of the local administration. The real power of starosta grodowy in the territory of their subjected (that is, a ziemia or a few court districts in the Crown, and a district or a voivodeship in Lithuania) was held over, for judicial and police matters, mainly a residential town, and for administrative matters – the crown lands. The starosta niegrodowy (nonborough starosta), called *tenutariusz* (Latin: *capitaneus sine iurisdictione*) administered usually royal lands that had been leased to him (*tenuta*). Private lands were in practice independent. That very situation, and not only the aversion of the Polish and Lithuanian noblemen to the strong royal power – typical of the whole European nobility – made both the centralization and reforms of the political system impossible.

The king's basic personal power were appointments to the highest offices, not only court offices (including ministerial ones) but also land offices (senatorial) with only slight restrictions in Lithuania, where three senatorial offices (of starosta of Samogitia and voivodes of Vitebsk and Polotsk) were electoral. The king's exclusive right of appointments included both secular senatorial offices and ecclesiastical ones, for the pope's approval of the bishops appointed by the king was a mere formality. Assignments to lower-level offices, on the other hand, were made mainly by sejmiks owing to the fact that already in the mid-15th century they had acquired the right to present their candidates (presentations) to the office of judge, sub-judge (Polish: *podsedek*, Latin: *subiudex*) and land (or district) clerk (Polish: *pisarz ziemski*).

It has been accepted that formally all offices were conferred by royal appointment, except for military ones (a guard and quartermasters, i. e. field camp leaders) who were conferred by hetmans, although from 1768 on, they were appointed for life. It was not until the constitution of the 1775 Sejm that broad appointment powers of the king were restricted, as it was said in the act that "the king shall appoint and endow bishops, voivodes, castellans and ministers choosing from among three candidates to the office selected *per vota secreta* by the Permanent Council."⁵⁴ But even then the king could freely confer court offices.

3.2. Limitations and Obligations of the Elected King

Resolutions determining the position of the king in mixed system of government of the Commonwealth applied to the way of electing a king, to the person and the scope of his authority, and had a character of mutual obligations between the king-

54 *Objaśnienie o funkcji, powinnościach, prerogatywach osób składających Radę Nieustającą*, VL, vol. 7, p. 67, fol. 88.

elect and his electors (that is, the nobility as citizens), and not only of limitations imposed on the king's power. They resulted both from the Henrician Articles and private obligations included in the *pacta conventa*.

The commitments related to the royal office (*officium*) included: the *viritim* election of a monarch (from 1573), only a catholic king (from 1669, confirmed in 1768) crowned by the Gniezno archbishop; the obligation of the king-elect to swear obedience to the fundamental principles of the political system of the Commonwealth upon his ascension to the throne (from 1573) under the sanction of forswearing the allegiance to the king (from 1609); the duty to summon the Sejm (at least every two years, for the period not longer than six weeks) and to make the parliamentary decisions (conclusions) on the basis of speeches of both senators and deputies; to appoint officials to offices for life and irrevocably, even if the official did not fulfill his duties; the right to punish officials limited to the imposition of a fine, the right to remove from the office only in the case of high treason; the right to impose limitations on the influence on the judiciary of the nobility by way of presentation by the sejmiks their candidates to land offices and deputies to the Crown Tribunal (from 1578) and Lithuanian Tribunal (from 1581).

In foreign policy the king was obliged to receive and dismiss foreign envoys only with the presence of the crown councils, to use in diplomatic correspondence seals of officials (chancellors and vice-chancellors) and not the own king's seal (chamber seal; Polish: *pieczęć pokojowa*), not to declare war without the consent of the estates.

The provisions regarding the person of the king himself included: the obligation to consult the Council of the Senate when making choice of his wife (1576), the ban on his acquiring lands for himself or his family (1631), on his travels abroad without the consent of the Sejm (1641), and the ban on his abdication (1669).

As regards private law rights (freedom of travel and choice of wife), the king was more restricted than his subjects. Few cases of royal marriages for love (Sigismund Augustus and Barbara Radziwiłłówna, Jan III Sobieski and Marie-Casimire d'Arquien) did not win wide social acceptance. It is doubtful that the king of the Commonwealth was personally a happy man. According to an oral tradition (mentioned by Krzysztof Opaliński), Stephen Bathory called the reign in this country a purgatory.⁵⁵

3.3. Sources of Royal Incomes

From the medieval times the king had been the largest feudal lord. The economic basis of his position was made of the Crown lands and salt mines, mines of Olkusz, and some custom duties. Revenues from them allowed for the king to provide for his household and his family, while the distribution of Crown lands and custom duties

55 Krzysztof Opaliński, "Satyra II: Że żaden król Polakom nigdy nie wygodzi," in: *Satyry*, ed. L. Eustachiewicz, Wrocław, 1953, p. 133.

for life as “bread of the well-deserved” (Latin: *panis bene merentium*) or temporarily – to gain supporters.

In the first years of Sigismund III’s reign, in order to remove the shortages in provision of the royal household and court that surfaced already under Bathory, a part of the crown lands was portioned out to form the so-called table lands (Polish: *dobra stolowe* or *dobra stolu koronnego*) – first, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1589), and a year later in the Crown – that were providing funds to support the monarch and his court (in Lithuania traditionally administered by land-stewards, in Polish known as *ekonom* and hence called *economies*). It has been thought recently, contrary to older literature, that it did not mean the limitation of the king’s control over the rest of the Crown lands and the State treasure. At the same time, the constitution *Rationes stolu Króla Jego Mości* [Rations of His Worship the King] (1590) granted the king, aside from two *grosze* (sing. *grosz*; Latin: *grossus*) from a lan (Polish: *lan*; Latin: *laneus*) and other old sources of income of the court’s treasure, also the revenues from the salt mines (of Cracow, Olkusz, and Rus), some custom duties (of the Crown, Rus and Płock), port customs of Gdańsk, Elbląg, Riga), money from minting and the duty to provide horses and transport for the use of the authorities, called *podwoda*, and from the table lands of the so-called procuration (Polish: *Wielkorząd*) of Cracow (*magna procuratio Cracoviensis*) and from several other starostwa (of Sambor and Sandomierz, the economy of Malbork, and procurations of Rogoźno and Tczew).

In comparison to other European rulers, the official sources of income of the Polish elected kings who did not possess (except for Jan III Sobieski and the Wettins) their own properties (also as the result of financial carelessness of some monarchs – for instance Wladislaus IV Vasa, Stanisław August Poniatowski) were meager – especially that they had to provide not only for their wives and children (and their households) but also for their relations (in the case of the Polish native kings).

But these sources of income were supplemented by extrajudicial income – first and foremost by payments for appointments to offices, from the times of Jan Casimir and Ludwika Maria in the form of fixed fee. In cases of emergency the Crown jewels were being pawned, regarded by the Vasas kings as a part of their inheritance from the Jagiellons. This caused a scandal after the abdication of Jan Casimir who appropriated not only the arrases bought by Sigismund Augustus (pawned in Gdańsk and bought back only in 1724), but also the royal crowns: of Sweden and Russia, deposited with the Commonwealth by Wladislaus IV.

The fate of the Muscovite crown – melted down and after its reconstruction returned to the state at the coronation Sejm of Jan III Sobieski in 1674 – is the best illustration of blurred borders between the public and private spheres of wielding royal power and the decline of the king’s authority.

3.4. *Lèse-Majesté*

The concept of *lèse-majesté* in the 17th century states, in which the absolutist (the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, France) or authoritarian (Muscovy) tendencies pre-

vailed – as well as in England, where the king was officially the Supreme Governor of the Church – included numerous offences: treachery of religion and the state, violation of the dignity of the ruler's family, his officials, or symbols of power, forgery of coins with the image of the monarch, publication of works that insulted him. In the French legislation the offence against the dignity of a king was closely related to an offence against God; in the English legislation it was related to the concept of an offence against the Crown and High Treason. Similarly, the Russian *Sobornoye Ulozheniye* (1649) identified the person of the tsar with the state, the subjects were obliged to report to the authorities all offences against him, and cruel capital punishments were carried out publicly. Particularly harsh reactions were caused by disrespect of the titles due to the tsar – a constant thorny issue in the relations between Poland and Russia.

In the Commonwealth the first constitution on the crime of *lèse-majesté* (1539) limited the crime to “the person of the king,” and the constitution of the Coronation Sejm of 1588 distinguished between the offence against the monarch and the treachery of the Commonwealth. In practice, such a solution resulted in problems with collection of the evidence of the crime and the execution of sentence on the basis of the constitution only, without executive regulations to it. The matter was further complicated by discrepancies between the law of the Crown and the Statutes of Lithuania which imposed a collective responsibility on the whole family of the offender not only for the offence against the dignity of the hospodar (according to the Russian-Byzantine tradition) but also for the intention of the offence (the Third Statute of Lithuania of 1588, chapt. I, art. 3).

During the early years of King Sigismund III Vasa, after the experiences of negotiations between the king and the Habsburgs for handing over the throne to them (1588–1592), the notion of crime of *lèse-majesté* was broadened to include the so-called practices pertaining to elections with the old king still alive (*vivente rege*) or to relinquishing of the kingdom through cession, and all suspected of participating in such activities were regarded as enemies of the homeland (the constitution *On the Practicing*, 1593).

3.5. The Royal Court

The main difference between the royal court in the Commonwealth and courts of Western European monarchs with definite number of employees and hierarchic structure was a fluid number of people, the lack of formalized court etiquette and hierarchy, and poorly developed bureaucracy. Those discrepancies resulted from fundamentally different functions of the royal court in the Commonwealth and the so-called absolutist or autocratic states (Muscovy and Ottoman Empire), where the main function of the ruler's court was exclusiveness, creating barriers for the pressure of those who wanted to make their way up into the state offices, held upon the grace of the king and lost after falling into disgrace, highly-paid, being an instrument of influence of the ruler exerted on the provinces. In the Polish-Lithuanian state the court offices were appointed by the king, but they were held

for life and unpaid for, or, to be more precise, seldom rewarded in cash, more often in crown lands conferred in lease, which in practice resulted in their permanent appropriation. In the rustic society of the Commonwealth public opinion on the court (both the royal one and of magnates) was basically negative, according to the nobility, it was the institution considered repulsive due to its location in a city, lack of contact with nature and instrumental treatment of courtiers, the abode of depravity and corruption of the young, nest of “foreignism” and intrigues hostile to the nobles’ democracy.

The number of people at the royal court of the Commonwealth was constant: from the times of King Sigismund Augustus to the abdication of the last Vasa king (1668) there were circa 400–500 people employed at the households of the king and his family; with 600 members of the court guard (1646), it made in total ca. 1000–1200 people. In comparison to the courts of absolute monarchs of Western Europe the Polish court was small, at least a dozen or so times less numerous (and forty times less expensive!) than the court of Louis XIV (ca. 5000 people).

As in all Europe, the court performed two functions: service function to the ruler, and public one – for the needs of the state administration. It included two categories of officials: the highest officials of the Commonwealth (the Marshal, Chancellor, Treasurer of the Crown, and Vice-chancellor) in two sets: of the Crown and of Lithuania, and the highest officials of the king – the Marshal, Chamberlain (Polish: *podkomorzy*), Treasurer (from 1775 in the Senate), the Standard-bearer (Polish: *chorąży*) (from the 17th century there were two standard bearers), Cupbearer (Polish: *cześnik*), Equerry (Polish: *koniusz*), Carver (Polish: *krajczy*), Master of the Kitchen (Polish: *kuchmistrz*), Sword-bearer (Polish: *miecznik*), Quartermaster (Polish: *oboźny*), Cupbearer (Polish: *podczaszy*), Vice-Chancellor (Polish: *podkanclerzy*), Steward (Polish: *podstoli*), Pantler (Polish: *stolnik*), Sub-equerry (Polish: *podkoniusz*) (from the second half of the 17th century), and Master of the Hunt (Polish: *łowczy*) (from the end of the 18th century) – all of them with the attribute “Court.” Both these hierarchies, the state’s and the court’s, overlapped with each other. The scopes of authority of these officials were not clearly specified and in many instances they intersected with each other. Ambiguous was also the position of senators resident at the king’s side, who in the course of the 17th century evolved from the supervisors of the king on behalf of the Sejm into members of Senate councils who more and more often decided outside the parliament on matters belonging to its jurisdiction.

In addition, in the 16th and 17th centuries the court comprised a number of honorific and paid courtiers: the lifeguard, messengers, and clerks: doctors, stewards, chaplains; the servants: musicians, hunters, doorkeepers, barber, bath-keepers, cooks, grooms stablemen and valets. From the second part of the 17th century they were completed in the Crown by Court Sub-equeries and Court Masters of the Hunt (from the end of the 18th century) – the offices that emerged together with an increasing number and representative functions of royal courts in the Baroque period.

One of public functions of the royal court was representation. In the 16th–17th centuries it was an instrument to create the authority of the ruler's *officium* as chief office of the Commonwealth, and accompanied the king in ceremonies of the royal power. Aside from the oath sworn by the king-elect and his coronation in the Wawel Cathedral (being an integral part of the funeral of the predecessor and penitential pilgrimage to the Pauline Church of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Stanislaw Bishop and Martyr called Skałka (literally: “a small rock”), they included royal espousal and coronation of the king's wife, royal entrances to towns and acts of *homagium*, rituals of fealty of the Prussian electors, the homage of the Chamber of Deputies at the opening ceremony of the Sejm session, and accompanying medals, engravings and pictures, occasional architecture – accessories of the court *theatrum*. At those occasions the monarch appeared with the so-called grand court – consisting, in fact, of the courts of state officials and royalists from among other secular and clerical magnates.

In the Baroque period, with the growth of absolutist tendencies, both functions of the court – public and private one – were more and more associated with the king's place of residence; only in England – a parliamentary monarchy – it was London that had become the seat of the power. In the Commonwealth the royal court under King Henry of Valois travelled with the king, and under Stephen Bathory it resided most often at Grodno. In 1595 a fire considerably destroyed the Wawel, which contributed to the King's decision to change his place of residence from Cracow to Warsaw. According to the newest research Warsaw obtained the status of the residential city in 1611, when the rebuilding of the castle in Warsaw was completed. It is a small wonder that rulers preferred to stay in suburban residences such as – Łobzów near Cracow, under the Vasas Ujazdów and Nieporęt near Warsaw and Wilanów under Jan III Sobieski. In the times of the Wettins the royal court resided mainly in Dresden, Warsaw lost its residential functions, and, in practice, also the function of the capital city. The revival of the institution of king's court and Warsaw's capital character under King Stanisław August Poniatowski took place in quite different circumstances – of a constitutional monarchy.

3.6. Royal Chancellery and the Royal Secretaries

There were certain institutions that were at the same time the institutions of the court and of the central administration of the state, such as the royal chancellery the office of the royal secretary. The term “Royal Chancellery,” as used in the literature on the subject, refers in fact to four teams of officials: two Crown ones (Chancellor and Vice-chancellor) and, analogically, two Lithuanian ones. Matters of the Crown were handled by the Crown chancelleries, while of the Grand Duchy – by the Lithuanian chancelleries; letters to Livonia were sent with two seals (of the Crown and of Lithuania), and were prepared in the Crown chancellery. The office of the Chancellor (called Major Chancellery, Latin: *cancellaria maior*) and of the Vice-chancellor (called Minor Chancellery, Latin: *cancellaria minor*) dealt with the same matters, there was no formal division either of their tasks or the authority.

When there was no keeper of the seal at hand, the charge of current service of the Chancellery was taken by great Secretaries and Regents, Clerks subordinated to them (Notaries) originating from the petty nobility, or even townsmen, and some of Royal Secretaries. The Secretaries were professional office workers, appointed and sworn by the king; there were also honorific secretaries. Thus, Secretaries working in the Chancellery prepared – in the field of foreign contacts – a political and legal documentation, texts of international agreements and diplomatic correspondence (also coded one). Within the frameworks of internal politics, writs were drawn up and instructions to be sent to sejmiks were prepared (according to the instruction of the 1570s that remained valid into the early 18th century), as well as parliamentary records; the Secretaries also participated in the process of editing parliamentary constitutions and of publicizing them. During the sessions of the Sejm (as evidenced by iconography) they were seated in one group on the right side of the king's throne, under the cross.

The Secretaries also took part in commissions appointed by the king: temporary ones (such as the one vetting the estates) or temporary ones (such as the Sea Commission of King Sigismund Augustus). It was from among them that personal representatives of the king (legates) were recruited to the senators and sejmiks. They were entrusted with diplomatic missions – especially to the courts of the Habsburgs and to Rome. The office of royal secretary offered a profound acquaintance with domestic and foreign politics and for this reason it often was a stepping-stone to the career of senator.

4. Central Offices of the Commonwealth

The division of the offices of the Commonwealth into central and territorial (land) ones is just a matter of convention, as it stems mainly from the need to set apart the highest officials of the state government who after the Union of Lublin entered the Senate of the Commonwealth of Both Nations. All central offices were initially derived from the royal offices. Their development over time and stabilization at the end of the 16th century matched the consecutive stages of the shaping of court institutions. At the same time, there was a duplication of offices (in the 15th century a second Marshal and second Treasurer; by the mid-17th century a second Standard-bearer; two Hetmans, two Referendaries – until 1764, when a second Crown Secretary appeared), resulting from the necessity to stand in for an absent official and to make uniform the hierarchies of the Crown and of Lithuania after 1569.

4.1. Offices of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

Also central offices of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania developed from offices of the ruler's (hospodar's) court, but later on also from the Crown offices (from the 14th century) – and for this reason their development took longer than in the Crown. At the times of the personal union of the Crown and Lithuania, Lithuanian court offices were strongly influenced by the Polish tradition, while after the Union of

Lublin it was the other way round – for instance, the office of Court Master of the Hunt had appeared in the Grand Duchy much earlier than in Poland.

The Lithuanian specificity resulted in differences in an arbitrary hierarchy of offices, their jurisdiction and appointing rules for secular and ecclesiastical persons. Among other things, Lithuanian Grand Treasurers (from the second half of the 16th century) were customarily Grand Scriptors, which was connected to the fact that they had their own Chancellery. In the Lithuanian Chancellery the position and influences of the Roman Catholic clergymen were weaker than in the Crown (there was no custom to appoint a clergyman to the office of one of the Chancellors (or Vice-chancellors), it was introduced only in the 18th century, when secretaryships were conferred). It was not until the end of the 17th and the 18th centuries that in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania ecclesiastical secretaries (1670) and secular ones (1764) were appointed as part of the so-called coequation (Latin: *coequatio iurium*), which resulted in fulfilling a postulate made at the times of the Union of Lublin to make Polish and Lithuanian hierarchy of official uniform.

4.2 The Hierarchy of Central Offices

In the same times, the hierarchy of central offices and ministries was described for the first time, or, to be more precise: the order in which the persons holding those offices were supposed to take their seats at the official ceremonies (1768). While the constitution of the 1569 Sejm placed ministers at bottom of the Senate hierarchy, after minor castellans (Polish: *kasztelan drążkowy*: literally: a bench castellan – sitting on a bench instead of a chair) – according to the arbitrary hierarchy that situated land offices before the court ones – the list of 1768 mirrors the advancement of ministers throughout last two hundred years: now they were placed after bishops and voivodes, before major castellans.

Table 1. Senatorial and Non-senatorial Offices

SENATORIAL OFFICES	
Officials of the kingdom: ministers (one for the Crown and one for Lithuania)	LAND OFFICIALS
Great marshal Court marshal (legally, he was not senator until 1635, but customarily he sat in the Senate; in 1775 he was officially recognized as minister) Grand Chancellor Vice-chancellor Grand Treasurer	Voivodes Castellans Starosta of Samogitia

NON-SENATORIAL OFFICES				
Officials of the Kingdom (one for the Crown and one for Lithuania)	District officials		Borough Officials (<i>urzędy grodzkie</i>)	Officials of the Court
	In the Crown and Lithuania	Additionally, in Lithuania		
Grand Hetman (<i>hetman wielki</i>)	Chamberlain (<i>podkomorzy</i>)	Land Marshal (<i>marszałek ziemski</i>)	General starosta (<i>generał</i>)	Chamberlain (<i>podkomorzy</i>)
Field Hetman (<i>hetman polny</i>)	Standard-bearer (<i>chorąży</i>)	Ciwun (<i>tywun</i>)	Starosta grodowy	Cupbearer (<i>podczaszy</i>)
Quartermaster (<i>oboźny</i>)	Judge (<i>sędzia</i>)	Horodniczy (castellan)	Starosta niegrodowy	Carver (<i>krajczy</i>)
Secretary (<i>sekreтарь</i>)	Master of the Pantry (<i>stolnik</i>)	Custodian of Bridges (<i>mostowniczy</i>)	(<i>tenutariusz</i> , Lat. <i>capitaneus sine iurisdictione</i>)	Standard-bearer (<i>chorąży</i>)
Ecclesiastical Referendary (<i>referendarz duchowny</i>)	Cupbearer (<i>podczaszy</i>)	Architect (<i>budowniczy</i>)	Treasurer (<i>podskarbi</i>)	Equerry (<i>koniuszny</i>)
Secular Referendary (<i>referendarz świecki</i>)	Sub-judge (<i>podśędek</i>)	Carver (<i>krajczy</i>)	Vice-Voivode (<i>podwojewodzi</i>)	Master of the Kitchen (<i>kuchmistrz</i>)
Cupbearer (<i>podczaszy</i>)	Master of the Pantry (<i>podstoli</i>)	Equerry (<i>koniuszny</i>)	(in Prussia)	Court runner (<i>woźny</i>)
Carver (<i>krajczy</i>)	Cupbearer (<i>cześnik</i>)	Guard (<i>strażnik</i>)	Burggrave (e. g. in charge of the Wawel Castle)	Chamberlain of the Bedchamber (<i>podkomorzy-łożniczy</i>)
Sword-bearer (<i>miecznik</i>)	Master of the Royal Hunt (<i>łowczy</i>)	Forester (<i>leśniczy</i>)	Starosta's surrogate (his deputy for business trips)	Cupbearer (<i>cześnik</i>)
Court Treasurer (<i>podskarbi nadworny</i>)	Wojski (Lat. <i>tribunus</i>)	Quartermaster (<i>oboźny</i>)	Borough Scriptor's surrogate (<i>surrogator pisarza grodzkiego</i>)	Master of the Pantry (<i>podstoli</i>)
Court Assessor (<i>asesor sądu nadwornego</i>)	Land Clerk (<i>pisarz ziemski</i>)		Chamberlain's surrogate (for initial acts in border disputes)	Sub-equerry (<i>podkoniuszny</i>)
Grand Notary (<i>pisarz wielki</i>)	Sword-bearer (<i>miecznik</i>)			Master of the Royal Hunt (<i>łowczy starszy</i>)
Grand Prosecutor (Lat. <i>instigator regni</i>)	Treasurer (<i>skarbnik</i>)			Masters of the Pantry (<i>stolnicy</i>)
				Secretaries (<i>sekreтары</i>)
				Courtiers (<i>dworzanie</i>)

NON-SENATORIAL OFFICES				
Officials of the Kingdom (one for the Crown and one for Lithuania)	District officials		Borough Officials (<i>urzędy grodzkie</i>)	Officials of the Court
	In the Crown and Lithuania	Additionally, in Lithuania		
				Pages (<i>paziowie</i>) Courtiers called <i>komornicy</i> (valets) Treasury notaries (<i>pisarze skarbu</i>) Halberdiers (<i>halabardnicy</i>) Physicians (<i>lekarze</i>) Chaplains (<i>kapelani</i>) Doorkeepers (<i>odźwierni</i>) Quatermaster <i>stanowniczny</i> Steward (<i>szafarz</i>) Master of the Cellar (<i>piwniczny</i>) Trumpeters (<i>trębacze</i>) Silver grooms (<i>masztalerze srebrowi</i>) Cooks (<i>kucharze</i>) etc.

Source: Szymon Starowolski, *Polska albo opisanie położenia Królestwa Polskiego*, ed. by A. Piskadło, Cracow, 1976, pp. 157–158.

4.3. Appointment to Offices

The king's power to appoint to offices was limited to a certain degree by the custom to consult some ministerial designations with the Sejm, but all court offices were at the free disposal of the monarch. Contrary to titular land offices, cases of double appointments within the court hierarchy were rare, and if they happened, a dispute between the candidates were settled on the basis of the issuing date of a charter which resulted in practice of leaving an empty space to put in the date at the last moment. Such unlawful practices were fought against, except for the period of diarchy in 1706–1709.

A great majority of offices of the central administration was held for life, except for the offices that depended on Hetmans (Guards and Field Quartermasters) and Chancellors who were entitled to appoint and replace their subordinate personnel. Because an office was identified with its holder, the fact that offices were held for life – regarded as the property of the persons appointed to them – meant, in practice, independence of officials from the king and their impunity, even if they acted contrary to his orders and interests of the Commonwealth. Although ministers (Chancellors and Treasurers) and senators residents were accountable to the Sejm for the exercise of their duties, they could have been neither dismissed nor called to political responsibility – unless their act of treason was proven in the Sejm court by the written evidence “certain and clear” (*certa et manifesta*). In practice, it turned out to be impossible without legal manipulations (the trials of the Zborowskis 1585, Radziejowski 1652, and Lubomirski 1665).

4.4. Central Officials

The Marshal managed the court of the king, he was the master of ceremonies, determined prices of purchases for the royal household and was in charge of the criminal justice system in the king's place of residence, especially during the Sejm sessions, after the implementation in the mid-16th century of the so-called Marshal's Articles, that is criminal law rules on public safety at the place of the Sejm session. To maintain order, the Marshal had the marshal guard at his disposal. During his absence, the Grand Marshal was stood in for by the Court Marshal with an analogous scope of jurisdiction. In theory, the Crown and Lithuanian Marshals performed their duties in turns, depending on the side of the frontier the king was at the time. The non-observance of this principle caused prestige conflicts within the power elite.

The Chancellor and Vice-chancellor (of the Crown and Lithuania) held broad authority over matters of internal and foreign policy. They were also responsible (from 1504) for the conformity with the law regulations of acts issuing by the king's chancellery. In the Crown there was a rule that if one of the chancellors was a clergyman, the other had to be a layman, while in the Grand Duchy two laymen could hold this office at the same time. Under the jurisdiction of the Chancellors was the Chancellery staff, including: the Grand Secretary, Secretaries and Scriptorers. The Chancellery kept the Chancellor's and Vice-chancellor's registers called the Crown

Register (*Metryka Koronna*, Latin: *Metrica Regni Poloniae*) and Lithuanian Register (*Metryka Litewska*, Latin: *Acta Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae*). The Chancellor presided over the sessions of assessor courts.

The Crown Grand Treasurer and his Lithuanian counterpart managed the Commonwealth's treasury and were responsible for the mint, while their deputies – Court Treasurers or the Crown and Lithuania (from 1590 on) managed expenses of the king and his household. The Treasurers were accountable to the Sejm for their duties, presenting a kind of budget summary reports called the Treasurer's Reports (Polish: *rachunki podskarbińskie*). The group of highest officials of the Commonwealth (ministers) included Referendaries: ecclesiastical and secular one to conduct cases at the royal courts and who participated in the Senate sessions in an advisory capacity (from 1569).

Ministerial offices in the Commonwealth had been developed as the result of a tradition-honoured practice. Laymen and clergymen who held those offices – and as such representing interests of the state and the Roman Catholic Church that not always were the same – were often driven by own ambitions rather than a public good, and, in addition, from the moment of their appointment they were practically irremovable. Both these factors made it impossible to transform ministers of the Commonwealth into a joint organ of the state government – a cabinet consisting of professional officials appointed by monarchs and responsible to them, with a determined scope of their authority – a typical organ of government in centralized states at the end of the 17th and during the 18th centuries.

4.5. Attempts to Modernize the Central Administration under the Wettins

There were some attempts made to modernize the central government of the state in the period of union between the Commonwealth and Saxony under the Wettin Dynasty. After King Augustus II (Elector of Saxony as Frederic Augustus I) came to the throne, the need to uniform and standardize the state government together with the king's desire to be independent both of the Polish-Lithuanian Sejm and the Saxon estates led to the emergence in Saxony of a secret chamber chancellery (1698) that several years later (1704–1706) turned into the Secret Cabinet consisting of Saxon ministers appointed by the ruler without consultation with the estates to deal with most important matters of the electorate of Saxony, and in practice also in the Commonwealth. At the same time, there was also the Secret Council that used to be an advisory body of the elector. Because the scopes of their authorities were underspecified, both institutions often competed with each other.

Effectiveness of such a ruling, by some historians interpreted as the manifestation of absolutist tendencies, depended on the personality of the ruler. Under King Augustus II the Secret Cabinet exercised in fact control and supervision over all matters of the state, and its establishment made it easier for the king to develop a modern apparatus of the state diplomacy as well as the intelligence service and the post office. Under King Augustus III, on the other hand, after Prime Minister

Heinrich von Brühl had acquired a dominant influence on the state government, its importance diminished.

Thus, attempts to change the system of ruling in the Commonwealth towards the cabinet government under the Wettins did not lead to any formal transformations of central offices, which were not made until the time of King Stanisław August Poniatowski.

5. Local Administration

The remarkable peculiarity of the system of government of the Commonwealth was that the Sejm – the highest organ of the state administration – was in practice the only organ of government within the territory of the whole state. Local administration in the modern sense of the word: permanent, professional and paid for, did not, in fact, exist.

5.1. Starostwo

The only public office that was directly subordinated to the king and represented the central government on the local level was a *starostwo* (plural: *starostwa*). Their head official (called *starosta*) was appointed by the king; the starosta had broad judicial and administrative powers, and presided over the local borough court (Polish: *sąd grodzki*). Both *starosta grodowy* and another type, without public functions, called *starosta niegrodowy*, was a holder of the lands belonging to the starostwo and collected all income related to the post. The starosta grodowy acted as the king's representative in judicial and police matters and in the management of the crown lands. The powers of the starosta grodowy and a subordinate court were primarily criminal cases and the jurisdiction over the landless nobility. The most important issues to be dealt with by the governor were the so-called four starosta's articles, which included an attack against a noble house, arson, assault on a public road, and rape (see Chapter III, 3.2.1.). They were considered as the biggest and most dangerous crimes that had to be pursued and severely punished. The starosta also had economic, administrative and judiciary power over the peasantry in the estates belonging to the starostwo, while his authority over the rest of the population was limited. He collected – with the aid of his subordinate staff – rents, taxes, and dues from townsmen, appointed officials of higher level (bailiffs and mayors), wielded control over the finances of city councils and examined appeals from sentences of certain municipal courts (for instance court of councillors [Polish: *sąd radziecki*]). He performed analogous functions for Jewish people, examining appeals of sentences of rabbinic and kahal courts, supervising the kahal (Jewish communities) finances and functioning of their self-governing organs.

The main duty of the starosta grodowy was to ensure public safety in the territory under his control and to pass on messages sent by the royal chancellery to local people. As regards the judiciary, he was in charge of the castle court, as regards gathering and spreading information – of the town office (chancellery). The office

of starosta played an important part in social communication, among other things by taking care of the maintenance and repair of roads and by ensuring safety of main routes and the state frontiers.

In the 16th to the 17th, centuries the effectiveness of the office of starosta gradually diminished. Contrary to the thesis commonly accepted in the literature on the subject, this did not stem from the fact that under the constitution of 1611 starostas were admitted into the body of land offices, because the constitution determined only the order of taking seats for starostas at the sejmik meetings (in the Crown they were to take seat after the Chamberlains), to avoid disputes over prestige.⁵⁶

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the starosta – in practice appointed for life – regarded his office and its endowment mainly as a source of income, and its accumulation in the hands of magnates, who occasionally had as much as ten starostwa (contrary to the principle of *incompatibilitas*), indicated a weakening of the administrative function of the starostwo.

Public duties associated with his office starosta delegated to his subordinate staff, appointed and supported by him. Those included: Borough Judge (Polish: *sędzia grodzki*), Borough Scriptor (Polish: *pisarz grodzki*) and Burgrave (Polish: *burgrabia*). The judge represented the starosta acting in his judicial capacity, the burgrave guarded the castle, and the scriptor kept official records (Polish: *księgi grodzkie*) that included instructions of the sejmiks, warrants of enrolment (Polish: *listy przypowiednie*) to recruit the troops, and private documents that were to acquire legal efficacy and be preserved from destruction (letters of protest, last wills, charters), being an extremely important documentation for the nobility. Scriptors charged fees for their services and it was a very profitable office.

5.2. Land Offices

The second pillar of the state administration – dependent on the noble estate – that in theory was supposed to supplement the residual royal administration was insufficiently developed in the Commonwealth. Among land offices, the most important in the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries were those of voivodes and castellans as senators, and among minor offices – those that ensured judiciary powers.

Conferrals of land offices, to a certain degree corresponding to honorary titles of Western Europe, fulfilled the need of the nobility for a title as distinguishing feature of their social standing. This was used by the monarchs who regarded appointments to those offices as an important instrument in developing a royalist party. Due to an increasing disorder in the activity of the royal chancelleries, however, and also as a result of their intentional acts, in the second half of the 17th century the same posts were held by several or more people, and in the 18th century each district had a full set (or surplus) of land officials (except for judicial offices, which were often vacant).

56 *Konstytucje sejmu walnego warszawskiego r. 1611*, VL, vol. III, p. 16, fol. 26, p. 75: *Ordo Officialium Terrestrium*.

A majority of land offices were held without salaries, which made the administration of the Commonwealth cheaper than in centralized monarchies. And despite the fact that the prestige associated with a land office (or even the right to use the father's title) was not accompanied by any substantial authority or power, it was regarded as honour and duty towards the noble brethren and the Commonwealth. There had developed an important for growing political awareness and social mentality type of a noble land official and *sejmik* activist who, often quite successfully, fulfilled functions performed by paid specialists in the West.

5.3. Promotions of Officials

There were several paths within the system of advancement of officials: the secular and ecclesiastical ones, and the civic and military ones. Promotions in the court hierarchy were interwoven with the hierarchies of land offices (mainly senatorial ones) and ecclesiastical offices (bishoprics, abbeys). The majority of promotions among secular officials were advancements from court offices to land senatorial offices, occasionally from the court hierarchy to high ministerial offices, sometimes associated with high castellanies or voivodes. Churchmen, who in the central hierarchy were holding posts mainly in the chancellery and referendary offices, crowned their career with a bishopric or at least abbacy. As regards promotions to land offices, there was usually an elevation from one office to another, according to the hierarchy determined in 1611 (the constitution of the *Ordo Officialium Terrestrium*), and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – according to that included in the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588). Holding office requiring professional skills – especially in the Crown and Lithuanian chancelleries or those of dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church – could have been a path of social advancement. But an office regarded as profession did not develop into the career way similar to the careers of churchmen, and office holders did not identify their activities with interests of the Commonwealth.

In general, the office could have been left by resignation of the office-holder or his promotion to another office: court, central or land one, especially senatorial (from 1504). But this rule had been notoriously broken by monarchs who usually conferred several offices on one person.

Some of the offices were subject to the principle of *incompatibilitas*, which forbade an individual to hold two or more official administrative positions. The most important of these applied to the highest secular offices, and thus there were bans on holding an office of Marshal simultaneously with that of Treasurer, Voivode or Castellan ones (1565), of voivode and castellan with that of a starosta grodowy (except for Cracow starostwo, from 1537) – limited to the Crown only, and to hold these offices simultaneously with land offices in the own voivodeship of the office-holder (1562) as well as to concentrate two starostwa grodowe (borough starostwa) in a single hand (1562–1563). There was also in the Crown a ban on holding land offices (except for land sub-judge, from 1658) simultaneously with that of borough office in the own land of the office-holder (1550), and the office of Cracow Burgrave with castellan and any land and dignitary offices (1562–1563). As regards ecclesi-

astical offices, there were bans on holding a majority of bishoprics simultaneously with the post of Chancellor (1504), of archbishopric (with the exception of Lviv from 1638) with another bishopric; of bishopric with abbacy or the office of a parish priest (from 1605).

The principle of *incompatibilitas*, pushed by the Executionist movement, were to prevent the official elite to turn into an oligarchy and to strengthen the principle of noble equality. In practice, however, they also made it difficult for the monarchs to create their own factions among the magnates.

As regards the bans on accumulation of dignitaries, the *pacta conventa* of King Augustus II (1697) and Stanislaw August (1764) introduced the principle that the king should not confer several ministerial offices upon the members of a single magnate family. It was an overdue attempt to restrict the domination of great lords who monopolized the central power in their hands.

5.4. Sale of Offices

The practice of selling offices known already in the 16th century flourished in the next two centuries, and included the offices from dignitary to land ones as well as officers ranks. Offices were sold by the king, queens, and court dignitaries. Also the office-holder would resell his office, although with the consent of the king. Officer's rank was bought for a young son or even an infant. On the other hand, sometimes the selling of an office provided the seller with maintenance for old age, a kind of today's old age or disability pension.

5.5. State Administration versus Private Administration

Functions of the state administration towards the peasantry in private lands were performed by private officials (dominion ones), appointed by the owners. The problem of replacement of the public administration by dominion administration has not been examined yet, only indicated by A. Mączak. What tells us about the development of a personnel of private officials are the fruit of their work – inventories of the noble properties produced in mass amount, especially the magnate ones, which much more quickly adopted modern ways, emulating Western European trends: the collegial institutions of management (commissariats) were established, and the reporting were developed. For the nobility a post in the administration of a magnate estate was one of few ways to earn a living (apart from the Judiciary, clergy, and military service).

Like in other European countries, in the Commonwealth of the 16th–18th centuries there was no sharp difference between a private and a state official, for as a rule a magnate picked up to his dignitary chancellor the persons who were associated with him, paid for out of his own coffers, and who were more servants of their patron rather than in the service of the Commonwealth. This resulted in special bonds, strengthened additionally by a principle of rewarding clerks out of the money paid by customers (starting from the royal chancellor). An obsolete system of

management, strengthening the identification of an office with its holder, delayed the separation of the two spheres: public and private one, which accompanied the development of a modern state throughout the whole Europe.

6. Parliamentary System

The juridical-political order of the mixed system was represented by two all-state institutions: the Sejm and a confederation, operating in the capacity of the legal sovereign on the basis of delegation of the political sovereign – the nobility. For this reason it was possible for confederations to operate also during those times when there was a king in the Commonwealth: with him or against him. That happened when the nobility withdrew the conferral of power to the king who was breaking the law, under the article on forswearing the allegiance. A confederation that was unable to seize power, and thus to legalize itself, was a form of rebellion called *rokosz*.

6.1. Parliamentary Traditions of the Crown and Lithuania

The functioning of the Sejm of the Commonwealth under the elective kings was greatly influenced by separate parliamentary traditions in the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The evolution of the parliamentary system in Poland ended with the transformation of a medieval estate assembly into an early modern parliament only in 1505, when the resolution of the Radom Sejm (The act of *Nihil Novi*: “Nothing new without the common consent”) stipulated that no law could be passed by the Sejm without the consent of all the participants of the session: the king, the Senate, and the Chamber of Deputies. But the distribution of political forces was unfavourable for the nobility, and their demands of the so-called Executionist movement threatened not only the political position of senators but also the freedom of the king’s decisions. It was not until several years before the union with Lithuania that the Crown Chamber of Deputies began to be regarded by the king as a political partner.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – unlike in the Polish Kingdom – there had not developed in the period of Ruthenian influence an institution of assembly of freemen. What was characteristic of Lithuanian relations, however, were military assemblies (of the so-called land service), used (for instance by King Sigismund I the Old) to deal with current political matters. A general Sejm with the participation of elites (members of the Hospodar’s Council, officials, *knezi*, or princes, and lords – the rest of the wealthy and powerful) and representatives of the knights-noblemen emerged in 1534 (the precise date is still a matter of debate), but it was summoned only in exceptional circumstances; normally the Lithuanians had to settle for gatherings of the lords of the council that during the absence of the king made a collective quasi-government.

It was not until the great administrative reform under King Sigismund Augustus in 1564–1566 that Lithuanian parliamentary institutions finally assimilated to those of the Crown. In the Grand Duchy the reform of the state structures did not include

the lords of the council who could still accumulate offices and inherit appropriated Crown lands, and this was the reason why they maintained political power and economic might also after the Union of Lublin.

6.2. The General Sejm

The common Polish-Lithuanian general Sejm was established during the last three years of King Sigismund Augustus' reign. Contrary to the analogous institutions in those countries where estate assemblies came to a halt in their development (in Bavaria, Brandenburg, France) or their increasing importance (1528–1620) was brutally brought to an end by a military defeat (in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia), not only did the Sejm in the Commonwealth survive a difficult period of the first interregna but also significantly increased its importance and included in its authority also the powers that under the Jagiellons belonged exclusively to the king. Encompassing the nobility of all provinces, the Sejm was a central institution of noble representation and integration within the estate, and until the 1720s also trans-denominational one. It was the symbol of the Commonwealth and embodiment of the principles of mixed monarchy through its requirement that all laws should be passed by a common decision of the monarch, Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The basic prerogative of the Commonwealth's Sejm of the 16th to the 18th centuries was, from 1505, the exclusive right to pass laws. As the matter of fact, however, the Sejm was a principal institution not only for legislation (especially tax legislation) – as a supervisory body of central offices: of the king and ministers and the judiciary – through the court of the Sejm headed by the king in especially important matters.

The Sejm had to give its consent to summon *levée en masse* and to ennoblements, it was to hear envoys of foreign countries, determined the strategy for foreign policy, appointed commissars to negotiations (although its role in ratifying treaties and alliances is not clear). Gradually, the Sejm increased its control over the king and ministers. More important posts could have been conferred by the king only at the Sejm session. *Senatus consulta* (recommendations of the Senate) had to be presented to the Sejm to get its approval.

Trespassing by the Sejm upon the authority of the king was made more often through practice than by codification; for instance, the parliamentary power of pardon stemmed from a precedent – a cancellation in 1591 of the sentence of death and infamy passed under King Stephen Bathory on Krzysztof Zborowski. The most important social function of the Sejm was in the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries to shape political awareness of the noble elites and practical training of parliament members.

6.3. Three Estates of the Sejm

The Sejm of the Commonwealth was an assembly of three estates (as legal entities): the king – representing the laws of the Crown; the Senate – the highest ecclesiastical

and secular officials; and the Sejm deputies – representatives of the noble estate, and at the same time of the lands being constituencies on the basis of the so-called mandate (power), that is a sejmik instruction determining the freedom of decisions of deputies sent to the Sejm with “full power” (Latin: *plena potestas*) or with “limited power” (Latin: *limitata potestas*).

The king gained his full power in the parliament – the Sejm, in which he appeared one time as a separate estate, and another time as the head of the Senate. He had the right of legislative initiative, and he set the beginning and the end of sessions as well as gave legal validity to constitutions. The importance of the Sejm – in political parlance identified with the Commonwealth – resulted in the political system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in collective respect for the king during its sessions, which was expressed, among other things, by a separate type of representations symbolizing the majesty of the king in the Sejm. Peculiarly understood Polish-Lithuanian royalism, which was that the king was always spared in public speeches, was growing weaker and weaker as the authority of the institution of the Sejm diminished, and in the 1680s already belonged to the past, since the most important political decisions had been made for a long time behind the scenes, outside the parliament.

The Senate was in the Commonwealth both the heir of the medieval royal council (Latin: *curia regis*) and the chamber of parliament. Such a solution has been regarded as one of the fundamental defects of a collegial system of the state’s government, because a large number of the participants and lack of interest of the majority of them in current matters prevented it from fulfilling its function efficiently. There was neither the heredity of seats in the Senate nor the separation of the council and legalization of attempts made by King Sigismund III Vasa to establish his own advisory body (*conventiculum*).

Table 2. *The Hierarchy of Senators in the Commonwealth of the 17th Century*⁵⁷

ECCLESIASTICAL SENATORS	
Archbishops of:	
Gniezno Lviv	
Bishops of:	
Cracow Kujavia (Włocławek)	Samogitia Chełmno

57 The following register has been made on the basis of one of the constitutions of the 1569 Union Sejm – *Porządek Rady Koronnej Polskiej i Litewskiej...* (VL, vol. 1, p. 93). All the changes have been marked. The list is valid for the period of 1569–1763. Compiled after: Henryk Litwin, Dariusz Maciak, *Sejm polski w połowie XVII wieku*, Warsaw, 1983, pp. 58–61.

ECCLESIASTICAL SENATORS	
Bishops of:	
Poznań	Chelm
<i>alternatim</i> (alternate)	
Vilnius	Kiev
Płock	Kamianets (Kamieniec)
Warmia (Ermland)	Livonia
<i>alternatim</i> (alternate)	(Wenden [Kieś]) 1593 (VL, vol. 3, p. 347)
Lutsk	Smolensk 1638 (VL, vol. 3, p. 451)
Przemysł	
SECULAR SENATORS*	
Greater voivodes and castellans:	
Castellan of Cracow	Voivode of Sandomierz
Voivode of Cracow	Castellan of Vilnius
<i>alternatim</i> (alternate)	Voivode of Kalisz
Voivode of Poznań	Voivode of Troki
Voivode of Vilnius	Voivode of Parnawa (Pärnu) 1598–1677 (VL, vol. 2, p. 377)
Voivode of Sieradz	Voivode of Livonia (Inflanty) from 1677 (VL, vol. 2, p. 377)
Castellan of Trakai	Voivode of Chernigov 1653 (VL, vol. 3, p. 410)
Voivode of Łęczyca	Castellan of Poznań
Starosta of Samogitia	Castellan of Sandomierz
Voivode of Brześć Kujawski	Castellan of Kalisz
Voivode of Kiev	Castellan of Wojnicz
Voivode of Inowrocław	Castellan of Sieradz
Voivode of Rus (Ruthenia)	Castellan of Łęczyca
Voivode of Volhynia	Castellan of Samogitia
Voivode of Podolia	Castellan of Brześć Kujawski
Voivode of Smolensk	Castellan of Kiev
Voivode of Lublin	Castellan of Inowrocław
Voivode of Polotsk	Castellan of Lviv
Voivode of Belz (Bełsk)	Castellan of Volhynia
Voivode of Novahrudak	Castellan of Kamenets
Voivode of Płock	Castellan of Smolensk
Voivode of Vitebsk	Castellan of Lublin
Voivode of Masovia	Castellan of Polotsk
Voivode of Podlasie	Castellan of Belz (Bełsk)
Voivode of Rawa	Castellan of Novahrudak
Voivode of Brest-Litovsk	
Voivode of Chelmno	
Voivode of Mstsislaw	

SECULAR SENATORS*	
Greater voivodes and castellans:	
Voivode of Malbork	Castellan of Plock
Voivode of Bratslav	Castellan of Vitebsk
Voivode of Pomerania	Castellan of Czersk
Voivode of Minsk	Castellan of Podlasie
Voivode of Wenden 1598–1677 (VL, vol. 2, p. 377)	Castellan of Rawa
Voivode of Dorpat (Tartu) 1598–1677 (VL, vol. 2, p. 377)	
Castellans of:	
Brest-Litovsk	Minsk
Chełmno	Wenden 1598–1677 (see: voivodes)
Mstsislaw	Dorpat (Tartu) 1598–1677 (see: voivodes)
Elbląg	Parnawa (Pärnu) 1598–1677 (see: voivodes)
Bratslav	Livonia from 1677 (see: voivodes)
Gdańsk	Czernigov 1635 (see: voivodes)
Minor castellans (called <i>drązkowy</i>), of:	
Sącz	Rozprza
Międzyrzecz	Biechów
Wiślica	Bydgoszcz
Biecz	Brzeziny
Rogoźno	Kruszwica
Radom	Oświęcim
Zawichost	Kamień (Krajeński)
Łąd	Spycimierz
Śrem	Inowódz
Żarnów	Kowal
Małogoszcz	Santok
Wieluń	Sochaczew
Przemyśl	Warsaw
Halych	Gostynin
Sanok	Wizna
Chełm	Raciąż
Dobrzyń	Sierpc
Połaniec	Wyszogród
Przemęt	Rypin
Krzywiń	Zakroczym
Czechów	Ciechanów
Nakło	Liw
Słońsk	Sieradz
Lubaczów	Łęczycza
Equerry castellans	Kujavia

SECULAR SENATORS*	
Ministries	
Grand Marshal of the Crown	Vice-Chancellor of Lithuania
Grand Marshal of Lithuania	Grand Treasurer of the Crown
Grand Chancellor of the Crown	Grand Treasurer of Lithuania
Grand Chancellor of Lithuania	Court Marshal of the Crown
Vice-Chancellor of the Crown	Court Marshal of Lithuania

* In theory, the first seat in the Senate was reserved for the duke of Prussia, but in practice he never took his seat.

The Senate consisted of: archbishops and bishops of the Catholic Church, voivodes and castellans (and in Lithuania the starosta of Samogitia), and ministers. From among the Crown and court dignitaries only those who in the 15th century had been in the king's council, thus hetmans (until 1768) and the Court Treasurer were excluded, for these offices were stabilized after the composition of the Senate had been established. In the beginning of the 17th century the Senate consisted of (from the Crown and Lithuania together) 140 senators, all appointed for life. The sessions of General Sejm included both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

There was an attempt to create a constant parliamentary body to cooperate with the king in the form of so-called senators residents – who (under the 1576 Constitution) were to be designated by the Sejm for two years “to reside with the King” in the number of 16, and four of them had to permanently reside at the king's side, changing every six months. In practice, the institution of senators residents, reinstated in 1607, did not begin to function until 1613; in 1641 their number was increased to 28. Their task was to give advice to and to have control over the king and his milieu, as well as to give an account of their activities at the Sejm. However, with the passage of time they ceased to serve as an institution of control over the king, but they were part of councils of the Senate whose role gradually increased at the expense of the Sejm.

Councils of the Senate (Latin: *senatus consilia*) consisted of all senators present at the court – ministers, residents, but also of persons arbitrarily invited by the king. Their duties were to give recommendations to the king called in Latin *senatus consulta*, which were written down, signed and read at the beginning of each Sejm. As intended by the legislators, this was supposed to increase the control of the Sejm over the king – in practice, however, monarchs turned councils of the Senate into their tool to go around the Sejm and act with the omission of the Chamber of Deputies.

There was in the parliament of the Commonwealth no formal division of the Sejm into the upper and lower houses (as the House of Lords and House of Commons in England). During a joint session of two chambers the necessity to opt for or against the court restricted the freedom of expression of senators, but they kept their influence on proceedings in small groups – hence the nobility fears of shifting

the sessions to commissions and working groups (Polish: *deputacja*). The impact of the Senate on foreign policy, making important decisions at the councils of Senate on domestic matters and increasing practical independence from the Chamber of Deputies strengthened during the times of the Wettins with a developing degeneration of the Sejm and increasingly often broken up sessions in the face of the necessity to make quick decisions.

The number of deputies in the Chamber of Deputies was established by custom. After the Union of Lublin there were from 140 to 170 representatives, including 48 from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The changing number of the Sejm deputies resulted from the lack of legal regulations, for instance in the Crown, the Lublin voivodeship sent as a rule only 3 representatives, Kraków V. – 7, Ruthenian V. – 14, Masovian V. – 20, while in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania it was as a rule two representatives from each district. This was the composition of the Sejm to the end of the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian state, with a small correction in the times of the Wettins (in 1736 the Sandomierz Voivodeship gained a seventh representative, and duchies of Oświęcim and Zator – a second one). As an institution of estate representation the Chamber of Deputies represented only the secular nobility – from the early 16th century there were neither the representatives of the lower clergy (chapters) nor those of the townsmen (from 1505).

As late as in the Wettin times the great majority of representatives came from the middle nobility. A certain percentage of deputies came from magnate families – mainly the young who did not gain a senatorial seat yet and initially settled for titular Crown and Lithuanian offices that could be held together with a parliamentary seat. Magnates also performed – occasionally in the first half of the 17th century, and predominantly under the Wettin kings – the function of Marshals (speakers) of the Sejm. But there were among the deputies also indigent people, usually clients of the magnates, who during their service as a Sejm members relied upon the financial help of their patrons, and later on (from the second half of the 17th to the 18th centuries) – of foreign diplomats. Besides, remunerations in money or in other form were often the effect, and thus the purpose of taking on the responsibilities of a deputy.

Initially, neither the confession of deputies nor senators was of any importance, but the number of non-Catholics decreased as the position of Protestant and Orthodox nobility weakened, and conversions to Catholicism increased. Non-Catholics, who were to be found among the deputies in the first two decades of King Augustus II reign, were finally excluded from the parliament at the 1718 Sejm – through a precedent. On the initiative of the Catholic clergy a dissident deputy, a certain Andrzej Piotrowski, was not allowed to vote for a Marshal of the Sejm, was not recognized as a deputy without a special court proceeding known as *rugi* and was expelled from the chamber, despite attempts to defend him by some senators and other deputies. A formal exclusion of dissidents from the functions of deputies and senators took place during the interregnum after the death of King Augustus II and was ultimately confirmed by the constitution of the Pacification Sejm of 1768.

6.4. Organization of the Sejm

Table 3. Frequency of Sejm Sessions Summoned by the Polish Kings

King	Regnal years	Number of Sejms		Average length of the session in days
		Actually held ^a	Including those with no legislation	
Henry of Valois	1573–1575	7	–	41
Stephen Bathory	1576–1586	7	–	47
Sigismund III Vasa	1587–1632	37	6	39
Wladislaus IV Vasa	1632–1648	15	3	38
Jan II Casimir Vasa	1648–1668	20	7	39
Michał II Korybut Wiśniowiecki	1669–1673	6	4	51
Jan III Sobieski	1674–1696	12	6	63
Augustus II Wettin (the Strong)	1697–1733	21	12	28
Augustus III Wettin	1733–1763	16	14	27
Stanisław August Poniatowski	1764–1795	13	1	162

^a Includes ordinary and extraordinary Sejms that were actually held; without election and convocation Sejms.

Source: *Historia Polski w liczbach*, Warsaw, 2003, p. 25, prep. on the basis of: Władysław Konopczyński, *Chronologia sejmów polskich 1493–1793*, Warsaw, 1948.

Initially, the place and frequency of the Sejm sessions (usually every year) were decided by the king who also determined the agenda of the session. After the order of proceedings had been regulated by the Henrician Articles, Sejms were divided into ordinary ones, summoned every two years, and extraordinary ones, summoned when necessary. An ordinary session could not take longer than six weeks, an extraordinary one – not longer than two weeks. In order to prolong the session, a consent of all deputies was needed. After the Union of Lublin of 1569, the joint session of the Polish-Lithuanian Sejm usually took place in Warsaw. Extraordinary Sejms convened sporadically in other towns: in Toruń (at the Town Hall) during the Prussian war with Sweden (1626), and in Lublin during the Great Northern War (1717). From 1673 on there was the so-called *alternata* introduced – in order to emphasize the equality of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania within the federative Commonwealth, every third Sejm was to be held in Grodno. Until 1734 the coronation Sejms had been held in Cracow; the last royal coronation of Stanisław August Poniatowski took place in Warsaw.

Sessions of the Sejm were settled in royal residences, most often at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, similarly to estate assemblies in other European countries of the early modern period: in Bohemia in the castle of Hradčany in Prague, in Muscovy in the Kremlin in Moscow, in Denmark in the castle of Nybörg, in Sweden in the royal castle in Stockholm. The division between the royal household and the seat of parliament took place in England where, after the residence of the king was transferred to Whitehall Palace (1512), the meetings of the House of Commons were held in Westminster; and the Reich – where the Reichstag met at the City Hall of Ratisbon (from 1663). In theory, the order of proceedings established by custom did not undergo any changes, only in the 17th century its ceremonial (especially religious) setting was expanded. In the 17th century the sequence of procedures was only occasionally changed until the regulations of the 1690 Sejm stipulated the following order of proceedings:

1. On the first day – the inauguration mass; election of a marshal of the Chamber of Deputies.
2. On the second day the so-called *rugi* (checking the validity of deputies' mandates) under the new marshal (under “the new staff”) – this rule was not strictly followed.
3. On the third day – the beginning of a joint session (of the king, Chamber of Deputies and the Senate) in the Senate: welcome of the king (a kiss on the hand); reading out of the *pacta conventa*; hearing of the “proposals from the throne”; reading out “scripts *ad archivum*” from the last Sejm and accounts of the Councils of the Senate (*resultata senatus consulta*) from the period between the Sejm sessions; the distribution of vacant offices by the king (under the constitutions of the 1588 and 1607 Sejms, making it possible for deputies to demand the distribution of vacancies, and after 1607 to block the proceedings until the king fulfilled this duty); hearing of the so-called senatorial *vota*, i. e. opinions and viewpoints presented by senators, and accounts of diplomats; and finally the appointment by the king of the representatives of the Senate to commissions.
4. Over the following days – the beginning of separate sessions of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate; the Sejm court in the Senate, and a debate over “the proposals from the throne” in the Chamber of Deputies – usually starting with the matters of security, and then with other affairs.
5. Five days before the end of the Sejm – again a joint meeting of the both chambers “upstairs” (in the Senate Chamber), a farewell to the king and the Sejm conclusion, that is the edition of constitutions finalizing the Sejm proceedings.

Not all constitutions of the Sejm concerned the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which sometimes accepted only some of the statements relating to the whole Commonwealth, while rejecting others or “taking them to the brethren.”

Separate Lithuanian constitutions appeared at the end of the 16th and in the first half of the 17th centuries as a result of the rule that the Sejm had no right to impose its will on any of the provinces. At the Coronation Sejm of King Sigismund III Vasa (1588) an obligatory “conformity” of constitutions was emphasized, and in 1590

the “Matters of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania” were separated out of constitutions for the first time (then in 1607 and several times after the coronation of King Jan Casimir).

As ascertained by Andrzej Rachuba, constitutions pertaining to local matters were placed within the part concerning the nation in question; mutual relations and matters of political systems – in the part on the Crown; diplomatic contacts – according to the jurisdiction (for instance, Muscovite matters in the Lithuanian part). In the 1640s and 1650s, in over twenty cases (of 37 Sejms) tax resolutions pertaining to Lithuania were separated as an individual part of the constitution. An interpretation of this phenomenon has been controversial; according to some historians (Henryk Wisner) it evidences the remaining individuality of Lithuania and the Crown, and to some others (A. Rachuba) – it tells of “a still alive struggle between treating the Grand Duchy as a province or as a nation.”⁵⁸

6.5. Procedures of Sejm Sessions

The procedure of sessions of the Sejm amounted to successive stages of reaching consent. It has been rightly pointed out (Janusz Ekes, Edward Opaliński) that the term *unanimity* commonly used in the literature on the subject is imprecise, since the point was to reach a unanimous consent of the Sejm (especially the Chamber of Deputies) to all the passed constitutions. Consent and compromise were being reached in successive stages of counting marks and exerting pressure on opponents.

The fact that in the parliament of the Commonwealth matters were not decided by majority (*per pluralitatem*) stemmed, to a large degree, from the respect for an individual (each deputy individually) characteristic of the Old Polish culture, and from the understanding that the essence of democracy was not to impose the will of a majority over that of their opponents but that the latter should actually become convinced of the rightness of proposed bills.

According to the principle of weighting votes, it was not only the number of supporters of the bill in question that mattered but also the quality and permanence of the consent. This understanding of unanimity was applied not only in the Commonwealth but also in the Bohemian estates, where during debates in separate chambers the votes were weighed (according to the ranks of voters), and not mechanically counted. Of course, the king and his closest associates, for whom the right of *liberum veto* was a thorn in their side, wanted decisions to be made by a numerical majority, and treated the Sejm instrumentally.

Despite its extensive capacities, the Sejm was less and less efficient. Its operations were hampered, and sometimes paralyzed by the necessity to reach a unanimous consensus and by the deputies’ obligation to strictly follow the instructions of their sejmiks. The only defense mechanism against the abuse of the unanimity rule was

58 Andrzej Rachuba, *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie w systemie parlamentarnym Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1569–1763*, Warsaw, 2002, p. 188.

the pressure of public opinion. In the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries (until 1652) a majority of deputies and senators thought that a single deputy should not oppose a common consensus (contradict it); the nobility at sejmiks demanded punishment for those who hampered the proceedings of the Sejm or led to its dissolution without any legislation. For a long time, the perspective of losing influence at local sejmiks was enough for oppositionists to refrain from breaking up the Sejm sessions, and when the Sejm dissolved without constitution, a lot of effort was made to shift the burden of responsibility onto the opponents.

The non-conclusions of the Sejms, when after the period of six weeks it was impossible to pass any act, and their subsequent breaking up, became especially dangerous from the 1640s on. The main obstacle to efficient implementation of the parliamentary procedures and passing of constitutions (the so-called conclusion of the Sejm) was the notorious practice of *liberum veto* (or rather *liberum rumpo* – breaking up the Sejms) initiated in 1652, when a deputy from Upita, Władysław Siciński, did not allow for the session to be prolonged on the last day, and the Marshal of the Sejm Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro regarded the individual protest as sufficient (although prior to that event it had to be the protest of the whole sejmik), thus nullifying all acts passed during its session. But “a precedent in the form of legal validity of contradiction of an individual deputy at the Sejm of 1652 did not determine the further course of the evolution.”⁵⁹ In the first period after the 1652 Sejm, there developed, as the reaction to a protestation, the technique of debating *in passivity* (*in passivitate*), that is, with no right to pass any legal acts. Occasionally, a mitigated form of *liberum veto* was used, suspending the works on constitutions, when an opposing deputy exclaimed: “I cease the activity (*sisto activitatem*).”⁶⁰

One should distinguish between the non-conclusion of the Sejm over the period of six weeks, and its breaking up through *liberum veto* by this date. In such a way the Sejm of 1669 had been broken up. The frequency of the Sejm breaking up increased in 1662–1672, in 1688, for the first time, the Sejm was broken up before the marshal was elected. The non-conclusion of the Sejm, like its breaking up, nullified all acts passed during its session in concrete matters – even the ones that had been passed unanimously, for the constitutions of the Sejm were regarded as the whole. The deputy breaking up the session was not obliged to justify his act. And although the practice of breaking off of the Sejms was lamented upon, the legality of *liberum veto* was not questioned, and the noble opinion regarded the right as the “inalienable pupil* of their liberty.”

59 Jolanta Choińska-Mika, *Między społeczeństwem szlacheckim a władzą. Problemy komunikacji społeczności lokalne – władza w epoce Jana Kazimierza*, Warsaw, 2002, p. 158.

60 Wojciech Kriegseisen, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej (do 1763). Geneza i kryzys władzy ustawodawczej*, Warsaw, 1995, pp. 117–118.

* The term in Polish is: *źrenica wolności*, in Latin: *pupilla libertatis*, with a reference to the biblical “apple of one’s eye.”

Nonetheless, it was not easy to block a debate or break up a session, and it was insufficient to hire a deputy for a certain sum of money. Protests could be ignored on formal grounds (e.g. when a deputy was drunk), or the door of the chamber could be locked to prevent a protesting deputy from escaping and forcing him to compromise, or the vetoing deputies could be captured on the exit roads from Warsaw and Grodno and bribed to withdraw their protests. When the Sejm was broken up, attempts were made to hamper the registration of the protest in Warsaw borough registers but it was enough to register it in any court registers, for example, in the place of residence of the vetoing deputy. Projects to formally restrict the right of free expression – such as the proposals to limit the right of *liberum veto* to the proceedings of the Senate (1638), and pursue the vetoer through legal action (the 1650s and 1660s) – turned out to be futile.

6.6. *Liberum Veto*

Liberum veto was condemned in Polish historiography as instrument of rowdiness and destruction in the period when the opinion prevailed that the state was the value in itself and in principle its interest was superior to interests of parties and individuals. A. Sulima-Kamiński, however, has proposed a thesis that the struggle for *liberum veto* has been wrongly explained, because if the great majority of deputies wanted to pass a bill, they knew how to reject all objections – for example, at the Silent Sejm (1717). In other words, it was not the procedures to be blamed for the breaking off of the Sejms, but rather the people and parties using them in bad faith.

The practice of *limita* (adjourning the conclusion of the Sejm until the next Sejm) introduced in the Wettin times did not save the parliamentary institution under King Augustus II, and under King Augustus III for 16 Sejms that were summoned, only two were concluded (the last one in 1736). In general, in 1582–1762, which is over the period of 180 years, 53 Sejms were dissolved or broken up, which is to say, almost 60 %. The degradation of the Sejm as a legislative and supervisory body was troublesome for the executive power, for it resulted in no revenues from the Sejm taxes. The Wettins managed somehow, settling for the revenues from fixed taxes, and it turned out that the Commonwealth was able to function without its legislature. The efforts to reactivate the Sejm for fiscal reasons undertaken under King Stanisław August Poniatowski (the Sejms of 1768, 1773–1775) did not result in its formal strengthening as representative institution until the Constitution of May 3, 1791.

6.7. A Sejm on Horseback

The question of a Sejm on horseback (Polish: *sejm konny*) has been controversial: was it an actual element of the political system of the Commonwealth as a synonym of *rokosz* (rebellion), or a theoretical construct, or perhaps only a political banner? According to legal historians, the Sejm on horseback of 1652–1763 was a

phenomenon belonging exclusively to the sphere of ideology (Henryk Olszewski), but it does not seem possible to be a mere doctrinal creation, unknown in practice.

In the opinion of the nobility, the Sejm on horseback (occasionally identified with the *levée en masse* derived from old military camp Sejms (*in loco campestri*), sporadically held under King Sigismund the Old (1537 in the Crown, more often in Lithuania). The concept of Sejm on horseback had been strongly rooted in the consciousness of the nobility since 1537, then in the times of King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki and Jan III Sobieski (1683, 1688–1689, 1695); in the Wettin times under King August II (1698–1701, 1701–1702 1709–1714, 1729–1733); and then under King Augustus III the last time in 1758. Politicians appealing to the concept of Sejm on horseback had various aims – both the defence and suppression of freedom; it was often the monarchs who resorted to it. In this sense, a Sejm on horseback merited the term of *exorbitantiarum*, which was to remove difficulties in the functioning of the state.

7. Confederation and Rokosz (Rebellion)

7.1. The Genesis of Confederation

The genesis of confederation derived from the custom of the sovereign to exercise his power by resorting to direct assemblies (without sejmiks), summoned to deal with specific matters. Depending on a situation, the right of public gatherings was exercised either by the Sejm and the king, or directly by the confederated noblemen. Early modern confederations were institutions developed over the period of two first interregna after the death of King Sigismund Augustus, when it was impossible to summon the Sejms since there was no king. In such circumstances the medieval (the 13th to the 15th centuries) tradition of confederation was revived – a union formed for a certain period of time by the nobility, clergy and/or towns and cities for common action and specific purposes, usually to force their postulates upon the state government.

7.2. General Confederation

General confederations were formed (since 1573) at the convocation Sejms, after the death of the king, and then this proven institution was resorted to depending on actual needs. Each confederation was headed by a marshal, and since a confederation Sejm was open, there was no need to elect another one for the Chamber of Deputies. During the confederation, senators, and deputies usually debated together. Hence, the problem of passing the bills twice did not exist: once in the Chamber of Deputies, and then at the joint session of both chambers. The only effective confederated Sejm was the Silent Sejm of 1717. Its legislative practice was recognized as an exceptional departure from the proper parliamentary forms and created an understandable dislike as a dangerous precedent leading to the suppression of freedom. Because, in fact, the legislation of the Silent Sejm suited the nobility, they did

not oppose it very forcefully, and later forms of modification were proposed mainly by hetmans afflicted with “descriptions” of their posts, that is, by a specification of their jurisdictions.

The institution of confederation was also known in other countries, but in the Commonwealth of the 17th century it appeared more and more often, and the right to call together a confederation found its permanent place within the noble liberties. During interregna, confederations were supposed to ensure order, to organize security on the local and national scale. But their imprecise statutory regulations made it possible even for local groups of the noblemen to regard themselves as representatives of the general community, and the *levée en masse* decided by provinces whether they would stay in the camp or leave for home.

A confederation was forming in one voivodship, and others were joining it, and when all or the majority of them acceded to it, the confederation became a general one. General confederations, called together separately for the Crown and Lithuania, elected their authorities – the so-called “generality” (Polish: *generalność*), consisting of the marshal of confederation and the councillors (Polish: *konsyliarze*) – that appointed regimentaries (Polish: *regimentarze*) as the commanders of the confederation troops. The confederation of Tyszowce, formed only to drive out the Swedes from the Commonwealth in 1655, exceptionally gave all the power to hetmans. In the Wettin times, it was the general council that was at the head of a confederation elected by confederation sejmiks; the general council either stood in for the general Sejm (on the basis of a general confederation, as in 1710), or was a preparatory stage to it (1673), or its epilogue (1735, when the confederation was preceded by the Pacification Sejm). The general council was headed *ex officio* by the marshal of confederation, and decisions were reached by majority vote.

Several general confederation councils, formed at the side of the king under the Wettins (1710, 1735), had the capacity of extraordinary Sejms passing constitutions. The Sejms convened as confederations met with the resistance of the nobility who regarded them as an attack on the principle of unanimity and *liberum veto*, for the majority rule excluded the possibility of breaking up of the confederated Sejm. The vitality of confederations, despite the fact that they were forbidden by the 1717 Sejm, was both the sign and consequence of weakness of the state authority in its normal, parliamentary capacity of a mixed monarchy (*monarchia mixta*).

In theory, confederations acted as the surrogate for the state authorities, when the latter were unable to fulfill their duties, but it was the confederated nobility who arbitrarily decided whether that was the case. In practice, their effectiveness and legality depended on the activity and number of participants. Under the superiority of magnates in the 17th and the 18th centuries, the confederations were often becoming a weapon in the hands of various factions of magnates to achieve their particular goals, they “had become a convenient cloak for the egoism of the estates.”⁶¹ When

61 Aleksander Rembowski, *Konfederacja i rokosz w dawnym państwie prawie polskim*, Warsaw, 1893, p. 278.

two parties convened two opposing confederations (in the times of King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki and the Wettins), an appeal was usually made to the Pacification Sejm that dealt with the matters and declared amnesty to the defeated party.

Until recently, the confederations had been harshly criticized in the literature on the subject as an anomaly of political system hampering the modernization of the state and its adaptation to the European norms. According to Zygmunt Gloger, “The worst consequence of free elections was the transformation of confederations into the institution of the state law, substituting for free crown courts during the interregnum.”⁶² Also the contemporary German historian recognized the confederation as “a traditionally revolutionary element contributing to the decay of the state,” in which the essence of a political maxim incomprehensible to the outsiders: *Polonia anarchia regitur* (Poland is ruled by disorder; Polish: *Polska nierządem stoi*), manifested itself.⁶³

However, nowadays Polish historians tend to put a positive spin on the institution of confederation, regarding it as an important element of the political life in the Commonwealth that was to fill in the gaps in the political system during the interregnum;⁶⁴ and during the *regnum* as the form of “politics exercised on horseback,” a peculiar binding agent within the boundaries of the Commonwealth.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, confederations both at the side of the king and against him were breaking the basic political principle of the mixed monarchy that it was only and solely the three estates together that were the supreme power of the Commonwealth. A usurpation of sovereignty by the king was regarded as *absolutum dominium*, but seizing sovereign power by the nobility resulted in putting the confederation over the Sejm – the only legal body of the estate representation.

7.3. *Rokosz*

The term *rokosz* – from Hungarian *rakás* meaning “crowd” or “gathering,” and *Rákos* designating “fields” located near the Hungarian royal residence of Pest (currently: Budapest), where assembly of Hungarian usually gathered on horseback, or from *rug* (*rugosz*) – referred to the customary right to resist unjust laws (in the form of a confederation against the king). And although according to the noble tradition the first *rokosz* was a rebellion of noblemen in the camp near Lviv during the so-called Chicken War or Hen War (Polish: *wojna kokosza*) of 1537 under King Sigismund I the Old, the name of *rokosz* itself was used for the first time during the Sandomierz

62 Zygmunt Gloger, *Encyklopedia staropolska*, vol. III, Warsaw, 1974, pp. 75–76.

63 Klaus Zernack, *Polska a Rosja. Dwie drogi w dziejach Europy*, trans. A. Konopacki, Warsaw, 2000, p. 192.

64 Juliusz Bardach, Bogusław Leśnodorski, Michał Pietrzak, *Historia państwa i prawa polskiego*, Warsaw, 1976, p. 230.

65 Antoni Mączak, “Przestrzeń władzy,” in: *Cywilizacja europejska – wykłady i eseje*, ed. M. Koźmiński, Warsaw, 2004, p. 200.

Rebellion (also known as Zebrzydowski Rebellion) of 1606–1609 (Polish: *rokosz sandomierski*; *rokosz Zebrzydowskiego*), against both the king and the senators:

Rokosz is a gentle thing [...] lords ne'er attend it, nay, they haue alway forbod the gentlemen to trye't, and they haue strived fiercely to countermand't, and they art not keen to see neither gentle displayes nor any gentle heap.⁶⁶

The superiority of direct democracy – personified by the “heap” of *rokosz* and other assemblies of noblemen (*levée en masse*, military displays [Polish: *okazowanie*]) – over the parliamentary representation stemmed from (according to the publicists supporting the *rokosz*) the degeneration of legal institutions of representation which had ceased to be a reliable representation of noble interests. And although the *rokosz* claimed the right to impose taxes, appointed its own courts, suspended the operations of borough and land courts, and claimed the power to judge the king and senate, the military defeat of its participants near Janowiec meant the victory of the Sejm over the Sandomierz Rebellion, the legal representation of the estates over the anti-royal confederation.

After 1609 for sixty years *rokosz* became an accursed word in the political language, and the political anti-system taking on the form of *rokosz* was rejected; yet it returned in the situation of the crisis of the state in the second half of the 17th century (from the Lubomirski Rebellion [Polish: *rokosz Lubomirskiego*] 1662–1665). Such rebellions found the response in the form of confederations at the side of the king, who could also recognize the postulates of a confederation against him and legalize it by joining in.

8. General Sejmiks and Convocations in Lithuania

8.1. General Sejmiks

The intermediate between the Sejm and particular sejmiks were general sejmiks called “generals” that emerged at various times in different provinces; they convened: in Great Poland – at Koło, in Little Poland – at Nowy Korczyn, in Royal Prussia – at Grudziądz or Malbork, in Masovia – at Warsaw (at St. Martin Church on Piwna Street), in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – at Volkovysk, and then at Slonim, in Podlasie (sporadically) – at Drohiczyn or Bransk. In the 16th century the general sejmiks, which aimed at finding a common ground of a particular province towards proposals of the king gathered before the Sejms (occasionally in Prussia and Masovia after the Sejms) fairly regularly, and they were attended by local senators and deputies of the sejmiks. There were some local differences in their structure: for instance, the Prussian general was attended also by representatives of the Crown cities, with the delegates of grand cities (Gdańsk, Toruń and Elbląg)

66 “Rozmowa o rokoszu,” in: *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoszu Zebrzydowskiego 1606–1608*, ed. J. Czubek, Cracow, 1916–1918, vol. 2, p. 119.

debating together with senators, and the delegates of smaller towns – together with the representatives of the nobility.

To the nobility, the general sejmiks were an important and much needed institution, if only for practical purposes. In the periods of conflicts with the central power (*rokosz*) as well as of successive wars and military confederations (especially in the time of King Jan Casimir), when the basic problem that they were facing was to impose taxes, the nobility took much care to burden all the provinces in equal proportion – which required local consultations prior to the Sejm session. Advance knowledge of decisions of individual lands and districts about political and economic matters was important for local politicians, and they wanted to ensure and maintain an efficient and fluent flow of information between sejmiks. A thesis of A. Sulima-Kamiński that the self-governance of the nobility presupposed no interferences in the matters of neighbours is the result of a false assumption that looking into matters of other lands and voivodeships meant a willingness to force own opinions upon them.

With the passage of time the importance of the general sejmiks diminished for the reasons that still arouse controversy of historians, a part of whom (including the author of this book) think that they were inconvenient for the king and royalists, while in the opinion of others (E. Opaliński) it was the nobility who was responsible for their decline. The question remains unsettled because, although formally it was the king who summoned the general sejmiks, and the nobility submitted the need to continue their sessions in the resolutions of the local sejmiks, the deputies and senators, who boycotted them, remained unpunished. It seems unquestionable that the efficient functioning of general sejmiks was inconvenient for magnate parties, since agreeing a position at the scale of province would make it difficult for factions to manoeuvre at the Sejm sessions. A possibility to reach an agreement within the province was further reduced by a growing conflict between the Catholics and dissidents, for each group could have been afraid of unfavourable religious and political resolutions forced upon it.

As a matter of fact, by the mid-17th century the general sejmiks (except for the Prussian General) were in the stage of decline. In the Wettin times also the general Sejm of the Prussian lands was increasingly often dissolved, and after 1735 it was never convened; under King Augustus III it was often the fate of the joined Sejmik of Kalisz and Poznań voivodeships. It is possible that those historians (Sybil Holdys), who think that the need for general assemblies was perceived by experienced parliamentarians, while the aversion towards them was felt by individuals and groups looking from the perspective of a province, are right. The validity of this thesis would have been reinforced by the fact that as late as 1756 Michał Czartoryski decided to convene an assembly of the Lithuanian nobility at Słonim, drawing on the tradition of general sejmiks serving to establish postulates shared by the whole Lithuania to be presented at the Sejm.

8.2. Lithuanian Convocations

There is another unresolved question concerning provincial conventions called Lithuanian (Vilnius) convocations, initiated by the Lithuanian lords of the council in 1572, and then called to deal with important matters of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the next interregna. Historians have debated whether they were a relic of the old Sejm of the Grand Duchy (H. Wisner), or a counterpart of the general sejmiks on horseback (E. Opaliński, A. Rachuba, Jan Sereďyka). However, it seems that what lies at the root of the controversy is the lack of distinction between convocations convened sporadically by the rulers (contrary to the provisions of the Union of Lublin) only for fiscal matters, and convocations of the interregna.

A convocation called during the interregna by the voivode or the Bishop of Vilnius (1632) acted within the sphere of internal and foreign policy, fiscal and security matters (it remains unknown if also in judiciary affairs), and finally it was recognized as a competent body to create a new parliamentary institution – a general Lithuanian sejmik. During the regnum, convocations were convened by the king, often on request of the Lithuanians themselves, almost always for tax resolutions – four times under King Stephen Bathory, who was thereby strengthening the sense of Lithuanian particularism and paved the way for a new custom. Under King Sigismund III there was over a dozen of convocations, and their participants used the occasion to bring up some political, financial, and judicial matters important for Lithuania.

Most often, convocations were held in Vilnius, but also at Volkovysk (under Bathory), Grodno, and the private town of Radziwiłłs, Biała. Their duration was from one day (1634) to 19 days (1671), but usually one–two weeks. They were attended by the deputies elected at the special sejmiks and by the senators of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Convocations were not the same as the general sejmiks, for they did not precede the Sejm. Although the Vilnius convocations were at variance with the provisions of the Union of Lublin, they continued well into the turn of the 18th century. In the nobility's estimation they were not a substitute for the Sejm but supplemented it – which was sometimes necessary for the welfare of the state. With the lapse of time, however, there was a growing dislike among the Lithuanians for this kind of proceedings, stemming from the fear of taxes imposed without any guarantee that they would include also the Poles, which was guaranteed by the resolutions passed by the Sejm.

9. Sejmiks

At the local level of the parliamentary system, and at the same time of a local self-government, were sejmiks (sometimes translated as *dietines*). After the emergence of the Chamber of Deputies, their independent legislative role deteriorated but the scope of their authority enlarged. And although the sejmik as an assembly of the nobles of a land or district was convoked under various names depending on the subjects to be considered during its session, its territorial scope and personal composition remained constant.

9.1. Types of Sejmiks

The basic kind of local assemblies were the pre-Sejm sejmiks, which were convened by the king who two or three weeks before the Sejm session sent his envoy (legate) with a writ from the Crown or Lithuanian Chancellery (legation; Polish: *legacja*) explaining the reasons for holding the Sejm. Their main task was to elect the representatives of the voivodeship to the Sejm.

Table 4. *The Land Sejmiks and Their Functions in the Commonwealth*

Names depending on functions	Time of emergence	Scope of authority
Pre-Sejm sejmik (Polish: <i>przedsejmowy</i>)	Second half of the 15 th c.	Heard the king's legation on the summoning of the Sejm, elected deputies to the general Sejm and composed instructions for them.
Relational (or debriefing) sejmik (Polish: <i>relacyjny</i>)	The 16 th century	Heard reports of the delegates to the Sejm from the sessions and its resolutions, made resolutions related to the implementation of the constitutions decreed by the Sejm or in matters left by the deputies to the decision of "lords brethren."
Electoral sejmik (Polish: <i>elekcyjny</i>)	The 15 th century	Elected four candidates to the vacated office of land judge, from among whom the king made the appointment. It convened when the office was vacated.
Hooded Sejmik (Polish: <i>kapturowy</i>)	From 1572	Organized as confederation, elected the confederation officials and appointed the hooded court for a voivodeship (land) for the period of interregnum.
Deputational Sejmik (Polish: <i>deputacki</i>)	From 1578 (Crown), 1581 (Grand Duchy)	Met once a year to elect a deputy (Polish: <i>deputat</i>) to the Crown and Lithuanian Tribunals.
Economic Sejmik (Polish: <i>gospodarczy</i>)	The early 17 th century	Passed resolutions (Latin: <i>lauda</i>) in matters related to lands, repartition of taxes imposed by the Sejm, elected tax collectors and controlled their activity; imposed local (voivodeship) taxes; decided about local expenses, and recruitment of local troops, appointed its commanders; from the mid-17 th c. elected commissars to the Treasury Tribunal of the Crown.

Source: Juliusz Bardach, Bogusław Leśnodorski, Michał Pietrzak, *Historia ustroju i prawa polskiego*, Warsaw, 2003, p. 229.

In the 16th century, the practice developed in which the so-called upper voivodeships (of Cracow at the sejmik at Proszów, of Sandomierz – at Opatów, of Poznan and Kalisz – at Środa) elected six deputies each, and the rest of the Crown sejmiks – from two to six representatives, while Lithuanian ones – always two. After 1578, when the Crown Tribunal was created, and after creating the Lithuanian Tribunal in 1581, deputational sejmiks were convened once a year to elect the candidates to the Tribunals. Initially, they were held on a date specified by each voivodeship separately, and from 1686, in the case of the Grand Duchy, on the first Monday after the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin (February 2nd), while in the Crown deputational sejmiks convened on the first Monday after the Nativity of Mary (8 IX) and on the first Monday after the Feast of St. Bartholomew (24 VIII) in the case of Podlasie and Dobrzyń Land. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the fixed dates of deputational sejmiks made it necessary to hold on the same day (or just before) pre-Sejm sejmiks, relational ones, preceding the Vilnius convocations, and the so-called economic sejmiks.

Representatives and deputies were elected unanimously – that is, in concord, without a firm opposition. To ensure the nobility of each voivodeship (land) were represented at the Sejm and the Crown Tribunal, some of sejmiks introduced the majority rule for the election of representatives and Tribunal deputies, while others kept the unanimity rule until the collapse of the Commonwealth.

Electoral sejmiks were called when necessary by the voivodes to elect the candidates for district officials (Chamberlains, Standard-Bearers and to the land court). Sejmiks that were convened after the Sejm sessions were called debriefing sejmiks (from 1589–1591 called relational), and deputies were to deliver reports of their activities. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, from the end of the 17th century to the 1730s there convened deliberational sejmiks to address different matters that were dealt with by the king or the nobility in an extraordinary procedure – most often in connection to the court *roki* (the date of land court) or *roczki* (the date of borough court).

In addition, all owners of landed estates from a given sejmiks district were gathered together by military displays, often used also for political purposes both by the royal opposition and by the kings (Jan Casimir in 1658, Michał Korybut in 1671), although it was clearly forbidden by the constitutions. Sometimes armed assemblies of the nobility were also called sejmiks, for example the people from Lublin Voivodeship used the name *horse sejmik* (Polish: *sejmik koński*) analogously to *Sejm on horseback* (Polish: *sejm konny*) discussed above.

In self-governance matters there were initially held special sessions (from 1685 called economic sejmiks) on the occasion of the pre-Sejm sejmiks, or deputational sejmiks, which were extended for another session devoted to affairs of the lands. From the early 17th century on, the sejmiks began to recruit the district military units called standard (Polish: *chorągiew*). A rittmeister (Polish: *rotmistrz*) of the district troops was appointed by sejmiks and paid from the voivodeship treasury. In the second half of the 17th century sejmiks received the right to choose the com-

missars to the Treasury Tribunal of the Crown but they also appointed voivodeship treasury commissions to judge tax debtors and to check accounts of tax collectors.

There were also some other types of particular assemblies, such as the confederation sejmiks summoned by the confederation officials or local leaders in voivodeships and districts, and the fiscal sejmiks, called *boni ordinis* (of good order) and held in order to determine and execute tax payments in exceptional circumstances (for instance, the requisitions of Saxon troops during the Northern War). They were not the sejmiks in the strict sense of the word, that is, the assemblies summoned by the king's writ, but they were the gatherings of the nobility called spontaneously, and their legal basis still remains unclear.

9.2. Rule of Sejmiks

The importance of local (particular) sejmiks increased with the developing disorganization of the central government of the Commonwealth and decline of the general sejmiks. The so-called "rule of sejmiks" – which became synonymous with the crisis of mixed government – resulted not as much from the aspirations of the nobility to seize the full power in the Polish-Lithuanian state as from the necessity. The precedent, and then the rule of the principle of *liberum veto*, was not born in the practice of sejmiks but in the Chamber of Deputies. It was the Sejm that delegated to the sejmiks the right to approve fiscal bills, collect taxes, and even the duty to draw pay from them to soldiers. In the times of King Sigismund Augustus, the nobility trusted their representatives in the Sejm, when the agreement with the king was reached, but the growing spread of relational sejmiks and more and more matters left to the decision of "lords brethren" testify to declining trust in the Sejm already by the end of the 16th century. The citizens of the Commonwealth were gradually becoming citizens of their land or district, and their sense of common good was shrinking to encompass a local community only.

9.3. Clientelism of Sejmiks

The administrative weakness characteristic of the Commonwealth contributed to the increasing influence of magnates on sejmiks. In the situation when starosta ceased to act *ex officio* as intermediary between the king and local communities, and direct contacts of the royal court with the nobility in the province began to be limited to legations sent to the pre-Sejm sejmiks, the king was using more and more the agency of the magnates who were influential in the land. They could personally influence the proceedings of sejmiks, by taking the floor and running for the post of deputy in the Sejm, or indirectly – through letters and their supporters from among the participants. It follows from the research of J. Dziegielewski that as early as in the time of King Wladislaus IV there was a division of the Commonwealth's map of sejmiks into the spheres of influence of great magnate families and parties they represented, although in many regions (especially in the "upper" voivodeships) the nobility maintained considerable independence. The problem of excessive depend-

ence of the participants of the sejmiks upon their magnate patrons was perceived by the contemporaries and was used as an argument against appointments of magnate clients to the functions of the Sejm Marshals.

Clashes between factions of the magnates and the court at the forum of the pre-Sejm sejmiks are most often presented as a sign of the weakness of central power, while in fact it was a manifestation of the rivalry for favours of electors, present also in other free states, e. g. in England. The most effective forms of influence were not money or corruption, but persuasion, campaigning, and moulding public opinion through the network of contacts and bonds, mainly family ties. According to some historians (J. Choińska-Mika), it is difficult to call the elections of representatives to parliaments in the 16th–18th centuries “elections” – those with the right to vote were in fact choosing their representatives from the candidates presented to them and associated with various influential centres and figures. It did not necessarily mean that the deputy allied with a specific faction or selected by it was unable to well represent interests of his land or district. In the light of the political commentaries of the 17th century, it was the royal court that appeared as a major threat to the honesty of the Chamber of Deputies, especially in the time of King Jan Casimir, when the royal couple used corruption, to the extent unknown before, also indirectly – through appointments to offices and granting of lands. Dependence on the king as a patron drew much more extensive condemnation than lackeying for one magnate or another – for it was thought that the use by the monarch of factional methods of political conduct, initiated already by Bathory, was inconsistent with the office of the king.

It is believed that clientelism reached its apogee in the Wettin times when, due to non-conclusions of the Sejms, the pre-Sejm sejmiks (to elect representatives to the Sejm) were diminishing in importance for deputational sejmiks, and gaining the majority of deputies in the Tribunal with the function of marshal for his client became a real test of the magnate’s power. Canvassing for sejmiks began with a strategic meeting of the magnates belonging to one faction (*coterie*) to agree upon candidates to be elected and terms of financing their elections. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, such methods of organization were used already in the second half of the 17th century (the Pac and Sapieha families). When a political struggle grew weaker, leaders made use of the advice and information provided by noble activists who, intermediating between the nobility and a patron, belonged to their party in those voivodeships where they had traditional influences, or special agents, called *ductores populi*, active at specific sejmiks. It was very common to break sejmiks, even in those voivodeships or lands where the majority rule was adopted, but in practice was not respected.

In theory, it was easy to break up a sejmik session, but in practice a person who wanted to do it risked much more than in the case of breaking up the Sejm, since it was more likely that his protest would be ignored and he would find himself under the pressure of those who wanted to continue the proceedings.

Not only the election of deputies but also the conclusion of sejmiks was often a result of agreement between opposite factions whose leaders settled on the candi-

dates by way of bids. Voting itself (called marking) was burdensome and time-consuming, so it was much more convenient to settle the election during preliminary negotiations between the opponents. Such an organization of pre-sejmiks campaigns in the Wettin times, reconstructed by Zofia Zielińska, could be interpreted as a symptom of not only degeneration but also of modernity of the Old Polish parliamentary system.

The black image of the noble parliamentarism has been questioned in more recent historiography, and magnate clientelism should not be demonized, because even under the Wettins it was still the royal court that was the main point of reference as the source of offices, favours and leases. There is no doubt, however, that the growing pressure of magnates upon the sejmiks contributed to the opinions formulated already in the second half of the 17th century about the threat of devaluation of a nobleman through the mere participation in the public life and holding the functions of deputies, since “Those who are pious and scrupulous are of no use in public matters.”⁶⁷ It was not until the second stage of the proceedings of the Great Sejm that the quality of the noble representation in the Sejm improved, under new conditions of the Sejm sessions.

10. Towards a Constitutional Monarchy

10.1. Program of Reforms

It was the ideology of the Enlightenment that laid at the roots of the reforms of political system that were carried out from 1764 on, under King Stanisław August Poniatowski, and crowned with the legislation of the Great Sejm. According to this ideology, the progress (modernization) was an autonomous value in its own right, as it sought to change the relationship between the ruler and his subjects and to fulfill the purposes of the state defined as “making a nation happy,” with “nation” understood as all the inhabitants and not only the noblemen. This radical change did not happen at once, after the implementation of a single reform, but by partial changes in bodies of central administration and methods of governing introduced in practice.

10.2. Reforms of the Early Years of King Stanisław August

10.2.1. System of Government

The year of 1764 could be taken as the initial stage of the creation of a constitutional monarchy because of the first reforms of the political system undertaken at the convocation and election Sejm, and because of the fact that it was recognized for the first time that the constitutions passed at the convocation and election Sejm

67 Melchior Sawicki before the 1667 Sejm, in: J. Ostrowski-Daneykowicz, *Swada polska*, Lublin, 1745, vol. 1, fol. 379.

did not need the consent of the new king after his coronation to be legalized. This emphasized the superiority of the Sejm over the will of the monarch in decisions about the political system and form of government.

Starting from 1764, there was a sudden increase in the effectiveness of debates – the Convocation Sejm of 1764 (May 7th–June 23rd) alone passed over 180 constitutions. The most important resolution of the Convocation passed on the last day of its session was to convoke a general confederation for an unspecified period of time. This meant a temporary replacement of the *liberum veto* with the majority rule.

There were three Sejms held as confederation: election Sejm, coronation Sejm in December of 1764 and ordinary Sejm in 1766. The first reforms of 1764–1766 were to improve the practice of the Sejm proceedings: the rules of parliamentary debate were passed and the principle was accepted that decisions in some minor issues, called conventionally “economic matters,” were to be passed by majority voting. Other issues, called *materiae status* (matters of state), were important matters of the state and required unanimity; those included (traditionally) taxes. At the 1766 Sejm, the laws were passed in financial, tax, military, and judicial matters, but at the end of the session the confederation was dissolved and the deputies agreed unanimously, albeit unwillingly, to adopt the constitution presented by the opposition under the title of *Ubezpieczenie wolnego głosu* (*Protection of Free Voice*), which for the next twenty years reinforced the strength of *liberum veto* at the free Sejms (that is, convened not as confederations).

The functions of central administrative institutions were taken over (informally) by the so-called conferences of the king with ministers – in practice mainly with the members of the Czartoryskis’ *Familia* – making decisions in a collective way. The materials for discussions were prepared by the Royal Cabinet and Military Chancellery, which also tried to enforce the results. After in 1775 the Permanent Council (*Rada Nieustająca*) was created, the Royal Cabinet took over from the Department of Foreign Interests carrying out of foreign policy of the state under the direct leadership of the king, but also under the supervision of the Sejm. A sign of the king’s initiative in foreign policy was the creation of network of diplomatic and consular posts in Spain, Great Britain, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, Austria, in the Holy See, Russia, and Turkey.

10.2.2. *The Project of Unification of the Crown and Lithuania*

From the beginning of his rule, Stanisław August sought to create a uniform state and assemble the central institutions of government in Warsaw. This required the federative tradition to be broken and Polish and Lithuanian institutions to be integrated. To this end, the king ordered a project of special constitution to be prepared to the Sejm of 1766, called *Ucalenie unii Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego z Koroną* (*Unification of the Union of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Crown*) that was to finish off the deed of the Union of Lublin and unite the both nations in “one, inseparable body” by putting together both commissions of the Crown with Lithuanian ones for fiscal and military matters (with the exception of the judiciary) – which,

in practice, meant that the Lithuanian commissions would be subordinated to the Crown's. There was to be the abolition of the ban on Polish troops entering the territory of Lithuania and of the separate Polish and Lithuanian armies. After the rationalization of the chancellery system and liquidation of separate chancelleries of both states each of the four chancellors would be able to seal any document prepared in the Crown or in the Grand Duchy. There were also plans to introduce a new seal, combining the coats of arms of the Crown and Lithuania and that of the king.

Nonetheless, the *Unification* of the union was blocked by strong opposition not only of the Czartoryskis (especially Lithuanian Chancellor Michał) but also of the people associated with the king (Lithuanian Vice-Chancellor Antoni Tyzenhauz and the Primate Michał Poniatowski). Stanisław August dropped the project, and a political crisis of many years after 1766 frustrated his centralist plans. They were executed only partly during the Partition Sejm of 1773–1775, when the first institutions of executive power were established for the whole Commonwealth: the Permanent Council (Polish: *Rada Nieustająca*) and the Commission of National Education (Polish: *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej*).

10.3. Legislation of the Delegation Sejm (1767–1768)

It was the legislation of the so-called Delegation Sejm of 1767–1768 that became an instrument for realization of the aim both of the neighbouring powers and the “republican” opposition, that is, to block the reforms undertaken in 1764. The Sejm took its name from a new body – a delegation of 108 carefully selected persons upon whom the Sejm bestowed its powers of ratifying the partitioning treaties and the judiciary ones.

The Cardinal Laws – pushed through at the 1768 Sejm, and then again after the First Partition in 1775⁶⁸ – recognized as the “eternally invariable” anachronistic rules of political system: the free election *viritim*, with the addition that only the “Piast, native-born nobleman and possessor in the lands of the Commonwealth” could be the king (Point 1), and the right to forswear the allegiance to the king. The supreme power was bestowed upon the Sejm defined as the government of the Commonwealth, which concentrated the full power (Point 3). And the unanimity rule was kept in all important matters, which meant that the tendencies of the years 1764–1766 to vote by majority were curbed.

The main purpose of this was to petrify the social conditions and previous form of government under the guarantee of Russia of 1768, made in 1775 the guarantee of the three neighbouring powers (Russia, Prussia, and Austria), which gave them the ability to influence the internal relations of the Commonwealth. But the Cardinal Laws had also positive effects – they secured for the state a quasi-constitution for

68 *Konstytucje sejmu ekstraordynaryjnego warszawskiego* [...] 1768, VL, vol. VII, pp. 253–254, fol. 567, Article IV: The Form of Government of the Polish Republic; *Konstytucje sejmu ekstraordynaryjnego warszawskiego* [...] 1775, VL, vol. VIII, p. 49, fol. 62: Article II: Confirming All Cardinal Laws and Materie Status.

the first time, protecting it from the lawlessness, and attempted even to prevent the partitions of its territory, guaranteeing its integrity.

Apart from the “eternally invariable” Cardinal Laws, the Sejm of 1768 specified also the so-called *materie status*, that is, the matters of highest importance for the functioning of the state (the increased size of the army, declarations of war and peace, summoning the *leveé en masse*, alliances and commercial treatises, changes in the jurisdiction of offices and courts, the rules of order for the Sejm and sejmiks proceedings, the official exchange rate and value of the coin, ennoblements and granting of indigenous rights, the right of *liberum veto* at the free Sejm); and economic matters that included all remaining issues, together with the increase and decrease of taxes. The legal norms developed by the delegation and confirmed by the Sejm of 1767–1768 remained in force, with slight changes, for twenty years, until the Great Sejm. During this period it was the political and legal concept imposed by the Petersburg court that was implemented – the free Sejms were reduced to controlling the executive power and were left only with third-rate issues of economic matters to be decided on. Thus, from that time on, only the confederated Sejms were able to pass any laws, under the consent of Empress Catherine II as the guarantor of the political system of the Commonwealth.

10.4. Legislation of the Partition Sejm (1773–1775)

The first ordinary Sejm to be held according to the new delegation laws was dissolved after one day (November 7th, 1768) in the face of non-conclusions of the majority of sejmiks and because the king (following the advice of the Czartoryskis) did not want to set the Sejm against the Confederation of Bar which led to five years without the Sejm sessions – until 1773. Only under the pressure of the partitioning powers, demanding the ratification of the partitioning treatises by the Commonwealth, an extraordinary Sejm was convened on April 19th, 1773 (boycotted by the majority of sejmiks) as the Sejm confederated under the staff of Adam Poniński. After breaking down a few days’ protest of several deputies (i. a. Tadeusz Reytan) against the appointed and not elected marshal, and after outvoting (by a minimal majority) of the opposition, inspired by the king, against the partitioning treatises – a new delegation was selected, with the authority analogous to that of the 1768 Delegation, which formally ratified the first partition of the Commonwealth; the Delegation continued its works on internal matters until March 19th, 1775.

By way of compromise between various concepts, and with some models taken from the states of enlightened absolutism, including Sweden, the Permanent Council was created at the Sejm of 1775, with the king at its head, as the highest collegial body of the state administration. The Permanent Council, appointed for two-year term, was composed of 18 representatives of the Senate and 18 of the whole nobility. Apart from plenary sessions of legislative character, it had five departments: of Foreign Interests (with the king as its president, who in fact together with his Cabinet seized the control over all matters), of Police, or Good Order (with the

surveillance of royal towns), Military (which for a certain period of time removed military commissions), of Justice and of Treasury. Decisions were to be made by a majority vote.

Control over the Permanent Council and commissions called “great” or “governmental,” including the Commission of National Education, was exercised by the Sejm through deputations appointed every time separately; the commissions audited accounts and budget reports, and reported on their activities before the Sejm. Worthy of notice is the fact that various postulates of political character were accompanied in the Sejm by positive opinions about the financial administration of those bodies, especially the Commission of National Education.

Russia expected that the Permanent Council would become an executive body under its control and would serve to block any reforms. Yet, contrary to the original assumptions, the Permanent Council became in time the king’s tool in his cooperation with the Russian embassy, performing a useful activity in the field of administration. Its members, however, were constantly changing and its activity between 1775 and 1788 was not stable. As an institution created with the support of St. Petersburg, it was attacked by patriotic circles, which resulted in its abolition at the beginning of the Great Sejm.

10.5. Sejms of 1776–1786

In the period between the Sejm of 1773–1775 and the Four-Year Sejm there emerged a new anti-royal opposition of magnates, made up with the old party of the Czartoryskis (recently related by marriage to the Potockis) and a new party of Hetman Franciszek Ksawery Branicki; the opposition championed the “republican” ideology, with a positive and reformatory program (the “ready” Sejm, the abolition of *liberum veto*) concealed behind the screen of conservative banners (to increase the prerogatives of ministers, especially hetmans, and to limit the authority of the Permanent Council).

Contrary to the efforts of the opposition who sought to buy the support of St. Petersburg with the offer to become a “Russian party” in the Commonwealth, the 1776 Sejm was won – owing to the assistance to Russian troops – by the royal party. As a result, the Council was given – through the Military Department – a direct command over the army (with the reduction of hetmans to little more than figureheads), and the authority over ministers and commissions – except for the Commission of National Education, which was subordinated to the king and the Sejm. But all attempts of King Stanisław August, undertaken from 1764 on, to establish a permanent Sejm failed, as Empress Catherine II did not concede.

After the success of the 1776 Sejm, Stanisław August wanted to continue confederated Sejms, but he met with a strong objection of the empress who thought that the king had strengthened his power too much and that the balance between the monarch and the opposition should be restored to maintain the stagnation in the Commonwealth, which meant that the system of “free” (that is, not confederated) Sejms should be brought back.

After 1778, four more Sejms (1780, 1782, 1784 and 1786) were held as “free.” As regards their legislation, they were almost entirely fruitless. As to the reforms, the king could not count even on the deputies from his own party – as exemplified by a harsh rejection at the 1780 Sejm of the so-called Zamoyski Code, that is, the text titled *Zbiór praw* (*Collection of Laws*) written by Andrzej Zamoyski, who wanted to improve the legal condition of the peasantry.

10.6. The Four-Year Sejm. First Stage of Works (1788–1790)

It was not until a growing crisis in the Russian-Turkish relations led to the outbreak of war in 1787 and made the Commonwealth face the threat of a new partition that a new Sejm was called to Warsaw – the Sejm entered history under the name of Four-Year Sejm or Great Sejm. A sign of the conviction that it was the Sejm that represented the sovereignty of the state was an adoption of (unofficial) title of “The Most Serene Estates,” while the title of “the Most Serene” had been reserved for the king and the Commonwealth.

As regards legislations, there were two great tasks that faced the Sejm: firstly – the implementation of the resolution on the increase of the army (in practice only 65.000 of the planned 100.000 was reached), secondly – a sweeping reform of the political system. The sequence of these tasks was the subject of argument and the Sejm veered back and forth between one subject and another, trying sometimes to deal with both matters at the same time. Of course, this had an adverse influence on the effectiveness of parliamentary works, especially that the way of debating was not changing and a lot of time was wasted in sterile and fruitless debates.

On September 7th, 1789, an eleven-member (five senators and six deputies) *Deputacja do Formy Rządu* (*Deputation for the Form of Government*) was established to draft projects of the form of government headed by Ignacy Potocki, and on December 17th, 1789, it presented a project entitled *Zasady do poprawy formy rządu* (*Principles for the Improvement of the Form of Government*), accepted on December 23rd, 1789. The principles emphasized the sovereignty of the nation, but traditionally (in the Point 2) limited to the noble possessors, they did away with the concept of the Three Estates of the Sejm, handing over the legislative power to the Chamber of Deputies only, provided for the institution of ready Sejm, composed of the representatives confirmed by relational sejmiks, who in case of urgency could have been summoned again, but only to pass temporary directives, not constitutions.

After the principles had been approved of, the works of the deputation progressed very slowly and it was not until August 2nd, 1790, that it submitted a huge (689 articles!) *Projekt do Formy rządu* (*Project to the Form of Government*). The project still mirrored a “republican” doctrine of political system, leaving the whole legislative process within the cognisance of sejmiks and introducing the election to all offices. Yet, it introduced the succession to the throne. This triggered violent resistance of the part of the nobility and a parliamentary battle in the autumn of 1790. Since it became evident that the Sejm would be unable to complete its work

on the new political system before the end of its term by the end of January, 1791, it was decided that the deputies would keep their mandates for the next two years, and on November 16th sejmiks were called to elect a new set of representatives who would join in the confederation.

10.7. The Government Act of 1791 and Later Legislation of the Four-Year Sejm

In the autumn of 1790, new elections were held and the Sejm began its session with a double set of parliamentarians. During the second two years of its session, in the early months of 1791, three important laws were passed, to wit: on March 24th an act on the reorganization of sejmiks, securing them against “duplication” and other abuses, and on April 18th – the act *Miasta nasze królewskie wolne w państwach Rzeczypospolitej* (*Our Free Royal Cities in the States of the Commonwealth*) that two months later was supplemented by the act *Urządzenie wewnętrzne miast wolnych w Koronie i Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim* (*Internal Organization of Free Cities in the Crown and Grand Duchy of Lithuania*) on the reorganization of cities and town and legal position of townsmen.

The whole legislative process of the Great Sejm was crowned with the *Government Act* called the Constitution of May 3 that regulated rights and duties of all inhabitants of the state and principles of the organization of the state power, thus it was the second in the world, after the constitution of the United States of 1787, written act of this type and preceded the French constitution adopted on September 3rd, 1791. The title of *Government Act* resulted from the contemporary understanding of the word *government* (Polish: *rząd*) – the system of state power. It was written by King Stanisław August Poniatowski, Ignacy Potocki, and Hugo Kołłątaj; the latter is credited with giving it its final shape. The adoption of the Constitution was executed through a summary procedure – to take by surprise the opponents who were away on Easter recess – as a sort of *coup d'état*, which provided its opponents with a pretext to question its legality.

10.8. The Most Important Provisions of the Government Act of 1791

Historians agree that the *Government Act*⁶⁹ of 1791 was an important and (as it turned out soon) irreversible breakthrough in the history of political system of the Commonwealth – the abolition of three political orders of mixed government and emergence of a constitutional monarchy.

69 *Konstytucje sejmu pod związkim konfederacji w Warszawie 1791 r., Ustawa rządowa*, VL, vol. IX, pp. 220–225.

10.8.1. Political System and Central Authorities

Article V declared that: “All authority in human society takes its origin in the will of the people.” This meant the breaking off with the sacral character of royal power and granting of sovereignty to the citizens – mainly the nobility. Then, the Constitution propagated the principle of “moderate government” that consisted of: a legislative authority in the assembled estates, an executive authority of the king and guardianship, and a judicial authority. The separation of powers formulated by Charles-Louis Montesquieu in his treatise *The Spirit of Laws* (1748, Polish edition: 1777) was an idea developed by lawyers in numerous countries who recognized it as the foundation of a model of so-called law-abiding state. In Poland it was to be realized by a constitutional monarchy, but inconsistently, because the tradition to regard the Sejm as a supreme body of the state power was maintained.

On King Stanisław August’ death the Commonwealth was to become a monarchy “hereditary by persons, elective by families.” Despite a not quite good tradition of the Wettin rules in the Commonwealth, the throne was entrusted to the Wettin Dynasty. The responsibility of the king, provided for in the Henrician Articles and the first Cardinal Laws, was replaced with the system of countersignature, making (on the British model) ministers appointed by the king responsible for the state of affairs, and each of his acts addressed in the council of ministers (the Guardianship of the Laws) was to be signed by a right minister. The king presided over the Guardianship of the Laws and, at the same time, was a lifelong prime minister; he had to summon Sejms, kept the right of legislative initiative together with the Guardianship of the Laws, and finally it was in his name that the laws were to be legislated. But the Sejm could also convene *ipso iure*, on the order of the Marshal of the Sejm if the king failed to call an election within the appointed time.

The supreme executive authority was vested in the Guardianship of the Laws. Its members were appointed by the king from among all ministers, whose number during the Sejm session was 14 (it was a double set – from the Crown and Lithuania). The Sejm could, through a vote of no confidence, immediately remove from his office an unsuitable minister. Ministers could be held accountable before the Sejm court (constitutional responsibility) and before the parliament. The Sejm, by a 2/3 majority of both houses together, could demand the resignation of a minister (vote of no confidence) for his line of action, even if it was legal. The Guardianship of the Laws supervised the Commissions of: Police, Army, Treasury, and National Education – collegial ministries, composed of members elected by the Sejm. Each commission had 14 or 15 commissars, appointed at the Sejm for two years, and 6 plenipotentiaries of cities, elected to the Commission of Treasury and Police. The Commission of Army had a majority of civilian members.

The Commission of Treasury was responsible for administration and the judiciary, and it had the legislative initiative in matters of modernization of the state economy and social policy carried out through the setting up of manufactures, care of the growth of commerce – building and maintenance of roads, waterways, and

navigability of rivers, the maintenance of the postal system. It also had the authority in agriculture matters; but in cases of private estates it could issue only warnings and advice, not directives. The Commission of Police, which was to be responsible mainly for towns and cities, had the authority not only in matters of security and “peacefulness,” that is, the order police, but also matters of “public comfort”: health and charity. It was thus the embryo of the later Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Territorial matters of lands and voivodeships belonged from 1789 to civil-military commissions of order made up of 15 commissars elected by the sejmiks every two years from among resident noblemen, and from 1792 on, also townsmen.

10.8.2. *Parliamentary Institutions*

The Chamber of Deputies was to be composed of 204 deputies elected at the sejmiks and 24 plenipotentiaries of cities to present their demands in municipal matters and those of industry and commerce (as before delegates of cities), and not as rightful deputies. As members of governmental commissions (ministries), they had the right to speak out in the Chamber of Deputies in accordance with the authority of governmental bodies. The Senate was to be composed of voivodes and castellans as well as diocesan bishops and ministers – altogether 132 persons. Its significance was reduced to a suspensive veto in political, civil, and criminal laws. At a special constitutional Sejm, which was to convene every 25 years to review the political system, the Chamber of Deputies could disregard the opinion of the Senate. And senators were not given the right of legislative initiative.

Deputies, elected for two-year term, were holding their mandates throughout the whole period of term between the elections and could have been summoned by the king or the Marshal of the Sejm at any moment to an extraordinary session. Since deputies were no longer bound by instructions issued by the local sejmiks, they became representatives of the entire nation. The Marshal of the Sejm was *ex officio* a member of the Guardianship of the Laws to watch over the implementation of resolutions; he held his post until the next legislative Sejm.

The sejmiks were to be made up of noble landowners only (heirs, leaseholders, and lifelong possessors, if they paid a fixed rate of tax) – thus the civil right was made dependant on a property qualification. The nobles without any land were disenfranchised and removed from the sejmiks. The minimum voting age was 18. The eligible voters were to be registered in separate records, called landowners registers.

There have been – and still are – varied opinions about the concept of political system included in the *Government Act* of 1791. Its weakest point was the introduction of a hereditary monarchy and resignation from the solutions similar to those in the presidential system, which, in the face of no official consent of the Wettin elector, could potentially lead the Commonwealth to a grave crisis. A disputable interpretation of the Constitution as a foretoken of “ennoblement” of the peasantry by noble democrats – Maurycy Mochnacki’s *O rewolucji społecznej w Polsce (On Social Revolution in Poland, 1833)* – illustrates its symbolic rather than real significance.

10.8.3. Polish-Lithuanian Relations in the Legislation of the Great Sejm

In the works of the Deputation established by the Sejm on September 9th, 1789 “to draft projects of the form of government” the problem of mutual relations of the Crown and Lithuania was related to the highest executive authorities: shared or separate ones. The first solution was advocated by H. Kołłątaj, the latter one – by I. Potocki. In his *Projekt do formy rządu* (*Principles of the Form of Government*, 1790) he stipulated that from the four so-called great commissions three would be joint ones (of Police, Military, and Education), and there would be separate Commission of Treasury for the Crown and for Lithuania. An “ever ready” Sejm would meet every third term at Grodno. And unification of the number of voivodeships and powiaty in all three provinces (Little Poland, Great Poland, and Lithuania) would ensure the equal parliamentary representation.

Potocki’s proposals, providing for the dualism of the state and separate Lithuanian ministries, were at variance with the tendency to create a homogeneous state represented by, among others, King Stanisław August Poniatowski. The upshot of it was that in the later drafts of the Constitution of May 3 the question of Polish-Lithuanian relations was passed over in silence. The terms used in the text of the *Government Act* (there are no such phrases as: *union, the Crown, Lithuanian, of the Crown*, etc.), and its constitutional and judicial solutions are interpreted as obliterating the tradition of Polish-Lithuanian union. However, this is a controversial thesis, for some relics of dualism were preserved: separate assessor courts for the Crown and Lithuania, and alternate place of the Sejm sessions.⁷⁰

Both during the discussion preceding the *Government Act* and later parliamentary debates there were constant references to the tradition of the union, and in detailed legislation of the Constitution of May 3 unification projects (such as a shared Commission of Police of Both Nations, a uniform system of taxation in the Crown and Lithuania) met with strong opposition from the Lithuanians. The struggle for a separate Lithuanian Commission of Treasury (October 14th–17th, 1791) seemed to (according to Jerzy Michalski) threaten the union of both nations. Finally (thanks to, among other things, the conciliatory attitude of the king), a compromise was reached: the Lithuanian province accepted the shared treasury on condition that in the future Lithuania would have the same number of ministers and commissars as the Crown in the Commissions of Military and Treasury, and would share their alternate presidency. In addition, there was to be created a separate treasury and special treasury court for Lithuania, made up of persons who would not be members of the Commission of Treasury.

It has been regarded as the victory of federalist tendency, or even as the wiping out of the Constitution, an addendum to it (unanimously voted) entitled *Zaręczenie wzajemne obu narodów* (*The Reciprocal Warranty of Both Nations*) adopted on Octo-

70 *Konstytucje sejmu pod zwiazkiem konfederacji w Warszawie 1788–1792*, VL, vol. 9, p. 250, CCXCIX, Seymy, I: O miejscu dla seymów przeznaczonym (1791).

ber 22nd, 1791, referring both in its phraseology and content to the tradition of the Union of Lublin and emphasizing equal and based on partnership relations between Lithuania and the Crown. It did not mean, however, breaking with the drive for unification, since in the same text there is a reference (as has been mentioned in the Introduction) to a common Polish Republic. Already after the *Reciprocal Warranty* the Sejm decided on the establishment of joint Commissions: of Treasury and of Army, and in the project of a new Commission of National Education there were no provisions for separate representations of individual provinces. Therefore, it can be said that, on balance, in the legislation of the Four-Year Sejm the tendency to centralization and rationalization of the political system of the state, evident in the *Government Act*, prevailed over the remnants of tradition.

10.9. Legislation of the Grodno Sejm of 1793

10.9.1. *Laws on Political System*

At the last Sejm of the First Republic, convened as confederation at Targowica, the new cardinal laws were adopted which restituted, among other things, the Permanent Council and the nobility's dominion over the peasants. And although, at the same time, the townsmen retained their right of personal liberty and the noblemen without land were still excluded from sejmiks – the changes introduced after May 3rd, 1791, could not be withdrawn. The fact that the Sejm was kept as a legislature evidences that it seemed impossible to eliminate the traditional political system and institutions of the Commonwealth (with the Sejm at the head). The aim was a parliamentary monarchy rather than the mixed government in its traditional form of *monarchia mixta*. More important, however, than a planned form of government was an actual pattern of political relations which led to overturning of the reforms, full anarchy, and loss of sovereignty. According to Article 15 of the alliance between the members of Grodno Confederation and Petersburg (October 14th, 1793), from that time on, all changes in the political system of the Commonwealth were to be agreed with Russia.

10.9.2. *Polish-Lithuanian Relations in the Legislation of Targowica and Grodno Confederations*

As regards Polish-Lithuanian relationship, the laws adopted by the Confederation of Targowica sought to destroy the achievements of the Four-Year Sejm, with special consideration for its unification accomplishments. Its symbolic manifestation was a solemn unification of two general confederations at Brest (September 11th, 1792) as a “renovation of the union” and a declaration of the Targowica Generality that one of its main tasks was to “restore to the Lithuanian nation those prerogatives that had been guaranteed to it by the treaty of the Union.”⁷¹ In the Grand Duchy of

71 Quoted after: Władysław Smoleński, *Konfederacja targowicka*, Cracow, 1903, p. 319.

Lithuania the Targowica Generality established district castellans (Polish: *kasztelani powiatowi*), restored a separate Commission of Military, created a separate Commission of Education (headed by Bishop Józef Kossakowski).

A new form of government, adopted by the end of the Grodno Sejm (June 21st–October 23rd, 1793), stipulated the following Commissions: of Treasury and Police, separate for the Crown and Lithuania, although with the identical structure and range of activity (like in the case of assessor courts and order commissions). Separate constitutions were issued also for the judiciary: tribunals and land courts of the Crown and Lithuania. The Permanent Council was to be made up of an equal number of representatives of the two nations; in the Sejm – 60 deputies and 20 senators from the Crown and 48 deputies and 16 senators from Lithuania. The number of military forces of the Crown and Lithuania was calculated with the 8 to 7 ratio. The Targowica and Grodno legislation was a compromise between the unification and federalist tendencies, but with more emphasis on the latter. In the present state of research, it is impossible to establish accurately the extent to which those projects enjoyed the support of the Lithuanian nobility.

11. Political System of the 1794 Insurrection

The insurrection act, issued on March 24th, 1794, and modified by later amendments (especially *Uniwersal polaniecki* [*Proclamation of Polaniec*] concerning the emancipation of peasantry, issued on May 7th, 1794), was a kind of a provisional constitution imposing, in fact, a military dictatorship for the time of the war. Formally, the monarchy was not abolished for it was necessary to legalize the leadership of the insurrection towards the governments of European states. The insurrection act did not refer to the Constitution of May 3, which suggests a critical attitude towards all compromising solutions and a return of sympathies for republican system.

11.1. Central Authorities

The central legislative and administrative authority was vested first in the Provisional Council of the Duchy of Masovia (Polish: *Rada Zastępcza Tymczasowa*) that seized power in Warsaw after a coup and a liberation of the city on April 17th–18th, 1794, and then in the hands of Tadeusz Kościuszko as Supreme Commander of the National Armed Forces and a Supreme National Council (Polish: *Rada Najwyższa Narodowa*) established by him. The Council consisted of eight departments (of order, security, justice, treasury, food supplies, military needs, national affairs and national instruction), it established criminal courts that could impose the death penalty on enemies of the insurrection. All decrees of the Supreme Commander and the Council were to be in force until the end of the insurrection, when the insurgent government was to give an account of their activities at the Sejm and hand over its power, and the Sejm had to decide on the future form of government and political system of the Commonwealth.

11.2. Local Administration

Local government consisted of order commissions that were to be made of equal number of “land owners” and “urban owners” and five clergymen of these confessions, which were present in the land in question. The lowest level of administration was made of guardianships consisting of 1000 peasant farms that were to execute the regulations in the country and to intervene in the relations between the peasantry and the nobility.

The laws of the insurrection exhibit an evident tendency to relate the scope of public rights with a property of land and tax payment. The more common was becoming the relationship with the state through military service, the more common were – potentially – public rights. Kościuszko appointed to the Council both noblemen and townsmen. An egalitarian tendency was no doubt present in the operations of the Criminal Court that sentenced traitors regardless their social standing (the nobles or clergy) and offices held by them.

11.3. Polish-Lithuanian Relations in the Acts of the Insurrection

The first insurrection act issued in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (April 16th, 1794) recognized T. Kościuszko as Supreme Commander of the Nation, but at the same time appointed General Antoni Chlewiński as the Commander of the Military Force of the Grand Duchy. An act of Vilnius rebellion (April 24th, 1794) formed the National Provincial Council (later renamed as the National Supreme Council of Lithuania) as sovereign government of Lithuania, which appointed Jakub Jasiński as commander in chief.

The emergence of separate leadership of the insurrection did not stem from Lithuanian separatism but from the necessity to create efficient headquarters that should be neither remote nor cut off from the enemies of Kościuszko’s camp. The Lithuanian leadership, however, was soon disparaged by Kościuszko who dissolved the Lithuanian Council (June 10th), and created a Central Deputation, subordinated to the Supreme National Council, made up of the representatives of the Grand Duchy. The replacement of the Council with the Deputation was a consequence of centralistic tendency in constructing the insurgent political system but weakened the support of Lithuanians for the rebellion.

One of the reasons of Polish-Lithuanian controversies about the organization of insurgent authorities was the dictatorial power vested in the Supreme Leader. It was a *novum* in the political tradition of the Commonwealth, against the spontaneous nature of the insurrection at the root of which lay (as observed by J. Michalski) not an action of a uniform conspiratorial organization but the living tradition of confederations.

12. Ideas of Political System after the Loss of Independence

After the Commonwealth had lost its independence, the former activists of the Four-Year Sejm, with Marshal Stanisław Małachowski at the head, remained faithful to the program of the Constitution of May 3 and were reluctant to cooperate with the revolutionary France. The aim expressed in *Ustawa przedspoleczna* (*Pre-Social Statute*) of the Society of Polish Republicans (1798) was to “restore the homeland with a republican democratic government, representative one,” together with the emancipation of the peasantry and renouncement of the differences of estates. These general statements continued the democratic tradition, which met with strong opposition of conservative noblemen and magnates. A manifesto of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski entitled *O systemie politycznym, którego winna trzymać się Rosja* (*On the Political System to Which Russia Should Adhere*, 1803) alternatively allowed for the incorporation by Russia the Prussian and Austrian partitions or for the restoration of the Polish State within the federation of Slavic nations under the rule of the tsar. It assumed certain liberalization of Russia, but without damaging the foundations of the old political system and social structure. Conservative Lithuanian politicians of Russian orientation (Michał Ogiński, Franciszek Ksawery Drucki-Lubecki, Ludwik Plater) based their drafts of a constitution of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1811) on the Third Lithuanian Statute of 1588. At the threshold of the 19th century, none of the political orientations was able to go beyond the constitutional and political legacy of the First Commonwealth. New ideas of political system emerged only in the Duchy of Warsaw created by Napoleon Bonaparte.

Chapter Three

Three Pillars of Power: Judiciary, Finances, and Army

1. Heritage of the Estate Monarchy

A split of development between the Polish-Lithuanian State and centralized European monarchies was a result not only of differences in political system but mainly of the maintenance of a late-Medieval social structure in the Commonwealth for the last two centuries of its existence. The principles on which three main spheres of public life were based, namely: the judiciary, finances and armed forces, were inherited from the estate monarchy and in the Commonwealth of Both Nations remained unchanged until the last three decades of the 18th century. Financial and military affairs were dominated by the noble estate, while the judicial system was divided into separate courts for the nobility, clergy, and plebeians.

All estates retained their legal distinctiveness: the nobility was subject to the land law; the clergy – to the canon law (except for the cases for patrimony and financial matters); the townsmen – to the norms of German law in its various types (of Magdeburg, Środa Śląska [in Latin: *ius Novi Fori* or *ius Sredense*, called in German *Neumarkt-Magdeburger Recht*], or of Chełmno [in Latin: *ius Culmense*, in German: *Kulmer Recht*]); the peasants in the Crown lands – to the royal judicature, in private estates – to courts of their lords, while in the fiefs of the Commonwealth (Courland and Ducal Prussia) and in ecclesiastical dominions (Warmia and duchies of Oświęcim and Zator) – to the courts of princes or bishops of the country's lords. A petrification of the estate legal system, which cut off plebeians both from the judiciary and common law, resulted in their discrimination in relation to the nobility in public life.

2. Codifications and Sources of Law

The sources of Polish law were not reduced to a uniform system or a code despite several attempts undertaken in the first half of the 16th century. The most important statutes and constitutions (*Łaski's Statute*) were consolidated by Crown Chancellor Jan Łaski and published in print on the initiative of the Radom Sejm of 1505, thus making the fundamental code of Polish land laws. There were several partial codifications such as: the so-called *Formula Processus* (1523) – a codification of procedural law prepared by the commission established at the Bydgoszcz Sejm of 1520 and approved of by Little Poland and then the entire Crown; and the so-called *Correctura Iurium* (1523), called also *Taszycki's Correctura*, that is, an amendment, from the name of one of the commission's members Mikołaj Taszycki – rejected at

the 1534 Sejm due to the lack of provisions required for the implementation of the Executionist Movement.

As a result, the rule of law postulated by the noble executionists remained only a slogan – the amendment of laws advertised under the pressure of the middle nobility had not been realized for both the magnate elites and the Catholic Church were more interested in maintaining the status quo. In practice, courts were using private amendments: Jakub Przyłuski's *Leges Seu Statuta ac Privilegia Regni Poloniae* (1553), Jan Herburt's *Statuta i przywileje koronne z lacińskiego języka na polski przełożone* (*Statutes and Crown Privileges Translated from Latin into Polish*, 1570), Stanisław Sarnicki's *Statuta i Metryka przywilejów koronnych* (*Statutes and Register of the Crown's Privileges*, 1594), and Jan Januszowski's *Statuta, prawa i konstytucje koronne* (*Statutes, Laws, and Constitutions of the Crown*, 1600).

An auxiliary source in the court practice of Great Poland was the *Prussian Correctura* (1599) compiled as a general state law (*Landrecht*) in Royal Prussia. The Lithuanian Statutes of 1529, 1566 and 1588, compiled on the basis of Roman law in the Eastern Slavic language (nowadays called Old Belarusian in retrospect), were in force for all inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (until 1840) and in the Volhynian, Kiev and Bratslav voievodships (in the redaction of 1566). Passing sentences on the basis of local tradition of the law interpretation made it possible to arbitrarily choose an interpretation and breach the rule of impartiality.

The constitutions of the Sejm were a superior source of law, and from 1543 on, they were drawn up in Polish, printed and sent to the boroughs of individual lands. In the 1730s and in 1782 on the initiative of the Piarists, the *Volumina Legum* were published that were to codify the entire Polish legislation, from the oldest times up to those days. A source of local law for the nobility were the so-called *lauda* issued by local sejmiks. For the townsmen from royal cities it was the king who remained the source of law and official writs issued by him: edicts in religious and military matters, decrees in economic affairs (commerce and customs), and ordinances (for instance, issued for salt mines). In the municipal and country courts sentencing was based on, in the Crown, *Artykuły prawa magdeburskiego* (*Articles of Magdeburg Law*) of 1556 by Bartłomiej Groicki; while in Lithuania, on the Third Statute (1588). In private estates the relations between the lord and his peasants, as well as the relations inside villages, were regulated by ordinances issued individually by the owners of estates.

3. The Judiciary

3.1. Royal Courts and the Sejm Court

On the basis of prerogative of the king as the highest judge there operated special royal courts called chancery courts (*post curiam*). They were: the relational court (Polish: *sąd relacyjny*) – which entertained mainly appeals from the Courland courts, there sat the king with senators and ministers, and a relation from the cause sent back by the chancellor was given by a referendary; the assessor court (Polish:

sąd asesorski or, in short, *asesoria*) – an appellate organ for municipal matters; the referendary court (*sąd referendarski* or *referendaria*) – an appellate court for the peasants from the crown lands. Usually, the king did not sit in the *post curiam* court personally but through the dignitaries who tried and sentenced in his name. Occasionally, the king designated senators to create the so-called commissioner court (*sąd komisarski*) to adjudicate a concrete cause.

The Sejm Court, made up of the king, senators, and eight representatives of the Chamber of Deputies (from 1588), heard in the first instance the most serious public criminal cases (Latin: *causae mere criminales*), which were subject to the penalty of death, infamy, and confiscation of property. These crimes were: *lèse-majesté* and treason against the Commonwealth (Latin: *crimen laese maiestatis regiae et perduellionis*), an act of violence at the Sejm session, the breaking up of a tribunal or sejmik, confederation in the army (if it had not been legalized by a hetman joining in), counterfeiting the coin, abuses and offences of officials in the discharge of their duty, and some financial and material cases (of non-payment of a quarter, escheats, fence and boundary between the royal and noble lands, etc.). Until 1607, the Sejm Court decided also in cases in which the tribunal was equally divided. It had the right to interfere with other courts verdicts, granting pardons or annulling sentences recognized as illegal, unwarranted or unjust. In practice, the court decayed in the 18th century due to the non-conclusion and breaking up of the Sejms.

The public prosecutor on behalf of the state was the Grand Prosecutor of the Crown (Polish: *instygator wielki koronny*, Latin: *instigator regni*), whose duty *ex officio* was to prosecute in all public offences, which had been acted against by no one (constitution of 1581), even without a delation, that is, a formal report of an offence (constitution of 1611). From 1588 on, the Crown Prosecutor brought actions at the Sejm Court against *lèse-majesté* and treason (in consultation with the Crown Marshal) and in cases of unlawfully leased crown lands by the nobility (1598), and at the Tribunal – against financial peculations of salt mine managers (Polish: *żupniks*, Latin: *praefectus salinarum*) and leaseholders of estates (1588), Grand Treasurers, starostas, stewards, and tax collectors (1590).

3.2. Nobility Courts

The courts of the nobility were fully independent of the king. Courts of first instance were self-governing in nature and pleas were heard by officials elected from the nobility resident in the land and not by professional lawyers, who were employed as auxiliary staff. The constant composition of the panel of judges was appointed for a specific kind of pleas as land courts, borough courts, and courts of chamberlain.

3.2.1. Courts of First Instance – Land Courts, Borough Courts and Chamberlain Courts

Each voivodeship (or land) had its own territorial court, which (from 1543) sat three times a year (the so-called *roki sądowe*) and had judicial authority to hear and resolve

all disputes where the defendant was a resident nobleman. The panel of judges was made up of a judge, sub-judge, and scribe.

From the end of the 16th century on, the so-called borough court (Polish: *sąd grodzki*) was sentencing in cases of the resident nobility accused of crimes that fell under the so-called four starosta's articles or paragraphs (an attack against a noble house, arson, assault on a public road, and rape), and in all cases of the landless (non-resident) nobility. When caught red-handed, a nobleman who had committed any of those crimes was deprived of his right of personal immunity and as such could be detained and imprisoned. The court was appointed by a starosta and independent of the local sejmik, thus in the 17th and 18th centuries the jurisdiction of borough courts increased to the detriment of that of land courts for they were taking over also civil cases, besides criminal ones.

The chamberlain court was presided over by a Chamberlain or his deputy and until the end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth it was hearing cases in boundary disputes in order to establish a new boundary line between the neighbouring estates "in field" – in the very place where the boundaries were to be drawn. The 17th–18th centuries saw the increased importance of arbitration courts (compromisory ones). They were made up of trusted persons (arbiters) nominated by each of the parties involved and a super-arbiter nominated by them; in cases of disputes between noblemen the super-arbiter was usually the patron of the strongest faction or his deputy designated by him. The court decisions, based on a voluntary settlement, were binding on the both parties and it was not customary to appeal from the decisions to state courts.

3.2.2. *Tribunals*

After King Stephen Bathory had relinquished his right of appellate jurisdiction, the Crown Tribunal had been established (1578) for the nobility. For the inhabitants of Little Poland, it convened in spring and summer at Lublin, and for those of Greater Poland in autumn and winter at Piotrków, which, for this reason, was called *Trybunalski* ("of Tribunal"). The Lithuanian Tribunal convened in Vilnius (1581), sentencing first on the basis of the Second (1566), then the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588). In 1589 the Crown Tribunal was vested with the jurisdiction of appeals from Royal Prussia and (in 1589–1590) with judicial authority over the Volhynian, Kiev, and Bratslav voivodships, but under the condition that decisions should be made on the basis of the Second Lithuanian Statute and verdicts would be written in the Ruthenian language.

In the Tribunals, justice was delivered not by professional judges, but by deputies elected every year from among the nobility at local sejmik. In the Crown each voivodship or land elected one or two deputies, with the exclusion of persons who served as the representative of the land in the Sejm; altogether, the Crown Tribunal was composed of ca. 40 members (in 1664).

As to the Lithuanian Tribunal, during the 16th to 17th centuries neither the number of its members nor the place of its sessions was constant. In 1582–1588 it comprised

of 42 deputies (two from each of 21 powiats, for Samogitia had not joined the common Main Court; cases were tried during six-week sessions in as many as four locations: Vilnius, Trakai, Novahruak, and Minsk. In 1589 the Tribunal grew by three deputies from Samogitia to a total of 48 members (45 lay deputies and three clergy deputies); from that time on, it had only two annual sessions: in Vilnius and (every two years) in Minsk and Novahruak. Matters of individual voivodeships were examined and decided according to the hierarchy established at the Union Sejm of 1569, first on the basis of the Second Lithuanian Statute (1566), and then from 1589 – the Third Statute (1588). In the first half of the 17th century the number of lay deputies increased to 52 (by four lay deputies from the sejmiks of Smolensk and Starodub).

The Tribunals were to hear the appeals against the judgments given according to the land law (lay and ecclesiastical ones) both between the nobles themselves and between the nobility and clergy: the first cases were to be heard by lay deputies only, while the latter by a mixed court (Latin: *Compositi Iudicii*) made up of secular and clerical deputies. The Circle *Compositi Iudicii* of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (called the Ecclesiastical Court) comprised of an equal number of lay and clerical deputies up to six (from 1584), and then eight (from 1641). The court of final instance for all criminal cases between the nobility and the clergy was the court of an apostolic nuncio in Warsaw (from 1635). Such a solution was adopted under the pressure of the nobility who sought to suppress the appeal of the clergy to Rome.

The Tribunal was presided over by a marshal elected for every session, the ecclesiastical circle had a president in the Crown, and in Lithuania it debated under a secular marshal. Verdicts were to be unanimous, a majority vote was allowed if agreement could not be reached for three times.

Although the 17th and 18th centuries witnessed the increase of the jurisdiction of the Tribunals, with the lapse of time they were functioning worse and worse: corruption was endemic (bribes, payolas), verdicts were increasingly often issued on the order of magnates whose clients were the deputies of the Tribunals. The attempts to amend the Tribunal (*correctura*) made in 1726 ended in failure and were successful only in the Stanisław August Poniatowski times.

3.2.3. *Special Courts*

Apart from the ordinary courts of law there were also special courts: marshal courts, military courts, and confederation courts. The marshal courts were held summarily before the marshal (of the Crown or Lithuania, depending on the place of residence of the king) in the presence of the monarch, in cases relating to the safety of the king's court and his immediate surroundings.

Military judicature was in the hands of the hetman with the jurisdiction over all his subordinates – including the noblemen who, after the recruitment, lost their right to the law courts of the nobility. The hetman judged with the assistance of deputies elected from officers, but he retained his judicial autonomy of sentencing. License and revolts of soldiers during military campaigns were punished with imprisonment, putting the offender to the sword, or bringing shame upon the dignity

(by humiliation and disgrace – the lashing or “trumpeting out” from the camp) under the military disciplinary code he established himself. In time of peace civilians in disputes with soldiers had the right to appeal to the Tribunal (1662, 1664).

Confederate courts took cognisance of ordinary courts in the area under a confederation, for their operations were suspended for the period of its duration. There was a special form of the confederate court, the so-called “hooded courts” during the interregna, with the right of summary adjudication in cases of disturbance of the internal peace until the election of the king.

3.3. Rural and Urban Courts

The highest appellate court for royal cities was the assessor court presided over by the chancellor who was ruling also in the cases of boundary line dispute between the crown lands and private estates. It was a professional court due to the participation of professional lawyers, and it enjoyed a good reputation.

The legal jurisdiction in the cities and villages founded under German town law was vested in the Bench composed of jurors (usually 7–12), designated by the City Council, who under the supervision of the elder adjudicated criminal offences and cases not under dispute. The members of ethnic legal groups (Jews, Armenians), as well as the clergy and the nobility, were beyond its jurisdiction. Apart from sentencing, the Bench kept the municipal registers legalizing financial transactions, divisions of family property, last wills, and other types of civil contracts. The village benches were abolished by the Constitution of May 3. The village bench, presided over by the *sołtys*, functioned as a court of first instance for the trials of peasants who in the 16th century could appeal from such a court to public courts; in the 17th century such appeals had ceased to be made.

In the crown lands, economies, table lands (Polish: *dobra stolowe*), and estates belonging to the castellany and royal cities, it was the referendary court that functioned as an appellate instance; the referendary designated by the monarch was hearing and sentencing cases on his own in cases brought by peasants against the leaseholders and *starostas*. In private lands, the petitions of peasants, especially numerous in the 18th century, were adjudicated by the lord's court. The lord's power over his peasants did not include capital punishment that could have been imposed only by the borough or municipal court. The dependent (or *liege*) nobility and land-owners (*boyars*) in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania did not have the right to appeal to the land courts or Tribunals, and the highest instance for them was the lord of the *latifundium* in which they were living.

3.4. The Bar

The Bar – “the estate of lawyers,” according to Jędrzej Kitowicz – was a group of professionals employed in the central court institutions (the Crown and Lithuanian assessor courts, referendary courts, marshal's courts and Tribunals), as well as at the land and borough courts in all voivodeships. The highest rank among the Bench

barristers and lawyers was that of patrons (litigation attorneys, that is, advocates) and the so-called dependants (assistants of the patrons); below them were regents (Polish: *rejent*) who were admitting the entries to the court records and taking care of the court office and archives; then the so-called susceptants (assistants of regents) who were taking testimonies; next, clerks, court runners, and Tribunal prosecutors (Tribunal police), those who were collecting fines in the Tribunal (called *skrzynkowi* from Polish: *skrzynka* “box”), those responsible for maintaining order (instigators *securitatis*), and wardens supervising prisons. All that host of people had created their own subculture, with a distinct language (judicial Latin in the Crown, and judicial Ruthenian in Lithuania) and peculiar entertainments, like fencing with singlesticks called *palcats*.

Usually, the members of the Bar had no formal legal education. The candidates to the profession of lawyer (known as *ferjanci*) served as apprentices to an elder patron or at the court office. Despite the low prestige of the profession of lawyer, limited possibilities of employment in the truncated public administration and in the army resulted in a steady inflow to the Bar of the nobility who officially in 1726 eliminated the townsmen from the land courts and Tribunals.

And, for the craft is profitable and esteemed, numerous poor noblemen, apprenticing earnestly, gained considerable substance (wealth) and high dignities.⁷²

The Bar profited from common barratry prevalent among the nobility, and the multitude of co-existing and contradictory legal norms and systems contributed to twisted interpretations and corruption. Dishonesty of lawyers is evidenced by the 18th-century laws banning them from buying any properties of their clients.

3.5. Performance of the Judiciary

The performance of the judicial system was low. An obvious crisis in the application of law in the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries manifested itself in a disobedience or disrespect for the laws and the authority of the Tribunals (for instance, in lawless forays). A commonly felt injustice of the judiciary was preserved in a proverb: “The law is like a cobweb, the horsefly would break through a cobweb, the fly would get caught, and the poor would get a waterfish.”⁷³

The noble judiciary system, jealously guarding its independence from the king and the executive power, expected the king’s official – starosta – to enforce the judgment of the borough court. But after the office of starosta became “the bread of the well-deserved,” noblemen turned for help in the enforcement of court orders or defense against a magnate neighbour to another magnate rather than to the local authorities.

72 Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów*, prep. by R. Pollak, Wrocław, 1951, p. 183.

73 Julian Krzyżanowski, *Mądrzej głowie dość dwie słowie. Dwie nowe centurie przysłów polskich*, Warsaw, 1960, vol. 1, p. 424. Waterfish was considered as the meanest fish.

What demonstrated the impotence of the judicial system and the lack of distinction between the public and private realms, was the system of enforcement of punishments, especially infamy and banishment, referring to the lynch law. An *infamis*, that is, a man who had been sentenced to infamy, was deprived of respect and of the benefit and protection of law, and the killing of him was not only unpunished but even rewarded, in the form of the right to escheat. Moreover, if the killer was an outlaw himself, the killing released him from the “calling out” (Constitution of 1613, against the group called *Lisowczycy*, from the name of their organizer and commander Aleksander Józef Lisowski). In 1699, the marshals and councillors of forbidden confederations were recognized as *infames*; their killer was to enjoy the right of priority to vacant posts, and if he was a plebeian – to the ennoblement. An outcast (sentenced to exile) was also an outlawed person, but killing him was not rewarded. A medieval custom of blood feud (Polish: *wróża*) (a declaration of revenge), served to legalize the practice of meeting out justice with one’s own hands;⁷⁴ it was not restricted until the constitution of 1588 that formalized a pursuit of the accused.

In the early modern Commonwealth there was no such institution as today’s public prosecution office, except for the Crown instigator. In private cases, the injured parties had to bring a lawsuit themselves, and what was more – they had to bring along the accused or make him turn up before the court. If the plaintiff failed to do so during one year and six weeks counting from the time of the offence, the perpetrator was safe, even if he had killed somebody. There was no custom or even possibility to place the perpetrator under a temporary arrest. In the case of the nobility, there was a tradition to appear voluntarily before the court and, after the sentence was pronounced, to report to serve a sentence, otherwise the adjudged was outlawed – and as such he could have been killed, because no court of law would protect him or accept his accusations and demands to dispense justice towards someone else. Thus, in practice, it was quite common that an accused actually reported himself to the authorities, and after serving a sentence he could regain his dignity and all privileges. However, this applied merely to the ordinary noblemen, while the magnates, who had at their disposal armed servants and their court troops, could disregard court sentences.

3.6. Reforms of the Legal System at the Four-Year Sejm

In the second half of the 18th century and at the Four-Year Sejm, a general reorganization of the judicial system was effected. The estate structure of the judiciary was shaken by the subjection of the whole population of the Commonwealth to the judicial power of courts of the Treasury Commission and commissions of order in matters of commerce, bills of exchange, and finance. Yet, in actual fact, the judiciary preserved its estate structure until the Partitions.

74 Natalia Starczenko, “Zapowiedź zemsty na Wołyniu w 2. połowie XVI – na początku XVII wieku,” in *Barok. Historia-Literatura-Sztuka*35 (2011), no. 1, pp. 283–312.

3.6.1. *The Noble Judiciary System*

The land courts were combined with the borough and Chamberlain courts, thus creating the collegial “ever ready” land courts, which operated the whole year round and were composed of 10 judges elected for 4 years at deputational sejmiks, which finally were settled at a fixed date (that is, at February 14th). In practice, however, the deputational sejmiks convened on that day only in 1792, because the Grodno Sejm restored the former date on which the sejmiks were convened for the last time in 1794. In Lithuania, until 1763, each of 23 sejmiks elected two deputies, except for the Samogitian sejmik that elected three representatives. At the Coronation Sejm of 1764 a decision was made that deputies had to be elected for a single term, which in Polish was called *repartycja* (henceforth rendered as “session”): there was one representative for the sejmiks of Vilnius and Rus, and only the Samogitian sejmik was granted the right to two deputies; also, the scheduled dates of opening of both these sessions had been changed.

A reform of the Tribunals was carried out. There were to be only two Tribunals in the Crown: at Piotrków for Greater Poland, and at Lublin for Little Poland. The Tribunals were to operate constantly. In Lithuania, at the Coronation Sejm of 1764, the Circle *Compositi Iudicii* was renamed as the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, increased to 12 judges, with an ecclesiastical president (from 1767). At the same time, the secular circle was significantly decreased by appointing for each session per one deputy from each sejmik (and two from Samogitia). After the reform of the Four-Year Sejm there were 34 deputies in the Lithuanian Tribunal (one from each sejmik, including: the Livonian “sejmik-in-exile” (Polish: *sejmik egzulancki*), and from the District of Pilten). Vilnius was designated as the only place of its debates, and separate sessions were abolished.

3.6.2. *The Sejm Court*

The instance to adjudge ministers and other high officials guilty by reason of their constitutional liability and in matters of political offences was to be the reformed Sejm Court, composed of 12 senators and 24 deputies.

3.6.3. *The Municipal Judiciary and Assessor Courts*

In towns and cities there were urban magistrate courts established together with departmental appellate courts, according to a new territorial division of the state. Reorganized assessor courts, separate for the Crown and Lithuania, were the highest instance for cities and townsmen. Court officials, and partly also senators and deputies, were to serve as assessors. There was a plan to introduce an institution of court of jurors as the representation of social factor in the process of determining guilt or innocence. From the 1770s also the referendary courts became collegial.

3.6.4. *The Rural Judicial System*

Rural courts remained in the hands of lords, but in 1768 they were explicitly forbidden to exercise their right of death and life (*ius vitae et necis*).

3.7. Criminal Courts of Kościuszko's Insurrection

During the Insurrection of 1794, criminal courts were established in voivodeships and the Criminal Court of the Masovian Duchy (Polish: *Sąd Kryminalny Księstwa Mazowieckiego*) in Warsaw, renamed on August 1794 as the Military Criminal Court (*Sąd Kryminalny Wojskowy*). The former Highest Court had protected the members of the Targowica Confederation. This, however, had led to lynching and other acts of terror (May–June 1795), which, in turn, allowed for the partitioning powers to stage a military intervention in the Commonwealth under the pretext of the necessity of suppressing the revolution.

4. Fiscal and Financial Matters

4.1. Development of Public Finances and Taxes in the Commonwealth of the 16th to 17th Centuries

In the early modern period there was no public treasure in the Commonwealth in the sense of an institution that would be responsible for receiving and dispersing the public revenue. There existed, however, certain factors for the centralization of the treasury that resulted from the unification of the tax system in the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and abolishment in 1576 of a separate office of Masovian Treasurer from among the institution of the ducal period.

The creation of public finances began in 1563 after the division of revenues from the crown lands (with the exclusion of the pledged lands) in the following proportions: 1/5 for the leaseholders, 3/5 for the royal treasury, and 1/5 for the “quarter treasury” at Rawa – which (according to Anna Filipczak-Kocur) was meant to be a beginning of state treasury; it was also imagined that the quarter itself would be only a part of its revenues. The possibility of further centralization was reduced after the death of King Sigismund August, when during the three successive interregna starostas appropriated a major part of revenues from the Crown lands. Therefore, the rules of the elected kings began with the lack of money to finance two basic spheres of their activity: the maintenance of the centre of power (the royal court and central offices) and financing of war expeditions.

In 1574, King Henry of Valois attempted to enforce the restoration of this part of the revenues which was allocated for the king by issuing an ordinance providing a new distribution of the revenues: in all estates – 20 % for the quarter; in starostwa grodowe – 40 % for the king, and the same amount for the leaseholder; in starostwa niegrodowe (*tenuta*) – 50 % for the king, 30 % for the leaseholder. Together with the growth in the number of the crown lands for the so-called “bare” land tenures

under King Stephen Bathory and the chaos in the state administration of finances, the abandonment of the execution of that law with respect to 3/5 of the Crown lands income for the king led to the situation in which King Sigismund III Vasa, immediately after his election, had nothing to live on.

Under the Vasa kings and the so called native kings (Polish: *królowie rodacy*) a practice was established of paying off of the debts towards supporters incurred during the interregnum with conferring the office of starosta upon them. This suited well with the nobility, always suspicious of the absolutist tendencies of their kings, to have them poor and depended.

4.2. Organization of Financial Authorities

It was not until the 1760s that a separate institution, independent from the king, was established to manage the fiscal matters; in theory, the holder of all revenues (except for the winter allowance for the army, called *hiberna*) remained the monarch, although “the management of finances by the king was more [...] of private character than of public legal one,”⁷⁵ and the Grand Treasurers appointed by him reported on their activities before the Sejm. Also decisions of sejmiks and Vilnius convocations formally were made in the name of the king.

In the name of the king and the Commonwealth operated the Grand Treasurers: of the Crown and Lithuania – central officials in the rank of ministers. The emblem of their office, like the staff of the Marshal, seal of the Chancellor, and mace (called *bulava* or, in Polish, *bulawa*) of the Hetman, were the keys of the Treasurer. The Treasurers were held accountable before the Sejm, and their accounts were entered into the Sejm accounting books (called in Polish: *księgi podskarbińskie*), kept in the Crown and Lithuanian royal chancelleries.

The Treasurer’s influence on the collection and execution of delinquent taxes was limited, because tax collectors elected at sejmiks (from 1572 on, constantly in the 1590s, formally after the constitution of 1626) were directly subordinated not to the Treasurer but to local authorities. They transferred money collected from the taxpayers to the voivodeship stewards, and not to the central treasury. Usually, the tax collectors were receiving remuneration for touring their tax districts (either personally or through sub-collectors) in the form of 10 % of the collected sum, which they deducted when accounting for collected taxes.

The office of Treasurer was the most profitable of all central offices in the Commonwealth, and at the same time most induced embezzlement. The main source of his income was a commission on collected public taxes; only in 1776 the Treasurer was granted an annual allowance (120.000 Polish zlotys) in exchange for his relinquishment of other sources of income. The group of Treasurers during the times of

75 Tadeusz Szulc, “Kształtowanie kontroli nad dochodami królewskimi w szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej,” in *Podstawy materialne państwa. Zagadnienia historyczno-prawne*, ed. D. Bogacz, M. Tkaczuk, Szczecin, 2006, p. 43.

the elected kings included reliable and honest officials, but also such as Jan Andrzej Morsztyn in the 17th century, and Heinrich von Brühl and Jacob Heinrich von Fleming in the Wettin times, who made great fortunes at the cost of the public treasury.

In the course of the 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries the authority of Treasurer shrank, after extraordinary taxes started to be collected under the supervision of voivodeship treasury commissions. But the limitation of private powers of the monarchs in managing finances of the state did not come until the times of Stanisław August Poniatowski. The Treasury Commissions of the Crown and Lithuania, established at the Convocation Sejm of 1764, are recognized as the first fully independent institutions of financial administration.

Traditionally, it was the Crown Treasury at the Wawel Castle in Cracow that served as the location of the treasury of the Commonwealth, where not only money was kept but also royal insignia (crowns, sceptres, orbs, and the sword) and state documents. The question of protection of the treasury, important because of not only financial, but also, and above all, political matters, was regulated in the *pacta conventa* of Henry of Valois of 1574, confirmed by King Stephen Bathory and introduced into the Constitution of 1576. From that time on, the Crown treasury was to be “concealed under the seals and keys” of seven senators each of whom had his own key. For greater security there was a new office established in the 17th century – namely, the office of the Crown Keeper – conferred by the king upon one of the canons of the Cathedral Chapter. In practice, the Polish coronation insignia were kept carelessly – for example, on the occasion of double election of Maximilian Habsburg and Sigismund III Vasa (1587) the Bishop of Kujavia, who had crowned Vasa was clearing himself of the charge of breaking in to the treasury by explaining that the keys had been lost.

The Lithuanian Treasury, which emerged in 1569 from the Lithuanian Land Treasury was located at the castle in Vilnius, where taxes imposed by the Sejm poured in; when necessary (for example, the necessity to quickly pay military troops), another place was set. The treasury was managed by the Grand Treasurer (Land one), an official analogous to the Grand Crown Treasurer, but (contrary to him), serving at the same time as Treasury Notary. Except for the powers of their Crown counterparts, Grand Lithuanian Treasurers had a broad authority over the artillery (despite the emergence of general of artillery office under King Wladislaus IV Vasa). Their duties included the protection of privileges and the Treasury of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, care of the fair coinage, timely setting of treasury liabilities (public and court ones) and performing their duties according to the letter of the Lithuanian Statute.

4.3. Court Treasure and Public Treasure

By the end of the 16th century the necessity to determine sources of revenues and to separate an independent public treasury was obvious. The difference of opinions in this regard was that the king pushed the idea of public treasury based on fixed taxes, while the noble opposition, referring to the banners of the Executionist movement,

wanted to base the reform on the regulation of exploitation of the crown lands. An attempt to solve the problem was the division of the Treasury into the state one (land one) and court one or royal, first in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (January 1st, 1588), and one year later in the Crown, and the creation of the so-called table lands.

An interpretation of the laws of 1588–1590 has been controversial. Some historians (Bohdan Baranowski, Stanisław Herbst, Juliusz Bardach, Natalia Gajl, Dariusz Makilla, Andrzej Wyczański) contend that it was then that the final separation of the public treasury took place. Others (Anna Sucheni-Grabowska) maintain that it is imprecise to regard the constitution of 1590 as an act finally dividing the Court Treasury and the Treasury of the Commonwealth, because the law of 1590 did not repeal the constitution on the 3/5 of the revenue from all the crown lands for the king, and the supervision of them was still in the hands of the Grand Treasurer in the name of the monarch. Thus, King Sigismund III could claim his rights to them in the alliance with the nobility, who proposed the appraisal of crown lands and revision of the rights of leaseholders – this would mean, however, a conflict with a group of senators and keepers of the seal with whom he shared his political power. The king decided on a compromise compatible with interests of leaseholders, who preferred to pay the second quarter (known as *dupla*) rather than to have their incomes reappraised. This tactic, however, turned out to be shortsighted, since later constitutions reserved the *dupla* for defense purposes, and the lands the revenue of which should be paid to the Court Treasury were limited in practice to the table lands.

A conflict between the nobility and the king over financial matters led to the decentralization of finances. Already during the Sandomierz Rebellion of 1606–1609, the nobility presented projects of land and voivodeship treasuries, which were to collect voluntary taxes of citizens paid for defense and other expenses (for example, education of the youth) in the territory of the operation of sejmik in question. They were indications of an actual disintegration of the public treasury in the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries into dozens of local treasuries.

There was also another reason why the law of 1590 marked the beginning of a new period in the Polish-Lithuanian finances: under this law, from 1591 on, Treasury Commissions were systematically established to decide on controversial matters related to the state treasury, called also (from 1613) the Treasury Tribunals: in the Crown – Radom Tribunal, and in Lithuania – Vilnius Tribunal. The Crown Treasury Tribunal was composed of six senators and noble deputies appointed by relational sejmiks (one from each voivodeship); the Lithuanian Treasury Tribunal – four Lithuanian senators and deputies from voivodeships, appointed (like in the Crown) by the Chamber of Deputies, or (after 1667 exclusively) elected at the relational sejmiks. The Treasury Tribunals operated similarly to the Crown and Lithuanian Tribunals. They had no exclusive rights in financial matters which were still decided by the Crown Tribunal, the Sejm Court or even the borough courts of law, which increased the chaos in finances on all the levels of administration.

After the reform of 1590, the basic foundations of the Court Treasury survived until the Constitution of 1772. During this period, the spheres of private and public revenues and expenses of the elected kings intermingled also for this reason that

they were personally bound by the *pacta conventa* to bear expenses for public enterprises – especially financial responsibility for defense of the frontiers, building of castles and (implemented only by Stanislaw August Poniatowski) the foundation of academy of chivalry for the noble youth. At the same time, the property of the monarch and his revenues were regarded as public property.

4.4. Public and Private Income of the King

The economies of the king were not huge farmsteads like magnate latifundia in the eastern frontiers of the Crown, but complexes of various revenues, a kind of benefice for a privileged person who in fact did not administer the estate. The attempts undertaken by King Sigismund III to “turn into economies” profit-making starostwa after their leaseholders had died met with a strong opposition of the nobility who feared that in this way some complexes of land could have been excluded from the domain (and thus from the appraisal and the quarter) and get a separate management without the control of the Sejm. The process of inclusion of starostwa into the economies was restrained but not abolished altogether – as is testified by repeated bans (1607, 1633, 1648).

The Treasury Commission of His Majesty the King (Saxon Chamber) established in the times of the Wettin Kings undertook to consolidate economies through the eviction of tenants who did not pay taxes. Ordering of matters of economies was made possible also by the fact that their litigations were resolved by the chancery court (constitutions of 1589, 1611, 1677 and 1678, reconsideration in 1717). In the second half of the 18th century there was a considerable increase in profitability of the Lithuanian economies under Antoni Tyzenhauz. Among the Crown economies the wealthiest were: of Malbork, Sambor and procuration of Little Poland – individually managed (from ca. 14th century to 1794), that made provisions for among others the Wawel Royal Castle.

Without the consent of the estates at the Sejm, the king could not issue charters burdening his estates for the clergy (constitution of 1638), in 1641 all previous contracts and land leases concerning economies were declared null and void, in 1699 King Augustus II pledged himself not to confer any functions in the Royal Treasury or leases in economies upon Jews. The restrictions imposed by the Sejm, apart from reducing the powers of the king, deprived gradually the elected kings of the material foundation of their power.

Initially, the monarch could seek to increase his personal income by buying lands as his private property. However, in the time of Sigismund III there was a scandal with the Żywiec estate – formally taken as a pledge from the Komorowski family, but in fact bought – by Queen Constantia in 1624 (legalized in 1626) which resulted in the ban of the Sejm on such practices in the future which, in fact, made it impossible to create a royal domain that would allow the elected kings certain independence of the Sejm. The distrust towards the intentions of the king demonstrated at sejmiks and expressed also in a treatise by the well-known Lublin lawyer Andrzej Lisiecki (*Apologia pro libertate Reipublicae et legibus Regni contra callidos novi iuris*

repartares, 1625) turned out to be fully justified. Indeed, Żywiec lands was treated as a private property of the sons of King Sigismund III. And what is more – Jan II Casimir Vasa bequeathed it to his sister-in-law Anna Gonzaga who ceded her claims to her son-in-law Henry Louis de Bourbon, a candidate to the Polish-Lithuanian throne. This affair – and some later ones, for example, the Duchy of Opole and Racibórz kept by Louise Marie as a pledge from the emperor (1645–1666) – reveals the consequences of confusion of private (of the king) and public (of the state) sphere of central finances.

4.5. Revenues of the Court Treasury

In theory, the revenues of the Court Treasury under the Vasa kings were increasing (in the last year of King Sigismund III Vasa ca. 457.000 Polish zlotys; under Jan Casimir – ca. 1 m, beside the takings to the private coffers of the king and queen for the appointments to offices), because – contrary to the quarter, the amount of which did not change over two hundred years – they could do short-term leases, raising the rent proportionally to market price. Due to the devaluation of the coin, an increased amount did not mean an increased real income of the monarchs. In the early 18th century the revenue of the Court Treasury is estimated to have been around 2 m Polish zlotys, although real money paid into the Treasury probably did not exceed 60 % of this sum. In the last years of King Augustus III, the establishment of the Saxon Chamber gave better control over incomes and expenses. Under King Stanisław August Poniatowski, whose private property in 1764 was only 63.000 of annual income from his hereditary lands, the Royal Treasury was divided into a main part: the Chamber, administered by the Treasury Commission of His Majesty, and the Coffers – left at the disposal of the king; for a certain time, there was also the so-called Lithuanian Treasury that maintained private uhlans' (Polish: *ulan*) regiments. The revenue of the Court Treasury in its first years was ca. 6 m Polish zlotys. After the first partition, when the king lost his largest sources of income (i. a. salt mines of Cracow), the Sejm of 1773–1775 granted him a subsidy of 5 million Polish zlotys from the state treasury; thus, the total income of the king was 7 million. But in fact, money expected to come into the king's treasury was paid with delay, and King Stanisław August fell into huge debts (21 m Polish zlotys – 1792; 33.5 m – 1793, 40 m – at his deathbed), which after the collapse of the Commonwealth were regulated (in three fifths) in 1797 by the partitioning powers.

4.6. Revenue to the Treasury of the Commonwealth

Revenues to the public treasury, being from the 16th to the 18th century subject to various fluctuations, usually did not suffice to cover expenses – especially the quarter to pay the mercenary troops called in Polish *zaciężne*. In Lithuania, the quarter was introduced in 1598, but only in the mid-17th century it was imposed as a tax of fixed amount. The indebtedness of the state to the army, growing throughout the 17th century due to wars, caused the necessity to look for new sources of income,

which, in practice, meant the invention of some new kind of taxes. In 1629 a hearth tax (Polish: *podymne*) was introduced (initially only in the Crown) – a direct tax collected from towns and rural areas; its revenue exceeded almost twice the former revenue of the land tax (*lanowe*). In the second quarter of the 17th century the hearth tax replaced the levy of the quarter, but soon afterward, in the mid-17th century, the quarter was restored, and both taxes were levied, either jointly or separately. In the period of wars in the second half of the 17th century the hearth tax was imposed in its double amount, and the quarter was increased to as many as 50 times (in 1661). In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the hearth tax revenue (from 1649 on) became the main source of public revenue.

In case of urgent needs of the Commonwealth, the second quarter (*dupla*) was levied, and at one time even the third (*trypla*), despite all the protests of crown lands leaseholders. In 1632 King Wladislaus IV Vasa pledged himself to pay from the crown lands and table lands a second quarter, called “new quarter” (from 1637 permanently) being a double old quarter, allocated for “the cannon” (the maintenance of the artillery), and in 1658 a fourfold quarter (*kwadrupla*) was imposed on new starostas for the first year of the lease.

From 1649 on, there was a land tax levied on the peasants from the crown lands instead of the military service in the so-called “drafted” or “chosen infantry” (Polish: *piechota wybraniecka*). A new tax – or, in fact, a supplement to the pay from the quarter – was a winter allowance for the army, called *hiberna* (“winter bread”), introduced in 1649 and levied until 1775 on the estates of the king and the church as an equivalent for relieving those lands from the winter quartering of troops. The church estates paid the *hiberna* in the fixed rate as *subsidium hibernale*.

In the mid-17th century, when the Commonwealth scrambled for money to pay off massive debts owed to the confederated troops, a universal poll tax called *pogłównie* was introduced (1662). It was the only in the fiscal system of the Commonwealth direct tax levied on all adult (over ten-year old) inhabitants divided into 189 tax groups (the only person released from paying it was the king). The tax was collected only in emergency (1673, 1674, 1676, 1683, and 1690) and paid in different rates (from 1 *grosz* to 300 Polish zlotys), depending on the sources of personal income and social status. To the Lithuanian Treasury, in turn, the poll tax was paid only once (1675), and instead Lithuanian sejmiks imposed the hearth taxes.

In 1656–1659 an excise tax was restored – an extra tax put on all goods being sold in royal and ecclesiastical towns and cities, and in market villages. The highly profitable taxes on the sale and service of alcoholic beverages: the *czopowe* and *szeleżne* (*szynkowe*) – a tax on beer and all other alcoholic beverages sold in taverns – went to the disposal of local governments: voivodeship treasury commissions and sejmiks.

4.7. Reforms of the Fiscal System in the 17th–18th Centuries

By the end of the 17th century, the demands to liquidate voivodeship treasury commissions, or at least to limit their authority grew in force. They paved the way to the reforms executed at the Silent Sejm in 1717. While all archaic taxes were abolished,

the poll tax (*pogłównie*) was collected (until 1775) through a repartition (distribution) of sums allocated to individual voivodeships, as well as *czopowe* and *szeleżne* excise taxes at the disposal of sejmiks. At the same time sejmiks were deprived of the right to give their approval to taxation, which was transferred to the Radom Treasury Tribunal.

In the Wettin times, the projects of reform of the financial system (1738 and 1744) ended with the breaking up the Sejm. The public Treasury was almost empty, and only with great difficulty could it collect means for diplomatic service and other necessary expenses; the army, reduced to several thousands, was paid with the poll tax revenue. To make matters worse, the last years of the Wettin kings saw the monetary disasters and the country was flooded by copper coins of shillings and *trojaks* (three *grosze* coin), minted by H. von Brühl, and the counterfeit coins made in 1758–1762 by King Frederic the Great. As a consequence, the Commonwealth lost ca. 200 m Polish zlotys.

Finally, in the last thirty years of the existence of the Republic of Both Nations a general reform of the fiscal system was conducted, in three stages (1764–1772, 1773–1775, 1778–1779), dictated by the political developments. At the first stage (already at the Coronation Sejm of 1764) there were central collegial offices established, with the powers of modern ministries of finances. They were the Treasury Commissions: of the Crown and of Lithuania, composed of the deputies of the Sejm, appointed for two-year term by the king from the quadruple number of candidates. Within their cognisance laid the management of the whole public treasury (including the Treasury of Rawa), presenting to the Sejm projects to increase public revenues, supervision over the collection of taxes, protection and safety of trade routes, the judicature in financial matters including all three estates – in the place of abolished Treasury Tribunal. For the first time in the history of the Commonwealth a fairly numerous and skilfully managed administration apparatus was created. In 1791 a joint commission was established for the whole state: the Treasury Commission of the Commonwealth of Both Nations, under the successive presidency of one of the Grand Treasures: of the Crown or of Lithuania.

The rate of the old quarter was increased, paid under the tariff fixed in 1564, which, as soon as in 1598, amounted to one tenth of real income from the crown lands, and before the reform of 1764 – only 5 %. At the Convocation Sejm of 1764 there was a new quarter introduced, called “the fair quarter,” ten times the old sum, calculated on the basis of a new appraisal of the crown lands and then raised in 1775 (in the Crown: 1.5 of the quarter, in Lithuania – the double quarter called “lavish” or “generous”) and at the Four-Year Sejm in 1789 (almost 2.5-times). The Four-Year Sejm wanted also to increase the revenues from those Crown lands which after the death of their life tenants (after the king had relinquished his right to confer them) were leased in 1775 through an auction for 50 years, without the right of ownership (under the *emphyteusis* [Polish: *emfiteuza*] contract); in 1792 a decision was made to sell all the crown lands for the purposes of the war with Russia. The implementation of this resolution was prevented by the loss of independence.

Fiscal reforms included also other sources of income: the *hiberna* tax was replaced with the hearth tax and new *czopowe* (1766), taken away from voivodship treasuries; a reform was implemented and finally the universal poll tax was abolished (1768 and 1775), replaced with a new hearth tax, and in 1789 – a one-time year-long hearth taxation (emergency or provisional tax called *protunkowy*) as advance tax for future years. Taxation on tobacco was revived, and stamp duties were renewed (on the offices conferred, playing cards, calendars, and Jewish books). Utterly new were taxes such as a tax of the tenth *grosz* (on salary) or a tax in kind (called “pilling up of grain”) for the army. The most important achievement of the reform of finances was a perpetual donation (called the offering of the tenth *grosz*), introduced in 1789, in the amount of 10 % of permanent income out of landed estate of noblemen and townsmen, and – for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth obligatorily – of the clergy. Although the revenue from the tenth *grosz* was smaller than expected, in comparison to other sources of income that tax was first in the revenue of the state; there was no time left to improve it.

An important element of economic and financial reforms was the unification of duties, weights, measures, and coins, and the abolishment of internal custom duties and tolls, which contributed to the development of internal market. In 1774 a monetary chaos was overcome by selecting from among numerous measures the most common within the whole state to be used by the Treasury Commission and by abolishing old arbitrary measures. A Minting Commission created in 1766, apart from opening a mint and changing the monetary system, was to perform a function of advisory body for treasure commissions in the Crown and Lithuania.

The Commonwealth was the first in Europe to initiate in 1717 and introduce in 1768 a complete draft budget of revenues and expenses of the state – defining the rules of financing of public needs (93 % for the army, 6.54 % for the rest). Works were initiated to introduce modern principles of budget economy: unity of budget, its transparency, and control over its realization by the Sejm. The principle of unity was never fully implemented, since a fund of the Commission of National Education and (apart from a civil list) other royal revenues were excluded from the budget. A new budget economy in the Commonwealth was related, like in England at the same time, to the development of parliamentary institutions; while in some states of enlightened absolutism there was an administrative budget introduced – prepared by the government only and not controlled by any representative institutions.

The annual revenue (profit, called *intrata*) of the public treasury under King Stanisław August Poniatowski in 1763 was not much over 10 m Polish zlotys, while the ordinary expenses – over 9 m for the army; and civil ones (i.a. for the diplomatic service and provision for the king) – 5 m. The *intrata* in Lithuania in 1768 amounted only to 1 m 400.000 of Polish zlotys, while ordinary expenses were estimated at 4.5 m (including 3.8 m for the army). The budget of 1768 was not implemented, and it was only the third version in a row, of 1775, became the basis for allocation of the Treasury money. The first draft of total budget was outlined only at the Four-Year Sejm thanks to the projects of a special deputation created for this purpose.

4.8. Financial Burdens of the Catholic Clergy

From the perspective of the Catholic Church in the Commonwealth, paying taxes to the state required every time the consent of the Holy See. The tax autonomy of the clergy was expressed in the fact that the amount of services for the state was decided upon at synod and enforced by institutions of the Church.

The only form of taxation of the clergy for the Commonwealth was a “synodal contribution” (a tax on the tithes). It emerged in the 15th century after the transformation of the papal tithe into a state charge, but initially was imposed by the pope on the motion of the king, and then passed by congregations and diocesan synods with the consent of the pope on the motion of the Polish and Lithuanian clergy (47 times in 1454–1640). A colloquial name of *subsidium charitativum* resulted from the emphasis by the clergy of a voluntary nature of the tax. Its enforcement encountered difficulties, also for this reason that it concerned mainly the parochial clergy for whom tithes were a primary source of income and who had no representation in the Sejm, and thus no impact on taxation laws. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, already after the Second Lithuanian Statute (1566) the Church lands were supposed to be taxed for the purpose of maintaining the army; in fact, the tax was levied only in 1577. The tax base was an appraisal of incomes made by the ecclesiastical authorities; the enforcement of payment was in the hands of the bishop and his chapter.

At the turn of the 18th century, because tax revenues for the army were allocated to individual units or squadrons (Polish: *chorągiew*), forced requisitions (contrary to the constitution of 1668) were made also on the estates of the Church. Clergymen were also sued for the non-payment of taxes – their privilege of immunity did not include financial matters. In special cases there was an extraordinary tax imposed on the clergy (called the Christian poll tax) to pay the soldiers’ wages and support the wars with Turkey in the 1670s and 1680s. The poll tax on the clergy was paid in the rates determined in 1662 on the basis of registers made on the order of bishops. Occasionally, there was a special levy formation drafted from the Church lands, called literally *lan* or hearth soldier, named after the type of a tax applied (1590, 1655–1656, during the wars with Turkey 1670–1679 and the Northern War of 1712–1714).

The fight for equal financial burdens of the ecclesiastical estate revived in the Wettin times. In 1700–1711 there was a conflict between the episcopate and the General Council of Warsaw that tried to impose taxation on the clergy to raise funds for defense. The draft of troops for the war was imposed on the ecclesiastical estates under the decisions of the voivodeship sejmiks (from 1733).

The Partition Sejm of 1773–1775 did away with the old tax system and imposed new taxation and (to replace the abolished *hiberna* tax and poll tax on the clergy) the *subsidium charitativum*. This time, however, it was not a voluntary donation or Christian offering, but a real tax, which was ostentatiously refused by the bishops and Primate Gabriel Podoski attending the Sejm session.

The Four-Year Sejm initiated a discussion about the introduction of fixed taxes (among others, on the incomes from the Church estates), which ended on April 6th,

1789 with the passing of the constitution on taxation of the estates of the nobility and clergy by the perpetual donation as a personal tax. The tax of perpetual donation had been widely discussed, for the attempt had been made to spare the lower clergy and to make the ecclesiastical estate tax itself voluntarily, and not under the administrative pressure. The clergy also paid extraordinary taxes levied for the maintenance of 100-thousand-strong army: the hearth tax (1789 and 1790) and a draft tax levied during the Kościuszko Uprising; the exemption could possibly apply only to the mendicant orders. The estates of the Bishopric of Cracow were appropriated by the state treasury (in exchange for a fixed salary for the bishop). After the incorporation of the Duchy of Siewierz into the Crown, the clergy of this territory began to pay the permanent donation. A planned secularization of other episcopal estates was made impossible by the collapse of the state.

5. Military System

For almost half of its history in the 16th–18th centuries, the Commonwealth of Both Nations waged either external or internal wars. Under the elected kings wars lasted for 15 years of 31 years of their rule in the 16th century, 56 years in the 17th century, the turn and the first decade of the 18th century. The defense of the country was a constant subject of debates of the Sejm, political argument, source of fear of the foreigners and growing xenophobia in the society encouraged to constant combat readiness against “heretics” and pagans, ravaged not only by foreign armies but also confederations of its own troops.

The fact that the army was associated with a threat rather than protection resulted in a rise in defeatist sentiments, tendencies to entrust the defense of the Commonwealth to divine providence and to regard wars as God’s own punishment for tolerating “heretics.” Until the times of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, projects to reform the military system were seen as a manifestation of foreign militarism, alien to the Polish tradition. There was no “military revolution” that, in the neighbouring states (especially in Sweden and Prussia), became in the 17th century one of the main factors of modernization and centralization of the state.

5.1. Organization of the State Army in the 16th–17th Centuries

The Commonwealth of Both Nation had no standing army to defend its whole territory. The “permanent defence” units (literally *obrona potoczna*, the quarter army) were established in the Crown for a specific purpose of defense of the southeastern frontiers of the state; the attempts to use these units on other fronts (for instance, in Livonia under King Sigismund III) aroused protests of the nobility. The income of the quarter tax, amounting at the end of the 17th century to ca. 100.000 Polish zlotys, supported ca. 3000-strong standing army at the borderland. In case of war other formations were enlisted, which were dissolved after the war ended. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania there was not any form of the standing army, the troops were recruited when needed for the purposes of specific campaigns. From the second

half of the 16th century on, under the constant threats of the northern frontier by Sweden, between war campaigns, the officer cadre stationed at the manors and in estates of the Lithuanian hetmans.

The basic form of the organization of the armed forces was the *levée en masse* of the nobility (initially also with *sołtysi* and *wójtys* [advocate mayors]), declared in the scale of the whole Commonwealth by the king, and in case of urgent local need by the highest local land official (*wici*, or summons to arms). It was regarded as a duty, but at the same time a privilege of the noble estate. With the lapse of time, however, the nobility increasingly preferred the managing of a farm over the military occupations, and the significance of the *levée en masse* decreased with the development of the military art the growing importance of the infantry and artillery. In the first half of the 17th century it was declared only once (1621), then during the wars with Cossacks and Tatars, and with Sweden (1649, 1651, 1655–1657), for the last time the *levée en masse* fought in the battle of Warsaw in 1656.

From the end of the 15th century, it was necessary to have the consent of the Sejm to declare a *levée en masse*. A combat and organization unit was called *chorągiew* (meaning *regiment*, literally *banner*), and was created on territorial basis. It was composed of 50–120 lances (singular form in Polish: *kopia*) in the Middle Ages, and then of cavalry retinues (singular form in Polish: *poczet*). Castellans in their castellanies, and voivodes in their voivodeships led the *levée en masse* to the location indicated by the hetman or regimentary (deputy hetman, a commander during the absence of the hetman), who inspected its numbers, armament, and combat value (*popis*). To maintain the constant combat readiness military displays of the local nobility were organized in voivodeships and districts. The participation in the land banner and *levée en masse* had the absolute precedence over all other types of military service of noblemen, and evading it was punished with the deprivation of noble rights. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the duty of participation in the *levée en masse* as well as in military inspections and displays under the threat of deprivation of nobility was included in the Third Lithuanian Statute.

According to the Polish war doctrine – developed in the 15th century during the wars with the Teutonic Order and preserved in the noble-republican ideology of the 16th century – the armed forces were defensive in nature. And the same were functions of the *levée en masse* that organizationally corresponded to the so-called popular militia, raised on a smaller scale in other European countries to maintain internal order and tranquillity. However, in the Commonwealth great trust was placed in the efficiency of this outdated means of defense, maintaining a myth of the possibility to call to arms as many as 200.000 of armed noblemen. As a result, all the subsequent projects of military reforms from the second half of the 17th century on were based on the *levée en masse*. In the time of King Jan III Sobieski there was a project by Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro (*Potrzebne consideratie okolo porządku wojennego i pospolitego ruszenia*, Slutsk 1675) to organize a constant expedition from voivodeships for the time of war, amounted to 50.000 cavalrymen from the Crown, 17.000 from Lithuania and 10.000 of Registered Cossacks. The Sejm, depending on the actual defensive needs of the state, would decide on a single, double or triple

expedition. King Jan III Sobieski had objections to cavalry expeditions but agreed to the infantry ones and combined a new draft with the peace comput troops that were to serve as the cadres developed in time of war through the incorporation of soldiers from the expeditions into the existing regiments.

The mercenary troops, developed already under the first Jagiellon kings, could be regarded as a professional group gathering people of various social standing. These troops differed from ordinary mercenaries in that they were recruited from among the citizens of the Commonwealth and not international condottieri. At a time of war, the mercenaries were divided into regiments commanded by one of the hetmans, and divisions – tactical units made up of a several or more regiments, commanded by more experienced rittmeisters.

At the beginning of the civil war in Ukraine in 1648, when the Commonwealth lost its quarter army crushed by the Cossacks in the battle of Zhovti Vody and Korsun, it was initially replaced by units drafted in individual voivodships, but also private armies of magnates. In 1652 they were merged with the reconstructed quarter troops, thus creating the comput army (comput, or *komput* in Polish: a composition of the army, passing as a secret document by a special Sejm commission) – permanent armed forces with changing number, that is, the size, which decreased during peacetime (at least 12.000 rates of soldier's pay), and increased during wars under a special decree of the Sejm. After the comput army was created, the quarter army disappeared and the quarter was allocated to the maintenance of the artillery.

The mercenary army was at its largest in 1656–1659 (ca. 36.000 soldiers in the Crown). Occasionally, it was supplemented by *lan* and hearth expeditions made up of new recruits (infantry or cavalry) provided for by the estate owners with a complete set of equipment and armament according to the rules prescribed by the Sejm (one infantryman from every 15 or 20 arable *lans* or heaths, that is, households).

5.2. Formations

The basic formation of the noble army throughout the whole Europe was the cavalry, in the West organized in companies and regiments, in the Commonwealth – in banners. Hussaria (from Hungarian: *huszár*) was at the threshold of the 16th century light cavalry, and from the second half of the 16th to the end of the 18th century the term was to mean heavy armed Polish cavalry, called winged hussars. The offensive armour of a hussar included: a lance, a *koncerz* (a long sword similar to estoc or tuck, which was used to impale from the saddle an enemy who fell to the ground) or pallasch (similar to a sabre), and two pistols; the defensive armour included a half-armour, a basinet and a vambrace called in Polish *karwasz* (karvash). A characteristic element of the armour were the wings, worn on the back of a backplate of the armour or attached to the saddle of a horse. Hussars were used mainly to launch a decisive attack, breaking the enemy's front line. The most famous victories of the hussars were in the battles of: Kircholm (1605), Klushino (1610), Khotyn (1673) and Vienna (1683).

The light cavalry was made up of Cossack banners (in Lithuania formed initially of Caucasian mountaineers, called *petyhorcy*, sing. *petyhorzec*) that from the mid-17th century became the medium-armoured cavalry (armoured banners), while Tatar or Wallachian banners turned into the light cavalry units. Those names, however, had little to do with the actual composition of the light cavalry, and the difference was that light cavalry banners did not use a protective armour, while the armoured units had helmets and armours.

Under King Stephen Bathory a new type of units was introduced, the so-called “drafted” or “chosen infantry” (*piechota wybraniecka*), modelled on the Hungarian infantry, developed in Hungary at the time of wars with Turks. It was made up of the peasants from the Crown lands (one soldier, called “chosen one” – *wybraniec*, from every 20 *lans*); each peasant was given one *lan* exempted from corvée in return for military service. The drafted infantry was quite small, it did not exceed 2300 soldiers, and its combat value was mediocre – in the first half of the 17th century the troops were used mainly to staff garrisons of fortresses; at the mid-century their military service was turned into financial contribution. Of greater significance was the Zaporozhian infantry recruited from the Cossacks taken for the pay of the Commonwealth (Registered Cossacks) who distinguished themselves particularly in the Moscow expeditions of kings Bathory and Sigismund III, and then in the defense of Khotyn against the Turks (1621) and during the Smolensk campaign (1633–1634).

An important modernization of the Commonwealth army was made by King Wladislaus IV Vasa who in 1633 introduced a division into two types of contingents or enlistments, called *autoraments*: national one which included the cavalry of the old type (hussars, armoured, and light cavalry) and foreign one (infantry modelled on Western troops: dragoons and reiters).

Dragoon units were a type of infantry who rode horses; they were armed with harquebuses (portable wheel-lock guns fired from a support called hook) or muskets (muzzle-loading shoulder firearms, fired from a portable rest called military fork), sabres or swords and pistols. Reiters in the 16th century in France were the light cavalry units, while in Germany in the 16th–18th centuries – heavy cavalry ones, armed with rapiers and pistols. In the Commonwealth the term was used from the mid-16th century to 1717 to describe the light cavalry of foreign *autorament*, armed with rapiers and harquebuses, and not using the armour.

The foreign infantry was divided into pikemen and musketeers. The development of firearms brought about in the 17th century new methods of combat with the use of infantry (for instance, the brigade system of King Gustav II Adolph of Sweden). The flintlock with bayonet eliminated pikemen and from this time on the infantry was of uniform character. In the Commonwealth the foreign infantry was used mainly for earthworks during sieges and for defense of fortresses, it was divided in the Polish and Hungarian infantry, and from the time of King Wladislaus IV also the German one (the name was derived from the command language and attire). In the second half of the 17th century it was mainly Polish peasants who served in the foreign *autorament*, albeit the legal regulations and officers’ cadre remained foreign.

Household troops of magnates – especially those from the families holding the offices of hetmans and having estates at the eastern borders of the Commonwealth, such as the Radziwiłłs, Sapiehas, Pacs, Ostrogskis, Lubomirskis – in the second half of the 17th and in the 18th century included all types of units: cavalry, infantry, and artillery. Military ranks were the same as in the Commonwealth's army. Private armies served to compel obedience of the subjects and to fight in private wars between individual magnates or magnate factions. Magnates had also fortresses, sometimes more modern and better equipped with artillery guns than state ones. Magnate troops and fortresses were an integral element of the defense of state borders, and the magnates who financed them encroached on the authority of state officials and monarchs with their consent, forced by empty coffers. In the mid-17th century the owners of private armies participating in the wars against the Swedes and Moscow tried to shift the costs of their maintenance to the state treasury.

The artillery (*archelia*), that is, the theory, method, and practice of producing of cannons was developing in Poland from the early 16th century. First artillerists (gunsmiths) were brought from Germany in the time of King Sigismund I, and one of them (Hans Beham) cast the Sigismund Bell; under King Sigismund August there were foundries (manufacturing cannons and firearms) in Lviv and Vilnius. At the end of the 16th century the three largest royal armouries (*cekhauzes*) – in Cracow, Tykocin and Vilnius – had ca. 500 cannons, supplemented by 300 trophy cannons taken under King Sigismund III from Moscow. Artillery and *cekhauzes* with a supply of arms, munitions, sulphur, lead, and artillery tools were also in large cities (Cracow, Poznan, Lviv) and magnate fortresses (at Zamość of the Zamoyskis in the Crown, and Lyahavichy [Polish: *Lachowicze*] of the Sapiehas in Lithuania). Each state or private castle with cannons had also own gunsmiths and stonemasons to carve out stone cannon balls. During wars, cannons were transported on carriages or rafted down rivers; sulphur and saltpetre required for the production of gunpowder were bought in Cracow, Vilnius, and Jarosław and conveyed to the gunpowder mills in Vilnius.

The artillery was used as early as in the Muscovite Wars of Stephen Bathory, on a larger scale it was developed under King Wladislaus IV. By the end of the 17th century, it fell prey to the Swedish troops of King Charles XII who bared all Polish and Lithuanian foundries and ordered to blow up the rest of cannons. In the times of the Saxon kings, the minister of King Augustus II, Heinrich von Brühl, being an infantry general and professional artilleryman, began to reconstruct the artillery in the Commonwealth, but it was not until Stanisław August' time that the foundry in Warsaw, established by Wladislaus IV, resumed its production. In 1781 the first Polish handbook by Józef Jakubowski was published, *Artillery Teaching*, for the students of the Nobles' Academy of the Corps of Cadets of His Royal Majesty and the Commonwealth (School of Chivalry). In 1794 the corps of field artillery numbered ca. three thousand people.

The state fleet did not exist in the Commonwealth. The first to think about the creation of a war fleet was Sigismund August during the war for Livonia, when he hired privateers (private ships commissioned into regular service as warships)

termed in documents “official guards of the sea.” They were given royal warrants of enrolment, authorizing them to enlist the crew and proving they were not common pirates. The fleet of privateers met with the opposition of Gdańsk, and for this reason its main basis was established in Puck. All sea matters were managed by the Sea Commission (1568–1572), established with the task to defend the seacoast and sea navigation as well as judicial jurisdiction in matters of booty of the privateers. All those actions resulted from the aspirations of the Commonwealth to dominate the Baltic Sea (Latin: *dominium maris Baltici*).

Under the Vasas, when the fleet was indispensable to uphold the claims of the Polish line of the Vasas to hereditary Sweden, the nobility had no understanding for its creation. And although King Sigismund III Vasa made an attempt to build his own fleet, the effort was wasted due to an unfavourable alliance with the Habsburgs who had the command over the Polish ships (1629). Wladislaus IV, who already before the death of his father Sigismund III Vasa had been engaged in the building of a fleet, planning a war with Sweden, in the 1630s created the fleet of 12 ships (bought or hired) and its port at Władysławowo. Because of the lack of money resulting from the aversion of the nobility and the constant opposition of Gdańsk, the royal ships were sold (1642–1643). It was the last attempt to maintain the fleet in the service of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

5.3. Command

The person responsible for the defense of the Commonwealth was the king. According to the opinion of Hetman Jan Tarnowski:

It is needed [...] that His Majesty the King should condescend to conceive how his States with the help of God can be defended against every enemy.⁷⁶

The king was *ex officio* the commander in chief of the *levée en masse* and the whole army if he was present in the camp; but a victory was always attributed to him even if he was absent in the camp. *Pacta conventa* of successive monarchs in the 17th century imposed on them special financial obligations related to the matters of defence, apart from this, the kings had to provide for the maintenance of royal guard (servants, household people) the number of which was increased during a wartime. The royal guard was a part of the state armed forces, but resolutions of sejmiks protested against its maintenance from the Crown Treasury (1669).

By the end of the 15th century, the introduction of permanent mercenary troops (*zaciężne*) brought about the necessity to appoint a professional commander on behalf of the king, called Hetman – initially as the king’s deputy for a precise period of time, then the actual commander in chief. The first to appear was the Court Hetman (1462); if a need arose, the king could appoint at his side temporary Hetmans. The

76 Jan Tarnowski, *Consilium rationis bellicae*, Tarnów, 1558, prep. A. Piliński, Kórnik, 1879, letter VI.

office of Field Hetman as deputy of the grand hetman was established in the Crown in 1539, and in Lithuania only in 1615, according to Marcin Kromer:

Great Hetman is the deputy of the king during a war: he leads the army, sets the location to pitch a camp, deploys the lines, gives the battle cry to attack or to withdraw, secures food for the army, set prices at the camp markets, commands justice in weights and measures and punishes culprits. Field Hetman on the other hand is kind of deputy of the Great Hetman added by the king, and in his hands are especially: lookout, spying, and foodstuff.⁷⁷

With the lapse of time, the field hetmans acquired in practice a position equal to that of great hetmans. Occasionally, there were regimentaries designated as aides or deputies of hetmans for the period of their absence in the camp (e.g. in 1603 Jan Karol Chodkiewicz as deputy of Hetman Jan Zamoyski in Livonia, in 1633 Aleksander Gosiewski near Smolensk; during the interregnum after the demise of King Wladislaus IV in 1648, when the Crown Hetmans: Stefan Potocki and Marcin Kalinowski were taken prisoner of war by Bohdan Khmelnytsky). From 1581, the title of hetman became permanent and the office was held for life – all the great Hetmans of the Crown died as hetmans except for Jan Sobieski who was elected king.

For a long time, the rank of hetman within the hierarchy was imprecise – he was not a senator by the title itself but usually was a member of the senate because of his previous senatorial office or was given the office of voivode together with the title of Hetman. It was only at the Sejm of 1773 that the Hetmans, after the Marshals, and before the Chancellors, were given *ex officio* the seat in the senate, thereby becoming ministers. Prior to that, if a hetman had no senatorial office, he could be a deputy and participate in the sessions of the Chamber of Deputies.

Hetmans had an annual salary from the salt mines, paid out by the Grand Treasurer on the king's order. In the first half of the 17th century it usually amounted to 1800 Polish zlotys for the Great Crown Hetman and 800 Polish zlotys for Field Hetman; the sum greatly increased in time. From his earned (extremely irregularly, usually after the end of a campaign) salary, and in practice from his own purse, the Hetman had to pay the functionaries of the Hetman office (called the Hetman's chancellery), scribes, receive officers, and representatives of the army, foreign envoys, grant rewards to deserving soldiers, buy out prisoners of war from captivity, buy ammunition, foodstuff, fodder, and many a time also pay soldiers' wages to keep the forces mobilized. Apart from the salary in money, the hetmans were given numerous offices of starosta, collected the *hiberna* and quarter taxes, and military donatives. However, because all those were uncertain incomes, in 1717 a permanent salary was established for the Hetmans in the amount of 120.000 Polish zlotys for a Great Hetman, and 80.000 for a Field Hetman (both for the Crown and Lithuanian

77 Marcin Kromer, *Polska, czyli o położeniu, ludności, obyczajach i sprawach publicznych Królestwa Polskiego księgi dwie*, trans. S. Kazikowski, Olsztyn, 1977, p. 114.

hetmans), with additional 120.000 for a great hetman to cover the expenses of his office.

The authority of the Hetman was described for the first time from the professional perspective by J. Tarnowski (*Consilium rationis bellicae*, 1558), and officially it was defined only by the constitution of the 1590 Sejm: *Disciplina militaris*. The Hetmans issued military laws and regulations for the army (Hetman's articles), had control over military judiciary during wars, nominated soldiers to be ennobled, awarded and promoted to officer rank – initially only with the knowledge and consent of the king, who lost this prerogative in the first half of the 18th century.

The Crown hetmans had also the power of diplomatic contacts with the East, i. a. the right to have their own representatives in Istanbul, Bakkchysarai, Jassy, and Bucharest. Combining the functions of the minister of war and the head of foreign policy towards Turkey, the Crimea, Moldavia, and Walachia, they had a great influence on the policy of the Commonwealth. The powers of Lithuanian hetmans to negotiate treaties with the enemy were still questioned in the first half of the 17th, and all international obligations had to be signed by the king and the Sejm to become valid. In fact, in the second half of the 17th and in the 18th centuries the hetmans conducted their own diplomatic activity.

The growth in importance of the office of Hetman and in power of the magnates holding it was the result of their full control over the army. The Hetman had the right to increase, organize and disband the troops; he fed them and collected taxes to provide for them, without being accountable for the tax collection before the king or the Sejm. He decided on the location of winter quarters of the army in the crown lands and church lands, which made it possible for him to oppress his political opponents with the quartering. Free of winter quarters were the royal table lands and the lands belonging to the nobility, unless the Sejm had provided otherwise.

From the early 17th century on, ineffective attempts were made to restrict the power of the hetmans, and a resolution was passed banning the use of the army under their command for private ends, for sejmiks, assemblies and elections under the punishment of banishment. However, in actual fact, there was constantly growing demoralization of the army that remained permanently unpaid and increasingly often slipped from under the command of hetmans, organizing themselves in the same way as confederations of the nobility: they formed circles, elected their own marshals and set their own regulations, and from 1622, proposed their own political demands. During the Lubomirski rebellion (1655), a military confederation under the name of Sacred Union (Polish: *Związek Święcony*; Latin: *Nexus Sacer*) emerged as a fully independent political force, aspiring to the status of the fourth estate in the Commonwealth. This made it easy for the army to be turned into a powerful tool in the hands of the Hetmans who occasionally legitimized military confederations by joining in and recognizing the validity of their financial claims.

Under Kings Jan Casimir, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, and Jan III Sobieski, the Hetmans were more and more often turning from former representatives of the kings into their rivals. In order to limit the powers and influences of the magnates who most often were holding the office of hetman, there was introduced in

1669 a ban on holding the office of Hetman simultaneously with that of Marshal or Chancellor (previously, Jan Zamoyski and Stanisław Żółkiewski held both these offices). The nobility was aware of the threat posed by the unrestricted growth of the Hetmans' power to the principles of the political system of the Commonwealth. At the Sejm sessions (starting from 1676) and in political commentary texts voices were heard demanding that the lifelong term of office be abolished and a three-year term introduced instead, without the right of re-election.

Nonetheless, by the end of the 17th century, the view had become widespread that the hetmans *ex officio* counterbalanced the relations between the king and nobility, and the curbed abuses of power by the king and the nobility's wilfulness. Under King Augustus II the Hetmans assumed the role of prime defenders of the Golden Liberty. It was the result of a fight between the king and the Hetmans that at the 1717 Silent Sejm there were restrictions imposed on the powers of Hetmans and an (unsuccessful) attempt was made to establish the office of the third hetman for the army of foreign *autorament*. In the Wettin times the Hetmans became, in fact, the highest officials in the state, and only the interregnum after the death of King Augustus III and Sejms under King Stanisław August Poniatowski brought about the collapse of the old importance of Hetmans by introducing collegial offices to command the army.

The Board of the Hetman's Staff was composed of four high military officials: a guardian, field scribe, military or field guardian, military or field quartermaster – of the Crown and Lithuania. From 1633 there was a commander in chief of artillery (of the Crown and Lithuania), independent of the hetmans.

The command cadre was made up of officers. In the cavalry, the officer ranks included rittmeister (Polish: *rotmistrz*), lieutenant (Polish: *porucznik*) and (only occasionally) deputy commander (Polish: *namiestnik*). Often also the standard bearers were regarded as officers. The officer ranks in the troops of Polish (national) *autorament* were of different character than modern ones, the dividing line between officers and companions was very fluid and each companion of a hussar or Cossack banner had the right to command a larger military unit. The officer cadre of hussar units, Cossack cavalry, and Polish-Hungarian infantry included only the noblemen. In Tatar banner Tatars from Lithuania or even the Crimea or Budjak (Polish: *Budziak*) served as officers. The foreign *autorament* troops were organized into regiments under the command of *oberster* (literally "colonel"), who was responsible for the recruitment and organization of the regiment. Because it was possible for a non-noble to become an officer in the foreign troops, the companions of the hussars, or even Cossack banners refused to serve under his command. Thus, there was a custom from the mid-17th century among officers of foreign *autorament* troops to obtain the title of companion of hussar or Cossack banner.

5.4. Social Composition of the Army

In theory, the defense of the country was the duty of the nobility who until the end of the Commonwealth (like in other countries) retained a majority in the basic

formation of their estate – the cavalry. In the 17th century, the knightly service by the groups of people of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania outside the estate structure – Tatars and Cossack – provided a basis for their claim to raise them to the rank of nobility.

Townsmen made up the majority in less prestigious formations: infantry and dragoons, retainers in the cavalry and in the artillery organized like guilds. On this basis, Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno argued for the citizenship of the Commonwealth for the plebeians, reminding that:

These who serve in war, run risk for their country, they have their liberties in the Commonwealth. For, if one defends his country, it is only right for his homeland to give him a certain freedom and peace. But the *plebeii* serve in war, risk their live for the homeland, let me say, even more than people of the noble estate, for except for *ductores* of war [there: officers – UA], almost all *plebeii* are, apart from rittmeisters and their companions: almost all servants are *plebeii*, the whole infantry is made up of plebeians, a bigger part of the troops is of plebeians. Thus *plebeii* should have a certain freedom.⁷⁸

Military service was the best path of social advancement for all ambitious plebeians: it made it possible for them to cover up their social origin, to grow rich (not so much from their soldier's pay as from war booty and looting) and legally or by means of usurpation work their way up into the ranks of nobility.

The household armies of magnates were composed in a different way. Magnates wanted their troops to be efficient, and their duties as patrons forced them occasionally to employ sons of their noble clients. For this reason in their banners were both foreigners and the petty and dependant nobility, as well as people of dubious origins, for whom the Hetmans' protection to ennoblement or lordly favours allowed to enter into the ranks of nobility. The veterans, who did not find place in the Crown or Lithuanian troops, went to serve – especially during the Thirty Years' War – in foreign armies, most often of the Habsburgs ("they went to the imperial service"). And it was both noblemen and plebeians, all from various regions of the Commonwealth making up the multiethnic mixture from which troops were recruited for great wars of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries – the Lisowczycy in the service of the emperor, Poles, and Lithuanians in the French, Danish, and Swedish services. Foreign service made it even easier for plebeians than the national one to usurp the ennoblement.

5.5. Participation of Townsmen in the Defense of the Commonwealth

In the 14th century the duty of townsmen to participate in a defense war outside the city walls was reduced to a minimum. However, big cities, kept their own military

78 Sebastian Petrycy z Pilzna, *Przydatek do Księgi VI Polityki Arystotelesowej*, in: *Pisma*, vol. 2, p. 383.

units for policing purposes and as guard of honor. In the first half of the 17th century the royal and private towns and cities participated in the wars waged by the Commonwealth by supplying (sporadically) several “armed servants” each, but mainly by providing transportation for the army (e. g. at Khotyn in 1621). In case of enemy attack all inhabitants participated in the defense of the city. This was especially important for the towns-fortresses on the borders of the Commonwealth. There has been preserved in the historical tradition and literature on the subject the defense of Cracow by the townsmen and students of the Academy of Cracow against the troops of Archduke Maximilian Habsburg in 1587.

During the Deluge (1655–1656) there was introduced a personal participation of plebeians in war campaigns, the so-called “expeditions,” and it was enforced increasingly often in the end of the 17th century and during the Great Northern War. In addition, at that time the Crown cities (Cracow, Przemyśl, Gdańsk, Toruń, Lviv, Bydgoszcz, Zamość) were forced to cooperate with the army. During the Muscovite invasion in 1654–1658 the inhabitants of some multinational and multid denominational cities of the Grand Duchy (Slutsk, Bykhav [Polish: *Stary Bychów*], Krichew [Polish: *Krzyszew*], Vitebsk) stood together in solidarity against the invaders. Vilnius, for example, was actively defended also by Jews who formed 130-strong unit under their own banner with various words in Hebrew. It was echoed far and wide a heroic defense of Bykhav in 1658 against the Muscovites by the army and townsmen together, both Poles and Belarusians, and Jews, who gave the example of “a steady faith for the King Our Lord and the Homeland, notwithstanding their condition.”⁷⁹

5.6. Military Recruitment

Recruitment to the banners of cavalry was based on the so-called “social enlistment.” The king appointed (usually on the proposal of the hetmans) a rittmeister of the banner who, under the king’s authorization, recruited companions. Those, in turn, brought their retainers, armed and equipped by them (at least five for each companion), recruited from among their friends, relations, and neighbours. They had draft horses, carts, camp equipment, led horses, menials, and servants (their subjects or petty noblemen).

Such a technique of recruitment had its advantages: the Royal Treasury did not bear the cost of maintaining the army in its full number during peacetime, and at the same time (at least in theory) it was possible to quickly form military units when a need arose. However, it seems exaggerated to contrast the mercenary troops of the Commonwealth with the cosmopolitan armies of professional mercenaries of Western Europe, as is often done in the Polish literature on the subject. It is a fact that the noble companions from the hussar banners regarded themselves as citizens of the Commonwealth, but for the term of their military service their citizen rights

79 Maciej Vorbek-Lettow, *Skarbnica pamięci. Pamiętnik lekarza króla Władysława IV*, prep. E. Galos, F. Mincer, Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow, 1968, pp. 285–286.

were suspended at the will of the Sejm. A similarity between the military circles and sejmiks stemmed from civil experience of the nobility, although it was only of formal character, and military confederations, like those of Poles and Lithuanians formed for social purposes (soldiers' pay), were to be found also in unpaid armies in the West. Plebeians, who made up the bulk of the army, did not have reasons to identify themselves with the republic of the nobles. The main motivation of soldiers was usually fame, honour, and solidarity within one regiment (*esprit de corps*) and the cult of the commander. Official values, which associated military service with the love to the Commonwealth (homeland), allegiance to the king, and defense of the Christian faith, were more often declared than practiced.

5.7. Military and Professional Training

During the population boom of the nobility in the first half of the 17th century it was easy to recruit soldiers. The basic problem was a chronic lack of money to pay the troops and a shortage of professionally trained officers' cadre. Polish and Lithuanian commanders had the knowledge acquired not in schools but from their personal experience, which was sufficient in wars fought in the eastern war theatre of the 17th and 18th centuries. Companions learnt in practice various fighting techniques in the cavalry and infantry. The Lithuanian army, fighting in the 16th and 17th centuries wars with Swedes in Livonia and Courland, was the first to absorb novelties from the enemy (e.g. the use of reiters in the 1620s), and at the same time influenced the changes in line formation and tactics of the Swedish heavy cavalry, modernized by King Gustav II Adolph.

In the 16th–17th centuries Polish military theory was developing poorly. The treatises on military science of the time were focused more on models of the commanding cadre (Stanisław Łaski, *Spraw i postępów rycerskich i przewagi opisanie krótkie* [*Concise Description of Knightly Matters and Deeds and Their Superiority*], 1545; Jan Tarnowski, *Consilium rationis bellicae*, 1558; Bartłomiej Paprocki, *Hetman albo własny konterfekt hetmański* [*Hetman or Own Portrait of Hetman*], 1578) than on the matters of logistics and strategy. The *Hetman's Books* by Stanisław Sarnicki (1577), dedicated to King Stephen Bathory, included also some problems of military logistics (food, uniform), but remained in manuscript. Outstanding works, although valued more in the West than in the Commonwealth, were prepared by Polish military engineers (Adam Freytag, *Architectura militaris nova et aucta*, 1631, edited in French in 1635–1669; Józef Naronowicz-Naroński, *Księgi nauk matematycznych* [*Books of Mathematical Sciences*] 1655–1659, including: *Budownictwo wojenne* [*War Constructing*], in manuscript).

5.8. Soldier's Pay and Army Supplies

Military expenses amounted to ca. 90 % of all spending of the state treasury, the revenues of which – despite being increased by extraordinary taxes imposed by the sejms and Lithuanian convocations (taxes on alcoholic beverages: *czopowe* and

skladowe, custom duties, Jewish poll tax) – usually were not enough to cover the expenses of wars. Circa 10 % of the imposed taxes were deducted due to the reduced payment capacities of individual voivodeships and lands, and costs of the state treasury administration. Also the period of tax collection grew longer: in the 16th century to five years, and in the 17th century to ten years, and thus the time of payment of due money to the army was delayed.

A measure to remedy this situation through granting lands to deserving soldiers by the right of feudal land tenure in Livonia (the Constitution *On Well-Deserved*, 1578) and in Smolensk land (in the 1620s and 1630s) turned out to be a failure, for the great majority of military settlers had no capital money to develop the uninhabited and uncultivated lands, which eventually were taken over by the magnates. From 1604, the unpaid troops organized confederations to force the payment of the overdue money. The worst shortages were in the domains requiring constant grants for upkeep: weaponry, artillery, and logistics (transport and food supplies). Foodstuff was bought or confiscated by the fouriers, while the care of uniforms was in practice burdened on the commanders of units. Even the elite hussars suffered shortages, while the infantry (especially fortresses' garrisons) ran away in large numbers or died of hunger.

Until the end of the 18th century there was in the Commonwealth neither permanent quartermaster organs on the central level specializing in distributing supplies and provisions to troops nor the office of Probantmaster (Polish: *prowiantmagister*) existing in the West, and all attempts to establish it 1622 in Livonia and in 1626 in the Prussian war ended in a failure. As late as during the Deluge it was remarked that:

Polish Army has no Probantmaster to think about the food for all the troops and to supply it, but each companion has to feed himself, his horses and servants and to pay himself for foodstuff.⁸⁰

Considering that in the whole Europe the awareness of bonds with the state and monarch was growing in proportion with the financial participation of the state in paying and supplying troops, the delay in modernization of the Polish and Lithuanian army seems to explain in a way its attitude towards the Swedes in the first stage of the Deluge. In the wars of the mid-17th century the costs of maintaining the enlarged military forces increased up to the limit of the society (in 1648–1655 there was ca. 30.5 m Polish zlotys of tax revenue, of what 96 % went to the army). Although in 1654–1655 the outstanding debt to the army was almost paid off with over 9 m Polish zlotys in cash, the debt increased again during the Deluge, when up to 1658 it was impossible to convene the parliament and adopt taxes, and then to collect them from the wasted country. In 1661 the debt to pay to the Crown army reached 24 m Polish zlotys and that resulted in a confederation, which included a larger part of the troops (Sacred Union) and for two years harried stretches of Little

80 Józef Naronowicz-Naroński, "O stanowieniu obozu polskiego i litewskiego," in: *Budownictwo wojenne*, ed. J. Nowakowa, Warsaw, 1957, p. 163.

Poland. Its pacification was obtained at the price of minting devalued coins (called *tymphs*) in 1663, which worsened the economic crisis.

In 1667 the Sejm assigned individual units of the reduced army to concrete voivodeships and lands that were to pay taxes directly to the army for soldiers' pay, without passing through the central treasury, thus accepting a decentralization of the state treasury. As usually, the worst was the situation of infantry, which did not partake in the *hiberna*. During the Great Northern War the country was further ravaged by troops, both Swedish and Polish soldiers, who lived off local people by forced requisitions.

5.9. Modernization of the Army in the 18th Century

Under the Wettin kings the structure of the armed forces of the Commonwealth differed glaringly from that of other European countries, where the armies were becoming highly similar to each other and were undergoing similar transformations. In the second half of the 18th century the recruitment of the peasant troops, in the number depending on current needs, was made everywhere on the basis of census of non-possessing people. The officers' cadre was still made up of the noblemen, but trained in professional schools. A gradual transformation of war technology, stipulated by wars, brought about a new group professionally related to the army: technical intelligentsia.

In the 1680s and 1690s a flintlock was introduced and until ca. 1715 it replaced a musket, and thanks to its bayonet, also a pike. The division between musketeers and pikemen vanished, although a pike as an arm of the infantry had its supporters, and a renaissance of this arm came in France in the first period of the revolution of 1789–1799 and in Poland during the Kościuszko Uprising. The appearance of iron punches and development of ammunition made a rifle a universal arm of the infantry, which (together with the field artillery) advanced to the rank of main formation.

Because wars fought with the use of firearms were extremely bloody, the manpower of standing armies grew in the second half of the 18th century into huge numbers (in Russia – 350.000 for ca. 20 m people, in Austria – 280.000 for a similar number of inhabitants, in Prussia – 200.000 for 5–6 m people, in France – also 200.000 for over 25 m people). Weaponry, equipment and provisions of these enormous masses of people were taken over by the state, which developed the system of logistic, permanent military quarters and quartermaster departments, hospital system, houses for invalids, and military training. To meet needs of the army, absolutist regimes raised taxes and consistently expanded state protectionism. The biggest problem, however, was the recruitment, which was to fill in an excessively inflated number of troops.

Meanwhile, the Commonwealth, which during the Great Northern War (1701–1721) stayed away from European conflicts or was their passive object, in the epoch of universal armament underwent demilitarization – not as much under the pressure of the neighbouring powers as due to the nobility's distrust of reforms of the state armed forces, seen as flagrant expressions of foreignism. At the Silent

Sejm of 1717 there was a military-fiscal reform adopted making a subsidy for the army independent of the Sejm resolutions. At the same time, however, the size of the army was reduced to 24.000 men. And because “the regulations of punctual payment” did not include officers’ wages, the actual number of troops stood in a striking disproportion to the huge armies of the neighbouring countries. There were some later attempts to make up for the lack of funds for the maintenance of artillery by deducting from the payment rates of infantrymen, but it did not suffice to replace the equipment destroyed during the northern war.

Due to the drop in the value of money, as soon as in the mid-18th century the permanent budget adopted in 1717 was insufficient to maintain the troops. Together with the reduction of the Polish army also the Saxon army was reduced to 12.000 men – but only soldiers were reduced and not officers. From that time on (1718–1733) the Saxon army performed mainly representative functions and was used in ceremonious military parades adored by the ageing monarch. Under King Augustus III the Saxon army had ca. 25.000 soldiers – thus it was more numerous than the army of the Commonwealth, but in the scale of the whole Europe it was a second-rate mercenary army.

The problem of increased size of the military forces in peacetime was addressed at the 1718 Sejm but was dropped due to the Hetmans’ opposition and was not brought up until the end of King Augustus II’s rule. Projects to increase the number of the army were addressed again under Augustus III, at the Sejms between 1736 and 1748, but were thwarted by the deputies bribed by foreign powers. There were numerous permanent taxes adopted to maintain the army, but troops were again assigned to different territorial units that were to cover the soldiers’ wages. However, because the taxpayers did not bring money to boroughs, the troops had to confiscate the due sums themselves. The army of the Commonwealth in the times of the Wettin kings was too weak to guarantee the integrity of state borders. Apart from representative functions, it was used to suppress peasant rebels (*haidamaks*) in Ukraine.

First reforms of the Stanisław August Poniatowski period began in 1764, when the Sejm decided on significant raise of the soldiers’ pay, which started to be paid in better coin. The military budget was increased and included a grant for the School of Chivalry and artillery. There were established central collegial institutions to supervise the army, Treasury Commissions, and Military Commissions, separate for Poland and Lithuania, and throughout the country – local treasury commissions, which took over the collection of taxes and paid out the soldier’s pay, thus relieving the army from the burden of extracting owed money. The results of those reforms were destroyed by the Bar Confederation (1768–1772), which returned to the recruitment of infantrymen from crown and private lands, and of cavalrymen from the petty nobility, but with no great results.

The Partition Sejm of 1773–1775 got the consent of the partitioning powers to increase the strength of the army to 22.000 of the soldier’s pay, but it was unfeasible due to the lack of money. The number of the cavalry was again reduced by the Sejm of 1776 to 12.000 men, and ten years later it grew to 13.000 cavalrymen. Regardless of financial decisions, the reforms of the Partition Sejm and Confederation Sejm of

1776 brought about changes in the command system: the office of Hetman became a sinecure, and the control over the army was taken over by the Military Department of the Permanent Council, in fact the Military Chancellery of the king. The influence of the monarch on the military forces was increased after he was returned the right of promoting officers. Combined with the permanency of ranks, this opened up the way to multiplication of posts for protégés and the officers' cadre was not reduced.

On the eve of the Four-Year Sejm the problem of increased size of the army became a common demand due to the desire to shake off the domination of Russia and the fear of annexation by Prussia. By developing its army, the Commonwealth wanted to gain more "consideration" in the eye of possible allies, while the king and various magnate parties wanted to strengthen their position. The growing popularity of the demands of increased army among the nobility resulted from the fact that the destruction of the private magnate armies during the Bar Confederation and their demise during the Permanent Council created a void in the Ukrainian borderland, threatened by the raids of "rogues" from the Cossack Ukraine. A program to increase the armed forces provided for basing it mainly on the nobility, which was the most reliable element, while at the same time, there was a ground for a thorough revival of morale of the troops and a broadening of their social base.

The ideologues of the Enlightenment period were hostile both towards the armies of absolute states, which they regarded as slavish, and towards modern war, which they regarded as being against nature. According to Stanisław Staszic:

The citizen cannot be a soldier, because the soldier is a targe of tyranny, a tool of oppression of a citizen. He serves not to his country but to the king. [...] The contemporary soldier is a machine which can do nothing by himself and only [...] bends and walks, turns and dies [...] This way of waging wars, based more on industry than on the strength of man, has created a political and civil captivity, has subjected the weaker to the stronger, and makes dozens of millions people worthless and one man precious.⁸¹

In the reforms undertaken by the Four-Year Sejm the attempts to modernize and increase the army were accompanied by an effort to democratize it, which is to say, to create a military force that would be truly national (in the sense of nationality). It was outwardly manifested by the new uniform, modelled on the costume of the nobility, which replaced former cosmopolitan uniforms. The basic task was to recruit more soldiers to the army, and one of the first resolutions – a decision to increase its number to 100.000 men (from the Crown and Lithuania). The lack of financial base and difficulties in recruitment resulted in the reduction of the number of soldiers to 64.000; also the outdated structure was kept with the superiority of the cavalry. The recruitment, equipping, and food supplies were in the hands of special civil-military commissions of order and the War Commissariat, established in 1790 as a chief quartermaster department. While the voluntary enrolment (the so-called

81 Stanisław Staszic, *Uwagi nad życiem Jana Zamoyskiego*, prep. by S. Czarnowski, Wrocław, 2005, p. 121.

wolny bęben, literary: free drum) was retained, there was also introduced the forced recruitment of the peasant recruits who were promised personal freedom after twelve years in military service. The soldier's age was determined at 18–35 years of age. A humanitarian rule according to which the service was to be short and that every year one fourth (24 %) of the troops was to be on leave for ten months was supposed to make it possible for peasant soldiers to live normally. It was a novelty in those days, for a military service lasted long years (in Russia 25 years, in Austria 14 years). The funds for food and pays were paid out to commanders by the Treasury Commission after the application of the Military Commission of Both Nations.

The building up of the army from a scratch made it easier than in the “old” armies, burdened with routine, to introduce the organizational novelties (divisional system), new rifle formations (to fight in dispersed line as a supplement to a traditional linear tactic), modern artillery (12-pounder guns with greater range and accuracy), and new principles of training for supervisory cadre (i.a. in the field of military engineering), which was recruited partly from the graduates of the School of Chivalry. However, it did not compensate for the fundamental drawback – that the size of the army of the Commonwealth was incommensurate with the threat to the state. In the 1792 war for the defence of the Constitution of May 3 only 37-thousand-strong army went to battle.

The military troops, strongly reduced after the Second Partition, were developed during the Kościuszko Uprising of 1794. There were larger numbers of recruits than in 1792 drafted from all estates (one infantryman from five hearths, and one cavalryman from 50 hearths). A universal conscription was to include all able-bodied men between 18 and 46 years of age: in practice, it was ca. 150–200.000 people. A second formation was to be that of the municipal militia, formed in fact only in Warsaw. Positive was also the development of technical services and artillery, but what failed was the noble cavalry, making up to 46 % of the army. A sharp increase in demand for the commanding cadre accelerated the promotion of the oldest classes of the School of Chivalry. Money needed in order to fight was acquired by issuing vouchers, requisitioning silvers from churches, and deposits. In general, the apparatus of the War Commissariat made enough provisions for the troops as regards food, forage, and uniforms; worse was the problem of weapons.

Although in the period of limited sovereignty and constant outside threat it was difficult to realize all projects of modernization of the army, what was finally created was an army of a new type, made up of the citizens-inhabitants, and not only the citizens-noblemen. A large part of soldiers and officers of the Commonwealth (ca. 33.000 people) went after its collapse to the Polish legions in France and the army of the Duchy of Warsaw.

Chapter Four

The State and the Churches

In the early modern Commonwealth the term *state* included (for a longer period than in other European countries) both its citizens and their representative bodies – the Sejm and the institution of royal power. The first of these factors determined the general rules of coexistence between various denominations, while the latter was responsible for a (generally understood) religious policy, mainly for securing “general peace,” that is, for appeasing conflicts – especially those based on religion.

Thus, an evolution of religious relations in a multiethnic and multidenomina-tional Polish-Lithuanian state from the end of the 16th to the end of the 17th century is an indicator of changes in the relationship between the Crown and the nobility as well as of transformations of the political and legal system. Omitting or marginalizing this problem produces a false image of political history (the so-called evenemental history).

1. Relations between the State and Churches in the Early Modern Commonwealth

1.1. Theory of Confessionalization

Until the French Revolution of 1789–1799 the concept of secular state was unknown in Europe: religion and politics were intermingled on an international arena. The early modern period witnessed a rivalry of three great Christian Churches: the Catholic Church after the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Lutheran Church (Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession) after the *Formula of Concord* (1577), and the Reformed Evangelical Church after the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563, Polish translation: 1564; English translation: 1567). The supremacy of one of these confes-sions in a state was determined by the support of the ruler with intellectual and political elites and not by the number of its believers. Also in the Commonwealth the victory of Catholicism was a result of the support of the nobility and the king. The fact that in the Crown it was the religion of a greater part of the peasantry, that is a statistical majority of inhabitants, was of minor importance.

The relationship between the state and the Churches in the early modern era was reduced in Marxist historiography to a dialectical sequence of three stages: the “progressive” reformation of the 16th century (thesis), the “reactionary” Counter-Reformation of the 17th century (antithesis), and the religious wars that resulted in the emergence of a secular absolutist state in the 18th century (synthesis).

A reaction to Marxism is the theory of confessionalization formulated in 1981 by Heinz Schilling.⁸² The theory describes the development of states in early modern Europe in terms of a system, in which religion and Church constitute the central issue in the functioning of the whole society. There are three stages of the development of relations between the state and Churches from the 16th to the 18th centuries: the process of confession-building – that is, the instituting of dogmas, forms of religiousness, and organization of the Church; modernization of social relations in cooperation of the state with the Church it supported; and confessionalization – establishment of an official religion.

This scheme, constructed on the basis of research into the religious relations in the German Reich, does not fully apply to other regions (Scandinavia, British Isles, the countries of Eastern-Central Europe).⁸³ However, it could be assumed that in its general outline it renders the changes in relations between the state and Churches also in the Commonwealth of Both Nations – although with the reservation that an equally important role to that of the conscious actions of a majority of elected kings towards the re-Catholicization was played by religious choices and changes in outlooks within the political nation itself.

In theory, a decisive part in relations with Churches and towards the ethnic-legal groups (Jews, Muslims, Armenians, Karaites) should have been played by the king, who could grant them (or not) privileges determining the scope of their religious freedom, and through decrees and edicts could (in consultation with the Sejm) punish individuals and institutions violating the rules of peaceful coexistence.

In practice – the increased importance of the Sejm, and then of noble Tribunals, with concurrent successes of the Counter-Reformation resulted in taking over the helm of religious policy by the so-called social factor and in “bottom up” confessionalization in three phases: building of structures of the Reformation Churches (the 16th century in the Crown, and until the 1630s in Lithuania); Catholic Reform and Counter-Reformation with a simultaneous tolerance of non-Catholics (the end of the 16th – first half of the 17th century); restrictions of the rights of the dissidents and recognition of Catholicism as the official confession (the second half of the 17th century to 1791).

1.2. Confederation of Warsaw (1573)

Speeches of noble Protestant activists at sessions during the first interregnum (1572–1573) – supported by the Catholic nobility because of the solidarity within the noble estate and the need to secure peace in the country – led at the Convoca-

82 Heinz Schilling, *Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung. Eine Fallstudie über das Verhältnis von religiösem und sozialem Wandel in der Frühneuzeit am Beispiel der Grafschaft Lippe*, Heidelberg, 1981.

83 Anja Moritz, Hans-Joachim Möller, Matthias Pohling, “Konfesjonalizacja Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej w XVII i XVIII wieku?” in: *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 108 (2001), no. 1, pp. 37–46.

tion Sejm to the introduction into the general confederation of a guarantee of peace made on January 28th, 1573, between “the councils and the nobility of the Crown and Lithuania, and other estates” for “all eternity [...] *inter dissidentes in religione* [between dissenting in religion]” forbidding to incite, under any legal pretence, conflicts under the pretext of religion.⁸⁴

In the historical tradition this point, introduced into other matters of the inter-regnum, was then identified with the entire act of the Confederation. It pertained to those Christian confessions, which were included in the Sandomierz Agreement (1570) – without the Polish Brethren (Arians), and in the text of the Convocation Sejm also without the Orthodox Church; a point of benefices of the Orthodox Church was added at the Election Sejm (May 1573).

Warsaw Confederation was the pinnacle of struggles of the generation of the Executionist Movement – yet, it limited the religious freedom exclusively to the nobility and confirmed the practice of imposing their confession upon their subjects, “as it has always been.” It was an intention of the Confederation’s authors to protect themselves from using different confessions in order to question the serfdom of the peasants, and for this reason they emphasized:

However, through this confederation, we do not take away our authority over their subjects, both of ecclesiastical lords and secular peers, and do not diminish the rightful obedience of subjects unto their lords.⁸⁵

This regulation is one of a few nationwide norms on dominion of lords over their subjects. In practice, however, it was the burghers from royal cities – especially the big ones and located in multiethnic territories (Baltic coast, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Ukraine) – who gained freedom of religion and (increasingly restricted) of public worship.

1.3. Equal Rights of Confessions as a Constitutional Principle

In the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the Warsaw Confederation was recognized as part of the state law through its inclusion in the Third Lithuanian Statute of 1588, binding for all the citizens of the Duchy – including the Catholic clergy. The article obliging the king to maintain religious peace was introduced into the Henrician Articles sworn by Stephen Bathory in 1576 among the cardinal laws of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Thus, the equality of confessions, based on the principle of equality of all noblemen as the fundament of Polish freedom, became a constitutional principle in force until the Constitution of May 3. It was appealed to, among others, at the Sejm of 1768, which restored public rights to dissidents.

84 *Konfederacja generalna na sejmie walnym w Warszawie 18 I 1573*, VL, vol. II, p. 124, no. 3.

85 *Ibid.*, no. 4.

Formal guarantee of the equality of rights of Christian confessions within the noble estate resulted from the Polish-Lithuanian *raison d'état* after the Union of Lublin; multinational and multid denominational structure of the state was especially vulnerable to religious conflicts. It was introduced after the shock of religious wars and the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of Huguenots in France – but also because the nobility wanted to secure the equality of confessions for the future, in the face of more and more active Counter-Reformation.

The act of Warsaw Confederation was not signed by Catholic bishops (except for the Bishop of Cracow Franciszek Krasiński, whose signature can be found under the Act and the Bishop of Kamianets Dionizy Secygniowski, who put his seal to this document). *Post factum* the article on religious peace was objected to by the bishops who participated in the commission preparing the Act of Confederation (including Jakub Uchański). It was a consequence of a double subordination of members of the episcopate: to the pope as the clergy, and to the king and the Commonwealth as senators, and in the future it provided a basis to call into question the legality of Warsaw Confederation under the successive elected kings. Refuting the charges that laws cannot be made without the king and that the consent to the confederation was extorted from the episcopate after King Sigismund August's death, the defenders of its legality referred to the suspension of political system during the interregnum, when it was the nobility – as the representative of the Commonwealth – who had the full power (including that of law-making).

1.4. Equality of Confessions or Toleration?

Polish historiography has tended to describe the relations between different religions in the Commonwealth of the 1580s and the first half of the 17th century in terms of toleration. The notion of toleration, however, is ambiguous; it could refer to a postulated system of human relations, making it possible for different religions to legally exist within a specific state, or to the attitude of inner acceptance of beliefs or practices differing from, or conflicting with, one's own, or to the principle of avoiding violence in ideological conflicts. In its first meaning, toleration is related to decisions of the rulers within their religious politics (toleration edicts). Conducive to toleration was irenicism – a trend of Christian theology in the 16th and 17th centuries aiming toward the unity of universal Church and preservation of peace between different denominations through mutual concessions in doctrine.

But neither the authors of that point about religious peace in Warsaw Confederation, nor their successors fighting for executory laws making it possible to punish the “violators of public peace,” wanted toleration; what they wanted was equality of religions in public life and the freedom of conscience – initially only for the nobility, and subsequently also for plebeians.

2. Christian Churches in the Commonwealth of the 16th–18th Centuries

The subject of religious politics in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were mainly three most numerous Christian confessions: the Roman Catholic Church (in sources termed also as *Roman* or *Latin*), Protestant (reformed) Churches: Reformed Evangelical Church (in union with the Unity of Bohemian Brethren), and Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran), as well as Churches of the Eastern tradition – from the end of the 16th century Orthodox Church and Greek Catholic Church (Uniate Church). Ethnic legal communities of non-Christians in towns were subject to the laws of their social status within the Commonwealth, and for this reason they are presented in the chapter devoted to the society (see Chapter Six).

2.1. Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church enjoyed a privileged position in relation to other Churches and religious communities during the whole existence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, playing *de facto* the role of a state Church; the kings were crowned and anointed according to the Roman rite. At the same time, it was independent of the state institutions, and was not subordinated to them, either administratively or economically.

The highest posts in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church were held by bishops, with the Archbishop of Gniezno at their head, who (from 1417) had the title of the Primate of the Polish Kingdom. The primate represented the Commonwealth in contacts with the Apostolic See, summoned national synods of the Catholic clergy, conducted the coronations of kings and queens, and occupied the first place in the royal council. The title of Primate of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was used (although without any legal ground) already in the first half of the 17th century by Bishops of Vilnius.

Because it was the primate who acquired the function of interrex, Polish historiography had preserved a thesis that the primateship (like hetmanship) gave political power independent of the power of the king. Without doubts this interpretation is in line with the conviction of the primates themselves, although it has rightly been pointed out (Henryk Wisner) that the institution of interrex was not envisaged by statutory law: it was included neither in the act of the Union of Lublin, nor in the Henrician Articles, nor *pacta conventa* and texts of constitution, and the Archbishop of Gniezno as interrex could summon only the rest of senators and noblemen to a convocation and election, and inform them about current matters of the state, but he had no right to make independent decisions. From 1632 on, the primate had a body of councillors (Polish: *konsyliarze*) at his side during the interregnum, representing the estate of senators and noblemen. According to custom, it was the Bishop of Kujavia who assisted the primate and acted as the vice-primate.

In their function of substitutes of the King, the primates acted on the mandate given to them individually every time by the sovereign: during the interregnum – by the nobility, and when the king was absent in the country – by the king himself, who could (like King Sigismund III Vasa in 1593, 1598, 1609), but was not obliged to (like Wladislaus IV Vasa in 1638) appoint his temporary deputy. During the interregna some of the Primates tried to take political advantage of their function of interrex and to take over the right of the king to summon conventions during the regnum (for example, the convention of the noblemen from Great Poland at Koło in 1590, inspired by Stanisław Karnkowski (in cooperation with the leader of Great Poland protestants, Voivode of Poznań Stanisław Górka) and held under the banner of opposing Jan Zamoyski, abolishing of toll tax and the constitution forbidding the Habsburgs from being elected kings of the Commonwealth, and at the same time very servile towards the king. Another example was a convention in Warsaw in 1594 (“in the image of the Sejm” called by the same primate, during Sigismund III’s stay in Sweden and in the face of Turkish danger and Emperor Rudolph’s pleas for help; similarly, in 1697 *rokosz* of Łowicz was called by Michał Radziejowski against the election of King Augustus II Wettin). Depending on circumstances, those conventions were regarded as usurpation or legalized.

The increased power of primates under the elected kings resulted from the weakness of state institutions and from huge ambitions of such persons like Andrzej Olszowski – who titled himself the “Governor of the Kingdom,” or Władysław Łubieński – who designated people to state offices during the interregnum after the death of Augustus III. It was, however, a result of current arrangement of political parties and not of the formally increased legal authority of the office of primate.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Third Lithuanian Statute did not mention the institution of interrex, and the Lithuanian nobility did not recognize the right of the Archbishop of Gniezno to set the dates of convocations during the interregna in their territories, despite the fact that he was also the Metropolitan of the Grand Duchy, and the bishops of Vilnius and Samogitia belonged to his diocese. Already in the first half of the 17th century the Bishops of Vilnius used unofficially the title of the Primate of Lithuania, and under King Jan Casimir the title was assumed officially by Jerzy Białozor, which was legalized by the Four-Year Sejm.

Bishops of the Commonwealth (like other senators) were designated by the king. And although it was officially accepted in Rome only in 1589, actually it was already from the end of the 15th century that the chapter, and then the pope, only formally accepted royal nominations. It was important due to the political role of bishops as the sole representatives of the Catholic Church in the Senate. The duties of bishops in their function of senators (to reside at the royal court) collided with their pastoral works in dioceses, obligatory after the Council of Trent.

Local administration of the Catholic Church was divided into two archbishoprics: of Gniezno and Lviv, and those were subdivided into dioceses (bishoprics), archdeaconries, deaneries, and parishes. The structures of the Roman Church were supra-state, they encompassed the diocese of Wenden seized by Swedes in the early

1620s; dioceses of Bačau (Moldavian lands) and Wrocław, which was subordinated directly to Rome only in 1732–1748. Also the borders of provinces of religious orders did not correspond to the borders of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and its administrative divisions – for example, the Polish Province of the Society of Jesus initially included both the territories of the Crown and of Lithuania, and after the Lithuanian Province was established, it included also Masovia.

The Catholic clergy kept their numerous privileges, also that of being excluded from the secular jurisdiction except for cases for landed properties (*privilegium fori*). Another privilege was the exemption from taxes for the state imposed by the Sejm, with the exception of synodal collection (*subsidium charitativum*), and in the Crown also the exemption from military service due to the ownership of lands (in the Grand Duchy military service was obligatory also for the clergy; see, Third Lithuanian Statute, Chap. 2, Art. 9). The Roman Church retained its traditional social functions: hospital treatment, care for the poor, and education. What was the most important, however, was that its economic basis, in the form of royal grants and bestowals, remained intact. A great majority of lost part of private foundations and sacral objects bequeathed to the Reformation Churches was repossessed in the Crown as early as the second half of the 16th century, and in the Grand Duchy in the first half of the 17th century. It was not until the last five years of the Commonwealth's existence that the matter of secularization of the Church lands, carried out in different periods in all the neighbouring states, entered the agenda of the Sejm sessions, and the takeover of lands of the Bishop of Cracow took place in 1789.

In the 16th and first half of the 17th century there was a revival of anticlerical tendencies. The nobility, regardless their confession, voiced against the Catholic clergy various grievances of economic character, demanding that they pay taxes for the state without appealing to decisions of synods; that the payments sent to Rome be reduced; that abbots fulfil their duties to educate the noble youth free of charge. There were also voices against accumulating dignities in one hand. The dispute between two estates: of noblemen and of clergymen (the so-called *controversio inter status*) – over the tithes from lands, which were secularized during the Reformation – lasted until 1635.

There were also conflicts over the right of the Church to jurisdiction over secular people and over the enforcement of sentences issued by ecclesiastical courts by starosta courts, abolished at the Sejms of 1563–1565. The nobility demanded that the Warsaw Confederation of 1573 be secured, that its actual enactment be guaranteed by secondary legislation and the influence of the clergy on the judiciary (chancery court) be reduced. In 1635 a compromise was reached, with the approval of the pope: the Catholic clergy kept their judicial immunity (criminal cases were decided by a nuncio), but there was a ban imposed on their buying land, and tithes in kind (sheaf tithes) were changed into a fixed payment in money.

The nobility showed a growing concern for the fact that land properties were being taken over by the Church through the so-called “pious bequests” made in testaments – contrary to the legislation forbidding people to bequest their lands

to the Church at the point of death – *in articulo mortis*, passed by the successive Sejms from 1505 to 1775. The ban included (with the exception of bequests to the king) both landed properties and real properties in towns and cities (1676), and both ecclesiastical and secular ones, and stemmed from the fear of weakening the state's defence through the increasing number of landed estates exempted from the duty of quarter tax – it is thus difficult to regard it as an explicit symptom of anticlericalism.

Those laws, however, were notoriously transgressed, and the possessions of the Church both in the country and in towns were steadily increasing at the cost of royal and noble estates. In the Saxon times the Church lands made up ca. 20 % of all landed estates. The area of estates managed by secular clergy and less popular orders remained unchanged, but the properties of the orders enjoying popularity among the nobles had greatly increased, as they easily obtained exemptions from binding legislation. Bequeathing land to a religious order was a kind of investment: magnate sons were becoming abbots, daughters – abbesses, a mundane gain was associated with the obtainment of God's grace. From among the Christian Churches in the Commonwealth it was the Catholic Church that gained the best position and the greatest share in the distribution of social income, it also suffered the least damage during the Deluge and wars of the early 18th century.

2.2. Protestant Churches (Reformation Churches)

Most often, advocates of the Reformation and members of Christian non-Catholic Churches in the 16th century described themselves as *ewangelicy* (in order to emphasize the return to the primary principles of the Universal Church), while Catholics called them dissidents (dissenters) or Protestants. Members of the Reformed Church (Evangelical Reformed Church) are called *Calvinists* (terms such as *calvins* or *calvin* were offensive), even though they do not have to be the followers of John Calvin's doctrines – contrary to the members of the Lutheran Church (Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession) who in principle accept the doctrine of Martin Luther and call themselves Lutherans; in the analysed period they were offensively called luthers or saxons after the *Augsburg Confession* (Saxon). Members of all Evangelical confessions strongly objected to being called "heretics" by clergymen and Catholic zealots as a justification for discrimination.

For a long time, the legal position of members of Reformation Churches had not been normalized. Unclear was mainly the status of Polish Brethren (called Arians or Socinians) who were not included either in the Sandomierz Agreement of 1570 concluded by Lutherans, Reformed, and Bohemian Brethren, or in the *Sandomierz Confession* of 1573 – the act of common profession of faith supplemented by a list of matters of doctrine and liturgy different for united creeds. In practice, the Sandomierz Agreement functioned until 1595, when the Lutherans broke away and created separate structures of their own Church. At the same time, however, the Prussian cities accepted in secret records the *Sandomierz Confession* and took part in a general synod in Toruń in 1595.

After temporary and finally failed agreement of 1570, in Leszno in 1675 Calvinists and Lutherans reached an agreement. Three years later the so-called “Amicable Agreement” (*Amica Complacatio*) was announced. Representatives of both confessions agreed upon mutual cooperation, sharing the same churches and holding synods together. The organizational division of Reformation Churches – used against them as an argument in religious polemics – was of secondary importance for their members. The basic drawback was the lack of explicit determination of the status of those Churches that, legally speaking, were not institutions but congregations of the faithful. Most ambiguous was the situation of the Reformed Evangelical Church, with legal personality only in the Lithuanian part of the Commonwealth.

The legal position of Protestants was getting gradually worse, but the period of limited toleration (second half of the 17th – first half of the 18th c.) was endured by two Reformed Unities (Polish *Jednoty*, sing. *Jednota*): of Little Poland, and of Lithuania, the Unity of Bohemian Brethren (from 1637 in union with the Reformed Church in Great Poland and often regarded as the third Reformed Unity), as well as the Lutheran Church.

The Reformed and Lutheran confessions had no institutions of all-national character. For Calvinists, the highest collegial authority was a provincial synod which, formally speaking, had only consultative voice and never gained direct jurisdiction over churches and believers; for Lutherans – local synods of Great Poland or consistory jurisdictions in Toruń or Gdansk. In the first half of the 18th century, both these confessions were holding general synods together, with the purpose of coordinating defensive actions against Catholicism.

2.2.1. *Reformed Church*

The Reformed created two major ecclesiastical communities (Unities): of Little Poland, Lithuania, which were divided into autonomous communities; larger administrative units were districts and provinces; and synods played the role of collegial authorities: district, provincial, and general (national) respectively. In addition, the Reformed Church of Great Poland joined the Unity of Bohemian Brethren (first attempts during the synod of Koźminek in 1555 but the final agreement was reached in 1637), which is often considered to be the third reformed Unity.

The administrative system of the Little Poland and Lithuanian Unities, developed in the 16th century, balanced influences of the secular and ecclesiastical members of the Congregation and was of presbyterial-synodal character.⁸⁶ The authorities in particular communities (parishes) were represented by colleges of seniors (called in the West presbyters) made up of ecclesiastical and secular (mainly noble ones)

86 The concept of presbyterial-synodal nature of the Reformed Church in the Commonwealth has been recently criticized. Cf. M. Ptaszyński, “O ustroju kościoła. Uwagi na marginesie edycji Akta Synodów prowincjonalnych Jednoty Litewskiej 1626–1637,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 56 (2012), pp. 203–226.

patrons headed by a main patron (*patronus loci*) – the owner of the estate, in which the building used for common prayers and services (commonly called *zbór* in Polish) was situated. The governing body dealt with current matters, and a majority of more important affairs was settled at the forum of provincial assemblies, because district synods had no executive power.

Provincial synods (in theory convened once a year, in practice much more infrequently) were attended both by the clergy and secular representatives of districts and congregations. Provincial synods could elect a new ecclesiastical general senior (superintendent) or approve the old one for the Unity, pastors for the offices of seniors and conseniors held for life, and secular seniors. Apart from elections, the synods dealt with the organization of education, church finances, mission (ordination) – appointments to vacant offices of preachers, contacts with the authorities of the Commonwealth and the Catholic Church, as well as with their fellow believers abroad.

The order of synodal sessions was very much similar to the order of *sejmiks* and *sejms*. Because of their mixed composition, the Roman Catholics (especially the Episcopate) tended to treat Protestant synods as illegal assemblies of Protestant nobility rather than as an element of Church hierarchy (analogous to synods of the Catholic clergy). A two-stage synodal organization – provincial and district one – was retained only by the Lithuanian Unity (Latin: *Unitas Lithuaniae*). The two remaining Unities of the Commonwealth had synods made up of representatives of individual congregations.

The fates of three Unities in the 16th to 18th centuries took different courses. The strongest one – the Lithuanian Unity was the only one that encompassed the whole country – the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, after 1614 it was divided into six districts (of Vilnius, Samogitia, Święciany Novahrudak, and Ruthenian one – that is, of Belarus and Podlasie). In the times of the first Vasa kings, general synods of the Lithuanian Unity were held once a year. Its governing body was made up of the provincial superintendent (from 1636) and the Council of General Curators, composed of six district superintendents and six secular seniors. Executive power was vested in the office of “general actor” (legal representative) of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania’s congregations, held in the 17th–18th centuries for life by the persons who not only had suitable law education but also enjoyed great authority as holders of public offices. In the tribunal courts lawyers (or agents) were permanently employed, usually Calvinists who were prepared to serve this function already at school.

From the 1580s to 1620s the Lithuanian Unity – contrary to the two others and due to the legal guarantees of land ownership and church buildings – did not suffer any setback or regress, but flourished. By virtue of the fact that in the 16th and 17th centuries numerous chapels were built in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from scratch, an action of repossession of churches undertaken by the Catholic Church harmed the Lithuanian Unity much less than their fellow believers in the Crown. First of all, the Unity retained its church in the capital of the Grand Duchy, despite several tumults (1611, 1639, 1682) and its forced move outside the city walls (1640). The only success of the Counter-Reformation was that general synods ceased to

be held in Vilnius. From the mid-17th century on, they were increasingly often replaced by convocations called up to deal with specific matters; their decisions were regarded equal to those taken by synods (synodal canons).

Until the end of the 17th century the Lithuanian Unity continued its missionary activity among peasants (in that territory mainly members of the Orthodox Church), and was able to bring many of them over to the side of the Reformation, especially in Samogitia. A part of country chapels dating back to the 16th century still operate today. In 1743 the Lithuanian Unity, due to the patronage of the Prussian king, obtained the inviolable right to churches in the lands after the Evangelical line of the Radziwills (the so-called Neuburg estate), despite the fact that they had been bought out by the Catholic line of the family, from Nieśwież. This allowed the Unity to maintain their state of possession and, after 1773, even to make attempts to rebuild their own potential and importance.

In turn, the Little Poland Unity, which in the 16th century was a hub of the Polish Reformation, lost ca. 30–40 % of their churches as soon as the period of 1606–1620. By the end of the 17th century, it was in the state of decline (in 1676 it had 19 churches, whereas in the first half of the 18th century only nine). And although the last general synod of the Reformed in the 17th-century Commonwealth was held at Chmielnik (1676), its decisions did not prevent the fall of the Unity. One of the contributing factors was the maintenance of a fictional at that time organizational structure with the division into districts (Cracow, Sandomierz, Ruthenian, Belz and Lublin ones). Before a more rational organizational structure of the Church was introduced in 1692, a majority of the Calvinists of the two confessions in Little Poland at the end of the 18th century had been living in a diaspora, meeting only once every three months at services combined with the Lord's Supper (Eucharist). In the first half of the 19th century the Reformed Church in Little Poland was dissolved.

The Great Poland Unity included Calvinists and Bohemian Brethren, whose name, indicating the Bohemian origin of the congregation, in the 17th century was only an echo of the tradition. The unity with the Reformed from Little Poland and Lithuania based on the Sandomierz Confession (1570) did not mean a full union with them; Bohemian Brethren retained their independent liturgy and internal system. Synods of the Great Poland Unity (in theory held every two years) were attended by the entire clergy and representatives of the nobility from among whom secular patrons were elected. The authorities of the Unity resided at Leszno. After losses suffered by the Unity during the wars of the mid-17th century, the number of churches decreased in the early 18th century to fourteen, and a majority of them survived until the end of the century. An inflow of settlers of the Augsburg confession from Germany to Great Poland in the 18th century, to whom churches were made available at the request of estate owners, and a similarity to the Lutheranism in their internal system (a significant role played by pastors) influenced an increasing Germanization of the Great Poland Unity.

2.2.2. Lutheran Church (Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession)

A structure of the Lutheran Church was less formalized than that of the Evangelical Reformed Unities. Outside Royal Prussia, its believers clustered only in Great Poland, where synods were held. In the rest of the Polish-Lithuanian territory only single Lutheran churches were scattered, with a numerous and affluent congregation of Warsaw at the lead. The Lutheran Church in Great Poland had a consistorial-synodical internal system: the highest power was vested in a synod gathering ecclesiastical and secular seniors, in practice – an ecclesiastical general synod which, together with the closest associates from among the ecclesiastical and secular seniors, formed in the 18th century a certain college transformed into a consistory. At provincial synods and preceding district assemblies a key part was played by two Church estates: the ecclesiastical and noble ones. General and districts seniors were under the authority of the synod, while pastors managing matters of individual churches – under the authority of seniors. The lower level in the hierarchy of Lutheran Church were teachers – cantors, who were teaching children and liturgical service except for the Eucharist. And it was they that most often were persecuted and harassed by the Catholic clergy.

Already in the 16th century Great Poland Lutherans were the most numerous Protestant community, but after the crisis of the 16th to 17th centuries caused by a brutal Counter-Reformation action, the structures and potential of the Great Poland Lutheranism were rebuilt in the 17th century by a German (or, more precisely, Silesian) settlement of the Thirty Years' War period. A reorganization of the structures and reconstruction of the provincial authorities of the Lutheran Church were made at the 1634 synod. The third wave of a German colonization came to Great Poland from Franconia, Swabia and Rhineland-Palatinate after the Northern War had ended in the Polish territory. In 1737, because the number of the faithful had increased, the Great Poland province of the Augsburg Church was divided into eleven districts, each headed by an ecclesiastical and secular senior.

It is practically impossible to determine the actual number of Lutheran congregations in Great Poland for in sources of that time a congregation – a community of the faithful – was identified with a place in which the church was located. It is estimated that in the early years of King Augustus III's reign the Lutheran Church in Great Poland had 88 urban and rural churches. Just how much legal restrictions limited their natural development is revealed by the fact that during the period of great migrations (1717–1776) only four Lutheran churches were built in Great Poland, while in 1776–1793 at least 30. In total, the number of the followers of the two Protestant Churches in Great Poland (Lutheran and Reformed ones) is estimated to be: ca. 200.000 people (before the First Partition) and ca. 100.000 (after the partition).

The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession dominated also in Royal Prussia, where the privileges of King Sigismund August of 1557–1559 recognized the Augsburg Confession as an official confession of Prussian towns and cities (except

for episcopal ones) and of the nobility. As a result, Prussian Protestants were made equal to Catholics, and in towns and cities enjoyed a privileged position, even after the reprisals, which came after 1724.

The believers of the Augsburg Confession had a privileged position also in Livonia (under the 1561 privilege and 1582 constitution). When, after the Commonwealth had lost in the second half of the 17th century a major part of Livonia, the legal and confessional situation in Livonia was being reviewed and fixed, it turned out that there was the need to establish a special commission to set the locations for building of the Catholic church buildings in the royal lands. Courland, a Protestant state, enjoyed legal guarantees of freedom of Lutheran religion under the privilege of King Sigismund Augustus of 1561 and the Act of 1569, confirmed on the occasion of a failed attempt to incorporate the duchy into the Commonwealth in 1726.

2.3. Churches of the Eastern Tradition

2.3.1. *The Orthodox Church*

The Orthodox Church (in Poland and Muscovy called also Ruthenian) in the Belarusian and Ukrainian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian state belonged to the eastern branch of Christianity, which was separated from the Church of the West after the co-called West-East Schism (from Greek *schisma* “cleft,” “division”) of 1054, hence the colloquial name of *schismatics* used to refer to the Orthodox Christians.

The hierarchy of the Orthodox Church for Lithuania and the Ruthenian lands of the Crown was headed by the Metropolitan of Kiev, elected at a synod attended by bishops, lords, and commoners. In the 16th century the election amounted to the confirmation by the patriarch of Constantinople the benediction of a new metropolitan who was appointed – like bishops (called *vladikas* or *vladykas*) – by a monarch. In the 16th century, the appointments were made most often to lay persons – usually married men or widowers with children – wanting to secure the profitable benefices for their offspring or relations. And because according to the Eastern tradition a bishop should be a religious, the lay appointees before their consecration entered the order, took vows and assumed new names. The married ones were also expected to divorce their wives – which they often failed to do. Contrary to the Roman Catholic hierarchs, Eastern bishops of the Commonwealth were subject to the jurisdiction of the king who was also the highest instance of appeal from the metropolitan court. The local organ of the Church authorities was made by protopopes (protopresbyters) whose jurisdiction was broader than that of the corresponding Latin deans and more or less the same as that of the officials.

Parish Orthodox priests were called *presbyters* or *fathers* (or *pop* in Polish, from Greek *pappas*, meaning ‘father’). Their authority was restricted by that of patrons and the faithful themselves, which was reflected in the Orthodox confraternities or brotherhoods [Ukrainian sing. *Bratstvo*] that flourished from the turn of the 16th century on. An important part was played by *kliroi* (sing. *kliros*: from a Greek

word *klēros*), made up of presbyters of parochial Orthodox churches of the episcopal sees (to some extent they resembled Roman Catholic cathedral chapters).

Until 1596, the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Kiev comprised of one archdiocese (of Polotsk) and ten dioceses (*vladikats*, eparchies), seven of which were in the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: the diocese of Kiev, of Polotsk, Smolensk, Chernigov (Briansk), Turiv (Pinsk), Lutsk, and Volodymyr, and three in the Ruthenian lands of the Crown: of Kholm, Przemyśl, and Halich. After Muscovy seized the Land of Chernigov-Siveria in the early 16th century, until 1625 the Kiev Metropolitanate had eight dioceses. The parish was the lowest level of local government of the Orthodox Church. In the 16th century the network of parishes was not crystallized, and in the dioceses of Kholm and in Volhynia its development was inhibited as a consequence of the Reformation. A significant increase in the number of parochial Orthodox churches in the following centuries resulted from (apart from religious motives) the fact that the building of wooden churches was not expensive.

2.3.2. *The Union of Brest (1596)*

In the 1570s and 1580s the Orthodox Church in the Commonwealth went through a period of crisis, brought about also by politics of the monarchs who supported the Catholic Church and instability of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which weakened the ties between the Metropolitanate of Kiev and Constantinople. Under such circumstances, the old idea of union with Rome was becoming increasingly popular. The union was backed up by King Sigismund III, driven not by the Catholic orthodoxy but by the desire to curb claims of the Patriarchate of Moscow and all Rus', established as a separate patriarchate in 1589, to the authority over the Orthodox faithful in the Ruthenian territories of the Commonwealth. The king's support for the union was in part also his reaction to an alliance between the Protestant and Orthodox noblemen contracted at the general synod in Toruń. The king's desire coincided with expectations of some Orthodox dignitaries, who were reluctant to see their increased subordination and subjugation to the patriarchate of Constantinople and supported the movement of renewal of Christianity, which had expanded greatly to include in the 16th century also the Eastern Church.

The immediate cause that forced the pace of preparations to the union with Rome was a visit to the Commonwealth by the Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremias II (1587–1595), who (by King Sigismund III's consent) deposed the Metropolitan of Kiev and the Bishop of Lutsk appointed his exarch (deputy or representative) in the Commonwealth; he also granted the Orthodox confraternities of Lviv and Vilnius a stauropegic right, exempting them from the jurisdiction of local bishops. This resulted in discontent of some bishops, which, in turn, accelerated actions towards the union at the synods in Brest (1590–1591), supported also by laic patrons of the Orthodoxy. Of different opinion was Konstanty Ostrogski, who presented his own project of "universal union," based on the consent of all Eastern patriarchs and Muscovy – unrealistic both because of the hostile attitude of Muscovy towards the

Latins and the attitude of Turkey which would not have allowed the cooperation with Rome of Christian hierarchs within the borders of the Ottoman Empire.

After discussions in the Commonwealth and Rome a consensus was reached and the bishops of the Kiev Metropolitanate in 1594 formulated 33 articles (among other things, they demanded seats in the Senate on a par with Catholic bishops, not met until 1790), which were then presented to the king and the pope. Their consent to the subordination to Rome was made dependent on the meeting of those demands. At the council in Brześć held on October 6th–10th, 1596 Metropolitan Michael Rohoza and the Orthodox Episcopate drew up an official text of the act of the Union of Brest – of the submission to the pope and union with the Catholic Church, and solemnly announced it. At the same time, the bishops of Przemyśl and Lviv, who did not accept the union, were excommunicated. In reply, opponents of the union demanded that the metropolitan and bishops who joined the Latins should be deprived of their offices.

As a result, the Brest Council further complicated religious problems in the Commonwealth, and the union of 1596 led to the permanent division of the Eastern Church into the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church and the Orthodox Church, which was to have a powerful impact on the future of the Commonwealth's territories inhabited by Ruthenian population (Belarusians and Ukrainians) and the whole Polish-Lithuanian state in the centuries to come. The petty Ruthenian (Belarusian and Ukrainian) nobility from the eastern territories of the Crown and western territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was against the union, together with a major part of the lower clergy, Orthodox monasteries and Orthodox confraternities in towns being under their influence, a group of peasants and also some magnates called Disuniates (Polish: *dyzunicy*). Cossacks saw themselves as defenders of the Orthodox faith, which they made their weapon in the struggle for independence from the Commonwealth.

2.3.3. *Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church*

In spite of some concessions for the Orthodox Church during the 1609 sejm,⁸⁷ from the Union of Brest to 1635⁸⁸ the Greek Catholic Church was the only legal Church of Eastern tradition in the Commonwealth. It retained its former administrative structure and its ceremonies (including the liturgy in a Slavic language, and marriages of priests), but recognized the dogmas of the Catholic Church, broke with Constantinople, and recognized the authority of the pope. Yet, Latin bishops did not allow the Uniate ones to be admitted to the Senate, which would be of paramount importance for the prestige of that Church.

The administrative range and status of the Greek Catholic Church changed with the current political situation. The second half of the 18th century saw an increased

87 Constitution "Religia grecka," VL, vol. 2, p. 465.

88 Constitution "Religia grecka," VL, vol. 3, p. 407.

understanding of the necessity to make equal the two Catholic Churches: Roman and Greek. In practice, however, only some preliminary steps in this direction were taken before the Partitions of the Commonwealth. An important part in the fight with the Orthodoxy and in propagation of the Union was played by the Basilian monks, the Order following the rule of St. Basil the Great. The order was reformed in 1617, with the support of the Apostolic See, by Uniate Metropolitan Josyf Veliamyn Rutsky who subjected a number of autonomous monasteries to the central government – of the general chapter and a protarchimandrite, after 1624 approved by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The rapidly developing Basilian Order gave many of its members to the Uniate episcopate, higher Church officials, preachers and theologians. The most important fields of their activities (apart from pastoral work in parishes of the monastery or diocese) included missionary work among peasants and teaching in colleges and public schools with the aim to deepen and strengthen the religious faith in the underdeveloped Eastern Lands of the Commonwealth.

2.3.4. Orthodox Church after the Union of Brest

From a formal viewpoint, in 1596 the Orthodox hierarchy was outlawed, the Orthodox Church was deprived of its privileges, its churches and landed estates were to be taken over by Greek Catholics. In fact, however, the Orthodox bishops of Lviv and Przemyśl kept both their estates and their bishoprics, but the situation of Orthodox clergy in private lands deteriorated.

Initially, the Commonwealth's authorities did not want to continue to recognize the Orthodox Church, and tried to force its adherents to change their faith by administrative means, which led to religious fights and victims (the death of Uniate bishop Josaphat Kuntsevych in 1623). By virtue of the persistent struggle of the Orthodox nobility and support of Lithuanian Calvinists (Vilnius synod of 1599), Disuniates began to achieve small successes starting from the 1603 Sejm, at which the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, the most important centre of the Orthodox monasticism in Ukraine, was exempted from the authority of the Uniate metropolitan, which turned Kiev into a bastion of Orthodoxy for a long time. The sejm constitutions of 1607 and 1609 guaranteed that the Orthodox would enjoy the freedom of worship and retain their estate, and in 1620–1621 there was an illegal re-establishment of the Orthodox hierarchy, hostile towards any attempts at agreement with the Uniates and Rome (Kiev synods of 1628–1629). Attempts to “appease the Greek religion” taken by King Wladislaus IV turned out to be too late, and from 1635 on, there coexisted two legal Churches: Greek Catholic (Uniate) and Orthodox.

During the Khmelnytsky Uprising in 1648 and the war with Muscovy of 1654, the Orthodox Church fell under the influence of the Moscow Patriarchate. Attempts at a new union in the 1670s did not bring any results. Yet, by the end of the 17th century another three Orthodox bishoprics joined the union: of Przemyśl (1692), Lviv (1700), and Lutsk (1702). Only the Belarusian bishopric stayed with the Orthodox Church that included the parishes and monasteries in the diocese of Polotsk; the rest was

supervised by the metropolitan of Kiev, residing abroad, who under the Treaty of Eternal Peace (the so-called Treaty of Grzymultowski) between Poland and Muscovy of 1686 had the right to communicate freely with the faithful in matters concerning the Orthodox Church.

The last reform of the Orthodox Church was initiated at the end of King Stanisław Augustus' rule with the purpose to prevent future interventions of Muscovy in internal matters of the Commonwealth under the pretext of defending religious freedoms of the Orthodox faithful. In 1791 at Pinsk a congregation of the Orthodox Church in Poland and in Lithuania decided on the autocephaly of the Church (its independence of external factors) and the establishment of its own consistory, headed by the later deputy of a member of the Supreme National Council in the 1794 insurrection, Sawa Palmowski. Next year the *Pinsk Statutes* were approved by the Sejm.

2.3.5. *Armenian Church*

In the accordance with the trends of religious unification of the first half of the 17th century, in 1630 the Armenian Church also entered a union with the Catholic Church. Armenians were monophysites – believed that the nature of Jesus Christ remains altogether divine and not human. Monophysite doctrine was rejected at the Councils of Chalcedon (451) and Constantinople (553). Nonetheless, from their very arrival in Poland, they enjoyed various privileges and the unquestioned right to build churches (from 1363 on, the Cathedral in Lviv), because for Rome it was important to gain the Armenian Church as a stepping stone to a full communion with other Churches of the Eastern tradition. Hence the active contacts between the pope and Catholicos Melchizedek, who in 1626 ordained Mikolaj Torosowicz the first Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Lviv. Torosowicz put himself under the protection of King Sigismund III and as soon as 1629 made a private Catholic profession of faith to Bishop Jan Andrzej Próchnicki. A public act of profession was made on October 24th, 1630. A document prepared after the ceremony was sent to Rome.

Thus initiated, the process of creation of the Armenian Catholic Church was to last over half a century. The successors of Sigismund III Vasa were less engaged in the Union. The breakthrough came in the time of King Jan III Sobieski, whose sympathy towards Armenians resulted from, among other things, the fact that his eastern policy was based largely on their knowledge eastern of languages and on their diplomatic talents. Bishop Torosowicz's death in 1681 ushered in a new era in the history of the Armenian Church – a period of strengthening of the Union by a new generation of the clergy, the alumni of the college established by the Theatine order. Also King Augustus II Wettin was sympathetic towards Armenians. During his reign, a new Armenian archbishop, Jan Tobiasz Augustynowicz won the support of the pope (1719), achieved an appeasement among the faithful and demise of the opposition against the union with Rome. The education of the youth in Catholic colleges was conducive to the assimilation of Armenians; a certain role was also played by the ennoblement of Armenian families (or confirmation of their nobility).

3. Evolution of the State Policy towards Religion, the 16th–18th Centuries

Formally, the policy towards religion was conducted not by the Commonwealth (Sejm), but by the king – for it was his duty to maintain religious peace and harmony, and to issue decrees in case of religious conflicts. In such cases – like in all others – laws adopted by the Sejm were also published in the name of the king. Apart from judicial jurisdiction, the elective kings had two main tools of religious policy at their disposal: the right to appoint bishops and decisive influence on education, including a monopoly to grant schools the status of an institution of higher learning. Insofar as they could and wanted to cooperate with the Sejm, they were able to fulfil their obligation to maintain internal peace. However, it was obvious from the very beginning that the struggle for equality of Christian religions would be difficult and that it was the Catholic Church, and not the secular authorities of the state (that is, the king and the Sejm), who enjoyed a privileged position.

3.1. Religious Policy of the Two First Elective Kings

Traditionally, the policies of the elected kings towards religion have been investigated through the prism of their personal religiousness. In fact, however, their decisions most often resulted from a levelheaded calculation, dictated by a current political situation.

The first king elected *viritim* (i. e. by all nobles appearing in person), Henry of Valois, in his childhood was religiously indifferent. Although he had learnt to pretend he was devout and participated properly in Catholic rites and ceremonies, “his attitude towards religious ceremonies was more pagan rather than Christian, [they] appealed to his imagination and not to his feelings.”⁸⁹

Certainly, it is difficult to say whether the part played by Henry in the massacre of French Huguenots (the so-called Massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day) resulted from his conformism and political interests or had religious motives. In any case, in the light of his later actions it is difficult to regard him as a religious zealot.

A solemn ceremony of swearing upon the *pacta conventa* and Henrician Articles by Henry of Valois and Charles IX in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris (September 10th, 1573), together with the pledge to maintain religious peace, was not a manifestation of their tolerance, but rather a necessary condition for Henry to come to the throne in the Commonwealth. From the point of view of the French court, the political arguments only temporarily outweighed the religious ones. When, only two weeks later, Protestants from the Polish legation presented to Charles IX postulates of tolerance towards Huguenots, it caused the irritation of the French, and Henry was informed by the theologians of the Sorbonne about the possibility

89 Stanisław Grzybowski, “Henryk Walezy,” in: *Królowie elekcijni. Leksykon biograficzny*, ed. I. Kaniewska, Cracow, 2006, p. 18.

of not keeping the oath. But his refusal to swear upon the Henrician Articles after his arrival in Poland was an attempt to reject limitations imposed by them on royal power and not to establish peace between religions.

As king of France, Henry III was driven in his religious policy not by his emotions, but by *raison d'état*. In 1576 he granted the largest measure of concessions to French Huguenots prior to the Edict of Nantes: the freedom of public worship "in all cities and parts of the kingdom, with no limits as to time and persons" (with the exception of Paris and eight strongholds in Languedoc, Aquitaine, Dauphiné, and Provence). The 1576 Acts of Toleration of the French king went further than the Warsaw Confederation, which determined the estate boundaries of religious freedom. An ideology adopted in France in the first half of the 17th century to subordinate matters of religion to political interests made France under Cardinals de Richelieu and Mazarin a secular state in the eyes of the arch-Catholic monarchs of Spain. At the same time, the development of religious relations in the Commonwealth took the opposite direction already under the second elected king, Stephen Bathory: from irenicism and equality of rights to the Counter-Reformation.

Contrary to the historiographical tradition, it is though now that Stephen Bathory was a tolerant ruler more out of necessity than out of conviction. As Voivode of Transylvania, he sought to restore Catholicism with the aid of Jesuits, and corresponded on the subject with the Jesuit provincial in Vienna, Lorenzo Maggio. He tried to fight against Unitarianism; with the support of moderate Arians, among others Jerzy Blandrata, he forced radical adherents of the movement to leave Transylvania in 1572, and put their leader Ferenc Dávid to prison. Restrictions towards Romanies (Gypsies) on whom he imposed taxes were to serve the same end (1572). He also impeded the spread of Calvinism among the Transylvanian Saxons – although he preferred them to be converted by Calvinists rather than by Unitarians. But he was ultimately helpless when the Edict of Torda (1568) was proclaimed by King John Sigismund Zápolya, whereby religious freedom was legally guaranteed and coexistence in Transylvania of four confessions: Lutheranism, Unitarianism, Calvinism and Catholicism made possible. In 1595 the Diet in Weißenburg formally recognized these four confessions as *religiones receptae*, while other faiths (Orthodox Christianity, Judaism and Islam) were merely tolerated.

"Calculated love for Catholicism" declared by Bathory – accused by Habsburg propaganda of heresy, or even of professing Islam in secret – resulted from pragmatism. After he became the king of the Commonwealth, he needed the support of the papacy to strengthen his position in Europe and the support of the Catholic clergy to secure his position on the elective throne. An exemplary cooperation between the king and the pope is testified by the fact that the Commonwealth as one of the first Catholic states (next to Spain, Portugal, and Italian states) to accept in 1582 the introduction of the Gregorian calendar (named after Pope Gregory XIII) – while other Catholic monarchies postponed its adoption. Protestants fought against the new calendar as late as in the 18th century, and Orthodox countries adopted it in secular matters only in the 20th century (the Orthodox Church still uses the Julian calendar).

A general synod of the Polish Catholic clergy at Piotrków in 1577, which was not called under King Sigismund August because of the fear of the establishment of a national Church, decided finally to implement the decrees of the Council of Trent in the Crown (the Lithuanian clergy did it only in 1602). This meant the beginning of an internal reform of the Catholic Church: the fight against simony, improvement of morals and education of the clergy, increased bishop visitations, reconstruction of Church education (mainly by Jesuits) – supported by King Stephen Bathory as the tool of realization of his policy to strengthen royal power.

Initially, the Society of Jesus (*Societas Jesu*), modelled on the army in order to fight against the Reformation, like the papacy treated Bathory with distrust. But after the death in 1576 of his rival to the Commonwealth's throne, Emperor Maximilian Habsburg, Jesuits began to consistently cooperate with the king, who protected them in return for their services, realized through the agency of Jesuit preachers at the royal court: Marcin Laterna, a camp chaplain during the wars with Muscovy, and Piotr Skarga, initially a rector of the Jesuit college in Vilnius, to which Bathory granted (unofficially on July 7th, 1578, and formally on April 1st, 1579) a charter making it equal with the Academy of Cracow.

The Vilnius Academy was a typical missionary school, educating preachers and polemicists for the needs of the Society of Jesus and Recatholicization of Livonia supported by Bathory, and potentially also for missionary work in Muscovy. New Jesuit colleges founded in Polotsk and Riga, Jesuit house in Dorpat, in Orthodox and Protestant countries were to serve a similar purpose. Bathory employed the services of Polish Jesuits not only in the territory of the Commonwealth: he appointed Jakub Wujek, a former rector of the colleges in Poznań and Vilnius, to the post of rector of a newly established Jesuit college at Kološvar (which survived only ten years) and a tutor of Prince Sigismund, a son of Christopher Bathory. Jakub Wujek was also the author of the Polish translation of the Bible (the New Testament published in 1593, a full translation of 1595, which was subsequently corrected by his fellow Jesuits and received official imprimatur only in 1599; two years after Wujek's death).

From the very start, Bathory combined in his religious policy the consistent realization of general aims of the Catholic reform with flexibility. He refrained from any radical action against the Reformation in the Commonwealth not because of his personal tolerance, but because of his understanding of *raison d'état* and models of the French monarchy. This also led to the king's decrees in religious matters: against tumults (April 27th, 1577 and October 27th, 1578, after repeated attacks of Catholic mob – mainly students of the Academy of Cracow – on the Protestant cemetery, funerary conducts and church).

However, at the time when religious matters were being regulated in Livonia, it turned out that the king's policy satisfied neither the papacy, nor Protestants. Catholics thought that the changes were too limited, while Lutherans regarded the propagation of Catholicism as an attack against the privileged position of their religion in Livonia, guaranteed by King Sigismund Augustus. In practice, the rights of Protestants in Livonia remained intact, with the exception of restoring the Bishopric in Wenden and giving back to Catholics two churches in Riga.

Bathory implemented the reforms of the Council of Trent trying to reconcile administration of the Church with gaining allies in the Senate (Primate Stanisław Karnkowski, the Bishop of Lviv Jan Dymitr Solikowski). He applied a similar principle when promoting to the rank of cardinal two very young people, with political qualifications only: Jerzy Radziwiłł – the Bishop of Vilnius after Walerian Protasze-wicz, and his nephew Andrzej Bathory – the Bishop of Ermland (Warmia).

3.2. King Sigismund III and the Counter-Reformation

The term *Counter-Reformation* is used to refer to a direct fight of the Roman Catholic Church in the second half of the 16th and in 17th centuries both for predominance over other Christian confessions and for winning back the Universal Church (also in a territorial sense). This was the implementation of sweeping decrees accepted at the Council of Trent that rejected the theses of all lines of the Reformation, and of the Creed of Trent – upholding the old claim that there was no salvation outside the Catholic Church. At the same time the Catholic Reform was being carried out (an increased care for discipline and education of the clergy, studies of the Holy Bible, foundation of institutions devoted to evangelization and charity), evident in Italy and Spain already by the end of the 15th century, and officially initiated by Pope Paul III (1534–1549) in the face of the threat of Protestantism. Thus, the Counter-Reformation and reform of the Catholic Church are two aspects (external and internal) of the same phenomenon, and nowadays more similarities are seen in the Catholic Reform and Reformation than differences (although it was not perceived in that way at the time): a concern for the quality of spiritual ministry and discipline of the clergy, emphasized importance of the Holy Bible and texts by the Fathers of the Church, stressing of the orthodoxy of one's confession.

The reform of the Catholic Church initiated under Stephen Bathory was mainly of an administrative nature and was continued during the rule of King Sigismund III Vasa by a new generation of bishops. They reorganized a network of diocesan schools and system of care, developed the system of control and visitation to increase discipline among the clergy (especially regular clergy), and at the same time took actions to regain church buildings lost on behalf of Protestants and to collect all outstanding tithes.

In Poland, the program both of the Counter-Reformation and Catholic Reform was a work of the Society of Jesus. Political concepts of the Jesuits were based on the model of Habsburg absolutism; they anticipated a significant strengthening of the royal power, transformation of the elective monarchy into hereditary one, and of the self-governmental administration of the nobility into an effective tool of the central power, together with supporting by the Catholic camp during free elections the Habsburgs who were regarded as tyrants by the nobility.

But political and social problems were of secondary importance from the perspective of Counter-Reformation actions. Their support for the plans of strengthening the royal power resulted from the fact that the elected kings were Catholics, and among the noble parliamentarians at the turn of the 17th century the most active

were dissidents – for this reason any strengthening of the royal power harmonized with the interest of the Catholic side; any diminishment of political privileges of the nobility would be tantamount to the diminishment of their religious freedom. The Jesuit programme of the renewal of Catholicism included also banners of taking commoners under the protection of the state to defend them against the arbitrary will of their lords, reduced in the second half of the 16th century to expressed sorrow over the lot of peasants, but in the early 17th century developed by Jesuit preachers (Mateusz Bembus and Marcin Śmiglecki) into concrete demands to limit the corvée to 3–4 days a week, not to raise rents and duties, and grant the peasant the free right to leave the rural community.

After the Sandomierz Rebellion (1606–1609) Jesuits decided not to propagate openly those ideas and realized that their support for strong monarchy induced even Catholics to an alliance with “heretics.” From that time on, at least officially, they began to extol the Golden Liberty – thus gaining the support of the nobility for the Counter-Reformation, and magnate elites also for the Catholic Reform in the Commonwealth. Yet, a Jesuit variant of the Tridentine reform faced the Catholic opposition resulting not only from the conflict of interests between the Society of Jesus and other orders (Piarists) or between Academy of Vilnius and of Cracow, but also from deeper differences of attitudes and ideas. Even some bishops (Wawrzyniec Gościński, Piotr Tylicki), representing the intellectual and spiritual formation of pre-Tridentine humanist Catholicism, were unfavourable to the Jesuit reform.

The Jesuits in the Commonwealth, like in the whole Europe, joined in public life, using a tactic developed by their founder, Ignatius of Loyola, the efficacy of which had been tested in the monarchies of the Habsburgs. They began by bringing under control the royal court, and then proceeded with the realization of particular aims: non-admission of “heretics” to offices, appointments to the king’s council of Catholics only; with the goal to expel “heretics” from the state, together with confiscation of their properties, or even death penalty as a warning – with the most severe punishment for their preachers; the postulated time limit for conversion was one month. Jesuits achieved the majority of their aims for the Commonwealth by the end of the Vasas’ rule.

The arguments of Protestants in defence of the principles of the Warsaw Confederation under Sigismund III had not only a propaganda purpose, but they stemmed from the doctrinal premises of relationship between the secular and spiritual powers, formulated in John Calvin’s *Institutio religionis christianae*, in 1559 (Book IV, Chap. 20); not without reason Polish translation was published in 1599 (*O zwierzchności świeckiej*) and in the Sandomierz Confession (1570) dedicated to King Sigismund Augustus. They were based on the strict separation between temporal matters – belonging to the state, and spiritual matters – staying in the sphere of the Church, on the obligation of rulers to warrant that everyone was able to freely express their religion according to their conscience and to oblige the people (in the Commonwealth – the Sejm) to protest against violations of freedom of conscience and instigation of conflicts between Christians.

Protestants contrasted the Catholic theses on the natural subordination of all Christians to Rome with the principle (already preached by the 15th-century conciliarists from the milieu of Cracow Academy) that the kings were not subordinated to the pope in secular matters, that Poles had “a free commonwealth ruled by its own laws,” and that individual nations enjoyed legislative sovereignty granted them by the law of nations. Refuting arguments of those clergymen who refused to conform to the Warsaw Confederation claiming that they wanted to keep a clear conscience in contacts with “heretics,” Protestants emphasized that the purpose of the Confederation was the civil and political peace, permitted by the pope even in relations with pagans – thus, why was it denied to Christians?

Therefore, it is not justified to reduce the political reasons of the protestant nobility to the arguments for toleration: in the first half of the 17th century, they still wanted religious equality as an implementation of the principles of political freedom and equality. Demands for freedom of worship and freedom of conscience, however, presented at the sejms of 1611, 1613, 1615, and 1627, went beyond the Warsaw Confederation and were not limited to the nobility. From the perspective of Protestant elites, even in the time of Sigismund III, the victory of the Counter-Reformation was not yet determined, and dissident *politiques* from among the nobles and magnates did not agree to be treated as second category citizens.

The Tridentine ideal of a religiously homogeneous state – propagated by the Jesuits and supported by Sigismund III – was against the Jagiellonian tradition of peaceful coexistence of many religions. At the turn of the 17th century, it contributed to a growing tension in the multi-ethnic territories (Podlasie, Red Ruthenia, Ukraine, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) – increased after the Union of Brest of 1596. Thus, advocates of the Counter-Reformation had to take into account the specificity of conditions in the Commonwealth which excluded all violent methods against the nobility. The main tool for actions against Reformation Churches (apart from the king’s policy of appointments) was Jesuit secondary education; a new generation of alumni of Jesuit schools (the so-called new Catholics) strengthened the Catholic party, which wrecked all attempts to pass secondary legislation to the Confederation of Warsaw. New Catholics served also in noble tribunals, which as soon as the 1620s began to punish noble supporters of the Reformation with a sentence of prison or fine under the pretext of “insult against the Catholic faith.” No wonder that dissidents accused them of placing the interest of the papacy above the common good of the Commonwealth. The use of religious coercion towards peasants, both by Catholic and Protestant lords, was unlimited in any way. In cities, religious tumults with the active participation of the students of the Academy of Cracow and students of Jesuit colleges (in Cracow in 1574, 1587, 1591; in Poznań in 1614 and 1616, in Lublin in 1627, in Vilnius in 1591, 1611, 1639) and students of Protestant secondary schools (in Gdańsk, Toruń and Vilnius) led to the liquidation of Protestant churches (in Cracow in 1591, Poznań in 1616, Lublin in 1627, Vilnius in 1640). Especially difficult was the situation of dissidents in private towns and cities – when their Protestant lord was succeeded by a Catholic one (in particular a convert) they usually had to leave their place or change their confession.

Growing in strength Catholic clergy or, more precisely, episcopate and chapters as the representation of the clergy in public life, began an action of repossession of their privileges called into question during the execution movement, usurping at the same time the right to reject “either *in toto* or *in parte*” the Sejm decisions,⁹⁰ more and more interfering in political matters. In the nobility’s opinion, this breached the rule of mixed monarchy developed during the first three interregna. In response, there were radical demands to put a ban on buying land by the clergy or to exclude churchmen from debates on secular matters in the Chamber of Deputies,⁹¹ rightly regarded as “threatening to the rules of political system of the Commonwealth.”⁹²

A source of conflict was the legal immunity of the ecclesiastical estate and bringing secular persons before ecclesiastical courts. Catholic priests sued Protestant nobility for delinquent tithes and church buildings with associated sources of income appropriated for the needs of Protestant worship, questioned the legality of marriages solemnized by ministers, and tried to enforce Catholic upbringing on children of mixed marriages.

In 1627 an unprecedented lawsuit was filed before the Crown Tribunal in Lublin against a nobleman Samuel Bolestraszycki accused of translating into Polish of a book by a French Reformed theologian Pierre Du Moulin, *Héraclite ou de la vanité et misère de la vie humaine* (1609). Bolestraszycki was found guilty of *lese maiestatis divinae* and sentenced to half a year in a tower and fined, while the book was publicly burnt. Such a drastic breach of the freedom of conscience of a nobleman provoked the outrage of public opinion and became the cause of the constitution of the 1627 Sejm *On Tribunal Decrees*, which forbade the Tribunal to give sentences in matters reserved for the Sejm. However, the affair of S. Bolestraszycki set a dangerous precedent and foreshadowed the times when the belonging to the privileged estate was no longer a guarantee of honouring personal rights of a nobleman, and the tribunals controlled by the Catholic juries were an openly biased forum of deciding in matters of faith.

The last stage of the struggle of Protestant and Orthodox nobility not only for the so-called process of (that is to say, the secondary legislation to) the Warsaw Confederation, but also for the freedom of conscience took place during the interregnum after King Sigismund III’s death (1632–1633). The fact that dissidents sought to deal with religious matters already at the Convocation Sejm of 1632 resulted not only from the current balance of forces and their desire to precipitate a political

90 “Punkta do Rzeczypospolitej i stanu szlacheckiego względem osób duchownych in Anno 1615 spisane,” quoted after: Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska, “Pretensje szlachty do duchowieństwa w latach 1615–1616,” *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Historia* 16 (1969), pp. 85–103.

91 “Artykuły in negotio compositionis inter status...” in: *Księcia Krzysztofa Radziwiłła sprawy wojenne i polityczne 1621–1632*, Paris, 1859, p. 671, no. VI: “So that they are absent in the Chamber with secular matters.”

92 Jan Dzięgielewska, *O tolerancję dla zdominowanych. Polityka wyznaniowa Rzeczypospolitej w latach panowania Władysława IV*, Warsaw, 1986, p. 33.

game with Catholics, but also from their negative experiences from the previous interregnum. The acceptance by the episcopate of the Warsaw Confederation with no exceptions, together with the expression that it must not be breached under the pretext of law, was regarded as a fundamental guarantee of religious freedom.

What constituted a significant novelty in the shared *Postulata Lutrów i Rusi schizmatyków* (*Demands of Luthers and Rus Schismatics*, as titled by Catholics) of 1632 in comparison to the resolutions of 1573 was a proposal to bound by oath hetmans, keepers of the seal, municipal officials and those of starostas, as well as tribunals deputies, that they would not be driven by religious prejudices – similarly to the projects of the processes of the Warsaw Confederation of 1595, 1605 and 1606. There were also demands that under a special oath of the king and chancellor (obligatory for the whole administration of the state) religious discrimination should be prohibited in appointments to offices.

A claim to declare invalidity of all acts against Disuniates issued after 1596 was supplemented by a demand that all peasants and burghers from royal, ecclesiastical and private towns and cities both in the Crown and in Grand Duchy of Lithuania should return to the Orthodox Church. Those who used the religious coercion should be put before the Tribunal. An explicit interpretation in the spirit of freedom of conscience regardless of social estate meant that the decisions of 1573 were broadened in reference to radical projects of the Warsaw Confederation's process of 1595–1605 – contrary to Protestant demands of 1611–1615 concerning only burghers. It does not seem to result from ethical motives only, but was a kind of threat to Catholics that Orthodox peasants could be mobilized against them. Regardless of motives of the authors of the *Demands*, to meet such a radical demand would be possible only under the strong royal power, with the right to interfere in civil legal relations between the lord of an estate and his subject.

Nevertheless, the fight for the return to equality of faiths and freedom of conscience was definitely lost when the Election Sejm of 1632 (under the pressure of Muscovite invasion into the Smolensk Land) accepted a wording “with the preservation of the rights of the Catholic Church” in the formula of confirmation of religious peace by Catholic senators, which in the future would be interpreted as the basis for unpunished limitation of public rights of Protestants.

3.3. The Decline of Protestant Patronage. Conversions and Dying out of Protestant Families

Not only religious policies of the kings but also the end of magnate protection at the turn of the 17th century had an impact on the fate of the non-Catholic Churches in the Commonwealth. As a result of the royal policy of office appointments, from the times of Bathory and Sigismund III who promoted Catholics and converts, some magnates returned to the Catholic Church, while some of the Protestant families simply died out by the end of the 16th century. Year 1592 saw the death of the leader of Protestants in Great Poland, Stanisław Górka, who – by virtue of his relations with the episcopate – prevented for a long time the destruction of a Protestant

church in Poznań. A majority of Unitarian churches in Lithuania after the death in 1591 of Jan Kiszka, the last magnate of this confession, went to the hands of Calvinists or Catholics. The extinction of the Szafraniec and Oleśnicki families had a negative influence on the further fate of Calvinists from Little Poland.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the actions against Protestantism were conducted at the end of the 16th century with a special zeal by the converted magnates (both lay and ecclesiastical). An example of religious intolerance (and from the perspective of the Tridentine doctrine – of religious devotion) was the activity of Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł the Orphan (1549–1616), a descendant of the protector of Reformation Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black, who converted to Catholicism under the influence of Piotr Skarga and then began to destroy his father's heritage: he closed Protestant churches, burnt books, liquidated printing shops. An excellent printing shop at Brześć was closed in 1570, and its equipment was transported to Vilnius, to be used by a Jesuit college. After a year a Protestant printing house at Nieśwież ceased its activity, and in the following year the same happened to another such printing shop at Zasław. Finally, a printing shop at Łosk had been closed in the 1580s. The Orphan's activity was echoed by that of his younger brother, Jerzy Radziwiłł, who ordered in 1581 to burn at the Vilnius marketplace all the "heretical" books issued at Nieśwież and Brześć.

By the end of the 16th century the Orthodox Church in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was practically left with no protectors, since a large group of Orthodox magnates (the Stuckis, Zasławskis, Sanguszkos, Prońskis, Solomereckis, Hołowczyńskis, Kruszyńskis, Massalskis, Horskis, Sokolińskis, Łukomskis, Puzynas), and also the noble houses (of the Chodkiewicz, Hlebowicz, Sapiehas, Kiszkas, Wołowicz, Korsaks, Dorohostajskis) after converting to Protestantism did not return to the Orthodox Church, but adopted Catholicism.

Catholic nobility increasingly often cooperated with the clergy, also with the use of armed forces, with the purpose to win back those former Catholic Church buildings, which had been taken by Protestants. However, it did not mean that the Reformation in the Commonwealth collapsed – Prussian towns and cities together with dissident nobility persistently defended their confessions, and Tribunal sentences ordering the liquidation of churches in private lands were difficult to enforce. The Lithuanian Unity maintained its state of possession, congregations of the Polish Brethren in Volhynia survived, despite numerous orders of their liquidation in 1644–1648, until the outbreak of the Khmelnytsky Uprising. Neither the destruction of Protestant churches in royal cities nor their closure on the court order meant the liquidation of dissident congregations, which constructed new buildings outside the city walls (Polish Brethren in Lublin after 1627, Calvinists in Vilnius after 1640) or attended services held in the nearest rural church (after 1591 Calvinists from Cracow went to the village of Aleksandrowice and then to Wielkanoc).

Under the conditions of limited religious tolerance of the first half of the 17th century it was only the death of the followers or the conversion of a patron that could put an end to the existence of the congregation at a given place. The liquidation of the Academy, printing shop and church at the cultural capital of Polish Brethren,

Raków was brought about not by a precedent sentence of the court of 1638, but by the death of the former owner of the town, Jakub Sienieński (September 1639) and the attitude of his successors, who were zealous Catholics. In the coming years similar sentences were issued to Unitarians of Volhynia, and finally, by an edict of 1647, the Polish Brethren were altogether prohibited from owning schools and printing shops.

3.4. King Wladislaus IV's Religious Policy

King Wladislaus IV Vasa inherited after his consequently Counter-Reformation father an exceptionally complex tangle of confessional problems. They were a main subject of the sejm discussions during the last years of Sigismund III's rule and the interregnum after his death. By virtue of his neutral and rational attitude – which, before the election, raised objections of the papacy towards his candidature – Wladislaus Vasa was able to appease the conflict between the followers of Eastern Churches: the Orthodox Church (Disuniates) and the Greek Catholic Church (Uniates) of a great social importance, since it concerned over a half of the population of the Commonwealth. His personal merit was a preparation in 1632 of *Punkty uspokojenia obywatelów koronnych i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego narodu ruskiego w religii greckiej będących* (*Points of Appeasement of Citizens of the Crown and Grand Duchy of Lithuania of Ruthenian Nation and Greek Religion*). A division was made between the territories of domination of the two Eastern Churches: the Orthodox were given the Archimandery of Pechersk and dioceses of Lviv, Lutsk, and Przemyśl in the Crown, and Mstsislaw in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

In this way the Orthodox hierarchy was officially recognized. The Uniates were to have seven dioceses, the Disuniates five, in three cases (including the metropolitanate) there were to be two hierarchies. According to the *Points*, the Disuniates were granted the right to celebrate services, build churches, organize brotherhoods and seminaries, and to have schools and printing shops. These concessions to the Disuniates did not win the approval of the papacy, despite the efforts of Jerzy Ossoliński, an envoy of the Commonwealth to Rome (1633) – and only a temporary suspension of a negative opinion of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. Even so, the Sejm of 1635 adopted a constitution called *The Greek Religion*, which confirmed the previous decisions.

Most unfortunate was the king's negative reaction to the action initiated by the Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev Peter Mogila. It consisted in founding Latin schools and printing shops; its success could contribute to levelling cultural differences between the Uniates and Disuniates. In this case, Wladislaus gave in to pressure of Jesuits who wanted to keep their monopoly on teaching in the Eastern territories of the Commonwealth and forbade the Metropolitan to establish new Latin schools and ordered to liquidate the already established.

What was indeed constructive, however, was the attempt taken up in 1635 by Volhynian Voivode Adam Sanguszko to convene a council of both Eastern Churches, in order to unite them and to create a separate autocephalous patriarchate in the

Commonwealth – supported by the king (1638, 1645 and 1648). But Pope Urban VIII refused to give consent to a common council. It was a fatal mistake of the papacy, and the Commonwealth suffered its consequences during the Khmelnytsky Uprising.

An attitude of King Wladislaus towards religious matters was mainly of a political character. A tolerant stance towards the Orthodox Church during his reign contrasts with his acceptance of biased sentences of the Sejm for Arians and the Reformed, inspired by the most influential politician in the Commonwealth – Chancellor J. Ossoliński.

Under the pretext of an alleged profanation of the cross by the students of the Unitarian Academy at Raków, on April 19th, 1638 a sentence was passed by the Sejm commission (with an open violation of rights of Raków's owner, J. Sieniński), ordering to liquidate the Academy and printing shop at Raków – one of the most excellent centres of sciences in the Commonwealth.

Religious policy of Wladislaus IV was inconsistent – as testified by his attitude towards tumults in towns. The king reacted sharply to the Raków affair, but when at the same time the students of Jesuit Academy in Vilnius attacked a funeral procession of meritorious Vilnius mayor Jacob Gibel and profaned his corpse, he rejected a demand of Lithuanian deputies to establish a commission to investigate the matter. In the following year (1638) he fiercely condemned the destruction of a Protestant church in Polotsk, ordering to investigate the case and to punish the guilty. That the king's stance towards tumults was opportunistic is evidenced also by an openly biased sentence of the Sejm court in the case of anti-Protestant riot in Vilnius in October 1639, during which (under the pretext of a sacrilegious shooting at the images of angels at the church of the Bernardine nuns in the vicinity of a Reformed church) the mob of Catholic students and plebeians – clearly inspired by Catholic priests and with the participation of some of them (the Jesuit seminarists and priests from the university church of St. John) attacked the Protestant church, hospital, and school. Several persons were killed and injured. And despite the fact that the commission was unable to prove the responsibility of Protestant ministers and inhabitants of the buildings for the shooting at angels or (even less so) for killing the victims – the Sejm court sentenced the ministers to death and the church to be moved outside the city walls “for all eternity” – which meant, in fact, that it was outlawed and exposed to attacks.

The wave of religious tumults and conflicts in the 1630s, in which the attackers were of the confession of the majority in the given town (for example, in Toruń, where in 1637 it was Catholics who were attacked) indicated that the personal tolerant attitude of the king deviated from a tendency to orthodoxy, growing in all the religious communities. Thus, in the last years of Wladislaus IV there was an obvious need for the king to undertake actions on behalf of a concord of religions – to maintain the religious peace, in accordance with the king's oath, the guarantees of equal rights of the nobility in the Warsaw Confederation, and the provisions of the Henrician Articles.

3.5. An Attempt at Conciliation – *Colloquium Charitativum* (1645)

The last attempt at conciliation of the Christian confessions (Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran) was made during the so-called *Colloquium Charitativum* (charitable conversation or colloquy) in 1645 on the initiative of King Wladislaus IV; it concerned the revived ecumenical tendencies in Western Europe during the second stage of the Thirty Years' War.

The humanistic ecumenism, exposing the unity of the Christian doctrine resulting from the universal nature of Christ's teachings, was represented mainly by the members of intellectual elites that were often unwelcome in their native countries – the exiles with a tendency to non-conformism and non-denominational Christianity (like, for example, the Polish Brethren in exile).

Political ecumenism – striving towards religious peace as an element of state peace without a deepened doctrinal reflection, represented by secular politicians – could be reconciled with confessionalization understood as the introduction of one official religion with the freedom of private worship for members of other confessions.

To this trend were related the so-called colloquies – conversations of the representatives of competing confessions which were to lead to a compromise – called on the initiative of political leaders in Regensburg (1601), Neuburg (1605), Dort (1618), of the representatives of Lutherans and Calvinists of the German Reich (1631). All these colloquies ended in failure due to the impossibility of overcoming dogmatic differences between the Christian confessions, which protected their individuality developed at the first stage of the confessionalization process. Similar was the ending of the *Colloquium Charitativum* at Toruń (from August to November 1645), with the participation of lay delegates (in the name of the king: Grand Chancellor of the Crown Jerzy Ossoliński and Gniezno Castellan Jan Leszczyński, while Lutherans were represented by Starosta of Sztum Zygmunt Guldenstern, and the Reformed by Castellan of Chełm Zbigniew Gorayski; six secretaries – two representing each of the confessions; eight representatives of the Prussian cities: Gdańsk, Toruń, and Elbląg) and theologians (25 representing the Catholic party, 28 the Lutherans, and 24 Reformed ones).

An invitation to the *colloquium* was a total surprise for the non-Catholic denominations, which had not renewed unity for 50 years (from the General Synod of Toruń in 1595). It was not preceded by preliminary preparations, which could bring the Reformed nearer to Lutherans and help them develop a mutual front towards Catholicism, while Calvinists and Bohemian Brethren reached an agreement (April 1645 at Leszno) and acted in Toruń as a *pars reformata*.

The colloquy in Toruń, according to the king's instruction, was to proceed in three stages (*actiones*):

1. An investigation into the teaching of each party.
2. A reflection upon the truth of preached teaching.
3. A discussion about contentious issues.

The way in which the discussion was conducted was to express the feelings of brotherly love, with no violent language, insults, and taunts. Most important problems were to be presented in writing before the discussion to a royal legate and six deputies (two representing each of the party) in order to clear out sensitive issues and wordings. Each of the confessions had to elect two theologians who would represent it during a public debate; those representatives were obliged to limit their comments only to the points agreed upon before the debate. There was a ban on all information about the debate prior to a formal election of the president of the *colloquium* who had to be approved by the royal legate. It was J. Ossoliński, one of the leading representatives of new Catholics, who was elected president, and this contributed greatly to the fiasco of the conversation, while the president of the Catholic theologians, the Bishop of Vilnius Jerzy Tyszkiewicz tried to soothe tensions and enjoyed a great respect of non-Catholics.

The debate was inaugurated (on August 28th) by solemn mass and services of each of the religion celebrated separately, and ended officially during the 35th session (November 18th) with a total failure. The first part of the debate, conducted by non-Catholics in separate groups, was in fact a comparison of individual professions of faith and exchange of reciprocal conditions, charges and accusations of heresy. And although J. Ossoliński left Toruń already before the first public session (September 25th), his way of presiding over the debate (among other things a refusal to write down in the minutes of the debate any expressions inconsistent with the post-Tridentine orthodoxy) led to such a accumulation of tensions that any agreement in the second stage of the debate, presided over by Castellan of Gniezno J. Leszczyński, proved to be impossible. It was impossible even to sign the shared minutes of the debate, and accounts of the debate (printed separately by each of the party) are selective and unreliable.

The main cause of the failure of the *Colloquium Charitativum* consisted in dogmatic differences between the confessions, strengthened in the course of 50 years of confessionalization. The only lasting effect of ecumenical attempts was the fact that during the *colloquium* Confession of Sandomierz was once again solemnly sworn in by both Calvinists and Bohemian Brethren. King Wladislaus IV himself ceased to engage in the Toruń *colloquium* as soon as January 1645 when (after his proposal of mediation between the participants of the Thirty Years' War was rejected) it turned out that the debate would not bring about political and prestigious benefits for which he hoped.

3.6. Anti-Arian Decrees

In the Commonwealth of Both Nations the identification of Catholicism with the state was made easier by the fact that in the 16th and the 17th centuries Poles only once fought with the Catholic army (of Archduke Maximilian Habsburg, at Byczyna in 1588), and as the only threat, real or imaginary, to the state that they regarded as "heretic" Sweden, "pagan" Turkey, and "schismatic" Muscovy. As a result, there developed in their political thinking the complex of besieged fortress, that is, an

identification of struggle for the country with the defence of Catholic faith. In the internal policy “heretics” – identified more with Lutheran burghers than with Reformed nobility – and the “schismatics” began to be regarded as internal enemies who wanted to lead to religious wars and to the collapse of the Commonwealth.

Prophecies delivered from the 16th century on by the Catholic preachers on “heretical treason” (for example, Piotr Skarga’s *Sejm Sermons* published in 1597) were confirmed during the Deluge, giving the pretext to crush down dissidents. Anti-dissident restrictions began with the Polish Brethren, who were arousing aversion also of other Protestants by denying the dogma of the Trinity essential for all Christian confessions. In 1658 Arians were given two years and were ordered to convert to Catholicism or leave the Commonwealth and have their estates confiscated. In 1660 a large part of them – mainly clergymen – left the Commonwealth and settled in Eastern Prussia (among other places, at Kosinów and Rudówka, leased from the elector by Zbigniew Morsztyn), in Silesia (at Kluczbork), and in Transylvania (Kološvar). Those crypto-Arians who stayed in Poland were concentrated mainly in Cracow Voivodship, probably around an underground church at Jankówka (at Seweryn Morsztyn’s).

The consequences of the anti-Arian decrees turned out to be paradoxical. As much as a Pole-Catholic became in the European culture an element of folklore, the Arian emigration through its monumental publication *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum* (Amsterdam, 1668–1692) had a powerful impact on the creation of modern concepts of state. The authors of concepts of the law of nations and liberalism, Hugo Grotius and John Locke, were undoubtedly influenced by the Unitarian ideology: religious rationalism – the trust in the reason as a tool to study the faith and humanism – the understanding of a man as a member of the whole human society, undivided by state borders, and pacifism – negating war as a method of solving conflicts.

Anti-Arian decrees in the Commonwealth (1658–1661) were the culmination of the process of religious unification in the Commonwealth, similar to changes in other European states the monarchs of which applied the rule *cuius regio eius religio*: both in Protestant (Anglican England, Lutheran Denmark, and Sweden) and Catholic ones. In the Empire, on February 1st, 1650 a decree was issued ordering all those who would not convert in six weeks to leave the Kingdom of Bohemia; despite a certain legal protection of Lutherans in the provisions of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), by 1653 around 656 churches were closed and 500 pastors expelled. After the Thirty Years’ War, Silesia underwent forced re-Catholization imposed by the Habsburgs. Under the edict of 1629 all churches taken away from Catholics after 1552 were to be returned to them, and Lutheran pastors were forced to emigrate. The ultimate blow was dealt to Protestants by the so-called reduction of churches in 1653–1654.

Anti-dissident legislation of the Sejm of the Commonwealth referred not to theological argumentation but to secular one. The principle of collective responsibility of the whole congregation was applied (totally contradictory to Jesus’ teaching) for treason of the homeland by an individual, and at the same time moral relativism – there was no mention of the treachery of Catholic nobility who in the first stage of the Swedish invasion went over to the side of Charles Gustav. After the banishment

of Arians (1658) Catholics were prohibited, under the penalty of death, to abandon their confession (1668).

In 1670 the Arian register was enlarged to include Jewish profaners and Protestant converts; finally, in 1726, it included all religious cases (apostasy, judaism, atheism, heresy, sacrilege). It was mainly Protestant ministers who were prosecuted in the court trials. In 1687 the Tribunal in Lublin sentenced a minister Stanisław Mikołajewski for celebrating a service at Łuczanie near Lublin (outside the area of old Protestant churches), which set the precedent for similar trials in 1687, 1689, and 1696. In 1700 the Tribunal prohibited a repair of the building of a private Protestant church at Malice, which became an introduction to a general ban on all repairs of Protestant churches without the consent of the nearest Catholic bishop, of 1717. In 1748–1750 it was very common to bring before bishop's courts ministers for baptizing children from mixed marriages.

But all the same, there were no such violent persecutions in Poland like, for instance, in France after Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes (1685). None of the Arians hiding in the Commonwealth after 1660 was executed after being sentenced to death, as was stipulated by the Sejm decision. Quite numerous trials *ex regestro arianismi* led to the confiscation of the possessions and to banishment (if the sentenced did not want to convert to Catholicism). From among the Catholic nobility only Kazimierz Łyszczyński was executed for his alleged, or real, atheism (1689).

3.7. Limitation of Public Rights of Dissidents

In 1668, a confederation that formed at the Convocation Sejm for fear of abandoning the union by the inhabitants of the eastern lands of the Commonwealth issued a ban on dissenting from Catholic confession (in both Roman and Greek rite), used also as a weapon against Protestant clergy, who could be accused of proselytism. At the same Sejm another restriction was introduced to the right of worship of the non-Catholic nobility at the royal court and that participating in the Sejm session in Warsaw; in 1669 a principle *Rex Catholicus Esto* was accepted, that excluded from the Polish throne not only foreign Protestant princes but also noble non-Catholic citizens of the Commonwealth. In 1673 the Pacification Sejm made dependent granting of *indygenat* to Protestant officers on their conversion to Catholicism.

Gradually, the right to be a deputy was limited to Catholics only – first in Smolensk Voivodeship, where the Catholic nobility (originating from the Crown) forced King Wladislaus IV to issue a privilege granting them the exclusive right to serve as deputies (1641). After 1658 Arians were forbidden to perform public functions, including the membership in the Sejm. By the end of 1660s, an attack against the Reformed was launched, with the use of a conflict between the Pacs and Radziwiłłs over the domination in Lithuania. Fighting took particularly sharp form in Samogitia, where the local bishop Kazimierz Pac already in 1668 began a broad action of non-admission of Calvinists to the functions of deputies, under the threat of anathema. But the action failed, and a wave of religious hatred incited by the Pacs subsided under King Jan III and hegemony of the Sapiehas, who willingly used the

services of Calvinists. Only the next crisis of the state during the civil war of the so-called republicans with the Sapiiehas, when Lutheran Sweden and Saxony and Orthodox Russia interfered into internal affairs of the Commonwealth aroused another wave of xenophobia against non-Catholics.

3.8. Situation of Protestants in the Wettin Times

During the personal union of Saxony and the Commonwealth, after the conversion of Augustus II (who reigned as Frederick Augustus I in Saxony) to Catholicism, an ambiguous situation arose, influencing the religious policy of the Wettins in the Commonwealth. As Saxon electors, they were Imperial Vicars and chief directors (protectors) of Lutheranism in the territory of the German Reich. A personal conversion of Augustus II in 1697 changed nothing in this regard, for at the same time he guaranteed to the Saxon estates all former prerogatives of the Lutheran Church as the state church in Saxony. Moreover, when in 1712 also the heir to the throne converted to Catholicism, the Saxon estates decided in 1717 that they would accept only Lutherans. Fearing the increased re-Catholicization after the union with the Commonwealth the Lutheran Church in Saxony supported the opposition against Augustus II in the electorate.

In the Commonwealth under the Wettins, the presence of Lutheran troops and advisors of Augustus II increased the xenophobia and tendency to use Catholicism as a defence shield against those who wanted to alter state-Church relations. It was perceived as justified because of the fact that influential politicians in the entourage of the king, for example, Jan Jerzy Przebendowski (a convert from Lutheranism to Catholicism) promoted the policy of subordinating Churches to the superior interest of the state, taxing clergy and favouring tolerance of dissidents. The dissident cause was more and more often the pretext to an intervention of other states into the internal relations of the Commonwealth, starting from the Eternal Peace Treaty (or *Pokój Grzymułtowski*) of 1686 (ratified in 1710), point 9 of which pertained to the rights of the tsar to the protection of the Orthodox in Poland and Lithuania. The Polish-Swedish treatises of 1705, between the representatives of Charles XII and the delegates of the nobility supporting Stanisław Leszczyński, the Swedish party demanded that the provisions of the Warsaw Confederation should be abided by, dissidents should be given back their churches seized by Catholics after 1660, Lutherans should be admitted to the Senate, and precedent sentences of the Tribunal cancelled, Protestant education restored, and the privileges of Lutherans in Royal Prussia observed. In response, the anti-Swedish Warsaw General Council (Polish: *Walna Rada Warszawska*) of the Sandomierz Confederation abrogated those points in 1710 and condemned all actions “harmful to Catholicism” (building new Protestant churches), which was ratified in the treatises between the members of the Confederation and representatives of Augustus II in 1716.

The constitutions of the Silent Sejm of 1717 included a ban on confirming by a chancellery seal royal grants and appointments to dissidents, the permit allowing the destruction of all Protestant churches built after the Constitution of 1674, and

a ban on services outside old churches. In 1733 the Convocation Sejm prohibited active participation of non-Catholics in the sessions of the Sejm, tribunals of the Crown and Lithuania, and the treasury ones (it did not forbid the election to those functions but performing them!), holding of dignitaries, titular voivodship and land offices, functions in the borough offices and courts (but not of senatorial dignitaries – it was regarded as obvious that they were inaccessible to dissidents). After that time, non-Catholics had the right only to hold officer ranks and starostwa niegrodowe (except when competing with a Catholic). In 1736 the Pacification Sejm made reinstated the anti-dissident constitutions of 1717 and 1733. This legal conditions lasted for 36 years – to 1768.

Anti-dissident legislation of the Commonwealth was nearly a hundred years delayed, compared to the confessionalization of Western European countries, where similar acts ceased to be issued in Catholic countries in the mid-17th century, and in Protestant states, England and Scotland, Catholics gained full political rights only in the 19th century. In the Polish-Lithuanian State, a demonstration of Catholic orthodoxy by the central institutions of the state – the king and the Sejm – risked undermining the ties with the provinces dominated by non-Catholics (Courland, Belarus, Ukraine), or those where Lutherans and Calvinists still played an important part (Royal Prussia, western Great Poland). An open conflict with the centre erupted in relation with the so-called Toruń affair of 1724 (Tumult of Toruń), when the responsibility for the attack against a Catholic procession was blamed not only on the direct perpetrators but also on the local authorities of this one of the most powerful cities of the Commonwealth. All protests of England, Prussia, and Russia defending the inhabitants of Toruń were ignored. The mayor of the city, Johann Gottfried Rösner and nine other Lutherans were executed.

On the international arena, the tumult affair, called also Blood-Bath of Toruń or Bloody Court of Toruń (German: *Thorner Blutgericht*), was cynically used by enemies of the Commonwealth as an example of Catholic lack of tolerance, religious fanaticism, Polish xenophobia and backwardness. All this was used by real supporters of tolerance, especially Voltaire, as the pretext to launch an attack against the Church and Catholicism. The Catholic side did not stay passive. A classic example of religious triumphalism characterizing Polish Catholicism of that time are the 18th-century anti-heretical publications: of Maciej Ancuta, *Prawa powszechnie przeciw wykladowi praw dysydenckich (Universal Rights against An Exposition of Dissident Rights, 1767)*, *Prawo zupełne wiary katolickiej (Complete Right of Catholic Faith, 1767)* and of Józef Andrzej Załuski, *Dwa Miecze Katolickiey, w Krolestwie Orthodoxeyskim Odsieczy, przeciwko natarczywym PP. Dyssydentow Polskich zamachom (Two Swords of Catholic Retaliation against Unrelenting Attacks of Polish Dissidents in the Orthodox Catholic Kingdom, 1731)*. The latter work, as indicated in its subtitle, includes: “a specification of all factions, machinations, tumults, seditions, revolts, interferences, treacheries, and other criminal actions, at various times, especially *sub interregnis*, committed by Polish heretics” – a concise lecture on the Polish history from the perspective of Catholic orthodoxy, with a total disrespect for facts. A conclusive argument of the author against dissidents was the fact that they informed

public opinion of Europe about the wrongs they had suffered in order to gain the support of Protestant rulers. Thus, a correspondence with foreign countries in itself was treated as a political crime, and dissidents – as wayward sons of the homeland.

3.9. Dissident Cause under King Stanisław August Poniatowski

In the 1750s, when the community of dissidents was sparse but influential (in towns and cities of Royal Prussia, at the Saxon court with the support of Heinrich von Brühl), a new generation entered the public life – a not numerous, but influential elite. It had some features atypical for the Polish nobility: better than standard education (often of cameralist type), knowledge of foreign languages, broad international contacts and relation to fellow believers abroad – among others with the nobility of Livonia and Courland, who in the 1730s–1750s pursued careers in Russia. An alliance between Saxony and Russia strengthened those contacts.

Main representatives of this community in the Crown were families of Calvinist nobility (of Goltzs, Bronikowskis, Grabowskis) from northern-western Great Poland. The outbreak of the Seven Years' War 1756–1763 cut them off from their traditional Prussian protection and fated towards Russia. When Augustus III's health began to deteriorate, the dissident community began preparations for the interregnum during which they wanted to once more make an attempt at regaining political rights for Protestant nobility. There were three possibilities considered for the period of interregnum: cooperation with Saxony, Prussian candidacy or Russian candidacy. The Saxon ambassador to Berlin, Jerzy Wilhelm Goltz, sought to win the support of Prussia, being fully aware that it would be necessary to pay for it with territorial loses. This does not mean that dissidents wanted to buy political rights with territorial concessions (particularly when it was not they who administered the territory!), but they had no reservations about profiting from the horse-trading between stronger political factions.

After King Augustus III's death it became evident that the conditions of the future election would be dictated by Russia – Frederick II made no bones about ceding the Commonwealth as a Russian sphere of influence. Dissident community toyed with the idea of supporting the Russian option – but the *Familia* did not see any interest in concessions for dissidents and thus there was no alliance made. In 1762–1763 a part of dissidents, faithful to the Saxon option, began to get closer to the hetman party, and Saxon Elector Frederick Christian issued a safe-conduct for dissidents, guaranteeing them the restoration of rights in exchange for their support during the election – of course, unrealized (like the safe-conducts of Augustus III in 1733 and of Jan Casimir – the so-called script *ad archivum* of 1648).

The Convocation Sejm (May 7th–June 23rd, 1764) became a symbol of failure of the attempts at agreement with the *Familia*: not only did Protestant gain no concessions, but they were also excluded from *starostwa niegrodowe*. It stemmed more from the aversion to the dissident elite who grew fat under the Saxon kings than from religious considerations. As a result, dissidents threatened not only by the loss of their political rights but also of their fortunes made, through their Russian

contacts, a successful attempt to force an open Russian intervention in the Commonwealth. Herman Karl von Keyserlingk and Nicholas Reprin, whose instructions for the anticipated election included *pro forma* a defence of rights both of Orthodox believers and dissidents, were ordered to put more emphasis on those demands.

The Election Sejm in September of 1764 was aware of this threat. Stanisław August Poniatowski in his *pacta conventa* promised to dissidents some legal protection, there was no open withdrawal from the decision of the Convocation Sejm, but *de facto* (through the change in the wording) the risk of their execution became unrealistic. In the meantime, dissident envoys were working intensely in Petersburg. Catherine II, after realizing that the decisions of the Election Sejm were unfavourable to Russia, backed up the project of dissidents. At the Coronation Sejm (December 3rd–20th, 1764) Reprin put forward a demand that political rights of dissidents be restored, which was rejected by “yelling noblemen” due to a skilful manipulation of the Czartoryskis. This was a rock of offence for Catherine II, and the dissident cause became the main point of Polish-Russian relations.

After a failed attempt of the Czartoryskis to reach an agreement with Catherine II in the early 1766, Russians, backed up by Prussians, gave the Sejm an ultimatum: either a full subjection to Russia and pro-dissident legislation – which implied a discredit to the king and the Czartoryskis in the eyes of noble opinion, or restoration to good graces of the former Saxon party, the so-called republicans – on the condition of the support for dissidents’ demands. In both cases dissidents were a subject of political manipulation, used to discredit the political “allies” – whereas not so long ago they had enjoyed a position of independent (albeit small) party. This meant the end of illusions of the dissident party: in return for the role of political hostage of Russia (securing the stabilization in the Commonwealth) they expected at least some concrete benefits. Hence the increased demands of dissidents who in 1766 wanted to enjoy full political rights, to have an access to the Sejm, Senate, ministerial offices, parity in the elections to the Sejm and in vacancies to senatorial offices, as well as the withdrawal from the project of removing them from the offices of *starosta niegrodowy*.

Since the king rejected all those demands, at the 1766 Sejm the convocation confederation of the Czartoryskis was dissolved, and Nikita Panin unsuccessfully tried once more to force the restoration of dissidents’ rights with their help, and again the following year, 1767, this time without their participation. In the face of failure of those machinations, new Russian troops entered the Commonwealth and a plan of dissident confederation was implemented. Initially, three confederations were planned: Protestant, of Prussia and Great Poland at Toruń, joint Orthodox and Protestant at Slutsk, and Calvinist at Sandomierz, which came to nothing; instead, the Toruń confederation was joined by the Prussian nobility, and the Protestant nobility from Samogitia convened a confederation at Biržai, but little is known about it. In actual fact, both dissident confederations operated under the protection of Russian troops and with Russian money. When, after H. K. von Keyserlingk’s death Russians realized that it would be impossible for them to achieve their end: to eliminate reformatory plans of the king, through dissidents only, in the summer

of 1767 they backed up the ultra-Catholic confederation of Radom. This caused an understandable consternation in the dissident community, despite Russia's assurances of support.

The terrorized "Repnin" Sejm (October 5th, 1767– March 5th, 1768) ratified the so-called Warsaw Treaty with Russia: dissidents had their political rights restored and reserved seats in the Sejm, and in all cases between dissidents and Catholics a mixed judicature was introduced. But the Sejm did not re-establish the possibility of promotion for dissidents to ministerial offices and the ban on conversion was not lifted, which was a rock of offence for dissidents.

The Warsaw Treaty was used by Warsaw Calvinists and Lutherans as an impulse to form a Union of Sielec (1777) with the Unity of Little Poland. In the act of the union, Sandomierz Agreement of 1570 was confirmed and renewed "for all eternity." Church organization was reordered by establishing a six-man consistory, which was made-up of representatives of both confessions from each estate (including burghers). Union of Sielec was of purely administrative nature, it did not deal with doctrinal issues and religious practices. Yet, as in the case of Sandomierz Agreement, the Union of Sielec failed to come into effect, because it was faced with fierce opposition on the part of Lutherans from Great Poland. During the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the common Church organization survived only 5 years (1777–1782). Still, it was a proof that among Polish Protestants ecumenical tendencies were alive and well and that each confession was able to adjust its matters without fear of the state's interference.⁹³

After the Bar Confederation was formed on February 29th, 1768, dissidents became a target of aggressive attacks and robberies by both the confederates and Russians. At the partition Sejm convened under the staff of Adam Poniński (April, 16th, 1773 – April, 11th 1775) they had their rights guaranteed, but at the same time politically limited (without the parity of representation in the Sejm), the ban on conversion was upheld, and *iudicium mixtum* was abandoned. It was the last stage of the dissidents' cause as a separate subject of internal policy of the Commonwealth.

3.10. Enlightened Catholicism

The Catholic Church in the Commonwealth changed together with the educational reform introduced by the Commission of National Education and dissemination of the Enlightenment ideas. In order to understand the heart of the Polish and Lithuanian Enlightenment one needs to realize that a new education system was formed mainly by clergymen and dignitaries of the Church (Ignacy Massalski, Michał Ponia-towski). They took their models from the German Enlightenment – which contrary to the French Enlightenment sought to introduce sweeping reforms in many spheres of Church life: theology and its teaching, pastoral work, people's education, charity

93 See, J. Gryniakow, *Ekumeniczne dążenia protestantyzmu polskiego od traktatu warszawskiego 1767/68 do II wojny światowej*, Warsaw, 1972, pp. 19–20.

works. Pastoral letters of German and Austrian bishops (such as a circular letter of the Archbishop of Salzburg Hieronymus von Colloredo of 1782) rebuked the excessive form of the Marian cult, number of processions and fraternities disorganizing the parish life. In Poland the Church authorities prohibited (referring directly to Austrian examples), for example, public whipping practiced by some of the brotherhoods on the occasion of the Passion services, and Primate Michał Poniatowski called this custom (1786) a “repulsive rather than encouraging true piety.” Attempts were made to limit excessive forms of popular devotion (nativity and Passion plays, staging of Holy Sepulchres) on behalf of the authentic pastoral work and missions among people. At the same time, a broad educational and charitable action was conducted among peasants (the Brotherhoods of Charity in 1784–1786).

Enlightened clergy was regarded by a majority of Polish advocates of the so-called enlightenment of people as their main ally, and seldom the term *Enlightenment* was used in an anticlerical sense. There were some exceptions, though, such as the Bishop of Warmia, Ignacy Krasicki, who in his mock-heroic poem *Monachomachia (The War of Monks, 1778)* scoffed at ignorant and dissolute monks, and Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, a dramatist and journalist from a Polonized French family, who on the occasion of the debate on taxation of the clergy at the beginning of the Four-Year Sejm accused churchmen of wanting to turn off the light of reason among the people: “for it is much easier to subjugate the unenlightened,” and of using superstitions to accumulate wealth and privileges. At the same time, the Enlightenment (by default: of God) was contrasted with “a trendy wisdom of the current time,” condemning atheism, deism, unbelief, godlessness, etc. Such was the interpretation of the term *Enlightenment* by the “Enlightened Piarist” Stanisław Konarski in his *O religii poczciwych ludzi (On the Religion of Good-Natured People, 1769)*, or by the “Enlightened Jesuit” Franciszek Bohomolec writing against witch trials in his *Odpowiedź na zarzuty względem przeznaczenia Boskiego (Responses to Accusations towards the God’s Destiny, 1766)*.

How bizarre ideological mixture was formed by the ideas of “Enlightened” Catholic clergy in the Commonwealth of the 1750s is exemplified by J.A. Załuski, a founder of the first public library in Poland, regarded as a precursor of the Enlightenment. It did not prevent him from being anti-Jewish, anti-schismatic, and anti-dissident. Regardless of their rationalism in public life, in the sphere of religion those people kept their Sarmatian outlook, and to regard them as the representatives of the second generation of the Enlightenment is premature, for they should be seen as the Sarmatian reformers.

Initially, it was difficult to instil the idea of fight against fanaticism in the Polish territories due to the dissident cause used by Russia and Prussia to interfere in internal matters of the Commonwealth. On the one hand, the diminution of traditional piety, characterizing also numerous prelates in wigs, contributed to the spread of tolerance and Free Masonry. On the other hand, however, the fight undertaken in the 1780s against intolerance was led by some ex-clergymen, like ex-Jesuit Piotr Świkowski, who in *Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny (Historical-Political Journal)* extolled reforms of Emperor Joseph II – the freedom of speech (in writing and

printing), secularization of religious orders, reforms of the Church structures in the name of *raison d'état* and welfare of the state.

Also in the Commonwealth, the Sejm in 1789 took the estates of the richest Bishopric of Cracow for the state treasury to increase the number of troops, and granted the bishop a fixed salary. On this occasion the term *Enlightenment* was used by both parties, and the fact that it was used by a leading ecclesiastical polemist, Canon Wojciech Skarszewski, gives the measure of secularization of the term during last fifty years, between the 1740s and 1790s. W. Skarszewski based his arguments on the denial that religion was the enemy of enlightened reason. He emphasized the achievements of the Catholic Church in the field of education, cultivation of sciences, and struggle against superstitions. In his political journalistic texts, *Prawdziwy stan duchowieństwa w Polsce* (*The Real State of the Clergy in Poland*, 1776) he accused the uncritical lovers of novelties of fanaticism and intolerance, and for this attitude he was finally rewarded with a bishopric.

3.11. Catholic Confessionalization

The Constitution of May 3, although it formally declared the freedom of religion, recognized the Roman Catholicism as the religion of the state. Moreover, it still regarded dissenting from it as the crime of apostasy. In specific provisions the throne and ministerial posts were reserved for Catholics, in order to win the support of noble opinion, but it should be remembered that it was a new generation of Catholics.

They had to cooperate in setting the rules of coexistence of the state and Church under the Partitions, when the collapse of the Commonwealth placed the Church *vis à vis* three absolutist centres of power of different religion. Under those circumstances the controversy between the Sarmatian and Enlightened Catholicism took on a different dimension: the heritage of traditional piety was to replace the lack of statehood, gaining a social protection as the essence of Polishness. An evolution of the Catholic Enlightenment continued unabated, but it was outside of the territories of the former Commonwealth.

Chapter Five

Economy

1. The Place of the Commonwealth within European Economy

According to Szymon Starowolski's appraisal:

Strengths of Poland, through abundance and nature, are such that are equalled only by few kingdoms in Europe and not exceeded; and if the order, which is the soul of things, were better in our country, we would undoubtedly surpass all nations of the West at once.⁹⁴

Unfortunately, during the period of elective kings this economic potential of the Commonwealth did not translate into real achievements. According to the majority of historians, this was the result of poor urbanization and anachronistic system of management together with the "passivity and narrow-mindedness in economic policy."⁹⁵

1.1. Economic Specificity of the Commonwealth

While the processes of economic modernization rapidly accelerated in Western Europe during the 15th–16th centuries, in the Commonwealth they were blocked by the domination of the folwark economy. Its introduction in the first half of the 16th century brought about an obvious if short-lived growth of social consumption, but at the end of the 18th century it became a main check on civilization progress. This was the result of economic policy stance concentrated mainly on the cultivation of grain, the export of which constituted merely several percent of the whole production, but at the same time determined the organization of landed estates and relationship between the Commonwealth and other European countries.

1.2. A division of Europe along the Line of the Elbe River?

According to the traditional historiography of European economy, from the early 16th century the social and economic transformations in Western and East-Central Europe began to move in two different directions. There was, on the one hand, the accelerated growth of urbanization, with an increased social mobility from rural

94 Szymon Starowolski, *Polska albo opisanie położenia Królestwa Polskiego*, trans. A. Piskadło, Cracow, 1976, p. 141.

95 Roman Rybarski, *Skarb i pieniądze za Jana Kazimierza, Michała Korybuta i Jana III*, Warsaw, 1939, p. 512.

to urban areas, and early capitalist forms of production beginning to emerge (the putting-out system), while on the other – the consolidation of the folwark economy, with the second enserfment of the peasantry and some remnants of feudal system. The division into two dominant types of rural economy – money-based market economy and folwark – has been interpreted as a civilization division between the “progressive” West and the “backward” East of the continent.

However, the grain cultivation was a main sector of the economy in the whole Europe in the pre-industrial era, for in the 16th–18th centuries 80 percent of European population still lived in the countryside. The re-feudalization processes occurred not only in the region of East-Central Europe but also (to various degrees) in the whole Europe, apart from England. In East-Central Europe, just like in France or Italy, beside the folwark economy there also functioned the commodity and monetary economy. The fact that the nobility of that region exploited to a larger extent the unpaid labour of peasants was a result of their exceptionally strong political position and a conscious choice of such a political system that would strengthen the position of those estates that settled the minimum level of corvée (in the Polish Kingdom it was settled in 1520, and in Hungary in 1548).

1.3. Economic Regions of the Commonwealth

It is obvious that the vast area of the Commonwealth was not economically uniform. Contemporary observers could easily see the differences in standards of management and in revenues of the owners in various parts of the country. The folwark economy dominated in those areas where the peasants had not been able to liberate themselves from serfdom, and towns were weaker: in the Crown – in Little Poland, Podgórze, and the southern part of Great Poland. The market economy, in turn, developed mainly in the region of Great Poland and Pomerania – with a strong position of the average nobility, hired labour and rent in agriculture, and a high level of urbanization and putting-out system of manufacturing – especially weaving, which was connected in the first half of the 18th century with the textile industry of Lower Silesia and Lubusz Land. Pomeranian towns and cities remained important trade centres. In Royal Prussia there dominated large manors of rich peasants (Polish: *gburzy*).

Also in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the incorporation of the economy into the Baltic trade led in the 16th century to a reform of agriculture, initiated in large estates of lay and ecclesiastical lords, and then in farms of *hospodars*. The *Volok Reform* (termed after the title of law, under which the reform was introduced: *Statute on Voloki*, of 1557) was initiated in the western part of Grand Duchy; in Ruthenian lands it was finalized only during the period of temporary stabilization of relations with Muscovy. It was accompanied by the introduction of the manorial system and the regular three-field system, as well as a precise measurement of lands and calculation of feudal peasant obligations – rent in money or in the form of labour services (*tiahlo*) of some of the peasants (*tiahli*).

Despite those reforms, folwark economy had not become the dominant form of organization of production there, and the payment of rent in kind still continued: in grain and hay (Polish *dziakło*, from Russian *dijakło*, and Lithuanian *doukle*), livestock and poultry, honey, beeswax, or even in valuable pelts from people living in forested areas. At the same time, the market economy developed – not only in magnate latifundia (for instance, in the estates of the Radziwiłłs of Birżai and Nesvizh but also in manor farms called folwarks (folwark was the estate or, in a narrower sense, the demesne under the lord's control) belonging to the nobility, and in some regions (Samogitia) in large farms of the peasants who paid rent to the landowners – the nobility and towns.

In Ukraine, the fertile soil yielded a large crop, but *folwarks* developed poorly due to the lack of ready market. Large estates neighboured with *khutors* of settlers from the Crown, encouraged by the magnate owners of desolate voids with the promises of many years of exemptions from all payments. Sparse farms were focused not only on the production of grain, but also on cattle breeding (mainly of oxen), fishery, and beekeeping. Intensive agriculture was pointless, for there was no market to sell grain, and the main sources of income for the lord were the right to distil alcoholic beverages called *propination* and various dues and rents paid by the peasants. The export of grain produced in the folwarks in the hinterlands of the Black Sea ports developed as late as at the end of the 18th century.

1.4. Economy of the Crown versus European Economy – Main Stages and Factors of Changes

There are four stages in the development of the early modern economy of the Commonwealth from the end of the 16th to the end of the 18th century:

1. The end of trade boom and the beginning of economic degression (the end of the 16th c. to the first half of the 17th c.).
2. The economic collapse after the massive wartime destructions, interrupted by short periods of economic recoveries (the second half of the 17th c. to the 1720s).
3. The economic stabilization of the Wettin period (the 1730s–1760s).
4. The system reforms under King Stanisław August Poniatowski (last thirty years of the 18th c.).

The successive stages of economic evolution were marked by negative phenomena, which afflicted also the countries of the West – such as the revolution of prices at the end of the 16th century and the global crisis of the mid-17th century, or especially Eastern Europe – such as the destruction and devastation left behind the wars of the early 17th and the early 18th centuries. The crisis phenomena, which in centralized monarchies could have been overcome or even used as stimulators of modernization, in the Commonwealth had a chronic character (monetary crisis, the decline of towns) and brought about an economic degression that lasted almost to the very end of the Commonwealth.

The weakness of the royal power and the lack of interest of the elective monarchs in economic problems resulted in the absence of consistent and comprehensive economic policy for two centuries. Economic doctrines imported from the West (mercantilism, cameralism, physiocracy) were interesting only for a small circle of educated burghers and magnates, and incidental attempts at their application did not bring any substantial results. Economic reforms included in the general reform of the political system of the Commonwealth were initiated too late – in the last thirty years of the existence of the state.

2. The Crisis of the 17th Century

At the beginning of the early modern period, the export of grain, meat, and forest products significantly changed the Commonwealth's balance of trade in its relations with the West. In place of the former adverse balance (an approximate ratio of import to export was 1:3) there appeared by the end of the 15th century the favourable balance of trade, which lasted until the 1620s (approximately 1:0.66). Money was flowing to the pockets of Gdańsk citizens and noble owners of folwarks, who used the money primarily for consumption. For this reason, the balance of trade with the East was still adverse, as the nobility paid for silk, spices, scents, and other luxury goods.

The actual producers of grain – the peasants – benefited from the trade boom only in a minimal degree. As the corvée developed, they had to limit their production, which, in turn, resulted in a shrinking local market. The development of cottage production and rural craft lowered the standards of craftsmanship and decreased trade between the land and the city, reducing the significance of the latter. As a result of the strong interconnections of the grain trade with the West, the Commonwealth experienced the effects of price changes in the European market, too. Both the increasing and decreasing prices induced the owners of folwarks to increase the land under cultivation, while the possibilities of changing the assortment of production from the perspective of existing or expected price changes were more and more limited.

2.1. Monetary Crisis

The economic development of central lands of the Commonwealth lasted probably to the end of the 16th century, and was followed by the initial symptoms of economic depression, which coincided with specific monetary problems. In large-scale commerce large silver thalers and gold ducats were used, minted in the Polish as well as the German, French, and Netherlandish mints. There were coins with different content of precious metal and thus of various exchange rate, and this was precisely what allowed the moneychangers to gain profit from the exchange of money. French Louis d'or, Spanish reales, Portugal pistoles, and even the Turkish coins flowed in through the whole 16th century, when the balance of trade was active (although with a downward trend). However, already in the 16th century a favourable economic

situation began to change, when the European economy felt the effects of the inflow of silver from South America and the drop of the value of silver coin in relation to the gold coin. In the first half of the 17th century, the disturbances of monetary relations and trade were amplified by the Thirty Years' War, which is why the majority of European countries had been plunged into the monetary crisis.

In the Commonwealth it caused in the 17th century at least a four-fold decrease in the value of Polish silver currency – *zloty* – in relation to the base currency – the so-called *red zloty* or florin (30 groschen) – and the fall in the real value of small coins, most often used in internal trade – a silver groschen and its varieties, called *szóstak*, *trojak*, and *ort*. While after the monetary union of the Crown and Prussia (1528) a content of precious metal in a groschen coin was set at 0.894 g, during the following century it dropped to 0.270 g.

This sudden devaluation of Polish currency was ascribed to the abuses of leaseholders of mints and attempts were made to counteract it by forcing King Sigismund III to relinquish his monopoly over the coinage (1632). Indeed, from the early 17th century the successive kings tried to increase the revenues from mints by minting coins of small denomination from a poorer ore – *ort* (under King Sigismund III worth 18 groschen, under King Władysław IV – 16 groschen). However, the genesis of the crisis was an adverse balance of the foreign trade in which the money from the export of farm products did not cover the costs of import of craft products, and an adverse for the Commonwealth ratio of gold prices to silver prices in the European market of precious metals. The adverse balance of foreign trade in the 17th century prevented prices of precious ores from rising, while at the same time nominal prices increased sharply.

Polish economists of the first half of the 17th century (with a few exceptions) expected that the Sejm ban on minting small coinage and official reduction of price of large coins would automatically improve the relationship between groschen and large thalers and ducats, and fill the state treasury at the expense of the king's income and dishonest profits of mint leaseholders. In fact, the relinquishment by Sigismund III of his monopoly over the coinage did not stop the production of bad coins under his successors, initiated by the constitution of 1659 ordering a mass minting of cheaper copper coins to pay the army (the so-called *boratynki* – from the name of Tito Livio Burattini, a mint leaseholder). In 1663 another mint leaseholder Andreas Tümpe (or Tympe, Tymf, Tymph) was authorized to mint one-zloty coins as half-silver and half-copper coins (called *tymphs*). A number of mints increased after Gdańsk and Toruń enforced their right to mint coinage, while Elbląg usurped that right. In the mid-17th century, when the state mints were closed as a consequence of wars, the towns' mints filled in a gap in the circulation of money by minting small coins. At the same time, the Commonwealth was flooded by poor coins minted in Silesia and Moravia (in a large part produced from old Polish coins, which were bought out and transported abroad to be melted down), and in the Netherlands where a poorer variety of thalers was coined (called in Polish *lewkowe*, from the Dutch *løvendalers*) especially for the Baltic trade.

The noblemen tried to defend themselves against the effects of monetary crisis fatal for them by imposing administratively convenient prices, which from the 16th century were set by voivodes. Yet the tax bases and price lists were ineffective. There was a justified fear that a unanimous action of merchants and craftsmen forcing low prices of agricultural products in local markets could impose high prices of handicraft goods – like, for example, in Gdańsk market, as a result of conspiracy of great importers of grain against its producers. But it was an unusual situation, since in a majority of towns the craftsmen were unable to unite in order to defend their interests – separate groups of them, associated in guilds, continued to fight against each other. Merchants, in turn, sought to avoid the monetary accounting by using the bills of exchange.

2.2. Global Crisis of the 17th Century

In the 17th century a great diversity of the economic growth rate, regress, and stagnation were occurring not only in individual countries but also in the scale of the whole European continent – especially in the second half of the 17th century, but probably also in the first half of the following century. The causes for unfavourable economic and social phenomena, defined in the literature on the subject as a global crisis (Eric John Hobsbawm) or regress (Andrzej Wyczański) of the 17th century were various and exceeded far beyond the borders of the Commonwealth.

The first half of the 17th century saw a stabilization of prices for agricultural products (in Europe ca. 1620, in Poland a bit earlier), then (till the mid-18th c.) even the fall of prices, which had an impact on the whole export-oriented region of the Vistula basin. At the same time, the demand for Polish grain was decreasing under the competition of Russian grain and the growing agricultural production of Western Europe countries, mainly England. Adverse effects of the folwark system were becoming increasingly more obvious, including sterilization of soil, which was exploited extensively through the use of the three-field system and rarely fertilized. Crop and livestock production further decreased after the deterioration of climatic conditions – a sudden fall of temperature. As a result, the agricultural productivity – both in peasant farms and manors – dropped from five grains grown from one grain sown in the 14th century to four grains in the first half of the 17th century. And although the export of Polish grain to Gdańsk did not slow down to the mid-17th century, it was the effect, not of increased productivity, but of an increased range of lands included into the orbit of the grain floated to Gdańsk by the Vistula and limited grain consumption. The agricultural regress in the Polish lands became more and more evident already before the wars of the 17th century.

Adverse changes were taking place not only in the economy but also in other spheres of social life. Increased area of land belonging to folwarks at the expense of peasant farms and increased burden of corvée labour with a simultaneous decrease of labour force due to outbursts of plague and escapes of peasants led to a gradual impoverishment of the people. This impeded the development of towns through a limited demand of peasant farms for handicraft goods and articles of better quality.

In some regions (Little Poland) a number of manors belonging to middle nobility decreased, as they were bought out by magnates – which raised protests at *sejmiks*. However, one should be careful not to overestimate the economic effects of this phenomenon, for the production of small landowners was not large, and after they got declassed, they moved to towns and enlarged the group of consumers.

Negative effects of an agricultural monoculture and one-sided foreign trade were further deepened by huge devastations of the 17th-century wars, mainly the Second Northern War (1655–1660), when the population of the Crown dropped by almost fifty percent – especially in Gdańsk Pomerania, Masovia, and Podlasie. The lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – mainly Belarus – experienced a planned action of robberies of possessions and deportations of people (mainly craftsmen) during the Muscovite occupation in 1655–1667. It has been estimated that, as a result of the wars of the mid-17th century, ca. 10 % to 30 % of villages in the Commonwealth ceased to exist, while the loss of population and farms was even greater. The population decrease affected mainly urban areas. In Masovia and Great Poland the urban population decreased by ca. 70 %, while ca. 85 % of buildings were destroyed. The weakened economy was further hit by requisitions and contributions, destroyed crops, burned down villages and towns. Wars were accompanied by famines, pestilences and epidemics.

Even though the political and economic crisis of the mid-17th century encompassed the whole Europe, the centralized monarchies of the majority of Western states overcame it victoriously. In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, however, it was accompanied by the decentralization of power. Not only did the wars fail to weaken the folwark system of the Commonwealth, but they actually helped to strengthen it. On the international scale, the rapid demographic growth in the countries that consumed all their agricultural production (Austria, France, Bavaria), together with the development of capitalist economy increasing the need for food and raw materials in England and in the Netherlands, created in the second half of the 17th century the factors leading to the preservation of the Polish monoculture of grain.

2.3. Mercantilism

A consequence of the political system and socio-economic structure of the Commonwealth – if only because of the customs privileges of the nobility – was the lack of understanding for mercantilism, an economic doctrine developed in the 17th century in the centralized states of Western Europe, mainly in France. These states sought to achieve national income growth through the promotion of foreign trade and the branches of production that ensured favourable balance of trade. To that end, the internal custom duties were removed and the communication networks extended. In foreign trade, the system of custom duties calculated to bring immediate financial profits was replaced with protective tariffs, conducive to the growth of the state income. The development of arms production and army was propagated as a measure of the state power and a means of forcing its commercial interests. In the

Commonwealth, however, the influences of mercantilism were virtually limited to theoretical reflections on the benefits of the development of towns and craftsmanship, on the one hand, and, on the other, to the demands to restrict the consumption of luxury goods and the import of expensive cloth, spices or other foreign luxuries.

2.3.1. *The Commonwealth's Economists in the Face of the Monetary Crisis*

In the early modern period (like in the Middle Ages) there were two competing monetary doctrines: 1. nominalism – according to which the value of money could be altered arbitrarily by decrees of the rulers; 2. substantialism – associating the value of a coin with the metal of which it is minted. The precursors of economics in the Commonwealth: Stanisław Cikowski, Wojciech Gostkowski or Stanisław Zaremba, wrote in the midst of the monetary crisis. Focusing on monetary policy and adverse for the noble trade relationship between prices of agriculture products and handicraft goods, they represented nominalistic opinions and formulated postulates, which were both naive and unrealistic, such as settling the wage claims of the army through the devaluation of coin, reducing import through common saving up and self-limitation of consumption of luxuries. Also among the nobility, the conviction prevailed – so glaringly contradictory to the mercantilist protectionism – that through the elimination of domestic merchants from the participation in foreign trade it would be possible to attract foreign merchants and gain more profitable prices. From among the authors writing on the economy of the Crown only Jan Grodwagner, probably originating from Royal Prussia, thought that merchants were a useful group of professionals and that the appropriate means of overcoming the crisis was not so much to defend the interests of consumers as to increase the export production.

Similar was the situation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where the nominalistic approach to the monetary question prevailed until the end of the 17th century. It was presented by, among others, the graduate of the University of Tübingen and the Academic Gymnasium in Gdańsk [German: *Akademisches Gymnasium Danzig*], a Reformed Evangelical pastor and professor of the academy at Biržai Adam Razjusz (Rassius, Rasch) in his treatise *Tractatus politico-irudicus de nobilitate et mercatura* (Wittenberg, 1624) – although, at the same time, he sought to defend the dignity of the profession of merchant – and by the lecturers and graduates of Vilnius Academy, for example Michał Majgis in his *Tezy etyczne-polityczne* (*Ethico-Political Theses*, Vilnius, 1690).

Opinions similar to that of mercantilism and substantialistic approach could be found in 17th-century Lithuania in communities directly involved in the production of goods and commerce. Already at the end of the 16th century interesting arguments for free prices were put forward (according to Tadeusz Czacki) by Voivode of Smoleńsk Jan Abramowicz in his text entitled *Zdanie Litwina o kupczy taniej zboża a drogiej sprzedaży* (*Opinion of a Lithuanian on Cheaper Purchase of Grain and Expensive Sale*, 1595). For him, a “natural price” was the price developed in

the free market (without monopolies) and even despite a plentiful supply of goods their price could not drop below the costs of their production. Thus, he was against the state interventions into the market, regulations of prices, and bans on taking money abroad propagated by mercantilists, for according to him they impeded the development of commerce.

Like in the Crown, the Lithuanian “mercantilists” reduced economic problems to the fact that good money was flowing out of the country replaced by poor coins, which led to the increase of prices. Such approach is evident in, for example, the complaint of burghers from Vilnius about the increase of prices of produces and a good coin caused by the corruption of the coin (1621). In the time of King Władysław IV, when the mint in Vilnius was not working, its manager Johann Trilner demanded that new coins be minted in the Commonwealth with such a precious metal content that it would be unprofitable to take it abroad, and at the same time profitable to use it for domestic transactions.

2.3.2. *Solutions to the Crisis*

In the Polish literature on economy from the end of the 16th and the 17th century, the idea of overseas colonization propagated in the West was replaced by the project of military settlement in Ukraine. According to that project, the settlement was a means for populating the void borderland territories, protecting the frontiers and, at the same time, solving the problem of population boom: Piotr Grabowski, *Polska Nizna albo Osada Polska (Lower Poland or Polish Settlement, 1596)*; Szymon Starowolski, *Reformacja obyczajów polskich (Reformation of Polish Customs, 1650)*.

More innovative were the economic projects proposed by senators and political activists. The most famous Polish mercantilist text by Voivode of Poznań Krzysztof Opaliński: *O sposobach pomnożenia miast i na nierząd w nich (On the Means of Increasing and Developing Towns and on their Bad Management, 1648)*, promoted the restoration of importance of towns and the burgher estate through promoting domestic crafts with simultaneous restrictions on import and bans on importation of raw materials (wool and linen), without protective tariffs.

In the second half of the 17th century the Voivode of Podolia Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro (*Militarium seu axiomatum belli ad harmoniam togae accommodatorum libri duo, 1668*) propagated – more strongly than his predecessors – the state interventionism in crafts, commerce, and transportations, conducted by a special body of councillors subordinated to the king. He also emphasized the necessity to improve the tax system and to introduce the state trade in grain that would make it possible to prevent famine and gain the highest prices in the future. In the mid-18th century a mercantilist programme of protection for domestic commerce and industry was proposed by the Voivode of Poznań Stefan Garczyński, *Anatomia Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Anatomy of the Polish Commonwealth, 1751; second edition published in 1753)*.

Because of poorly developed crafts and money turnover as well as monetary problems, the mercantilist postulates in the Commonwealth were unrealistic. In ad-

dition, sporadic economic initiatives of individual magnates (for example, Bogusław Radziwiłł's project of building arms manufacture near Slutsk, of 1670) and the modernization of managements of their latifundia in the absolutist spirit, which transformed them into states within the state, further disrupted the economic system and decentralized the domestic market.

3. Commerce

3.1. Organization of Commerce and Banking

The basic tools for serving trade and banking operations: accountancy, forms of companies, bills of exchange, etc., were adopted in the Commonwealth and other countries of East-Central Europe from the West (from the Hanseatic League, Antwerp, Prague, Nuremberg). Instruments of commercial exchange, developed for centuries in great centres of Rhineland and the Netherlands: currency exchange, credit, banks, international fairs – connected all the countries of the continent.

During the 16th to the 17th centuries great merchants turned into entrepreneurs (also in the Commonwealth). As the methods of accounting developed, bigger merchant firms began to employ qualified and skilled scribes and accountants. The system of payment processing was likewise evolving. Besides the older forms of direct exchange of goods for other goods, money or precious metal, there appeared new forms of credit: a system of bills of exchange and payment by transfers, and a new way of recording loans, namely, the books of account. Transactions were increasingly based on written contracts. The companies of merchant families consigning goods and operating through their representatives in various towns of Europe, were replaced with great commercial and banking houses, which were involved together in banking, charging interest and other financial activities throughout the whole Europe.

At the same time, however, in the Commonwealth of the second half of the 16th century loans were being made by Gdańsk bankers secured on future crops. First banking houses – offering credits to merchants and noblemen, transferring money abroad and financing various enterprises of the Polish royal court – were most often established by merchants. In the 16th–17th centuries the most important for cash management in the Crown were banking houses in Cracow, Szczecin (German: Stettin), Gdańsk, Toruń and Wrocław, and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – in Vilnius, Riga and Königsberg.

A specific charitable institution of credit were banks of the pious called mounts of piety (*montes pietatis*), established on the initiative of the Catholic clergy or Brotherhoods of Mercy with a view of protecting poor persons from usurers by short-term loans at low rates secured upon their movables; if the borrowers were unable to return the loan, their objects left in pawn were sold out. The first *mons pietatis* in the Commonwealth was established by Piotr Skarga in 1579 in Cracow, which was followed by other ones established between the 1580s and the first decade of the 17th century in bigger royal and private towns (Vilnius, Cracow, Warsaw, Poznań,

Pułtusk, Łowicz, Lviv and Zamość). Organized forms of lending money included only a small part of the inhabitants of the Commonwealth, and a large majority of them fell victim to usury – loans given illicitly (charging exorbitant or unconscionable interest rates) by private individuals or institutions with a capital (Catholic orders, Jewish communities).

3.2. Place of the Commonwealth within European Trade

The Commonwealth was situated away from centres of the most intense European trade (the Netherlands and Upper Germany, together with the Rhine axis connecting them, and Central and Northern Italy). Still, it could have played an important role in transit trade between Western Europe and Muscovy and countries of the Orient. In the 16th century the whole Vistula basin participated in the mass exchange with foreign countries which included mainly grain and semi-finished forest products. They were delivered to the Baltic ports both by owners of large estates – with a regular contracting party in Prussian towns and possibilities to store their grains in wait for better prices, and by average and petty nobility – who transported their grain to Gdańsk only after an abundant harvest.

In the heyday of the international trade at the turn of the 17th century over three hundred types of various commodities were passing through customs houses on the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian state. It is estimated that in the territories of the Commonwealth around 150.000 to 200.000 people were employed in the great international trade (including merchants and various traders, transport supervisors, agents, coachmen, carriers, rafters, floaters, dockers, herdsman and sailors), that is ca. 2 % of all inhabitants.

3.3. Commercial Specificity of the Provinces and Regions

The development of grain trade was accompanied by an increasing importance of the Vistula River and its tributaries (San, Bug, Western Dvina, Neman, Noteć), which were used to transport 90 % of exported grain. The areas outside the range of the Vistula transportation networked to the long-distance trade in other ways.

Little Poland and Ruthenian lands in the southeast region participated in the international exchange through the export of oxen, which were driven via Little Poland and Silesia to Thuringia and (to a lesser extent) via Masovia to Prussia. The economy of huge latifundia in Volhynia and Ukraine was shaped by cattle breeding. Lead was exported to Hungary and iron to Silesia; the latter was further processed abroad.

In Great Poland – alongside the Vistula River – at the end of the 16th century a rafting route on the Oder and Warta Rivers to Szczecin was developed. And although the Oder route did not play as important a role in the economy as the Vistula one, it was not without a political significance – it connected through economic interests the northern-eastern part of Great Poland with Brandenburg and brought its nobility into the orbit of the Hohenzollerns' influence. A relationship with the

two markets: of Gdańsk and Wrocław, brought about better conditions for the development of towns than in other parts of the Commonwealth (except for Prussia and Pomerania). While the grain trade with Gdańsk was totally controlled by the nobility, an important role in trade with Silesia, Bohemia, Hungary, Turkey, and the Danubian Principalities was played by burghers.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th century an importance was acquired by transit trade of pelts, furs, cloth, and metal goods in which the main part was played by (after the loss of Smolensk in 1514) Polotsk and Mogilev – associated with the market of Muscovy, Livonia, Prussia, and the Crown. The exchange of forest products from the forested areas of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian countries still continued, but great estates in the basins of Neman and Western Dvina organized also to the end of the 16th century floatings of grain, linen, hemp, and ash via Riga and Königsberg. In the areas involved in the trade with Riga also the peasant renters – that is, peasants paying rents, and not serfs like in the Crown – were implicated in the economy and production.

3.4. Fairs and Contracts

A new form of trade in mass commodities were fairs at which imported and exported goods were bartered. In the Crown a special role was played by fairs at Lublin, Gdańsk, Poznań, Gniezno, Warsaw, Jarosław, Kazimierz, Krzepice, Łowicz and in the borderlands: at Brzeg in Lower Silesia, and in Leipzig in Saxony; in Lithuania at Vilnius, and in Belarus at Grodno and Brest. The development of fairs led to a new credit-based exchange – the best known examples of which were periodical assemblies of the nobility, that is, the so-called contracts (after 1630) – most often taking place in January (with the exception of Poznań contracts, which began on the day of St. John – on the 24th of June) and lasted for two–three weeks, usually at the same time as fairs. Acts of transactions were registered in municipal books. Contracts first appeared in the second half of the 16th century in Poznań, and then in the first half of the 17th century in Cracow and Lviv; they were not used in Pomerania and Masovia. Fairs and contracts, related to seasonal agricultural cycle of production, became important dates in both domestic and international trade, and the participation of native and foreign merchants as well as the nobility offered the possibility of economic confrontation.

In the 16th–17th-century Commonwealth trade was the most important factor of modernization: it was bringing about social transformations and changes in the economic structure of a province, revived routes and peripheral places, and forced changes in the forms of accumulation of money, assortment of commodities and means of transport. But its structure, oriented towards the export of raw materials in exchange of industrial products, had fatal results: the collapse of domestic market, weakness of the burgher estate, and atrophy of domestic industry.

4. Transportation

In the 16th to the 18th centuries there still existed three main forms of transport of commodities, which were: 1) floated and transported by water (on floats, boats and ships); 2) transported by land on carts or pack animals (horses and oxen), 3) and cattle driving. Costs of water transportation were much lower than of transport by land, they amounted to ca. 40–60 %, and with longer distances to 80 % of all commercial expenses. But not all goods could be transported by water (for example, great herds of oxen), and not always did the network of land routes suit the needs of trade – for instance, furs from Lithuania and Russia were transported either by water to the Baltic ports or by land (or by sledge, which was the cheapest form during the winter) directly to ready markets in Saxony and Thuringia.

4.1. Land Transport

A characteristic feature of early modern land transportation was its high costs and small quantities of transported commodities. Transport of mass goods (such as grain or timber) over a distance longer than 50 km was unprofitable; under the most favourable conditions the transport of grain by merchants did not exceed 100 km. The nobility, who were using unpaid transport services by serfs (an obligation to provide transport called *podwoda*), occasionally sent their carts with grain for a distance of over 150 km. For longer distances, it was profitable to transport only expensive goods in great demand on the market – which justified the fact that folwark and latifundial economy was oriented to provide maximum self-sufficiency. A bad condition of Polish land routes in the 16th to the 18th centuries had its root not only in the weakness of the central power and insignificant role of merchant capital but also in the fact that the nobility preferred water transportation and driving their cattle over road transport.

In the 16th to the 17th centuries the improvement of trade techniques made it possible for merchants to be absent during transportation of their goods as they could arrange to have their commodities looked after by professional carriers – coachmen organized in guilds, often specializing in the transportation of special kind of goods over regular routes. The most common means of transport was a heavy four-wheeled cart or wagon, with a movable fore-carriage to facilitate steering, and with the wheels set at an angle to make it more stable on a deeply rutted track or road. From the 16th century on, carts were made of crates hanging on chains both in passenger transport and transport of commodities over longer distances, and from the 17th century on, vehicles were fitted with springs. In the Crown, carts were usually driven by horses; in the eastern parts of the Commonwealth dominated slow but less expensive oxen. An average load capacity of peasant cart driven by two horses is estimated for the 16th century at 600–650 kg; of merchant wagon driven by four horses – even at over one ton.

4.2. Waterways

Ships to transport goods by water and floats were usually built by serfs in those estates that used waterways to float local timber. The biggest river ships were barges (with a deadweight capacity to 120 tons), which in the first half of the 17th century made up ca. 65 % of all the Vistula ships in its lower course; there was another type of Vistula ship commonly used, smaller than a barge, called *dubas* (from 40 to 50 tons, that is, 20–25 *laszts*; one *laszt* = ca. 2 tons, or, more precisely, 3000–3840 litres [dm³] of grain), and a smaller mastless *komięga*, propelled by towing. There were also auxiliary vessels: *byk* (a flat-bottomed ferryboat to carry salt), and mastless *galar* and *lichtan*, helping with unloading – unable to ascend the river against the current, and usually sold for wood after arriving at the destination port.

The crew of a river vessel was made up of floaters called *flisacy* or *oryle*, whose number has been estimated at 5–28 thousand people organized in guilds existing in all major towns associated with the Vistula transport route. They created their own subculture, and to go “to float” was not only one of the duties of serfs but also one of their possibilities of escaping, similar to that of moving to the Cossacks’ territory. In the 16th century a group of specialized cargo rafting organizers was formed, called *frochtarz*. Boats or groups of boats were commanded by skippers. Boat traffic density depended on the season of the year; it was at its highest in the spring (“after the first big water”) and in August and September (immediately after the harvest); the lowest was during the intensification of field works (May–August), with a total break when rivers were frozen in the winter (December–February).

The nobility, economically dependent on transport by waterways, did not see the need to improve its technical conditions. Their care for the navigability of rivers was reduced to passing sejm constitutions (in practice not observed) that required removing all the obstacles hampering navigation on rivers (weirs, causeways, mills). There were also minimal expenditures for river dredging and engineering, no one had a duty to clear waterways and only in 1764 the Crown Treasury Commission decided to care for the navigability of main waterways in the Commonwealth. Before the second half of the 18th century (in 1494) only one short canal was built connecting Elbląg with the Nogat (a delta branch of the Vistula); in the 16th and 17th centuries the fork of Nogat and Leniwka was regulated several times. It was not until the times of King Stanisław August Poniatowski that investments were being made to provide convenient routes with the Black Sea.

4.3. Sea Transport

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had no state merchant fleet, and the sea transport was in a minimal way operated by domestic carriers. In the 16th century only Gdańsk and Elbląg had a merchant fleet of several dozen of ships (with a load capacity up to 100–300 tons), but in the first half of the 17th century they turned to profits from acting as agents in the grain trade between the nobility and foreign merchants, and the Baltic transport got dominated by Dutchmen and Englishmen.

It was caused by cheaper transportation (lower freights, cheaper crew), increased navigational and exploitative capability (ships were faster and larger), and Dutch capitals penetrating into Gdańsk commercial companies. Boats of Gdańsk and Elbląg were used mainly by local merchants. Decreasing export sales resulted in the increased number of the Gdańsk fleet (from the mid-17th century) and the Elbląg fleet (in the second half of the 18th century).

There were also changes in the organization of sea transport. By the end of the 17th century it was dominated by partnership companies of merchants and ship-owners, and a high risk of shipping damage forced them to divide the goods of one merchant among several vessels in the hope that some of them would reach their destination safely. The costs of shipbuilding were shared by several people and profits were divided accordingly to their share. A captain (skipper) – most often a member of the company – was responsible for the organization of transport and sale of his shipload. However, the 18th century saw the emergence of individual shipping companies and skipper became a hired employee only.

5. Agriculture

A noble folwark – that is, the lord's estate or demesne – had on average around 150–200 acres (60–80 hectares) of arable land. It was divided into a residential part, with the lord's manor house (called in Polish *dwór wielki*), and homestead buildings, called *dworzyszcze*, with a house for an overseer and living quarters for household servants. The servants were responsible for various areas of the farm. The most important was livestock: cattle (barn), handled by women with a female overseer called *dworniczka*, pigs (under the supervision of male *rykun* or female *rykunia*) and fishponds – natural or artificial ones.

The agricultural productivity of folwark in the second half of the 16th century has been assessed at approximately 7–9 quintals of rye and wheat per hectare, 8–9 quintals of barley, 5–7 quintals of oat, and the sum of disposable income totalled between 175–385 Polish zlotys per year, because his board and lodging as well as fuel the nobleman had from his own folwark. The share in the grain market depended on the area and category of ownership: while in the mid-16th century grain was supplied to internal and external markets not only by noble folwarks but also by peasant farms (ca. 2/3 of arable land). In the second half of the 17th and in the 18th century approximately 70 % of agricultural export production derived from the folwarks of great landowners.

5.1. Farming Methods and Tools

In the 16th to the 17th centuries there were no important changes either in production techniques or farming system. The three-field system continued to prevail, with a plough in the Crown as a basic agricultural tool, and an ard (or scratch plough) in Lithuania, combining the characteristics of a plough and colter, which after the Union came to the Lublin region, then eastern areas of Podlasie and Masovia. But

in the remaining lands of the Crown an ard did not play a significant role, and was superseded by a plough in the Ruthenian lands of the Commonwealth, just as the fixed payments were superseded by the corvée duties imported from the Crown: better tools and techniques of farming were replaced by worse ones.

In the rural household of the 16th–17th-century Commonwealth the consumption of iron – regarded at the time as a criterion of technical progress – was very slight in the production of both agricultural tools and household utensils. The low state of civilization was strongly related to a limited range of monetary economy; the progress of material culture depended on the development of barter and the existence of surplus of money, making it possible to resign from home production of tools, furniture, and clothes for one's own use.

5.2. Stages of Transformation of Manorial Economy in the 16th–17th Centuries

Activity of the nobility in the 16th century was multidirectional: new villages were located, breeding and fisheries were developed; besides crop and livestock production there were also breweries, sawmills, grain and weaving mills established; the exploitation of forests was rationalized. Also the peasants in the second half of the 16th century were still selling their surplus of grain, while buying tools and clothes for relatively cheap prices; it was also worth for them to broaden the acreage and employ the workers necessary to work in their own farms and to fulfil their corvée duties. In time, however, it was farms of peasants that began to bear costs of the monetary crisis and of wars the burdens of which fell especially on royal villages, sparing a little villages belonging to the nobility and the Church. It has been estimated that the grain production dropped to ca. 30 percent of its level from before the Deluge, cattle breeding – to ca. 80 % of its pre-war level. Substantial losses in buildings, farming tools and means of transport made it impossible to reconstruct the pre-war production. Land lay fallow, getting overgrown with bushes; there were no people, livestock, horses, and fields remained uncultivated due to the lack of yokes.

Post-war reconstruction began under the economic supremacy of the nobility over the peasants, and the magnates over the nobility. The noblemen were interested mainly in their own business, which is why the folwark's assistance to the peasants was insufficient, and the labour shortage made the lords extend the unpaid labour obligations of their serfs (at the end of the 17th century it was five days, and in the 18th century even 12 days a week from one *lan*). Compulsory service for the folwark was more and more common. The loss of livestock by peasant farms forced the folwarks to lend them yokes and other tools of the trade (known as *zaloga*), which deepened the dependence of the village on the manor. The area of land used by peasants was increasingly smaller as they were driven out from their farms. The search for new sources of income contributed to the development of folwark monopolies, such as the *propination* and milling monopoly (milling of corn in a mill belonging to the lord). Those were the dominant tendencies, although in some territories (e.g. in Great Poland) the reconstruction of economy brought about the

abolishment of *corvée*, introduction of monetary rents, limitation of the areas of impoverished folwarks and colonization activity.

Wars deepened the one-sidedness of farming, now almost exclusively based on grain. Corn growing was dominated by rye (ca. 35–60 percent of arable land) and winter wheat, and the development of brewing was accompanied by an increasingly important role of barley and hops. Much less significant were pea, then horse bean, tare, and lentil.

The decline of agriculture included all spheres of production. The three-field system was replaced by even more extensive methods (ploughing in narrow beds); in the peasant yoke more important than in the 16th century became oxen. The crop yield dropped to ca. three grains by the end of the 17th century, which together with the reduction of arable lands led to the fall of consumption. The peasants' burden of working on the lord's fields with their own yokes made it more difficult for them to breed cattle.

A difficult situation of peasant economy in the 17th and 18th centuries resulted in further stratification of rural population, while at the same time in the territories of more developed commodity economy some more affluent peasants were getting richer (in Great Poland and Pomerania). Those phenomena were quite natural; they accompanied the process of transition of the country to the market economy throughout the whole Europe. But what was specific for the Commonwealth was the stagnation of peasant economy that helped to maintain a large portion of the population at the lowest level of vegetation.

6. Horticulture and Fruit Farming

The 16th century brought about a special progress in the cultivation of plants for food. Owing to influences of the royal court, some new vegetables were introduced to vegetable gardens of the nobility, the so-called *włoszczyzna*, which literally means “Italian stuff” (and which in contemporary Polish refers to soup vegetables): leek, celeriac, cauliflower, kohlrabi, savoy cabbage, artichoke, lettuce, dill, and in the early 17th century melon and asparagus. Usually, both noble folwarks and peasant farms had their vegetable gardens and orchards. Vegetables and fruits cultivated in folwarks were mainly for the use of the owner and his family, and only a small portion was produced for sale. There was no strict division between grain and vegetable growing – often in gardens grain was cultivated (e.g. barley), while some garden plants (cabbage or pea) were grown in the fields. Parsnip was cultivated both in the fields and gardens, like some oil plants: rape, poppy, linen, hemp, and vegetables. There were also monocrop gardens (hop gardens) and herbal gardens.

In the 17th century gardening became a fashionable pastime of European aristocracy and then Polish and Lithuanian magnates who followed their example. A specific feature of gardens at noble residences in the Commonwealth was that until the end of the 17th century the renaissance tradition was preserved to combine useful plants with ornamental ones (Polish-Italian gardens). Besides flower beds and herbs also fruit trees were planted: apple trees, cherry trees, plum trees, pear trees,

walnut trees, and also peach trees, hazelnut trees, apricot trees, currant bushes and gooseberry bushes. The fashion of importing plants and rare flowers from beyond the sea reached the Commonwealth already in the 16th century – mainly tulips, which in the Netherlands at the turn of the 17th century became widely sought after as articles of desire, exchange, and speculation (tulipomania). Also potato was introduced as a garden plant – sporadically as early as the first half of the 17th century (for example, in the gardens of the Kiszka magnate family in Vilnius in 1620, as “American tuber”), becoming common in the 18th century.

7. Animal Husbandry

Breeding in the noble economy was regarded as a supplement of farming because of the yoke and manure; only in those territories that were not directly involved in the export of grain it played a more important role. In folwarks most important was horned cattle, while in peasant farms – beasts of burden (oxen and horses) and pigs. Sheep farming was developed as a result of an growing demand for wool from cloth manufactures of Great Poland and Silesia. Sheep grazing on fallow lands were raised mainly in folwarks of the southern and western areas of Great Poland, but also by farmers in Pogórze (settlers from Wallachia), where flocks of sheep grazing on fields compensated partly for the lack of fertilizer and improved the yield. From the mid-17th century sheep farming became widespread also in Masovia, Podlasie, Lublin region, in the Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Lithuanian lands. Great herds of oxen were farmed in the Ruthenian lands rich in forage (Ukraine, Podolia, Volhynia), and then driven via Little Poland to the markets of Silesia and Saxony.

Specific branch of animal farming that combined economic importance with entertainment was the breeding of saddle horses, cultivated by the nobility. It flourished especially in stud farms of Lithuanian and Ukrainian magnates who were amateurs of horses and equestrian experts. The first theoretical treatise devoted to the breeding of these animals was written by Lithuanian Court Marshal Krzysztof Dorohostajski *Hippica, to jest o koniach księgi* (*Hippica, or books on horses*, 1603). Most common were light horses of oriental breeds (Turkish or Persian), but occasionally there were also breeds from the West (in the 16th c. Neapolitan or Spanish horses). In the 17th and 18th centuries a new horse breed was developed called Polish (mainly in Ukrainian stud farms), based mainly on genetic materials brought from the Muslim East. In the 18th and early 19th century a significant part of horses for cavalry troops of the neighbouring countries (e. g. of Prussia) was purchased in the Commonwealth. The 16th century saw an especially significant increase in the population of draught horses, which subsequently dropped until the latter half of the 18th century. By the end of the century horses made up ca. 40 percent of draught animals in the Commonwealth. In the eastern, central, and southern territories small peasant horses prevailed, combining strength and endurance; in the western lands – a heavy draught horse (the Mecklenburg breed).

8. Forestry

The management of forested borderlands of strategic importance was regulated by the Sejm constitutions of the 16th and the 17th centuries, together with letters of the kings (Sigismund Augustus and Stephen Bathory) that forbade destroying starostas' forests. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania licences were introduced that regulated the rights of peasants, burghers, and nobles to cut down trees, hunt, keep beehives, fish in forest rivers and lakes, graze livestock on forest herbage and in woodland meadows, mow grass – more and more restricted from the second half of the 16th century.

In the 17th century both in private and royal lands special fees were introduced for using forests by craftsmen (shoemakers, tanners, wood-tar makers, coopers, cartwrights, charcoal, and ash makers), and in the 18th century the peasants were totally excluded from the right to commercial exploitation of forests, although they retained a limited right to the free use of forests for building and fuel purposes. In the 17th to the 18th centuries the exploitation of forests for commercial ends was monopolized by the court, which secured its rights through the development of forest guard (foresters, various forest officers, gamekeepers).

Until the early 18th century nothing was done to replace lost forests by planting and to reduce damages to tree stands caused by predatory exploitation of forests. What denuded the forests on floatable rivers was that large quantities of timber were felled and used to build vessels for the grain trade. Commercial entrepreneurs (usually merchants from Gdańsk) were granted unlimited rights to fell trees, cut and process timber in selected forest complexes on the basis of lease contract, purchase agreement. Occasionally, semi-finished products were prepared by forest owners with the use of their serfs or hired hands (from the end of the 18th c. on).

8.1. Forest Protection

Problems of protection and preservation of forests began to appear in the second half of the 16th century in some textbooks (i.a. in Anzelm Gostomski's book on husbandry, *Gospodarstwo (Economy)*, 1588) and calendars, providing a basis of the knowledge about agriculture for the nobility. But first elements of rational management in agriculture were introduced in the first half of the 18th century by Saxon foresters, and in the second half of that century first independent forest administration centres were established in private estates (of Anna Jabłonowska, of the Radziwiłłs, of the Zamoyski Family Fee Tail) and crown lands (in the Koziernice Forest and Grodno Economy). The first to bring up the problem of protection of forests and their rational exploitation was Krzysztof Kluk, *Roślin potrzebnych utrzymanie (Cultivation of Needful Plants)*, 1777–1779).

8.2. Beekeeping

An important form of using forests was keeping of forest bees in the nests specially chiselled out in tree trunks, called *barć*. From the 1530s until the 18th century special ordinations were issued (gradually restricted) for private, magnate, and royal estates, which guaranteed beekeepers better fate than that of serfs, including their exemption from *corvée* labour in field, the right to hunt and to retain their traditional organization and customary laws (Krzysztof Niszczycki's *Prawo bartne (Beekeeping Law)* of 1559; Stanisław Skrodzki's *Porządek prawa bartnego (The Order of Beekeeping Law)* of 1616). Forest beekeeping supplied honey, used to produce a popular alcoholic beverage, and wax to make candles for churches. For this reason it was a respected profession, and apiaries and forest beehives were under special protection; the theft of bee swarm was punished by death.

An important place in the export of the Commonwealth was occupied by the export of wax, mainly from the primeval forests of Lithuania, but also from Little Poland and Masovia. Main centres of wax trade in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were Kaunas, Vilnius, Grodno, Slutsk and Minsk, and in the Crown – Lviv, Lublin and Warsaw; it was exported to Wrocław and Leipzig. In the 17th to the 18th centuries forest beekeeping was replaced by first primitive and inefficient apiaries – bees were kept in fixed-frame hives made of trunks of trees. A renewed, although short-lived popularity of beekeeping was brought about by a new colonization of huge forested areas in the 18th century (Kurpie, Białowieża, Augustów, Tuchola and Człuchów forests).

9. Fishing Industry

Fishing industry was a specialized branch of folwark production. A rational fishponds management was developed in the 16th century (together with the popularization of carp breeding) mainly in the lands of the Crown, of the Church (e. g. of Gniezno Archbishopric and Chapter) and of magnates; it was undertaken also by the average nobility, especially in Lithuania. Fishponds built in the 16th century were oriented mainly towards the domestic market, but smoked and salted fish were sold also abroad. Important for the development of fishing industry was a book by Olbrycht Strumieński entitled *O sprawie, sypaniu, wymierzaniu i rybieniu stawów (On Matter, Pouring, Dispensing, and Stocking of Fishponds, 1573)*. In the first half of the 17th century, the significance of fishponds decreased due to the impoverishment of the largest consumer of fish – burghers, and folwarks changing over to grain cultivation with a simultaneous negligence of other branches of agriculture. Fishing industry was finally ruined by wars of the 17th century; there was some progress in its restoration in the second half of the 18th century, but it did not regain the level of the 16th century to the end of the Commonwealth.

10. Crafts

10.1. Organization of Crafts and Technological Innovations

The development of folk economy had an impact also on the development of crafts in the 16th and first quarter of the 17th century. Initially, good economic conditions in agriculture and the increasing wealth of burghers and average nobility led to an increased demand for craftsmen's produce. This, in turn, induced technological progress – in mining and metals industry as well as in various other crafts: milling, tanning, paper, cloth and linen industry, and in metals crafts (at polishing shops, wires, and sheets manufactures). A water wheel was introduced and a spinning wheel with a treadle, which made it possible to rotate a spindle with one foot and to have both hands free to spin. There appeared also new techniques of trimming cloth (brought to Gdańsk by refugees from the Netherlands who were settling permanently here), tanning hides, and welding metals. There was an increased specialization and number of tools, especially in shops of founders manufacturing tin products of everyday use – mainly tableware, and of locksmiths, woodcarvers, goldsmiths and many other representatives of artistic crafts (e. g. craftsmen working in amber). A quality of products increased, and some workshops produced masterpieces of craftsmanship.

In the second half of the 16th – first half of the 17th century new guilds were founded and their number increased even in small cities and rural towns (from 500 to 1500 inhabitants). Specialization of production increased – tanning got divided into separate branches dealing with fine pelts (white tanning) and another one for tanning soft pelts (red tanning); shoemaking was divided into a branch making products of cordovan and of Morocco leather (saffian). Because guilds were also very specialized (for instance, the guild of black bread makers in Lviv), disputes often erupted over the range of activity between guilds and individual craftsmen of similar specializations.

10.2. Main Stages and Tendencies of Changes

In the 1620s–1640s crafts production got significantly eroded in a majority of towns of the Commonwealth. Customs policy of the nobility was conducive to the inflow of products of foreign crafts, and low prices of goods imposed by tax bases and price lists of voivodes did not include a majority of imported commodities.

Apart from the war destructions of the mid-17th century, the regress of urban craftsmanship was also caused by a policy of the aldermen of guilds who restricted the number of masters authorized to make independent production in order to maintain higher prices – contrary to the interests of apprentices and buyers. A gradual transformation of the guild aldermen into a closed group with hereditary membership led to the practice of apprentices leaving their masters and going to other towns or jurydykas (sing. jurydyka, which designates a settlement outside the walls of a royal town and independent of the municipal laws, but under the jurisdiction

of its secular or ecclesiastical owner) of the nobility or Church. Since all attempts to protect interests of masters by laws forbidding such practices turned out to be futile, municipal authorities were forced to legalize separate associations of apprentices which evolved from organizations formally subordinated to the aldermen into corporations defending interests of their members. Also a number of so-called *partacze* (workers from outside guilds, from Latin: *a parte paternitatis*, meaning “outside the guild”) continued to increase. In between the wars craftsmanship was gradually raised from the ruins, but usually not to the standards from the first half of the 16th century – with the exception of Gdańsk spared by wars and some other towns of the western part of Great Poland, where linen cloth making and weaving flourished, also owing to the inflow of Silesian weavers escaping atrocities of the Thirty Years’ War.

A renewed revival of urban crafts began already in the Saxon times, but the actual breakthrough took place in the last decades of the 18th century, when guild craftsmanship began to give way to developing manufacturing industry. A number of rural craftsmen, however, was still increasing; in Great Poland in the second half of the 18th century there were six craft workshops for each ten villages. This period of growth was stopped by the Partitions, which undermined the market relations that had been created for centuries between the provinces of the Commonwealth.

11. Industry

As regards industrial production, the Commonwealth was between highly developed regions of Lower Silesia, Moravia, Bohemia, Saxony, and of a part of Royal Prussia in the north – and extensively developed Belarus and Ukraine. Husbandry and agriculture dominated in all territories except for an industrial region of Gdańsk and its vicinity, associated with the trade of this city, and cloth and textile industrial centres of Great Poland and Little Poland around Biecz–Tarnów.

11.1. Cloth Manufacturing

In the 16th to the first half of the 17th centuries cloth making was developed mainly in the southern-western parts of Great Poland, where numerous towns (e. g. Wschowa [German: Fraustadt]) became important supply centres for the whole Commonwealth, including remote Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. The supply of raw materials, transport and sale of products were beyond the capabilities of guilds, which imposed a new form of organization of production – the putting-out system. And despite the fact that it did not take the form of distributed manufacturing yet, it contained several elements of the latter, such as the subordination of producers to their employees and the royal privileges restricting monopolies of guilds (domestic system).

11.2. Mining Industry

Quarrying ore mining was organized in the system of mining guilds, similar to those of craftsmen, and merchants. Low-grade bog ores were mined seasonally by open-pit methods, usually for local steel mills, which employed local serfs. Mines were shallow (20–25 meters) and fitted with simple tools and machines (ladders, winches, shovels).

Mining of building stones was more like earthworks rather than the actual art of mining. The growth of stone mining occurred in the 16th to the 17th centuries when residential and defence architecture flourished. From the end of the Middle Ages marble was mined near Cracow (Raclawice) and Kielce (Chęciny); sandstone in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains (Kunów, Wąchock, Szydłowiec) and in almost whole Subcarpathia (Polish: *Podkarpacie*); limestone in Cracow-Częstochowa Upland, in Sandomierz and Lublin provinces. Great quarries of Little Poland were organized like a manufacture employing both miners and stone-masons producing portals, tombstones, capitals, flagstones and other prefabricated elements, occasionally transported to very distant parts of the Commonwealth. From the second half of the 16th century in such a way operated the quarries at Pińczów, quarries of grey brown marble at Chęciny (ca. 1595) and of black one at Dębnik (ca. 1620), supplying the building materials for, among other things, sacred foundations of the royal court (St. Casimir Chapel in Vilnius).

Different in character was salt mining at Bochnia and Wieliczka, which from the very beginning were owned by the state. Both these salt mines (called Cracow salt mines) and so-called Ruthenian salt works, which extracted salt from salt-water springs and wells, belonged to the monarch, but the only Polish king who actually visited Wieliczka salt mine was King Henry of Valois. Salt mining and salt trade was a royal monopoly, leased out (first, hereditarily, then for life) as a privilege to extract or sell salt in a defined locality to private individuals, burghers, and noblemen. It was an extremely lucrative business – the lease of Cracow salt mines under King Sigismund III gave birth to the fortune of the Lubomirskis.

The highest level of technology and specialization was achieved by ore mining. Lead and silver ores, which were usually found together, were mined in Upper Silesia (Bytom and Tarnowskie Góry), in Little Poland (Olkusz, Trzebinia, Sławków), in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains (Miedziana Góra, Chęciny, Łagów). Gold until the end of the 17th century was mined at Złoty Stok near Kłodzko, and to a lesser extent in the Tatra Mountains. From the 15th century on, deposits of copper ores were mined at the foot of the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, and from the 16th century in the vicinity of Złotoryja, Lwówek Śląski, and Legnica. Some written sources mention also mining of nickel ores in the 16th to the 18th centuries at Szklary Śląskie, of tin ore near Lwówek Śląski, and of barite at Boguszów; in the 18th century, an arsenic mine was built at Złoty Stok (which operated until 1962), where some gold was being extracted as a by-product. In the 17th century, however, the mining of precious metal ore began to decrease in Poland and in Silesian territories neighbouring the Crown. The exploitation of silver and lead mines at Olkusz was very limited after

the accessible deposits of ores got exhausted and due to the difficulties in draining; in the 18th century the mines of valuable metals in the Tatra Mountains ceased to operate. Mines in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains operated until ca. 1830. In 1784, under King Stanisław August, a special Mining Commission was established, headed by the Bishop of Płock Krzysztof Szembek, subsidized by the State Treasury. However, mining enterprises (at Miedziana Góra, marble quarry at Dębnik, or hard coal mine at Szczakowa) and attempts to revive the Olkusz mines as well as to find new deposits of salt were loss-making.

11.3. Metallurgy

Ironworks were to be found mainly in the region of Silesia–Częstochowa and in the so-called Old Polish Industrial Region; they produced chiefly for a rural clientele (farming tools) and the army. An important role in the development of metallurgical plants, based on new principles of technology and organization, was played by public contracts. At the turn of the 17th century first blast furnaces for smelting iron were built (in plants of the Cacci family at Bobrza, Samsonów and in the neighbourhood; of Great Crown Marshal Mikołaj Wolski at Panki and Łaziec), which were several times more productive than primitive smelting furnaces.

12. Economic Changes in the 18th Century

12.1. Recession of the Second Half of the 17th – Early 18th Century

The second half of the 17th century and the early 18th century brought about a sharp recession in mining and metallurgical industries. All effects of technological modernization initiated at the turn of the 17th century were lost. Rights and privileges of industrial entrepreneurs were often taken over by the nobility, while the craftsmen found employment in great landed estates. Worse still – due to the drastically shrunk market and the lack of capital – there were no conditions to rebuild the industry. Pauperization of the countryside decreased the demand for craft and industrial products – especially when their prices were inflated due to problems with transport. A poor demand for craft goods of folwark villages was compensated for by a craft production at manors.

Those adverse economic conditions of the second half of the 17th century were still worsened by damages of the Great Northern War (1701–1710) and pestilence. It is probable that the decline of foreign trade, further crisis of towns, and the shrinking of peasant economy were presumably worse than the destructions caused by the Swedish wars. Chaos on the domestic market was further worsened by bad quality and diversity of coinage. King Augustus II Wettin did not open mints in the Commonwealth, only Grand Lithuanian Treasurer Ludwik Pociąg minted in Grodno in 1706–1707 some amount of 6-groschen *szóstaks*, called in Polish *ludzki płacz* (meaning literary ‘human cry’) from his initials L.P. Mints in Leipzig minted,

although without the authorization of the Sejm and the Senate, silver and gold coins with the image of the king, and during the occupation of Saxony during the Seven Years' War Frederick II Hohenzollern seized in Dresden a Polish mint and flooded the Commonwealth with forged 2-zloty coins (called *efraimks* – from the German Jew Efraim, who minted them in Berlin with the image of Augustus II). In practice, only the rich noblemen and foreign financiers used solid foreign coins.

12.2. Reconstruction of Economy in the Wettin Times

In the Wettin times the Commonwealth's economy was influenced by a Saxon variety of mercantilism – cameralism. It differed from mercantilism by its orientation mainly towards fiscal matters, encompassing economic policy, legal issues, administration and public finances. Statistics developed to allow censuses to be taken and to count turnovers in commerce. In practice, cameralism focused on the development of the country, ruined and depopulated after the Thirty Years' War. The governments of German states (including Saxony) sought to rebuild the economic foundations of the state through an active population policy, establishment of state-owned manufactures, the development of infrastructure (roads), backing up modernization, and through a strict control of the state over crafts and trade. A cameralist programme of reforms in Saxony and the Commonwealth, united under his sceptre by a personal union, was announced by Augustus II Wettin at the beginning of his rule; its implementation, however, was made impossible due to the Great Northern War and customs policy of Prussia and Austria.

The period of half-century after the Northern War saw an economic boom. The demilitarized Commonwealth neither waged wars nor was a theatre of war, except for skirmishes with Saxon troops in 1714–1716, peripheral war operations from the time of diarchy in 1733–1735 and encroachments of the neighbouring countries on the Commonwealth's borders during the Silesian wars and the Seven Years' War. Its citizens were paying minimal contributions to the state. Almost all income, a huge part of which was going in Prussia, Austria or Russia to the state treasury, in the Crown and Lithuania was going to private individuals and Church institutions.

Around 1720 the value of currency stabilized and prices got stagnant, and 10 years later a change in the economic situation of the whole Europe began, which was manifested by increasing prices of grain and decreasing prices of craft goods and wages. There was a great population bulge and increased inflow of precious metals from South America. Non-agricultural production grew, and at the same time landowners were getting richer by virtue of the development of towns and absorptive power of the market. The Commonwealth participated in those all-European processes in the specific conditions composed of: domination of manorial economy, weakness of towns, lack of economic initiative of the state, which played an especially important role in states of East-Central Europe, poor financial turnover and underdevelopment of credit institutions. All those factors inhibited the economic development. Nevertheless, in the noble tradition the Saxon times, and especially

King Augustus III's rule, went down in history as the years of prosperity and peace, as the saying went: "Under the Saxon king, eat, drink, and loosen your belt."

The peak of expansion of latifundia and concentration of land in the hands of magnates fell on the rule of the Wettins. Not always, however, a size of landed estate reflected the affluence in cash – money in the Commonwealth was sparse, credit was expensive and difficult to obtain. It was mainly Jews and Church institutions that allocated capital and lend money on usurious interest, but also magnates who were in need of cash became a kind of bankers with whom noble clients allocated their capital savings secured upon the lease of magnate villages or folwarks.

A concentration of money made it possible for magnates to cover huge consumption expenses, but also to make deals and to invest. Those great latifundia, which were in the nature of miniature states (especially in the eastern borderlands of the Commonwealth), conducted their own mercantilist policy by means of non-economic coercion. Because of the corvée obligations of the peasants and natural resources of estates it was possible for their owners to make non-cash investments, and at the same time, through various serf duties and monopolies, to drain money circulation within the estate. Simultaneously, great landed estates threatened by competition, among others from Russia, sought to modernize agrarian management and secure increased revenue through giving up the system of corvée and substituting a fixed rent for the labour duties of serfs, introduction of crop rotation and establishment of manufactures (with the help of a new capital of burghers).

After 1740 revenues of great landowners increased even more. Export of grain via Gdańsk, which in 1700–1719 amounted to 20.000 *laszts* a year, during the period of post-war normalization raised to 30.000 only to increase in the 1750s to 50.000 a year, reaching in the mid-17th century the level of half of the export from the first half of the 17th century. The increase of wealth did not include peasants and burghers, but only secular and ecclesiastical noblemen and magnates. Economic activity of Jews increased, who in the agrarian society of the Commonwealth made up a specific "third estate" in place of burghers.

Latifundial expansion of the economy was accompanied by the flourishing of magnate courts, which attracted throngs of provincial nobility in the character of courtiers, residents, officials, officers of court militia and friends bound to magnates by ties of clientelist dependency. Provincial nobility existed in the shade of magnate residencies, while magnates spent their lives in their "small states," only rarely visiting Warsaw, which during the reign of the Wettins ceased to be the city of the royal court and owing to lethargy of the state institution barely merited the name of the capital city.

The union between the Commonwealth and Saxony provided a way out of the severe economic crisis and made it possible to develop large-scale economic and commercial relations. Once again the Commonwealth began to attract immigrants and capital, which in stages – via Silesia and Great Poland – went to Masovia to Warsaw and then via Brest to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The extent of settlement could be best illustrated by the fact that during the Polish-Saxon union

850 new settlements emerged in Great Poland only, with ca. fifty thousand of new peasant households.

The implementation of cameralist programme of the Polish-Saxon court was made impossible by a customs war declared on Saxony by Prussia and Austria, which blocked the flow of goods to the Commonwealth. It was not until 1732 that merchants from Leipzig were able to conclude with Grand Crown Treasurer Franciszek Maksymilian Ossoliński a customs agreement, which removed barriers to trade. Already in 1727 King Augustus II succeeded in inducing Prussia to suspend customs restrictions on Saxon commodities. Relations with Austria during the Second Silesian War were so tense that there stopped not only exchange of goods with Silesia, Bohemia and Moravia, but simply also movement of people between these countries: a permit to leave Prague for Dresden was issued personally by the emperor! Even after the loss of Silesia the ban on exchange with Saxony was retained, and was suspended only in 1758.

Commercial relations in the period of personal union with Saxony did not develop according to possibilities, for the Commonwealth trade was monopolized by Gdansk, and Saxony had no access to the sea, so it was not an equal partner in the exchange. But the Commonwealth was a large and absorptive market for Saxon goods. Even when the political ties were severed, there still existed strong commercial relations between Saxony and the Commonwealth, until a next union in the Napoleonic era.

Urbanization processes under King Augustus II led to the emergence of new towns (Nowy Tomyśl, Nowa Sól). Together with new privileges to hold fairs it contributed to the emergence of a new economic model, based on the domestic market. The first half of the 18th century brought about a renewed growth of great fairs (Łęczyca, Łowicz, Zelwa), much more numerous than in the 17th century, and although they were not always operating within international trade, they enlivened local exchange trading system. At the same time, markets in small towns were revived and reorganized, but also in bigger villages, attracting once a week or several times a year people from the neighbourhood. All this was favourable to the development of barter and monetary commodity exchange.

A situation calmed down in the southeastern frontiers and the development of the Russian empire in the 1730s allowed for the transformation of economic relations in Ukraine. The development of credit operations (famous annual contract fairs held in Lviv till the First Partition; then transferred to Dubno and in 1798 to Kiev, and contracts of Berdychiv [Polish: *Berdyczów*]) lead to the acceleration of capital turnover and made it possible for great landowners to gain the cash necessary for commercial investments.

Changes in the organization of industry were small in comparison to the revival of commerce. Although it was possible to find in the Commonwealth a kind of enterprise similar to manufactures already in the 16th century (ironworks and marble quarries of Little Poland), and in the 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries manufactures were being established in magnate estates (a silk manufacture of Stanisław Koniecpolski at Brody as soon as ca. 1643, glass manufactures of the

Radziwiłłs at Naliboki before 1724, and Urzecze from 1737, faience manufactures at Biała Podlaska from 1738 and at Świeżeń from 1742, cloth manufacture at Nesvizh from 1752, glass manufacture of Adam Sieniawski near Lubaczów from 1717) and in royal ones (glass manufacture of Augustus II at Bielany near Warsaw ca. 1710), a real development of manufacturing production began in the epoch of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, after the First Partition of the Commonwealth.

12.3. Era of King Stanisław August Poniatowski

The beginnings of the reign of King Stanisław August Poniatowski brought about a general change in the attitude towards economic matters and a whole array of the related sejm reforms. It was started with a regulation of monetary chaos. *Tymphs* were withdrawn. The right of minting coins was restored to the king, who with the assistance of foreign minters established a new mint in Bielańska Street in Warsaw. The sejm of 1768 set anew the content of noble ore for the Polish zloty (divided into 4 silver groschen, and 8 copper ones), which had to be lowered 20 years later, because the Polish coin turned out to be too good and was taken away from Poland in large quantities (according to the estimates of the Grand Crown Treasurer of 1768 – ca. 40 million Polish zlotys).

At the Convocation Sejm of 1764, apart from a monetary reform, also important resolutions were adopted, which removed centuries-long negligence. Besides the abolition of internal customs duties and tolls, and unification of a system of measures – which greatly improved and facilitated the circulation of goods – attempts were made to improve an internal communication system. The maintenance and development of a much neglected (especially in the eastern provinces of the Commonwealth) network of land and water transportation routes was put under the care of special Treasury Commissions, supported by initiatives of a semi-private nature, undertaken by high state officials who paid from their own pocket.

In 1765 Lithuanian Hetman Michał Kazimierz Ogiński began building a canal to connect the Neman River via the Pripet with the Dnieper (Oginski's Canal, 54 km long), which was concluded in the 1780s. When, after the First Partition Prussia imposed high custom rates (a treaty of 1775), the Prussian government built the Bydgoszcz Canal (1773–1774), which – connecting the Vistula and Oder rivers – incorporated the annexed Polish lands into the Prussian economic system, the Lithuanian Commission undertook in 1777–1784 building of the Royal Canal (ca. 80 km long), connecting the Pripet and Dnieper with the Bug.

Under Stanisław August Poniatowski economic matters became – for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth – a subject of interest not only of a small group of theoreticians but also of broad parts of the society. It was the result not only of joining into all-European Enlightenment current but also of a real necessity to reorient the traditional rural economy, especially after the first partition. A new situation, without the possibility to transport grain by the Vistula and with no salt from the Wieliczka mine (seized by the Austrians), imposed the necessity to look

for new commercial routes, to replace the imported goods with domestic production and to changes in agriculture, obvious even for averagely educated noblemen.

What was met with favourable conditions in the rural society of the Commonwealth devoted to the Sarmatian ideology of superiority of the countryside over towns, was the ideology of physiocracy, developed in France in the second half of the 18th century as the first modern philosophical economic doctrine based not on a generalization of practical experiences but on the assumptions of Enlightenment philosophy of nature and scientific analysis of economic relations. Physiocracy was the reaction to mercantilist propaganda of commerce and crafts. Its forerunners and propagators (François Quesnay and his followers) voiced an opinion that land, not industry or commerce, is the source of all wealth, they supported the development of agriculture (mainly of great estates). As a measure of greatness and prosperity of the state they regarded the increase of mass of material substance. Regarding agriculture as the main field of activity and source of prosperity led to the division of the society into three classes: landowners (holders of capital for agriculture development), the productive class (farmers and agricultural labourers) and the idle class which included all employed outside agriculture, who created nothing but only “add together” the existing elements. He set forth his views schematically in his *Tableau économique (Economic Picture, 1758)*.

The first forerunners of the new school in the Commonwealth were the “enlightened” magnates (Ignacy Massalski and Joachim Chreptowicz), who met physiocrats in Parisian saloons and invited some of them to Poland as experts on political economic reforms. The latter included Nicolas Baudeau (1768–1769), the author of *Listy o obecnym stanie Polski i o pochodzeniu jej nieszczęść (Letters Concerning the Present State of Poland and the Origins of her Misfortunes, 1770)* and *Uwagi ekonomiczne do oświeconych obywateli Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej o popieraniu dochodu publicznego (Economic Comments for Enlightened Citizens of the Polish Commonwealth on Way to Support Public Income, 1771)*, in which he promoted granting freedom to the peasants as the main means of economic development, and Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, as secretary of the Commission of National Education participating in reforms of the education system.

The doctrine of physiocracy was introduced to schools of the Commission of National Education within “moral teaching,” in the form of a *Elementarz dla szkół parafialnych narodowych (Primer for National Parochial Schools, 1785)* prepared by Onufry Kopczyński in the spirit of physiocracy, and for teachers another treatise by Grzegorz Piramowicz entitled *Powinności nauczyciela (Duties of the Teacher, 1787)* was issued. After the Commission of National Education the teachings of physiocracy were continued by Krzemieniec Lyceum (from 1805), and then by the secondary education of the Duchy of Warsaw. Some physiocratic influences could be found in Stanisław Staszic, *Uwagi nad życiem Jana Zamoyskiego (Remarks on the Life of Jan Zamoyski, 1787)* and *Przestrogi dla Polski (Warnings for Poland, 1790)*; Wawrzyniec Surowiecki, *Uwagi względem poddanych w Polsce i projekt do ich uwolnienia (Remarks on the Subjects in Poland and Project of their Freeing, 1807)*; Franciszek Salezy Jezierski, *Katechizm o tajemnicach rządu polskiego (Catechism on*

the Secrets of Polish Government, 1790); in the Constitution of May 3 (mainly in the articles on the Landed Nobility and the Peasants) and in Hugo Kołłątaj (an epigonic text *Porządek fizyczno-moralny* (*The Physical- Moral Order*, 1810).

In agricultural practice, first symptoms of economic revival, prices increase and improvement of the economic situation appeared in great estates (in Great Poland and Pomerania, in Belarus and Volhynia). Initially, the reforms initiated under the Wettins did not bring significant results for many villages preferred *corvée* labours to exorbitant rents. Thus, the process of rentification (changing of labour services into money rents) included only a small part of peasant farms – the largest ones or those of peasants belonging to a privileged group such as millers or *sołtysi*. However, in the long term it led to a gradual increase of this form at the expense of *corvée*, and to a renewed incorporation of the peasants into the commercial exchange. At the same time, the process deepened differences in wealth of the peasants and only a part of them benefited from ties with the market.

The second half of the 18th century brought about a lot of texts on agrarian subjects propagating the conversion of *corvée* obligations into money rent. Their authors stressed not only economic but also social gains of such a reform (the triggering initiative of the peasants interested in results of production). This developed interest in agriculture and situation of the peasantry manifested by landowners and the state (taking the peasants under the protection of the law in 1791, reduction of their burdens in 1794) was associated with the development of social and national awareness of at least a part of the peasantry participating in the Kościuszko Insurrection.

The rentification of peasants in the estates of Andrzej Zamoyski, Joachim Chreptowicz, Paweł Brzostowski or Stanisław Poniatowski (the king's nephew) became more famous than it was merited by their real significance and was held as a model. Attempts at economic modernization on a large scale, based on English models, often without any consideration for actual economic environment and economic calculation, caused bankruptcy of some of the reformers (like A. Jabłonowska).

As in the previous centuries, the level of agrarian economy depended on the region: the rentification and replacement of the *corvée* duties with hired labour on a large scale were taking place in highly-developed Great Poland. In Ukraine, in connection to opening export possibilities, reverse changes were occurring: from the rent economy to the folwark economy. In the scale of the whole Commonwealth the folwark economy retained its dominant position until the end of the 18th century. Propination was still playing an important role: a monopoly for the production of spirits, which was then compulsorily distributed among the serfs. Thus, the balance of the situation of agriculture in the twilight of the Commonwealth was negative – in comparison to the situation in Europe it was increasingly underdeveloped. This state of affairs was caused not only by its folwark system but also by the lack of possibility of effective intervention of the state into matters of the countryside, the collapse of the state power, and urbanization processes that proved too weak to increase a domestic demand for agricultural products.

The second most common issue – apart from the improved situation of peasants and modernization of farming – discussed in the economic literature of the second half of the 18th century was the so-called urban matter. The plain truth was being said again and again that strong towns, together with a development of the industrial production, would intensify the commerce between the towns and the countryside. The reforms implemented under King Stanisław August Poniatowski contributed to the economic growth of towns, despite the laws that abolished or restricted their rights and subjected to the judicial power of starostas. Royal towns, especially bigger ones, were gaining administrative decisions favourable for their development. Commissions of Good Order, established after 1765, were responsible for the whole urban economics. Despite the aversion of the nobility and old municipal authorities, activities of those commissions resulted in some beneficial outcomes, such as, for example, putting in order of commercial privileges, transportation routes and regulations, etc.

Transformations in the economy were accompanied by social and population changes in the towns. Warsaw (without Praga) – with 30 thousand inhabitants in the early rule of Stanisław August Poniatowski – in 1792 had ca. 100 thousand inhabitants. Such a big (for those times) city became in a natural way a large centre of urban industry, crafts, trade, and banking houses. A rapid development of Warsaw and some smaller urban centres in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Ukraine, and Great Poland brought about increasing turnovers not only in food trade but also in various goods related to the urban lifestyle. The Act on *Miasta nasze królewskie wolne w państwach Rzeczypospolitej* (*Our Free Royal Cities in the States of the Commonwealth*) incorporated into the Constitution of May 3, 1791 granted political rights to burghers, and freeing royal towns from the jurisdiction of starostas, abolished noble jurydykas.

The decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth gave rise to – greatly delayed in comparison with the well-developed countries of Western Europe – a new relationship between town and the countryside. The foundations were laid for the growth of the urban population organizing local and international exchange. Internal turnover changed more than external one, due to the development of industrial production, metallurgy, magnate manufactures. The circle of cloths and textile manufactures of Great Poland maintained its position despite very difficult conditions of the Prussian borderland, where crafts were more and more organized by commercial capital in the nature of the putting-out system. In Little Poland there developed the rural putting-out system, and in the whole Commonwealth – to a much larger extent than under the Wettins – manufacturing production.

In the era of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, the magnates' motivations and the state for initiatives in establishing manufactures were very various: apart from a natural desire of landowners to increase their feudal rent, there were also political and patriotic motives: a wish to strengthen the military potential of the state and to revive the general economy. Activity in the field of industry was pictured in political commentary texts as “merit for the nation,” and it became fashionable – which influenced behaviours of some great lords, namely the industrialists.

A part of latifundial manufactures from the Wettin times survived and new ones emerged. Textile manufacturing industry was developed at the foot of the Sudeten (Jelenia Góra, Kowary, Bolków, Kamienna Góra, Wałbrzych, Rychbach, Gryfów Śląski) and in southwestern Great Poland (urban manufactures at Leszno, Wschowa, Bojanów, Rawicz, Zduny). Mining and metallurgic industry was developed in the region of Częstochowa and Opole, in the Old Polish Industrial Region (26 blast furnaces in 1782, for example, ones newly founded by Stanisław Małachowski at Końskie and Białaczów, by Castellan of Łuków Jacek Jezierski at Miedzierz, also at Samsonów, Suchedniów, Parszowów, Szałaszy). The largest industrial centres of the Commonwealth at the end of the 18th century included: Gdańsk, Cracow, Poznań, Warsaw.

The economic revival in Ukraine and Volhynia resulted in the emergence in those territories of manufactures using the *corvée* labour, established in the countryside mainly by landowners and the state and generally producing luxury goods for a small group of consumers. Such enterprises were founded also in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, under the patronage of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, by Grand Lithuanian Treasurer Antoni Tyzenhauz in the Crown lands called *economies* (over 20 manufactures at Horodnica and Łosośno near Grodno in Belarus). However, the importance of those enterprises did not correspond to the publicity they gained. They were wastefully and incompetently managed, caused the devastation of estates and resulted in a huge deficit; and after Tyzenhauz was removed from his office in 1790, they were liquidated. Of different type were urban profit-oriented manufactures organized by industrial entrepreneurs and merchants, with larger capital at their disposal and using the hired labour of an increasing number of loose people in towns.

A programme of modernization, undertaken by Stanisław August, modelled on initiatives of the “Enlightened monarchs” in the neighbouring countries, included the foundation of royal manufactures (at Zaleszczyki a cloth manufacture, at Belweder a porcelain manufacture) and the support of the state for stock initiatives of joint capital of burghers and noblemen – a phenomenon characteristic of the 1780s. The first one to be established in 1766 was the Company of Wool Manufactures under the management of Andrzej Zamoyski; the most important was a joint stock company organized in 1787 by Primate Michał Poniatowski under the name of Society of the National Factory of Linen. In 1765 the king opened a bell foundry in Warsaw, which he maintained from his own funds until 1780; in 1770–1772 a similar foundry was established at Kamianets-Podilskyi. The production of guns of the Warsaw bell-foundry was small but based on the best Austrian models. In the Kielce region, on the basis of old iron metallurgy, former smelting furnaces were replaced by blast furnaces.

In the area of banking great banks and commercial houses in Warsaw dominated: of Piotr Tepper – “the greatest banker of the North,” of Antoni Protazy Potocki – a magnate-entrepreneur, joint owner of a merchant navy, latifundia and capitals, of Fryderyk Kabryt (Cabrit) and others. Their characteristic feature was still the lack of specialization, and majority of bankers were involved, aside from cash and credit

operations, also in industrial and commercial activities. By their impetus and modernity they were in sharp contrast with the backwardness of the economy, but the circle of their clients and creditors was made up of a few dozen people in the scale of the whole Commonwealth. All these initiatives, despite many abortive realizations, contributed to the growth of financial ties with foreign countries. Appeals for a balanced foreign trade through saving and development of domestic industry became one of the most propagated banners, but the Commonwealth remained an agricultural country until the end of its existence.

Also the structure of trade did not undergo big changes by the end of the 18th century: the main export product was still grain, while luxury commodities and industrial products were imported. At the end of the 18th century the balance of foreign trade became once more positive. But after the First Partition Prussia gained control over 95 percent of the export of the Commonwealth (via land routes in Silesia, the Vistula and Warta waterways). Customs duties imposed at Kwidzyn and then in 1772 at Fordon were not only to gain revenue for the Prussian Treasury but also – through constant harassment, high fees, etc. – to ruin Polish merchants, ensure an easy ready market for Western commodities in the Commonwealth and to hamper the development of its own industry.

After the First Partition the Baltic Sea grain export via Gdańsk, which in the mid-18th century was ca. 56 thousand of *łaszt*s a year, decreased by half (23–28 thousand of *łaszt*s). This loss could not be compensated by an increased export of agricultural produce via Elbląg and Königsberg. The Prussian frontiers, difficult to penetrate by Polish export (except for much-needed by Prussian industry raw materials, such as wool) were an open gate for import from Prussia and through the Prussian agency. According to Polish official statistics, the negative balance of trade in 1776–1777 amounted to 44 m zlotys (an extremely important item on the list of Polish imported commodities was after the first partition salt, indispensable to everyday life). This state of affairs did not change until the Second Partition, despite a commercial agreement and the fact that Gdańsk and Toruń remained Polish cities.

The loss of economically important parts of the state after the First Partition (especially of southern Little Poland and Royal Prussia) induced a change in directions of great foreign trade, which resulted in the necessity to look for new routes of exchange with Western Europe. Land routes via Austria (Cieszyn–Olomouc–Brno–Vienna) were being used more frequently, and after the conclusion of Russian-Turkish treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) an attempt was made to export Ukrainian grain via Kherson, Black and Mediterranean seas. This new situation led to the increased importance of Ukrainian lands and prospects of Black Sea grain trade (opened thanks to the victories of Russia over Turkey). In 1782, with the support of the Sejm, the Black Sea Trade Company was established, headed by Antoni Protazy Potocki. Trade with Moldavia was also growing, which resulted in works to increase the navigability of the Dniester River. But good economic conditions for the agriculture of southeastern borderlands could not counterbalance the losses induced by the collapse of the Baltic trade.

Transactions in land between the partitions were increasing and economic bond with the partitioning powers were growing stronger, although initially they preserved commercial traditions of the Commonwealth, among other things by the similarity of units of measure used on both sides of the frontier. In 1784 the Austrian Partition was included into the Habsburg customs area, after 1772 the transport by Dvina River was made easier, and a separate contract with Russia regulated the possibilities of trade with the Northern East. At the same time when the Gdańsk market was diminishing in importance for Little Poland a new one emerged in the form of Transcarpathian and Silesian market, which greatly developed. There was an activation of commercial contacts between Silesia and Great Poland, which was also associated with the policy of Prussia that intended to develop great international trade.

After the Third Partition, in the changed political and economic situation, a large majority of initiatives of the last king, magnates, and burghers undertaken in the twilight of the Commonwealth collapsed. Because great bankers, granting credits and loans secured on landed estates and acting as agents in the contacts with foreign banks, were shareholders in finances of the noblemen and magnates of the Commonwealth, the collapse of the state meant financial bankruptcy for them. In 1793 a majority of bank houses suspended money withdrawals; the Grodno Sejm established a commission to liquidate their interests. But contacts with French and German banks survived, continued by bankers and merchants from Warsaw in the 19th century. The downfall of the majority of noble manufactures was the result of both economic (the collapse of the market) and political factors (confiscations of the landed estates) as well as military ones (requisitions, destructions, contributions). More long-lasting than economic consequences of rural manufactures were their social effects: the spread of technical skills in the countryside via the peasants employed in manufactures who after their enterprises collapsed earned their living as rural craftsmen: smiths, carpenters or weavers, producing goods for their own use and that of their neighbours.

The era of King Stanisław August Poniatowski left also a “curiosity for industria and fabrication”⁹⁶ among the nobility and their readiness to modernize the economy. A part of landowners (for example, near Łódź) transformed their villages into industrial settlements with the putting-out system, going ahead of 19th-century initiatives of the government. Thus, changes in the mentality and customs, caused by the Enlightenment attempts at reviving the economy, commerce, and finances, matched the actual social transformations foreshadowing the beginning of the modern era.

96 Ireneusz Ichnatowicz, “Przemysł, handel, finanse,” in: *Polska XIX wieku. Państwo – społeczeństwo – kultura*, ed. S. Kieniewicz, Warsaw, 1982, p. 63.

Chapter Six

Society

1. Population Changes since the End of the 16th Century towards the End of the 18th Century

At the beginning of the 16th century Poland was a European country with a medium sized population. It is estimated that the area of the Crown (along with the Masovian feud) and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, connected by a dynastic union, had 7.5 million inhabitants in 1500.⁹⁷ The dynamic growth of the population after the Union of Lublin and in the first part of the 17th century up to about 11 m in 1650 had put Poland in the fourth position, after France (18.8 m), The Grand Duchy of Moscow (after the Time of Troubles around 12 m, in 1650 18.3 m), and Italy (12.3 m), before the German Reich (10.3 m), England (with Scotland and Ireland, about 6.6 million), the Netherlands (about 3 m) and Sweden (about 3 m in the 30s of the 17th century).

The inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1569 (that is, at the time of the Union) are estimated to have been 3.5 m according to Polish historiography and 4 m according to Lithuanian scholars.⁹⁸ The inhabitants of the territories of today's Belarus were most probably equal in number to the people living in ethnic Lithuania, because the Ruthenian territory was four times bigger, but also more scarcely inhabited. In the mid-17th century the population of the Grand Duchy is estimated to have been about 4.5 million, including 1.3 in ethnic Lithuanian territory.

The noble population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth also rose considerably. This probably stemmed from better hygiene and nutrition, as well as earlier age of marriage for women, increasing their chances for fertility. "In the 16th to the 18th centuries, the nobility was the most dynamic element in terms of demography,"⁹⁹ which, in turn, increased the economic stratification of this estate and the development of magnate patronage and clientelism.

Demography was influenced not only by birth rate but also regional relocations, seasonal labour migrations, and permanent settling migrations. The influx of people from the late 16th century – mostly petty nobility and peasants from ethnic Polish and Red Ruthenian lands – to less inhabited Ukraine and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – had caused the rise of ethnic conflicts in the mid-17th century.

97 Irena Gieysztorowa, "Ludność," in: *Encyklopedia historii gospodarczej Polski do 1945 r.*, ed. A. Mączak, vol. 1, Warsaw, 1981, p. 430.

98 Zigmantas Kiaupa, Jūratė Kiaupienė, Albinas Kuncevičius, *The History of Lithuania Before 1795*, trans. M. Danytė and N. Borges, Vilnius 2000, p. 254.

99 Emanuel Rostworowski, *Sprawa aukcji wojska na tle sytuacji politycznej przed Sejmem Czteroletnim*, Warsaw, 1957, p. 111.

A deep demographic crisis in the whole of Europe was caused by wars and repeated outbreaks of plague in particular countries or pandemics spreading throughout the whole of Europe. Casualties in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth due to the epidemics of 1624–1625 and 1629–1630 were probably higher than in Western Europe, as the outbreaks overlapped with the economic crisis. The migration of peoples from the German states overtaken by the Thirty Years' War towards the western part of the Crown stimulated urban development on the borderland, but it did not significantly influence the general demographic balance.

Andrzej Karpiński's research shows the correlation between wars and pandemics and demographic crisis; it is still very hard to decipher how huge the decrease of the population was afterwards. According to earlier scholars, like Stanisław Hoszowski, the epidemics accompanying warfare during the times of the Deluge caused the death of about 50 % of the Commonwealth's inhabitants. According to Irena Gieysztor's analysis, in 1650–1660 the Crown and Lithuania lost about 1 million inhabitants (25 %) and in the Western regions of the Crown (Little Poland, Great Poland, and Royal Prussia) 20 %. The destruction dating back to the Deluge intensified the economic crisis, and hampered the attempts to equalize the demographic loss.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1655–1661 about 37 % of the inhabitants of the ethnic Lithuanian territory were gone. In 1675 there were about 800.000 people; in the territories of today's Belarus the population was decreased by half (from 2.900.000 in 1648 to 1.350.000 in 1667). The Navahrudak area lost fewer people, while ⅓ of the inhabitants of Połock, Witebsk and Mścisław Voivodeships perished.

In the Crown, after a revival of the population brought by the last forty years of the 17th century, another collapse took place during the period of the Great Northern War (1700–1721), by the end of which the population fell to about 2.9 m. Only in 1790, the level of population from the end of the 16th century was achieved. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the war caused further depopulation by 30 %. According to Jacek Staszewski, the plagues and two years of bad harvest (1713–1714) led to a greater destruction than the seven years of war.

In the 1730s, and later in the second half of the 18th century, a rapid increase of population was observed as warfare came to an end and the economic situation improved, decreasing the effects of hunger and epidemics. There were also social changes (the beginning of the liquidation of the serfdom and the improvement of the situation of burghers), as well as civilization and cultural changes (the development of medicine and sanitary supervision), which played a significant demographic role. The eastern parts of the Commonwealth showed a much greater increase in population and have influenced the rise of the people within the Commonwealth between 1650 and 1772. It is estimated that the general rise in the population between 1650 and 1772 was related to the rise of the population density (from about 11.1 to 19.1 inhabitants per square km) rather than the absolute population number; an important factor was the fact that the lesser-populated territories of Ukraine were severed from the Commonwealth.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a constant rise in the population was marked from 1730, and around 1790 the ethnically Lithuanian territories exceeded slightly

the level from 1648 and reached 1.3 m. The Masovian and Podlasie colonization in the Navahrudak and Vilnius areas caused ethnic changes in among the nobility.

1.1. The Reliability of Demographic Data

As the data quoted above indicate, the differences in estimating the population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth according to historical demographers, reach a few million. This is due to the poor source basis of Polish historical demography.

The population of the Crown in the 16th to the 18th centuries is estimated on the basis of the data taken from the particular state tax registers (*lan* tax in the 16th to the 17th centuries and toll and hearth tax in the 17th to the 18th centuries). This data contains a lot of gaps and requires not only critical analysis but also a choice of multiplicands and correctors in order to retrace the bases of taxation in relation to the estimated number of taxpayers and the appropriate general figures. The final results of such calculations are a resultant of the individual tax trustworthiness (usually very low) and researchers' arbitrary decisions regarding the indicators used.

The verification of the population estimates based on the taxation sources referring to wider territorial scopes (district, land, voivodeship, province) is usually performed on a parish scale based on metrical registration. It was kept in Poland in the 16th to the 17th centuries but the remaining documents date back to the 17th to the 18th centuries and contain demographically more limited and less complete data than the West European metrics. A visible improvement in the Crown's metrics can be seen in the 1730s – a fact that is connected to the growing interest of the church authorities, and later also of the state authorities. Because of the state of preservation of these sources – from very few parishes – and of imprecise registration, one must take into account that the analysis of the Crown's metrics from the 17th to the 18th centuries might present higher population growth than it actually was.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the basic sources to investigate population changes are the displays of the Lithuanian army (1528 – the elaborate Hospodar Office created not in the field but in the central office and in 1565 – a result of the actual display of the nobility¹⁰⁰ and tax registrations from 1667 and 1690).

The most accurate data regarding the Commonwealth's population can be traced back to the period of the Partitions, when the population counts were made: in 1771 it was 12–14 m; in 1790 it was 7.6 m, including the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with 2344 thousand according to Polish researchers and 3.6 m according to Lithuanian historians.¹⁰¹

Therefore, all of the data from the earlier periods are merely an estimate.

100 Henryk Łowmiański, *Studia nad dziejami Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, Poznań, 1983, pp. 456–457.

101 *Historia Polski w liczbach*, GUS, t.1, Warszawa 2003, ed. A. Wycza.1, Warszawa, 2003, pp. 51–53, 59: Table 37: *Ludność wiejska i miejska Korony około 1578 r. i w 1662 r.* [Townsmen and peasants in Poland in 1578 and 1662]; p. 52–53, Table 38: *Ludność Rzeczypospolitej w końcu XVIII w.* [The population of the Commonwealth

2. Estates of the Realm

The Commonwealth in the 16th to the 18th centuries was divided into four estates: the nobility, clergy, burghers, and peasants. The numbers vary depending on a province. It is estimated that by the end of the 16th century, 66.6 % people in the Crown were peasants, 24.1 % burghers, 9 % nobility, and 0.2 % clergy. This corresponds (more or less) with the estate structure in the main ethnic parts of the Crown: Little Poland and Great Poland. However, in newly annexed Masovia there were 10 % less townsmen, while 23.4 % more nobility and 0.9 % more clergy. In Royal Prussia the situation was opposite: burghers constituted a third of the population (36.5 %), nobility were only 3.3 % and Catholic clergy were not indicated in the data.¹⁰²

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1569, 8–9 % of the people were nobility; peasants were 75 %, and burghers and peasants 15–16 %.

Towards the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth the structure of the estates (based on Tadeusz Korzon's estimates, amended by Emmanuel Rostworowski) was as follows: nobility 8 % (landed nobility 2 %, petty nobility 6 %), burghers 6 %, peasants 73.5 %, (Catholic) clergy 0.5 %, ethnic-legal groups 12 % (Jews 10 %, Armenians, Tatars 2 %). In the Crown the nobility was estimated to be ca. 10 % (25 % of ethnic Polish people in the scale of the Commonwealth), ca. 15 % burghers, and ca. 75 % peasants (including 85–90 % serfs) of the whole population. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania towards the end of the 18th century, the nobility constituted ca. 6–8 %, burghers above 12 %, and peasants ca. 80 % of the society.

2.1. The Factors of Social Structure Change in 16th to the 18th Centuries

The division of the society into estates was formally maintained (or even strengthened) until the end of the existence of the Commonwealth. It was petrified in common consciousness, shaping a separate ideology, system of values, individual and group habits, as well as social order. It does not alter the fact that the estate divisions were more and more in discrepancy with real divisions within the society and mutual relations between each of its groups. Already in the 15th century two of four estates (in the legal understanding) virtually vanished: the peasantry and townsmen with their privileges drastically limited and all obligations maintained.

It is also misleading to follow a simple division of the Commonwealth's society put forward by Marcin Kromer, who believed that:

at the end of the 18th century]; Historia Litwy. Od czasów najdawniejszych do 1795 roku, Warsaw 2007, table 6, p. 243.

102 *Historia Polski w liczbach*, GUS, vol. 1, Warsaw 2003, table 62, p. 77, basing on Witold Kula, *Stan i potrzeby badań nad demografią historyczną dawnej Polski (do początku XIX w.)*, vol. 13, 1951, p. 71; later researchers suggest a smaller share of the population among nobility and burghers.

The population of Poland on the one hand can be divided [...] according to birth; that is into nobility and plebeians; on the other hand according to their lifestyle chosen on religious premises – that is clergy and laymen.¹⁰³

The clerical estate in its medieval understanding disintegrated in the first half of the 16th century. Legally, the term *clergy* has been assigned to Catholic bishops. In the social sense, also non-Catholic clergymen performed virtually the same function, but this did not mean that they were considered as members of a particular estate.

The only estate, which met the legal and formal criteria completely, was the nobility. The plebeians (townsmen and peasants) were virtually eliminated from public life; but the results of the competition between the nobility and the clergy remained unresolved. To be sure, the nobility managed to gain independence – in the period of the Executionist Movement – from the clerical courts apart from religious matters. However, any attempt to subject the Catholic clergy to the general jurisdiction in matters of taxation and army remained unsuccessful.

In terms of social composition, the nobility and the clergy coincided in the 16th century; however, in the following two centuries, the number of plebeians in the ranks of the lower clergy increased.

3. The Nobility

3.1. Noble Exclusivism

The noble estate was formally closed, and any attempts of the burghers to enter it were hindered at the beginning of the 16th century when it was established that a nobleman had to present his parentage on his mother's side as well. In the course of the next centuries it was extended to two generations back (parents and grandparents both on the father's and mother's side), whose coat of arms were placed in four fields of noble escutcheon. A legal way for a plebeian to obtain the status of a noble was the ennoblement, granted since 1578 only by the Sejm (and subsequently inscribed into the constitution). The king retained his right to confer individual ennoblement for military achievements, but only with the permission of the *levée en masse*. The nobility's reaction to such form of rewarding soldiers (considered to be too often exercised) was the demand of local sejmiks to eliminate the insitution of ennoblement altogether.

Apart from the ennoblement there also existed the indygenat, which granted the status of a noble to a foreigner. Initially, it was performed by the king at the Sejm, and since 1641 by the Sejm itself (a constitution with retroactive effect from 1607). In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Third Lithuanian Statute allowed for automatic ennoblement of Jews, who converted to Catholicism, but this regulation was

103 Marcin Kromer, *Polska, czyli o położeniu, ludności, obyczajach i sprawach publicznych Królestwa Polskiego księgi dwie*, trans. S. Kazikowski, prep. R. Marchwiński, Olsztyn, 1977, p. 68.

cancelled with retroactive effect in 1764. In 1669 in Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki's *pacta conventa* there appeared scartabellat, an institution of partial ennoblement, which did not allow for holding offices or serving as a deputy up to the third generation. Losing the status of a noble Formby means of court's pronouncement of infamy or banishment and (in theory) concerned persons engaged in craft or trade (1538, 1633).

3.2. The Numerical Amount of the Nobility

The privileged social estate in the Commonwealth was very numerous in comparison with most of European countries, except for the Iberian Peninsula (in 1568 the nobility constituted 10.5 % of the Castilian population) and Hungary (at the end of the 16th century it was 4.5 % of the Transylvanian population; in 1784 the number grew to 5 % of the whole population of Transylvania, Croatia, and Slovenia). In many countries only a few hundred families enjoyed the status of nobility (the number could not exceed 1–3 % of the population), whereas in the Commonwealth the percentage was several times higher and showed a tendency to increase.

Because of the limitations of demographic data, we cannot be certain how much nobility there was altogether in the whole of the Commonwealth, in its different territories and different moments of the early modern times. There is a thesis put forward in Polish historiography, holding that in the second half of the 18th century the nobility was 8–10 % of the whole population of the whole Commonwealth. This thesis, however, is based on the research on the main provinces of the Crown: Great Poland, Little Poland, and the Masovia. The results of recent research, done in the past decades show that the hypothesis of the large population of the nobility is rather overestimated.

3.3. Citizenship

The noble estate within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was theoretically united by citizenship. By virtue of being born into the nobility they had the privilege of participating in political decisions about the future of the country and the other estates, in reality dependent on being a landowner and the place one lived: in the eastern parts of the Commonwealth most of the nobility in the second half of the 17th-18th centuries entered into the so-called magnate patronage, whereas in Little Poland and Great Poland most nobles remained independent.

Treating the whole noble estate as "a group which is clearly distinguishable from the rest of society and internally coherent,"¹⁰⁴ and which can be therefore described as a political nation, is possible merely at the level of an ideal type which includes all the members of the estate who are (potentially) entitled to participate in public life. In reality, due to the economic disintegration that had been ongoing since the

104 Tomasz Kizwalter, *O nowoczesności narodu – przypadek Polski*, Warsaw, 1999, p. 43, 53.

16th century, the rise of the clientelism, and decrease of the civic attitude of most of the nobles, there were three subcategories of the nobility remaining outside of the political nation: the dependent nobility, the so-called *golota* (literally: naked nobility), whose noble status was questioned, and finally the nobility recruited to the army (during the time of service), alienating itself from the rest of the estate. The governing elite included the so-called *homines novi* – state officials and clergy of burgher background and patricians from big cities (mostly Prussian), who were well-educated and rich and therefore had a real influence upon governmental decisions, and (to a certain extent) intellectuals collaborating with prominent figures and contributing in the creation of the Sarmatian state ideology.

The dependent nobility was not entitled to use its public rights – voting at sejmiks and being subject to the noble jurisdiction. It used to rent land owned by the great landowners in return for military service and payments. Dependent noblemen were under starosta's jurisdiction in the crown lands or lord's courts of landowners and were not entitled to make appeals to the king or the Tribunals. In the Crown, the dependent noblemen were mostly found in Podlasie in the Starostwo Tykocin and in the lands owned by the clergy (in the Duchy of Siewierz of the Bishopric of Cracow, the Duchy of Łowicz of the Archbishopric of Gniezno, and lands of the Bishopric of Chemno, Pułtusk lands of the Bishopric of Płoc and in Warmia). They were also quite numerous in private landholdings and crown lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in the so-called 'Principalities' of Radziwiłłs: of Slutsk, Birżai, Nesvizh, Kletsk, and the so-called, Counties' Szaków and Mysz of the Chodkiewicz family and County of Bychów of the Sapieha family.

The nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (boyars and landowners) was not a separate social estate at the time of the Union of Lublin, but rather a group of fluctuating composition – mostly Lithuanians and Ruthenians, who were 41 % of the estate. Lithuanian dukes (Polish: *kniazie*, sing. *kniaź*) were also counted as nobility, as well as a group of the nobles granted the privilege of summoning their own *levée en masse* banners and being subject to the jurisdiction of the Grand Duke only (until 1564).

Traditionally, both Lithuanian (Ivan Lappo, Konstantinas Avizonis, Edvardas Gudavičius) and Polish historiography (A. Mączak, J. Ochmański) claims that the Lithuanian nobility, divided before the reform of 1564–1566 into two separate estates: nobility and magnates (Polish: *szlachta* and *możnowładztwo*)¹⁰⁵, became one unified estate after the reform. However, it was divided in terms of wealth and participation in power (holding of offices) into two strata: higher (magnates and average nobility and lower (middle and petty landowners).

Nonetheless, the alleged unity of the Lithuanian nobility raised some concerns: the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was not subject to the execution of crown lands, also the pre-union hierarchical structures were preserved there, along with a direct economic and judiciary subjection of the dependent nobility (landowners and boyars in

105 Jerzy Ochmańszak, *Historia Litwy*, Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow, pp. 98–106.

private grounds), not to the Hospodar – King, but to the lords and dukes. Above all, the nobility of the Grand Duchy (like in the Crown) was internally divided in terms of economic standing. This is why the social status of the dependent nobility, the range of its political involvement and individual promotions are still under debate, and some Lithuanian researchers (Jūratė Kiaupienė) suggest that in actual fact, the Lithuanian nobility formed a few different estates in the 16th century.

3.4. The Factors of the Disintegration of the Noble Estate

Two factors led to the disintegration of the noble estate in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the period in question:

1. Numerous groups of the nobility (feudal nobility, *manowie* [homaged nobility], landowners, and boyars) have emerged after the Union of Lublin that were beyond the scope of medieval legislation in the Crown and groups at the margins of the estate: people serving in the army, who were not granted the appropriate privileges (Tatars in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Cossacks in Ukraine).
2. The growing financial discrepancy throughout the 17th century within the estate was an effect of the fragmentation of the hereditary possessions and the buying out of land by rich nobility, lay and clerical magnates. This natural process was accelerated after the union with Lithuania and the incorporation of Podolia, Volhynia, and Ukraine into the Crown, where the magnates were assured by the Act of Union of Lublin that they would maintain their hitherto privileges.

3.5. Economic Divisions within the Nobility

It is acknowledged that ca. 60 % of the nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were partial (owners of only a part of a village) and *zagrodowi* (from *zagroda* – a farm, not differing much from peasants' farms) noblemen, while rich nobility and magnates did not exceed 4 % of the whole population. The most significant factor for the escalation of the internal divisions was the development of feudal economy in the 16th century, and in the following centuries – the expansion of the magnates' *latifundia*. This has led to so deep changes that according to Andrzej Zajączkowski in the 18th century the nobility was divided into a few social classes (in the Marxist sense of the term) – from the magnate elite to the lower (partial and *zagrodowa*) nobility. The difference in terms of education, lifestyle, and mentality between magnates and lower nobility was virtually as great as between magnates and peasants.

3.6. The Magnates

The magnates constituted the highest stratum of the nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th to the 18th centuries as well as in the Kingdom of Hungary in the 15th to the 19th centuries, and having the social function of aristocracy in Western European countries. During the era of elective kings, the magnates

were internally integrated through marriages within their stratum (70 % in the 16th century, 40 % in the 17th century, and 18 % in the 18th century). According to Henryk Litwin,¹⁰⁶ the marital contracts above territorial boundaries and the holding of offices outside local lands led in the mid-17th century to a situation whereby the bonds between individual magnates, even those residing in very different parts of the Commonwealth, were much stronger than their sense of territorial solidarity.

The magnates were not legally distinguished from other groups of the nobility within the Commonwealth. Only the titles included in the Act of Union of Lublin were accepted as a relic of the old Ruthenian tradition (the duke or knyaz families of Czartoryskis, Massalskis, Ogińskis). Western European titles – such as princes: Radziwiłłs, or counts: Tarnowskis, Tęczyńskis, Ostrogozs, Ossolińskis – were given to the Polish and Lithuanian nobility in the 16th to the 18th centuries by foreign rulers (the German emperor and the pope, and after 1773 the rulers of the partitioning powers); sometimes the titles were taken after adoption to European families (like Myszkowscy-Gonzaga). An attempt to formally distinguish the magnate-senator elite within the Order of Immaculate Conception, undertaken by King Wladislaus IV, was frustrated by the nobility and the magnate opposition. The 1638 Sejm constitution *O tytułach cudzoziemskich* (*On Foreign Titles*); confirmed in 1641, 1646, 1732, 1736, and 1764) forbade using “foreign titles” granted earlier and granting new ones. This restriction was constantly breached, formally it was in force until the 70s of the 18th century, when the title of prince was recognized only with respect to the Sapieha family (1768), and later with respect to all princes of the German Reich residing in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (including the Radziwiłłs) and the Massalski knyaz (ducal) family (1775), with the reservation “that they cannot act against the equality of the noble estate.”¹⁰⁷

The magnates had no legal guarantees to sit in the higher chamber of the parliament: membership in the senate was lifelong but not hereditary. The elective kings kept their right to appoint nobles to the chosen offices, making them part of the senatorial elite. Thus, 30 % of all senators nominated by the Vasa kings, then by the native kings, and finally by the Wettins, were the so-called new magnates (by the royal grace and without magnate ancestors).

It is therefore hard to determine strict criteria for belonging to this estate – a magnate was simply someone perceived as a magnate. A necessary condition for being a magnate was to possess huge amounts of land and to have political influence at least on a provincial scale. This was linked to further divisions: the magnates’ fortunes in Great Poland were much smaller than the latifundia in Lithuania or Ukraine; in Royal Prussia the dominant families mostly leased crown lands, instead of owning hereditary ones. Another distinctive feature of the magnate estate was

106 Henryk Litwin, “Magnateria polska 1454–1648. Kształtowanie się stanu,” *Przegląd Historyczny* 74 (1983) no. 3, pp. 451–470.

107 VL, vol. 7, fol. 811, vol. 8, fol. 180, fol. 655.

the fact that they kept private armies at their own cost (from the mid-17th and the 18th centuries).

Also external indicators of prestige served to confirm their status: residencies (Nesvizh, Wiśnicz, Birżai, Pidhirtsi (Polish: *Podhorce*), Łańcut, Krzyżtopór), sacral foundations, maintenance of a large court, as well as artistic (painting, music, theatre), cultural, and educational patronage (e. g. Academy of Zamość, Gymnasium of Leszno). These were the fields in which the magnates competed with the royal patronage; they were ahead of the nobility in terms of education, cultivating the tradition of sending their sons for studies abroad in order for them to learn foreign languages, *savoir vivre*, as well as to develop political and military skills.

From the 15th century among the magnates there was a group of ca. 79 families that managed to sustain their wealth and retain their right to membership in the senate for many generations, having influences in the whole country, or at least the whole province, and being connected with other aristocrats locally and on a European scale through marriages. All these factors contributed to the fact that they were regarded as members of eminent families by their contemporaries. It is estimated that in the first half of the 17th century there were about 16 such families (about 20 % of the magnates), and towards the end of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th centuries the magnates constituted only 40 % of all senators. Sitting in the senate with people of more modest background, they still held most of the crucial offices in the country.

The special position of the magnates in both the society and the state was a result of a situation whereby the estate of townsmen was not sufficiently developed to form ties at the scale of the whole country. In older historiography, the role of the magnates in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was unanimously judged negatively. It was stressed that the magnate's political and economic domination over the nobility fostered the disintegration and decentralization of the state apparatus (Rebellion of Sandomierz of 1606–1609 and Lubomirski's Rebellion of 1665–1666), hampering reforms. However, Adam Kersten pointed out that some of the magnates had their own reform programs, which was of oligarchic nature and based on the agreements between the king and the senate, the reform of the Sejm, and the limitations placed upon the Golden Liberty.

More recent Polish historiography has presented a thesis according to which it was the king who was responsible for the domination of the magnates in the country. It was the king who voluntarily gave the magnates some of his prerogatives – especially influencing the sejmiks on behalf of the royal court – as a cheaper *modus operandi* than persuading the nobility by the court (Janusz S. Dąbrowski). Nevertheless, in the times of King Jan Casimir nobody noticed that the magnates in the Crown totally dominated the nobles and dictated their political will onto them. The times of the Lubomirski's Rebellion had shaken the links of clientelism and forced the patrons to rebuild the existing structures or to build new ones. This, however, became possible during the times of King Jan III Sobieski's reign.

In the 18th century the nobility was headed by 20–30 grand magnate families (that is, ca. 200–300 men) of appropriate age for holding offices; the members of

these families occupied over a half of lifelong positions in the ministries. During the Wettin age, the magnates managed to take over the governmental apparatus (district offices and military posts), and held sway over the local nobility, which was eager for political advancement. This is why the Saxon advisors who were observing the situation in the Commonwealth around 1733 claimed that:

In order for the Polish king to be able to rule peacefully and with an adequate authority, he cannot evade meeting those who are famous and of merit among the nobility, since that is the only way to control the powerful by the weak and the weak by the powerful.¹⁰⁸

This piece of advice was to be used by Stanisław August Poniatowski at last. The way in which he created his party showed clearly that it was his desire to eradicate the magnates' right to intervene in the royal office distribution competencies.

3.7. The Specificity of the Magnate Patronage in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Ukraine

The actual dependency of the nobility upon the magnates in public life in the Crown was treated as an extralegal situation. In turn, the political system in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which accepted the separate legal and judiciary status of the dependent and feudal nobility (in Lithuania called: *bojarzy* or *ziemianie*), created legal possibilities for the patronage to flourish. The Lithuanian magnates in the 16th and the 17th centuries were the direct heirs of the pre-union feudal lords.

The limited emancipation of the Lithuanian nobility from the overwhelming sway of the magnates was also a result of financial discrepancy – incomparable to the situation in the Crown. According to Witold Sienkiewicz, at the end of the 17th century the Radziwiłłs owned 65 % of the households in the Navahrudak District, and the dependent noblemen constituted 40–50 % of all the nobility in this region. The economy of the great latifundia was run by leaseholders or pledgees who were all representatives of rich and average nobility. This, in turn, perpetuated not only the unity of material interests of the noblemen and the magnates but also the ties of dependence binding them together and the hegemony of the magnate families.

In their political activity, the magnates of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were unconstrained and virtually untouchable in the second half of the 17th century. The Lithuanian Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor's prerogatives to set seal the Tribunal's decrees and irreverence towards the principle of incompatibility made the Lithuanian nobility struggle to change the situation. The noblemen's program was described in the 17th century as a *coequatio iurium* with the Crown. It was carried out only at the election Sejm in 1697, when central officers had their prerogatives

108 Szymon Aszkenazy, *Fryderyk II i August II*, in: *Dwa stulecia XVIII i XIX*, vol. 1, Warsaw 1901, p. 59.

limited and it became possible to have them judged in front of a Tribunal in cases of abuse of power. Successful armed action of the Lithuanian nobility against the Sapieha domination – crowned with the victory in the battle of Olkienniki in 1700 – only eradicated the threat of monopoly of power, but was far from overthrowing the magnates' oligarchy.

The nobility of central and eastern Ukraine constituted a much smaller percentage of people than in ethnic Poland. The traditional financial discrepancies within the nobility had not been eradicated in the course of the 16th century and a separate group was created there known as the princelings (Polish: *królewiczy*), who were economically and politically omnipotent. Their position was based not only on their huge latifundia but also on their fortunes, which in several cases outgrew the Commonwealth's budget. In the Kiev and the Bratslav regions, buying out the land of local boyars, who were able to sell out their grounds on the basis of the Second Lithuanian Statute of 1566 formed these huge landholdings. In the Dnieper delta the magnate latifundia – for example, the Transdniper Estates owned by the Wiśniowiecki family – emerged through the process of populating empty lands.

3.8. Groups at the Margins of the Noble Estate

A growing tendency to close down the access ways to the noble estate was a mirror reflection of the actual deterioration of its significance, the increase of financial discrepancies between its different echelons, legal promotions within its ranks and illegal attempts of ambitious individuals to gatecrash their way into it, and, finally, the growing aspirations of groups situated at its margins: boyars, Cossacks (in Ukraine and Belarus), and Tatars (in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania).

Social relations in the eastern parts of the Commonwealth were marked by porous borders between groups of different formal status (petty nobility, boyars, burghers, and Cossacks), which were often forced to conjointly confront the dangers of the Tatar and brigands' raids. Instead of estate unity, what was noted was the solidarity of the "armed people" that contributed to the emergence of the unique social structure in the borderland areas.

The Cossacks in the 16th century Ukraine were also known as *dobycznicy* or *uchodnicy*, as they searched for game or swept the so-called *uchody* (special areas for fishing, hunting, occasionally meadows for grazing), usually located on the banks of the Dnieper River and its tributaries. The Cossacks' main income was war booties and ill-gotten gains. They were free people, organized in territorial regiments called *sotnie*. The stratification of the Cossacks was a process which started relatively early: the richer ones who had their own landholdings (the so-called *włości*) and the poorer ones called *hołyszczacy*, who made their living solely on fishing and plunder; the highest rank was the elders – officers, recruited from the Ukrainian petty nobility.

Some Cossacks settled down in the lower Dnieper area; they were called the Zaporizhians, or the People of Sich, because their centre was the Zaporizhian Sich, a fortified camp on the island of Khortytsia, the only permanent settlement in the

area. For the wintertime, the Cossacks left a few hundred people to guard Sich and came back to their landholdings in the starostwa of: Cherkasy, Kaniv, Bila Tserkva, Pereyaslav (and in starostwa established later), Korsun, and Chyhyryn. The Sich commander was a Hetman (Ataman) of the Zaporizhian Army, who was elected (like the rest of the Zaporizhian Army) and subordinated to the starosta of Cherkasy.

Along with the development of the Sich, Polish authorities tried to subjugate some of the Cossacks by offering them royal soldier's pay. Stephen Bathory's plenipotentiary, Jancza Beger, reached an agreement in September 1578 in Lviv, titled *Postanowienie z Nizowcami* (*Accord with the Zaporizhian Cossacks*), whereby 500 Cossacks were given soldier's pay and were enrolled into the register; hence, they came to be called the Registered Cossacks. The number of the Cossacks serving the Commonwealth fluctuated. When a need arose, volunteers were sign up to the army (from ca. 1000 in 1590 to 60–70.000 in 1616–1622), but the tendency was to limit the register of those who were paid on a regular basis (1–3.000 in 1617, 6.000 in 1625, 7–8.000 in 1630–1637). The Cossacks who did not find themselves in the register, were to be turned into burghers or peasants, and the attempts to turn them into serfs were direct causes of the Cossack uprisings.

In the first half of the 17th century, the Cossacks continued to insist on receiving the estate privileges of the Commonwealth's elites, while the nobility continued to reject their claims. Since the 1620s, the problem of fast development of Cossack army raised a lot of concern of the nobility. However, the armed conflicts with Sweden and Muscovy created a demand for the Zaporizhian army – light cavalry and especially infantry – so the register was either increased or decreased, depending on the agreements between the Crown Hetmans and the Cossack elders in 1618–1638. On the one hand, this opened the way for the Cossack elders to obtain privileges, but on the other, it inspired a lot of turmoil among the Ukrainian peasants and burghers, as they wanted to achieve at least legal autonomy.

Cossack demands to take part in the political life of the Commonwealth stemmed from the fact that they perceived themselves as the members of the noble estate. However, in the nobility's eyes they were peasants and rebels, even though some of the elders were indeed noblemen or boyars. There was growing hostility between the Cossacks and the Commonwealth that sprang from the way in which the Cossacks were treated: they were, on the one hand, deprived of hope to legally acquire the status of noblemen and the Sejm constitutions referred to them as the "traitors and enemies," while on the other hand, they were summoned for military service. The Cossacks proved that they were skilled soldiers during the Khotyn campaign against Turkey in 1621 under the command of Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny. After his death in 1622 the Cossacks seeing themselves as protectors of the Orthodox Church and its illegally reestablished in 1611 hierarchy against the Union of Brest became involved in a conflict with the rest of the Commonwealth. As a response to the Cossack rebellions in the 1630s, their autonomy was taken away in 1638, and the registered Cossack were subjected to the Polish commissioners and colonels. During the 10 peaceful years of Wladislaus IV's reign (1638–1648) – thanks to the inflow of people it became possible for the magnate latifundia to flourish, yet the

same factors contributed to ethnic and social strife, to the point of leading to the Khmelnytsky Uprising, the creation of the Cossack state together with the idea of complementing the Commonwealth of Both Nations with a third nation – Ukrainian as the Duchy of Ruthenia.

Unlike the Cossacks, the Tatars did not reveal such strong aspirations to social advancement. They were Muslims settled in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and since the 15th century were burdened with compulsory military service. The first wave of Muslim settlers were the people of Turkish descent, whose countries were created as a result of the disintegration of the Golden Horde. Since the 16th century, the Tatars who settled in the Crown were the inhabitants of the Khanate of Kazan and Khanate of Astrakhan, destroyed by Ivan the Terrible, as well as the refugees from Crimea.

Large groups of the Tatars (ca. 5000 in 1631, 7000–10000 in 1661) inhabited the Smolensk land, the Niemen regions in Lithuania, Podolia, Red Ruthenia, and Volhynia. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Tatars received land from the Grand Duke (the so-called *tatarszczyzny*, sing. *tatarszczyzna*) in return for military service in separate Tatar units. That is how the groups of Hospodar Tatars (who had serfs working for them) and Tatar-Cossacks (who cultivated land themselves) emerged. In terms of status both these groups were very close to the noble estate. Together with the elders (*knjaz*), other Tatar groups, who did not belong to military families, came to Lithuania: private (personally dependent) and urban Tatars. They settled down in crown lands and magnate lands or Lithuanian cities – where they created the so-called Tatar suburbs. They were often carters, tanners or farmers cultivating vegetables.

The Hospodar Tatars, who served in the army were considered the elite. They created self-governing bodies of military and territorial nature: *chorąstwa* (*sciahy*), probably developed from tribal groups, as they kept their individual names (Juszyn banner, Najman banner, Kondrat banner, Jałoir banner, Bahryn banner). Each *chorąstwo* was headed by a standard-bearer holding his office for life (in practice, it was hereditary). He was appointed by the king following the Hetman's recommendation. The standard-bearer had command over a unit at a given territory, ran the tax evidence, and was in charge of both military and civil court cases. He was assisted by a marshal, who was also nominated by the king and had similar competences. The Tatar aristocracy could use the title of *soltan*, while other hospodar Tatars could use the title of *murza*. The middle layer of the Tatar society used the title *ulan*. Urban Tatars did not have municipal, but only confessional organization. The mulla was in charge of religious jurisdiction and metrical registration. He was also a spiritual leader of the community. Tatars had religious freedom within the Commonwealth. In the Crown, however, the Tatar captives were forcibly baptized until the end of the 15th century. The sejms of 1556–1557 and 1569 allowed Muslims to build mosques after obtaining the king's personal consent and the consultations with a local bishop. In practice, the limitations were rarely imposed in such situations. Around 1600, there were mosques in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Vilnius, Trakai, Minsk, Navahrudak, Ostrog, and 5 other cities; in the 17th century, 16 new mosques were built. In 1672, after the Turks conquered Kamianets-Podilskyi,

the Sejm issued a constitution prohibiting the building of new mosques in private landholdings in the Crown. As a result, the Podolia Tatars (or the so-called Lipka Tatars) rebelled and fled to Turkey. As it turned out, this country was completely alien to them and after the restriction decree was abolished in 1677, they came back to the Commonwealth.

The social status of the Hospodar Tatars was rather unsteady and depended on the politics of particular rulers, as they did not have any privileges as a group and were subjected to legal limitations, especially in terms of political rights. Muslim Tatars could not serve as deputies to the Sejm, deputies to the Lithuanian Tribunal, judges in land or borough courts, and did not participate in local sejmiks. Their legal and economic position was better than that of the dependent nobility, which was subject to the feudal law, while the Hospodar Tatars, against the parliamentary restrictions of 1616, held their landholdings according to the law of the nobles. Personal freedom, landholdings, and military service placed them socially in the vicinity of the nobles and that is exactly how they were treated by their noble neighbours. It is important to notice that the factor, which bound Tatars and the nobility together was the fact that tax registers (of hearth tax) placed the Tatar landowners among the district nobility. Even though their social status was questioned in the first half of the 17th century, and today is still debated (Piotr Borawski, Stanisław Kryczyński, Andrzej Zakrzewski), they obtained a confirmation of their rights and privileges as a group (the constitution of 1673), and in the 19th century the tsarist government placed them among the average nobility (Russian: *dvorianstvo*).

The Tatar-Cossacks also enjoyed individual freedom, cultivating small pieces of land in return for military or post service as well as other duties for the Grand Duke and his officials. Apart from the Tatar-Cossacks, the Tatar-boyars (landowners) were likewise regarded as servants. Tatar settlements within the magnate latifundia served as recruitment areas for court armies (royal and private). Even though it was not permitted, the Tatars also served as rittermeister in the army. By virtue of the magnate protection, this opened a way of individual promotion to the noble estate.

By keeping their religious distinctiveness, the hospodar Tatars had never been fully assimilated within the noble estate, and conversions to Christian confessions were individual decisions (usually connected to the acts of ennoblement). Their linguistic assimilation was much faster (although it was slower than in the case of the Lithuanians): Ruthenization in the 16th century and Polonization in the 17th century. In the second half of the 17th century, the Tatar nobility was mostly Polonized, while the urban Tatars yielded themselves to the Belarusian influence.

4. The Clergy: Estate or Estates?

4.1. Catholic Clergy

The Catholic clergy (secular and regular) did not exceed ca. 0.5 % of the whole population until the end of the 18th century. Especially the male orders grew fast (7.500 in 1650 to 14.500 in 1772). Most of the regular clergy were mendicant orders

(Dominicans, Franciscans, Observants), as well as Carmelites and Capuchins, and the teaching orders: Jesuits, Piarists, and Lazarists (Congregation of the Order). Catholic institutions managed well even during the Wettin dynasty anarchy and were not restricted by the state.

4.2. Internal Divisions within the Clergy

The Catholic Clergy “saw itself as a separate estate, and yet it was a group with such divisions and hierarchies that one can speak of an estate structure of this group.”¹⁰⁹ The head of the structure was the episcopate – ecclesiastical magnates, diocese bishops, among whom the first position was the Bishop of Cracow with the title of the Duke of Siewierz. Also the Bishop of Warmia had the title of the Duke of Warmia, answering directly to the pope. The Catholic episcopate was the only representation of the dioceses at the Sejm forum. In 1569, when Podlasie, Volhynia, and Ukraine were incorporated to the Crown, which entered the union with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Royal Prussia, also the bishops from these territories became a part of the senate hierarchy.

Members of the episcopate were guaranteed to participate in legislative process (as senators) and executive authority (as Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, and Referendaries). The bishops, like the lay senators, voted individually. They were not much more supportive for the king than the regalist senators, and those of them who descended from the magnates, represented the political interests of their families. The Polish-Lithuanian episcopate very rarely took a unanimous stand on matters of internal politics (including the church affairs). The practice of developing an undivided stance for the common Sejm sessions was quite rare and was actually adopted as late as the 18th century.

The personality of bishops and their worldview was usually shaped by their earlier work in the Crown and Lithuanian chancelleries, as well as the royal secretariat. This created a conflict between the bishops’ obligation to reside in their dioceses (formulated during the Council of Trent) and their public involvement. When the ordinaries had to serve as resident senators, the suffragan bishops, who did not have judiciary competences, performed their diocesan duties. The number of the suffragan bishops significantly increased in the course of the 17th century, which meant that new lucrative posts were created.

All bishops were at the same time owners of vast land property. The primates had Łowicz as their sovereign principality, completely released from paying even symbolic sums of one grzywna for the state treasury by king Casimir Jagiellon. All in all, the primate owned 360 villages, a few cities, and 1 m zlotys of income in the second half of the 18th century. The social standards followed by the bishops diverged from those established by the Council of Trent: their lifestyle was similar

109 Antoni Mączak, in: Ireneusz Ichnatowicz, *Spółeczeństwo polskie od X do XX wieku*, Warsaw 1996, p. 275–276.

to that of the lay magnates, with whom they had family ties and from whom they were far richer (in Great Poland, Prussia and Masovia). The elements of splendor exhibited by the ecclesiastical magnates were similar to those of the lay magnates: they maintained large courts, armies and retinues of feudal noblemen that were used to demand obedience not only among the townsmen (especially Protestant), but sometimes also among the regular clergy. They built their residencies, which were rarely located in the diocesan capital. The primates resided in Skierniewice and Łowicz, the Bishops of Płock in Pułtusk, the Bishops of Włocławek Wolborz, and the Bishops of Cracow in Bodzentyn, and later in Kielce.

The nobility approved of the high status of the clergy, as they expected them to represent the majesty of the Commonwealth with dignity and to employ the noble youth. The bishops had their protégés among the nobility and their relatives – from the end of the 17th century especially the Załuski and the Szembek family received a lot of offices – including ordinary and suffragan bishops). It is therefore possible to state that the ecclesiastical magnates constituted a separate and mighty group, analogous to the lay magnates.

The upper clergy may be called the spiritual nobility, because only they could hold some offices like the chapter and collegiate canons, and since 1538 abbots. Burghers had access only to five seats in the chapter, which were restricted to those holding academic titles (from 1505). The members of the chapter did not have their separate representation in the Sejm, but in fact they took part in its sessions, attended general and local sejmiks, Lithuanian convocations, and Warmia and Siewierz local sejmiks – as bishop attendants and as delegates in specific cases.

The diocesan and regular clergy was mostly of burgher parentage. However, the number of priestly vocations increased also among the petty nobility. For 200 years the profession of Catholic clergyman was subsidized by the state, while the clerical education was financially supported by the papacy.

The source of the parochial clergy's maintenance was money paid by the faithful, land given to the church, and tithes – from the mid-16th century to the 1630s questioned by the majority of the nobility (including Catholics), often appropriated by the upper and regular clergy. Despite the medieval custom that payments for religious services (dictated by the so-called *iura stolae*, the laws of the stole) are voluntary, later practice shows that there was a tendency to establish special fees for such services. Funerals were the most lucrative, weddings the least. The annual income (for Lithuanian parishes at the beginning of the 18th century) was on average 25 % of the parson's income, and was ca. 100–300 zlotys.

Because the Catholic regular and diocesan institutions defended plebeian clergy against the pressure of lay patrons, their social position and living conditions were relatively higher than that of the Orthodox and Uniate clergy, or Protestant ministers, especially in the Crown.

4.3. Clergy of Other Christian Confessions

The non-Catholic Christian clergy, which had similar social functions and also met the estate criteria, was not privileged at all, having no representatives in the Sejm, attended only by their co-believers acting as deputies or senators. Sometimes Orthodox and Protestant priests participated in local and general sejmiks in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Ukraine. Non-Catholic clergy had no legal and judiciary privileges. In 1632, at the convocation sejm there was an initiative to officially recognize the noble status of the Protestant clergy (by judging their cases at the Tribunal). However, this postulate was never implemented, as it met with the resistance of the Catholic episcopate and a part of lay senators.

In the Eastern Churches (Orthodox and Uniate) priesthood was usually hereditary, and not merely determined by rights and duties, as in the case of Latin clergy. However, it was not a closed estate; every free man of different estate could become a priest. For eastern bishops the law stating that only noblemen could hold higher offices was not in force, so in the 16th century there were some plebeians and petty nobles holding higher ecclesiastical offices. In the next centuries, very few serfs took priestly vows, as they had to obtain their lords' written consent. Neither the nobles were very numerous. The clergy was composed mostly of burgher and priestly sons, just as in other estates. Sons were to inherit their fathers' profession and – in this case – a benefice. The number of lay Orthodox priest is hard to establish: ca. 1772, there were 400–700 of them, and at least 100 religious. The number of Uniate parish priests, in turn, is estimated at ca. 10.200 and 960 religious.

The number of Protestant ministers is not known due to the lack of proper research and weak differentiation of the faithful in comparison with the Catholics. The society of the Commonwealth did not face the problem of ministers' families and children, which was present in all Protestant countries. However, there were some famous pastor families in the 16th to the 18th centuries: Kasjuszes in Great Poland and Minwids in Lithuania. Generation after generation, they assumed the role of spiritual guides and represented their communities in the relations with the Catholic clergy and state authorities.

The Reformed and Lutheran ministers came from different estates and social background. It seems that the majority of them came from the burghers, as the nobles were rather discouraged by the lack of the privileges reserved for the Catholic clergy and were able to influence congregations by different means. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, many Reformed ministers came from the nobility: they could marry noblewomen and were treated as the noblemen by their fellow believers. It is no wonder that from the 17th century large groups of Reformed ministers migrated from Little Poland and Great Poland to Lithuania in the search for employment and social advancement.

5. The Burgher Estate?

The term plebeians can be found in Old Polish sources in three different meanings: with regard to one of the urban orders, all non-noble estates or burghers exclusively. From the formal legal perspective, the burgher estate was non-existent in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until 1789. There were, however, autonomous urban republics – or, more precisely, groups of cities governed by separate laws – that continued to compete with each other.

The term *burghers* (Polish: *mieszczanie*) was employed to designate all inhabitants of towns and cities, even though not all of them had the status of a citizen. Urban citizenship was hereditary; newcomers could receive it from the city council, after meeting some conditions (possession of real estate within the city, an urban spouse), or proving the fact of living in a city for at least a year (which was significant for the peasants who had escaped to live in the cities). Each city granted citizenship independently, and having it in one city did not guarantee having it in another. There were different types of citizenship (trade, craft, urban, and suburban) and the *incolat* (corresponding to the form of ennoblement called *scartabellat*). There was a fee for granting the citizenship, usually allotted for the city armoury. A new citizen made a pledge to obey the city council and abide by the city laws, and then his name was written down in a special book of receptions.

5.1. The Size of Cities and the Level of Urbanization

Cities of the Commonwealth varied between themselves in their legal status, economic development, and the number of inhabitants; at the turn of the 16th and 17th century, 8 cities of the Commonwealth had over 10,000 people: Gdańsk, Toruń, Elbląg, Poznań, Lublin, Lviv, and Cracow. Basing on these criteria, one can identify certain groups of cities.

I. The Prussian cities (Gdańsk, Toruń, Elbląg) were characterized by:

1. Economic power: the budget of Gdańsk was 20 times bigger than the state budget in the first half of the 17th century. That is why the city was seen as a threat, accused of dictating prices and attempting to starve the state into submission (hence an old saying Gdańsk-chłauński [Gdańsk-the greedy one]).
2. Political authority: official participation in the Prussian Estates and unofficial participation in the Polish-Lithuanian Sejm (the City Council Secretaries); the city's own diplomacy (in the case of Gdańsk) and foreign residents, which was often the reason for accusations of espionage and treason (the Karnkowski commission of 1574), ambitions of conducting independent foreign policy.
3. High civilizational and educational level: city gymnasia, City Library in Gdańsk, the 17th century rule of "wisemen," print shops, international relations.
4. Confessional and linguistic distinctiveness: German as the official language, the Lutheran faith; a Pole-Catholic could not obtain the citizenship of Gdańsk (the citizenship of Toruń could be received, but with difficulties); political, economic, and cultural relations with the Crown (Polish language teaching, self-study

books and scholarships for the students learning Polish). A similar situation could be found in the cities of Livonia, such as Riga, where it was not the multilinguistic and multicultural councils, but the plebeians (with more direct connections to the economic supplies and internal market), that provided the crucial base for cultural Polonization.

II. Great cities of the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – Cracow, Vilnius, Lviv, Lublin, Poznań, Jarosław, all enjoying royal privileges and legal autonomy (Magdeburg Law) – were also multicultural and multireligious. After 1505, at the time when the General Sejm was developing, they were deprived of their right of active participation in the sessions, and they could only send unofficial observers. Only a few of the cities, whose patriciate was granted the status of the nobility, could send their representatives with the right to vote and only in cases regarding urban issues.

At the same time, however, the patriciate of most cities exhibited decreasing interest in general state matters, focusing on maintaining their city's autonomy and securing its interests. Individual representatives of urban elites and urban intellectuals kept permeating into the political nation either formally – by means of ennoblement, or informally – through marriages with the nobles.

III. Private towns – which were most commonly located in Great Poland and in the Ruthenian territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. According to A. Mączak, most of these cities throughout the 16th to the 17th centuries did not exceed the size of a large village, and as years passed, the differences between the village and the town (or rather, the townlet) faded away. More recent research is far more optimistic in showing that the private founders, especially in Great Poland, looked after their cities, so that they developed “for the purposes of beauty and profit” (Dorota Mazak). This issue requires further inquiry into the situation throughout the Commonwealth.

Economic regression in the middle of the 17th century caused a significant decrease of the urban population. It is estimated that in the middle of the 18th century there were only 1500 towns with formal urban rights, in the Crown in 1775–1776 – only 862, including the so-called “rotten” agricultural towns (90 % or 78 %), where people mostly cultivated land and bred cattle or brewed beer, with around a few dozen to a thousand of inhabitants.

Around 1790, according to optimistic estimates of demographic historians, the burghers constituted ca. 15–16 % inhabitants of the Commonwealth; according to pessimistic estimates it was only 6 % of the population. This true was until the beginning of the 19th century, and resulted from the process of small towns having their civic rights taken away from them. It shows a massive discrepancy between the processes of urbanization in different countries – in England 40 % of the people lived in cities, in France 20–30 %, in Prussia ca. 27 %. The most urbanized areas were: Great Poland (27 %), Royal Prussia (3 big and 34 smaller cities), western Little Poland (173 towns), and Kujavia (129 towns, 21 agricultural); the least urbanized were Belarus and Lithuania, Podlasie (37 towns, 35 agricultural), and Masovia (100 small

agricultural towns). An uncontrolled and unnatural spatial development of Warsaw and high density of buildings in the city highlighted these disproportions.

5.2. Internal Divisions within the Burgher Estate

The urban society – like other estates – was hierarchized. The administration and judiciary were dominated by rich merchants and craftsmen, who were known as the patricians (ca. 5 % of all urban inhabitants).

The patricians of big towns (especially in Royal Prussia) had the capital, which was even higher than the magnates' fortunes. They also had more political influence than the nobility of a given region. The source of their wealth was mostly trade, usury, and credit operations, especially loans delivered to the nobility. In terms of culture and, the urban elites followed the example of the magnates and nobility by creating exclusive associations reserved only for the patrician families. Their difference from the craftsmen was stressed by their clothing and lifestyle. Also the possession of hereditary real estate (such as tenements in the city or manors in the countryside) was a sign of prestige and of belonging to the elite.

The organs of the patricians were the city council and the judiciary bench. The council had administrative, judiciary, and legislative competences (the right to issue the so-called *wilkierze* (German: *Wilkür*), which were the decrees regulating economic issues in large cities, and the so-called *ortyle* (German: *Urteil*), which were the admonitions regarding controversial issues between the inhabitants of smaller towns); it also served the function of the notary that kept the land registers confirming the sales. Moreover, it was an appellate organ considering the sentences of the judicial benches in the field of the judiciary (for example, in the trading cases). The judicial bench, in turn, was composed of tradesmen (representatives of guilds), and was the first instance court in civil and criminal cases.

The city councils were composed of 4–16 councillors either elected for a lifetime (Cracow, Gdańsk) or periodically re-elected from among the privileged urban “aristocratic families.” These councils constituted the first order. They represented the city in its external relations (with other urban republics and with the king), supervised the internal organization of the cities, looked after safety and order, and conducted independent financial transactions. Since the beginning of the 16th century, they were limited by the populace and lost their power in favour of the immigrant noblemen. Finally, they were dissolved by the Constitution of May 3.

The second group (in terms of importance and wealth) in cities was composed of common retailers (constituting ca. 60 % of the urban population): who could not participate in the city council, as they received their citizenship later, and vendors and craftsmen (masters, sometimes journeymen). This group was constantly growing thanks to the newcomers, who were receiving civic rights. Some exceptional individuals among the newcomers were even able to achieve the status of patricians. The competition between the patricians and the common people over financial control and civil power led to the creation of collegial municipal institutions in the 1520s and throughout the 17th century, which grouped 20 and 40 men (tradesmen

and craftsmen) who were responsible for controlling the financial management of the city councils and eliminating the instances of overt abuse.

Sometimes the general assemblies of all urban inhabitants were held, which debated over current financial needs and presented them to the city council. The populace assemblies were divided into orders according to the guild divisions, and in the multiethnic cities – according to ethnicity. The development of the common people caused the decline of the institution of 20 and 40 men as the institution representing the lower echelons of the town populations.

The lowest social group of the townspeople was the plebs; people having no citizenship and civic rights, but at the same time subject to the urban legislation and courts. They also had several duties towards the city (the domestic service, apprentices, journeymen, petty craftsmen, vendors) and constituted ca. 1/3 of the urban population (especially in large cities). In the 17th century, among the plebs one could find suburban townsmen, living outside the city walls, usually cultivating vegetables and performing all sorts of small seasonal and casual jobs. As the plebs was usually an unproductive if rebellious social group, the authorities always sought to prevent its growth. The rest of the inhabitants were the social margin (beggars, prostitutes, peasant escapees, the so-called “loose people”) and the nobles or clergymen who had their possessions within the city walls.

The mechanisms of status stratification and hierarchization of the burghers were strikingly analogous to those found in the noble estate. The latter owned the Commonwealth in the same way the patricians owned the urban republics. The analogy is even more accurate, since the patricians were also permeating into the magnate families (Boners and Morsztyns from Cracow and Werdens from Gdańsk); rich urban families from Gdańsk and Toruń had their representatives in the chapter houses and episcopal sees of Royal Prussia.

Also the common people, in its struggle to gain power in the cities, can be compared to the average nobility organized in the so-called Executionist Movement striving to overcome the magnates.

The “anti-luxury bills” – issued by the patricians under the pretext of cutting unproductive expenses – were in fact directed against the lower echelons of townsmen. In the 17th and 18th centuries similar restrictions were introduced by the sejm constitutions whose authors were the more “willing to have the noble estate different *a plebeis*” the less noticeable actual differences were.

These conflicts were not that visible in private towns, since from the perspective of a town owner, all the inhabitants were simply his subjects. Yet these townspeople were affected in various ways by conflicts with starostas, especially regarding the peasant’s duties (*tłoki*), which were mostly burdened on the poorest. It seems that the image created by the literature (Sebastian Fabian Klonowic, “O pragnieniu urzędów abo dostojeństwa,” in: *Worek Judaszów* [“On the Yearning for Offices and Dignities,” in: *A Sack of Judases*], 1600; Adam Władysławiusz, *Wzdychanie obywatelów niektórych miast* [*Sighing of the Citizens of Certain Towns*], 1613; Krzysztof Opaliński *O sposobach pomnożenia miast i na nierząd w nich* [*On the ways of Multiplying Towns on the Methods of Dealing with Corruption therein*], 1644–1649) is

rather exaggerated, and the situation of the inhabitants of private towns was not much worse than the situation of those living in royal cities – especially in Great Poland and Ukraine.

5.3. The Decrease of the Burghers' Participation in Public Life

The main factor, which could have stimulated the participation of burghers in the Sejm sessions and the creation of the third estate, was the tax exemption of this estate. The duties that the townsmen had to pay were strictly defined by the settlement privileges and all extraordinary taxes needed the city council's formal consent. Thus, as in the case of the nobility the king had to appeal to the towns to get the money he needed. Theoretically, this gave the Commonwealth's burghers the chance to reach equally independent political position as that enjoyed by their counterparts in several other European countries.

The decline of the development of privileges for the cities had many reasons: their mutual competition; the ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences among the patricians, hindering the possibility to establish their unified representation; the nobility's "anti-burgher" politics, which subjected them to the jurisdiction of voivodes (1497); the prohibition for the townsmen and "people of common condition" to buy "towns, villages, farms, and other estates" (1496, 1611; with the exception of "private citizens" of Cracow and the Prussian towns 1621); and, finally, the imposition of the annual duty to "clear the city's accounts" before the starosta (1620, 1631). There were two distinctive tendencies in the sejm constitutions: the exclusion of some categories of the townsmen from the jurisdiction of the general law and the particular treatment of town affairs – for example, granting Poznań, Lviv, Warsaw (1674, 1733), Vilnius and other cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1673, 1677) the rights of the "capital cities," or introducing the laws conferring particular privileges upon individual cities.

As a result of the prohibition for the townsmen to hold the state offices or the higher church offices (1505 and 1538) and the lack of their parliamentary representation, they had been slowly losing their position of the third estate of the Commonwealth. The deputies to the Sejm from the cities, whose patricians or all citizens were granted the nobility's rights as a recognition of their cities' merits for the state – such as Cracow, Vilnius (since 1569), Lviv (since 1658), Kamianets-Podilsky (since 1670) and Lublin (since 1703) – had a say only in matters regarding the cities' affairs, without being allowed to vote.

Royal Prussia remained an exception for quite a long time. The tradition of interconnections between cities lasted there, and during the convocation of the estates (since 1569 the Prussian General Sejmik), the townsmen had an equal position with the nobility; the small towns' representatives were removed from the sejmik in the second half of the 17th century. In 1587–1595 the officials (*syndycy*) from Gdańsk had re-interpreted the political status of Prussian cities, and the new resolution was that in case of a conflict the king or the higher officials could not act against the cities without the Sejm's approval. The relationship of Royal Prussia to the nobility

was also stressed by Protestantism – as the Prussian cities embraced Reformation confessions – especially Lutheranism.

The Prussian city councils (of Gdańsk and Toruń) continued to send their observers to the Sejm. These observers kept the diaries of the sessions and maintained lively contacts with royal clerks, senators, and the influential nobility (both Protestant and Catholic), and thereby influenced crucial state decisions – for instance, the end of Stephen Bathory’s war with Gdańsk in 1577 and Wladislaus Jagiellon’s fights for the share of the customs income in Gdańsk, 1638–1639.

The decline of Prussian cities was parallel to the weakening position of the Protestant nobility. Even Gdańsk’s loyalty towards the Commonwealth during the Deluge and the Great Northern War did not convince the Catholic noble majority to cooperate permanently with the Lutheran burghers. At the same time, it became harder and harder for the city councils to convince their citizens that being loyal to the Commonwealth was more beneficial than supporting Lutheran Brandenburg. In fact, it was the result of the Commonwealth’s polity that resulted in the particularism of Royal Prussia in the second half of the 18th century.

5.4. Methods of Bribing the Urban Elites

The urban issue in the noble Sejm legislation was perceived strictly as a mercantile problem. Despite their envy the noblemen did recognize the significance of the merchant aristocracy, and therefore sought to ally with the patricians. The following methods were employed:

1. Group ennoblement: for instance, granted to Lviv in 1658 for the townsmen’s bravery shown in the fighting against Bohdan Khmelnytsky, in spite of the fact that it was the plebeians, and not the patricians, who were of merit. In 1685 the patricians were summoned to the Tribunal, as they had not fulfilled their obligation of arms.
2. Individual acts of ennoblement: nobilitations and indygenats given to a number of families in the 16th century: the Melsztyyskis, the Tarnowskis, the Jordans, the Wierzynek (later Wielopolscy), the Firlejs, the Boners, the Morsztyns, the Szembeks, the Wodzickis; the years, when most ennoblements were granted were 1676 and 1691.
3. Marriages on the levels of both the magnates and average nobility (despite the institution of scartabellat). Such marriages meant social degradation, but financial advancement.
4. Involvement of the nobility in urban activities by not respecting escheats – suppressing of the urban activities; the exemptions and jurydykas (subject to the landowner’s jurisdiction and competing with townsmen).

5.5. Economic Decline of Cities in the Commonwealth

The period until the 1630s was “the silver age” of the Polish-Lithuanian townsmen and new private towns were founded at that time. The decline commenced in the

mid-17th century, when soldiers started to station in cities, and the destruction of the Cossack and Swedish wars, the Great Northern War, and outbreaks of plague (1707–1709) followed.

As a result of these events, the old municipal structures became disintegrated and dissolved, because the magistrate had minor influence on the taxation decisions, the unpaid services for the private owners or starostas were extorted, and the conflicts between the townspeople deprived of citizenship and the city authorities ensued. What was noted was the lack of interest in gaining the urban citizenship. Instead, what became popular was the servitariat, which during the reign of the Wettin dynasty was conferred to the non-Catholics: Germans, Frenchmen, and Russians. The exemptions from the jurisdiction of the municipal law and the subjections under the law of the nobility destroyed the unity of urban organization (granted by kings to individual households and noble manors within the city walls in the 17th and the 18th centuries). As a result, a massive part of the urban real estate was out of the urban jurisdiction and therefore did not pay taxes. Also the church jurydykas (taking up an increasing percentage of the cities' areas throughout the 17th and the 18th centuries) were excluded from the jurisdiction of the municipal laws. At the same time, the number of Jews living in the cities increased together with the level of their emancipation from the authorities: they constituted up to ⅓ of the urban population, and yet were outside the legal structure of the cities.

The devastating wars and natural disasters of the second half of the 17th century caused the demise of the old patriciate whose members attempted to gain ennoblement. The new urban elites emerging from the third quarter of the 17th century relied on their financial capital rather than the estate privileges. In the mid-18th century, the townsmen were no longer an estate, and most of the Commonwealth consisted of orderless groups of people without any urban features. As the result the Enlightenment reforms was not the recovery of the burgher estate on the model of the old estate laws, but rather the creation of the new burghers (or bourgeois), which would be marked by a new social composition and based on modern legal regulations.

6. The Peasant Estate?

There was no peasant estate in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th to the 18th centuries. The villagers were not subject to unified legal regulations and yet they were a very diversified group in terms of land use and jurisdiction. Most of the peasants living in the Crown had the status of serfs, unable to leave their land or appeal to dominial (lord's) or state courts. They were deprived of public rights, did not become a part of the political nation, and did not feel the need for identifying with the state. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the peasants were subject to the public law and tried according to the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588). Apart from that, in different provinces and regions of the Commonwealth, there were also variously sized groups of villagers outside the division into the estates of realm. There were *włodycy* (a group with unclear status; between petty nobility and peasants) and *sołtysi* in the Crown, *lemanie* (vassals, obliged to perform military service in

exchange for a land) and free people in Varmia, as well as newly created groups such as ołędrzy and Vlachs.

The issue of the peasant's personal status is questionable. Contrary to the legal historians' claim that they were completely enslaved, it seems that the peasants kept their legal standing, private property, and could even make contracts. Even though they were sold together with the land that they cultivated, it was still the sales of goods rather than human trafficking. Sporadic cases of abuse do not suffice to invalidate this rule. The literary image of the peasants' destitution, toil and oppression was often generalized and exaggerated for propaganda reasons (like in Stanisław Staszic's writings). In reality, brutal abuse of the serfs was not acceptable and if it took place, it was rather in the rented estates, especially in the territorial and civilizational borderlands of the Commonwealth.

Already in the 17th century the Lithuanian magnates asked the state inspectors to listen to the peasants' opinions on the occasion of changing the administrators and tenants of their landholdings. Reforms concerning the crown lands were carried out in the first half of the 18th century as a result of the peasants' pleas and petitions to the referendary court. In the second half of the 18th century, the situation of the peasants was regulated by various village bills issued by the landowners, securing the peasants' hereditary rights to the estate, and at the same time defining the type and amount of the rent that they received.

6.1. Stratification of the Peasants

The changes in the structure of the peasant community in the 16th to the 18th centuries were a direct consequence of feudal economy, which demanded the restriction of the privileges and common liberties granted to various groups of the rural people and the increased influence of the landowners on the life of the community. However, this state of affairs did not modify the structure of the peasant population, which remained formally and informally diversified across the entire Commonwealth.

The *sołtysi* were a privileged group; they were removed from the lands in the second half of the 16th century in the Crown, mainly in the crown and ecclesiastical landholdings. Only in the territories where the landholders had troubles with exercising juridical authority and needed more land for farming, the *sołectwa* survived in the peasants' hands – in the Pomeranian Voivodeship until the Partitions: 89 %, in the crown lands of the Kraków Voivodeship, even in 1772: 40 %. The *sołtysi* and the so-called “free people” were also found in Varmia, where they had relatively more land (16.7 %) than the nobility subjected to the Prussian, Chełmno or Magdeburg Law (11.8 %). There were different categories of the “free people” depending on the size of their farms, the type and amount of duties that they were to pay; what was common were the military duties.

In Royal Prussia and Masovia, both in the crown and ecclesiastical lands, there was a group known as *lemanie*, which was under the jurisdiction of the landholder; initially, they served in the *levée en masse*, and in the 17th and 18th century (instead of

military service) they provided postal and transport services. Just as the *sołtysi*, they soon became the richer layer of the peasantry and the royal court noticed their existence in the second half of the 17th century. The owners of glassworks, steel plants, smithies and mills were in a similar legal situation. Their parcels (insofar as they were a part of the crown lands) could be bought up by the tenants on the strength of the Sejm constitutions of 1563–1564. “The chosen ones” (Polish: *wybrańcy*) were in a better legal position, as their land could not be formally bought. However, in practice their lands were passed on to the nobility.

Also the innkeepers belonged to the richer layer of the peasantry; their occupation was usually hereditary. Initially, they could brew and sell beer, but in the 17th century the propination was taken over by the court and so they could only sell the farm products. Millers, in turn, kept their position even when the court bought up a mill, for, as qualified labourers, they were hard to substitute.

Apart from that the Crown’s peasantry consisted of three different layers: landed peasants (Polish: *kmieć*; Latin *kmetho*), small-farm peasants (Polish: *zagrodnicy*) with little land who had to hire themselves to feed out their families, and landless peasants (Polish: *chalupnicy*, *komornicy*, *czeladź*). The one-lan farms belonging to the landed peasants were divided and in the 16th century, half-lan farms were more common, and in the 17th to the 18th centuries in Little Poland and Masovia, the quarter-lan farms were the most common. The restructuring of agriculture, initiated in the 1660s, was stopped by a new wave of wars, which greatly impoverished the landed peasants. The parallel emergence of new privileged groups signaled an improvement in the living and farming conditions experienced by a limited group of the Commonwealth’s peasants.

6.2. Regional Differentiation of the Rural Population

Apart from its economic and legal differences, the rural population was also regionally differentiated.

In the Ducal Prussia and in Royal Prussia, as well as in Kujavia, bigger landholdings belonged to *gburowie* (sing. *gbur*). In the 16th century, *ołędrzy* (sing. *ołęder*) and Mennonites (a faction of Anabaptists) appeared in the Crown. They were religious refugees from the Netherlands and Friesland, residing also in Masovia, Little Poland, and Volhynia. In 1628 they arrived to Warsaw (to the *Saska Kępa* part of the city). They settled on the grounds, which needed to be dried and secured from floods, on the basis of the long-term (30 to 60 years) contracts signed by the owner of the ground with the whole community or its chosen representatives. They were governed according to their own law, which was similar to the Chełmno Law. They were free people, with their own municipal institutions, separate religious beliefs and habits (rejection of violence and military service, oaths, the imperative of diligence and solidarity). As long as they were economically useful and there was no danger of spreading their doctrine, they were granted tolerance. Only after the First Partition, Prussian authorities forced them to participate in the military service, which is why many of them decided to leave. With the passage of time the group became ethnically

cally heterogeneous: there were Germans and Poles (in the 18th century, 35–38 % in the Poznań Voivodeship), because the already existent villages were transformed and subjected to the Olęder Law.

The Subcarpathian territory was settled by the Vlachs who were immigrants from the Danube region. They were mostly shepherds of cattle and sheep, lived in the private landholdings, and remained much more independent from the noble manors than the peasants. Their head was a knyaz (responsible for the judiciary), whose assistants were called *szalaśnicy*. The Vlachs were easily Polonized and Ruthenized, but at the same time they managed to retain their cultural differences. The Vlach law was sometimes implemented on the villages inhabited by the Poles and the Ruthenians occupied with herding. Like olędrzy, also this group of people was distinct, not in terms of their ethnicity, but in terms of their profession.

In the borderlands of the northern Masovia and Pomerania there was a very unique group of people of Masurian decent known as the Kurpie. They were descendants of the settlers (peasants and petty nobility) arriving from the second half of the 16th century to the wild territories situated near the Narew and its tributaries (the royal Green Wilderness and White Wilderness in the Płock Diocese). Their economy was based on natural resources: hunting, timber processing (tar production), extracting the iron from the bog-iron ore by the opencast method, and especially beekeeping. Agriculture was their side activity from the second half of the 17th century. The Kurpie – as a free people well acquainted with firearms – participated in the defending the Commonwealth against the Swedes (1655–1656, 1708) and against the Saxons and the Russians on Stanisław Leszczyński's side (1733–1735). They refused to obey August III, which is why the Sejm constitution of 1736 condemned “the lawless and rebellious Kurpiks.”¹¹⁰ The constitution was followed by an armed pacification of their territory by the starostas of Ostrołęka and Łomża (1738). The Kurpian peasants were forced to pay overdue taxes and the propination fee was raised and charges for hunting and fishing were imposed on them. They also had to perform feudal duties in the starostas' landholdings.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the folwark economy developed only in the mid-17th century, after the Volok Reform (Polish: *pomiara włóczna*) had been completed. The agrarian structure was largely differentiated there and the peasants' situation was different in each territory. The peasant community living at the basin of the Dvina and Dnieper Rivers was dissolved in the mid-18th century. The family communities were maintained in Samogitia, on the Courland borderland, in the Szawle (currently: Šiauliai) and Poniewież (currently: Panevėžys) districts.

In Ukraine the peasant's duties included mostly the payment of taxes in kind: labour at the fortifications, providing horses or carriages (*podwoda*) or seasonal agricultural work (*tłoki*); the amount of service for the landlord was not calculated on the basis of hearths (Polish: *dymy*), but on the croft (Polish: *zagroda*). The basic

110 Warsaw Sejm Constitutions from the reign of August III, 1736, vol. VI, p. 325, fol. 650, p. 38: “The taming of the lawless Kurpiks”.

form of farm organization was called *khutor* – a group of households inhabited by a couple of generations; this allowed peasants to divide equally among themselves the work needed to discharge their debt (Polish: *odrobek*). The settlers arriving to Dnieper Ukraine were granted 10–30 years exemption from taxes and other duties.

7. Ethnic-Legal Groups

The formal-legal estate barriers actually ran across real social divisions. They did not encompass the groups of incomers, who differed from the natives in their legal status, *ethnos* (a set of characteristic cultural features), hereditary professions, and social functions. Among them, one could find groups living in the Commonwealth from the Middle Ages, either dispersed around the whole country (Jews) or inhabiting some particular territories (Karaites, Tatars, Armenians), as well as the later immigrants from Western Europe (olędrzy, Vlachs) and nomads (Scots, Romani).

It is hard to define the position of these groups within the Commonwealth's society. Some historians (A. Mączak) believe that in the Polish context the names such as *Scots* and *Jews* designated, not ethnicity, but rather the profession and social position of these groups in the 16th–18th century Commonwealth. Other scholars (H. Litwin, A. Sulima-Kamiński, M. Markiewicz) posit ethnicity as the most distinctive feature, and all of these groups are by their standards considered as nations – regardless of their number or self-perception.

The features used to distinguish these groups of people have been varied and changeable in time. The Olędrzy were immigrants from the Netherlands and they were to transform into olędrzy – peasants of many ethnicities, who followed specific ways of cultivating land. The Vlachs were professional shepherds organized according to the Vlach Law. Legal and demographic features have determined the unique position of Jews in the Commonwealth from the 15th century. They might be referred to as a separate estate without a political representation: as an especially numerous group, comparable in size only to the nobility, they were granted royal privileges, as well as judiciary and municipal autonomy. Their ethnic (religious, linguistic, cultural) distinctiveness was rather of secondary importance. There were also people in the Commonwealth who were on the margins of law due to the declassification, excluding them from the estate society (the loose people), or because of their lifestyle (the Romani).

The legal situation of all of these groups was different in the countryside and in cities. The Jewish, Armenian, and Scottish inhabitants of urban areas had municipal rights, whereas other immigrants did not have any formal confirmation of their distinctive status, but supported each other within their group and maintained professional solidarity (e.g. the Italian tradesmen in the Cracow city council), which cannot be simply identified with ethnic solidarity: there was no special bond between Italian tradesmen and Italian artists, or between Scottish soldiers and Scottish vendors). In all these cases the distinguishing factor was the legal status of a group, which is why the expression *ethnic-legal groups* seems more appropriate than *nationalities* or *nations* – an anachronism suggesting a domination of ethnicity in

the multiethnic, multicultural, and multilinguistic society of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

7.1. The Scots

The emigration of Scots began in the 15th century and it progressed until the 17th century. It was usually connected to religious and economic issues, and its routes ran towards Germany, Sweden, and Poland. Scottish population in the Commonwealth lived mostly in Great Poland, Lithuania, and in the Prussian countryside.

It is usually assumed that Scots settled on the territories of the Crown in the 15th century. However, according to more recent research, the processes in question might have begun already in the 14th century. Basing on the Crown's register of tithe-paying Scots and Englishmen (1651), one may assert that the Scottish population lived in approximately 119 towns, and inhabited rural areas only in Prussia. In the Crown the largest clusters of immigrants were: Gdańsk, Poznań, Warsaw, Cracow, Lublin, Zamość, and Lviv. In Prussia, the Scots settled especially in Chełmno and Elbląg and, to a much lesser extent, in the suburbs of Toruń. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania a wave of Scottish settlers came not only to Vilnius but also to the estates belonging to magnate families (for example, to the Radziwiłłs).

First Scottish tradesmen were granted citizen rights in the 16th century; also first royal decrees against this group date back to this time: the trade restrictions (1537 in Prussia, 1551 in the Crown), which were renewed and extended throughout the 17th century, prove the mass nature of their immigration. It is estimated that there were 37,000 Scots in the Crown in the first half of the 17th century. However, this figure is imprecise for various reasons, including a considerable mobility of the Scottish merchants.

The Scottish community in the early modern Commonwealth was confessionally diversified. The first to arrive were Catholic immigrants, who fled from their homeland's puritan restrictions. Subsequently, the Presbyterians, and then Calvinists (since the first half of the 17th century) came to the Crown's cities (for example, to Cracow). The Scottish communities were often small – they consisted of not more than a couple of families. They maintained strong ties of identity and kept speaking their own language until the mid-17th century. The influx of Scots to the Commonwealth decreased later and a significant number of rich Scottish families became Polonized in the 18th century. Their municipal organization consisted of brotherhoods, which were created in all urban centres of the Crown. At the end of the 16th century they were subjected to the jurisdiction of a separate court (Polish: *sejm główny szotski*), which dealt with imposing and collecting taxes. In 1603 these competences were passed on to the Scottish “general,” captain Abraham Young nominated by the king. This idea, however, turned out to be off the mark. In 1616, in the Duchy of Prussia a collegial self-government of the Scots was established, and it was dominated by rich Scottish tradesmen who had citizen rights.

The Scots were occupied mostly with trade, and operated outside of the corporate guild system of city trade. The most characteristic field of their activity was the

door-to-door trade: cheap and poor quality goods (low quality cloth, wool, metal haberdashery, clothes); soon the word *szot* (as *Scot* was pronounced) became a synonym for a door-to-door tradesman. The activity of the Scottish hucksters was widely criticized by the cities, but it met with the king's approval as his additional source of income. Also the nobility approved of it, because it made it possible to limit direct contacts of the peasants with the cities.

7.2. The Armenians

The Armenians were emigrants from the Transcaucasia, dispersed in Podolia, in the vicinity of Lviv, and in Little Poland. The Polish Armenians spoke the Armeno-Kipchak language, which was a mixture of the Armenian language with the Turkish dialects. In the 16th to the 17th centuries their position became more significant, stimulating the development of their settlements in Ruthenia, Volhynia, and Ukraine. Most of them lived in cities: Lviv, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Lutsk, Kiev, Stanisławów (currently: Ivano-Frankivsk), Yazlovets (Polish: *Jazłowiec*), Zolochiv (Polish: *Złoczów*), Zamość, Bar, Mogilev. There were 6,000–15,000 of Armenians in the Commonwealth in the mid-17th century, and 3,000–3,500 in 1664.

It was King Casimir III the Great who granted the Armenians judiciary and religious autonomy in 1356. Their self-government was of local nature: each of their communities had its own budget, kept tax records and collected taxes, maintained order, and organized schools and charity. Their villages were usually headed by the vogts (Polish: *wójt*) who presided over both the judicial courts (benches) and the councils, which were in charge of the executive power. They also had the so-called council of 40 brethren, representing the populace, and an ecclesiastical court (*chuc*), which comprised of the eresphans (the church elders). The Armenian customary law of the 12th century (the *Datastanagirk Code*) was confirmed by the king in 1509 and later complemented by Jan III Sobieski, and it remained in force until 1780–1781, when the separate Armenian judiciary was abolished. The Armenian court records from the 16th century were written in Polish, using the Armenian alphabet, and in the 17th century in Latin. The oldest preserved statute written in Polish dates back to 1519.

The unique position of the Armenians in the Commonwealth stemmed from their trade contacts with the East, especially Persia and Turkey. They imported luxurious textiles and eastern handicraft, and managed to monopolize this market in the 16th to the 18th centuries. The Armenians were also craftsmen, mostly weavers (producing the Polish belts from Stanisławów and Brody), embroiderers, and goldsmiths (Lviv, Zamość). They made ornate weapons, tents, harnesses, and became famous for implementing in the Crown the oriental patterns of production and ornamentation. Moreover, by virtue of their knowledge of oriental languages, they were valuable middlemen in economic, diplomatic, and cultural relations with Turkey, Moldavia, and Wallachia. They were also brave soldiers and loyal citizens of both the Commonwealth in general and individual town republics. They often sacrificed their own financial means in the times of danger (for example, in Lviv in

1648). Many Polish Armenians were ennobled and the Armenian nobility became Polonized in the second or third generation. However, they had maintained their own religion and culture.

7.3. The Karaites

The Karaites were an ethnic-confessional group of Turkish descent, established in the Crimea in the 13th century. They professed a modified version of Judaism, and in the Commonwealth they used the Kipchak language. According to their own tradition, the Karaites came to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after Vytautas's (Polish: *Witold*) victorious march into the Crimea in 1397. In the 15th century there were Karaite groups in Trakai, Lutsk, and Lviv, and in the 16th century in Halych, Zhydachiv (Polish: *Żydaczow*), Vilnius, Biržai, Upytė (Polish: *Upita*), Kėdainiai (Polish: *Kiejdany*), Zhovkva (Polish: *Żółkiew*), and Kukeziv (Polish: *Kukizów*).

It is estimated that there were 2.000 Karaites in the mid-17th century and 4.300 in 1790. They were mostly craftsmen (tanners, weavers) and tradesmen. Initially, they were not distinguished from Jews, so they enjoyed legal privileges reserved for this group. With the passage of time individual Karaite communities were being granted separate privileges. The best-known Karaite municipality was in Trakai (the so-called Trakai Jews). The head of this institution was a vogt chosen by the voivode. He was in charge of administration and taxation and supervised the elected court of law. The Karaite religion was based on the Old Testament, but it rejected the Jewish tradition. Their liturgical language was Hebrew. Only a small group of the Karaites decided to convert to Catholicism, which would grant them ennoblement.

7.4. The Jews

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth the name *Jews* was applied to those, who professed Judaism and have been living in the diaspora since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (70 C.E.) and the collapse of Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 C.E.). The fact of living in the diaspora for so many centuries contributed to massive diversification of this group. Yiddish – the common language of European Jews developed from German, Hebrew, as well as Slavic and Romance languages; its written form was based on the Hebrew alphabet. The Jews had been living in the Polish Kingdom since the 10th century, and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania since the 14th century, but it was as late as in the 16th century when the Commonwealth attracted a mass immigration of Jews. Among the incomers there were mostly the Ashkenazi Jews, exiled from the Habsburg states (Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, and Silesia), and also – albeit to a much lesser extent – the Sephardi Jews from Spain and other Romance countries.

From the end of the 16th until the end of the 18th century, the Commonwealth was the largest centre of European Jewry, in the mid-16th century there were 150.000 Jews inhabiting mostly cities (80 % of the general number). In large cities they lived within enclosed districts (ghettos), while in smaller private cities they

had separate streets to live in (similarly to other ethnic-legal groups). According to the Piotrków Sejm regulation (1538), Jews were obliged to wear special clothing (yellow hats), but it never took effect. In the 17th century, Jewish trade and production centres were flourishing, which was evident against the backdrop of the crisis prevailing in Polish cities. Still, in the ghettos of royal cities the Jewish poor could hardly make a living.

The legal autonomy of the Jews of the Commonwealth was a result of a range of privileges granted to them by Polish dukes and kings in the 13th century as well as by Lithuanian Grand Dukes in the 15th century. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (the First Lithuanian Statute of 1529) and in the Crown (King Sigismund's privilege of 1539) Jews were excluded from the jurisdiction of the voivodes' courts and had their own judiciary, also in the private cities where they enjoyed other special privileges. The cases between Jews and noblemen were decided by the borough court, while the cases between Jews and burghers were settled either by the patrimonial court (in private cities), or according to the Magdeburg Law.

In 1539, at the Piotrków Sejm, the Crown's noblemen were granted jurisdiction over Jews in private cities and villages. As a result, the Jewish inhabitants' standing was different in different parts of the Commonwealth: there were cities where they were free to be tradesmen and craftsmen, and cities where they could not work, or even live (the privilege *De non tolerandis Iudaeis*). Some districts and cities were specifically restricted for Jews who managed to implement a law prohibiting Christians from living in these areas (the privilege *De non tolerandis christianis*). The town of Kazimierz near Cracow, (1564, 1658), the Poznań Jewish community (1633) and all Lithuanian communities (1645) were granted this privilege.

In the 16th century Sigismund I created in Great Poland and Little Poland the general seniorities governed by the richest Jewish entrepreneurs who had connections with the royal court. Even though these institutions turned out to be temporary, they made it possible for the Jews to achieve full municipal autonomy, which was found nowhere in the rest of Europe. At the local level, the Jewish municipality consisted of kahals – religious communities headed by seniors (the *parnasim*); there was also an independent control council (*towim*) and specialized committees. The members of a kahal were subordinated to a rabbi who had a final say both in religious and municipal matters. The second level of the municipality was a land (2 in Great Poland, 3 in Little Poland, and 1 in Red Ruthenia), which in the first half of the 16th century constituted an association of kahals, governed by chosen delegates and a land rabbi approved by the king. The central organs were: the Sejm of Four Lands (Polish: *Sejm Czterech Ziem*; Hebrew: *Va'ad Arba' Aratzot*) – before 1581, and the Lithuanian Sejm (Hebrew: *Va'ad Medinat Lita*) – 1623. The origin of these institutions is associated with the fact that in the second half of the 16th century all Jews were obliged to pay a toll tax, and later (since 1629) also a hearth tax, and this system of taxation required the creation of a central institution. During the 18th century the Va'adim became more and more dependent on state authorities, and the Sejm decided in 1764 that they should be dissolved, because they failed to deliver the collected taxes.

As regards the Commonwealth's economy in the 14th to the 15th centuries, the Jews specialized in trade (both local and international) as well as in credit operations. In the 17th century they monopolized nearly the whole of the exchange of the Lithuanian and Ruthenian lands with England and the Netherlands (via Gdańsk) and with Hungary and Turkey (via Cracow and Lviv). They participated in the great fairs in Leipzig, Frankfurt am Mein, Hamburg, and Wrocław. The main figures of the Jewish community's economy were large-scale merchants and bankers. Jewish craftsmen were organized in guilds, which functioned similarly to Christian guilds.

In spite of the Piotrków Sejm constitutions of 1536 prohibiting Jews from leasing public income, the magnates' capital was often located in the kahals, and rich Jewish entrepreneurs leased customs duties and tolls. Alongside them came the arendars of folwarks and demesnes as well as inns, mills, distilleries, and breweries, Jewish settlements developed in cities and in the countryside. Popular literature created the figure of a Jewish arendar, taking over the rent owing to a nobleman and offering usurious credit – but there were also Jewish doctors, musicians, and craftsmen. In the 18th century, the pauperization of the Jewish community forced some Jews to seek direct contacts with the village communities and to abandon the city markets. Jewish vendors were occupied with door-to-door trade and specialized in purchasing milk and dairy products from the peasants, which was serious competition for urban commerce.

The mid-17th century was a tragic period for Jews in the Commonwealth. During the Khmelnytsky Uprising, the Cossack armies organized massacres of Poles, Ruthenians (Unities), Armenians, and, above all, pogroms of the Jews. In Ukraine, Jews were particularly loathed as lessees and usurers; we know about these events from the Jewish chronicle by Nathan ben Moses Hannover *Yeven Mezulah* (1653). During the Cossack wars and the great Polish-Muscovy war of 1654–1667, when the tsarist and Cossack armies treated the “purging” of the land from Catholics (especially Jesuits), Uniates, and Jews as a religious mission, most Jewish communities in Ukraine and Belarus ceased to exist; people were either killed or led away into the Tatar captivity, and only some managed to escape to central Poland. Also the Swedish armies and Polish divisions under the command of Stefan Czarniecki persecuted Jews.

In the second half of the 18th century, the Jews moved to the great magnate latifundia in the eastern parts of the Commonwealth as a result of the economic crisis and the decline of cities. The destruction and impoverishment of many Jewish communities made it impossible for the Jews to pay taxes and plunged them in debt to the nobility and clergy. Also the sejmiks of the Jewish lands, as well as the Va'adim of the Crown and Lithuania, were increasingly indebted. At the same time, the Jewish municipalities underwent internal petrification, which led to the consolidation of oligarchic structures. This caused the decline of the authority of the community leaders and various conflicts between the kahal authorities and the rest of the Jewish population. The social and economical crisis also stimulated the emergence of new religious currents, which ran afoul of traditional Judaism: the Sabbateanism (in the mid-17th century), Hasidism (in the 1730s), and (in the 1750s)

Frankism that led to conversions to Catholicism, Polonization, and ennoblement of some members of the community.

During the Wettin period the decline of Commonwealth's economy during the Great Northern War and the growth of Jewish population contributed to the inflaming of conflicts in the cities and stimulated the implementation of new Anti-Jewish restriction on production and trade. The Jews enjoyed much greater support from the magnates, nobility and the kings – especially Augustus II Wettin whose financial situation depended largely on Jewish bankers. Therefore, he tolerated the influx of Jewish merchants from the Commonwealth to Saxony. According to J. A. Gierowski, Jewish commercial and production initiatives were among the basic factors, which galvanized the Commonwealth's economy out of stagnation.

During the Enlightenment period the Jewish question was a constant element in the reform programs. Hugo Kołłątaj and Tadeusz Czacki suggested that all the legal restrictions imposed upon the community should be cancelled and that Jews, at the price of religious and linguistic assimilation, should be allowed to buy and cultivate land, and stay commercially active in cities. Such demands were posed in earlier periods, when the ideal of Counter-Reformation was the unity of faith. The ideal of the Enlightenment reformers was rather the unity of language of the whole state. While some burgher authors of the 16th and 17th century demanded that all Jews (except those who converted to Christianity) be removed from the Commonwealth, the “enlightened” demanded their complete Polonization. France was an example to look up to – in 1791 Jews were recognized as Frenchmen of the Jewish faith. Along with their civic and political equality, they lost their ethnic identity.

There were plans to have a Polish school in the vicinity of each synagogue, with the regulations regarding teaching defined by the Commission of National Education. These reforms remained unrealized, even though a part the Jewish intellectual and commercial elite accepted the assimilation program. The Duchy of Warsaw deprived Jews of their legal rights and reintroduced ghettos, which stopped the assimilation process.

8. Groups Outside the Law

8.1. The Romani (Gypsies)

The Romani people (also colloquially called Gypsies) were a group of people, which remained outside of both the estate structure and the legal boundaries in the Commonwealth. The term Romani people designated various nomadic groups of different descent, anthropological features, language, and types of social bonds. The true Romani were people of Indian origin, who migrated to Europe c. 1.000 years ago.

The Roma arrived to the Commonwealth at the beginning of the 15th century, and then their influx was larger in the 16th century when they were expelled from Germany. They formed nomadic groups living in social and cultural isolation, with their own laws and tradition, maintaining their own distinct language with different dialects and without a written form. They were mostly smiths, potters and

travelling merchants. It is impossible to estimate their number, as they evaded tax and metrical registrations, and all administrative control, which is why they were perceived as a threat in the whole of Europe. In the Crown edicts banishing them from the Crown (1557, 1565, 1578) were issued, but, in practice, the expulsion was impossible and in 1607 the edicts were revoked in Podlasie, which became a Romani asylum. The Third Lithuanian Statute (1588) banished them from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, accusing them of deceiving the simple folk and of espionage on behalf of foreign powers.

In order to contain this problem, in the 17th century kings started to appoint the so-called “Gypsy kings,” who were responsible for the judiciary and tax collection. The first Gypsy king was Jancy, nominated by Wladislaus IV, and others were being nominated in 1652, 1668, 1697, and in the 18th century. Starting from 1668, this title was given to the nobles.

The Romani people were one of the few ethnic groups in the Commonwealth that were not assimilated.

8.2. Social Margin (the Loose People)

Legally, the loose people were a group of people who were outside legal regulations. They were a group, which emerged in the process of declassification of peasants, as well as nobility and burghers. In colloquial speech the term was used to refer to all vagrants, people without a permanent place of residence or regular work – and therefore, treated with suspicion in a society where residence was the condition for having citizen rights in all estates. According to S.F. Klonowic, the reason of the social degradation to the status of loose people was the “misuse of property” and growing indebtedness.

The decrees of land sejmiks and acts issued by municipal authorities and general state authorities aimed at limiting the increasing number of the loose people. They tried to prohibit the loose people from travelling freely across the country – and demanded that they have a kind of passport issued by the village owner, another way of subduing the loose people was forcing them to work. Indeed, the nobility used them as a labour force – already the constitution of 1593, passed upon the motion of the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships, allowed the starostas, city officials, and all landholders to force any loose man whom they encountered to work for them until his legitimate lord was found. The law was implemented in many Crown voivodeships in the 17th century, and in 1683 also in the whole Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1632 the sejmik of Środa decided that any loose man working in a landholding for over a year becomes the property of its lord. However, the attempts to impose high tax the loose people as a deterrent, proved almost completely ineffective.

Beggars were a very unique group among the loose people. They were a trans-estate, multiethnic, and multiconfessional community with its own specific language and mentality (Jan Dzwonowski described it in *Peregrynacja dziadowska* [Beggars Peregrination] from 1612). The nobility accused beggars of espionage on behalf of the neighbouring countries and the Cossack rebels. Indeed, the sources from 1651

confirm that during the time of the peasant uprising in the Subcarpathia region some of Bohdan Khmelnytsky's emissaries infiltrated the lands disguised as beggars.

During the Enlightenment period, there were some attempts made to solve the problem of the loose people by organizing a free labour market, improving the police forces, and developing manufactures, as well as by the propaganda of compulsory labour remunerated on the basis of current demand and supply. Special civil-military order commissions and the Police Commission of the Four-Year Sejm addressed this issue.

9. Ethnic and Confessional Divisions

9.1. The Ethnic Structure of the Commonwealth

Relatively trustworthy quantitative data regarding the ethnic and confessional structure of the Commonwealth can be traced back to the 1770s. The estimates regarding earlier periods are based on more or less well-grounded presumptions. This applies especially to the data concerning confessional divisions: based on Catholic parish registers, after 200 years of Polonization processes, and therefore tell very little about the eastern parts of the state, where the majority of inhabitants belonged to Orthodox or Uniate Churches.

Taking all these reservations into account, it is estimated that c. 1500 the ethnically Polish inhabitants of the Polish Kingdom constituted 70 % of the whole population. The remaining 30 % was divided among the Ruthenians (15 %), Germans (above 10 %), other settled groups (Jews, Karaites, Armenians, Tatars, Kashubians, Slovincians), and migrant groups (Vlachs, Romani people). In the eastern voivodeships the Ruthenians were 76 % of the population, and in Royal Prussia – Germans were 50 % of the population. Masovian, Sieradz, and Łęczyca voivodeships were 90 % Polish; southern Little Poland and parts of southwestern Great Poland were ethnically mixed. In the 15th century these divisions were strong insofar as they came along with religious and legal differences.

Further shifts in the ethnic structure of the state were caused by the annexation of Livonia in 1561 and the Union of Lublin in 1569. It is estimated, (taking into account the limited reliability of demographic sources – cf. Chapter VI 1.1) that the non-Polish population increased by 50 %, where 40 % were the Lithuanians and Ruthenians, and the remaining 10 % were Jews, Germans, and Latvians as well as other ethnic groups. As a result of further redefinition of the eastern and northern borders, the non-Polish population was 60 %. What is worth mentioning is that dense Polish settlement comprised only 20 % of the Commonwealth's territory. According to M. Markiewicz, during the Wettin period everybody who possessed land in the Commonwealth was considered a member of the Polish nation (including the Courlanders and Prussians, and even Saxons insofar as they met this condition).

Ethnic and confessional identification converged no earlier than at the end of the 18th century. According to the census taken in 1789 (without the lands lost as a result of the First Partition), more than 53 % of the Crown's population were Roman

Catholics (mainly Poles and Lithuanians), about 30 % Greek Catholics, 3.5 % Orthodox, 10.5 % Jewish, 1.5 % Protestants (without Gdańsk), and 1.5 % professed other faiths. Regardless of the credibility of these data, there is not much information about the language of the population, as some Germans and Lithuanians continued to be faithful to Rome, and a lot of the Greek Catholics spoke Polish.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (according to the same census), there were 39 % of Greek Catholics, 38 % Roman Catholics, 10 % Jews, 7 % Orthodox, 3.6 % Old Believers (the escapees from Muscovy, who did not accept the changes in the Orthodox Church implemented by Patriarch Nikon in 1652–1666), 2.4 % Protestants (Lutherans and Calvinists), Muslims, and Karaites.¹¹¹

The largest language groups were Belarusian – 37 %, Polish – 26 %, Lithuanian – 20 %, Jewish – 10 %, Russian – 3.6 %, Latvian, German, and Karaite – 3.4 %. Such a confessional and ethnic structure was a result of the processes shaping the identity of the inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for three centuries. This identity, in turn, was a function of the estate divisions, territorial and legal traditions, and broad social backgrounds.

9.2. Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's society meant not only the coexistence of different ethnic, confessional, and linguistic groups, but also a necessity for them to communicate in a few languages on a basic level. In the 16th–18th centuries, the political nation of the nobles-citizens was shaped, and so the Ukrainian and Belarusian people continued to feel more and more self-aware in terms of their confessional and linguistic identity. The nations of the Commonwealth were differentiated on three levels, which were all at work in social consciousness, without hindering one another. The first one was the state level (the citizens of the Commonwealth), the ethnic and historical level (the Ruthenians), and, finally, the territorial level (the population of provinces: Poles, Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Prussians, and Masovians).

According to most historians, the differences between the inhabitants of the Commonwealth stemmed from territorial (resulting from different historical traditions), rather than ethnic differences (similarly to Spain, France, and the German Reich). One referred to Prussians, Lithuanians, Samogitians, regardless of the language they spoke. According to a 17th-century preacher:

Poland is a bird-of-paradise, painted with colours diverse. Hast thou seene this diversity of nations? Poles, Ruthenians, Masovians, Samogitians, Prussians.¹¹²

111 Władysław Wielhorski, *Stosunki językowe, wyznaniowe i etniczne w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim pomiędzy XIII a XVIII wiekiem*, London, 1964, p. 37.

112 Józef Olszewski, *Kazania albo tytuły*, Vilnius 1645, p. 136.

The catalogue of “provincial nations” was not meant to emphasize the separatist tendencies. On the contrary, it was meant to diminish the differences between the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, between the Poles and the Lithuanians. It was meant to render these differences mere local particularities, and underline the “unity in variety.” The inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were proud of being able to peacefully coexist while having so many ethnicities and cultures within one state.

9.3. The Nations of the Crown of the Polish Kingdom

The name *Poles* in the 16th–18th centuries meant either all citizens of the Commonwealth (that is, the nobility) or, in the situations of external threat, all Polish-speaking inhabitants of the Commonwealth, bound together by a common historical tradition. The bond between a Polish nobleman and a Polish peasant was far weaker than the transethnic brotherhood of the noblemen.

In the 17th century also the Masurians were considered as a separate nation – because of the separationist tradition of the Duchy of Masovia and the characteristic difference in pronunciation of the Masovian dialect. The name *Prussians* had two meanings: citizens of Royal Prussia and German-speaking people of Prussia drawing on the Teutonic Order tradition of the 16th century. In the 17th century there emerged some divisions among the Prussians due to the influx of Polish nobility to Royal Prussia and the Polonization of Prussian elites. In addition, the Livonians were considered a political nation (but only the nobility) – like the Poles and Lithuanians basing on their political and territorial separation, as well as German as their language. However, Livonian (Latvian) linguistic and ethnic consciousness was surely not present in the 16th–18th centuries.

Outside the political nation of the Crown were some ethnically Slavic relic groups: Kashubians and Slovincians; descendants of ancient eastern Pomeranians, who used to border with the Veleti. It is believed that the Slovincians lived in the delta of the Wieprz and Łupawa Rivers, and the Kashubs lived in the southern part of the Białogard Land and the Slavincian-Słupsk Pomerania. These lands were later owned by the Teutonic Order and until 1637 they belonged to the West-Pomeranian Griffins dynasty, and later the Hohenzollerns, as part of the Duchy of Kashubia (German: *Herzogtum Kassuben*) (in the 17th and 18th centuries it comprised of Kołobrzeg, Koszalin, Białogard, and Szczecinek).

The Kashubian language was used in religious texts of the Lutheran Church, namely by the ministers: Szymon Krofey (1586) and Michał Pontanus-Mostnik (1643). As a result of the victory of the Counter-Reformation, the Kashubian Lutherans and Poles weakened their contacts. The Protestants who found an asylum in Pomerania were mostly Germans. This isolated these territories from Poland, and in the long run popularized the usage of German.

There was a high percentage of the *zagrodowi* noblemen among the Kashubians. Serving in the Polish army during the war with Sweden (1629) could pave the way for their Polonization, like in Royal Prussia and Livonia. Until Western Pomerania

nia was governed by the Griffin dynasty, it was in their interest to maintain the separationist tendency and draw upon the Slavic tradition. In the 18th century, the Kashubians were Germanized because of the Prussian politics of limiting the use of Polish language in the Lutheran churches in this area. Nonetheless, they managed to survive and they still maintain strong sense of distinctiveness of their culture and language – thanks to the 19th-century regional writers and reformers. The Slovinsians, who inhabited the enclave between the Lebsko and Gardno lakes, either died out or migrated to Germany as a result of the oppression exercised on them after 1945 by the authorities of Polish People's Republic.

9.4. The Nations of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

The name *Lithuanians* in the 16th and 17th century was used mostly for the nobles. Even before the Union of Lublin, all noblemen, in spite of the fact that they usually spoke Ruthenian, considered themselves Lithuanians. Parallel to the Lithuanian sense of state unity, there was also a consciousness of different historical traditions in the Duchy of Samogitia, Lithuania Proper, and the Ruthenian lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Maciej Strykowski described the beginning of these nations (Lithuanian, Samogitian, and Ruthenian) as follows:

My story, pointing to the Lithuanian origins of so many nations, might be doubtful to many of you [...] But if they remember that Lithuania, apart from Poland, is the household of so many peoples, they should understand that this country used to be the keeper of more than one people in various times, too.¹¹³

The term *Ruthenian* (Polish: *Rusyn* or *Rusin*) in the 16th and the 17th century had a few meanings: as an adjective, it simply meant Orthodox; it also meant an inhabitant of Little Poland, Volhynia, and Kiev lands (including Poles and ethnically Polish noblemen); an inhabitant of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania or the Crown; here, what was important were separate state traditions; in terms of ethnicity, this term was rather malleable, and it encompassed generally the eastern European Slavic peoples. Polish historians (J. Bardach, J. Ochmański) and Ukrainian historians (Frank E. Sysyn) maintain that in the 16th century there was virtually no difference between Belarusians and Ukrainians. Both of these groups described themselves as Ruthenians, called their territory Ruthenia and perceived themselves as a cultural, historical, and religious unity; Ruthenian was their administrative language; their liturgical language was Old Church Slavonic. Ruthenian was seen as a homogeneous language even though it contained various territorial dialects: in the north (Belarusian) and in the south (Kievan territories). Vilnius, Lviv, and Kiev belonged to the same cultural circle and historical tradition of Kievan Ruthenia, used by the

113 Maciej Strykowski, *O początkach, dzielnościach, sprawach rycerskich i domowych sławnego narodu litewskiego, żemajdzkiego i ruskiego, przedtym nigdy od żadnego ani kuszone, ani opisane, z natchnienia Bożego a uprzejmie pilnego doświadczenia*, 1586, ed. J. Radziszewska, Warszawa 1978, p. 75.

authorities of the Grand Duchy of Moscow in the 16th century in order to support their territorial claims.

In the 17th century the ancestors of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians used different variations of the term *Ruthenian* to describe themselves. However, in their internal communication, the names depended on the state affiliation. Ukrainian nobility referred to the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Moscow as Muscovites or Muscovy (Polish: *Moscowcy*; *Moskwa*), and in Belarus they referred to them as Moscals or Muscvinites (Polish: *Moskale*; *Moskwicini*), reserving Ruthenians and Ruthenia for the inhabitants of the Commonwealth. In Muscovy, people who lived in Belarus were called Poles or Lithuanians, but in 1620 (in a decree issued by the Holy Sobor in 1620 and signed by the Patriarch in 1621, stating how “foreign” Orthodox believers should be introduced into the Church of Moscow) they were called Belaruthenians. Foreign envoys of Orthodox faith were not allowed to enter the Orthodox churches, and Orthodox prisoners of war were forcibly re-baptized. Old Belarusian language – called Ruthenian in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – was called Lithuanian in Muscovy and interpreters were necessary in Lithuanian-Muscovite contacts.

The communities known as Ruthenia and Ruthenians as well as Poland and Poles or Lechites (Polish: *Lachy*; *Lechici*) had been developing for centuries and in the early modern period within the borders of the multiethnic Commonwealth there was a tendency for them to interfuse. Just as in the case of the Poles, it was the nobles who were called the nation, when referring to the Ruthenians and their rights in the 16th and 17th century context usually Ukrainian (or Ukrainian and Belarusian) Orthodox nobility and the elite of Orthodox clergy is meant. The territorial and legation disintegration of the Ruthenians was the crucial factor, which ultimately contributed to the emergence of separate national consciousness. After the Union of Lublin, the Ruthenians were subject to different legal systems, depending on the territory in which they lived (the Third Lithuanian Statute in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Second Statute in the territories annexed to the Crown). In effect, the Ruthenian elites referred to two state traditions: Lithuanian and Kievan. Religious differences became even more acute among the Ruthenians as a consequence of the conflict with the Counter-Reformation after the Union of Brest in 1596. The Khmelnytsky Uprising rapidly accelerated the process of cultural self-identification of the to-be Ukrainians and Belarusians.

The peoples of Belarus in the Middle Ages comprised of the neighbouring communities (from Polotskians, Vitebskians, Mogilans, Slutskians). These names were in use after these territories were annexed to the Grand Duchy – which was possible because of weak centralization of the state and the autonomous status of its lands. In the 16th century the basic names for the inhabitants of Belarus were Ruthenia and Lithuania – neither of them was related to the religious or linguistic divisions. Until the end of the 16th century, as a result of the Reformation, when old names started to lose their confessional meaning, the name *Ruthenians* was used for not only Orthodox believers, but also for Protestants, Uniates, and even Catholics. A parallel tendency manifested itself in the terms such as: *Belarusian cit-*

ies, Belarusian language, and Belarusian faith. After the Union of Brest in 1596, the term *Belarusians* was used with reference to the inhabitants of central and eastern Belarus, but nobody in the 17th century referred to Belarusians in the same way as to Lithuanians or Poles – this understanding of the term appeared as late as in the second half of the 18th century.

The borders between Lithuania and Ruthenia were not ethnic or confessional, but rather territorial and legal: not all Ruthenians (Belarusians) were Orthodox, just as not all Lithuanians were Catholics. That is why after the Union of Lublin, Ruthenians accepted the Lithuanian idea of the state and they became (politically) Lithuanians; yet they kept their double identity, typical of cultural borderlands. In the 16th and 17th century, the members of powerful Belarusian families – Sapiehas, Chodkiewicz, and Hlebowicz – participated in royal privileges and public benefices to a larger extent than the masses of nobility.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania there were two basic spoken languages: Lithuanian and Belarusian, and two administrative languages: Old Belarusian and Latin. Such a cultural situation also contributed to the separation of Belarusian nobility. During the 16th–18th centuries period, Lithuanian was used rather in the communication with the peasants than in the administration. Polish (both written and spoken) was at the time the dominant language in Lithuania – as the language of the royal court, the magnate courts, and Polish clergy fighting against its Protestant opponents and the Reformation. Yet, Polish officially replaced Ruthenian in public life and Lithuanian chancelleries only in 1697.

9.5. The Evolution of Confessional Relations

Confessional unity was rather a postulate than a fact in the early modern period. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a multiconfessional state in the 16th and the 17th centuries, and in 1573 it introduced a guarantee prohibiting any form of constraint in confessional struggle and securing the equal treatment of the nobility regardless of their confession. That was not exceptional in the modern period – in France or in German Reich such state of affairs was guaranteed by the king's edicts. At the same time, the shift from the idea of a political nation to that of an ethnic nation occurred in the Commonwealth much earlier than elsewhere. A couple of reasons contributed to this change:

1. The split of ethnic consciousness of Ruthenians into, on the one hand, Belarusians in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (for whom the Greek Catholicism became, to some extent, a kind of national faith) and, on the other hand, the Orthodox nobility and Cossacks in Ukraine.
2. Political destabilization of the Commonwealth – a result of Sweden's and Muscovy's aggression in the mid-17th century.
3. The degeneration of the Sarmatian myth of origin and general transformation of the nobility's ideology in the 17th century, as a result of the Counter-Reformation

offensive under the slogan of identification of nationality with confession: the Pole-Catholic (earlier limited to the peasants in the Crown).

The confessional diversity of the Commonwealth's provincial population was also changing as time went by: the conversions occurred mostly among the nobles, while the peasantry of many areas remained virtually non-confessional because of a weakly developed parish network. In the landholdings belonging to the clergy and nobility of all confessions religious coercion was practiced: Catholics were mostly in the west, and Orthodox believers in the east. It became much more complicated during the Reformation, when Catholicism remained powerful only in the centre of the Crown (Masovia). In Great Poland, Little Poland, Royal Prussia, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania there was an ongoing offensive of Reformation Churches, whereas Belarus and Ukraine remained Orthodox.

Significant changes in the confessional map of the Commonwealth occurred at the end of the 16th century, when some Orthodox believers converted to Greek Catholicism and the number of Protestants diminished along with the tendency driven by Counter-Reformation to identify political and national identity with religion. Still, Lutheranism continued to prevail in Royal Prussia and in all vassal states (The Duchy of Prussia, Courland, and Livonia), while in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania there was a strong presence of the Reformed Church (the Lithuanian Unity).

9.6. The Social and Ethnic Structure of Polish and Lithuanian Protestants

Apart from the Pole-Catholic stereotype, Polish historiography also invokes another stereotype: of a German-Lutheran (luther). Indeed, during the Reformation the German nobility and the burghers in Royal Prussia and Great Poland adopted Lutheranism, and there was an apparent connection between ethnicity and confession: Germans from Gdańsk and Toruń supported Lutheranism as it was culturally appealing to them, strengthening their sense of separation and distinction. Also the members of the Poles were under the influence of Reformation until the end of the 16th century, when the Counter-Reformation and Catholic Reform grew in strength and became increasingly successful – resisted of most of the German-speaking people – the terms like *German Church* or *German faith* appeared.

For a German of the 17th century, the conversion to Catholicism was tantamount to Polonization, and that strengthened the connections between German character and Lutheran faith, petrifying the stereotype. In the second half of the 17th century, due to the influx of more immigrants (Lutherans and Bohemian Brethren), ethnically Polish members of Reformation Churches became rare in Great Poland and Kujavia. It was also significant that most immigrants settled in together in the Polish-German borderland area, as this helped them preserve their cultural identity. In effect, Protestantism became more plebeian and nationally alien, and after the Deluge the level of inter-confessional hostility and conflicts increased.

The situation was more complicated in Prussia and Pomerania, where not only burghers but also the Prussian nobility mostly supported the Reformation. In the Duchy of Prussia there was a prevailing tendency to maintain ethnic-confessional connections with the Reich, while the Pomeranian nobility was Catholicized. That is why the idea of Lutheranism as a National Confession in Royal Prussia was doomed to collapse. Nevertheless, most of the German burghers remained loyal to Protestantism, not so much because it was perceived as German confession, as because it conveyed for them a distinct Prussian identity. In a similar way, Lutheranism united the Livonians until the Swedish conquest in the 1620s century, when a line of division was drawn: the Swedish parts of Courland and Livonia remained Protestant, while the rest of the territory annexed by the Commonwealth became Catholic.

The ethnicity of the Reformed Church in the Commonwealth was completely different; in the 2nd half of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th century its Unities (Including Bohemian Brethren Unity of Great Poland) were linguistically and culturally mostly Polish. It is obvious in the case of Little Poland's community, whose members were the Polish nobles with a small admixture of townsmen of Scottish and German descent. The other two Unities faced a much more complicated situation in the 16th century, as they were gradually Polonized.

In the 17th century there were still 135 congregations, and in as many as 30 % of them Lithuanian language was used. In large agglomerations the preachers were appointed to serve bigger national groups like German or Scots. In spite of the community's transnational connections with the Reformed throughout Western Europe, the word *patria* (fatherland) meant the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the acts of the Lithuanian Unity. However, the language commonly used in liturgy and synod acts was Polish (or, more precisely, its North Borderland dialect) despite the reluctance (sometimes seen as a manifestation of Lithuanian separatism) to unify the rites in the Reformed Churches of the Grand Duchy and of the Crown.

The Reformed Church of Great Poland (The Unity of Great Poland) underwent the most complicated evolution. It was established in the 16th century by the Bohemian immigrants, whose influx strengthened it after the Battle of White Mountain in 1620. Until the end of the 17th century, it was gradually Polonized. Despite much reluctance of part of the noble Protestant elite and some of the clergymen, the Unity, especially the plebeians, were gradually Germanized

Because few sources have survived, it is virtually impossible to estimate the number and the social structure of the Commonwealth's Protestants. According to Wojciech Kriegseisen, the discrepancy between the data given in old historiography (which maintains that there were 200.000 Protestants [both Lutheran and Reformed] in the Commonwealth at the end of the 18th century, and in Lithuania – at most over a dozen thousand) and that given in the modern research (only in Samogitia there were 40.000 Protestants at the beginning of the 19th century – which was about 10 % of the population) is so huge that any attempt to provide the estimates seems dubious if not pointless.

It is well known that nobility constituted a small part of the Lutheran society. In the 16th century, the majority of Lutherans lived in Royal Prussia, where along

with the members of Polish Brethren they owned 40 % of the land (in relation to 90 % of Lutherans in great cities) and in 1772 there were only 60 families left in Royal Prussia (more than 80 % Lutheran). After the mass waves of conversion to Catholicism, in the 17th and at the end of the 18th centuries there remained around 500 Reformed noble families, and both in the Crown and Lithuania only 8 % were of foreign descent (German, Bohemian, and Scottish). These figures diminished in the 18th century, as the old generation was dying out, mixed marriages were looked upon with much reluctance, the immigration of the nobility was weaker, and the number of conversions to Catholicism increased. At the beginning of the 18th century, one can speak of ca. 600 families (ca. 3000–4.800 people) of both confessions: Reformed and Lutheran.

There are no sources whatsoever to estimate the number of the plebeians of both Protestant confessions. This applies also to the non-Catholic peasants – both the Lutherans and the Reformed believers in Samogitia as well as to the *olędrzy* in Great Poland and Masovia. It is also difficult to estimate the social composition of foreign specialists, doctors, governors, foreign avarament officers, in the 17th century brought from Livonia and Courland, and in the 18th century from Prussia and Saxony. There was also a small group of intellectuals active in Warsaw during the Wettin period (Lorenz Christoph Mizler von Kolof, Christian Gottfried Friese, Michael Gröll) – which indirectly transmitted the ideals of German Enlightenment. Another group were the Protestant merchants. One might say that due to their education, the cultural impact of the Protestants in the Commonwealth exceeded by far their share in the population.

9.7. The Nationalization of the Orthodox Church

According to Polish historians, the boyars of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the Belarusian territories did not take advantage of the Union of Brest in 1596 in order to create a national church, and easily changed their political preferences. However, invoking the separatist tendencies of Ruthenians was never a successful strategy: after all, the Belarusian nobility remained indifferent to the Muscovite propaganda the 17th and the 18th centuries, invoking the alleged ethnic ties with the Ruthenia against the Commonwealth. On the one hand, the ethnic consolidation was supported by the separation of Ruthenians (Ukrainians). On the other hand, it was hindered by the massacres and deportations of the elites and the most active members of the society during the Muscovy's intervention of 1654.

In Ukraine in the 1620s there was an intellectual renaissance in the circles of the Kiev-Mogilev Academy and among the Orthodox clergy, which stressed the separation of Ukraine not only from Lachs but also from the rest of Ruthenia. The delay of the transformation of the political nation into the ethnic nation in Ukraine was caused by a typically preindustrial social conflict – the inability of the Ruthenian nobility to identify with the plebeians. Another issue, which turned out to be insolvable, was the severe conflict between the Orthodox and the Uniates.

The Ruthenian religious, cultural, and historical community was weakened in the second half of the 16th century by the conversion of a considerable part of the magnates and Orthodox nobility to Roman and Greek Catholicism. The Orthodox faith still remained the predominant confession of the Ruthenian community: it was professed by peasants (until the end of the 17th century), burghers, and nobility (until the Khmelnytsky Uprising). Between 1610 and 1620 the Cossacks – who initially were confessionally indifferent – stood for the Orthodox faith, and since then put religious slogans on their banners.

Some Ukrainian and Polish (Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel) historians see Cossacks as the bearers of the national tradition. The process of transformation of the Zaporozhian Cossacks into a separate national (or, more precisely, estate and confessional) group – different from Don or Ural Cossacks – was very complex. Its origins should be traced back to the inspiration of the Orthodox clergy and intellectual elites that sought to nationalize the Orthodox Christianity under the vivid influence of Latin Churches¹¹⁴ and due to the social and political circumstances (the confessional and economic conflict between the Ukrainians and the Polish latifundists). It was surely not a spontaneous outburst of the sense of national identity among the common people.

Natalia Jakowenko's thesis that until the first cultural renaissance of the Ukrainians was due to "a self-preservation instinct of a nation, whose religion and culture were threatened" is contrary to the 17th-century understanding of the term *nation*. The shaping of ethnic and cultural identity of Ukraine's people was not finished at the end of the 18th century. In fact, it was stopped by the annexation of Ukraine to the Russian Empire.

10. Multiethnicity and Multiculturalism in the Cities

Large cities in the Commonwealth were multinational, which stemmed from the fact that during the Magdeburg Law settlement, most settlers were of Western European descent. In 16th century Poznań the 1/16 of the citizens were immigrants from Germany. In Cracow the Polonization took place in the 15th and 16th centuries, while in the 16th century by Italianization made much progress (in the 17th century 13 % of the members of the City Council were Italians); in eastern Little Poland there were Poles, Ruthenians, and Armenians – all with different legal status. Jews lived everywhere: in the royal cities they were deprived of the citizen status, but remained subject to the city councils (with the exception of Przemyśl). The origins of the distrust of the nobility towards the city councils can be derived precisely from its multinational character. During the periods of interregnum (for example in 1586) and wars the nobility – terrified of espionage allegedly exercised by tradesmen and of various

114 Natalia Jakowenko, *Świat podzielony albo ogólny obraz Ukrainy-Rusi w przededniu powstania Chmielnickiego*, in *Historia Ukrainy od czasów najdawniejszych do końca XVIII wieku*, trans. O. Hnatiuk and K. Kotyńska, Lublin, 2000, pp. 202–211.

conspiracies of the non-Catholic burghers with foreign countries – formulated the postulates of closing the city gates.

Ethnic differentiation was not a barrier in obtaining the urban citizenship. What was the discrediting circumstance, in turn, was a confessional difference – a departure from or an internal rupturing of the ideal of a united Christian community. During the Reformation and Counter-Reformation the admission under the municipal law was dependent on being a legitimate child (not out of wedlock) and professing the “proper” religion: Roman Catholicism in the Crown (Poznań 1619, Cracow 1627 – with tolerance towards dissidents in Kleparz and Kazimierz) or Lutheranism in Royal Prussia (in Toru, Catholics were unable to obtain citizen rights). The principle of Catholic orthodoxy was first introduced in Warsaw, where from 1574 non-Catholics could not hold the city’s offices and all forms religious agitation were banned.

In Gdańsk and Elbląg – the biggest cities of Royal Prussia – in spite of the fact that the Lutherans outnumbered Christians of other confessions and were granted royal privileges, the confessional tolerance was nonetheless practiced. A similar situation was in the multicultural cities of Red Ruthenia, for example, in Lviv, which was called “triple” (*Leopolis triplex*), because it was a city of three coexistent religious communities: Catholics, Uniates and Orthodox believers. Ruthenians obtained equal rights in citizenship in 1692–1699, and Armenians in 1686. It was similar in Belarusian and Ukrainian cities, where a similar compromise (regarding the urban citizenship and the access to guilds) was to be finally reached.

In practice, the features, which determined granting the urban citizenship, were the prescription and usefulness for the community: that is why burghers’ children and people of liberal professions (lawyers, doctors, and pharmacists) were on the top of the list. The Catholic owners of new private cities, created in Great Poland in the second half of the 17th century, supported the influx of dissident craftsmen and employers, as they knew that such people could contribute to the development of their cities.

10.1. Tumults (Riots)

Urban communities were mostly comprised of people who did not have a steady income, and lived in very bad conditions, making them prone to populist slogans, pointing to certain groups as the ones to be blamed for causing natural disasters interpreted in terms of divine punishment. At the end of the 16th and in the first half of the 17th centuries the cities of both the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania saw the outburst of religious and ethnic tumults. In the cities dominated by Catholics they were aimed against the “heretics”: in Cracow (1574, 1587, 1591), in Vilnius (1591, 1611, 1639), and in Poznań (1614). In Royal Prussia (Gdańsk, Malbork, Tuchola), the tumults were mostly aimed against the Calvinist members of the city councils, and at the same time against the attempts at the re-Catholicization.

Armenians and “luthers” (all Protestant townsmen) were accused of treason (revealing the Commonwealth’s secrets to “foreign powers”) by the Counter-Reforma-

tion propaganda. The commercial activity and number of the Jews increased at the beginning of the 16th century, which is why they were also resented by the burghers, both on the ethnic (anti-Semitism) and confessional (anti-Judaism) grounds. In the 16th–17th centuries, the cities' struggle to eliminate Jewish competition was doomed to failure due to the politics of the magnates, nobility, and royal court, for whom the taxes paid by Jews were a huge source of income. Unlike in the rest of the Commonwealth the General Sejmik of Royal Prussia did not pursue the tolerant policy and continued to issue edicts to expel the Jews (1551, 1594, 1606, 1616).

The atmosphere of intolerance introduced by the implementation of the decrees of the Council of Trent altered the former attitudes towards Jewish population in the Commonwealth, and what, in fact, was the economic competition was presented in the guise of confessional difference. Since the early 17th century Jews were associated with various repulsive features and activities (cowardice, forgeries, ritual murder), especially in the journalistic writings produced in the patrician circles – for example, in the 1584 poem titled “Roxolania” by S.F. Klonowic, a judge for Jewish cases in Lublin. This piece presented Jews as parasites (leeches, lice, moths) preying on the body of the Commonwealth. The anti-Semitic writings (Szymon Hubicki's *Jewish cruelty* [Żydowskie okrucieństwo], Cracow 1602, Sebastian Miczyński's *Zwierciadło Korony Polskiej* [The Mirror of the Polish Crown], Cracow 1618, Jan Achacy Kmita's *Talmud albo wiara żydowska* [Talmud or the Jewish Faith], Lublin 1642) reveal certain knowledge (but also a deep misunderstanding) of Jewish habits and culture – a fact which only proves the existence of quite intensive relations between Jews and Christians living in the cities. In 1547, there was the first actual trial against a Jew for an alleged ritual murder; it was followed by executions of Jews accused of the profanation of the Host (1569–1648 ca. 60 accusations of ritual murder and 20 accusations of profanation; every 2 years on average).

Another reason of the hostility of the urban communities towards Jews was their cultural difference (using a different language, celebrating different holidays, such as Passover, usually coinciding with Easter), which hampered everyday contacts. The urban plebeians were also agitated by preachers (mostly from regular orders), who reminded the believers of Jewish responsibility for the death of Christ, invoking the cult of the Passion propagated after the Council of Trent.

German immigrants who came to Lutheran cities also excited religious tumults in the 18th century. Political elites during the reign of the Wettin dynasty supported the influx of new burghers. The dissidents could easily practice their faith – for instance, they could use the Lutheran chapel in the Danish embassy. However, many people of merit for Polish culture – like the Troc family – fell victims to the aggressive mob.

Tumults were even more common outside the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In Counter-Reformation Europe they were a common element of social behaviour. Among the reasons one can name: pathological upbringing, disturbance of social status, and material deprivation. According to Natalie Zemon Davis, in Western Europe, material difficulties were of secondary importance; among the organizers of the tumults one can find the rich burghers, priests, and officials (acting in place of state's agents responsible for maintaining social peace), but the poorest

inhabitants of the cities did not have such prominent role as it was thought earlier. The most active participants of the riots were women and academic youth – subject to university, and not city, jurisdiction. That is why tumults mostly took place in the cities with universities, Jesuit colleges and Protestant gymnasiums.

Tumults were not spontaneous actions of a mob. They were organized: the houses which were to be attacked were marked; all the participants had similar outfits and slogans. Tumults cannot be simply explained by poverty or ignorance of the masses – the organizers were often people considered as decent citizens, and their motivations were complex. They stemmed from their religious orthodoxy and will to get rid of competition, either religious (in the case of Protestants) or economic (in the case Jews). The situation was similar in the Commonwealth, where the slogans of purging the country of heresy propagated by Catholic preachers since the 16th century (Piotr Skarga, Wojciech Cieciszewski) resulted in the expulsion of the Polish Brethren in 1658–1668.

11. Changes in the Social Structure during the Enlightenment

11.1 The Collapse of Magnate Patronage

In the second half of the 18th century, as a result of the strengthening of the state authority and the rule of law, the ties of patronage and clientelism had been loosened. Moreover, the internal turmoil (the Bar Confederation) had shaken a lot of the magnate fortunes, whose restoration was hindered by the peasant uprisings in Volhynia and Ukraine (Koliyivshchyna) of the end of the 18th century. The lifestyle of the magnates became more like that of Western aristocracies: the impoverished magnate courts did not maintain numerous courtiers, residents, or officials; their private armies were disbanded. The following groups remained in the magnate patronage networks: cottiers, leaseholders, renters, and landless nobility – as they had no political standing anyway. These groups were also a weak support of the Targowica Confederation – more out of necessity than because of political beliefs, as we can read in the diaries of Antoni Chrzyszczewski, a scribe of the Potocki family from Tulczyn.

In the first half of the 18th century, the magnates' properties were developing thanks to the nobility; the second half of this century was marked by an opposite tendency. As a result of King Stanisław August's politics, the average and petty nobility grew in force. The royal party resembled a clientele, but the state character and nationwide scope of the patrons' activity made it something completely different. Due to the king's consistency in carrying out reforms, the closest circle around Stanisław August Poniatowski may be called a political party, as distinct from the groups of interest gathered around the Vasa kings, or the so-called "native kings."

11.2. Cities and Burghers

In order to rebuild the cities in the first half of the 18th century, both their private owners and the kings from the Wettin dynasty brought new settlers to Little Poland, mostly Lutheran Germans from Austria and Silesia, later also Italians and Frenchmen. In 1765, as a part of Stanisław August Poniatowski's reorganizing of the urban structure policy, the Commissions of Good Order (*Boni Ordinis*) were established. First in New and Old Warsaw, later in 22 other cities, the Commissions were supposed "to change old urban laws, if they did not suit the present times." Older literature depicted them in very favourable way, but the newer research shows their negative sides: the Commissionaires were not paid and there was large opposition among the urban magistrates towards them. Indeed, "the nobility, who from generations has not tasted administrative constraint, in this particular way tried to raise the urban economy from ruins, by limiting as greatly as possible the initiative of those whom it concerned."¹¹⁵

The acts of reforms (ordinations) were introduced separately in each city, which is why it was impossible to solve the issues of the whole "not only the third estate" (Jerzy Kowecki's phrasing). According to the ideals of enlightened absolutism, these acts were to regulate all urban affairs, precluding the burghers from making their own decisions. In 1768 the appellation starosta's courts of the second instance were created, and this undermined the solidarity of urban communities, as they allowed appellation to other jurors of "equal status," which made it possible for private animosities to come into play. The Sejm of 1768 also issued the "anti-propination constitutions" that precluded the cities from "gaining easy income and enjoying drunkenness" in favour of the starostas and possessors. In the 1770s century they were supplemented with the obligation to bid the propination privilege every 3 years. In some regions (especially in Great Poland), the Commissions worked well, but in general the reform was pro-urban and anti-burgher; it advocated for the nobility's pursuit of "land and possessions."

As the new forms of production organization and commerce developed, the nobility and rich burghers (who had been ennobled) were brought closer. The Sejm constitution from 1775 allowed the nobility to be occupied with great commerce: "from this day a nobleman involved in commerce shall not lose his status."¹¹⁶ The rule that only taking up urban citizenship may take away a noble status, and the requirement that all ennobled burghers would have to buy landholdings worth at least 50.000 Polish zlotys, only suggests the need for a compromise between the burghers and nobles. In 1776 the population of 40 % of royal cities (150 in Lithuania) was declassed, as they did not bring the expected splendour and income. 13 years

115 Krystyna Zienkowska, *Ślawetni i urodzeni. Ruch polityczny mieszczaństwa w dobie Sejmu Czteroletniego*, Warsaw, 1976, p. 38.

116 Constitution of the extraordinary Warsaw Sejm in 1775, *Warunek szlachectwa*, in VL, vol. 8, p. 113, fol. 183.

later the national representation of the so-called “little burghers” (Polish: *mieszczankowie*) spoke up for their rights.

The king’s initiatives to create manufacture companies with the burghers’ capital – like the Wool Manufacture Company (1766), or the National Cloth Factory (1787), where half of the Board were burghers – were the attempts to strengthen the alliance between the nobles and burghers.

That is how an early bourgeois group was established: tradesmen, bankers, owners of manufactures and large workshops in Warsaw, Poznań and some other large cities. Big banking companies were mostly at the magnate’s and rich noblemen’s service, which resulted in the cash flow remaining in their hands – as the magnates usually did not pay their debts. Apart from that, among the circles of the Warsaw financiers very high incomes remained in the hands of a few families (Tepper, Blanc, Meyer, Klug, Hejzler), aspiring to the ennoblement, which was denied to all patricians. Both of these practices were in the line of the old tradition: what was changed was only the form and scale of the consumption expenses of the “corrupted” burghers, leading to their bankruptcy. The group of the *nouveau riche*, deprived of political aspirations, composed into the landscape of Warsaw as “an urban, but not burgher centre” (the expression of Jerzy Michalski), which owed its significance to the concentration of the decision centres, and not to the participation in the production. Indeed, the discrepancy between the official slogans of economic increase and a new ideal of a burgher – a great merchant, a manufacturer or a rich craftsman – was only deepening.

The urban constitutions of the Four-Year Sejm (the “Bill of our free royal cities” from 1789 was incorporated into the Constitution of May 3) concerned free royal cities, which were supposed to be organized in a unified manner – for the first time in the Commonwealth’s history. Private cities could also be subjected to new regulations and their owners were expected to carry out modernization processes by themselves. All inhabitants – the noblemen and burghers equally – were now accountable to municipal law, but suffrage (both active and passive) was limited to the real estate owners. A new criterion of citizenship was introduced: a financial one, placed above that of descent, preserving the principle of limited access to power. Real estate owners were granted privileges, which before were reserved only for the nobility (immunity from imprisonment without a court sentence, the right to buy land, the right to hold office in the administration and judiciary, access to the guilds and military posts, except the national cavalry restricted for the nobility). Rich burghers could apply for ennoblement, and early urban intelligentsia began to emerge. Foreign craftsmen and merchants were encouraged to settle in the Commonwealth.

In the new urban system there was a division into legislative and executive power (magistrates) offices. In smaller cities, the general assembly consisted of all real estate owners; bigger cities were divided into circuits (Polish: *cyrkuły*), and the whole country – into departments (Polish: *wydziały*). The urban autonomy was abolished, and city councils could not issue any statutes or decrees (*wilkierze*). The Police Commission controlled the municipal authorities. All of these changes were

supposed to improve the cities' organization and reinforce their economy. The most spectacular reforms were introduced in the capital city; the Old Town and the New Town were joined into one agglomeration, along with royal and private jurydykas. Since 1791 we can speak of Great Warsaw, whose population grew from 63,000 to 98,000, or, according to different estimates, to even 116,000 people in 1764–1792. This phenomenon can be explained by the tripling of the size of the city and the influx of new inhabitants. The majority of them were people from the noble jurydykas, who were not permanently connected with the city. After the disasters of 1793 and 1794 there was a sudden decline in the population of Warsaw, and most of the noble newcomers returned to the countryside. However, some of them participated permanently in the economic life of Warsaw.

Along with Stanisław August Poniatowski's aspirations to be perceived as an enlightened monarch grew so increased the prestige of the central authorities and the significance of Warsaw as a capital city. At the same time, the emancipation of the burghers of the capital city was taking place. Warsaw was also the place where the Four-Year Sejm took place and the space for consolidation of the burgher estate against fierce actions of the noble reformers as well as noble speculators – like the Castellan of Łuków Jacek Jezierski, who, basing on the sejm constitutions of the 1765, profited from bawdy houses and built houses across the streets. The beginnings of the burgher reaction can be seen in the initiative of Warsaw's Mayor, Jan Dolfus, who at the Delegation Sejm of 1767 introduced the project of creating a Warsaw burgher commission (2 councillors, 2 jurors, 2 district officials) as a “council for the happiness of the Crown's and Lithuanian cities” – in opposition to the reforms of the Commissions of Good Order.

In 1768–1788, a group concentrated around Warsaw's Mayor Wojciech Lobert, and later Jan Dekert and the magistrate of Old Warsaw presented memorials concerning the Warsaw burghers, and during the Four-Year Sejm concerning the whole burgher estate. A general political program for the burgher estate was prepared during 6 meetings of the delegates from cities of the Commonwealth (apart from the very conservative ones, including Cracow) between March 1789 and April 1791. The first national assembly of more than 200 cities and towns of the Crown and Lithuania (almost 90 % of royal cities) took place in November and December 1789 – the so-called black procession. According to postulates prepared by H. Kołłątaj and the members of the Patriotic Party it was decided that the useless scheme of the estate divisions would be abandoned and a new “nation of citizens” would be created (the possessors of urban real estate and rural landholdings). Thus, the limitation of civic rights was to be based on financial census.

During the Four-Year Sejm the burghers' interests were taken into consideration in the general reform of the estate structure of the realm, inherited from the Republic of Nobles. The condition to fulfil these projects was: lowering the status of the landless nobility, extending the noble privileges of individual freedom to the burghers (and possibly to the peasants), excluding the non-possessors from political rights (regardless of their descent). These postulates were partially met in the Constitution of May 3, which meant the final end of the First Commonwealth as a

Republic of Nobles, before it was officially liquidated by the foreign powers during the Partitions.

The burgher rights were widened by the legal system of the partitioning powers and The Duchy of Warsaw, gradually liquidating the estate differences. It was preserved for the longest time in the Russian Partition, where the burghers gained access to the state offices only after 1863, and were no longer subject to corporal punishment etc.

11.3. Intelligentsia

The reforms of the Four-Year Sejm and the Constitution of May 3 initiated the process of integration within the new layer of the burgher estate – intelligentsia (originated from the declassed nobility and educated townsmen). Intelligentsia consisted of writers, journalists, scholars, teachers and school visitors, artists, lawyers, doctors, some officers, and some clergymen (especially the regular clergy).

A new social group emerged: qualified state clerks – as a result of the attempts to create a modern state administration since the 2nd half of the 18th century. The development of cities and economic growth created technical intelligentsia jobs, mostly represented by architects and geometers. The king, by virtue of his conscious cultural policy, was also among the creators of this social group: the Knight School, The Commission of National Education, reforms in the Academy of Cracow and the whole education system, the development of cities, and awakening of the intellectual needs of the magnates and rich nobility, as well as townsmen – all that created a demand for educated people.

The majority of the intelligentsia was centred in Warsaw, where it was easiest to find a job. Its financial and social position was very varied: some had wealthy patrons, and some of could barely make ends meet. However, it was possible to make a living by writing and not all of the “people of letters” were poverty-stricken (the famous saying of Antoni Trębicki, who was a professional military official “literate know-alls, hungry writers” [Polish: *mędrki piśmienne, głodne literaty*]).¹¹⁷ Some writers and activists managed to make a living not only as clerks but also as editors and journalists: Franciszek Ksawery Dmochowski supported himself from the translations, and in 1794, as the editor of by publishing the *Gazeta Rządowa*, he saved some money, which covered a year of his living expenses. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz could afford a trip to Italy, as he also had some savings from working at the *Gazeta Narodowa*, which “was saleable.”¹¹⁸

Not everybody was that lucky. Even though there was a demand for educated people, there was also a certain surplus of intelligentsia. The increase of political tensions during the Four-Year Sejm and the Kościuszko Uprising forced a lot of

117 Adam Trębicki, *Opisanie sejmu r. 1793 w Grodnie – O rewolucji r. 1794*, ed. J. Kowecki, Warsaw, 1967, p. 227.

118 Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki czasów moich*, vol. 2, ed. J. Dihm, Warsaw, 1957, p. 63.

members of the intelligentsia to join radical factions, like the Polish Jacobins, who supported the Constitution of May 3. The first generation of the Polish intelligentsia played a similar role in the stormy years of the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as its counterparts in the preparation of the French Revolution.

12. Peasant Reforms in the 18th Century

12.1. New Regulations Regarding Land Usage

During the decline of the Commonwealth the forms of land usage by the peasants depended on the will of their owners. Emphyteusis was a rule, which functioned in most of the magnate states and the landholdings, which belonged to the great cities in the north and in the west. It meant renting the land for many years without the right of ownership or buying it even after many years of usage. Peasants' rights towards the land usage (the so-called "good rights") with time were called the "peasant possession," which was contradictory to the peasants' understanding of ownership. Also the acts of liberating the peasants from servitude were a result of individual contracts between the landowner and the serfs; they enabled the peasants to send their children to the cities to work in crafts and in other trades. A real change in the position of peasants in the Commonwealth was brought by the Constitution of May 3 and acts of the Uprising of 1794.

12.2. Peasant Reforms of the Four-Year Sejm

The fourth article of the Constitution of May 3 concerned the peasants, and it was designed according to the concept of Polish physiocrats, stating that land is the source of wealth and that the work of the peasants also contributes to it.

The peasant folk, thanks to whom we owe the country's wealth and richness, is the majority of the nation and therefore the most valorous might [...]. From this day on we take them under the shielding of law and the state government.¹¹⁹

This statement opened the possibility for the state judiciary and administration to intervene in the relations between the landowners and the peasant community.

Apart from that, the Constitution also contained two other resolutions concerning the peasants: first, it encouraged the landowners to make individual contracts with the peasants regarding the time and capacity of their services, under the guarantee of state institutions, and secondly, it gave an assurance of personal freedom to foreigners and refugees who wanted to settle down and take up a job. The bill regarding selling crown lands (issued in 1792, just before the war with Russia to protect the Constitution of May 3), guaranteed the peasants' lifelong possession of the land in which they served. The bill also liberated from servitude all those who

119 The Constitution of May 3, 1791, Chapter IV "The Peasants," VL, vol. 9, p. 221.

were ascribed to a land but with no official contract. According to recent research, the authors of the Constitution planned further legislative actions concerning the peasant population.

12.3. The Peasant Reforms of the Kościuszko Uprising

The Proclamation elaborated by H. Kołłątaj and his collaborators was issued in a military camp near Połaniec on May 7th, 1794. It contained the following resolutions:

1. Basing on the article IV of the Constitution of May 3 about the state and government protection of the peasants, supervisors were employed, who were state clerks, and not the lords' employees.
2. Peasants were granted personal freedom – that is, the possibility to leave the village under the condition of having paid all debts, taxes, and obligations towards the landlord and notifying the Voivodeship Commission of Order about the place where they wanted to settle.
3. The guarantee of the “possession” of land and the protection from being removed from the landholding.
4. The obligations of peasants were reduced for about 33–50 % for the time of the insurrection, and larger discounts were given to smaller peasant farms.
5. At the same time it was advised to make contracts for obligatory work, assuming that “they will not refuse to work if they get decent pay.”

The points 4 and 5 obviously collided with the interests of the landowners as employers, and therefore caused the protest of the nobility. The fixed regulations of the work of peasants were planned after the insurrection had ended. Indeed – after the battle of Maciejowice (October 1794) The Supreme National Council issued a bill, which announced the first enfranchisement of certain groups of peasants. The participants of the Uprising – soldiers and descendants of those who perished in the battlefield – were promised a full land ownership of the national lands, as well as those recaptured and confiscated from traitors. The executive decree for the Proclamation of Połaniec was a bill of the Supreme Council about the organization of supervisors and the supervisor position itself (July 1794), which were the first instance in the contacts between the lords' courts and the peasants. The village teachers were supposed to collaborate with the supervisors – in order to explain the government proclamations to the peasants, to teach them their duties towards the state, as well as “the sanctity of indentures and contracts.” One supervisor was responsible for 1.000–1.200 households, so in fairness this position remained illusory. The bills of the Kościuszko Uprising were special in comparison with the norms in other neighbouring countries in their treatment of the issue of personal freedom. However, the basic feudal rules of land possession and land rent were not disturbed.

13. The Enlightenment Civic Nation

13.1. The Shift in the Concept of Nation

The nation in the enlightenment period was understood as a civic community of people who are equal, share the same political rights, and personal freedom regardless of their ethnicity and the estate status. In reality, in Europe (including France) it was rather a postulate than a fact. The Commonwealth of Both Nations was not an exception in this regard. The last ten years of its existence brought the confrontation of the two distinct conceptions of nation. The first one was the modernized version of a political nation, based on linguistic, national, and confessional unity – on the state level, it was created by Polish enlightenment reformers. The second one was an ethnic-cultural conception of nation-people, based on the linguistic and confessional opposition towards the “lords.”

A nation – according to enlightenment ideologists – should be culturally unified as only then governing it and implementing education reforms is feasible. It should also be uniformed according to a norm accepted by all local communities, as well as linguistic and confessional minorities. These postulates can be found in the Constitution of May 3: “the government of the Polish nation” (as the unity of all lands of the Commonwealth), “Polish nobility,” “Polish countries,” “our Fatherland.” The traditional term *Both Nations* (Polish and Lithuanian), which was used in the cardinal rights legislated by Four-Year Sejm in January 1791, was replaced by the Constitution of May 3 with its idea of nation unified within the state, but at the same time socially inconsistent. The feudal resolutions were accompanied by the new norms of social transformation. One can notice the creation of the modern Polish nation, which was ready to stand up for its independence and culture. It is visible in the manner in which the term *nation* encompassed all groups of the society: the burghers and the peasants, and not only the noblemen. Despite the fact that nobility was still the dominant group within the state, it was the nation – according to the Constitution – which was superior.

The authors of the Constitution refrained from using the term *noble nation*; instead, they employed the term *nation of owners* (owners of both land and real estate in towns). In some other cases, however, the point of reference was a different, more radical concept of nation, tantamount to *people*. The term *nation-people* was invoked in the final part of the Constitution, in the article XI about the national army: “The army is nothing else than the mighty protection derived from the general strength of the nation.” However, in the article II the term *civic freedom* still signified freedom of the nobility, but the article XI – stating that “all citizens ought to protect the whole if the national freedom” – referred to the whole nation in a broad sense (like in France).

Contrary to these revolutionary announcements, in *Zaręczenie wzajemne obojga narodów* (*The Mutual Warranty of Both Nations*, Oct. 22nd 1791) the term *nation* meant the same traditional state and political value. It only proves the lack of consistency regarding terminology, and the lack of a unified understanding of the term *nation*.

13.2. The Nation and the Citizens

In the discourse of the legal acts of the Four-Year Sejm (including the Constitution of May 3), the term nation was used in the traditional sense of nation of the nobility, especially in expressions like “national will” or “national representation.” At the same time, there were some changes in the political language, which formulated the modern understanding of the Polish nation – especially in the bills and decrees concerning the “supremacy of the nation” and the fact that it encompassed both the burghers and the peasants. In the journalistic writing (for instance, Franciszek Salezy Jezierski, *Niektóre wyrazy porządkiem abecedla zebrane i stosownymi do rzeczy uwagami objaśnione* (*Some Words in Alphabetical Order with Appropriate Commentary*, Warsaw 1791), the term *nation* was defined by the legal-cultural criteria as “an assembly of people who share one language and customs, which are put down in a unified legislation for all citizens.”¹²⁰ F.S. Jezierski, who was a petty noble, treated nobility as a part of the nation equally to the burghers and the peasants. At the same time, the nobility was often juxtaposed with the nation interpreted as a community of all citizens. Both ways of interpreting the notion (traditional and modern) were presented in parallel in different meanings in journalistic writings and official acts, sometimes coming from the same author. The broadest understanding of the nation – as the people, the populace (as the radicals phrased it) – was advocated in the journalistic writings of the Kościuszko Uprising of 1794.

Radical activists of the period of the Great Sejm mostly demanded the unification of political and civil law. Introducing Polish to schools, offices, and courts as the official language was seen as an inevitable move on the way to integrate the society. Other elements of social integration, as the reformers saw it, meant the confessional and cultural assimilation of the peasants (especially from the eastern parts of the Commonwealth) and ethnic groups (who had their legal autonomy and separate courts) – especially the Jews, who were “as if a privileged estate, with their separate government and judiciary.”¹²¹ The modernization of the nation was understood in terms of unifying all existing diversities and was a breach of the principle of “unity in peaceful variety,” which meant a multicultural and federative Commonwealth – where not only Lithuania but also other provinces had such an autonomy as “they were, in a way, separate nations.”¹²²

The issue of adjusting the reality to the new idea of nation, as a political, territorial and civic community – was not a problem that only the Commonwealth faced. East-Central Europe was an ethnically varied territory, with lots of “insular” communities, whose dispersion made it difficult to establish borders. As a result,

120 Franciszek Salezy Jezierski, *Niektóre wyrazy porządkiem abecedla zebrane i stosownymi do rzeczy uwagami objaśnione*, in: *Wybór pism*, Cracow, 1952, p. 217.

121 Hugo Kołłątaj, *Listy Anonima*, in *Kuźnica Kołłątajowska*, vol. 2, ed. B. Leśnodorski, BN I 130, Wrocław, 1949, p. 329.

122 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 367.

the regulation of the borders, put down in international treaties, always meant an intervention in the traditional relationships between different ethnic communities.

During the Four-Year Sejm a very interesting concept was presented: if all people were born equal and free, they should become one nation of citizens and one social estate, namely – the nobility. This idea may be perceived as anachronistic or pioneering. Either way, there was not enough time to implement it in life, as the Commonwealth disappeared from the maps of Europe precisely at the moment when it made attempts to return to the path of development set by Western European countries.

13.3. The End of the State-Nation

The elites of the Commonwealth, at the time of its decline, understood the national community in the enlightenment terms. In effect, both democrats and conservatives perceived the fall of the state as an introduction to the inevitable decline of the nation. After the abdication of Stanisław August Poniatowski, in his letter to Seweryn Rzewuski, Szczęsny Potocki wrote:

This state is gone, and what is gone is this name, as so many others in the history of the world. Each and every man among the former Poles should choose a new country to live in. I myself became a Russian, forever.¹²³

In order to abandon such an approach it was necessary to modify both established conceptions of the political nation: the one based on the estates and the other based on the state. This happened after the collapse of the Commonwealth – when it turned out that a nation could function not only without having its own state but also against the will of the partitioning powers.

123 Quoted after Emanuel Rostworowski, *Potocki Stanisław Szczęsny (Feliks) h. Pilawa (1752–1805)*, PSB, vol. 28/2, no. 117, p. 199.

Chapter Seven

Social Bonds and Conditions of Life

1. Family and Marriage

1.1. Family

The basic form of bond between people was the family bond. The model of family largely depended on the level of civilization. As urbanization and industrialization proceeded in the 16th to the 18th centuries, in the more urbanized countries broad ties of kinship weakened, and people entered into marriages after achieving financial self-reliance – in certain milieus, birth control has been practiced already since the 16th century. This led to the creation of a nuclear family (composed of parents and children) with increasingly limited economic functions and scope of social control over its members, as well as diminished authority of parents over children. In the less developed and urbanized countries, the model of extended family (composed of at least two generations) was dominant. In the latter type, marriages were arranged at a young age by parents (18 for men, 14–16 for women), and young couples lived together with their parents. Family was treated as the basic production unit, and the functioning of households were based on the wide ties of kinship.

The Commonwealth was at the intersection of the spheres of domination of these two models. The extended family model was predominant there because of the agricultural economic system and level of urbanization. However, it coexisted with the nuclear family model in the milieus of higher social status, life standard and education (patricians living in large cities, the Crown's magnates, and rich nobility). In the family relations, the patriarchal model was predominant: the father was the caretaker, the judge, and the main provider of his family's livelihood, but the customs and law limited his authority. Mobility was a factor, which determined the changes in the family structure, bringing about the dissolution of ancestral ties. An external expression of the emancipation of individuals was the establishment of surnames among the noblemen and burghers (until the end of the 16th century). In the estate of peasants the process began much later and was completed as late as after the Partitions, since in the majority of cases peasants did not have legal standing, but as communities (Polish: *gromady*; sing. *gromada*) remaining subject to the legal authority of the landowners.

1.2. Marriage

In Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity (which allowed the clergymen to marry) marriage was treated as a sacrament, yet only the former considered marriage as an indissoluble bond, for in the latter in some cases divorce was permitted; in the Reformation confessions it was rather a partner contract between the spouses, which

could be terminated (under the control of the Church, for significant reasons and on the grounds of mutual consent). Also Roman Catholic canon law allowed for a legal separation, as well as for a temporary or permanent disruption of marital life (a separation from table and bed) on the grounds of mutual consent. The separation was in force after a court's assessment – while in the case of Catholic marriages it could be decided only by the clerical court, in the case of Orthodox marriages a secular court was also competent to decide it. A marriage could be regarded as formally invalid in the cases of estate inequality if one of the spouses was unaware of them. Also a confessional difference was considered as a so-called “disabling hindrance.” This allowed for questioning both the validity of marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics, and the hereditary rights of children coming from such marriages.

1.3. The Position of Women in the Family and in the Society

The situation of women was altered along with the changes brought upon the institution of family. In the 15th to the 16th centuries the woman question was raised in literature and theological debates. In the Renaissance, women entered social life and politics; in some countries they even became rulers. The stereotype of female intellectual inferiority was weakened and (especially in Germany) women took active part in theological disputes. In the 17th century they gained wider access to education.

Reformation brought about a lot of positive changes, but there were also some limitations imposed on women living outside the family structure. The convents were liquidated in Protestant countries (by no means counterbalanced by the institution of diaconate), the legislation became more repressive, and the legal position and wages of women decreased, while the social control over them by the church and state authorities increased. The principle of everyone's full responsibility for their actions caused the exacerbation of punishments for women for crimes regarded as their special domain (abortion, infanticide, magic, prostitution, and adultery). They were endangered with death by drowning, burning, or being buried alive. The actual execution of such sentences is under discussion, and – as Natalie Zemon Davis claims – women used the perpetuated stereotype of the feeble-mindedness in order to plead for a more merciful punishment.

The legal position of women in the Commonwealth in the early modern times had not changed much since the Middle Ages. They still could not stand in a court of law without a male legal proxy – a fact explained by their alleged inferiority:

For the women's issues always weigh less than those concerning men – they are not so stable, and not so serious.¹²⁴

It was thought that for their whole lives women should remain in the custody of their parents and later of their husband or a male relative. As women became eman-

124 Bartłomiej Groicki, *Obrona sierot i wdów*, Biblioteka dawnych polskich pisarzy prawników, vol. 4, ed. K. Koranyi, trans. J. Sawicki, Warsaw 1958, p. 51.

icipated in cities and aristocratic courts in the 16th and the 17th centuries, various satires were written against them (Marcin Bielski, *Sejm białogłowski* [*The Women's Sejm*], 1566; *Baba albo stary inwentarz* [*A Woman, or an Old Inventory*] from the second half of the 17th century, Krzysztof Opaliński, *Na zepsowane stanu białogłowskiego obyczaje* [*On the Decline of the Female Estate's Manners*], 1650). At the same time, however, the law protected women against seduction, rape, and abduction. Financial punishments for these crimes were supposed to compensate for the economic and prestige value of lost virginity or honour of a woman. Their amount depended on the social status of a victim. In the Crown and Lithuanian legislation, the aspersions of adultery cast upon a virtuous maiden or married woman was punished with financial fines, sometimes accompanied by a request to the abuser for public rectification and apology (the so-called "retraction" [Polish: *odszczekanie*, literary: "barking back"]) under a bench.

Women's financial rights depended upon their social and civil status. Both in the urban and noble law, the engagement was bound to a prenuptial agreement written down in the court register, with the value of dowry secured on the husband's landholdings. If the bride's father was dead, the duty of paying the dowry laid on her brothers, and if they had lost their parental wealth, it was transferred to the creditors. According to Lithuanian law, daughters were entitled to the ¼ of the estate of their parents (the so-called *czwarcizna*). In the 16th to the 17th centuries the jointure (Latin: *advitalitas*) became typical – a bequest for the spouse (also male) who survived, allowing him or her to use the whole estate terminally, sometimes under the condition of not marrying again. The jointure property was passed on to the heirs after his or her death. In noble law, the community property was the most popular marital property regime. As for the urban law, the Magdeburg Law established the separate property, while the Chełmno Law posited the joint property, but the husband had all the wealth at his disposal, without the necessity to consult his wife – according to the principles of commerce, in which the obligation of paying off the debts of the deceased was prior to the obligation of securing his family.

In the 17th century the economic activity of women increased. In large cities (Cracow, Lublin, Lviv, and Gdańsk) a lot of them lived and worked alone. Widows enjoyed the most freedom and had the highest social position. Widows of guild masters were allowed to manage the workshop until they remarried, in some crafts they could even obtain the status of "guild sisters." Similarly to men, women could work as innkeepers, usurers, and bathkeepers. A lot of women in cities were hired as maids and nannies (nurses, baby-sitters). Prostitution was another way of making a living – in the countries where it was illegal, it was a secret occupation, but the authorities in the most of cities tolerated it as inevitable. Usually, prostitution was supervised by a local executioner.

The economic position of women in the countryside remained unshaken. Their specialties were: weaving, poultry farming, keeping the barn in order, dairy production, gardening, fruit processing, herbiculture, and the production of tinctures considered as medicinal (pharmacy). Many noble and aristocratic women in Central European countries were the actual managers of the landholdings, and their

husbands, busy with politics, war or social life, willingly accepted such division of duties. In the 16th century, some agriculture experts (Anzelm Gostomski) thought that it is better to hire a woman as an overseer (*dworniczka*) – as she can work very well for a lower wage than a man. In Little Poland a lot of women ran their own farms. In the second half of the 17th and the 18th centuries women often established their own manufactures (Anna Radziwiłł, born Sanguszko, Elżbieta Sieniawska), modernized agriculture and breeding.

For most women, the only acceptable form of existence outside of the parental household was marriage. Other forms of non-marital sexual activity, which were tolerated in the Middle Ages, were condemned in the early modern period. The freedom to chose a partner was rather limited for women from the upper echelons of the society – despite the fact that, in theory, the canon law required free consent on both sides. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the state law protected girls against forced marriage or intentional delay of marriage by their parent or guardian. Since the 16th century the position of custodian was established for the mature maidens who did not get married, separated women, and widows. In the case of the latter, the custodian was only supposed to help them prepare legal documents concerning their wealth, and did not interfere in their current economic management. In the 16th century, it became customary that a noblewoman, whose guardians refused her marriage, because they did not want to lose control over her wealth, after reaching the age of 18 years, could either ask her further removed relatives for the permission to marry, or request the king to appoint new guardians for her.

When choosing the appropriate candidate for a spouse, people usually searched within their own social milieus, paying special attention to the value of the dowry and the interests of the connecting families, as well as potential political and social benefits of the planned relationship. The relations between husband and wife in the arranged marriages were usually correct, at best, and the male and female spheres of social and economic activity were separated – even the magnate women were isolated from the external world by their husbands. The actual marital relations largely depended upon the social environment and social practice was significantly divergent from legal norms. There are known examples of politicians' and hetmans' wives (Zofia Chodkiewicz, Regina Żółkiewska) who were their husbands' confidantes and advisors. The Old Polish description of wife as a "friend" is usually held as a proof of the existence of marital partnership. Because the family was a respected social institution, the woman as mother and wife was the subject of an ideological apotheosis. In practice, however, women were treated purely instrumentally, as servants, nurses, cooks, suppliers of goods and the children's preceptors. The image of "a good woman and diligent housewife" was constructed both by Reformation (Erazm Otwinowski) and Catholic moralists (Piotr Skarga).

1.4. Lifespan and Procreation

The average lifespan was only ca. 25 years (a few years more in the rural areas than in cities). It depended on the living conditions: it is estimated that there were only

9.7 % people over 50 years old among the peasants, and 12.4 % among the nobles, and only 35 % of the population reached the childbearing age. The main purpose of marriage was procreation. Married women were almost always pregnant during their fertile years; more children were born in the upper classes by virtue of better nutrition and freedom from hard physical work, which could cause a miscarriage. Death during the childbirth was considered as normal; infertility, in turn, was regarded as a reason for divorce respected by both canon and secular law. High rates of childbirth (on average 6 per couple) were equalized by high mortality of children (especially of newborns – ca. 30 %) and below the age of 10 (ca. 50 %). The issue of separating newborns from their mothers (and giving them away to nannies or grandmothers) was explained by the necessity of sparing the trauma of another child's death and preventing the mother from developing an emotional bond with her child.

1.5. Custody

The custodians guarded all people who were legally unable to decide about themselves: the poor, squanderers (after the king's decision), women and youth of both sexes from birth until the established age. According to the noble law in the Crown in the 16th century the established age meant 15 for boys and 12 for girls, in the second half of the 17th century – 18 for boys and 14 for girls. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in accordance with the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588), it was 18 for boys and 13 for girls. The established years finished with the age of 25, when men achieved the age of majority, and therefore were able to undertake legal action (before they could do this only with the guardian's consent). According to municipal law, boys reached their established years at the age of 14, while their majority age was 21.

The legal regulations concerning custody over minors were meant to facilitate the well being of children and limit the arbitrary will of the guardians. The constitution of 1565 required the guardian to create an inventory of goods that the minor possessed as a basis for settlement, when the custody was over. The custodian had no rights to sell, exchange or pawn the wealth of the pupil without the court's consent; he also had to secure an education for the minor; in the case of not fulfilling his duties, he could be deprived of his rights as a custodian by either the king or a court of law. Formally, the highest custodian of all orphans in the country was the king and according to the customs of the magnate patronage – the magnate.

Illegitimate children had no hereditary rights; they could not use their father's name and were deprived of the noble status. Only the king could legitimize them, but he was lost this right in 1578 along with the right of granting nobility. At the same time, the illegitimate children were also those whose parents lived together before marriage – which mostly concerned the relationships between the noblemen and female plebeians, but it was also used as a political argument (for example, against the royal candidate Jakub, who was the oldest son of Jan III Sobieski and Marie Casimire d'Arquien). Illegitimate children of Catholic priests could receive

from the bishop a dispensation from their “defective birth,” so that they could enter the clerical estate.

1.6. Kinship

The ties of kinship were very important to people in the 16th to the 18th centuries. The memory of multigenerational connections was alive in all social milieus, and it was a main reference point in wedding and funeral speeches, as well as an argument used to support political solidarity. In the ideological dimension, the whole noble estate was one family with common ancestors – the Sarmatians.

Apart from the kinship of blood, there was also the social kinship (fosterage). The reason for adoption was mainly the need to preserve the name and coat of arms after all members of a noble family had died. The adopted persons did not break their family ties and could be the heirs of their biological family, too; they would take up a new name the moment they inherited the wealth of the foster family. Adoption to the coat of arms – prohibited by the Sejm of 1616 – yet it still remained in practice and enabled the plebeians to enter the noble estate.

1.7. Clientelism and Patronage

In the noble society of the 16th–18th centuries Commonwealth the clientelism was a natural extension of family and kinship ties. It was an informal relation of two unequal, but free individuals: a client and a patron, who had mutual obligations towards each other; the patron’s obligation was the patronage, and the client’s – loyalty and faithfulness to the patron. The relation between a client and a patron was voluntary. The client was obliged to support the patron in the sejmiks and the Sejm, or to serve in his army. The patron employed his client in the administration of his landholdings, at his court or army; he was also obliged to look after the client’s family, educate his children (also abroad), support the client when he ran for office, and guarantee legal aid (at the tribunals). Efficiency in these matters mirrored the magnate’s prestige. In the case of the client’s illness, the patron was obliged to ensure medical care for him. In the case of the client’s death the patron used to share the cost the funeral.

The magnate clientele was hierarchic; it encompassed people who were socially equal to the patron, his kinsmen (friends), clients belonging to the average nobility and officials, clerks employed at his court and in charge of administering his landholdings. Internal solidarity was an obligation of the clientele; in the case of conflict the patron acted as a mediator, analogically to the father’s figure in a patriarchal family. Early modern clientele encompassed generations linked to one magnate, but the client was capable of changing the patron had he not fulfilled his obligations. The clienteles functioned in the public life of the 16th–17th centuries similarly to factions, but without a political program; the only binding factor was the client’s loyalty towards the patron. The magnate parties (coteries) were established in the Wettin times and in the Stanisław August Poniatowski’s period.

Antoni Mączak was the precursor of research on the clientelism in the Commonwealth. He considered clientelism as the basic form of ties within the noble estate since the second half of the 17th century and he suggested that the term *magnate oligarchy* be replaced with *magnate patronage*, insisting that in the assessment of the social consequences of clientelism it is important to note the difference between the magnate's position with respect to his courtiers and his servants and with respect to the nobility remaining under his influence. In the first case the magnate's domination was similar to absolutism, in the second case – he could only use his personal authority and ties with the king who was the source of offices, titles, and privileges. That is why one of the crucial reasons for the development of the clientelism in the Commonwealth – apart from the increase of the wealth disparities among the nobility – was the weakness of the royal authority and the lack of local administration, which would report directly to the king. This has encouraged the elective kings to use the magnates in contacts with petty nobility, who, in turn, were gradually taking over the king's competences instead of representing him.

1.8. The Rituals of Social Life

The family in the 16th to the 18th centuries was an institution, which defined the social and economical status of individuals in all stages of their life, marked by birth, baptism, marriage, and death. The church ceremonies and rites accompanying these events were public – in Catholicism, they were announced from the pulpit, while in Lutheran cities of Royal Prussia the announcements appeared in the occasional prints. Their symbolism referred not only to the religious and emotional code of the participants, but also to a collective code petrified by the local tradition – habits which were unique to a certain type of social milieu, depended on the estate, wealth, confession, and region. In cities, the anti-luxury laws determined the number of invited guests, the types and amount of meals, the types of fabric allowed to use for clothes, and even the value of wedding presents. The restrictiveness of these laws depended on the order (patricians, plebeians or the populace) young couple's family belonged to; in the countryside, it was determined solely by the tradition.

Until the 18th century, the rituals accompanying the childbirth were in baroque Catholicism a conglomerate of elements of the post-Tridentine religiosity (covering the newborn with scapulars and crosses, offering sick children to the protection of saints, and dressing them up in monastic garbs) and traditional pagan rites of initiation. These consisted of kissing the newborn by the mother and father after the first bath (with milk, butter, bran, or consecrated herbs added to the tub), the gesture of lifting the baby by the father, and first haircut.

The ritual of marriage consisted of many elements: matchmaking, engagement, hen's night and stag night, the wedding ceremony including sugar feast, the unveiling and capping ceremony, carrying the bride to the groom's house, as well as the continuation of celebrations the day (or even a couple of days) after the main event. Most of it was completely secular, but after the Tridentine reform the wedding ceremony itself ceased to be a ritual performed at home. In order for the wedding

to be legitimate, both the bride and the groom had to express their consent before a clergyman and in the presence of at least two witnesses; other forms of marriage were seen as “clandestine” and hence null and void (legalized in 1741).

Funeral ceremonies were the most elaborate ones. Death was treated not only in terms of biological passing (the termination of corporeal activity), but also as the crucial point of life and a moment of summary for which one had to be prepared. The act of death (apart from the elites cultivating neo-stoic tradition) was not treated as falling into eternal sleep, a pastime after the hardships of life. After the Council of Trent the Catholic Church consciously drew upon to the medieval tradition, according to which the fate of the soul was determined by the hour of death (*hora mortis*), when the satan and the guardian angel waged their final battle. The family helped the soul to overcome the temptations of the “evil one” together with a clergyman, who provided the sacraments of Confession and Extreme Unction (Catholicism), special ceremony known as “Office at the Parting of the Soul from the Body” in Eastern Orthodoxy or spiritual assistance (Protestant confessions); there were also special objects serving to chase away the “evil one”: a blessed candle lit at a deathbed, aspergillum and holy water, Easter palms, the Bible and the breviary, the *agnusculus* (a figurine of Lamb of God typically made of wax), and holy relics. Manuals of *Ars bene moriendi* (The Art of Dying Well) were very popular. In all confessions, the necessary element of a good death and salvation was, above all, the creation of a last will, which was a form of final reckoning with the living (especially with the family and the debtors) and with God, as well as the condition of the general absolution.

Baroque funerals, especially those of rich and famous people, were extremely lavish (with the preparation works taking weeks or even months). The funeral conduct and the funeral banquet (Polish: *stypa*) were the occasions for gatherings of the family members, relatives, clients, and guests, and sometimes even court armies, royal ambassadors, and foreign guests. During the commemorative mass, the interiors of churches were decorated with black or purple cloth (military funerals) and lit with candles, and all the windows were covered. The coffin containing the body of the deceased was placed on a catafalque, in the magnates’ funerals under a canopy, with a special structure (*castrum doloris*) consisting of three elements: coat of arms and emblems signifying the power of the family, the insignia of military virtues (even if the deceased had never participated in a war), and the deceased’s portrait nailed to the front of the coffin for the time of the funeral (the so-called coffin portrait). In Sarmatian funeral rituals, the deceased himself was symbolically involved in the ceremony: in the magnates’ funerals (especially military) the deceased was represented by the so-called *archimimus* – a person resembling him, dressed in his clothes and armour, sitting on his horse. He would fall down on the ground with much noise the moment the coffin was entombed. Dignitaries were buried inside the church, at the closest spot to the altar (in a chapel or crypt); ordinary people rested in graveyards close to the church (also in the city centre). Right after the funeral, the servants divided the cloth used to cover the catafalque (hence the symbolic image of “tearing of the cloth” over the grave of the dying fatherland

in baroque literature). All of these funeral rituals served as the indicators of prestige and social status. In fact, they were also performed in spite of the wish for a modest ceremony expressed in the last will, or even against the confessional principles (like in the case of Calvinists).

The place of burial was commemorated by Polish and Latin inscriptions (epitaphs), and, more seldom, by banners with the coats of arms, or tablets. Sometimes there were gravestones with an image of the deceased in motion, seemingly conscious of the presence of the living, trying to grasp their sight and remind them of the vanity of life and the constant possibility of death (*memento mori*). Images of *danse macabre* were popular in the 17th and the 18th centuries, presenting a musical procession of people of all estates and all professions, guided to the grave by skeletons playing on different musical instruments.

The baroque rituals accompanying birth, weddings, and funerals lasted many weeks and cost astronomical sums of money. Occasional literature flourished in the Renaissance and Baroque periods; written in order to commemorate the most important family celebrations, it was mainly published as occasional prints, sometimes written by professional writers – usually family members or guests (Ludwika Ślęk called it “the domestic muse”). The knowledge of all rituals was passed on in the family, but the art of writing occasional poems was taught at schools as a skill necessary to maintain the ties of blood and kinship, and the network of clientele relationships.

1.9. Upbringing and Socialization

The Renaissance introduced a different categorization of childhood than that which dominated in the Middle Ages; at the turn of the 15th and the 16th centuries, the value of childhood as a stage of life was recognized. It had nothing to do with the 19th-century ideal of the “idyllic and angelic time”; on the contrary, children in the 15th–17th centuries were perceived as creatures very much like young animals, naturally impure, whose bad instincts and drives had to be tamed and tempered with the birch.

The basic issue whether to educate at home or at school – raised by Quintilian in the 1st century C.E. – was solved in the 15th-century Commonwealth, which (against the opinion of most humanists) supported the home education. It stemmed from the lack of understanding that a public school, educating competent and diligent officials and preparing for a social life, was also a crucial element of the development of modern state institutions. The home education collided with these ideals in many ways, as it put the family and respect for the authorities in the first place. In this regard, all educational institutions of all Christian churches, especially Catholic institutions, supported the family.

In the “culture of word and gesture” prevailing in the Sarmatian formation, the home education, especially in the rural milieu, produced illiterates, who were perfectly capable of coping in life, but only in the vicinity of their households. As a consequence, the majority of youth of all estates (noble, burgher, and peasant) of

the 16th–18th century Commonwealth perceived the family as the “whole world.” This led (even in the magnate families) to uncritical subjugation to the authority of the parents and confessional institutions, causing egoism and lack of understanding of “public-good.” The parental instructions – apart from instilling the love of the Commonwealth and the obligations towards the king – prescribed the duty to magnify the power of the family that, in practice, trumped all other obligations.

The system of home education was criticized by people professionally occupied with education: Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (Book V: “De schola” in *Commentarium De republica emendanda libri quinque*, 1554); Szymon Marycjusz of Pilzno (*De scholis seu academiis libri duo*, 1551) and some Catholic clergymen (P. Skarga in *Żywoty świętych* [*The Lives of the Saints*], 1579) and Protestant clergymen (Erazm Glicznier, *Książki o wychowaniu dzieci* [*Books on Raising Children*], 1558), as well as the creator of modern pedagogy John Amos Comenius (Jan Amos Komenský) (see Chapter Nine, 6.3). The shift from home education to public schooling occurred during the Stanisław August Poniatowski period.

The School of Chivalry or Corps of Cadets established in 1765 was designed to socialize and provide a civic upbringing through military training. It educated the elites in the spirit of reasonable discipline and the equality of all people, for the good of the Humanity, following the rule: “a civic school should also be a school of chivalry.”¹²⁵ The School of Chivalry was founded for purely utilitarian reasons. It was meant to educate not only professional soldiers, but also, and above all, a body of officials loyal to the king, people who would be later employed in the administrative and fiscal apparatus of the new, reformed state. In practice, this profile of education in the state maintaining a minimal administrative apparatus had somewhat pitiful consequences during the Partitions of the 1770s and 1780s, and the graduates from the School of Chivalry could not find employment that would match their qualifications. However, “the School of Chivalry was more than another unsuccessful Polish educational project. It was the first realization of the 17th century dream of a unique educational institution, which would change everything, nurturing a host of future reformers and people devoted to the Cause, regardless of how it would be defined at their time. In fact, this legend returns repeatedly in the 19th century: the Krzemieniec Lyceum was supposed to educate people living according to the guidance of *reason of the vanquished*, and the Main School was supposed to give the country a generation of reasonable positivists; also Collegium Nobilium and the Corps of Cadets in Kalisz had their own lesser legends.”¹²⁶

The reforms of the Commission of National Education (since 1773) were an endeavour to revise the Sarmatian tradition and restore the nation to a new birth

125 Marcin Fiałkowski, *Dissertation on Public Education, May 15th, 1789 Read in Cracow*, in: *Pisma i projekty pedagogiczne doby Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, ed. K. Mrozowska, Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow-Gdańsk 1973, p. 358.

126 Witold Zakrzewski, “Szkoła Rycerska: codzienność instytucji i losy absolwentów,” Instytut Kultury Polskiej UW (in preparation).

through the youth (by separating the children from the influence of their parents and sending them to the reformed schools). That aim was to prepare new individuals (regardless of their social background) for the public life in an egalitarian and free society. The purpose was to minimize the “caste education system” used by the nobility with the aid of clergy to deprave their own children. The “enlightened” circles believed that the traditional home upbringing and education was the basic obstacle in implementing the program of reforms. That is why the idea was to maintain home education, but under the condition of reforming, at the same time, the families and subjecting them to the supervision of the state. According to Stanisław Staszic, it was merely a temporary solution:

It is quite impossible to have such great buildings for all the Polish children to find room there, yet the family cannot be the only educating institution. Therefore, as a legislator willing to have moral people within the state, he should, above all, endeavour to create perfect families with complete control of husbands and fathers, and thereby provide guidance for children.¹²⁷

In the 1770s a lot of discussions took place concerning the reform of education and most theoreticians and practitioners from the Commission of National Education circle agreed to condone home education under one condition: insofar as it would be supervised by parents who were “moral and loving,” and with the participation of professional teachers, with the necessity for the pupils to take public exams (for instance, the voice of Franciszek Bieliński, list 11: *O edukacji domowej*, in: *Sposób edukacji w XV listach opisany*, [letter 11: *On Home Education*, in: *Forms of Education Described in 15 Letters*, 1775]). The Commission of Education published *Ustawy dla stanu nauczycielskiego* (*Bills for the Teacher’s Estate*), where it was stated that holidays at home should be limited for children, as it should be the school’s responsibility to care about the physical, moral, and intellectual development of the children. It was widely understood that the tradition, insofar as it is uncritically or thoughtlessly approached, may be the main “hindrance” – as Ignacy Potocki put it – on the way to prepare the youth for coping with the new reality.

2. Social Environment

2.1. The Countryside

Neighbour ties were the basic ties in the nobility’s social milieu. In a country with poor urbanization and almost without local administration, where the noble manors were dispersed all around, it was the neighbour relations that guaranteed help in the event of natural disasters, defence against danger, and participation in the circulation of information. Social norms framed the socializing element of good

127 Stanisław Staszic, *Ród ludzki*, chapter 17: *The Institution, or The bill on Public Education*, in: *Pisma i wypowiedzi pedagogiczne*, ed. T. Nowacki, Wrocław 1956, p. 180.

neighbourhood relations: moderation (typically, guests should stay no longer than for three days), the allusions to overstaying one's welcome and the sarcastic images in proverbs (where somebody is not invited, there he is lashed away; a quest is like a fish – starts to give off an odour on the third day) and in popular literature (for example, the epigrams by Waclaw Potocki) reviled the deviations from these customary norms. However, good neighbourhood relations and hospitality were seen as typical elements of rural life, as opposed to the urban egoism and ruthlessness:

...who
Is hidden amongst the city's walls,
Loving only a self-seeking man,
Being always in his pawns,
[...]
Thou shalt not make any friends,
Nor waste gold for friendship ends –
If you will ever be in need,
Count on yourself, indeed.¹²⁸

Hospitality was a virtue practiced not only towards neighbours but also to foreigners: travellers and army officers (Saxon, Swedish, Muscovite/Russian) who stationed in the Commonwealth in the second half of the 17th and the 18th centuries. There was no social ostracism towards officers of foreign armies in the 18th century, especially towards Russians; it appeared only after the uprisings.

The peasant community (*gromada*) was the basic collective institution for the peasants, also convenient for the court in the matter of tax collection as well as in the judiciary dimension. However, in the next two hundred years, it was replaced by the farm organization governed by officials. The model of coexistence between the magnate courts (with their officials) and the peasants was based on cooperation in fieldwork, not on conflict. The necessity to collaborate was explained in Polish treatises and farming handbooks, like Anzelm Gostomski's *Gospodarstwo* [*Economy*, 1588] that advised:

A peasant must not be forced to do anything, as only the one who wasted time must act under pressure. Acting under pressure is not good for anyone, and seems to be a form of slavery.¹²⁹

In reality, the peasant serfs worked badly, saved their animals and tools by exploiting the lord's supplies, and the officials punished them cruelly for laziness and fractiousness, usually by forcing them to work more than the established corvée. It created a new reality compared to the one shaped by rent economy, so critically

128 Józef Domaniewski, "Byt ziemiański i miejski," in *Polska literatura ziemiańska*, ed. J. S. Gruchała, S. Grzeszczuk, Warsaw, 1989, pp. 208–209, verses: 236–256.

129 Anzelm Gostomski, *Gospodarstwo*, ed. S. Inglot, Wrocław, 1951, Biblioteka Narodowa (BN), Series 1, no. 139, p. 34.

depicted in literature (*Żeńcy* [Harvesters] by Szymon Szymonowic, *Na ciężary i opresyję chłopską w Polsce* [On the Toil and Oppression of Peasants in Poland] by Krzysztof Opaliński). As A. Mączak pointed out, “the currency created new threats and conflicts, not necessarily humanitarian, but usually less brutal.”¹³⁰

2.2. The City

Table 5. The Number of Towns in the Crown

Detailed list	Early 16th c.	Late 16th c.	Mid-16th c.	1775–1776 ^a
Total	–	1287 ^b	–	862 ^b
The Crown in its borders before 1569	688	873	902 ^c	570
Great Poland with Kujavia (Wielkopolska and Kujavia)	263	256	264	208
Little Poland (Małopolska)	164	210	228	180
Masovia (Mazowsze)	88	107	108	104
Royal Prussia (Prusy Królewskie)	36	36	37	–
Warmia (Ermland)	12	12	12	–
Red Ruthenia (Ruś Czerwona)	110	215	253	22
Podolia	15	37	–	56
Lands incorporated to the Crown in 1569				
Podlasie	13	25	27	37
Volhynia	–	68		110
Ukraine	–	321		145

^a Excluding the lands lost after the first partition and without Gdańsk and Toruń.

^b Including the lands incorporated in 1569.

^c Excluding Podolia.

Source: on the basis of: Maria Bogucka, Henryk Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej*, Wrocław, 1986, in: *Historia Polski w liczbach*, Warsaw, 2003, vol. 1, table 40, p. 61.

130 Antoni Mączak, in: I. Ichnatowicz [et. al.], *Spółeczeństwo polskie od X do XX wieku*, Warsaw 1996, p. 219.

Table 6. *Density of Urban Settlements in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Mid-17th Century*

Duchy Voivodeship of:	Area in square kilometres	Number of urban settlements	Average area of one urban settlement in sq. km
Total	296.900 ^a	808	367 ^a
Vilnius	44.200	201	220
Troki (Trakai)	31.150	109	286
Duchy of Samogitia	23.300	93	250
Brześć Litewski (Brest-Litovsk)	40.600	72	564
Novahruak	33.200	96	346
Minsk	55.500	98	566
Polotsk	21.750	49	444
Vitebsk	24.600	60	410
Mstislav	22.600	21	1076
Undetermined	–	9	–

^a Excluding areas of urban settlements with undetermined voivodeship.

Source: on the basis of: Stanisław Alexandrowicz, "Geneza i rozwój sieci miasteczek Białorusi i Litwy do połowy XVII w.," *Acta Baltico-Slavica* 7 (1970), pp. 65–105, in: *Historia Polski w liczbach*, Warsaw, 2003, vol. 1, Table 43, p. 63.

The corporation ties in guilds and confraternities, which were based on the community of profession and confession, were typical for cities. Guilds became institutions of social life in the modern times, which exceeded the economic sphere. Their statutes – which described the maximum amount of apprentices and students, conditions of production, quality and prices – also ensured all their members to have equal chances and a life appropriate to their estate. Most burghers considered the guilds to be a guaranty of stability of social order. The gradual deterioration of guilds (due to other rising modes of production) was regarded as a threat to the traditional forms of life, customs, and professional and estate ethics. That is why the guilds were maintained until the end of the existence of the Commonwealth, despite the nobility's attempts to shut them down (undertook since 1550). Stallholders and innkeepers created their own guilds modelled on the craft guilds.

Merchants who were not patricians created their own confraternities, which were very similar to the Western European guilds grouping rich merchants (such as cloth merchants). Another form of economic family ties were commercial partner-

ships between relatives who had the citizenship of different cities. In such ventures, the capital and work were combined with family ties.

2.3. Noble and Magnate Courts

Noble and magnate courts were a very unique social and cultural environment. In Old Polish, the term *dwór* (manor or court) referred to the people, rather than the building. The size and structure of a court depended largely on the wealth, but lavishness was condemned. It was postulated to adjust the number of servants to the wealth of the landholders and to get rid of lackeys kept only to show off and living off their masters.¹³¹

Polish and Lithuanian courts in the 16th and the mid-17th centuries were characterized by directness of manners; etiquette was introduced in the 18th century, along with the hierarchy, which followed Western European patterns.

In the 17th and the 18th centuries, the magnate courts were a school of public life for the noble youth, as well as local cultural, political, and information centres. Their significance increased together with the diminishment of the role of the royal court and the decentralization of power. A stay at a magnate court opened a gateway to the state offices. In spite of that, it is very difficult to find favourable opinions concerning the courts in the historical sources; proverbs and literature depict them places of demoralization of the noble youth:

The court shall teach you hypocrisy,
And those who enter the court,
Will forget the virtue and hunger of favours.¹³²

Especially two elements of the courtly condition were considered as contrary to the chivalric ethos: the availability and service for money.

3. Social Bonds in the Confessional Institutions

3.1. The Parish

The parish was the lowest organization unit on a given territory in the Catholic and the Uniate Churches. At the same time, it was a social group, in which internal ties (regardless of the estate and wealth differences of its members) were shaped by religious practice, which sometimes was the only occasion to escape the toil of everyday life and participate in a broadly understood cultural life. In the 17th–

131 *Rewersał listu szlachcica jednego do drugiego pisany, w którym się obmawia, że nie przybył na sejmik, w Opatowie pro 16 Martii 1606 złożony, o którym zdanie swe i dyskursy różne przydawa*, in *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoszu Żebrzydowskiego*, ed. J. Czubek, Cracow, 1918, vol. 2, p. 255.

132 Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, *Stabat Petrus in atrio principis et iterum negavit*, in *Poeci polscy od średniowiecza do baroku*, ed. K. Żukowska, Warsaw, 1977, p. 615.

18th centuries, the parish ties were more profound in rural areas, and a parish sub-culture was created, which was parallel to the elite Catholic culture of the magnates and the Episcopate.

A parish priest was in charge of the Roman-Catholic parish, and a rector (Polish: *paroch*) was the head of the Uniate churches; afterwards was a patron – an donor of the land, founder of an ecclesiastical building and its provider, who had the right of presentation (that is, to choose the candidate for the parson, later acknowledged by the bishop), the honorary privileges (a honorary seat in the church, precedence in a procession, prayers and intercessions), and the duty of maintaining church buildings and supporting vicars and church servants. Chosen vitrices (Latin: *vitricus ecclesiae*) were the parish's functionaries responsible for the maintenance of its budget. Men and women were separated in both Catholic and Orthodox churches (different benches, separate communion and confession).

Religious confraternities were also connected with the parish; they served devotional, educational, and above all charitable functions. Confraternities were propagated in the post-Tridentine Church as a form of activity of all milieus diversified in terms of sex and age (for example, Jesuit student Sodalities of the Holy Mary). As Henryk Samsonowicz rightly observed, “the Roman Catholic Church tried to structure the whole secular society on the model of church confraternities, and it largely succeeded.” Each confraternity had its own legal frames, celebrations, and habits that satisfied the need for elite status.

3.2. Orthodox Brotherhoods

The Orthodox brotherhoods were a form of organization, which resembled guilds. In the cities where members of the Orthodox Church were not allowed to join guilds, it was precisely the brotherhoods that performed this function. Initially, only men who were independent financially and had their own families, could join them. There were also “lower brotherhoods” in the 17th century for the single people and youth (an equivalent of the apprentice associations). The goal of establishing brotherhoods in the 1620s was the moral, social, as well as intellectual reform connected with the rise of solidarity and feeling of threat after the Union of Brest. The Ruthenian brotherhoods can be compared with Latin confraternities, as they shared mutual goals and forms of activity. They were also similar in that they looked after the churches and supported the clergymen and servants. Their cultural activity (schools, printing houses, teaching the Old Church Slavonic and Greek languages) was organized by the Orthodox believers with the cooperation of the Orthodox nobility and magnates.

3.3. Protestant Congregations and Synods

Protestant congregations played a similar role to that of the parishes. The intervention of synods into secular life was larger than in the case of Catholic synods – through their disciplinary regulations they could influence the private lives of specific individuals. The most serious punishment that a synod could implement

was banning an individual from the participation in the Eucharist, and a clergyman could be deprived of his rights to administer sacraments or even removed from the church – this, however, required the consent of his secular patron. Secular seniors were visitors and legal supervisors in the territories that they inhabited, as well as in Protestant schools. The social ties in the Protestant congregations required more private activity than in Catholic parishes, where all sorts of action performed by the parishioners were initiated and supervised by the clergymen.

4. Social Care

4.1. The Stages and Tendencies of Change

Throughout the whole Europe on the verge of the early modern era, the medieval doctrine of charity was overcome along with its model of treating the poor. It was a result of a massive increase of paupers demanding alms and posing an increasing threat to the public order and health. The social scale of this phenomenon in early modern Europe is manifested by the emergence of a new literary genre (first in German 14th-century literature, then in Italian, French and Spanish literatures) – the so-called Picaresque novel, which showed the life of vagrant beggars and vagabonds.

The response was a shift in the way, whereby destitution was treated and in the form of charity actions, initiated by severe critique of the Catholic doctrine of good deeds by Reformation theologians. The Protestant and some Catholic reformers (Juan Luis Vives in Spain and A. Frycz Modrzewski in Poland, although the latter was already leaning towards Protestantism) called for the secularization of social care, and the secularization of the church wealth meant for this purpose, and the division of beggars into those who could be put into hospitals, people too ashamed to beg, and the paupers incapable of working, entitled to a public begging. Also P. Skarga criticized the practice of distributing alms and called for establishing hospitals by secular and church institutions.

The Protestant countries started to implement reforms quickly. The changes were visible also in the Catholic countries, where the development of absolutism supported centralized forms of charity. In the Commonwealth, where the weakness of central authority resulted in the lack of interest in the matter of the poor until the 18th century, it remained a duty of all confessional institutions to support their members.

4.2. Catholic Social Care

After the Council of Trent, bishops took over the monopoly of conducting charity in the Roman Catholic Church, taking over these functions from the magistrates and the king. Apart from the religious orders, there were two types of Catholic institutions, whose main purpose was charity: hospital provostries in large cities and hospitals (poorhouses in parishes). The hospital provostries had their own

equipment and a provost, i. e. a hospital parish priest. The hospitals were subject to the city authorities.

Sporadically, almshouses for veterans of different professions were created: for soldiers (a Warsaw hospital established by Stephen Bathory), for peasants (in the landholdings of Mikołaj Spytko Ligeza in the so-called Rzeszów Country), or for miners (in Tarnowskie Góry in 1528). Orphans, foundlings, illegitimates, and poor expecting women were looked after in specialized institutions, of which the oldest was the Hospital of the Holy Ghost in Cracow (since 1220). At the end of the 16th century, brotherhoods of charity were created and their revival took place in the second half of the 18th century, under the influence of the Enlightenment. “Brotherhoods of Active Love of the Neighbour” were introduced in all parishes in order to supervise the almshouses and offer cheap loans for the poor. It was an initiative of the Bishop of Płock Michał Jerzy Poniatowski, who organized the first poorhouse in Płock in 1777, established entirely by virtue of the donations of the local community (the so-called *karbony*).

Funds for all kinds of charity were raised during the special collections for charity, testaments, extraordinary taxes, low-interest loans, and donations from the king and the magnates – disproportionately low, given their capabilities. The decentralization of charity actions and private character of their funding made it difficult to reach out with help to those who needed it most (especially to vagabonds). In the second half of the 18th century first attempts to reorganize the social care system were undertaken. In 1774–1780 special Commission of Hospitals in the Crown and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania started working. In 1791, the Commission of Police of the Both Nations carried out the lustration of all charity organizations in the Commonwealth.

4.3. Protestant Social Care

In the Protestant communities, the most important role in terms of social care was played by the city councils (in towns and cities), and in the countryside – by church authorities collaborating with the district superintendents. Theoretically, each well-organized church was supposed to have a hospital, apart from a church and a school. The hospital was meant not only for people deprived of means but also, and above all, for “the ministers’ widows and children.” In reality, the existence of hospitals depended largely on the condition of churches; the Unity of the Lithuanian Unity was able to keep its social care institutions until 1801. Another form of aid, scarcely applied, was the rent distributed on a regular basis to people in need, who were not obliged to live in a hospital.

In the Commonwealth, the Protestant charity was financed by individual donations. Another source of funds were the collections conducted among the believers abroad, thus the Protestant charity was of international nature. This exposed the Polish and Lithuanian Protestants to criticism, according to which they took up charity as an excuse for acting against the national interest; for example collec-

tions for Protestant states of the Reich, demolished by Catholic armies during the Thirty Years' War.

The organization of social care in Lutheran cities of Royal Prussia in the 16th–18th centuries looked different. In Gdańsk, as early as in 1545, there were offices of hospital supervisors, and in 1606–1610 – after the combining of various foundations with the resort of the tenants and beggars – a central Charity Office was established. Orphans were specifically looked after: in 1554, the Children's Home was opened, where the foundlings and beggar children were brought up. In Toruń, a special Orphan Office was established (by the ordinance of mayor Heinrich Stroband, *Patrocinium Pupillorum*, 1605), which approved the supervisors for orphans according to the testaments of their parents, or tried to find custodians for them.

According to the Lutheran principle regarding orphans, the whole urban community should benefit from the social care, so that they could reclaim the status of their parents. In the 16th century, the authorities of Gdańsk decided that the best way to help the poor is by educating them. The ordinance of 1551 (only partially implemented) imposed compulsory education on all poor children (the city was paying for their books and clothes). Best students were even offered the possibility to continue their studies abroad.

Protestant charity, as distinct from its Catholic counterpart, was pragmatic (pragmatism was perceived as the basis of healthy social relations). That is why begging and idleness were not tolerated (especially among people capable of working), and an integral part of charity system was the establishment of compulsory workhouses – like the one in Gdańsk, operating since 1630. In the mid-18th century there were 900 people in three Gdańsk care homes (The Children's Home, Orphanage, and Educational House). Catholic charity reached a similar conception of linking social care with education in the 18th century (for example, the practice of employing beggars to serve in church buildings).

4.4. Social Care in the Ethnic-Legal Groups

In the Jewish kahals, the care for those in need was left to a *gabbai* (also known as *shamash*), who was a charity supervisor, and to special burial societies (*chevra kadi-sha*), which were responsible for preparing bodies for burial and all related services.

In Islam, charity (*zakāt* – tax for charity, amounting to 2.5 % and based on income and the value of one's all property) was one of the fundamental religious requirements. The followers of the Qu'ran created foundations (*waqf*) devoted to religious goals (mosque, madrasa – school) and public aims (library, hospital, cemetery, bridge, water pipes). The object, which was subscribed, had to have a constant value and bring profit; usually, it was land, which one could neither sell nor pawn or inherit. Another form of charity was *Sadaqah*, in which each member of the community donated a certain sum of money or food to be distributed among those who were in need.

Among the Lithuanian Tatars, donations for charity were sometimes done in the form of "tithe," given to the mullah. The *Sadaqah* institution was transformed into a

meal for everyone during the holidays, instead of being just alms. Since the 16th century, family adoption was a charity duty for the Lithuanian Tatars. Its uniqueness is under discussion as this form of caring about others was also common in other confessional communities.

5. Hygiene and Health

5.1. Personal Hygiene

Low level of individual hygiene and health – especially among the poorest groups in cities and villages – was caused by the lack of access to clean water. In the first half of the 17th century ca. 40 towns and villages of the Commonwealth were granted privileges to build their own water supply system. However, they were mostly installed as a means of fire prevention. The quality of water distributed through wooden or lead pipes was dreadful, as the pipes were leaking, earthbound, and the sewage and gutter drained through them. This led to digestive issues, and during epidemics it created closed cycles of bacteria. Also cemeteries were a huge danger for the health of the inhabitants, as until the 18th century they were situated near churches, mostly within the city walls where there was very high-density housing. Public baths existed only in bigger cities and fell into ruin in the second half of the 17th century; some historians and epidemiologists consider baths as the main reason for the outbursts of plague, which is possible, especially given the fact that they were frequented also by city beggars.

Because the cities were so densely build and therefore crowded, in each room in a household there were a few people living together, on average 2–3 sleeping in one bed. Wooden, dirty, often mouldy and stifling interiors were a natural habitat for insects and vermin. The livestock, kept in the same rooms as people, was another source of disease. Slaughterhouses, tanneries, breweries, malt houses and barns, full of mice and rats (the main carriers of the bubonic plague) were all inside the city walls. Most cities were plunged in dirt: there were no rubbish dumps, which is why most garbage was thrown out on the streets or kept in courtyards.

The countryside was in a slightly better situation in terms of access to water. However, people rarely washed themselves and their clothes (mainly using lye as soap became popular as late as the 17th century), which was another reason for poor health. Using the same dishes, not combing one's hair for months caused tangled hair (the famous *plica polonica*) and pediculosis, and the lack of underwear or shoes facilitated the circulation of viruses and bacteria infections. It seems that hygienic conditions of everyday life were worse in the Crown than in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which was more scarcely inhabited and had mostly wooden infrastructure, and where the use of Ruthenian banya (a large tub) remained a custom, which significantly increased the level of hygiene.

5.2. Epidemics and Plagues

The low level of hygiene caused local epidemics of contagious diseases, and outbreaks of bubonic plague on a wider scale. The epidemics usually coincided with the years of bad harvest, hunger, and wars. The highest intensity was in 1651–1663, and then in 1708–1711; after 1720 the plagues were rare and had a smaller range. As sources are scarce, it is still unknown how big the death toll was in larger cities of the Commonwealth. According to Andrzej Karpiński, the best documented plagues killed more than 1/3 of a city's population, which struggled for years to retrieve the demographic status from before the catastrophe – like Cracow, which lost 20.000 people during the epidemic of 1677–1679, and in 1791 had only 10.000 inhabitants, or Gdańsk, which had 80.000 people in 1650 and in 1730 only 48.000. The lack of data makes it impossible to estimate the death toll of the rural population. Władysław Andrzej Serczyk calculated the loss in Podolia during the plague of 1769–1771 to be 60–80 % of the whole population.

The city councils issued special plague ordinances – regulating the behaviour of inhabitants during a plague. It was advised to clean the houses and their vicinity, to let fresh air inside, to incense interiors with burnt herbs and amber, and to disinfect them using hot vinegar with herbs. To protect oneself against plague, anti-plague substances were advised: diet, bleeding, wearing special “characters” (pieces of paper with magic incantations written on them) or amulets – gems or mercury in nuts or feathers. Both the populace and professional medics at the beginning of the 18th century believed in the efficacy of these practices. Taking baths and the use of soap were discouraged, as it was believed that by opening the skin pores they made it possible for the disease to develop. Most inhabitants of a plague-stricken city were left with prayer to saints specializing in the plagues (Sebastian, Roch, Barbara, Rosalia). All these means, which were a mixture of official and folk medicine and magic, only showed the vulnerability and helplessness in face of the plagues.

People's behaviour during the plagues revealed the weakness of human bonds: some of them considered it a great opportunity to make money, often using criminal methods; also fleeing from an plague-stricken city by those who could afford it – the king and his court, the highest city officials with the mayor and secular and regular clergy (including enclosed convents) – was common. The city authorities, in turn, tried to get rid of beggars, and vagabonds using physical violence (whips and lashes). Charity in these cases was rare: sometimes donations were made for those who had nowhere to escape from a city beset by plague. Sporadically, the city council established city hospitals, distributed free medicines, and paid for funerals of the plague victims. During a plague, the special “plague mayors” and stewards were created who gave out money to those in need, and rarely provided help in kind.

The Jesuits and the Brotherhood of Saint Roch were convents, which helped the plague-stricken. One of the statute goals of the latter was to serve the poor and the sick and to bury their bodies. In Warsaw in the second half of the 17th century, the Daughters of Charity, Lazarites and Brothers Hospitalers also helped the sick. Secular associations and charity organizations provided help as well. In Warsaw,

during the 1624–1625 plague the most active were the Brotherhoods of Charity, which were established by the Jesuits in the last quarter of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century.

5.3. The Development of Medicine

The plagues gave an impulse to the development of professional medicine strictly connected with urban environment. At the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, in larger cities, the function of a city physician was established. They were responsible for supervising the level of sanitation and the competences of medics. In the first half of the 17th century, Prussian cities began to found medical colleges (*collegia medica*), which were financed by the city councils. In the first half of the 17th century, in all large cities of the Crown there were guilds of barber-surgeons.

Alongside the Christian guilds, analogical Jewish corporations were also created, which were supervised by the kahals (for example, in Kazimierz near Cracow). The ophthalmology was developing – reading glasses, imported from Nuremberg and Venice, were known in the Commonwealth since the second half of the 16th century. The barber-surgeon guilds (which dealt with surface injuries: fractures, twisted bones etc.) led to the emergence of professional surgeons (specialists in internal disease). A lot of mobile “operators” wandered around the country – many of them were simply charlatans.

The only school for medics was the Academy of Cracow, which had two medical chairs at the beginning of the 16th century. Some of its 16th and 17th century graduates (like Wojciech Oczo, Sebastian Pertrycy of Pilzno, Jan Struś) were the authors of outstanding (for their time) publications based on practice and observation. At the end of the 17th century, a decline in medical education was noted; the studies abroad were expensive and medical departments in the Commonwealth were practically closed. In the Academy of Zamość in 1708–1759, there were no professors of medicine at all, and in the Cracow Academy, during the reign of Augustus III, there were no lecturers given, in spite of the fact that two doctors were holding the chairs of medicine. The reforms of the Commission of National Education changed this situation: schools of medicine, surgery, and pharmacy were established at the Faculty of Medicine of the Cracow Academy. In 1789, in Cracow, within the hospital of St. Lasarus, a school training surgeons for the military was opened. In Cracow and Vilnius, the 3-year courses for midwives and obstetricians were arranged, and the royal cities within the Crown (after 1784) and in Lithuania (after 1793) were obliged to send their students to study medicine at the academies of Cracow or Vilnius.

The benefits of official medicine were available only to the richest members of society. Professional medical care was scarce even in large cities; it was as late as the second half of the 18th century, when patients were finally categorized according to their diseases. In the 18th century, it was common to use the services of barber-surgeons, while in the villages, old women, quacks and folk healers offered medical care. In the cities, pharmacists were also responsible for treating patients. It was a profession practiced through generations and often made it possible to acquire

large fortunes. Oil merchants were famous for special soaps, scents, and oils that they produced. In the noble estates, there were also the so-called “pharmacy ladies.”

5.4. Remedies

The iatrochemistry (chemical medicine), which introduced the employment of chemical substances (such as copper, iron, antimony, lead, gold and silver) in treating diseases developed in the 16th and 17th centuries. The study of mineral waters and their beneficiary effects followed: Iwonicz and Cieplice Śląskie were the famous health-resorts since the 17th century. Yet, it was herbalism, which remained the principal means of dealing with health problems. Various herbariums with descriptions of medical herbs (as well as medicines of animal and chemical origin) were written (by Polish authors, like Szymon of Łowicz, 1532, Stafan Falimirz 1534, 1542, 1566, Marcin Siennik 1568, Marcin of Urzędów 1595, Szymon Syreński 1613). The import from India and America (through Gdańsk) enriched the assortment with opium, camphor, quinine, and guaiacum.

6. Life Standard

6.1. Quality of Life versus Lifestyle

The issue of quality of life refers to the actual conditions of life and the availability of material goods in relation to other countries, and lifestyle refers to patterns of consumption, shaped by social elites. The average quality of life in the Commonwealth was rated as rather low. According to A. Mączak, the poverty of most inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian state and other regions exporting grain was a price for the flourishing of the Netherlands and some other West European countries, as well as colonial expansion. In the Crown and Lithuania, the elite culture of the magnate estates and Gdańsk patricians contrasted with the poverty of petty nobility and the peasants, and therefore was perceived as a contradiction to the estate equality and lifestyle.

The accessibility of high quality goods imported from abroad – which was one of the criteria of assessing the quality of life – differed according to the social environment. Even the peasants and the lowest milieus of the society, who went “floating” on behalf of their lords, had the possibility to buy the goods from Gdańsk, as well as the goods from Scottish and Jewish travelling merchants, who sold cheap German products from Nuremberg. Regional diversification was also significant. In Ruthenia, the plebeians’ access to goods imported from the East was relatively higher than in the central parts of the Crown.

6.2. Nutrition

Social diversification was most visible in the food consumption. Changes, which took place in the early modern period, concerned mostly the rich nobility and the

patricians. They were influenced by Italian or French trends and were connected with proportions and products in their menu. The basic nutrition remained, since the Middle Ages grain products: bread, flour, and groats. In the 17th century, the consumption of grain products decreased: in the 16th century one person consumed ca. 0.6 kg/per day, in the 17th and 18th centuries only 0.3–0.35 kg. Soups, oats and barley or millet groats substituted bread. Naturally, there were some regional differences – more fish were eaten in the lake districts, and in these parts of the Commonwealth, where the pond economy was developed (in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in Great Poland). Mushrooms were eaten mostly in the times of hunger (for instance, in Belarus). In early spring and during poor harvest, bread was baked with addition of bran, chaff, hay, and oak leaves. Peasants and farm workers ate more vegetables: cabbage, rape, parsley, beetroot, turnip, and cucumber. Pork fat was used more than any other kind of animal fat (pigs were bred mostly for this reason); butter, oil, meat and fish were rare.

The models of consumption were determined by the financial status, rather than the estate divisions. Menus of different social groups reconstructed by historians of material culture illustrate the culinary preferences rather than the real possibilities of consumption. Poor nobility could not afford “noble life” on an everyday basis, and they rather ate the same things as the peasants and urban populace. The difference was in the amount of food, rather than in the assortment. It is estimated that nobles consumed relatively the same amount of bread as the populace, but had more wheat products, more butter, dairy, fish and, above all, meat – poultry, mutton, and since the second half of the 17th century more beef and veal, but less pork. Along with the predatory forest economy the consumption of venison decreased. However, in the first half of the 17th century, during the Livonian Wars, salted elk meat was on the Lithuanian army’s menu.

The basic beverage was light beer, home brewed, which was consumed in the amount of 2–3 litres per day per person, regardless of the estate or age. Rich nobility, magnates, and burghers drank Polish meads and wines imported from Hungary, Italy, Spain, Rhineland, Moravia, or Austria. At the end of the 16th century, Malvasia was a traditional drink, which competed with the wines largely imported from Hungary, especially Tokay (the magnates of Little Poland even had their own vineyards in Hungary). In the first half of the 17th century, French wines became popular: sweet and semidry, and in the second half of the 17th century – white dry wines and champagne, which were considered unhealthy. As the poverty increased and the deterioration of culinary culture followed, vodka (ca. 30 % of alcohol) became a dominant beverage, produced from rye, wheat, and barley, called *palonka* or *gorzalka* (a Polish equivalent for *booze*) in the first decade of the 17th century. Richer people drank vodka in the form of herbal tinctures, regarded as healthy. Tobacco smoked in pipes, chewed or snuffed became popular in the first half of the 17th century. The custom of using tobacco was considered more civilized than drinking vodka, and popular literature often juxtaposed these two substances: *Poswarek tabaki z gorzalką* [*A Quarrel Between Tobacco and Booze*], 1636.

Migrant ethnic groups (Jewish, Armenian, and Tatar) had a different menu than most inhabitants of the Commonwealth. Pork was mostly avoided due to religious and cultural habits, and there was more groats, potatoes, pea, herring and onion, and (during holidays) poultry, beef, fish, and patisserie. It is worth noting that pork was also rare on Christian tables in the 16th–18th centuries, as pigs were mostly bred for fat. Traditional dishes of the Jewish (carp in jelly), Lithuanian (beet green soup, fruit jelly), and Ukrainian (borscht) cuisines became a fixed part of the “Old Polish” menu.

6.3. Lifestyle

In the Baroque period, the noble lifestyle was marked by ostentatious lavishness and luxury. The Crown and Lithuanian nobles were the main buyers of the 17th century cloths of gold and Oriental carpets in Europe. This does not mean that luxury was a normative quality of noble culture; on the contrary – according to the general rule of “mediocrity,” consumption was to be adjusted to wealth. Anonymous writings from the time of the Sandomierz Rebellion called for introducing anti-luxury laws, which would constrain the lavish lifestyle of the nobility. Imitating the magnates’ bearing (especially regarding consumption) was strongly discouraged as it led to the impoverishment of the noble estate.

The Sarmatization of customs was equally visible both in political life and in the kitchen. Diets based on beer and meats were opposed to “wine and delicate foods” from the West, and since the times of Mikołaj Rej, it was essential to follow the former to maintain the “Old Polish brawn.” Traditional noble’s dishes at the beginning of the reign of Augustus III were:

Chicken soup, meat, the so-called *rogue bigos*, that is, cabbage with pork fat and different types of meat and sausage chopped into small pieces (...); followed by goose served with sour cream and dried mushrooms chopped into small pieces; and, finally, black goose.¹³³

The “black goose” was flavoured with strongly scorched hay, mixed with honey, vinegar, pepper, and ginger.

Although the nobility stressed so much their “Sarmatian” identity, they followed the fashion adopted at Crown and Lithuanian magnates’ courts to hire professional chefs from Western Europe (pastry cooks and confectioners). These foreign trends did not change the noble diet, though; it was more visible in more diligent processing and diversification of dishes by introducing pâtés, jellies, sweets, and cakes, as well as various spices and additives (cloves, nutmeg, ginger, pepper, saffron, pistachios, truffles, honey, sugar, rice, citrus fruits), which were much more popular in the Commonwealth than in the West.

133 Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów w Polsce za Augusta III*, ed. R. Pollak, Wrocław, 1951, chapter VI, “O stanie dworskim, O stołach i bankietach pańskich,” p. 433.

Serious changes in the nutrition were introduced in the mid-18th century. They were mostly caused by the advent of widespread potato farming, which replaced cereal in the first half of the 19th century. The development of vegetable farming meant a dissemination of asparagus, green bean, Brussels sprouts, and tomatoes. Spices became less popular. Mulled beer and beer soups lost their popularity as breakfast drinks. They were replaced by coffee, which appeared in the Commonwealth at the end of the 17th century, and became widely popular in the 1730s (the first coffee house in Warsaw was opened in 1724). Tea, which was known since the 18th century, was treated mostly as a remedy, and its later popularity was connected with the Anglomania, which prevailed at the court of Stanisław August Poniatowski. Hot chocolate was also a popular beverage at the end of the 18th century.

The structure of alcohol consumption changed as compared with the previous period. Strong beer became more popular and vodka consumption increased on average to a few litres per year for one person in the second half of the 18th century. Mead was regarded as an old-fashioned drink; hence, it was replaced by arrack and rum. Heavy Hungarian wines, in turn, remained popular until the end of the 18th century. The frequency of meals increased. Only the poorest had two meals a day, and ate from one bowl placed on the table. The richer social strata paid more attention to the aesthetics of their table wear – placing it even higher than the actual quality of their food. Lavish tablecloth became popular, along with porcelain and faience (with up to even a hundred pieces). Glasses became fashionable, as it was a part of the bon ton to drink each beverage from a differently shaped glass.

The hygiene of nutrition in the Commonwealth left a lot to be desired, and this concerned all social groups. The methods of food preservation remained unchanged since the Middle Ages. No longer fresh products were used for cooking and meat was often musty. Stoves with closed hearths became common as late as in the 19th century, which is why the dishes were unevenly cooked and consumed half-raw. Too much salt was used; fruit and vegetables were rarely eaten raw. The peasants' food was monotonous, while the higher estates overate and their meals were too heavy. It is under discussion whether this lifestyle was hazardous for health and was a cause of shorter lifespan (especially in the magnate families). Zbigniew Kuchowicz's evocative theory of degeneration of the magnate families was undermined by more recent analytical studies.

The quality of nutrition gradually diminished. It is estimated that in the periods of normal harvest the average nutrition was good (in the 16th century ca. 4.000–4.800 kcal, the richest up to 6.300 kcal). The daily nutrition of a folwark worker was 3.500 kcal with a domination of carbohydrates (82 %) over proteins and fats (11 %). The nobility, magnates, and the richest burghers (13 % of the society) overate, while the poor were constantly undernourished.

From the end of the 16th century, the average nutrition began to deteriorate – in the second half of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th century it was below satisfactory level. The discrepancy increased between the nobility's diet, which was rich, but monotonous, and the food of the poor, who were generally

destitute. The situation of the rent farmers, *ołodrzy*, and *folwark* servants was better as their food was guaranteed by their employers.

7. Housing

7.1. The Noble Estates

In the 18th century the estates of rich nobility and less powerful magnates were similar in shape and interior design, only their names and size differed:

If the building was large, it was called a palace, either brick or wooden if it had annexes.

If it was brick and situated on a knoll, and with a moat and walls, it was a castle.¹³⁴

The noble manor as a unique type of building was shaped in the second half of the 17th century and at the outset of the 18th century, when the great post-war reconstruction took place. It was a one-storey building, but with two floors (with rooms in the attic), wooden, on an axial and symmetric plan, easy to expand, with a high four angled roof covered with wooden shingles or homemade tiling. In Lithuania, roofs were decorated with metal streamers with the owner's coat of arms.

Wooden manors were mostly built of large larch, pine or oak bales connected with blazes at the angles. Usually, the area of a manor was 100–400 m², and the chambers were 3–4 m high. The cost of building a manor was ca. 600–800 zlotys, which was relatively low, as a horse cost 1.200 zlotys. The architectural form of a manor was not very complicated: it was usually a one-track building, divided by a hallway (often asymmetrical), with two biggest chambers on the sides (the dining and living rooms). Before the entrance there was a porch, often with little columns or pilasters, above which the parlour was situated. The bedchambers were on the sides. Manors were decorated from the outside with “galleries, exhibitions, porches, and elaborate entrances, but that was not common; rather, barns and sheds surrounded manor.”¹³⁵ In the interior there was a chaotic conglomerate of smaller chambers and annexes.

Manors were furnished with tables and long benches, fixed to the walls; stools were less common and chairs were rare – they became popular in the 18th century, along with trunks and chests. Beds were wooden, mostly narrow and hard (only rich manors had huge beds with baldachins), with *paillases* or mattresses, and the richer beds had also bed sheets. Sporadically, there were cabinets and bookshelves, desks and *escritoirs*. The richest nobility imported Dutch or Gdańsk furniture made of carved oak wood.

In the 16th-century manors of rich nobility, the first bathrooms with copper tubs were built. Usually, however, the wooden tubs placed in the kitchens were used for washing. Bathrooms were built in separate buildings outside the manor. Inside

134 Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów w Polsce za Augusta III*, pp. 519–523.

135 *Ibid.*, pp. 521–522.

the manors there were toilets – rare in the Crown, and quite popular in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the first half of the 17th century. In the second half of the 17th century and in the mid-18th century, the hygiene level deteriorated: bathrooms were no longer built, and instead the representative rooms were created.

7.2. Palaces and Castles

Magnates and some rich noblemen built their residencies in cities – either in tightly-built urban areas or in suburban gardens. Multi-storey buildings were built in cities, mostly for representative reasons: they had elaborate frontons, stone stairs and floors, lavish interior design (especially of the banquet halls), antechambers for the guards, and big apartment chambers (cabinet, sleeping room, dressing room), separate for the lord and the lady. There were also libraries, galleries (for example, with family portraits) and the cabinets of curiosities full of startling and extraordinary objects.

It was very difficult to heat up these huge interiors laid with stone and maintain order when the lord was absent, which is why the urban residencies were uncomfortable to live in. According to the description of a court musician Adam Jarzębski (*Gościniec albo opisanie Warszawy* [*The High Road or the Description of Warsaw*], 1643), in the Wladislaus era, most Warsaw palaces were wooden manors, whereby senators lived, even if they owned lavish stone palaces in the vicinity (e.g. Jerzy Ossoliński, the Grand Crown Chancellor). A similar situation was noted in Vilnius, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

7.3. Peasant Buildings

Peasant houses were made of wood. In some of them (especially since the mid-17th century) only the construction was wooden and filled with brushwood and clay mixed up with straw; roofs were thatched with hay, cane or shingles. A typical house of poor peasant consisted of a hallway, where livestock, tools, and farming equipment were kept, a chamber, and a larder (where food and harvest were kept, especially from the mid-17th century when the storage buildings were destroyed by wars). In richer peasants' houses, there was a chamber and a larder on the one side of a hallway, and the storage building on the other. The floors were made of fixed clay or planks. Small windows were covered with cloth and paper impregnated with oil, while in richer houses there were glass windows framed with wood and fitted with shutters. The houses were lit with torches and cressets; tallow candles were rather rare. In the 16th century in Pomerania and western Great Poland houses were built with chimneys. At the turn of the 17th and the 18th centuries, smoke huts (Polish: *kurna chata*; traditional peasant huts without chimneys) existed only in Little Poland, Ukraine, and Ruthenia.

The standardization of peasant housing followed came along with the development of folwark economy. The owner of a village would regulate the model of the peasants' houses, or even build houses for them (usually, for two or four peasant

families). With the dawn of the Enlightenment, there was a further development of housing and certain unification of housing models was achieved. This was especially the case of the so-called Josephine and Frederickian colonization of the annexed lands of the Commonwealth.

7.4. Impoverished Nobility Farms (*Zaścianek*)

The manors of petty and *zaściankowa* nobility, often “thatched with sheaf,” consisted of a hallway, chamber, and larder. What distinguished them from the peasant houses were porches with small columns. According to Jędrzej Kitowicz:

The main difference was that the noble manor had to have a high gate, even though the fence was made of brushwood; and the second difference was that the noble manor was to have two rooms at the sides and an entryway in the middle, and peasant houses had the hallway in the front, followed by the chamber and then the larder. But this was the case only in Masuria, since in the Great Poland voivodeships, the peasants, *sołtysi* and *oleńdrzy* had better houses than the Masovian petty nobility.¹³⁶

The arcaded houses of the Pomeranian rich peasants (Polish: *gburzy*), still preserved in Żuławy Wiślane, were distinctive in terms of their size, architectural shape, and a rich decoration in the Gdańsk patrician style.

7.5. Burgher Housing

The houses of poorer burghers were mostly wooden, one-storey buildings with a room in the attic, or a top floor extension. They consisted of a hallway, a few chambers, larders, attics, and cellars. A kitchen was usually situated in the hallway, but sometimes in a separate building. Usually, the living space was 30–50 m²; and with 3–6 people living there. Also rich burghers had wooden one- or two-storey houses with and a wide entryway, and 200 m² of the utility space.

Only in the largest cities, the patricians owned brick tenements, mainly in the market square or at the most important streets. In the 17th century, next to the old medieval tenement houses (narrow and deep) there emerged new ones – wide and built one next to the other. They were usually composed of three sections, replacing earlier two-section buildings. In the first section one could find commercial and craft workshops; in the middle one – stairs, tools and the heating installations. The representative rooms and the kitchen were placed in the third section – facing the courtyard and being the quietest part of the house.

On the ground floor (especially in Prussian cities) large entryways were built, which also functioned as the representative chamber. The owners' apartment was usually placed on the first floor, and it consisted of: a dining room, bedroom, alcove and dressing room, and in richer houses from the 18th century, also cabinets, parlours, guestrooms, the boudoirs, music rooms, libraries – like in the magnate

136 Ibid., p. 522.

palaces. The servants lived on the top floor, sometimes with the distant family. There were cellars under the houses (available from the street). Inside the lot there were also economic facilities and toilets. Water was taken from the city wells; the sewage system was a rare thing.

The destitute lived in cells, in the attics, and in annexes nearby the city walls. In the 18th century (in Gdańsk already in the 17th century) there were special tenements for the poorest: wooden, one-storey, for 6–8 apartments. Peripheral districts were full of mud shacks and ramshackle houses, in the poorest dwelled. Town halls, merchant houses (like the Kraków Cloth Hall [Polish: *Sukiennice*]), weight houses, prisons, hospitals and arsenals, as well as synagogues were the only stone/brick buildings in towns. After the destructions of war in the mid-17th century, only larger towns were quickly rebuilt with stone or brick houses. The reconstruction of smaller towns and villages was rather slow.

The equipment of a moderately rich burgher's house was similar to that of a noble manor. Patrician tenement buildings had costly Gdańsk furniture, and in the second half of the 18th century they were replaced by light, golden Rococo furniture – like in the magnate palaces. In the 16th–18th centuries mirrors became fashionable (first metal, then glass, imported from Italy); there were also cabinet clocks and paintings (mostly landscapes, still life, portraits, or allegorical painting); musical instruments and books were more common than in the noble estates. In the 18th century, tallow candles were used to light up the interior on an everyday basis, and during holiday times: wax candles in elaborate candlesticks and in glass chandeliers placed in the middle of the room to disperse light. Ballrooms and representative chambers were decorated with illusionist paintings. Sanitary rooms were in the separate parts of the household.

8. Clothes and Hairstyle

The style of clothing shifted in all estates of the Commonwealth in the 16th and 17th centuries due to the domestic production of textiles (cloth, woollen and linen), the improvement of the tannery technique, and, above all, to the increased importation of different types of products (cloth, silk, and brocade) from abroad.

8.1. Noble Dress

The noble dress was created in the 16th century and generally accepted in the 17th century, from the elements of Lithuanian-Ruthenian, Hungarian, and Oriental origin. The style developed during the reign of king Stephen Bathory, when along with the Hungarian immigration to the court and the army, thanks to oriental influences and direct contacts with the Ottoman Empire such type of clothing became more popular.

The male noble dress consisted of trousers and shirt, covered with *zupica* (the 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries), which was waist-long, had very tight sleeves, with buttons in the front, open on the shirt and often made of leather.

Since the second half of the 16th and in the first half of the 17th centuries, a *dolman* was fashionable – a type of a caftan, knee-long, with tight sleeves, buttoned, often braided, and a *giermak*, which was a coat with a large fur collar and smooth sleeves, narrowing at the cuffs. Both of these outfits were inspired by the Hungarian fashion, and were mostly popular in the 17th-century army. In the 18th century, they survived as liveries of the court hajduks. In the noble wear they were suppressed by *kaftan* – initially, an external wear, sewed from cloth with fur, and in the second half of the 17th century made of lighter textiles and worn only underneath a *kontusz* (that is, a split sleeve overcoat). It had characteristic sleeves, cut from armpit to the elbow, pending loosely, or tied at the back, worn with elaborate belts.

During the wintertime, fur jackets were worn, until the 17th century – *szuby* (loose, with broad sleeves, and collars); in the 16th century and in the middle of the 17th century *delie* – initially, as an external wear, and from the mid-17th century – *ferezje*. Silk or felt fur hats were also popular, along with Hungarian magyars or high fur military hats. Trousers were put into shoes – *baczmagi*, with no heels, uplifted crests, high boot-tops, above the knee made of soft red or yellow leather, sometimes cordovan.

The Sarmatization of the outfits was visible in the use of fur, not only in clothes, but also interior design (kelims, carpets, and rugs), and a fondness for vibrant colour compositions. Noble outfits were sewed from very expensive textiles, usually imported (Flemish or English cloth, Italian silk, brocade, and cloth of gold) as well as furs. Polish, Lithuanian, and Ruthenian nobility enjoyed lavish luxury by presenting their clothes, jewels (chains, golden, and silver buckles incrustated with gems and pearls), breastpins and clasps, accessories with feathers and tails, decorative weapons (sabres with handles incrustated with gems). Lavish apparel was also a capital investment – it could be redone according to a current fashion. Silk belts and other elements of the noble wear were sometimes donated to churches to be redone as chasuble.

In the first half of the 17th century, the noble dress started to function as the Polish “national” wear and was also worn by plebeians. In 1776, the voivodeship uniforms were introduced, as a means to curtail the excessive lavishness of noble wear. The colours of the coat of arms of a given voivodeship or district were model for the colours of clothing. Magnates’ clients wore their clothes tinted after their patrons’ coats of arms. At the end of the 18th century, the *kontusz* was replaced by the *czamara*, which was similar in style, but without the cut sleeves and decorated in braids. Wearing it in the 19th century was a way to express patriotism, and during the January Uprising, it was treated as a uniform. Until the beginning of the 20th century, it was the *kontusz* that remained the Polish national wear.

Polish noblewomen wore pleated skirts with tight corsage, worn on top of a shirt, and for special occasions long dresses with vests made of linen, satin, damask, velvet, brocade or silk. Polish matrons wore *rańtuchy*, a type of shawl, which in the 16th century made of white linen, and in the 17th century of more expensive textiles. Their cheeks and chin were covered by a wimple (Polish: *podwiki*) (since the 14th century it was a symbol of a married woman). Hats and external outfits

were the same for men and women. Women wore more gems – diadems, necklaces, chains, bracelets, pins, rings, and since the mid-17th century – pearl necklaces, clips, and fans. Their dresses were sewed with pearls, braids, laces, and strings. Cosmetics were used only by the court maidens and demimondaines.

The 16th century witnessed more variety in types of underwear. Linen shirts were worn directly on the body, and since the turn of the 17th century there were also linen long johns, and legs were covered with cloth. Since the 17th century, socks and stockings came into fashion. Only old women wore low underwear and briefs (the so-called *kramarki*). Panties and t-shirts became more popular in the 18th century. Handkerchiefs became fashionable together with the increasing popularity of snuffing tobacco. Ruffles and collars (in foreign wear) were starched; lace cuffs, jabots, and flounces were later added to skirts.

8.2. Burgher Dress

The burghers, unlike the nobles, did not have their distinctive dress. Men working in the workshops wore shirts, trousers, and leather vests. Mantles served to protect from rain. *Kontusz*-like overcoats were worn: *kitlice*, *bekiesze*, *delie*, *szuby*, *czamary*, and *ferezje*. In the 16th and in the first half of the 17th centuries loose jackets (*kopieniaki*) became popular with cut sleeves, a small collar, and gems. There were also long *hazuki* coats – buttoned up from ankles. Galligaskin trousers, usually dark blue or red (made of a rectangular piece of cloth), were worn with boot-tops, or with moccasins. Craftsmen wore leather trousers to work. Men wore kalpacs or caps; round magyars were less popular. The burgher shoe wear was usually black or red with boot-tops. Men’s accessories comprised of rings, bracelets, and chains. The richest men wore chain watches.

As regards the festive outfit, the burghers imitated the nobility. Therefore, they wore kaftans in many colours (in Great Poland mostly yellow, which is why burghers there were called yellow-bellies), and *kontusze*. The estate difference was in the belt: the nobility wore it on top of the *kontusz*, and burghers on the kaftan. Taking over the nobility’s customs and dress code was not an ideological manifestation. The Polish dress was a festive outfit, usually lavish, and treated as an investment and, at the same time, a manifestation of their social capital – that is why it was more popular in the 17th century, when burghers were richer. The situation changed in the second half of the 18th century. During the Four-Year Sejm the burghers wore black to manifest their “mourning after the lost freedom, which had been taken away from the cities,” and as an expression of their estate solidarity. In smaller towns, the Polish dress was still in use up until the mid-19th century.

Townswomen’s dress was much more modest than men’s wear. Poorer women wore peasant clothes and the richer ones imitated noblewomen. They wore kaftans, and men’s overcoats (*szuby*, *bekiesze*, *kontusiki*). Married women wore the same headwear and underwear as the noblewomen.

8.3. Foreign Dress

The fashion for foreign dress was influenced by the tendencies prevailing in the royal court and in the army. In the 16th century, mostly Italian and Hungarian trends were visible. Subsequently they were accompanied by Spanish, German, French, and even Swedish ones. Special outfits were the most cosmopolitan: military uniforms, magnate servants' liveries, as well as clerks' and city officials' clothes.

In the second half of the 17th century, French clothing became popular, as the fashion was influenced by the court of Queen Marie Louise Gonzaga. It was popular among the magnates, nobility, and burghers – especially women – and was widely criticized by the moralists and popular literature. Rich burgher women and noblewomen wore low-cut patterned dresses, with unbuttoned panniers, court shoes on heels (made of delicate leather or cloth), cotton and silk stockings, held up with decorative garters, wigs, caps and lace hats. Female plebeian dress differed from the noble dress: the skirts were cut in the cane scaffolding and starched. Male French dress – richly decorated with silk, usually in vibrant colours, consisted of tight trousers, a shirt, a vest or a long braided frock, moccasins with buckles, and a wig. It became widely used in the 18th century, mostly in large cities, in magnate courts and among clergy (dressed in black colours) – which, according to J. Kitowicz, signified the secularization of life, and abandonment from prayers, fasting, and altar services.

The German dress competed with the Polish dress, especially in the area of the intersection of these two cultures – that is, in Royal Prussia. However, it was preferred rather by burghers than the nobles. The male German dress comprised of tight trousers (hose), a vest and a waistcoat, a hat or a flat beret.

The male Jewish dress remained unchanged from the 16th to the 18th centuries. It consisted of a long black gabardine (a type of coat, buttoned with hook and eye), short trousers, white stockings, and boots (insulated with fur in the wintertime). Men always covered their heads – at home with a silk yarmulke (*kippa*), and a hat on top of it when outdoors, or a marten hat. Jewish women wore a shirt, a lurid skirt and a vest. They had woollen stockings and heavy shoes. As an overcoat, they used a shawl, which was buttoned below the chin. They adored accessories, especially pearls. Married women, especially older ones, wore wigs.

8.4. Peasant Dress

Everyday peasant dress remained mostly unchanged. In the 16th–17th centuries most of its elements were home-produced (uncoloured canvas and home-spun wool). To a lesser extent, better quality cloth and fabric (bought or imported from Silesia) was used.

Male outfits consisted of canvas trousers and shirts; there were also cloth vests, jackets, and coats; during the wintertime the woollen trousers, woollen waistcoats, and sheepskin coats were worn. Men wore straw and felt hats in the summertime, and fur hats in the wintertime. All elements of the peasant dress were dark: grey, black, or brown. Festive outfit of rich yokels consisted of long overcoats with stiff

collars, and homespun wide sleeves and tight trousers inside boots, and was a distant imitation of the noble dress; it was made of better textiles in bright colours.

Women wore mostly canvas dresses comprising of long skirts, shirts, and corsets, only the richer ones could afford woollen dress. Girls wore headscarfs on their heads, and married women wore mob caps; they had shawls to protect themselves from rain and cold. Canvas coats and woollen vests were different depending on the season. Colourful handkerchief appeared only for special occasions. Men covered their feet with foot wrappings; women wore homespun stockings.

During the summertime the peasants walked barefoot, or in soft shoes (Polish: *łapcie*) or in clogs, during the wintertime men had shoes with boot-tops filled with hay, and women wore laced boots. In the 16th century, shoes became a means of payment for the farm workers, and most peasants wore them only in the wintertime or on festive occasions. In the second half of the 17th century and in the first half of the 18th century leather shoes were replaced by textile shoes, and only one pair was given to the manor servants, and they were not given sheepskin coats, nor woollen overcoats any more.

8.5. Hairstyle

Female hairstyle changed frequently. In the 17th century unmarried women wore long braids, which were cut off after the wedding, before the ritual of the capping (a form of a rite of passage, which indicated the change of status). At the end of the 17th century, only the peasant women wore braids, and noblewomen and the burgher had long tresses falling to their shoulders or short hair (underneath a wig). Among men, peasants had the longest hair. The nobility of the 17th century shaved their heads, leaving a long strand of hair (*oseledec*) on their forehead. The Crown burghers, who wore the Polish dress, also kept their hair short. Female wigs appeared in the Commonwealth in the 1620s, and male wigs were worn since the mid-17th century in the royal and magnate courts. In the 18th century, a lot of noblemen and noblewomen, as well as burghers, city intelligentsia, and soldiers of the foreign auroament wore powdered wigs.

Long beards were fashionable in the Renaissance. However, in the late 17th century men more and more often shaved their faces clean, and later only religious old men and beggars kept facial hair. Moustache – which in the 17th century was every man's pride, especially in the military circles – in the 18th century were a sign of the Sarmatian tradition. At the end of the 18th century, clean shaved faces were the most fashionable. However, in the military men waxed and dyed their moustache black up well into the 19th century.

8.6. Cultural Breakthrough of the Enlightenment: “Moustache and Wig”

During the Stanisław August Poniatowski period, there was a clash of two ideologies and people from different times: on the one hand, there were noblemen proud of

their moustache and shaved heads, wearing *kontusze* and ranting in school Latin; on the other hand, there were dandies wearing powdered wigs and speaking French. Since ca. 1788, along with this ideological breakthrough, there came the change of dress – patriotism became fashionable and Jan Potocki, who was brought up abroad and wrote only in French, advocated for the Polish dress. Out of a clash of Sarmatism and foreign fashion, a new cultural formation emerged, which can be called the Enlightened Sarmatism.

After the fall of the Commonwealth, the Polish dress became a symbol of national and estate identity, as well as an element, which distinguished the petty nobility from the peasants in rural areas:

They only had sabres for the parish feasts, when they had to assist the priest under the canopy [...]. During the Feast of Corpus Christi everyone wore crimson trousers. And some of them [...] soaked their trousers in their wife's beetroot broth, so that they were properly crimson and therefore could be seen in the proper way.¹³⁷

This ultimate decay of the poor Polish “crimson noblemen” under the Russian Partition only shows the actual level of the noble tradition, which was mystified by Romantic literature.

137 Stanisław Morawski, *Szlachta bracia*, Vilnius, 1849–1850, p. 15.

Chapter Eight

Culture and Ideology

1. Models of Culture

In traditional descriptions of the Commonwealth's society, three models of culture were employed: noble, burgher, and folk (peasant). However, this classification does not conform to reality and fails to do justice to the dynamic conception of cultural phenomena that would take into account the time changes and the exchange of cultural achievements and ideas between the estates. That is why has been suggested to abandon the typical estate divisions in order to establish new criteria: the access to cultural achievements and the participation in their creation and consumption as well as social communication (Krzysztof Dmitruk).

From this perspective, the whole period from the 16th to the end of the 18th century is described as the Sarmatian culture formation – a cultural phenomenon shaped by the following unique conditions: the decline of large cultural centres (the royal court and cities), lack of state sponsorship, rural lifestyle of most inhabitants of the country (rusticalization), decentralization of most culture-creating institutions (magnate and noble courts, education), and domination of oral forms of communication over print.

At the end of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th century, there were premises for the emergence of an alternative and modern cultural formation, which was urban, literate, cosmopolitan, supported by the state patronage, and co-created by the intelligentsia. The radical changes that took place during the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, manifested themselves during the last 30 years of the Commonwealth's existence. However, the impact of this modern formation was limited to Warsaw. In the provinces, the Sarmatian formation was predominant until the Partitions.

According to social research on the functioning of art and literature, there was a division between the elite official (or dominant) culture of the nobility and burghers, and popular culture of the populace and simple people. Further divisions are as follows:

1. The elite culture of courts (royal and magnate) as well as the patricians of large cities – based on cosmopolitan patterns.
2. Noble culture (Sarmatism), which encompassed large groups of nobility, some burghers, and court servants.
3. Burgher (patrician) culture – a continuation of burgher culture of the 15th century, which was an ideological alternative to Sarmatism.
4. Popular literature and culture – predominant in the lower layers of society, but in principle exceeding the estate boundaries and contestant towards the Sarmatism and patrician culture.

5. Popular culture (traditional, oral) of peasants, poor inhabitants of small towns, and poor and petty nobility.

2. Noble Culture and Sarmatism

Sarmatism was a unique noble culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, comprising an ideology and system of values, political culture, rituals, and artistic taste. The term was first used in 1765 in *Monitor Polski* in a negative sense, and at the beginning of the 20th century it was used to describe the “old noble life and thought,” that is, customs and ideology.¹³⁸ After the World War II scholars noted that Sarmatism was not constant and unchangeable as a cultural phenomenon, and not coherent as an ideology. It encompassed very different elements: the chivalric ideals and pacifism, noble lifestyle, Polish tolerance and the idea of Pole-Catholic, hospitality and xenophobia, the cult of freedom for noble-citizens and the belief in personal servitude of peasants, along with the scorn for burghers. The antinomies of Sarmatism were also present in public life and customs: the idea of personal freedom from the intervention of the state in private matters and the simultaneous acceptance of “violence between the equals,” being open-handed and, at the same time, narrow-minded and litigious, pride and humility towards the will of God and meekness towards the magnates, ceremonialism and spontaneity, tolerance and intolerance. These contradictions manifested themselves also in the Sarmatian literature: baroque lavishness of metaphysical and court poetry was accompanied by the inclination to primitivism, crudity of the noble tales and facetiae.

Such contradictions deepened with the evolution of Sarmatism. One may distinguish three aspects, each of which prevailed in the succeeding stages of its development: in the 16th century, the Sarmatian genealogical myth; in the 17th century, the political ideology that integrated the noble nation; in the 18th century, the Sarmatian customs, mindset, and artistic taste. So the question, whether Sarmatism was an ideology, or a lifestyle, can be answered only as follows: it was both, with the reservation that these two elements played a different role depending on the time period.

2.1. Myths of Origin

In the Renaissance, the internal integration was accomplished by using different methods: administrative force in absolutist countries (France, England, the Habsburg Empire), autocratic tendencies (Muscovy), or reforms initiated by the political nation (the Commonwealth of Both Nations). Myths of origin and dynastic lineages were a common feature of changes in the state ideology of the discussed period. New countries placed themselves in the line of ancient tradition by tracing their history back to the Roman Empire (Italy), or to other figures from the classical tradition (Brutus of Troy in Britain, Palemon in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania),

138 *Encyklopedie staropolskie* by Z. Gloger (1903) and A. Brückner (1939).

or to the tribes that fought with the Romans (Helvetians in Switzerland, Gauls in France, Vandals in Scandinavia). The leaders of the Grand Duchy of Moscow had a peculiar justification for the “gathering the lands of Rus” drawing on the tradition of the Byzantine Empire (with Moscow as the “Third Rome”) and, at the same time, tracing the lineage of the Tsar’s family back to Emperor Augustus.

The Sarmatian myth of origin was created by the court humanists of the Jagiellonian dynasty (Jan Długosz, Justus Decjusz, Bernard Wapowski, Marcin Bielski, Marcin Kromer, Aleksander Gwagnin, Stanisław Sarnicki) in order to support its imperial aspirations. Basing on Herodotus and Hippocrates, by the 1570s the descent of the Slavs had been established from the brave Sarmatians (Sauromates), who neighboured with Scythians on the territories of today’s Ukraine, between the Maeotis Lake (the Sea of Azov) and the Tanais River (Don). The name Sarmatia taken from Ptolemy was popularized to describe the Polish-Lithuanian state in Maciej Miechowita, *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis asiana et europiana* (1517).

The Sarmatian myth, which was used by the Executionist Movement as an ideological basis for integration of the nobility of the Commonwealth, was transformed in the spirit of the Catholic Reformation by the writers of the 17th century. They stressed the genetic community of the Sarmatians, including the valorous plebeians (in works such as Szymon Starowolski, *Sarmatiae Bellatores*, Köln, 1634) and excluding the “heretics” (that is, the non-Catholic nobility). Such a reinterpretation collided with the idea of a supra-confessional political nation. It also favoured intolerance and megalomania. According to Szymon Starowolski:

For our pride we understand ourselves as being above all nations [...] and the most splendid knights; confusing our grandiose will for freedom...and we repeat that there is no mightier nobility under the sun than the Crown’s nobility and its sons.¹³⁹

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the interest in Lithuanian history can be found in 30 annals or chronicles known as *letopises* (Polish: *latopisy*). They were written in Old Ruthenian language between the late 14th century and the 18th century. They may be divided into three groups: the so-called Short Code (14th/15th century), the Middle or Greater Code, and the Great Code (Bychowiec Chronicle), according to Sigita Narbutas written in the 1520s and 1530s, in the circles of Grand Lithuanian Chancellor, Albertas Goštautas (Polish: Olbracht Gasztold).

According to the Lithuanian myth of origin Lithuanians had their ancestor in the person of Palemon (Publius Libo) and his comrades, emigrants from Rome in the times of Nero, who were the progenitors of the Lithuanian ducal dynasty. This motif was already present in the *Annales* of Jan Długosz, but was absent from the Short Code (which is based on Muscovite chronicles), and Polish historiographers (Maciej Miechowita, M. Bielski, and M. Kromer) put it to question, as it collided with the Sarmatian myth. In the first half of the 16th century, Lithuanian historiographers

139 Szymon Starowolski, *Reformacja obyczajów polskich*, prep. K. J. Turowski, Cracow, 1859, p. 11.

representing the nobility (the creators of the Middle Code and clients of the magnate patronage) consciously constructed a chronological history of Lithuania.

Maciej Strykowski, a Masovian-born citizen of Lithuania, was the next to attempt to reconstruct the ancient history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In his book *O początkach, dzielnościach, sprawach rycerskich i domowych sławnego narodu litewskiego, żemojdzkiego i ruskiego* (*On the Origins, Virtues, and Knightly and Domestic Matters of the Famous Lithuanian, Samogitian, and Ruthenian People*), written at the court of Yuri III Olekovich (written ca. 1575–1577), he asserted the Roman descent of Lithuanian nobility and the Gothic (Sarmatian) descent of Lithuanian peasantry – just like A. Gwagnin in *Sarmatiae Europaeae descriptio* (1578). In *Kronika polska, litewska, żmudzka i wszystkiej Rusi* (*The Chronicle of Poland, Lithuania, Samogitia and the Whole of Ruthenia*, 1582) M. Strykowski combined the “Roman” myth of origin with Sarmatism, creating a conception of the assimilation of the descendants of Roman patricians to the culture of “Sarmatian” Lithuanians, Gepids, and Sudovians. Thereby he tried to satisfy several Lithuanian magnate families (describing themselves as the descendants of Palemon), as well as the noble majority – treating it as an independent part of the Sarmatian world, distinguished by Roman influence.

The later propagators of Sarmatism treated Lithuanians as Sarmatians. For them, the arrival of Palemon (Libo) did not mean the beginning of the Lithuanian state. Thanks to the assimilation theory, the unity of the nobility of the Commonwealth was not threatened by a conflict between Sarmatism and the Roman theory of Lithuanian origin, which did not inspire a different ideology of separate Lithuanian political nation.

The latest lineage constructed through the appropriation and transformation of the Sarmatian myth of origin was the lineage of the Khazar Cossacks. The religious and linguistic dichotomy of the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) society, in which Polonization had to compete with a sort of resentment towards Lachs (Poles), created an adjustment for the 16th century idea of Roxolania as part of the Great Sarmatia. According to Natalia Jakowenko, the Ukrainian ethno-genetic lineage gained its original shape at the beginning of the 18th century, with *The Bender Constitution* (1710) by Pylyp Orlyk, the piece *The Grand War* by Hryhorij Hrabjanka and two volumes of *Litopys* by Samuil Velichko (1715). The collective protagonist of these oeuvres is the “Cossack nation,” descending from the “Scythian dynasty of the Khazars” who came out from Asia Minor and – after crossing the Don River and conquering all the tribes up to Elbe – changed their name into Cossacks and joined the Slavic warrior people. The Cossack annalists moved the centre of the Sarmatian legend to Ruthenia, Roxolania, claiming that the Poles – kinsmen of the Sauromates and the Ruthenians – took different name and got as far as the Vistula River, and subsequently betrayed the Ruthenians and conquered them. Significantly enough, only the noblemen were accused of treason, as they acted against the Polish kings who were always favourably inclined towards the Ruthenians and the Cossacks.

The genealogical lineages of the three nations of the Commonwealth had one thing in common – they established identities, which were based on artificial his-

torical constructions created by native intellectuals and supported by the clergy that postulated the unity of religion – Catholicism in the case of Poles and Lithuanians, and Orthodoxy in the case of Cossacks. All the three lineages concerned the elites, leaving the peasantry outside the nation (regardless of its ethnicity). In this situation, Polonization did not have to mean the change of nationality; rather, it was a shift from a small fatherland to larger one, and the widening of the sense of belonging to a region, so that it encompassed the whole Commonwealth and Polish culture. The ethnic consciousness of plebeians, who were the majority of the society, is very difficult to determine in the face of the lack of sources; the nobility perceived them according to the linguistic and confessional criteria.

2.2. The Sarmatian Worldview

During the first interregnum, and then in the Bathory's era and in the first half of the 17th century, the Sarmatian tradition was invoked as a justification of the union of Slavic nations: Poland and Muscovy under the reign of Ivan the Terrible – as some Lithuanian political elites wished (1572–1574) – and later under False Dmitri I, initially by the royalist party supporting Sigismund III, and then by the opposition. It was used to propagate the Poles' mission had of uniting the Slavic nations on the territory from the Balkans towards the North Sea, as they were allegedly the most ancient peoples; Jan Jurkowski, *Tragedia o polskim Scylurusie i trzech synach koronnych* (*The Tragedy of Polish Skilurus and Three Royal Sons*, Cracow 1605) and *Chorągiew Wandalinowa* (*The Banner of Vandalin*, Cracow 1606).

The Sandomierz Rebellion of 1606–1609 was of utmost significance for the creation of the Sarmatian ideology, when the term *Sarmatian* became a synonym for *Polish* or *noble*. The ancient term *Sarmatia* was no longer within the historical-geographical interpretation, but became a basis for the Sarmatian ideology, shaped in the 1630s. Its basic elements were: the cult of ancient and native values (laws, customs, institutions), the apology of the Commonwealth's political system, the conviction of Polish supremacy over other nations, and the expansion of the myth of Sarmatian origin into Ruthenian and Lithuanian lands.

At the same time there emerged various messianic slogans exposing the unique historical destiny of the Sarmatians (Poles), which included spreading Catholicism and fighting against heresy, schism, and paganism. The preacher of the Lisowczycy company, father Wojciech Dembołęcki tried to show that the Polish nation was a nation chosen by God, who once ruled the world and who will rule the world again, and that Slavic (that is, Polish) language was the original language of mankind (*Wywód jedynowłasnego państwa świata* [*The Lineage of the Only Rightful Reign of the World*], 1633). This only shows how farfetched the identification of Sarmatism and the Polishness was.

The idea of Poland as the rampart of Christianity was connected to a belief that Providence kept watch over the Commonwealth. Even in the worst times of the Turkish danger, it was beyond the pale of doubt that God would never allow a

Catholic state to perish from the “pagan sabre,” insofar as it continued to fulfil the mission of protecting the true faith and cherished the ancestors’ virtues.

At the same time, there was an increase of catastrophic attitudes, especially since the second half of the 17th century, when the mantic scriptures, conversations, lamentations, and grievances heralded the decline of the Commonwealth. In the writings of the Sandomierz Rebellion period (regarded by the royalist party as the God’s punishment for Polish lawlessness) one can hear the echo of the classical division into Ovid’s the Ages of Men (gold, silver, bronze, and iron) and the fear that the Iron Age as the Age of Doom might come soon. Social acceptance for the vision of the Commonwealth as the rampart of Christianity, together with the struggle against “heretics” and pagans, caused an intellectual incapacitation and instead of reforming the army, brought about the faith in Providence. Even before the Partitions there was the belief that Poles should be afraid of the wrath of God, rather than of the neighbouring countries.

2.3. Attitude towards Foreigners

In the 17th century – especially during the wars in the middle of the century – the citizens of the Commonwealth were forced to confront the foreigners – not only when travelling abroad, but also on their own territory. In spite of the thesis of intolerance and xenophobia towards other nations – opposed to the ideal image of the own nation – the assessment on both sides depended on the nature of the contact, and the multiplicity of viewpoints and expectations caused this stereotype to have both positive and negative aspects.

As the heirs of the chivalric tradition, the noble citizens of the Commonwealth evaluated other nations on the basis of their military qualifications. In these categories, the Germans, Cossacks, Turks, and (especially) Tatars were respected for their military prowess. The Turks were viewed as honorary enemies, as they possessed the virtues that the Poles also allegedly had; however, as Christians, they saw Muslims as pagans, enemies of their faith and culture, and therefore saw them in a very negative light. Also the stereotype of the brave Pole was not univocally positive, and often triggered critique, like in an epigram entitled *Polacy (Poles)*:

That is our greatest vice –
We are always keen to fight.
And if someone pops his fist,
We just want to cut his wrist.
If someone seeks to thwart, defy,
A Pole shall quickly make him die...¹⁴⁰

140 *Fraszka Polacy*, in: *Różność nacyj z ich własnościami, Fraszki Sowizdrzała Nowego*, in: *Polska fraszka mieszczańska. Minucje sowizdrzalskie*, prep. by K. Badecki, Cracow, 1948, p. 173, verses 137–144.

The role of the confessional criteria is arguable: the Poles – regarded, both at the time and today, orthodox Catholics – should perceive Spaniards, Italians, and the French positively; yet this was not the case. Spaniards were regarded as arrogant and self-important, Italians as greedy, and even a poisoners, and Frenchmen (since the first interregnum) as hypocritical and rotten (the same opinion was shared by both a Protestant Mikołaj Rej and a Catholic Mikołaj Radziwiłł Sierotka). Protestants were also viewed in a negative light, and Dutchmen were placed in one line with pagans. From the estate perspective, the Cossacks, Hungarians, and Tatars were perceived as servants, Germans and Italians as craftsmen, and Jews as a separate estate. Other nations were perceived positively or negatively because of the considerable noble population (Lombardians, Spaniards), or plebeians (Dutchmen).

From the perspective of political preferences, free states were perceived as best: especially Venice, and – albeit to a lesser extent because of the confessional difference – the Netherlands and England. The Muscovites had the worst opinion – as a country with no civic liberties. Paradoxically enough, they were respected for their economic and military power, which resulted in the repeated attempts (1572–1658) to establish a triple union between Poland, Lithuania and Muscovy.

Stereotypes speak very little of the groups that they describe, and a lot about those, who construct them. Since the 1980s, Polish humanists have undertaken new research on stereotypes (mostly ethnic), which may prove trying to find one's own national identity.

2.4. Sarmatian Customs and Mentality

The far-reaching integration of the noble estate led to a unification of Sarmatian mentality, ideology, and lifestyle. The culture of everyday life was connected with a unique sense of artistic taste, which was a symbiosis of elements derived from the Muslim Orient, Armenian and Jewish culture, Eastern Christianity, Russian folklore and some role models taken from the West. All of these elements have created a unified noble culture in the Commonwealth, which flourished in the 17th century. Mature Sarmatism was a result of a merge of noble political ideology with a baroque taste and an artistic culture created by it. However, the Slutsk sashes or the Sarmatian coffin portraits – which were allegedly the most original products of Polish art – were also present in Hungary, Russia, and the Balkans. Therefore, it is hard to speak about a Polish influence on the neighbouring countries. Instead, one may contend that there was a cultural league of different countries from Lublin to Zagreb in the world of Slavic baroque (Endre Angyal's expression).

As late as in the second half of the 17th century and in the Wettin times, the features of noble mentality and customs were finally popularized and petrified. In the Enlightenment they were viewed as typically Sarmatian, but in fact they also meant a degeneration of the positive features of the previous age: chivalry was replaced by martyrology, and the cult of native qualities by hostility towards the foreigners, and folk religiousness by bigotry and superstition. The Commonwealth was turned into a backwater of Europe with lazy cultural life following the rural rhythm. The

burghers and plebeians remained culturally diversified in the multiethnic Polish-Lithuanian state, but the “noble nation” became more and more homogenized in terms of confession, mentality, and customs in the second half of the 17th century.

The process of Polonization of the Lithuanian and Ruthenian nobility was coming to an end, when in 1697 the Ruthenian language was removed from the court registers as the official language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (as distinct from Ukraine and Volhynia). The Sarmatian art and customs were never automatically linked with linguistic or Catholic Polonization, and the political ideology of Sarmatism run afoul of the actual cultural background.

2.5. The Noble System of Values

The common axiological system of the multiconfessional, multiethnic, and multicultural noble estate of the Commonwealth was built around the integrating Sarmatian political and social ideology. According to Andrzej Zajączkowski, the main values of the noble culture of the 16th–17th centuries were: racism (nobility by blood), noble dignity, intolerance, and estate equality. Other researchers, specializing in the political ideology of the nobility (Jarema Maciszewski, Edward Opaliński), in turn, considered freedom/liberty as its main value. It seems vain to establish a strict hierarchy of the values of noble culture, as both their interrelations and influences changed in time. Besides, not all of the noblemen were prone to the Sarmatian indoctrination and some of them (especially the Protestants) maintained constant relationships with Western European culture.

It is also significant to differentiate the doctrinal differences – which were a basis of the noble estate ideology (freedom/liberty, equality, fraternity, concord) with a set of unique values characteristic for some milieus and professional groups, such as “landedness” and chivalry. Their position in the hierarchy varied depending on social reality, as well as state and ecclesiastical propaganda. The ideal landed nobleman or knight created by moralists did not have to correspond to the social or economic position of those who preached it. An apology of “landedness,” as a collection of virtues connected to a “life in agreement with nature” and distant from urban and court corruption, was preached by the ecclesiastical intellectuals (Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski), secular intellectuals (Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno, Szymon Szymonowic), along with burghers (Sebastian Fabian Klonowic, Adam Władysławiusz, Józef Bartłomiej Zimorowic), soldiers (Albrycht Karmanowski, Zbigniew Morsztyn), and even magnates (Łukasz Opaliński, Jan Andrzej Morsztyn). Literature and poetry of landed nobility flourished especially in the times when the real condition of the nobility was deteriorating due to the crisis of folwark economy contradiction.

The idea of supremacy of the life of a landed nobleman over the life in a city or a court was based on the perceived opposition between two different models of life: life regulated by the clock of nature and healthy rural existence, or life subject to the whim of a lord. Again, as a point of fact, these tendencies to idealize the country life originated in the ancient times. They were not an original feature of the Commonwealth’s nobility, but, in fact, were popular among French and English aristocracy

in the 16th century. Already in the 17th century, secluding oneself to lead a rural life was not highly esteemed. Nonetheless, the Commonwealth's situation was specific, because that what in Western Europe was a feature of a historical period – when the “court established its structures and customs, as if it negotiated its position in the existing systems of power” (Antoni Mączak) – in the Commonwealth became a fixed feature of the Sarmatian mentality, which soon became a synonym for the “national character.”

The chivalry – a combination of valour and patriotism (love for the king and the fatherland) and a protective approach towards the weak (women, children, plebeians) – was invoked mostly among ecclesiastical moralists, who not only never served in the army but also had no idea about warfare. In the apologies of Poland (e.g. Szymon Starowolski, *Declamatio contra obtrectatores Poloniae*, 1631), chivalry and military prowess were the main virtues of Poles, developed through the battles with the Tatars, Vlachs, Turks, and Muscovites. In reality, chivalry was only practiced by some members of the estate – the military nobility, who had a slightly different hierarchy of values (fame, honour, *esprit de corps*) than the landed nobility. At the same time, it was precisely the chivalric tradition – rooted in the estate archetype since the Middle Ages, and reactivated in the mid-17th century and the beginning of the 18th century – that integrated the landed and military nobility in confederations against the foreign interventions and saved the Commonwealth from disintegration.

Among all the doctrinal values, the crucial value was the Polish nobility (as distinct nobility in general), exposed during the Sandomierz Rebellion:

The Polish nobleman is the most respectable of all, and one who was born with such virtue cares only about law, liberty, and his nobility.¹⁴¹

The idea of sovereignty and freedom of noble nation was dear to all noblemen alike. However, the Crown and Lithuania entered the period of elective monarchy with different traditions, which foreshadowed difficulties in the decision process concerning the future of the Commonwealth. Research on political discourse shows that both political nations had different sets of values: while in the vocabulary of the Crown noblemen, it was *liberty* that was the most frequently used term, the Lithuanian noblemen rather invoked *government* and *order*, which were the traditional values of the Ruthenian state. According to the Lithuanian political ideology, the ideal state was one with a strong government headed by a Grand Prince and collaborating with the nobility (Augustyn Rotundus-Mieleski, *Rozmowa Polaka z Litwinem* [*A Conversation Between a Pole and a Lithuanian*], 1564; Michael the Lithuanian (probably Michał Tyszkiewicz or Wencław Mikołajewicz), *O obyczajach Tatarów, Litwinów i Moskwicinów – De moribus Tartarorum, Lithuanorum et Moschorum* [*On*

141 A. Rembowski, *Konfederacja i rokosz w dawnym prawie polskim*, Warsaw 1893, p. 24 (from the speech of Stanisław Stadnicki aka Diabeł – Devil).

the Customs of the Tatars, Lithuanians, and Muscovites], written ca. 1550, printed in 1615). The Crown noblemen, in turn, preferred a republican political system.

Freedom and law – treated as inseparable – became the designations of the Polish state at the time when it was being shaped as an elective and parliamentary monarchy. The system norm of *nihil novi* (1505) expressed the harmony between freedom and law, not only giving the legislative power to the Sejm but also defining the “public freedom” (*publica libertas*) – a republican concept of the state – as a common weal (*res publica*), shaped in the first half of the 15th century according to the Roman legal and political models. The term “free people” meant the nobility, which had the right to be free from illegal interventions in the nation’s interest, as well as the freedom to participate actively in public life (each nobleman was a political subject, a citizen). Such a double meaning of the term “liberty” was written down, among others, by Marcin Błażewski in *Tłumacz rokoszowy* (*The Rokosz Instructions*) from the time of the Sandomierz Rebellion of 1606–1609:

To be free is to live as one wills, safe in one’s home,
And to answer to no one but God, court, and law,
To have the right to speak freely in a brotherly circle,
And not to be insulted for saying what one believes.¹⁴²

Noble legalism also stemmed from the equation of law and liberty. The rule of law and order was an unquestionable rule of political life in the Commonwealth, which also bound the rulers. The kings of the Commonwealth were obliged to consult their decisions with the public and explain their doubtful actions, because, as Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski put it:

It is important that the law be protected not only by the dignity of the office but also by the dignity of a reason itself..¹⁴³

At the same time, in public practice of the 16th century, the primacy of the fairness over legal norm was respected, and “the procedural norms were not followed in a dogmatic fashion” (Jan Dziegielewski). The commitment to liberty sometimes collided with the rule of legality and led to the equation of public freedom with the interest of one’s own political party. Even the noble legalists, after a *rokosz* or confederation, put forward postulates, which stood in sharp contradiction to the understanding of the rule of law, by demanding not to punish the participants in the name of brotherhood and solidarity of the “armigers.”

142 Maciej Błażewski, *Tłumacz rokoszowy*, in: *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoshu Zebrzydowskiego*, ed. Jan Czubek, vol. I, Cracow 1916, p. 171–172.

143 Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Rozważania o poprawie Rzeczypospolitej*, in: *Dziela*, ed. S. Bodniak, E. Jędrkiewicz, Warsaw 1953, Book II: *O prawach*, Ch. II: *Różnica między prawem a obyczajem. Znaczenie prawom nadaje przede wszystkim ich wewnętrzna racja, ale także powaga urzędu.*, p. 235.

In private life, freedom led to lawlessness and impunity of violating the rights of the weaker – in spite of the reproaches of moralists. The conviction of A.F. Modrzewski that the “excessive” (“brutish”) freedom has to be limited, and that the noblemen must have equal rights with the plebeians, was repeated by Łukasz Górnicki in *Rozmowa Polaka z Włochem o wolnościach i prawach polskich* (*A Conversation of a Pole with an Italian on the Liberties and Rights of the Poles*, written between 1588–1598, published in 1616). When doctrinal liberty was treated as a synthesis of the estate laws, also the burghers, clergy, and (exceptionally) Cossacks (on an elementary level) were granted it. However, the dominant idea was that “neither the plebeians nor the peasants need liberty, as it would bring them about a blemish”¹⁴⁴ – which was in concord with the estate interest and the dominical rights that the nobles had over their servants. Apart from political liberty, there was also another, narrower, understanding of freedom as “the holy right of property”: “Liberty is the possession and proper usage of wealth – in peace and with no dread of violence.”¹⁴⁵

A complementation of to the concept of liberty was the concept of equality, which had its basis in the fact that all noblemen were equal in terms of law and liberty. However, it was clear that there was an inequality within the estate due to economic differences. Moreover, it was the magnates who were the most forceful advocates of liberty in political life, resorting to it every time when the *viritim* election was questioned or when the public rights of their servants or clients (treated as “equal to other noblemen”) were to be limited. It remains debatable whether liberty was a doctrinal or real value. An argument advocating for the fact that it was practiced during almost the whole history of the Commonwealth is that the law treated all noblemen equally, regardless of their wealth, or the offices that they held. The attempts to formally distinguish the magnates from the rest of noblemen had always failed, and in 1699 a parliamentary constitution formally banned the use of the term “petty nobility” in public print: “admitting that *in aequalitate* there was no smaller or greater nobleman.”¹⁴⁶ The equality of all noblemen before the law regardless of their material status was abolished by the legislation of the Four-Year Sejm, which took away civil rights from the landless nobility, granting them to rich burghers, and thereby creating a new category of citizenship based on the equality of owners.

A natural consequence of the notions of liberty and equality was the idea of fraternity within the noble estate, stressed especially in the relations between the Crown and Lithuanian nobilities. In a situation of political, confessional, and ethnic diversity of the nobility, the idea of fraternity minimized the possibility of conflict within the estate. Concord was also an important value, which was defined as the

144 Łukasz Górnicki, *Rozmowa Polaka z Włochem o wolnościach i prawach polskich*, in: *Pisma*, ed. Roman Pollak, vol.2, Warsaw 1961, p. 348.

145 Andrzej Wolan, *O wolności Rzeczypospolitej albo szlacheckiej*, trans. S. Dubingowicz, ed. K. J. Turowski, Cracow 1859, p. 12.

146 *Konstytucje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego na sejmie warszawskim 1699 r.*, *Volumina Legum*, vol. VI, p. 41, fol. 78, p. 2: *Zniesienie słowa contra aequalitatem*.

ability of reaching a voluntary compromise. In political practice, the term concord was a technical term designating the way in which decisions were made at sejmiks and sejms – not by majority vote, but by trying to convince the opponents. Concord, thus understood, conditioned the functioning of the Commonwealth, which is why some historians (Janusz Ekes) refer to it as “the state of concord.”

2.6. Liberty and *Liberum Veto*

Polish historiography has identified the political freedom of the nobility with *liberum veto*, stating axiomatically that the system of wide political representation was self-destructive and that the price for the centuries of noble liberty were the Partitions. The negative evaluation of the “Golden Liberty” (first put forward by the Cracow historical school – Józef Szujski, Michał Bobrzyński) was a result of treating history as a catalogue of national failures and achievements: the length of existence, territorial expansion or shrinking of borders, effectiveness in using the economic and population potential. As a result, the royal or aristocratic reform projects were overestimated and the Sejm’s rejection of the changes threatening civil rights of the nobility was condemned.

It was as late as in the last fifty years of the 20th century that the achievements of the noble society were finally recognized and rehabilitated. The attempts to create (for the standards of the era) democratic institutions – sometimes described as direct democracy, or a liberal-democratic republic (Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska), or civic society (Andrzej Sulima-Kamiński, Klaus Zernack) – were appreciated (especially in comparison with the autocracy in The Grand Duchy of Moscow). It is worth to remember that the Muscovite autocracy was supported by the elites, the Orthodox Church, and the boyars, who in the 17th century (as the diaries of Samuel and Bogusław Maskiewicz suggest) considered the “Polish liberty” in terms of wilfulness of the elites and lack of respect for the law.

2.7. Three Currents of Noble Political Ideology

The relation towards liberty and law marks three main political orientations within the noble estate: royalist (monarchist), republican, and constitutionalist. The first one supported the king and the system based on one strong head of the government. Republicans, in turn, championed freedom and equality, and the constitutionalists were the supporters of traditional values and laws. These were not political parties, nor even permanent associations – their members, ideas, and opinions changed according to the shifts in power.

The king was the natural leader of the royalist faction, which that supported him in the army, at the court, in the senate, and in the state administration. The royalists wanted a strong and centralized government, where the king decided on taxation, had unlimited authority over the army, the diplomatic services, and the offices. Monarchists like Krzysztof Warszawicki and Mikołaj Wolski who advocated absolute monarchy as the best political system were exceptions.

The constitutionalists were mostly lay and clerical senators, as well as their clients. There was the magnate elite, like Łukasz Opaliński, Jerzy and Krzysztof Zbaraskis, or Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, but also talented parliamentarians from average nobility (Marcin Broniewski, Zbigniew Niszczycycki, Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro) and political theorists of burgher descent (Sebastian Petrycy from Pilzno, Aron Olizarowski), who supported a mixed constitution, that is to say, the harmonious collaboration between the king and the senate, which would act as an advisory body for the king and the Chamber of Deputies. Most of the constitutionalists' ideas remained in theory, instead of turning into political practice.

Both royalists and constitutionalists opposed republicans, who perceived each attempt at centralization as a threat of *absolutum dominium*; they fought for direct participation of noble masses in the government at the expense of the king and the senate, and wanted to strengthen the sejmiks, often invoking the right to *rokosz* and confederation – which they believed to be legal methods of direct government.

Although all the three movements strive to take over the main state organs, none of them succeeded until the end of the Commonwealth's existence. This only proves the extraordinary resilience of the mixed constitution, in which all three estates of the Sejm took part in the government. Their competition brought upon the evolution from monarchism of the 16th century through constitutionalism of the first half of the 17th century and republicanism of the Saxon period to the new, Enlightenment version of monarchism of King Stanisław August Poniatowski times.

2.8. Monarchism. The Ideal Model of a Ruler

Although Krzysztof Opaliński claimed that “There was no king, who managed to live up to our tastes”¹⁴⁷ – it seems that in the 16th century a fixed and unalterable ideal of king, very weakly related to the changing political reality, engraved itself in the Commonwealth's social consciousness. It was in many ways convergent with the ideal of “Christian prince” created by moralists – beginning with Desiderius Erasmus (*Institutio principis christiani*, 1516), who formulated guidelines concerning “the proper way of “ruling over free men with their consent”¹⁴⁸, meant for philosopher rather than for a ruler.

This genre, which was called *l'institution de prince* in France, found its continuation in the works of Catholic humanists in the post-Tridentine period: Juan de Mariana (*De rege et regis institutione*, 1599), Roberto Bellarmino (*De officio principis christiani libri tres*, 1619; dedicated to prince Wladislaus Vasa), and Giovanni Botero in a series of historical and biographical treatises created for the court of Savoy. The image created by these works – namely, *Il principe cristiano* – was a conscious reference to the late medieval political thought, which was opposed to political

147 Krzysztof Opaliński, *Satyra II*, in: *Satyry*, Book III, prep. L. Eustachiewicz, BN, Seria I, no. 147, Wrocław 1953, p. 132.

148 Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, prep. L. Jardine, trans. N. M. Cheschire, Cambridge, 2003, p. 36.

rationalism and to the growing popularity of Niccolò Machiavelli among the early modern Catholic rulers (Robert Bireley).

In the works of 17th-century writers, it is hard to find original pieces of advice for rulers, which would exceed the stereotype of the king as the father or shepherd of his subjects, the helmsman of the Commonwealth's vessel, or a physician for its ailments etc., formulated by Stanisław Zaborowski at the beginning of the 16th century (*Tractatus de natura iurium et bonorum regis*, 1507). This stereotype was recreated and repeated until the end of the next century. It is possible that the overwhelming preponderance of sociotechnical elements over actual political advice stemmed from the fact that the Commonwealth was treated as a *communitas* – a community of free men – rather than a state institution. According to this stereotype the “true royal” virtues were: faith, justice, bravery, and wisdom, which might have indicated a lack of connection between the ideal and the real – if it was not for the convergence of the opinions of theoreticians and the expectations of the nobility expressed in anonymous writing.

The majesty of the king, which stemmed from the divine choice, was revealed in his personal virtues – which every good Christian should possess, but which were cultivated on a much larger scale. According to Desiderius Erasmus, “what is a mistake in other people is a crime for the prince.”¹⁴⁹ The ethical bases of the ruler's authority were described by S. Petrycy of Pilzno:

The dignity or majesty of the king can be understood in two distinct ways: first, it comes from his virtues and goodness, against which no one fights, except for the angry and dishonest [...] and such majesty, true and rightful, should truly be found in kings; the second meaning is related to power and wealth, when kings do not trust their kindness and, in effect, surround themselves with guards [...] which is not their own and violent.¹⁵⁰

This burgher theoretician stated the dilemma well by juxtaposing strength with virtue, as it was precisely the question that the elective kings had to face: either strong authority, which meant a conflict with the subjects, or social acceptance. They could count on the support of the clergy (especially the Jesuits, but not the whole of the Episcopate), and the burghers who did not have political representation. In the Commonwealth under the rule of the Vasa dynasty, who looked upon the Habsburg monarchies with their sacral authority as a model, there are very few projects of strong monarchy, among which the most famous one: *Kazania sejmowe* (*Sejm Sermons*) by Piotr Skarga, is interpreted by more recent historiography as a vision of a theocratic state (Stanisław Obirek).

149 Ibid, p. 21.

150 Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno, *Przydatek do Księgi Piątej Etyki Arystotelesowej*, in *Pisma*, vol. 1, pp. 518–520.

2.9. Political Ideology of Decadent Sarmatism

The Commonwealth's system was soon perceived as the best one in the world. The only thing that seemed to work unwell was the Commonwealth's political practice, because people did not follow the virtues of their ancestors and did not abide by the old laws. By virtue of its commitment to tradition and reluctance towards any changes in the political system, Sarmatism can be said to be the first consistently conservative worldview in the Polish and Lithuanian political thought.

The apotheotic version Sarmatism, in which the noble liberties were endowed with a mythical nature, emerged in the 1630s and the 1640s and developed to its mature form in the period of turmoil of the Deluge. During the reign of Jan III Sobieski it was enriched with messianic accents to the point of becoming its own caricature known from the comic depictions of Franciszek Bohomolec and Franciszek Zabłocki from the second half of the 18th century. The historical term *Sarmatian* was devaluated along with its popularization in Polish language and customs. In Old Polish oratory Sarmatians were identified not only with the noble estate but also with all Poles in general (or, more precisely, the inhabitants of the Commonwealth). Everything became Sarmatian: ambition, nation, blood, freedom, but also snow, woods, and rocks (everything native and familiar: the people and the landscape alike).

The construction of Sarmatism as a separate cultural type, which was created in the Enlightenment, was perceived as a negation of European civilization. As a result, every assessment of Polish national character depended on a positive or negative perception of Sarmatism. Soon afterwards, the Sarmatian-nobleman, usurping the monopoly for Polishness, was opposed to the Lechite: the Pole, regardless of his social background. It meant the reassessment of the concept of political nation confronted with the myth of Lechiada, shaped simultaneously to the Sarmatian myth in the 1540s.

2.10. Constitutionalism versus Neostoicism

The noble republican ideology became an anachronism as compared to the tendencies prevailing in the 17th-century European political theory and practice. However, it does not mean that there were no groups in the Commonwealth that would be interested in strengthening the state and centralizing the authority. According to their designs, the main state organ was supposed to be the senate, not the royal court – a group of educated, competent, and responsible people, able to maintain the form of *monarchia mixta*, while implementing the system of government, which proved successful in other free states, such as Venice, the United Provinces, and England.

The proponents of this political orientation were described in historiography as constitutionalists. In fact, their situation was very difficult – they opposed both absolutism and decentralization, which is why the adherents of the other two orientations (republican and regalist) treated them with hostility, while historians had a tendency to link them with one of these orientations (Jan Adamus, Franciszek Bronowski).

Nonetheless, already Adam Kersten pointed out the existence of another ideological group among the Polish-Lithuanian magnates, who supported oligarchic (aristocratic) reforms. Since the 1990s, this approach has been associated with the philosophical and political current known as Neostoicism, which had dominated European political thought in the Mannerist and early Baroque period (at the turn of the 16th and 17th century).

Contrary to the Renaissance humanism, which invoked the tradition of the Roman Republic (Marcus Tullius Cicero 106–43 B.C.E., Titus Livius 59–17 B.C.E.), Neostoicism developed out of the interest in Imperial Rome (especially in the historical works of Publius Cornelius Tacitus 55–120 C.E.), which, to his early modern readers, to some extent resembled the world of the Counter-Reformation. Notably, the uncertainty regarding the use of material goods, the political and religious pressure on an individual during the confessionalization period, and the lack of legal security were stressed.

As a philosophical current, Neostoicism drew on the Stoic philosophy (Lucius Anneus Seneca ca. 5–65 C.E., and Marcus Aurelius 121–180 C.E.), reformulating it in a new Christianized form. It was possible, because Stoicism was preoccupied mostly with ethics – which described the basic rules guiding the individual and social life according to the laws of nature and universe, of which man was a part. The main virtue was passionlessness (*apátheia*) towards the adversities of life, and the openness towards others, constituted by the harmony of the universe. *Magnanimitas* (the greatness of spirit) was the ethical ideal, which was a feature of men, who thanks to their virtue were elevated above the multitude. Yet, the social position (blood ties and wealth) was often considered sufficient to be counted among those possessing *magnanimitas*.

Early modern Stoicism was an eclectic and elitist philosophy. In fact, it had very little in common with the basic principles of evangelical Christianity: empathy and love of the neighbour, but it corresponded well to the post-Tridentine atmosphere of Catholicism of the late 16th century.

The main advocate of Stoicism was Justus Lipsius (Joost Lips, 1547–1606) from Overijse in southern Netherlands, the secretary of Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle (1517–1586), educated in a Jesuit college in Cologne and at the University of Leuven; a philologist, translator and editor of Tacitus, lecturer at Lutheran universities in Jena and Köln (1574–1579), Calvinist in Leiden (1579–1591) and Catholic in Leuven (1591–1605). His philosophical, ethical, and political works (respectively: *Manductionis ad stoicam philosophiam libri tres* [1604], *De constantia libri duo* [1584],¹⁵¹ *Politicorum libri sex*, [1589]¹⁵²) gained much popularity and were translated into many European languages. In the 17th century, the so-called Lipsian-

151 Translated into Polish by Janusz Piotrowicz and printed by Łukasz Kupisz in Cracow in 1649 as *O stałości*.

152 Translated into Polish by Paweł Szczerbic and printed in Cracow in 1595 and 1606 as *Polityka pańskie*.

ism (as a current in Neostoicism) was treated as a lifestyle, a new anthropological discipline, whose aim was to create a natural humanist system, and a doctrine of centralized state.¹⁵³

In *De constantia*, the main virtue advised by Lipsius was constancy – regardless of the adversities of life, including (against the republican ideology) the commitment towards the fatherland, understood as both a home country and a political community. Lipsius suggested a new understating of the fatherland – the whole world (*universus orbis*), as the people created by God are the same everywhere. It stemmed from his concept of the genesis of human community as the passage from a simple nomadic life to a society built on liberty, customs, law, and justice. The Lipsian definition of the fatherland=state=society as an artificial creation, and not a community derived from human nature, can be interpreted as the basis of modern patriotism, and a negation of nationalism. A new type of man was created – a citizen of the world, in control of his emotions and bravely coping with adversities.

What *De constantia* was for private men *Politicorum libri sex* was for public life and thus expanded many themes only marginally dealt with in the previous book. Lipsius, following Aristotle, stated that man was a social being, expressing himself through public activity for the common comfort and good of the community. He interpreted the Stoic *eudaimonia* in terms of both an individual need (*De Constantia*) and a collective yearning for happiness. Both the rulers and the ruled should exercise civic virtues: they should be honest and respect the laws and customs. Lipsius considered monarchy as the best system, because only authority, which is concentrated in one man, can diminish the possibility of depravation and demoralization. *Politicorum* is a book intended mostly for rulers, unlike most mirrors for princes (*specula principum*) of the 16th century, it is a treatise of sociotechnical, rather than normative character. The range of techniques of efficient rulership is very wide: from concealing the truth, hypocrisy, and dissimulation to denunciation, espionage, torture, and a military power. It could lead to a conclusion (perhaps, not in concord with the author's intention) that being a ruler meant being above ethics.

Lipsius' philosophy, which was a symbiosis of the Calvinist bravery and the Jesuit free will, was supra-confessional and therefore it could be taught at the universities of the Catholic France, Calvinist Netherlands, and Lutheran Rostock. Lipsius' thought, especially in the Jesuit interpretation (the principles: *reservatio mentalis*, which justified the breaking of an oath, or "the end justifies the means"), influenced political practice in the 17th-century Europe. *Politicorum libri sex* was regarded by the elites as a recipe for organizing a well-governed state. It was used by rulers, parliamentarians, and officials. Especially the notion of *raison d'État* proved useful for the Protestant rulers as a legitimization of their authority (possessed in order to maintain material and spiritual wealth of a society), which was a surrogate of the Catholic *sacrum* of the ruler. According to Maria O. Pryshlak: "in many countries

153 Georg Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, trans. D. McLintock, Cambridge, 1982.

there was a direct relationship between the Lipsian philosophy and the proponents of centralization of power and modernization of the state.¹⁵⁴

Lipsianism was popular in the Commonwealth, especially among its burgher intellectual elites (the Gdańsk Gimnasium, Bartholomäus Keckermann) and its political elites (the court of the Biržai branch of the Radziwiłł family, Daniel Naborowski, Krzysztof Arciszewski). It was popularized not only through books but also by the lectures at the University of Leuven, which was a fashionable place to study for Polish-Lithuanian aristocracy. In Leuven the Lipsian thought found its continuation in the lectures of Erycius Puteanus (Eric de Putte, 1574–1646), an eminent pedagogue and a teacher of Krzysztof and Łukasz Opalińskis and Jerzy Ossoliński.

Nonetheless, it is hard to agree with M. O. Pryshlak that Lipsius' works were "very often"¹⁵⁵ translated and printed in the Commonwealth, and that individual reform projects, which she describes as constitutionalist (reforms of Jan Zamoyski 1589, Jan Ostrorog 1607, Krzysztof Zbaraski 1589, Łukasz Opaliński 1632), were strictly dependent on Lipsianism. Her reading of the treatise of Łukasz Opaliński, *Rozmowa plebana z ziemianinem* (*A Conversation between a Parish Priest and a Landowner*, 1639), which she believes to be strictly connected with the Lipsian thought, is much more convincing than the earlier interpretations stressing the royalism of the author.

The translations and editions of his works in the Commonwealth were usually connected with the times of historical turmoil (Sandomierz Rebellion, the Cossack wars of 1648–1649). Usually, they were not treated as philosophical treatises, but rather as practical Christian handbooks:

During this time, when the fatherland was in great turmoil and unrest, destroyed by the civil war [...] one can easily and without much convincing find in him a picture of a true philosopher, who should keep a steady and sedate mind and not give to in the adversities of life.¹⁵⁶

The fact that Polish translators had to make immense efforts to gain the acceptance of Church censorship by assuring Lipsius' unwavering adherence to Catholic faith (which was far from being true) only proves the cultural backwardness of the Commonwealth. Philosophical and political thoughts reached the elites with much delay, and were only visible in the late 17th century or the beginning of the 18th century, when Sarmatian republicanism and mixed government were widely criticized. Jan Stanisław Jabłonowski (the Ruthenian Voivode) wrote an anti-noble pamphlet entitled *Skrupuł bez skrupułu w Polsce, albo Oświecenie grzechów narodowi* (*Scruple Without Scruple in Poland, or the Enlightening of Our Polish Nation of Its More*

154 Maria O. Pryshlak, *Państwo w filozofii politycznej Łukasza Opalińskiego*, trans. G. Chomici, Cracow, 2000, p. 61.

155 Ibid.

156 Paweł Kupisz, a dedication for Stanisław Skarszewski, the Stężyce starosta, in: *De constantia*, Cracow 1649, book 1.

Common Sins, 1730). The most famous were the writings of Stanisław Hierakliusz Lubomirski, a politician, philosopher, and poet, as well as the Grand Crown Marshal. His philosophical and political treatises, such as *Rozmowy Artaksesa i Ewandra* (*Conversations Between Artaxes and Euander*, 1676–1683); *De vanitate consiliorum*, 1699, (reprinted until 1745, and since 1705 available in Polish translation) were written in the spirit of Christian Stoicism, stressing the superiority of a great man over a crowd. His oeuvre is marked by the lack of hope for a better future. However, it was not philosophers, but political practitioners, who undertook the last attempt at reconciliation of the principles of the Commonwealth's system of government and the structural reform. These practitioners were connected with the royal court: the Lithuanian Vice-Chancellor Stanisław Szczuka (*Eclipsis Poloniae orbi publico demonstrare*, 1709) and the Chamberlain of Sandomierz Stanisław Dunin-Karwicki (*Eksorbintancyje we wszystkich trzech stanach Rzeczpospolitej* [*The Violations of the Rights of All Three Estates of the Commonwealth*]), who had certain influence on the decisions of the Sejm of 1717.

3. Urban Culture in the Commonwealth of the 16th and the 17th Centuries

The historians' opinions concerning urban – or the so-called bourgeois – culture of the Commonwealth in the 16th–18th centuries are divided. Stanisław Herbst viewed the Commonwealth's burghers as the creators of the original culture in the Renaissance period, whereas Maria Bogucka believed that the burghers in the Baroque age were unable to continue their own model of culture established in the 15th century as an alternative to the noble model. This extreme difference of opinions cannot be explained by the passage of time; for the end of the Renaissance was shifted in Polish culture to the 1630s. However, it can be explained by the fact that legal, social, linguistic, and ethnic discrepancies made it impossible to create a unified urban culture or the burgher estate. In effect, the differences between the culture of the patricians of large cities of Royal Prussia and that of rural towns in Belarus were certainly comparable with the differences between the culture of magnate courts and the noble folklore. Thus, by Polish urban culture one may understand the culture of Polish-speaking patricians of the Crown and Red Ruthenian cities.

Apart from incidental examples (Biernat from Lublin, *Rozmowa dwu baranów* [*A Conversation Between Two Rams*], 1587; Ł. Górnicki, *Rozmowa Polaka z Włochem* [*A Conversation of a Pole with an Italian*], ca. 1587; S. F. Klonowic, *Flis to jest puszczanie statków Wisłą i innymi rzekami do niej przypadającymi* [*Timber Rafting Down the Vistula River and Other Rivers Flowing into It*], 1595), there are no examples of the praising of urban culture in Polish literature. However, the apologies of “The new times” are mostly found in urban literature, and not in traditional noble literature (A. Władysławiusz, *O wieku starym* [*On the Old Age*], 1609), which juxtaposed the “old-fashioned” customs with “foreign” fashion, architecture, and economy as the

examples to follow (Adam Jarzębski, *Gościniec albo krótkie opisanie Warszawy* [*The High Road or the Description of Warsaw*], 1643).

The vision of urban culture in literature is not trustworthy, and the thesis of the decline of cities in the Commonwealth at the end of the 16th century, as well as other pessimistic appraisals of their situation from the 1620s (Sz. Starowolski and K. Opaliński), can be juxtaposed, for example, with the opinion of Jakub Gadebusch from Gdańsk *Pochwała Królestwa Polskiego* (*The Praise of the Polish Kingdom*, 1621). That is why contemporary researchers, who focus on the culture and everyday life of cities (Andrzej Karpiński, Andrzej Klonder) refer to burgher historiography, diaries, correspondence, and recently also last wills – which make possible an accurate evaluation of the life standards, religious relations, or the problem of the social margin and social care in the cities.

3.1. Urban Ideology

In spite of the progress in analytical research, there is still lack of sufficient information for answering the question whether a separate urban ideology existed as an alternative to the noble (Sarmatian) ideology. It does not seem right to assume *a priori* that the culture of non-noble social strata had to be antagonistic towards Sarmatism in order to prove its originality.

It is difficult to find comprehensive concepts of the state, nation, and social order in Polish urban literature in the 16th–18th centuries, not because the plebeians passively absorbed the Sarmatian culture, but because in the 17th century Sarmatism itself became an ideology and cultural formation, which exceeded the estate boundaries. Non-noble elites interpreted Sarmatism in their own way in the 17th–18th centuries and therefore (contrary to the widespread interpretations) it became a factor of cultural integration, and not of estate exclusivism. It is also not true to say that there was no urban ideology and cultural patterns – even though they were marginalized, and limited to the patrician elites, they survived up to the Enlightenment period. The phenomenon of urban patriotism (contrary to what Jacek Jezierski, an enemy of the burghers, claimed) was not a result of Hugo Kołłątaj's intrigues.

3.2. Urban System of Values and Role Models

The urban system of values and concepts of social order were conservative (in much the same way as the noble ideology): the old laws and the mythical golden age were invoked quite often. This ideology did not exceed the frames of estate society – on the contrary, it was desired to revive the old, natural order of things, in which each estate of the realm of the Commonwealth fulfilled its obligations. That reminded the noblemen encroaching into the cities of their duties of the knightly estate. These concepts did not negate the main position of the nobility in the state, let alone their significance. Rather, the urban ideologists referred to the “true nobility,” understood differently than in the noble myth of origin identifying Sarmatism with nobility in the 17th century.

Writers of urban descent believed that noblemen had special rights and these were given to them, not by birth, by the will of the rulers in appreciation for their military services. At the same time, the urban (patrician) role model of a decent man – educated, hardworking, thrifty, virtuous (pious), and busy – was often opposed to the image of idle noblemen. The interludes, written in the circle of Jesuit colleges, stressed the dignity of all conditions:

The world needs work and diligence,
Both among the poor and the rich.¹⁵⁷

Work was the main value of urban life. It was seen as the basis of a virtuous life, social order, and the power of the state. It fulfilled the life both of the poor and the rich burghers and its influence formed a certain type of collective mentality of the city inhabitants. In the 17th century a consciousness arose that (even most respectful) work does not guarantee wealth, which enabled the rebellion of the populace against the patricians, who despised the craftsmen as much as the nobility did. A very good testimony of this phenomenon is a literary genre known as *sowizdrzały*, a type of Picaresque literature (*Sowizdrzał* is the Polish name for *Eulenspiegel* – a trickster figure from German folk literature).

The reluctance towards becoming rich – understood in terms of transgressing one's condition and greediness – seems to be understandable in this context. Apparently, it was shared by both the noble and burgher moralists. Urban hostility to the rich was not only justified by the will to respect the principle of “mediocrity,” that is, of spending less than one earns, but also, and above all, by the will of maintaining the *status quo*, which meant protecting the position of burghers against the nobility, which was ruthless in its chase after money to the point of taking up urban professions. According to an anonymous writer, known as Nowy Sowizdrzał (The New Eulenspiegel):

The rich have ale-houses now, they bake bread,
The rich are in the market place.
And even the noble women are seen selling things...¹⁵⁸

The resemblance of the scornful noble and urban attitude towards the peasants is also illusory. For in the noble literature it was linked to patriarchalism and the responsibility of the lord over his subjects, whereas in urban popular literature it was usually critical of the rich and irreverent peasants – especially in Podgórze, where the most of the Picaresque literature authors originated from at the beginning of the 17th century.

157 *Intermedium polonicum* from 1564, in *Dwa najstarsze intermedia szkolne*, prep. I. Bernacki, *Przegląd Literacki*, no. 2, (1903), pp. 109–110.

158 *Sowizdrzał Nowy albo raczej Nowyźrzał, Na łakomych*, in: *Fraszki sowizdrzała nowego*, in: *Literatura mieszczańska w Polsce od końca XVI wieku do końca XVII w.*, prep. K. Budzyk, H. Budzykowa, J. Lewański, vol. 2, Warsaw, 1954, p. 20.

3.3. Urban Political Ideology

Urban Sarmatism in political ideology consisted of regalism, stressing the king's significance in the state (in opposition to the noble republicanism), and the supra-estate idea of law and justice. In the theoretical and doctrinal understanding, the king was the source and interpreter of the law and acted as the institutional counterweight to the nobility, which had a political monopoly in the state and did not give much in return. The ideal was the magnate-urban monarchy (according to the expression of Stanisław Grzybowski), which was created by the best urban theoretician, S. Petrycy of Pilzno, in *Przydatki do Polityki Arystotelesowej (A Supplement to Aristotle's Politics)* from 1605, dedicated to Sigismund III and Prince Wladislaus.

Urban regalism was not always connected with pacifism, which was often regarded as a typical feature of this estate. The insistence on reminding the nobility of its chivalric ethos at the time of the Rebellion of Sandomierz was probably driven by the desire to expel the insubordinate noblemen from the Commonwealth by engaging them in the war against Muscovy. At the same time, the emphasis on the military merits of the plebeians was not only propaganda-driven but also referred to the real military merits of both burghers and peasants as depicted in popular literature: *Albertus z wojny (Albertus Returns from War, 1596)*, *Polak w Śląsko (A Pole in Silesia, 1608–1618)*, *Jantaszek z wojny moskiewskiej (Jantaszek Returns from the Muscovite War, 1661)*. At the same time, urban theoreticians of the first half of the 17th century criticized the chief quality of the noble ethos – liberty – presenting it as lawlessness, on the one hand and, on the other, as an exemption from all social commitments.

3.4. The Sarmatization of Burghers

It is doubtful whether the reception of the noble cultural patterns among the burghers went beyond clothing and phraseology. The Polonization of the burgher elites – well educated, speaking many languages, different from the Polish nobility in dress and customs, and sometimes in religion – often consisted in a conscious choice of Polish as the language of correspondence and public life, treated as a choice of political option and a manifestation of loyalty to the king and the Commonwealth. It does not change the fact that for patricians of Cracow, Poznań or Lviv – let alone Royal Prussia – the model of estate virtues and customs was German urban culture, as a source of laws, privileges, and institutions (Magdeburg Law) of urban republics in the Commonwealth.

Special was the situation of burghers writing in Polish and Latin, who described themselves as Ruthenians in spite of being of Catholic confession – S. F. Klonowic, the mayor of Lublin, the author of a Latin poem *Roksolania (Roxolania)*, inscribing Red Ruthenia in the Sarmatian myth, or the authors of Ruthenian pastorals and Lviv patricians, the Zimorowic brothers – Józef Bartłomiej with his *Sielanki nowe ruskie (New Ruthenian Pastorals, 1663)* and Szymon with his *Roksolanki, czyli ruskie panny (Roxolanae, or Ruthenian Maidens, 1654)*. They were all emotionally attached

to their closer fatherland – Ruthenia, situated “between the Polish rock and the Scythian hard place” – and, at the same time, to the Commonwealth. In Szymon Zimorowic’s pastoral *Kozaczyzna* (*The Cossacks*), which describes the siege of a city by the army of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the Cossack’s attitude towards such Polonized fellow-countryman is presented in a very suggestive manner:

... you are a Ruthenian, soon to be dust,
But a Polish flesh grows on your Ruthenian bones
So if you want to come to heaven, with us,
We have to beat this flesh out of your bones.¹⁵⁹

3.5. Cities as the Cultural Centres

Urban intellectual elites, which had a great influence on the culture of the whole society throughout the early modern period, are very difficult to define in terms of legal (estate) status, nationality or social milieu. Some of these people were firmly settled in the urban milieus, some abandoned them and permeated into the political nation (the nobility, the royal court, or the clergy). A clerical intellectual of urban descent was a typical figure of the Renaissance period. However, with the passage of time, he vanished because of the limitations imposed by the nobility on burghers aspiring to the clerical profession. M. Kromer, the Bishop of Varmia, was an intellectual of urban descent, and his works written in Latin (especially *Polonia*) were the main source of information on the Commonwealth for European elites for two hundred years.

Life in the city of the second half of the 16th and in the 17th century still offered many opportunities for development and creative activity – despite the deterioration of the position of the burgher estate. Even small towns participated in the exchange of information and social communication to a much larger extent than rural noble courts, and gave more possibilities and inspirations for intellectual development than the landed nobility’s lifestyle. The patricians understood the necessity of educating the youth – if only for the professional purposes of trade and financial circulation. The urban milieus of the Commonwealth – just like those of other European countries – collected manuscripts and books, created cabinets of curiosities, and conducted academic research.

Some of the members of urban intellectual elites holding municipal offices, usually with legal education and knowledge of classical texts, also found some time to create literature. Since 16th century, the development of urban historiography proved that the urban inhabitants of the Commonwealth were emotionally attached to their “urban republics”: in Little Poland (*Dyariusz Jana Tymowskiego, obywatela Nowego Sącza* [A Diary of Jan Tymowski, A Citizen of Nowy Sącz, 1607–1625], Andrzej Komoniewski, *Chronografia albo dziejopis żywiecki* [Chronography, or the History of Żywiec, 1704]); in Red Ruthenia (Jan Alnpek, *Opis miasta Lwowa* [A Description of the Town

159 Józef B. Zimorowic, *Kozaczyzna*, in: *Sielanki*, prep. J. Łoś, Cracow, 1916.

of Lviv, 1603–1605]); and in Masovia (Andrzej Krzysztof Cebrowski, *Roczniki miasta Łowicza* [*The Annals of the Town of Łowicz*, 1648–1659]). The development of historiography was very characteristic for burgher culture of the 17th century, when it was enriched by supplementing historical knowledge with the Sarmatian lineage. Basing on the writings of M. Bielski and M. Kromer, the urban historiographers were eager to prove that the Sarmatians were the ancestors of all Poles, even if today the term is mostly employed to designate the nobility.

At the end of the 17th century, Sarmatism spread from the noble estate and Slavic community, reaching the intellectual elites of Prussian cities. In these circles, historiographical works were produced, whose authors (Jerzy Sachs, a burgher from Great Poland and the secretary of the city council in Toruń, Krzysztof Hartknoch, a history teacher at the Toruń Gymnasium, Jakub Pastorius, a royal historiographer) consciously created an atmosphere that made it possible to link the Sarmatian myth with local patriotism. Hartknoch's work was of special importance here, as it was an erudite product of the so-called Enlightened Sarmatism. In this work, the name *Sarmatia* encompassed Muscovy, Ruthenia, Livonia, Pomerania, Prussia, Lithuania, Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as Silesia, Brandenburg, and Lusatia. In his lectures concerning the constitutional law of the Commonwealth understood as "our Poland," he treated this legal system as a "domestic example." Just like Ł. Opaliński, Hartknoch was a constitutionalist and a proponent of the mixed government in the Commonwealth, and he criticized the absolutist reform projects of Jan Casimir. This shows that intellectual culture of the 17th century exceeded the estate boundaries.

4. Popular Culture – Folk Culture

In Polish historiography of the 1950s – that is, in the period dominated by the Marxist methodology – the term *popular culture* was used with ideological overtones: the cultural formation designated by this term was treated as a plebeian alternative for the noble (i. e. Sarmatian) culture, or as a synonym for the Picaresque literature, a lower standard of plebeian literature, connected with the urban milieu. Today the term *folk culture* is associated with folklore, while *popular culture* (as seen from the perspective of its recipients) is tantamount to mass culture, which was not connected to any particular estate, served mainly for entertainment and stood in opposition to the intellectual, high, and official culture.

4.1. The Creators of Popular Culture

The origins and development of popular culture (from the 1580s until ca. 1600) have been often connected with the crisis of old political and social structures in Europe. The situation of former opinion-forming elite, university graduates, and nobility had deteriorated markedly, and the barriers of literature and elite culture were finally breached. However, the reasons behind the cultural crisis in the West and in East-Central Europe were different. While in the West (in England, Sweden), at the end of the 16th century, the shortage of employment for people with university

education was a result of greater supply than demand for educated people, in the Commonwealth the increase of unemployment among the graduates from the only (until 1579) university in the country – namely, the Academy of Cracow – was caused by the fact that secondary education remained undercapitalized, and, in general, there was no conscious state sponsorship of education and culture during the elective kings period.

The poorest social strata were almost completely illiterate: the number of parish schools decreased during the Reformation, and then other problems appeared with the reorganization of parishes in the Cracow diocese after the Council of Trent. All of this caused a deterioration of elementary education. What also decreased was the demand for teachers in rural schools – for the so-called *klechowie* (sing. *klecha*), who were the lower personnel in the parishes, without the holy orders, and usually fresh graduates from the Academy of Cracow. As they did not have a steady job, they were forced to lead a vagrant life and make a living by writing and distributing entertainment literature. The Little Poland's "proto-intelligentsia" from the parish schools was active for only 40 years; due to the deteriorating economic conditions and emigration of people from Podgórze during the epidemics and military confederations, the Jesuits' attempts to dominate the Cracow Academy in 1618–1634, and the imposition of strict discipline on rural clergy by the bishops of Cracow (Bernard Maciejowski and Marcin Szyszkowski). Nevertheless, the specific forms and principles of Picaresque literature created in these circles were popularized not only in cities but also in villages, and lasted in Old Polish writing until as late as the Wettin period and the 1730s.

4.2. Characteristic Features of Popular Culture

Despite the civilizational differences, there are significant similarities between popular cultures of the Commonwealth and Western Europe. Because most of the lower social strata were illiterate, oral culture prevailed over written culture, visual arts dominated the cultural sphere, and education was of practical nature (it encompassed teaching of communication skills in different circumstances, music education, and rhetoric. The gesture played a crucial role in the process.

The most typical genres of popular culture were: ballads in the British Isles, the so-called *livres bleus* in France (the so-called gutter literature, mainly romance and crime stories). In the Commonwealth – love poetry (songs, dances, and pavaues) and facetiae: the collections of humorous anecdotes and parodies of various genres of official literature: the descriptions of parliamentary sessions and synods, calendars and novelties (the so-called *minucje sowizdrzalskie*). The basic common features of popular literature in the Commonwealth and in the West were: the representation of the "world upside down," as "in a mirror of fools," a scorned and mocked image of the official culture, anonymous or pseudo-anonymous (collective) authorship, and an unpretentious form.

4.3. Social Range of Popular Culture

A characteristic feature of the Picaresque literature and popular culture in the Commonwealth was the fact that it functioned independently of estates and milieus, which illustrated the “descending” of culture from magnate courts to nobility, from nobility to merchants, from merchants to rich craftsmen, and finally to peasants. S. F. Klonowic showed that on the example of the epigrams of Jan Kochanowski, who:

First having pleased the lords' ears,
Sent his new psalms to other sirs,
With good will it came from time to time,
To the simple folk which enjoyed the rhyme.

The Picaresque literature reached the noble manors in the circle of the Babin Commonwealth (from Babin, a village near Lublin, in the 16th and the 17th centuries a manor of the noble family Pszonkas) – established in the 1570s by Stanisław Pszonka and Piotr Kaszowski. The Babin nobles created (perhaps drawing on the Western carnival tradition) a parody of the Commonwealth with the senate, the bishops, voivodes, hetmans, and secretaries nominated “upside down”: a nobleman who spoke lavishly, but with no relation to his position, would become an archbishop, a stammering storyteller saying incredible things or hurling paradoxes – a chancellor, the one who lied about extraordinary hunting merits – a royal hunter, the one boasting about bravery – a hetman, and the one who was denied an official position – the governor in Babin.

According to the contemporaries (S. Sarnicki, *Annales*, 1587), such jokes helped to fix the morals of the nobility and taught modesty and distance. The Babin jokes and anecdotes were constructed according to the poetics of absurd. The rich nobility's sense of humour was not much different from the “Picaresque boheme” – *klechowie*, cantors, as well as travelling monks (especially the Observants who were popular among the nobility) and some magnates like Karol Radziwiłł aka Panie Kochanku.

Since the Middle Ages, the “culture of folk humour” or the “world of laughter” (following Mikhail Bakhtin's expressions) could be encountered both in the church and in the marketplace – especially during the carnival when the higher classes of the society were not excluded from the participation in the festive events. However, in the 16th–17th centuries, some elements of popular culture were “elevated”: popular songs (especially Ruthenian) reached the nobility, and they became popular among the nobility and burghers in the 1590s. Noble folklore was enriched by urban pamphlets and novelties (Latin: *novitates*; printed or handwritten proto-newspapers) as well as astrological calendars and astrological predictions, which influenced the authors of *minucje sowizdrzalskie*. Old Polish popular culture – to a much larger extent than Western rural culture (of parishes, noble mansions, and peasantry) – turned out to be a fixed cultural formation. It was preserved until the 19th century in noble folklore, and became an invaluable source of information concerning the lower social strata of the Commonwealth (including the petty nobility).

5. Folklore

The term *folklore* is used to describe local cultures, which are maintained and transmitted verbally – from generation to generation. The oral nature of communication in folk culture implies huge diversity and, in spite of seeming permanence, noticeable malleability of its cultural products. The noble (as well as urban and court) folklore developed in the Commonwealth on the margins of official culture, often neighbouring with the actual (peasant) folklore. The noble and folk culture influenced each another, and their mutual influences were visible especially in the dress of petty nobility and burghers from small farming towns, as well as in music, dance, sculpture, painting, decorative art, social habits, and customs (such as toasts, speeches, harvest festivals, and noble cakes). All of these elements created the unique ambiance of the Old Polish countryside, which (as A. Mączak was right to note) has been incorrectly described as noble culture only because there are more noble sources preserved.

Written literature – *Żywoty świętych* (*The Lives of Saints*) by P. Skarga, poems by J. Kochanowski – left a trace in rural-oral culture, but also the other way around: rural folklore (fairy tales, proverbs, peasant songs, farming advices transmitted mouth to mouth) influenced the noble literature. Typical examples of such influence are: a treatise by Jakub Kazimierz Haur *Oekonomika ziemiańska generalna* (*General Land Economics*, 1675), studies in nature by Gabriel Rzączyński (a naturalist writing in the first half of the 18th century), or the so-called Radomszczańska *Silva* – a noble song book from 1699–1703, where at least half of the texts were of folk origins. These mutual influences and cultural reciprocity were easier in ethnically Polish areas, but the same mechanisms functioned in ethnically and culturally diversified territories of Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine.

5.1. Noble Folklore

The works of the noble folklore were abundant, even though that what is preserved to us in writing is just a fractional part of what there was. It encompassed: *silvae rerum* (by jurists, farmers, poets), diaries, collections of facetiae (e.g. *Vorago rerum, torba śmiechu, groch z kapustą, a każdy pies z innej wsi* [*Vorago rerum, a Bag of Laughter, Peas and Cabbage, and Each Dog Is from a Different Village*] by Karol Żero, a Observant collector living at the end of the 18th century), political and occasional poetry. Its bloom was during the Wettin period, when high culture was in decline. By virtue of its connection with high culture, the noble folklore was enriched by basic knowledge (derived from Jesuit education) on the classical and Biblical tradition and books (armourials, historical, political and religious treatises, occasional poetry, and calendars). Its was linked to the folk culture by the absence of literary life and institutions mediating between the creators and the recipients, as well as by its direct reception (home, neighbours), anonymity of the authors, and the great importance of living word (folk tales, facetiae). As distinct from high Sarmatian

literature, which was very serious in tone, folklore was ludic and lewd, and in that sense it opposed elitism.

5.2. The Noble Manor as a Cultural Institution

The noble folklore emerged at the intersection of countryside and noble manor. The latter was not only a production unit but also a cultural institution influencing its surroundings. It is precisely in such a milieu that the specific currents of Old Polish literature were born, namely – the manorial poetry and occasional literature (the so-called “domestic muse”). The latter drew on the Roman tradition: genethliacons were written to celebrate the birth of a child; weddings and funerals were accompanied by elaborate speeches and epithalamia or funeral addresses in the 17th century. These pieces were copied into the so-called *silvae rerum* (sing. *silva rerum* means “forest of things”) – manuscripts kept in every noble manor, containing the family history and functioning as archives of the Sarmatian memory (as Stanisław Roszak described them), recording more important events of family and public life.

In this multicultural environment a varied and eclectic subculture was created, easily appropriated and cultivated by both the natives and the Polonized immigrants from different European countries: noblemen who obtained *indigent* as well as peasants of German origin. In the journals of Kajetan Koźmian from the turn of the 18th and the 19th centuries, two noble houses are listed among the exemplary civic homes in the voivodeship in which he lived:

They seemed foreign and Protestant, and different from all others because of their enlightened character, virtue, morality, elegance, and civic life [...] and they were called Lutheran, as there was a Protestant church.¹⁶⁰

Koźmian praised the manor of Ernest Gonteryn Goltz, the Chamberlain of August III Wettin, in Wronów for its civilizational importance for the peasants.

6. Religiousness

The term religiousness designates a set of norms, values, symbols and practices, which were recognized and respected by a certain group, and linked to an individual or collective answer to the perceived presence of the sacred. According to A. Mączak, the social function of religious beliefs is a problem at the intersection of political ideology and social psychology. Also in the case of this cultural realm two distinct levels are usually distinguished: elite and popular religion in its ideological aspect (knowledge of the doctrine) and in its intellectual aspect (knowledge of religion itself). As for religious practice and its consequences, the opposition between elite and popular religiousness had been recently criticized, as they had many points

160 Kajetan Koźmian, *Pamiętniki*, vol. 1, Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow-Gdańsk, 1972, p. 181.

in common (especially in the Baroque period). The folk religiousness is now treated as a subculture of institutionalized religion (Tomasz Wiślicz).

Spiritual life of the ecclesiastic and lay elites in the first half of the 17th century was largely influenced by Spanish mysticism, mostly due to the Jesuits. The reform of convent life took place – mostly in the female convents (the Benedictines and Carmelite nuns), which were very popular in the Commonwealth in the 17th century thanks to their religious and educational functions. Insofar as it is not hard to understand the propagation of mystical writings in the seminaries and colleges (St. John of the Cross), the permeating of secular circles with this form of spirituality is thought provoking and testifies to the development of a genuine need for deepening religious knowledge and reflection.

While theological disputes did not die out among social and intellectual elites, the process of Christianization of the peasantry and petty nobility was not completed in the 18th century. In Polesie, Volhynia, and Lithuania, members of these groups maintained their faith in superstition and magic until the 19th century. In the Renaissance and Baroque, however, superstitiousness and faith in magic were present not only in the folk culture. Demonology and alchemy were practiced in the 16th and the 17th centuries at the courts of European rulers: the Habsburgs, Sigismund August, Stephen Bathory, and Sigismund III. The most distinctive characteristics of Baroque preaching was the fact that the preachers themselves believed in witchcraft, magic, and demons, and the devil was the main protagonist of the so-called exempla – sensational anecdotes embellishing the sermons in the 18th century. An example of this belief in witchcraft and magic is the fact that the notorious *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) was translated into Polish as *Młot na czarownicę* in 1614.

The chronological layout of witch trials in the Commonwealth shows the increase of faith in magic: in the 16th century 4 % of all trials against witchcraft were held by rural and city courts, in the 17th century it was 46 %, and in the 18th century it reached 50 % (more precisely, in 1676–1700 there were 23 % accusations of magic, and in the next quarter century the number increased up to 32 %). In comparison, in 1755 there were a few cases of burning the so-called witches, and the last executions in the Reich were held in Bavaria in Kempten in 1775, in Spain in 1781, and in Switzerland in 1782.

The most popular excuse to start a trial against someone accused of magic and relations with the devil were the suspicions, not of heresy (in spite of the qualifications of the Chelmno Law), but rather of the profanation of sacred objects (the host or holy water) or the use of these objects in magical practice, which allegedly caused various diseases among men and animals (especially cattle).

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, witch trials were noted between 1563 and 1771. Just like in the Crown, they were held more often in the 17th century. According to Lithuanian scholars, only 15 of 109 best-documented court cases involving magic were related to the actual practice of witchcraft. They took place exclusively in Samogitia (as distinct from the conflicts around casting charms). Herbalists, in turn, were tolerated and respected in Lithuania until the 19th century.

6.1. Mass Religiousness at the End of the 16th Century

During the Reformation, the lower social strata in the countryside and in the cities remained attached to the old beliefs (Catholic in the Crown and Orthodox in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where only in Samogitia some groups of peasants converted to Protestantism). Most of the believers remained loyal “to their forefathers’ faith” out of conformism and habit, rather than conscious identification.

The main reason behind the absence of religious education of peasants was the clergy’s approach that limited the requirements to attending rituals regularly (mass every Sunday) or to memorizing the three main prayers (*Our Father, Credo, Hail Mary*). The participation in the Catholic service of laymen (not only peasants) who did not know Latin was totally passive, and the prayers were repeated without comprehension. It resulted in the twisting of the texts on the verge of blasphemy, which was used with great delight by the Baroque satirists – for instance, in the epigrams of Waclaw Potocki.¹⁶¹

The basic way of religious education for the peasants was confessional constraint (regardless of the patron’s religion) as a factor shaping an obedient subject. It was used both by the Catholic landowners and Protestant magnates in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, who hired special officials (the so-called *dziesiątnicy*), responsible for bringing the peasants for a Sunday mass.

6.2. Methods of Ministry

The main goals of the reform of Catholic Church after the Council of Trent were to efface the relics of pagan beliefs (for example, the prohibition of the ludic festivities, like the bonfires of St. John), to restore the morals of the priests (the ban on cohabitation and on attending the inn, the duty to reside in the parish), to ameliorate the financial situation of lower clergy, and to evangelize the populace. The evangelization was conducted by regular clergy: they taught basic truths of the catechism (in accordance with the regulations of Trent), which was translated and edited by 30 Jesuits in the 16th–17th centuries. The Jesuits created a new, very popular formula of education, namely – colleges. In the 16th century, more than a dozen thousand young people attended Jesuit colleges.

The Jesuits employed new methods of ministry: missions in different circles (field, court, folk), school theatre, and distributing propaganda of religious confraternities among the plebeians (The Confraternity of St. Isidore the Farmer, who was canonized in 1622, of God’s Grace, of St. Lazarus, and of the Holiest Sacrament). The prayer books for soldiers were quite unique (*Żołnierskie nabożeństwo* by Piotr Skarga [*The Soldiers’ Service*], 1606, *Bellator christianus* by Mikołaj Bembus [1617], S. Kurzeniecki *Żołnierskie nabożeństwo* [*The Soldiers’ Service*, 1748]), just as the missions in the army, which was mostly non-denominational (or, more precisely,

161 Waclaw Potocki, *Chłopska teologia*, in *Dziela*, vol. 1, Warsaw, 1987, p. 261.

professed the so-called soldier's faith, which manifested itself mostly during the executions of insubordinate individuals).

The low level of confessional consciousness and religious knowledge was not limited to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's society. Different congregations (Jesuits and since 1613 Oratorians) held rural missions as late as at the end of the 17th century, even in Italy and France, especially outside the harvest time. During these missions quite crude if effective methods were used: burning books considered to be "heretical," setting up the crosses, showing various allegorical illustrations, performing the biblical scenes and the lives of saints, and composing easy carols to the tunes of popular songs (the *contrafacta*). The basic feature of Catholicism after Trent was the revalorization of sacraments: the obligation to baptize infants within three days after they were born (if it was not fulfilled, the parents were not let inside the church), the duty of Easter communion and of attending the mass on Sunday, and the catechization conducted by parish schools (a method taken over from the Protestants). A very similar program of evangelization was formulated for the Greek-Catholic church.

In spite of all these actions, the level of folk religiousness was terrifying, and the situation in which the formal Christians took only one sacrament (baptism), did not know the basic prayers and truths of faith was not rare even in the Crown; moreover, it was also quite common in the border territories of the Commonwealth. The conducting of religious education was mostly a duty of the parish clergy, and it depended not only on their professional preparation but also on their diligence. The records of visitations of the borderline deaneries of the Uniate diocese in Chełm show that the populace did not know the basic Christian dogmas and blamed the clergy for their own ignorance.

6.3. The Folklorization of Catholicism

After the Council of Trent, all Catholic countries in Europe standardized the form of liturgy, unified the language of holy books (the translations of the Bible into national languages were limited) and the performance of service. However, it did not interrupt the practice of local forms of cult. In order to highlight its antiquity and supremacy over various "heretical novelties," the post-Tridentine church invoked the medieval tradition, which naturally survived the times of Reformation: the cult of relics and holy images, the pilgrimages, and the Gothicization of church buildings and images of St. Mary. Yet the success of Counter-Reformation in the Commonwealth was possible not by virtue of the traditional methods, but by virtue of the modern sociotechnical methods. New elements of religiousness after the Council of Trent (sometimes mistaken for Polish religiousness) were the May devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the adoration of the Holiest Sacrament, the three-day expiation services during Shrovetide, the general monthly communion, the processions with relics, and the visitations of prisoners, convicts, and the sick (especially those with contagious diseases and during epidemics).

Post-Tridentine Catholicism appealed to emotions and imagination: the Protestant God – a strict judge was replaced by the benevolent Creator of Mankind. The cult of the Holy Mary became widespread – she became a universal (in fact supra-confessional) mediator and a caretaker in all difficult life situations. In the 17th century, in the face of an increased sense of exterior danger and the conviction that the Commonwealth was special, a new type of noble religiousness was shaped, in which mysticism and Marian cult were combined in order to form a new quality. The invocation of the Mother of God as the Queen of Poland in the vows of Jan Casmimir (1656) was merely an expression of a shared belief. The cult of Holy Mary, manifested by coronations of her images (first time in Częstochowa in 1717) played a significant political and integration role in the Commonwealth (just like in the Habsburg countries). The Marian iconography was used in political and dynastic propaganda.

In the Commonwealth, the cult of saints had a lesser importance than in Western Europe. It was more developed in cities, where mostly saints believed to protect people against epidemics were worshiped (St. Roch, St. Rosalie, St. Barbara). In the countryside there were slightly above a dozen characters connected with the Gospel stories (St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, St. Peter) and the state cults (St. Wojciech and St. Stanisław). These forms of cult were visible in the names given to the newborn children. Despite the clergy's efforts, the cult of the saints did not correspond to the folk piety. Religiousness was manifested during the celebrations (markets, fairs, calvaries, and pilgrimages), not in everyday life. Devotional prints and realistic descriptions of Christ's passion in sermons did not encourage people to follow the extreme forms of practice (e. g. flagellation).

Popular religiousness, finally shaped in the Wettin times, expressed itself in the lavish church ceremonies, and the implementation of religious practice in the everyday life. Processions, pilgrimages, fairs, strict fasts, and huge festivities shaped the annual cycle. A type of Polish religiousness was formed – similar to the particular form of Catholicism in Italy or Spain, but less clerical than in the Romance countries.

The evaluation of the Catholic folklore in the Commonwealth is ambivalent. Some scholars believe that during the Baroque period it was to be theatricalized and materialized: "In a situation of confrontation (with the Reformation – UA), the logic of inculturation was applied: even in a shallow way, since there would be time to deepen it. The core started to live its own life."¹⁶² The victory of Counter-Reformation brought about the primitivization of religious feelings, the lowering of standards, and the rise of intolerance. Other historians (Jerzy Kłoczowski) point out that treating religion in a superficial way served its perpetuation, whereas in the areas where the reform of Christianity rejected folklore by introducing the purified form of religion (as in France), the tendencies of de-Christianization and laicization of culture emerged in the 19th century.

162 Jan Kracik, *Powszechny, apostołski, w historię wpisany – z wędrówek po kościelnej przeszłości*, Cracow 2005, p. 263.

7. The Enlightenment – an Ideological and Cultural Breakthrough

7.1. Assumptions and the System of Values

Immanuel Kant described the Enlightenment as the “Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity.” The Enlightenment treated man as a rational being, capable of independent thinking. The system of values, social and political order, science and religion were all to be subjected to reason. The question about the range of the Enlightenment reforms in the Commonwealth, as well as the issue whether the 18th century was indeed an “enlightened period” remains unanswered, also due to the fact that along with the development of historiography, the uniform image of this period became diversified.

After the Second World War, Polish historiography treated the Enlightenment as a synonym of all that was progressive in Polish culture from the 1730s to the 1820s. More recently, this period ceased to be viewed as a breakthrough, a time of the blossoming of freedom and human rights. It is connected with the discussion over the laicization of culture as a determinant of the influence of the Enlightenment and over the character of Polish Catholicism in general. Due to the unique relations between the state and the Church (see Chapter IV/3.10), there were no conditions in Poland for the French libertarian slogans, religious scepticism, or freethinking. Numerous brochures popularizing these ideas were published since the 1770s in the printing houses of Michał Gröll. The significance of the reception of libertarian slogans (as well as the Francophile tendencies) was overestimated by Polish historiography of the 1950s – nowadays, it is rather the Anglophile tendencies of the reformers and activists of the Four-Year Sejm (from Stanisław August Poniatowski and the Potocki family to the lower officials) that are underscored (Richard Butterwick).

The Enlightenment was connected with the learning the truth – not thanks to God, but through education. The beginning of the period – dated ca. 1740, or even 1730 – is connected with the activity of new education institutions, the Piarist and Jesuit reform of education, and the social education initiated by the press. In 1765 Stanisław August Poniatowski founded the weekly *Monitor* (modelled on the English *Spectator*), and its popularity was regarded as a proof that “A new era is dawning, a more enlightened and brighter one.”¹⁶³

Social values, which informed the Enlightenment slogans and corresponded to the revolutionary changes in reality, were: liberty, equality, and fraternity – deeply rooted in the Masonic movement and later displayed on the banners of the French Revolution. They were present in Old Polish democracy, but the liberty of the enlightened was different: it encompassed the liberty of an individual opposed to the

163 *Monitor*, 1765, no. 47.

“God’s will,” and politically – to the enlightened absolutism. In social relations (after the Sarmatian experience), it was a liberty subordinated to the good of the society.

The awareness of the ambiguous meaning of liberty is visible in the works of Stanisław Konarski, Michał Wielhorski, Stanisław Staszic, Hugo Kołłątaj, and in the West – in the writings of Charles Louis Montesquieu, who praised social liberty, but condemned it on the individual level. The quality of freedom was not only limited but also questioned by the proponents of utopian communism (Étienne Gabriel Morelly, Léger Marie Deschamps), who questioned another cherished value of the enlightened, namely – property. Finally, fraternity (connected with humanitarianism and charity) was a value accepted by most of the enlightened. However, there were some – like Marquis de Sade – who negated it completely.

The antinomy of the idea of the “return to nature” and progress understood as “the accumulation of culture,” the struggle to eliminate superstition and mistakes, was visible in the milieu of the enlightened thinkers in the contradiction with the thesis of “the unchangeable nature and the emerging historicism” (Giambattista Vico, Johann Gottfried Herder, H. Kołłątaj) and evolutionism derived from geology and biology (Denis Diderot, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, Jędrzej and Jan Śniadeckis, S. Staszic). In social practice, the term *enlightenment* was connected with the civility realized by the new education and upbringing system (with the support of the modern state), opposed to the traditional home education.

7.2. The Native versus the Foreign

In the second half of the 18th century, the relationship of the elites towards cultural and political tradition of the Commonwealth changed, as compared to other countries. The Sarmatian self-indulgence was replaced by criticism, but with an optimistic tendency. People of the 18th century believed in a better future, for which one had to fight. At the same time, they invoked the Polish Renaissance tradition, which was especially visible in the care surrounding literary language – by the establishment of the linguistic norms. New ideas were to be introduced into the frames of old institutions, and the noble liberty was translated into the language of European Enlightenment without breaching the parliamentary-republican heritage, but merely modernizing it. However, the emphatic preaching of “newfangled slogans” taken from French literature among the influential Warsaw elites sufficed to make the “country” anxious and to define Warsaw as a degenerated city.

The main cultural institutions active in the promotion of the Enlightenment values during the Stanisław August Poniatowski period were accused of depravation and falsification of the image of traditional Polish culture. The opposition writings of the 1770s accused the king, The Permanent Council, the ministers, and the court retinue of spreading the spirit of despotism through the *Monitor*. Warsaw, which became a metropolis in the second half of the 18th century, became a symbol of an alien area, where urban life was practiced, but without the old burgher estate. It was mostly perceived as the king’s residence and the home of magnates and foreigners, as well as poor writers, but not of the burgher citizens.

The civilization and urbanization progress did not concern the nobles, who were deprived of any social impact. The opposition of the countryside and the city, which was strong during the Stanisław August Poniatowski period (but present in Old Polish literature since the 16th century), was built on the opposition of the magnates living in the city to the nobility – the bulwark of the tradition based in the countryside. Hetman Seweryn Rzewuski wrote: “Warsaw is not the nation! The nation is in other citizens who live in other voivodehips!”¹⁶⁴ Moreover, such an image of Warsaw was preserved in the 19th century journals, written by people who spent their youth in the city (for example, Franciszek Karpiński, Jan Ursyn Niemcewicz) – repeating the stereotype of urban degeneration well into the Romanticism period.

The anti-Warsaw literature promoted passivity and resentment towards the public life in the face of the new dangers threatening the Commonwealth. The king’s and The Permanent Council’s unpopular foreign policy was widely criticized, and in 1775–1776 the countryside nobility and the republican tradition was dominant in the opposition circles. During the Four-Year Sejm sessions the sejmiks were perceived as the core of real authority. Even H. Kołłątaj was afraid of “a too far-reaching centralization.” In his *Listy Anonima* (*Letters of an Anonymous Author*, 1788–1789) and *Prawo polityczne narodu polskiego* (*Political Law of the Polish Nation*, 1790) he subjected the “republic of the capital city” to the “republic of the provinces.”

In the 1780s, in the magnate courts, a need to adjust to the taste of the nobility was noticed, as the noblemen began to emancipate from the former forms of magnate control. In Puławy, in 1785–1788, a well-directed spectacle of the return to the Sarmatian customs was performed. Szczęsny Potocki undertook a similar endeavour in Tulczyn by introducing the so-called “friendly uniforms.” The French-speaking aristocrats started to wear Polish national dress (*kontusz*) on a daily basis and use patriotic phrases. Izabela Czartoryska entered the political stage before the Sejm of 1786 and, according to the French resident Joseph Aubert, she:

Presented herself in front of the nobility in the Sarmatian attire, and spoke only about the virtues, fatherland, and the difficulties that she was ready to face in order to raise her children as future restorers of the state. Children, who were subjected to French, English, and cosmopolitan education, were to be brought up in a Spartan manner.¹⁶⁵

7.3. Transformations of Political Ideology

The spectre of *absolutum dominium* still threatened the republicans in the Stanisław August Poniatowski period. It is important to remember that political categories were not precisely defined at the time, and that the nobility had a tendency to

164 Quoted after Jerzy Michalski, “Warszawa”, czyli o antyspółecznych nastrojach w czasach Stanisława Augusta, in: *Warszawa XVIII wieku*, “Studia Warszawskie,” vol. 12, notebook 2, Warsaw, 1972, pp. 9–78.

165 Quoted after: Emanuel Rostworowski, *Ostatni król Rzeczypospolitej. Geneza i upadek Konstytucji 3 maja*, Warsaw, 1966, p. 99.

identify each attempt of strengthening the king's authority with absolutism. As enlightened absolutism was out of the question in the government reform, and the only alternative that the Commonwealth faced just before the Four-Year Sejm was a republic with a lifelong president or a parliamentary monarchy, which both meant the division of sovereignty.

The old Commonwealth was plunged in anarchy in the Wettin era, but the kings retained their authority until the establishment of the Permanent Council. After the Council was overthrown, a dilemma arose of how to define the position and prerogatives of the king, who was no longer not to be partner of the Commonwealth, but was to become a republican dignitary: the President of the Guardians of the Laws and the senate. The contract relationship of the king with the Commonwealth based on the *pacta conventa* was to be abolished along with the free election. It was a conception of bringing an end to the antagonism between majesty and liberty by subordinating the king to the republic.

H. Kołłątaj's idea of a governing parliament, which was practiced in 1788–1790, was rather a slogan, than a mature constitutional project, and the author himself soon changed his mind, becoming a supporter of the strong executive power out of political and social reasons (the government's protection of the peasants). The magnates did not feel such a need, as they practiced the ideology of enlightened absolutism on the scale of their little states. The nobility's priorities were the noble courts, and all actions of the state institutions were treated as an intervention in their private matters. The Josephine reforms in Galicia were perceived as an admonition of how the enlightened state could make life difficult for the landowners.

Outside of the realm of the Commonwealth and the jurisdiction of the noble law were more than 90 % of the inhabitants of the country: peasants, burghers, Jews, and a huge group of petty clergy. In the absolutist countries they were subject to the protection of the government and the law, but at the same time they were burdened with taxation and military service. It turned out that the monarchy served only the privileged groups. In the Commonwealth the plebeians did not serve the state but their lords: that is why the myth of the "good king" was more vivid in the Commonwealth than in Western Europe, as the lower layers of the society could appeal to the monarch, when oppressed by the "evil lord."

The activists of the Four-Year Sejm were conscious of that (H. Kołłątaj and S. Staszic), and they were able to think in categories of the social good, treating the king as a symbolic head of the Commonwealth. In order to avoid the turmoil of interregnum, they proposed a hereditary throne. However, the king was to be deprived of all his authority and the Sejm and sejmiks were to choose all state officials, dignitaries, and administration, and the Sejm (always ready according to Staszic and permanent according to Kołłątaj) was to become the government.

The Sejm was the representation of the noble nation, with formal equality and common (active and passive) suffrage. The enlightened, however, supported the idea that the nation comprises of all people living in the Commonwealth – that is why the right to vote became a focal issue. At the time, the equal treatment of all inhabitants of the Commonwealth as citizens was a utopia. Hugo Kołłątaj,

Stanisław Staszic and Ignacy Józef Pawlikowski suggested to end of the domination of nobility by arguing for the implementation of the financial census instead of the blood census. The new Parliament was supposed to have two chambers (The Land Chamber and the Urban Chamber), and only the countryside and urban property holders and clergy were to be entitled to become its members; the peasants were to be represented by the tribunes chosen by the Land Chamber.

Apart from the census principle, characteristic for the bourgeois parliamentarism in its early stages, there was the typically Polish notion of a nobleman-citizen. H. Kołłątaj, a political pragmatist, seeing how difficult it was to introduce the burgher representation to the parliament, suggested an automatic ennoblement of the rich, military officers, officials, and educated people. I. J. Pawlikowski argued that all people (*les hommes*), who became gentle (*gentils*), should become the nobility (*les gentilhommes*). One of the writers suggested a gradual ennoblement of the whole nation. The conception of nobility as an open civic estate with the inflow of new fortunes and new talents and simultaneous outflow of impoverished noblemen was a workable conception of census for the Commonwealth.

The conservative proponents of the Sarmatian political ideology were on the defensive in the 1770s and 1780s and repeated the old slogans of “Golden Liberty,” which at this point appealed only to the petty nobles who were threatened to lose their public rights. They also warned everyone against the spectre of absolutist tendencies of the monarch, which allegedly threatened the noble freedom. Seweryn Rzewuski was an ardent opponent of the hereditary succession and a protector of hetman power “a buckler of Old Polish liberty.” The conservatives, like Szczęśny Potocki, invoked the federalist conceptions – which were popular in the West, but which in Polish conditions could be beneficial only for the magnates (who were powerful in the provinces controlled by the nobility) – and the Montesquieu’s division of power with the ministers mediating between the king and the nobility. Some of the conservatives who supported the abolishing of the throne (Sz. Potocki, Józef Kalasanty Olizar Wolkiewicz) invoked the example of the United States. However, these ideas remained isolated and the ideal system for the conservatives was a mixed monarchy with an elective king (similar to the system from before 1764).

After the failure of the republican projects in the Constitution of May 3, there was a return to the ideal of parliamentary monarchy based on the English model (which met a strong resistance during the last year of the Four-Year Sejm). During the war supporting the Constitution and the Kościuszko Uprising in 1794, the new republican conceptions emerged – modelled on the French ideals – which inspired the unrest of the Warsaw plebeians. Again, the province was threatened with the image of degenerated, but this time democratized Warsaw. The leaders of the Targowica Confederation invoked the opinion of the “real nobility” from the provinces, which did not follow the Warsaw “bare leaders.”

The patriotic republicanism of the insurrection was informed by many centuries of republican tradition in the Commonwealth, combined with the modern understanding of the nation. The uprising lead by Tadeusz Kościuszko was a battle of “to be or not to be,” and its motivations were purely patriotic (as distinct from the rea-

sons behind the Bar Confederation). Kościuszko's ideology survived the Partitions, and in the 19th century the noble republicanism inspired the faith in regaining the independence, but only after the liberation of peasants through the resolution of the agrarian issue. Kościuszko's slogan: "to fight, fight, and to win!" became the major imperative, and the staffed army was to co-operate with the peasant *levé en masse*. The noble democratism of the 19th century was rooted in the Kościuszko Uprising.

8. The Romantic Rehabilitation of Sarmatism

The Sarmatian myth and the idealization of the noble tradition were born long before the fall of the Commonwealth. Anonymous pieces published ca. 1791 (*Myśli przy kominku* [*Thoughts by the Fireplace*]; *Dzwon staropolskiej fabryki* [*The Bell of an Old Polish Factory*]) criticized Warsaw's moral decline. At the time of the Four-Year Sejm Sejm, the national dress once again became fashionable. Polish Romantic prose gave birth to the genre of "noble tale" (Konstanty Gaszyński, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki), which was a medium of the Sarmatian myth.

Polish Romanticism drew on Sarmatism, and not on the medieval tradition (as distinct from its Western counterpart). During the Congress Kingdom, Sarmatism was perceived as the "early modern Middle Ages." The triumph of the Sarmatian myth became evident after the uprisings, when it started to function as an antithesis of the Enlightenment and the industrial and commercial civilization of the West. The sacralization of everything native was perceived as the condition of survival in the face of the "foreign elements."

There were three parallel visions of Sarmatism: tragic – based on the opposition between an average nobleman and a magnate (*Maria* by Antoni Malczewski; *Sen srebrny Salomei* [*The Silver Dream of Salomea*] and *Horsztyński* by Juliusz Słowacki), epic (*Pamiętki Soplicy* [*Soplica's Memoires*] by Henryk Rzewuski), and prophetic – presented by Adam Mickiewicz in *Księgi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* [*Book of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims*] and developed in *Przedświt* [*Daybreak*] by Zygmunt Krasiński. Krasiński viewed the difference in the historical development of the old Commonwealth (as compared to Western European countries) as a positive thing. The prophetic vision of Sarmatism was based on the impossibility of criticism of the noble tradition, because, as Krasiński wrote, "the judgment on the past is the judgment on the nobility."

During the 1920s and 1930s, the negative perception of Sarmatism was usually connected with the opposition to the "nationalist" political orientation¹⁶⁶. In the 1970s, the relationship between the noble and the national traditions was treated as a key to understand the notions of national identity and historical consciousness of contemporary Poles. The noble manors situated in the borderlands and the intelligentsia – most of whom were descendants of the landed nobility (Hanna Malewska) – were taken to have been the bearers of this tradition.

166 Jan Stanisław Bystroń, *Megalomania narodowa*, Warsaw, 1995 [1924].

For Polish historiography after 1989 – in accordance with the tendency to prove that we have “always” been a part of Europe – it was symptomatic to lose the interest in Sarmatism. Historians of literature were among few who write about this cultural formation (usually in the context of the Baroque studies). In fact, it was the elite culture of Polish Baroque that became the main focus of study (especially the ideas and styles, which were common for the whole of Europe). Nowadays, Sarmatism is usually researched by the scholars from the countries that regained independence in the 1990s: Lithuania and Ukraine. Also German scholars rediscover Sarmatism as an original contribution of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to European culture (Hans Jürgen Bömelburg).

In general, the attitudes towards Sarmatism exceed the oppositions of conservative to progressive and traditional to modern. Before the industrial era, Sarmatism was the only cultural formation in the history of the Commonwealth that exceeded the estate divisions, and for three centuries integrated this multiethnic, multiconfessional, and multicultural society. Multiculturalism as a constructive feature of the Sarmatian cultural formation, its system of values and political ideology – especially with the emphasis on individual rights and liberty – constitute an inalienable part of historical tradition and heritage of the Commonwealth and all the modern nations, which claim to be its descendants.

Chapter Nine

Social Communication – Education – Alphabetization

1. The System of Social Communication in the 16th–18th Centuries

The term *social communication* comprises not only the exchange of information but also the ways of using it to influence the society (propaganda) and the active participation in the exchange of meanings and symbols and emotions within a community (Tomasz-Goban-Klas). The evolution of social communication in the Commonwealth in the 16th–18th centuries can be captured in a dual model of two cultural formations: the Sarmatian formation, which was mostly oral, decentralized, with no institutions organizing and controlling the circulation of texts, and the modern formation, in which several new techniques of communication (like the printing press) were developed, and in which the state supported literary production and created institutions controlling the circulation of information.

The Sarmatian formation lacked a unified system of information, which would be controlled by the state. There were no common communication channels available to everyone. Information was exchanged mostly through private and public correspondence, printed or manuscript novelties, as well as through the colportage of original and copied documents. Since the 1620s, occasional and periodical newspapers started to appear. Participation in social communication depended not so much on one's position in the estate structure as on one's mobility, wealth, and, above all, social milieu. Thus, plebeian urban inhabitants were in a better position than the rich nobles, who lived mostly in the areas distant from the postal routes.

Among the participants of information exchange, one can distinguish the ordering parties (state authorities, church authorities, town councils), the senders (authors and editors of newspapers, authors of letters, artists illustrating occasional prints), the intermediaries (couriers, postmen and booksellers), and finally the recipients of information. Of course, this rough division is conventional, as these functions could be exchanged between various agents.

Among the landed nobility, the magnates and their courts were the most influential parties in that they shaped the attitudes of their clients. An important role was also played by the noble parliamentarians who took active part in public life. The church was also very significant – especially the Catholic Church, which distributed the official messages from the pulpits and influenced both noble and plebeian opinion by interpreting the ongoing events.

Noble and burgher milieus gained knowledge of cultural values and current information also through reading books. Peasants, and petty nobility were informed

mostly through church sermons, or private contacts with others (in cities and towns, inns, mills, on battlefields etc.)

1.1. The Culture of the Living Word

Social communication in the Commonwealth was based on personal contacts and the living word; print and writing had a much more modest scope and significance as compared to European countries with higher level of alphabetization. Some historians (Kazimierz Maliszewski) describe the Sarmatian culture as a culture of disputation, in which “the pompous and lavish Polish eloquence was a value in itself and the oratory skills guaranteed a high social position.”¹⁶⁷ The participation in debate and dialogue was a civic duty in a parliamentary system, and the ability to deliver long, memorized speeches in Polish and Latin constituted a condition of pursuing a political career. Education was shaped precisely in a way that would meet these demands: rhetoric was equally important as national law and history. As Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski wrote,

Elsewhere, rhetoric is cultivated only in books, while for us it holds sway in meetings, courts of law, and sejmiks.¹⁶⁸

Rhetorical training was a foundation of the noble education. Nonetheless, it was also necessary for the members of other estates, who wished to occupy high social position. The family and public rituals – such as the welcoming of foreign delegations, the royal, magnate, and clerical ingresses, and especially the celebrations of the triumphs of hetmans – required not only an aesthetic setting but also a commentary in the form of poems, speeches, or inscriptions on the triumphant gates. The spoken word was equally important as the visual message, gesture, and movement. It was an indispensable element of these rituals, integrating their participants.

Polish rhetorical culture had its heyday in the Renaissance and the Baroque, when it dominated prose, poetry, and everyday life. Panegyrics were an especially popular form of expression: today, there are ca. 700 preserved panegyrics from the 16th century and ca. 6.050 from the 17th century. They became “a part of a multisystemic, pansemiotic performance [...], not only an expression of a certain literary culture but also of the general estate culture, with its acceptance of hierarchy and respect for the legal, moral, and aesthetic norms.”¹⁶⁹

167 Zofia Lewinówna, in her afterword to Henryk Rzewuski, *Pamiętki Soplicy*, Warsaw, 1978, p. 428.

168 Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, *O poezji doskonałej, czyli Wergiliusz i Homer*, Wrocław, 1954, p. 201.

169 Krzysztof Dmitruk, *Problemy publiczności literackiej w dawnej Polsce*, in *Publiczność literacka i teatralna w dawnej Polsce*, ed. H. Dziechcińska, Warsaw-Łódź, 1985, p. 9.

1.2. Points of Social Contact

The mobility of individuals and social groups was the condition of public activity in a vast, poorly urbanized, and multilingual country. It was a feature of all social strata: there were migrations of both nobility and peasants, as well as from rural areas to cities, in all cases connected with the assimilation to local conditions. The points of social contact were mostly intra-estate, and depended on the functioning of juridical institutions (separate for each estate) and on the structures of political representation (reserved exclusively for the nobility). The spheres of communication between the nobles were various assemblies: sejmiks, elections, court sessions, confederations, displays, Tribunal and Sejm sessions etc. According to Claude Backvis: “In a society whereby postal services did not exist for private people, and where roads were very poor, the political assemblies [...] satisfied the need to look beyond the local horizon, and was an occasion for meeting different people and receiving information about the events of the world.”¹⁷⁰

There was a vogue for being well informed among the nobility. The satisfaction of this need depended on the material status, which enabled active participation in public life. Equally important was the ability to gain access to the best sources of current information, provided mostly by larger cities and the magnate courts.

The main forum of information exchange was the Sejm, in which all deputies from different areas gathered together and the foreign delegates were heard.

I therefore tell you that all publics in the world are a mere shadow in comparison with the Sejm. There you can learn politics, law, and all that you have not heard at schools.¹⁷¹

Sejmiks were the “main source of information from the whole of Poland and Europe, where [...] a nobleman could get news, anecdotes, and gossip, enough for twelve months.”¹⁷²

The points of contact between different estates were also temples of different confessions. Liturgy was not only a marvellous work of art but also a tool to establish a common code, which appealed to all human senses. Especially the Catholic Church used architecture, visual arts, and music, whose purpose was to delight and enchant the recipients. Of course, the primary objective remained to be the instruction in piety, convincing of the truths of the Church and encouraging prayer as well as general piety.

Every week, the preachers shaped the vision of the world of their recipients during the religious instruction given from the pulpits. In the countryside, preaching served similar function as a parish newspaper: it provided local and statewide information as well as the novelties from neighbouring countries. An exotic flavour was added to sermons thanks to the stories from Catholic missions in distant lands,

170 Claude Backvis, “Les thèmes majeurs de la pensée politique polonaise au XVI^e siècle,” *AIPHOS* 14 (1954–1957), pp. 307–355.

171 Jan Chryzostom Pasek, *Pamiętniki*, prep. W. Czaplński, Wrocław, 1979, p. 389.

172 Władysław Łoziński, *Życie polskie w dawnych wiekach*, Cracow, 1974, p. 242.

like West India, Asia or Africa – the piety and zeal of the overseas neophytes was often juxtaposed with the coldness and “division in faith” of European believers. The Catholic Church – which was the biggest and best organized propaganda and information structure, preaching universal truths and values, was a very important centre of information transfer and social communication.

The places, where one could obtain an indulgence were also a very important communication channel. They were frequented by all Christians, and even Muslims. The mendicant convents (especially Observants and Franciscans) were significant centres of communication, which created a specific Baroque convent culture of the post-Tridentine era.

Another very important meeting place for people of different estates, milieus, ethnicities, and confessions were the highroad taverns, public bathhouses, markets in cities and villages, and, above all, inns – where the noblemen, peasants and loose people met. Various wandering poets performed their pieces in front of such an auditorium, providing both entertainment and news from the world. The tavern made it possible to suspend the divisions and legal differences between members of all estates. According to the *Exepta mazowieckie* (*Masovian Exceptions*, 1576), peasants were not held responsible for hurting or killing a nobleman in a tavern¹⁷³.

The usage of contact points depended on the technical conditions of travelling and the linguistic competences. They were usually available for everyone, but the contacts, which they made possible, were mostly superficial and did not allow gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of new people and phenomena, They encouraged bilingualism and the cultural exchange of customs, fashion, and culinary preferences (of both the noblemen and the plebeians), and made the knowledge of Polish language indispensable in public life (at least among the nobility and burgher elites).

1.3. The Role of Urban Centres in the Communication System

In Europe, during the whole early modern period, the main role in organizing social communication was played by the cities. Urban postal services, which operated in East Central Europe since the 14th century, were organized as the international associations (confraternities). They employed pedestrian messengers, who belonged to the guilds of couriers (1573 in Wrocław, 1635 in Gdańsk). In the Crown, the main walking postal routes ran from Košice in Hungary to Gdańsk, and from Gdańsk to Lviv, which was connected with the Great Eastern Route to Turkey and Persia, and from the West through Poznań, Warsaw, and Vilnius to Moscow. Postal services were carried out alongside the transportation of commercial goods.

The great royal cities functioned as the points of collecting and passing information to the inhabitants of less urbanized regions of the Commonwealth of Both Nations. In this respect, especially important were the largest cities of Royal Prussia:

173 *Exepta y zwyczaje województwa mazowieckiego* in VL, vol. 2, p. 174.

Gdańsk, Toruń, and Elbląg, which were linked to the nationwide networks of communication, as well as the smaller ones, like Malbork, Grudziądz, Chełmno, which served a similar function for Great Poland. Prussian cities as the Hanseatic centres continued to maintain their earlier contacts with the other countries and provinces (Flanders, Holland, England, Denmark, and Sweden). By virtue of their wide commercial contacts, they were also open to novelties of European culture and served as intermediaries in the transmission of ideas, techniques, information, and cultural patterns. At the same time, they were also main international centres of information concerning the Polish-Lithuanian state. Especially Gdańsk was a kind of great postal repository for the inhabitants of a large stretch of the Commonwealth's land, while also being an information centre and a platform of exchange of novelties brought by merchants, sailors, diplomats, noblemen, craftsmen, and random travellers. It was the seat of foreign residents (from Sweden, Prussia, Denmark, and France), who reported to their principals about the situation in the Commonwealth. Gdańsk also served as the information hub providing the royal court with knowledge of Northern Europe. There was even a permanent delegation from the Gdańsk city council residing at the court.

Royal Prussian cities had two basic forms of information circulation (typical for the early modern period):

1. Inner (usually informal) information contacts with other cities by private and public correspondence (city councils).
2. The forms destined for a wider circle of recipients (mainly burghers): manuscript newspapers, occasional information prints, and periodic newspapers as well as a variety of journals.

Two basic forms of the press – manuscript and printed – were not mutually exclusive, but rather complemented each other. This was of great significance in terms of the information transfer on a European scale: the correspondents from Gdańsk provided information for printed newspapers in northern German cities (e. g. Hamburg), and – by virtue of its postal connection with Wrocław – also for Prague and Vienna. The novelties from Warsaw, which were passed through the offices of Gdańsk correspondents, were not only copied but also re-edited in order to satisfy the interests of their recipients.

Commercial exchange, closely related to cultural exchange and social communication, had a great influence on the development of the attitudes of the inhabitants of the Commonwealth. Personal contacts, together with the knowledge of new products and forms of activity, fostered the influx of new ideas, fashions, and systems of values and judgements. Great commerce enabled regular intercontinental contacts, which made it easier to get to know new customs, languages, forms of labour, as well as political systems. As the European market was shaped in the 15th–16th centuries, the Commonwealth established closer cultural ties with Germany and Netherlands, and, albeit to a lesser extent, also with Italy (since the 15th century). Apart from the German burghers who participated in this process, also Ruthenian and Jewish merchants (mainly in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), Italian merchants

(since the mid-14th century in Cracow and Poznań), the Armenians (in the south-eastern lands), Scots, Englishmen, and Dutchmen (regardless of the obstacles posed by Gdańsk) were all actors of this exchange. Turkish, Greek, and sometimes even Persian merchants frequented the southern parts of the Commonwealth.

The relations, which were based on international contacts, fostered open attitudes to foreign patterns of behaviour. In order to be successful, a merchant – burgher or nobleman – had to seek new ways of activity. It was necessary to be able to read, write, and count, but also to know geography and the basics of local and global politics. Incorporating the Commonwealth into the European system of commerce broadened the intellectual horizons of its inhabitants. Especially the Commonwealth's burghers were open to foreign influences, both in the 15th–17th centuries and during the Enlightenment.

1.4. The Postal Service

The beginnings of the state-run post in the Commonwealth date back to 1558, when Sigismund Augustus decided to arrange a constant exchange of correspondence between Cracow and Venice, mainly to deal with the issue of legacy after Bona Sforza's death. The initiation of the public postal service as an institution of social communication was nonetheless delayed due to the limited interventionism of the royal court and central offices in the realm of local affairs, as well as the lack of control over the clerks and the lack of efficient administration.

Cracow was the central hub of the Crown postal organization. Letters were sent from there by two different routes: the Italian postal route to Venice (in 10 days) and the Lithuanian route to Vilnius (7 days). The post transported both royal letters exempted from additional payment and private correspondence – which required payments, and in that sense initiated the public postal service. During the period of elective kings, the range and significance of the post grew proportionally to the increase in literacy, as well as in the range of social correspondence and in the current demands of commercial, political, and private communication in the vast Polish-Lithuanian state.

Post stations existed in the first half of the 17th century in Cracow, Tarnów, Rzeszów, Jarosław, Lviv, Zamość, Lublin, Warsaw, Toruń, and Poznań. Initially, the post office was a private endeavour, leased by successive kings to merchant families. The efficiency of mailing letters and parcels depended on the reliability of the person who was in charge of the post office. The Italian merchant family with the name Montelupi (later Polonized as Wilczogórcy) ran the postal business for almost 100 years (since 1568 until 1662).

The Sejm constitutions of 1564 and 1576 (*Uniwersały na podwoły*) regulated the organization of the post organization as well as royal privileges (1583 Stephen Bathory, 1632 Sigismund III, 1647 Wladislaus IV, 1662 Jan Casimir – who passed the management of post to Antonio Maria Bandinelli). During the reign of Vasa dynasty, the organization of postal service was considerably modernized. The density of postal routes increased, and letters were delivered directly to an increasing number

of cities. Since 1620, some cities, districts, and voivodeships had their particular post offices, which were different in terms of organization and ways of funding (in Lviv the post office was private, while in Przemyśl and Leszno they were financed by the city and in Navahrudak by the voivodeship). However, they were subject to the state legal authorities, which guaranteed stable expedition trails and regulated the cost of sending a letter.

During the reign of Wladislaus IV, regular postal connections existed between all cities with more than 4.000 inhabitants. Since 1649, there was a Lithuanian post, founded by Jan Casimir, with its own postmaster subject to the Grand Lithuanian Treasurer. Jan III Sobieski abrogated all privileges exempting cities from the payment of the postal tax and established a new management of the Prussian postal service with the seat in Gdańsk. Despite the competition of the Brandenburg post, it managed to persevere until the Second Partition.

The efficient dispatch of letters beyond the main postal routes could not be guaranteed solely by the state commandments, and the cities, which were impoverished by the 17th–18th century wars, were not able to function as intermediaries in the exchange of correspondence. After all, postal service was very dangerous these days. Organized armed bands roved over the postal routes, robbing postal convoys and stealing horses. In such situation, the central management of correspondence was virtually impossible. However, using the official post was just one way of dispatching correspondence. There was also the magnate post, which was organized thanks to the employment of boyars, Cossacks or Tatars, who were “experienced in adventure” and cooperated with the magnate factories in cities. Also the dependent people – in the Crown mostly peasants, and in Lithuania landed nobles – performed, albeit reluctantly, the postal services. In the cases of emergency, more expensive forms of sending letters were used – with the relay teams and horses placed in the prearranged spots near the public roads. Usually, a mixed form of dispatch was carried out – with the use of messengers, servants, merchants, and travellers heading in a given direction – which was practiced well into the 19th century.

Social communication remained a form of private and local activity until the beginning of the 18th century. Doubtlessly, it increased the freedom of individuals, who, also in this respect, were not subject to the intervention of the state. At the same time, however, it made linguistic and cultural integration more difficult. It hindered the development of a supra-provincial identity as a sense of community or responsibility for the state. The relationship between the functioning of information system – that is, the level of urbanization, the state of the public roads, and the development of commerce – and the shaping of a linguistic and national identity is best envisaged by the example of France. The development of France in the 17th century was similar to that of the Commonwealth, and it was also threatened with disintegration (at least, until the suppression of the *Fronde des nobles* in 1653). However, the authorities put much effort to build the land and water routes linking Paris and other cities, and since 1715 the Department of Roads and Bridges at the Royal Finance Counsel was commissioned to build huge high roads connecting Paris with the provinces. After 1770, the communication system between Paris and large

provincial cities was organized. According to Robert Mandrou, “By building these roads, the monarchy did much more for the language and cultural unity of the nation than the hundreds of years of centralization. [...] The spread of French language can be measured by the density of the high roads with the increasing traffic.”¹⁷⁴

Following the example of France, other countries in Europe modernized their roads. In the Commonwealth, during the reign of Augustus II Wettin, several new postal routes were opened: towards the east – to Riga, Moscow, and Kiev, and towards the west – to Dresden, the capital of Saxony. Adam Friedrich Zürner, a great cartographer, was employed by the king to organize the connection between Warsaw and Dresden, and he was granted the title of the Crown and Saxon Commissioner of Roads. Using a special measuring cart, the so-called *viatorium*, he estimated the time of delivering a letter from Warsaw to Dresden to take about 136 hours. He also calculated the speed of a pedestrian courier to be 0.5 Saxon-postal mile per hour (a Saxon-postal mile was equal to 9.062.08 m). Post stations were also established – they were placed at equal intervals alongside the routes of the state postal service. Postal buildings – the so-called postal palaces – were designed according to a unified architectural model prevailing in the 18th–19th centuries. A post building was a multi-storey building with a high roof, situated parallel to the street and surrounded by a decorative fence. Inside these buildings – apart from the room for dispatching letters and parcels – there were also fully equipped rooms for the post personnel to live in, as well as guest rooms and dining rooms serving regular meals for travellers.

During the times of Stanisław August Poniatowski, the post finally became a truly public institution. In 1764, a royal universal established the office of royal postmasters all over the country. They were obliged to send regular packages of correspondence every week. There was a fixed fee, which varied, depending upon the weight of a letter or parcel. For the domestic consignments, it was prepaid, and for the foreign consignments, it depended upon the distance and was charged both before and after the delivery. The fee established in 1764 was very modern in that it was equal for all regardless of their position or estate. Letters were divided into *in regno* (domestic) and *extra regnum* (foreign), and as the number of consignments increased, they had to be marked with ink seals – which was a prototype of postmarks.

There were 10 trails at the time, including 8 going out from Warsaw. The longest routes reached 90 miles: from Warsaw to Jelgava (Polish: *Mitawa*, German: *Mitau*), from Grodno to Smoleńsk, and the shortest were 10 miles. During the Stanisław August Poniatowski period, the number of consignments rose rapidly, leading to the expansion of the post as an institution. New post buildings were erected: stations and provincial offices. They were subject to the state and exempted from the obligation of providing quartering for the army during peacetime and from requisitions during the war. In the last years of independence, after the First Partition,

174 Robert Mandrou, Georges Duby, *Histoire de la civilisation française, vol. II, XVIIe–XXe siècle*, Paris, 1979, pp. 89–92.

the Crown post kept on functioning. The fees for sending letters increased and new postal routes were opened – to Kamianets-Podilskyi, Bucharest, and Istanbul.

1.5. Censorship of Information

Apart from technical factors, the spreading of information was also limited by preventive and repressive censorship. Censorship was a form of control over creating, spreading, and making use of information (mostly printed). It was carried out by the Church and secular institutions. It involved correcting or erasing of the content considered improper for theological, political or moral (relating to customs) reasons.

The tools of censorship were lists of forbidden texts – initially local and issued by secular authorities (for example, the so-called *placards* against heresy of emperor Charles V, in England during the reign of Henry VIII). In the Catholic Church, censorship was introduced by the papal bulls in the 1480s and in the first decades of the 16th century as a duty (and privilege) of the bishops. The Council of Trent created a consistent system of church censorship, which was subject to the Roman Inquisition and the Sacred Congregation of the Index. The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was published (since 1559) together with the instructions regulating the rules of authorizing the publication of a book (the *imprimatur*) and of controlling print: the prohibition to translate the *Old and New Testament* into national languages without the consent of a bishop and to read the “heretical” books, including concordances and dictionaries. There were also limitations imposed on reading of the Bible and the damnation of books concerning magic and witchcraft. Moreover, the criteria of evaluating the publications that required “editing” were introduced. The combined state and church censorship in Protestant countries was not as institutionalized and centralized as in Catholic countries.

The first act of censorship in Poland was the decree of Sigismund I the Old (1523). However, its extension – and even its wording – has raised various doubts among historians. The first Polish editions of the Roman index were published in 1601, 1603, and 1617. The index contained: the works by Nicolaus Copernicus, including *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (until the 18th century), Desiderius Erasmus, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, Stanisław Sarnicki, Jan Łaski (the Younger), and the Picaresque texts. Other churches and religious communities in the Commonwealth also applied inner censorship.

The royal decrees of the 17th century prohibited the publication of specific prints. The Sejm, as Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa writes, “established laws regarding censorship and the liberty of print only at the end of its existence; in the earlier periods the Sejm court dealt with specific issues.”¹⁷⁵ Prohibited books were burnt (e.g. the anti-Jesuit *Gratis* by Jan Brożek, 1625). However, according to Buchwald-Pelcowa,

175 Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa, *Cenzura w dawnej Polsce. Między prasą drukarską a stosem*, Warszawa 1997, p. 20.

“the descriptions of these events were to some extent mystified, and legends were created about destroying the books, which were actually quite safe.”¹⁷⁶

The attempts of the Crown Tribunal to control the private practice of reading and translating (the trial of Samuel Bolestraszycki, 1627) ended with a failure. In practice, the most severe form of censorship was the censorship of correspondence. Despite the development of the state institution of the post, different forms of private dispatching of letters were maintained (also within the modern cultural formation). The principal reason was that – even though the state postal service was obliged by the authorities to respect the secrecy of correspondence – constant supervision was a common practice “in the name of the reason of state.”

Reading people’s letters – especially those of opposition politicians – was practiced by governments from times immemorial. In early modern Europe, the state control of diplomatic correspondence was practiced in the 17th century by special services of the Reich and Spain, and the magnate oppositionists accused the Vasa kings of following in their footsteps. The diplomatic handbook by Krzysztof Warszawicki, *De legato et legatione* (Cracow 1595), described the ways of classifying correspondence. During the Vasa period, the confiscated political correspondence was a basic piece of evidence during the trials for treason of the oppositionists: Hieronim Radziejowski in 1652 and Stanisław Lubomirski in 1664.

During the Wettin times, the official controller of correspondence was the general director of the state post, Carl Leonard Marschall von Bieberstein. His clerks were very skilled at opening and reading the magnate letters, as well as at preparing their copies, which were sent to the state archive in Dresden. Lac seals, which at that time began to be used for protection, were also forged.

The state supervision over correspondence increased along with the progress in the techniques of communication. The postal ordinance of 1764 stipulated the inviolability of the secret of correspondence and (since 1789) the postmaster vowed (under the threat of being expelled) to return the letters to their recipients with an untouched seal, but there were exceptions from that rule motivated by the need to secure the state’s safety. The breaking of seals was allowed for political purposes, especially in the last years of the existence of the Commonwealth. The tsar’s delegates in Warsaw conducted the so-called perlustration of correspondence (the practice of secretly opening letters in order to extract information) on a large scale and often confiscated letters (even those with the royal seal). The action was coordinated by the ambassador Nikolai Repnin residing in Grodno, who thereby monitored the activities of Polish politicians.

During the Kościuszko Uprising, the Postal Deputation was established, which was supposed to invigilate people suspected of wrongdoing (those who were abroad without permission) and confiscate everything believed to be “harmful for the Nation and the Uprising,” like the correspondence with revolutionary France (the universal from April 4th, 1794). Controlled letters were marked with special stamps.

176 Ibid., p. 16.

The censorship of letters was not a secret and it was meant to prevent harmful correspondence from being sent by the post. However, one may conclude that the advantages of using the public post outweighed the threat of violating the secrecy of correspondence.

2. Languages of Communication

2.1. *Latinitas*

The descriptions of the Commonwealth usually began by depicting the territory, and the confessional divisions were stressed as typical for this state. A lot of space was also devoted to explaining the political system. However, much less was said about the language, which was mostly described in the functional terms. In the northern provinces of the Commonwealth, the Low German was the language of commerce, while in the southern provinces the High German was mostly used. Bilingualism made it possible for all people to communicate – at least on a very basic level in Latin, and since the second half of the 17th century also in French. Apart from that, there were also languages, which could be described as regional, used in different parts of the continent: in Western Europe German, Italian, and Spanish, and in East-Central Europe of the second half of the 17th century – Polish as a tool of international and intercultural communication.

In the 16th and the 17th centuries, Polish was a language that enabled people brought up in the Byzantine tradition to be in touch with Western – Latin culture. Together with neo-Latin – unfairly boiled down to the Latin terms interspersing speech and writing (macaronisms) – it formed *latinitas*, which integrated educated inhabitants of the Commonwealth regardless of their estate or ethnic origins, and which confirmed their affiliation with Europe.

Polish nobility built a state, in which the role of Latin was neither a simple continuation of the humanist tradition, nor a direct effect of the Counter-Reformation of the Church. Polish language appropriated various Latin terms, which were much better to describe the classical political values that became part of the noble ideology. These terms should not be confused with macaronisms that were unchanged Latin words mixed with the vernacular texts. These were used only in functional texts, which were hardly edited – for example, in anonymous political writings.

2.2. Multilingualism

As Henryk Samsonowicz noted: “We will never know how widespread was the use of the Polish language in the Commonwealth’s society, and how many spoke German, Ruthenian, or Lithuanian.”¹⁷⁷ Since the 15th century, the language bond started to

177 Henryk Samsonowicz, *Średniowiecze* in Antoni Mączak, Henryk Samsonowicz, Andrzej Szwarz, Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Od plemion do Rzeczypospolitej. Naród, państwo, terytorium w dziejach Polski*, Warsaw, 1996, pp. 62–63.

have a double character: horizontal (between those who belonged to the political nation) and vertical (between upper and lower strata of the society, in which people expressed not only the particulars but also ideas, values, and abstractions). The inner expansion of the Polish language was visible in cities – especially in the communities of immigrants (Italians, Englishmen, Dutchmen, Armenians) who, just like merchants from Gdańsk and Elbląg, were forced to master their customers' language. Hence, the rapid Polonization – or at least a possibility of communication and knowledge of the local customs – became a fact.

In the Commonwealth, culturally mixed zones were very broad in the 16th–18th centuries: western Great Poland, almost the whole of Royal Prussia (Polish-German and Kashubian regions). According to M. Kromer – who wrote extensively about the Polonization of German settlers in Great Poland, Royal Prussia, Silesia, Spiš, and Ruthenia – both the Germans who became noblemen and the “burghers and peasants whose vast majority became Polish [...] but also the Poles were eager to learn German, as it was very commonly used in the close contacts that they maintained with Germans.”¹⁷⁸ In the Sub-Carpathian region, Polish was mixed with Vlach and Slovenian, and in the eastern parts of the Commonwealth, the Polish-Ruthenian zone encompassed the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Red Ruthenia, and Ukraine.

The victory of Polish language in the Crown's cities such as Cracow or Poznań – where in the 15th century German was still dominant – was a result of a pragmatic decision. German was the language of commerce and law, but it was not used in literature. The Polonization of Livonia was very similar (ordinances from 1582, 1598, and 1607 used German as the official language, but the 1677 constitution sanctioned the use of Polish in order to provide legal standing for the actual state of affairs).

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of the 16th–17th century, the nobility used the Lithuanian and Samogitian languages. The preservation of the Lithuanian language among the peasants was possible thanks to the missionary actions of both Churches competing in the Grand Duchy: the Catholic Church and the Reformed Church, which educated Lithuanian-speaking missionaries and supported the development of Lithuanian writing and print. For example, Mikolajus Duakša, in his preface to the Lithuanian translation of Jakub Wujek's *Postylla katolicka* (*Catholic Postil*), explained this endeavour by invoking the benefit of not only the Catholic Church but also all citizens of the Grand Duchy – as the translation was “a fervent effort to enrich our native language.”¹⁷⁹

A special care for the Lithuanian language was also exhibited by the Academy of Vilnius and the cosmopolitan milieu of the Jesuit order. In fact, Latin, as the official language of the royal instructions, education, and literature was not a competition

178 Marcin Kromer, *Polska czyli o położeniu, ludności, obyczajach, urządach i sprawach publicznych Królestwa Polskiego księgi dwie*, Olsztyn, 1977, p. 49.

179 Quoted after: Sigitas Narbutas, “Litewskie piśmiennictwo,” in: *Kultura Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego – analizy i obrazy*, ed. Vytautas Ališauskas [et al.], trans. P. Bukowiec, B. Kalęba, B. Piasecka, Cracow, 2006, p. 325.

for Lithuanian. On the contrary, the use of Latin at the university and in the Jesuit colleges hampered the spread of the Polish language. At the end of the 16th and in the first half of the 17th centuries, groups of propagators of Lithuanian were formed at the Academy of Vilnius and in Varniany, the centre of the Samogitian diocese.

The Lithuanian Unity was concerned with the knowledge of the Lithuanian language out of pastoral necessity. In the Samogitian, Biržai, and Vilnius districts Lithuanian parishes constituted one third of all congregations. It was on their demand that the synods of 1631–1633 ordered an obligatory catechesis in both Polish and Lithuanian. As a consequence, the following texts were published: *Kniga Nabažnistos* in Kėdainiai in 1653, the reprint of Lithuanian hymnbook in Slutsk in 1654, and, finally, the New Testament in Lithuanian in 1702. The Lithuanian Calvinists of the “political estate” (the nobility) funded the scholarships for the “indigenous Lithuanian” alumni.

The written language had four variants: Old Church Slavonic, Ruthenian (Old Belarusian), Latin, and Polish. In the 16th century in the Grand Duchy the language of books as well as everyday communication was Ruthenian. The ideological struggle between the proponents of Reformation and the Catholic Reform determined the use of Ruthenian as the language of mass propaganda. Szymon Budny, a famous proponent of Unitarianism, was to be the first one to publish in that language the texts of *Katichizis* (*Catechism*, 1561; an adaptation of Luther’s catechism) and *O opravdaniu hriesznaho czelowieka pried Bohom* (*The Justification of a Sinner before God*, 1562) for the “common people” of Nesvizh (his works were commented until the 18th century). He continued his activity in 1573–1583 in a Belarusian town Losk (Polish: *Łosk*), publishing not only his own works but also those of the Crown’s religious reformers, including A. Frycz Modrzewski, who influenced the intellectual circles of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the creators of the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588).

The influence of Latin tradition and the proliferation of texts written in Latin alphabet were so profound, that in the 16th Latin alphabet began to be used alongside with Cyrillic in East Slavic texts. By virtue of the uniqueness of cultural life in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania one person could write in Old Belarusian, Latin, and Polish, and the Latin and Polish script influenced the Belarusian handwriting, which in the 16th century became differentiated from the Cyrillic– used in the Grand Duchy of Moscow.

The evaluation of the usage of Ruthenian language in the 16th–17th century Commonwealth remains ambiguous. Linguists notice the separation of two distinct dialects in the 17th century: Belarusian and Ukrainian. In popular consciousness, there was only one common Ruthenian language, while Old Church Slavonic served a similar function in Orthodox liturgy as Latin in Catholicism. What complicated the matters was the fact that Ruthenian was a part of the cultural identity of the Ruthenians and the official language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. All acts, resolutions, and convocations were written down in Ruthenian (Old Belarusian), which only proves that at least 20 years after the Union of Lublin this language remained the main tool of communication in internal relations – or, at least, this

was its desirable image – as long as the political elites needed to highlight their distinctiveness for political purposes.

Paradoxically enough, at the time of the ratification of the Third Lithuanian Statute – in which the state's offices and lands were guaranteed to the citizens of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the insistence on preserving Ruthenian weakened, which only proves that the population generally exhibited a purely pragmatic attitude towards written word and did not feel any connection between language and ethnic identity. Ruthenian was also the official language of the territories of Kiev Land and Podolia, which distinguished these lands from other Crown's voivodeships and maintained their ties with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Therefore, depending on circumstances, acts of defending Ruthenian language can be perceived as a manifestation of either Ruthenian or Lithuanian ethnic identity.

2.3. Polonization

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the second half of the 17th and in the 18th century, the fruits of Polonization were evident. Most of the cosmopolitan intellectual milieus considered Polish as a universal tool of communication of the nobility in the whole Commonwealth. Ruthenian (Old Belarusian) became gradually influenced by Polish in official documents. Texts written in Lithuanian were mostly published in Prussia.

Along with these changes, until 1650, the Polonization of culture and literature progressed in Ukraine. Catholic schools and convents flourished even behind the Dnieper River. Both sides – the Catholics (Roman and Greek) and the Orthodox Church – acknowledged the cultural superiority of Latin and Polish. The Orthodox Church underwent Latinization and Polonization: even the Orthodox clergy (except for a few ardent proponents of the Old Church Slavonic, e.g. Ivan Vyshenskyi) used Latin and Polish in correspondence and literature. There was very little concern about the popular use of Ukrainian, and Old Church Slavonic was employed exclusively in liturgy.

Ruthenian in its two forms (Old Belarusian and Old Ukrainian) was replaced with Polish in literature. As a spoken language, however, it was commonly used by the peasants and burghers in Belarus, Volhynia, Podolia, and partly in Red Ruthenia and Podlasie. The reasons behind this were the weak ethnic identity of the peasants and the progress of the Union of Brest. There were very few Polish parishes scattered around the vast territories of the country, which is why most of the inhabitants were under the supervision of Greek-Catholic parish priests. This, in turn, contributed to the progress of Ruthenization.

The fact that among the higher strata of the Commonwealth Polish (apart from Latin) was the most commonly used language did not mean a universal Polonization: the usage of Polish out of pragmatic motivations did not mean that it was treated as the native language. On the contrary, it was treated as one of many languages (for example, by the burghers of Royal Prussia or Wrocław). The choice of language did not imply the appropriation of Polish customs, let alone the identification with Polish historical tradition (for example, by the Lithuanian nobility).

Language divisions were strong insofar as they were linked to religious and legal differences. That is why Polish – as the language of the privileged groups and a sign of prestige – became increasingly significant and indispensable for the active participation in the sejmns. Historical demographers and linguists estimated that the influence of Polish was directly proportional to the growth of the state’s power. However, in spite of the opinion of older historiography, the linguistic Polonization was not a result of migration (e. g. the influx of people from Podlasie and Masovia to Lithuania), but it was a result of the political and religious expansion (of Protestantism in the 16th century, and of Catholicism in the next two centuries), and of the influx of prints from Little Poland. The Masovian influence on the language of the Vilnius Poles is not questionable, but it was presumably later than the influence of Little Poland, which affected petty nobility and burghers.

The dominant role of Polish as the language of social communication in the Commonwealth of the 16th–17th centuries stemmed from the fact that it was used by the nobility, officials, and clergy. Therefore, one may contend that it was, although informally, the official language of the Crown. In fact, during the 17th century it superseded the Ruthenian language in the offices and acts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The *lauda* (sing. *laudum*), instructions, attestations etc. were written down in Polish since the last quarter of the 16th century, and the Cyrillic was replaced with the Latin alphabet in the signatures on the documents of the sejmiks. The noblemen who did not know the Latin alphabet could manage in the sejmik sessions and local gatherings, but they were completely excluded from the political life of the Sejmns. 25 years after the composition of the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588) its Polish translation appeared, and the use of Ruthenian was gradually limited to the preambles of documents, and finally in 1697, as a part of the so-called *coequatio iurium*, a decision was made to “have all decrees issued in Polish.”¹⁸⁰

A factor determining political career was not only the ability to speak Polish (or, more precisely, Polish-Latin) well but also the rhetorical skills acquired in the education in the Jesuit colleges and subsequently used during the sessions of the Sejm and sejmiks. This must have contributed to the consolidation of spoken Polish and to the development of persuasive functions of this language. Also church sermons stimulated the popularization of Polish language during the Counter-Reformation.

The most significant feature of the expansion of Polish language in the 16th–17th centuries – a feature that constituted the proof of social and political uniqueness of the Commonwealth – was the lack of any administrative constraint in the popularization of Polish. In the British Isles in 1366–1613 there was an edict forbidding the use of Irish by English nobility was in force. In France, French was the language of administration and secular courts since 1539. In the Commonwealth, such a compulsory regulation was unthinkable both in the Crown and Lithuania. Such a

180 *Coequatio Iurium Stanów Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego z Koroną Polską* in VL, vol. V, p. 418.

decree would have had no chances of being implemented, even if in the 16th century there were many concerns about the “fate of the mother tongue.”

2.4. The Development of the Polish Literary Language

Polish of the 16th–17th centuries had many regional variants; it functioned without a stable linguistic norm even on the level of literature. In the first half of the 17th century, the socially acclaimed standard of spoken and written Polish was the manner in which educated people spoke, which differed from the speech of “simple” people. There were also other differences that depended on social background (the language of rogues, soldiers, gamblers, students etc.). There was no theoretical reflection over the Polish language at the time (with the exception of Stanisław Zaborowski, who published his *Orthographia* in Cracow in 1513), and there were no institutions, or editing houses, which would formulate it. The Polish linguistic system was described by the foreigners, whose motivations were mostly pragmatic, as there was a need for a synthetic and systematic study of grammar in a handbook of Polish language for the representatives of other nations learning Polish. The need to speak Polish stemmed from the commercial contacts of Prussian and Silesian cities with the nobility and with the German-speaking settlers from Germany and Silesia. They could not be subject to compulsory Polonization, since (according to B. Groicki) to speak to people in a language they did not understand would be:

Nothing else but to throw words into the wind, and to make a fool of oneself.¹⁸¹

Almost all grammar handbooks of Polish, multilingual dictionaries, as well as spelling and conversation handbooks from the 17th–18th centuries (written mostly in German and Latin) were created in Pomerania and Silesia. In the 17th century there were 47 positions of this sort, written mostly by Germans – teachers of the Polish language (Nicolaus Volckmar in Gdańsk, Maciej Gutthäter-Dobracki in Wrocław); François à Mesgnien Meninski, a Frenchman, was an exception – after having spent two years in Poland, he wrote one of the best handbooks of Polish grammar (*Grammatica seu Institutio Polonicae linguae*, Gdańsk 1649). Jan Karol Woyna (connected with the Gdańsk gymnasium) – was the first Polish author of a Polish grammar handbook in Latin *Compendiosa Linguae Polonicae Institutio* (Gdańsk 1690).

2.5. The Enlightenment Tendencies of Unification

The Enlightenment brought about a radical change in the issues of unification, culture and customs. In this period, all European countries attempted to increase the legitimization of the national languages and literary discourse by limiting the dialects and languages of ethnic minorities – e. g. Joseph II declared German to be

181 Quote after: Karol Koranyi, introduction to: Bartłomiej Groicki, *Porządek sądów i spraw miejskich prawa magdeburskiego w Koronie Polskiej*, prep. K. Koranyi, Warsaw, 1953, p. V.

the official language of Austria, expecting that it would cluster different national groups into one unified entity. The linguistic unification in public-legal issues was supposed to unify the state and strengthen its safety, improve its judiciary and education systems, and foster the popularization of new ideas.

In this respect the proponents of Polish Enlightenment came close to the French revolutionists of 1789, for whom being a patriot meant speaking French perceived as the language of the republic and liberty. Tadeusz Kościuszko shared these convictions. He believed that the pacification of the Ruthenians was impossible without Polonization:

We should make them [the Ruthenians] adjust to the Polish language; all their services should be conducted in Polish. With the passage of time, they would be infused with the Polish spirit.¹⁸²

Hugo Kołłątaj had similar ideas and juxtaposed the nobility speaking “the same native language” all over the country with the peasant inhabitants of the eastern parts of the Commonwealth, who “spoke Ruthenian.” He blamed the Orthodox clergy, which he believed to spread the resistance towards the government along with the different language and religion. However, he also had his grudges against the Catholic clergy, as they taught the basics of the religion in Lithuanian, thereby isolating the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the state government. He saw the key to internal and external safety in the assimilation of the people living in the eastern lands of the Commonwealth. In his opinion:

The government should diminish these differences in speech: the multiple dialects should more and more resemble one another and the non-Slavic languages should be eradicated. The least it can do is to create a situation, in which everyone speaks Polish out of pure need, in order to express their connection with the government, even those who remain loyal to their previous languages out of an addiction or prejudice.¹⁸³

That is why he insisted on introducing a monopoly of the Polish language as the official language of the judiciary and education systems. Such an approach stemmed from the unification tendencies of the Polish Enlightenment, but also from a different understanding of the nation – opposed to the Sarmatian idea of political nation of noblemen, and encompassing also the burghers and peasants. The latter – according to the Constitution of May 3 were the most numerous social groups. That is why there was a tendency to Polonize all social milieus: the sense of belonging to the political nation was supposed to overlap with the choice of Polish nationality.

Curiously enough, the assimilation of German inhabitants of Royal Prussia was not postulated, perhaps because they were politically strong and loyal to the au-

182 Quoted after: J. Tazbir, “Procesy polonizacyjne w szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej,” in: *Kultura i społeczeństwo*, XXXI, no. 1, 1987, pp. 29–47.

183 Hugo Kołłątaj, *Stan oświecenia w Polsce w ostatnich latach panowania Augusta III (1750–1764)*, preface by H. Mościcki, Warsaw, 1905, p. 25.

thorities of the Commonwealth. The bilingualism in Prussia was widely accepted, while at the same time there was a desire to liquidate the Ruthenian-Polish and Jewish-Polish bilingualism. As the memory of the Ukrainian rebellions was still vivid, but there was no fear that the inhabitants of Prussia would wish to separate their small fatherland from the Commonwealth. The issues of ethnic differences were so insignificant that they were not even taken into account in the consideration of the reasons behind the subsequent Partitions of the Commonwealth. In their declarations, the representatives of the partitioning powers asked about their disadvantaged fellow believers, but the multicultural character of the Crown and Lithuania was never considered. It was only after the January Uprising (1863–1864) that Russian historians started paying attention to that issue.

3. Literacy and Alphabetization

The level of literacy among the nobility in the Commonwealth was very low in the second half of the 16th century. At the same time, there were reasons to anticipate the growing civilizational disproportions between the Commonwealth and the West (especially western Protestant countries) in the next centuries, resulting from the opposition between the culture of the living word and gesture and the culture of print and writing. It turned out to be a result of civilizational differences measured by the level of urbanization and the development of print and education.

It is estimated that in France at the end of the 16th century there were 90 % literate people among burghers and merchants, 65 % among craftsmen, 10–30 % among peasants. In the 17th century, Protestant Europe had 55–65 % illiterate people, and Catholic Europe – 70–80 %. In comparison, in the second half of the 16th century (according to Waclaw Urban) 2.000 people could write in the territories of western Little Poland: 89 % of the nobility, 30 % of the magnates, 14 % of women, 80 % of the Cracow patricians, 60 % of the urban populace, and 1.8 % of the plebs; the peasants were almost completely illiterate. Contrary to the West, the level of literacy in Little Poland deteriorated with time, and it is estimated (basing on the Lviv contracts) that at the end of the 17th century 28 % of the rich nobility and magnates were illiterate, and in Red Ruthenia in 1768–1775 a major decline in literacy was noted: 30 % of nobility were literate, the rest of the *nobiles* would sign with a cross, whereas among the burghers illiteracy was exceptional. There is no data regarding the alphabetization of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the level of readership among the nobles of Vilnius is estimated at 30 % and among burghers at 50 %. All of these numbers are not very credible, but it is a fact that the levels of literacy were different in different parts of the Commonwealth and the general estimation might be even more pessimistic.

3.1. Printing Houses and Readership

The invention of print had a revolutionary significance for social communication: it provided the scholars with books, and the populace with leaflets. The culture of

print also influenced, albeit indirectly, the spoken language in the issues of standardization and the development of norms (grammar, style, and vocabulary) of the literary language.

In the Crown, Cracow played the most significant role in the development of printing houses (ca. 1580 – 8 print houses, first half of the 17th century – 19) and other Little Poland centres. Warsaw became the centre of the printed word in the second half of the 17th century. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania such a centre (especially for Cyrillic prints) was Vilnius. Renowned printers worked all over the Commonwealth and popularized this form of communication. During the reign of Stephen Bathory, there was the so-called “flying printing house” of the royal editor Marcin Scharffenberg. As typography was a relatively cheap technique, which made it possible to gain profit even in low capital investments, rich burghers owned huge printing houses. Besides, there were also small companies and travelling typographers, who printed popular literature, ephemeral prints, and calendars.

Printing houses were divided into a few categories: burgher, Protestant, belonging to religious orders, and private. In terms of the first category, the most significant were Vilnius (since the 16th century), Lublin, and Kalisz (since the 17th century) printing houses. Otherwise, the fate of printing and publishing was determined by the functioning of secular and/or church schools as well as the general economic and cultural conditions.

Urban printing houses were particularly active in the first half of the 17th century, after the Deluge their activity was greatly limited. Protestant printing houses, mainly in the western and northern parts of the Crown, not only published materials for schools and churches but also served as the city printing houses. Most of them were connected with Lutheranism (in Gdańsk, Königsberg, Toruń, Elbląg, Wrocław, Legnica, Oleśnica, Brzeg, Leszno), and in the first half of the 17th century there was a Unitarian printing house in Raków and a Bohemian Brethren printing house in Leszno.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania there were many private printing houses sponsored by the Protestants. 8 out of 15 printing houses belonged to the Reformed communities: the most important ones in Nesvizh (1562), Zaslawye (Polish: *Zasław*) (1570), Losk (1570–1580), and Vilnius.

The first books in Polish were printed in the Protestant printing houses. The most famous one was located in Brest in Belarus, created by Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black, where the *Brześć Bible* (or the *Radziwiłł Bible*) was published in 1563 together with other books (40 titles in Polish).

The first print in Lithuanian was *Catechism* by Martynas Mažvydas, written and printed in Königsberg, the capital of the Duchy of Prussia, on the initiative of the Protestant immigrants from Lithuania. The author’s preface and his defence of the native language had a large cultural significance, even though it did not foster the mass production of books. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the number of Lithuanian publications was small. In Königsberg the following texts were published: 16 books and 4 decrees of Duke Albrecht Hohenzollern, in 1591 the *Lutheran Postil* by Jonas Bretkunas, in the 1590s the two Catholic texts by Mikalojus Daukša: *Catechism* from

1595 (the first book in Lithuanian in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, translated from Spanish by a Jesuit Diego de Ledesma) and *Catholic Postil* from 1599 (the translation of *Postylla Catholica* by a Polish Jesuit J. Wujek), as well as two Protestant texts: catechism of Melchior Pietkiewicz (1598) and *Postil* by Jakub Merkun (1600).

The Cyrillic prints in Belarusian were first published by Francysk Skaryna (ca. 1490 – ca. 1552) – an editor and physician (since 1535 at the court of Ferdinand I in Prague), whose confession is still unclear. In 1512–1519 he published the Bible in Prague in his own translation into Ruthenian (Old Belarusian). Later he also published several religious texts in Belarusian in Vilnius (*Małaja podorożnaja kniżica*, [*The Little Travel Book*] 1522; *Apostol (The Disciple)*, and *Psalter* in Old Church Slavonic (1525). His activity was continued by the printing house belonging to the Mamonic brothers, which existed for about 50 years and since 1596 published only in the Cyrillic and for three times (in 1576, 1586, 1593) the Grand Dukes granted them privileges to print religious and secular literature including the Third Lithuanian Statute in 1588. In the 17th century the Cyrillic editions were supplanted by Polish prints.

A small Unitarian printing house in Ciaplin near Leplo had a unique character. It was established in the 1570s by a petty nobleman, Vasily Ciapliński, who was the first one to publish the Bible in a bilingual version: “Slavic” (Old Church Slavonic) and “Ruthenian” or “simple” (Old Belarusian).

The printing houses established in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the mid-16th and the first half of the 17th centuries published 46 % of books in Polish, 38 % in Latin, 10 % in Ruthenian (in the Cyrillic), and only 0.2 % in Lithuanian (39 titles). The Bible in Polish, Belarusian, and Lithuanian translations was the most popular book, followed by a collection of legal and history books as well as confessional polemics in Polish.

The change in the political and confessional situation in the second half of the 17th and in the 18th centuries promoted the printing houses belonging to the religious orders, initially established mainly for the Counter-Reformation and Catholic Reform activity, producing devotional prints, panegyrics, and schoolbooks. In the Crown, Jesuit printing houses existed in Braniewo, Vilnius, Kalisz, Lviv, Lublin and Poznań, the Cistercians had their printing shop in Oliwa, and the Order of St. Paul the First Hermit in Częstochowa. In 1683, the first Piarist publishing house was established in Warsaw. It also served as the official printing house and contributed to the massive rise of Warsaw’s importance in terms of print at the end of the 17th century. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the main publishing house was the Jesuit printing house at the Academy of Vilnius. Private printing houses, which produced mainly for narrow circles of private customers, did not play a significant role in the business and their activity usually did not exceed the limits of small local markets.

Orthodox printing houses were active in Ukraine: in Kiev, Lviv (two in the first half of the 17th century), and Mogilev. After the Cossack wars, there were new printing houses established in Kiev Pechersk Lavra, Kiev, and Novhorod-Siverskyi, and since 1678 in Chernihiv. In the 18th century, printing houses of the Basilians were an important element of education, mainly in Uneiv, Lviv, and Pochaiv. More than

60 % were the liturgical books and religious literature: the collections of sermons, prayers, and religious songs.

In the second half of the 17th century, there was a crisis of secular (burgher) printing in the whole Commonwealth apart from Cracow and Silesia. The Deluge and its resulting economic crisis, the liquidation of a significant number of burgher printing houses and their taking over by the convents, as well as the intensification of censorship had caused a situation in which at least half of the printing houses disappeared (from 143 to 69), and the technical level and content quality of printed texts deteriorated. As printing activity was subjected to mercantile conditions, there was an increase in the number of published astrological forecasts, devotional texts, and especially calendars, which were the most popular readings in the Commonwealth in the 18th century, influencing the life attitudes and customs of the readers (e. g. the belief in magic).

At the same time, however, the number of private commissions increased, and the market was therefore flooded with panegyrics, which constituted more than 30 % of the whole production. After 1700 the number of typographic workshops in the Crown decreased to 12 (including 2, which worked nearby the academies in Cracow and Zamość).

The renaissance of print took place with the advent of the Enlightenment and the opening of a printing house in Warsaw in 1756 by Lorenz Christoph Mizler von Kolof. After the cassation of the Jesuit order, they their printing shops were taken over by the Commission of National Education and academies. During the Enlightenment there were three state printing houses in Warsaw, belonging mostly to burghers (Michael Gröll and Piotr Dufour) and magnates (Tadeusz Mostowski, Jan Potocki). In general, in the 1770s, there were 22 printing houses in the Crown (15 in Pomerania, and 12 in eastern Little Poland).

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the rector of Piarist college in Vilnius, Maciej Dogiel founded a printing house in 1754, which before long began to compete with the old printing shop of the Academy of Vilnius. In the Stanisław August Poniatowski period, according to Polish historians, there were 7 printing houses in Lithuania.

The production of printing houses in the Commonwealth in the second half of the 16th century reached 2.500 prints (ca. 43.000 editorial sheets); in the first half of the 17th century it reached 5.500 prints, half of which was produced in Cracow. Printing business was strictly connected with bookselling, and the printers imported books from different places, also from abroad. Since the beginning of the 16th century, the main book fair in Europe was based in Frankfurt am Main.

The development of print in the Commonwealth was never sufficient in relation to the demand: for 100.000 inhabitants of the Crown in 1578, only 3.1 titles were printed; in 1662 – 7.8 titles, and in 1791 – 17.8 titles. In the last decade of the existence of the Commonwealth, a rapid increase was noted – there were on average 765 books for the 100.000 inhabitants in 1786–1790 (up to 1.086 in the last year). The next time readership rose to that extent was in 1840–1841.

3.2. The Circulation of Manuscripts

When evaluating the role of print in the early modern period, one has to remember that this form of communication was never isolated. Firstly, because manuscript books were still in circulation, and short texts (official, journalistic, literary, novelties) were hand copied on a mass scale and functioned both in their printed and handwritten version. Secondly, because some printed texts were specially meant (by the choice of font or the use of additional sign systems) for reading out loud or singing. The manuscript circulation compensated the scarcity of publishing venues, and the second half of the 17th century and the mid-18th century are often described as the age of manuscripts.

The main reason of the underdevelopment of printing and the simultaneous rise of manuscript production was the weak urbanization of the country and the deglomeration (or dispersion) of cultural centres, resulting in their provincialization. Many literary works (including works by Zbigniew Morsztyn, Waclaw Potocki, Daniel Naborowski), journalistic texts, ephemeral newspapers, literary and quasi-literary pieces, were widespread by virtue of their manuscript copies, often modified and reshaped by the copyists. The manuscript libraries were created, containing mostly miscellanea and the copies of particular pieces or whole groups of works (selected by author, theme or randomly segregated). Many handwritten books were designed so as to resemble print. In the family circuit, there were also collections of letters, documents, speeches, news, stories, anecdotes, and proverbs – all combined in books, called the *silvae rerum* – which became a very significant element of Sarmatian culture. The general crisis of the Commonwealth in the 17th–18th centuries influenced the limitation of print publishing, but it did not diminish significantly the circulation of written word, or the readership in the noble milieus.

Correspondence was another factor in social communication and cultural integration. The exchange of letters played a very significant role in the 16th–18th centuries, as never before and never afterwards. In Western Europe, the collections of letters written by famous scholars (Desiderius Erasmus, Justus Lipsius, Erycius Puteanus) to their students were published in many volumes. A poetic letter written to a fictional or real recipient became a separate literary genre in France in the Baroque and Classicism periods. Private correspondence reached the highest peak of artistry in France, including letters written by women (Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, marquise de Sévigné, Jeanne Julie Éléonore de Lespinasse). By virtue of the art of letter writing, French supplanted Latin as the international language of elite communication in the 17th–19th centuries.

In the multiethnic and multilingual Polish-Lithuanian state, a great evidence of the integrating function of letter writing were the handbooks of Marcin Gut-thäter-Dobrcki, a Polish teacher in the city gymnasium in Wrocław: *Wydworny polityk* (*A Courtly Politician*, Oleśnica 1664) and *Kancelarya polityczna* (*Political Chancellery*, Gdańsk 1665), published together in 1690 under the title *Polityka polska w konwersacyjej i korespondencyjej z ludźmi* (*Polish Politics in Conversations and Correspondence with the People*). Given the fact that the word *politics* meant also

politeness at the time, and *politician* was the synonym for the cultured person, the Baroque titles of the books devoted to letter writing illustrate their educational role: Jakub Boczyłowic, *Wymowny polityk (An Eloquent Politician, Toruń 1694)* and *Orator politicus, Toruń 1699*; Wojciech Bystrzonowski SJ, *Polak sensat w liście, w komplementach polityk, humanista w dyskursie, w mowie statysta, na przykład dany młodzi (Pole: a Wiseacre in Letters, a Politician in Complements, a Humanist in Discourse, and a Statesman in Speech, on the Example of the Youth, Lublin 1730)*, which had 11 editions in 9 years; Jerzy Szlag, *Korespondencja polsko-niemiecka (The Polish-German Correspondence, Wrocław 1741)*. All of these titles show the popularity of Polish language in Silesia and Royal Prussia at the time when French was the most fashionable language.

Writing about state news in private letters was a seed for the emergence of press in the Commonwealth and other early modern European countries. In the 17th century there were handwritten and copied *avvisi* and handwritten newspapers, which were very popular due to the scarcity of printed newspapers. The most popular newspapers of that sort were edited by Jakub Kazimierz Rubinkowski – who was a nobleman, postmaster, member of the city council in Toruń, and the secretary of King Jan III Sobieski.

The subject matter of handwritten newspapers was very wide. In commercial news, a huge part was devoted to harvest, transport, natural disasters, and political events, which could affect prices, bank operations, and business-conduct practices. It was the same in all European commercial metropolises, from Venice to Nuremberg and Gdańsk. Some of the large houses of commerce (e. g. the Fugger company) organized a network of correspondence, which supplied necessary information to the central office in Augsburg, where it was processed and transmitted not only to rich merchants but also to princely courts.

In other types of newspapers military, political, and religious themes were dominant together with the descriptions of newly discovered lands and extraordinary events seen on the sky and interpreted mostly in astrological terms, or human and animal monstrosities, which were perceived in the spirit of Baroque religiosity as the signs foretelling future events or revealing God's will. All of these types of information had their recipients in the wide social circles of the Commonwealth – from the elites to the commoners.

Despite the similarities in the development of correspondence and techniques of dispatching mail, the range of correspondence was different in the Commonwealth and in Western Europe. In the West, letters became an element of everyday life in the 17th and the 18th centuries, especially in the countries with a high level of education and urbanization. In Dutch painting of the 17th century (e. g. Johannes Vermeer) there was a motif of a woman reading a letter as a symbol of all those who impatiently awaited news – not only from the commercial routes or battlefields but also from journeys, undertaken for pleasure. According to Janusz Drob, in the second half of the 17th century, correspondence was a form of social communication, which dominated in the areas without strong central government, where authorities were dispersed and hence were lacking a proper official representation. In the countries,

where the state structure was crystallized and dominant over local organizations, it was more popular to spread news publicly through printed newspapers.

3.3. The Press

Ephemeral newspapers were the seed of press in general. It is estimated that in the German-speaking area, 8,000–10,000 ephemeral newspapers were printed, from which ca. 50 % have been preserved to our times. Their layout depended on their social function. They often had catchy titles with words like “horrible,” “dreadful,” “miraculous,” and were illustrated with colourful woodcuts and printed in a large font in order to encourage readership. In terms of their literary form, they were usually real letters or their imitations, different types of reports written in prose or verse, and songs. Their circulation in the 16th century varied from a few hundred up to a few thousand. As these prints were often copied or renewed, one may draw a conclusion that they were very popular, but also that the editors were cautious and unwilling to risk producing high-circulation papers, especially considering the fact that the competition could steal their more interesting texts and issue pirated editions. These ephemeral newspapers were the prototype for a new form of literature.

In the 17th century press underwent incredibly dynamic development – from the circumstantial messages to the collections of messages and reports sent by the city post (hence the *Daily Post*) to the newspapers, which were issued with regular frequency. The prototype of the newspaper appeared in Köln in 1583 and it was issued every six months. The next periodicals appeared in the first 30 years of the 17th century, due to the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War and the necessity of news reporting: initially in the German states, then in the Netherlands after 1616, in the British Isles since 1625 (*Mercurius Britannicus*), in France since 1631 (*La Gazette* in Paris). In 1666 in Leipzig the first daily paper appeared.

In the Commonwealth, press was preceded by calendars, along with handbooks of household economy and first encyclopaedic editions: e. g. *Oekonomika ziemiańska generalna* (*General Manorial Economics*) by Jakub Kazimierz Haur (1675 and further editions). The first printed magazine was *Merkuriusz Polski Ordynaryjny* published in 1661 in Cracow, and then in Warsaw; in 1718–1720 a Polish editor Jan Dawid Cenquier published *Poczta Królewiecka* (*Königsberg Post*), since 1730 *Kurier Polski* (*Polish Courier*) appeared in Warsaw, in 1765–1785 *Monitor* edited by Franciszek Bohomolec, Ignacy Krasicki, and Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski under the royal patronage (preceded by *Monitor* from 1763 edited by Lorenz Christoph Mizler von Kolof).

Another type of press was a scientific journal, which was strictly connected with the development of science – based on experimental knowledge and teamwork sponsored by the state. The first scientific institution was the Royal Society – created in 1660 in London as a private initiative, and since 1662 remaining under the patronage of King Charles II. Similar institutions were created in France – the Académie française in 1635 (under the patronage of Louis XIII), the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres in 1663, the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture in 1648,

and the Académie des sciences in 1666 (all under the patronage of Louis XIV) – and subsequently in Germany.

Special erudite periodicals and German compendia were the repository of source material for Polish scientific press. Besides that, in larger cities there were German newspapers with moral and cultural focus, which were the main sources of the knowledge on the Commonwealth, its history and culture for foreign readers. In the Wettin times, cities of Royal Prussia were the leaders in this type of press: Gdańsk (*Polnische Bibliothek* of Gottfried Lengnich in 1718–1719) and Toruń (*Das Gelehrte Preussen* of Georg Peter Schultz in 1722–1725). In the Stanisław August Poniatowski period, *Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny* (*A Journal of History and Politics*) was the best of ephemeral papers, and the only one with national scope, which was published by an ex-Jesuit Piotr Świtkowski. In 1770–1777 *Zabawy Przyjemne i Pożyteczne* (*Joys both Pleasant and Useful*) was issued with the purpose of popularizing knowledge. All of these forms of scholarly press, despite their modern form, continued the tradition of the 17th-century encyclopaedias, calendars, and serial editions, which were to satisfy a sense of curiosity and provide basic knowledge, but also indoctrinate and educate the readers.

4. Education

4.1. Education of Girls

In the Commonwealth, mothers were responsible for the upbringing and education of children of both sexes until the age of 7. Thus, it is worth pondering whether they were prepared for this task. Apart from urban milieus of Royal Prussia, girls remained for their whole life in the close family circle, so until the end of the 18th century, they had no chances to receive secular education. There were exceptions of Catholic schools, which were founded especially for secular girls – like the school of the Presentation sisters founded in Cracow in 1621 by Zofia Maciejowska-Czeska. Apart from the home education, which prepared girls to be wives and mothers, female education could proceed in two ways – either through a convent or through a court.

During the Baroque period, almost all non-enclosed female orders educated girls. The Visitationist nuns specialized in it – they were brought to Poland by Queen Marie Louise Gonzaga and the Ursuline sisters, who were famous for their educational activity not only in Catholic countries but also in England. The convent schools mostly taught “female work” (embroidering and sewing), the basics of faith, writing, counting, and especially chastity and obedience (at the Visitationist nuns’ schools also French was taught). The students should have been between the ages of 7 to 16. In practice, however, the schools educated girls from infancy to the age of 24. Convent education for secular girls was impeded by the Council of Trent, which made all convents subject to male authority (bishops and abbots of the corresponding male orders), forcing enclosure. The Carmelites, who were subject to

strict enclosure were very popular. It is estimated that in the 18th century there were ca. 3.000 pupils in Catholic convent schools.

The daughters of magnates and rich nobles were brought up by nurses, and their early education was guided their mothers and private teachers. As the educational instructions formulated by the magnates for female courts show, their education did not differ much from the education of patrician daughters from Gdańsk and Dutch families. Apart from the female savants at the court of Marie Louise Gonzaga and the very narrow milieu of the Bohemian Brethren, there were very few educated women in the Commonwealth (increasingly numerous in the 17th-century West). Women who were interested in activities beyond the realm of family life – like politics (conducted from behind the scenes or through their husbands) – were subject to mockery and were derisively depicted in various pasquils.

4.2. The Confessional Character of Educational System

During the Renaissance, the vast majority of humanists (including Desiderius Erasmus in the West and A. Frycz Modrzewski in the Commonwealth) supported the concept of school as an educational and preparatory tool for entering social life. It was supposed to be a public institution, since any other facility did not deserve to be called *school* (according *De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis* by Erasmus, 1529), universal on the elementary level (available to all children, regardless of their social background or sex) and with a unified curriculum. All great reformers shared the humanist ideal of educating children for the benefit of the society. Martin Luther suggested that in all urban and rural communities there should be schools for boys and girls (even for the children of peasants and craftsmen, who were to learn religion and morality every day for two hours).

The basis of the Renaissance reform of education was the creation of high school (academic gymnasium) in all European countries. Philip Melanchthon, a Lutheran theologian and educationalist, started implementing the reform in 1518 at the Wittenberg University, but it was Calvinist Johannes Sturm, who had greatest achievements in this matter. He was the founder and president of the gymnasium in Strasbourg (1538), which was granted the status of academy in 1566 (first with 5 classes, and then with 10 classes). The educational class-lesson system introduced by Sturm, in which the students analysed original Greek and Latin literature, was an example to follow for the whole 16th-century Europe.

The program of the new school contained the old *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectics), which was separated in school years and taught with new methods. There were two currents of teaching within the general reformist tendency: the philological-literary current (Desiderius Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives, in the Commonwealth Szymon Marycjusz of Pilzno) – propagating the study of ancient literature (the *Distichs* of Cato, the comedies of Terence and Plautus, the speeches of Cicero, and the poetry of Vergil and Ovid) – and the religious-moral current (J. Sturm), which emphasized Latin and rhetoric courses as the means of preparation for public life.

The second type prevailed in the 16th–17th century Protestant and Catholic schools. Both the Reformation and Catholic ideologists agreed that school should be the basic tool of formation of the youth. The Renaissance idea of public school creating equal opportunity for everyone was finally rejected not only in Poland (with its model of private schooling for the privileged groups of rich nobility and magnates) but also in the whole Europe. This led to a situation whereby only the richest gained access to education and the rest of the youth could receive merely basic education (and hence had to make do with popular culture).

5. Catholic Education

5.1. Parish Schooling

During the Reformation and the weakening of the parish structure of the Catholic church, parish schools were immersed in general crisis due to the lack of educated teachers. After the Council of Trent, parishes were strengthened and elementary schools were developed, which were probably equal in number to those in Western Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is estimated that in the first half of the 17th century 90 % of parishes in Little Poland had schools. The oldest parish schools in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (functioning in several dozen Lithuanian and Belarusian towns) are mentioned in the sources from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. The languages, in which they taught, were: Polish, Ruthenian (Old Belarusian), Lithuanian, and Latin.

Along with the rise of the number of parish schools, the level of education provided in them decreased. It was a result of the economic crisis at the beginning of the 17th century, when the graduates of the Academy of Cracow, who because of wretched conditions of their work, were forced to leave their work only to become wandering *klechy*. The impoverishment of peasants and the stratification within the noble estate also caused hindrances in the education of peasant and petty nobility children. The decline of the parish educational system was deepened in the second half of the 17th century as a result of the wartime destructions and the decrease of the bishops' interest in the diocesan issues.

Basing on new research it is estimated that in the mid-18th century, schools existed in 40 % of parishes in the Commonwealth, and before the First Partition – in every second parish (mainly in the Crown). It means that there could be ca. 10 times more parish schools than it was estimated in older historiography (Stanisław Kot), but still half as much as in the neighbouring countries (in Germany in the mid-18th century, in the Köln diocese and in south Austria, there were up to 98 % parishes with schools, and in Slovene Lands – 60 %). Polish parish schools had very low attendance rates and poorly educated teachers, of whom 85 % were clergymen and church servants: cantors, organists, sacristians, and only 5.4 % professional teachers.

5.2. The Role of Religious Orders in Education – Colleges

The basic institutions of education provided by religious orders in the Commonwealth of the 16th–18th centuries were colleges, created mostly by the Jesuits on the whole territory of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The term *college* (*collegium*) designates a religious house, in which most of the monks were employed as teachers. The boarding schools, which were created in the vicinity of the colleges, had the form of monastery schools, *bursae* (dormitories) for the poor or noble colleges.

The first Jesuit school in Braniewo (1565) was an exemplary humanist school, in which the ideal of “erudite and eloquent piety” was achieved through learning Latin and Greek grammar, as well as poetics and rhetoric. Initially, the Jesuits did not create the *bursae* for the noble youth, as they feared that the distance between the teachers and students might vanish. However, the typically Jesuit institutions were soon created in the vicinity of the colleges: sodalities, which were very significant in shaping the mentality of the college graduates. These assemblies had their special names, chapels, rituals, pilgrimages, customs, and charitable activities. Candidates for joining the order were often recruited from their ranks. Another form of recruiting new clientele for the Jesuits were *bursae* for poor youth, which were created in the end of the 16th century in all Polish and Lithuanians colleges. In the 17th century these *bursae* were turned into musical schools, which educated 5–10 students learning music and singing, while other subjects were taught at the college. These students belonged to musical bands, which were hired for public and private ceremonies.

Education in the Jesuit colleges was theoretically free and public (available to all students according to a unified program), but, in practice, the pupils were divided into two groups: full students (the sons of rich nobility) and servants, who had many duties (for example, lighting the furnaces) and other heavy tasks, and therefore participated in classes only in their free time. There was a very complex system of competition (the institution of the “dunce’s bench,” the practice giving honorary titles, like “dictator,” “imperator,” to the best students). The order was kept by the so-called censors – the chosen students who were supposed to report their diligent classmates to the teachers. Teachers’ duties were to supervise students, assign homework, and conduct exams, while the education proper consisted mostly in self-teaching.

Until 1599, the Jesuit education lacked a unified system of education; each college had different school instructions. In 1584 in Rome, on the initiative of the general of the Jesuits, Claudio Aquaviva, six best Jesuit pedagogues decided to work out the school curriculum, which they subsequently (1586) sent to all provinces of the order, with a request for comments from the teachers. After several revisions the *Ratio studiorum* was implemented across the world (1599) without taking all the critical comments into account (e.g. Polish arguments to extend the lectures on the Bible and the objection to limiting of the teaching of doctrine to the works of Aquinas). The short and clear regulations regarding the curriculum, time schedule, professors and handbooks, as well as the excellent school organization with a strong

base of professional teachers gave rise to the impressive development of the Jesuit educational system.

The Jesuits exercised great influence upon Podolia, Volhynia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Prussia, as their colleges were, from the very beginning, of missionary character: they conducted missionary activity among the Protestant and Orthodox youth, and especially among the nobles, whose winning over for Catholicism would mean re-Catholicization of their subjects (through confessional constraint). The noble youth was drawn to the Jesuit colleges by their cheapness and availability on the one hand, and on the other by the usefulness of this kind of education in political and social life. That is why the number of nobles in Jesuit schools (apart from Royal Prussia and Warmia) increased systematically.

Apart from the Jesuits, also other Catholic teaching orders had their schools and seminaries (especially the Piarists), but their participation in the education system was much more modest. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Jesuits had 12 colleges, in 1648 – 35, in 1700 – 47, in 1772/1773 – 66, with 16.400 students; the Piarists in the second half of the 17th century had 11 school colleges, and in 1772/73 their number grew to 27; at the end of the 17th century there were 9 Piarist schools and ca. 1760 their number grew to 29. In general, the number of the colleges doubled in the 18th century from 58 in 1700 to 104 in 1772/73. The network of religious schools was set quite evenly across the whole country.

Colleges of all educational convents followed the Jesuit humanist school program from the 16th century until the 30s of the 18th century. It was a long process: 5–6 years of high school (the *infima* [the first stage of education encompassing the very basics of Latin], grammar, syntax, poetry, rhetoric), 2–3 years of philosophy, and 4 years of theology. The extent of teaching was limited to Latin and speech composition or writing occasional poems. Twice a year the students performed their pieces in front of their teachers and parents. An important part of the Jesuit education was a school theatre, which staged plays with interludes in Polish (in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Ruthenian). An effect of such education was the ability to repeat schemes and use rhetorical tropes. “Perhaps, every fiftieth person that graduated from this kind of school could call himself a poet or a writer”¹⁸⁴ – and that is why popular and mass culture was predominant in the Baroque period.

Ratio studiorum may have standardized education, but it blocked any attempts to modernize it. This led to the petrification of the 17th-century curricula of the religious colleges and determined the different fates of the Protestant and Catholic high schooling. Protestant gymnasia maintained their high standards and up to the 18th century and could boast of having great theoreticians of education among their teachers (John Amos Comenius, Joachim Pastorius). Polish and Lithuanian Jesuit schools went into decline in the third decade of the 17th century. It was caused by the

184 Andrzej Borowski, *Wymowa sejmowa w Polsce w latach 1550–1584*, in *Cracovia litterarum. Kultura umysłowa i literacka Krakowa i Małopolski w dobie Renesansu*, Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow, 1991, pp. 415–428.

weakening of contacts with the West, as well as the easy and frequent yielding to the convictions of the noble society. This, in turn, led to the predominance of a passive, mnemonic education and the negligence of the general humanistic and philological subjects. In their place theology and philosophy were even more stressed in the teaching process, as they were believed to be beneficial for spiritual development.

5.3. Higher Education

The unique feature of higher education in the Commonwealth in the 16th–17th centuries was that it was exclusively Catholic and constantly underfunded. That was an exception in comparison to other European countries, where an indispensable element of centralization was the establishing of higher schools, which educated professionals to be employed in administration or army.

The privilege of Sigismund I from 1535, which granted personal ennoblement to all doctors of the Academy of Cracow (for the time of their employment), and hereditary ennoblement to those who worked there for over 20 years (although the actual application of this privilege is still under debate), had a purely prestigious function and did not imply the improvement of their financial situation. The deteriorating position of scholars corresponded with the diminished interest of the nobility in formal education, earning academic degrees, and professional work at the university, which, in fact, was left to the plebeians. This situation was very similar to that of other European countries (especially France and Germany), where the nobility (since the late 16th century) was no longer interested in academic work, but instead focused on military, diplomatic, or political service.

The lack of interest in receiving academic degrees was a logical consequence of the labour market situation: the nobility needed 2–3 years of studies in order to get some polish and be prepared to study abroad. Formal education was required neither in the state administration (apart from the royal offices) nor in the military. And since there was no school of chivalry, the nobles usually finished their education at the level of high school; only a scant part of the nobility could afford to study abroad.

Since the second half of the 16th century to the end of the 18th century, the Commonwealth had two academic institutions (universities): the Cracow Academy and the Academy in Vilnius founded by Stephen Bathory in 1579. Apart from the University of Königsberg in the Duchy of Prussia (a fief of the Commonwealth), there was no Protestant academic institution, although its opening was planned during the reign of Sigismund Augustus, and postulated at the Synod of Toruń in 1595. For in order to be granted the status of academy, it was necessary to receive a royal privilege and the pope's consent. The 40 years of efforts of the Crown and Lithuanian Protestant community to create a university – initiated by the establishment of the Lubrański Gymnasium in Poznań – brought no results.

In the 15th–16th centuries, the Academy of Cracow was the main university not only for the Crown but also for the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the university records, no less than 430 people stated their country of birth to be Lithuania or Ruthenia, and half of them were granted the bachelor's degree. Since the mid-

16th century, the number of students from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania started to decrease. The reasons were the Reformation and the outflow of the Protestant youth to Protestant countries or to the reputable Western European universities in Bologna, Padua, Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Frankfurt am Oder. In 1544, the University of Königsberg was created and many Lithuanians went to study in Prussia. Some people studied at 3 or 4 universities.

The Cracow Academy was endowed with land and church benefices (whose value diminished in the 16th–18th centuries along with devaluation of the feudal rent). The effectiveness of the studies was also low: they lasted 5–7 years until the moment of receiving the master's degree (1530–1541 it was on average 7.1 years, and in 1580–1589 – 5.4). The Academy of Cracow was rather resistant to new intellectual currents and propagated very traditional knowledge. At the end of the 16th century it educated mostly the burgher youth: the number of its noble students in 1580–1589 is estimated at ca. 31.2 %, and the number of peasants – at ca. 9.8 %.

In the 1580s, the struggle between the Jesuits and the Academy of Cracow begun and was in full swing in the 1620s. The Jesuits wanted to establish a new college in Cracow and take the monopoly away from the Academy. However, they also made attempts at taking control over the old academy. Most of the nobility and prominent alumni of the university, and even King Wladislaus IV (unlike his father, who favoured the Jesuits), supported the Academy, as they were resentful towards the Jesuits and accused them of “an unnecessary encroachment of Cracow, where the academies and sciences flourished so well.”¹⁸⁵ As a result of the Academy's protest, the colleges in Braniewo and Poznań also could not be transformed into academies, and the college in Lviv was granted academic rights during the reign of Augustus III (even though Jan Casmir granted the college a royal privilege in 1661, it was not approved by the Sejm and the pope and thus was null and void).

The Jesuit Academy of Vilnius was founded in 1579 on the initiative of Stephen Bathory, after the status of academy was granted to the Vilnius college by the pope. It was not a complete academy: it lacked the faculties of law and medicine, and was almost exclusively devoted to the pursuit of church goals in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation and Catholic humanism. The Academy of Vilnius as a scholarly and publishing centre was the main cultural centre of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in the first half of the 17th century it developed very quickly (160 students in 1570, 600 in 1590, 1210 in 1618, although one has to remember that these numbers include younger pupils from the colleges of the Lithuanian province). One third of its students were from Lithuania and Samogitia, the rest from the Belarusian lands of the Grand Duchy, from the Duchy of Prussia, and even from the Crown. The education in Vilnius was quite traditional and consisted of the liberal arts. The University's teachers were educated at various European universities, and the handbooks they wrote were used across Europe (for example, M. Śmiglecki's *Logica*, the

185 “An anonymous letter against Jesuits, exposing their bad influence on education.” The Sanguszko Archive in Wawel.

editions from 1618–1658, used at the universities of Oxford, Dublin, and Paris). In the first half of the 17th century, M. K. Sarbiewski – a lecturer with European fame, who taught in the Jesuit colleges, in Polotsk, Nesvizh, and Vilnius – was employed at the University. His lectures contributed to the popularization of classical culture in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The Academy of Zamość was a high school. It was founded by Jan Zamoyski (in 1594, opened in 1595), after Stephen Bathory gave up the idea of establishing the Royal College (1577) as an alternative for the Jesuit education facilities. The Academy was supposed to prepare the noble youth for public activity by teaching classical culture. Despite the generous funding, employing native and foreign professors, and a fairly modern program of studies, it did not manage to win the status of academy, and ca. 1620 it declined and was transformed into a branch of the Academy of Cracow.

6. Protestant Education

6.1. Lutheran Gymnasia in Royal Prussia

Protestant urban education was mostly developed in Royal Prussia. In this respect, Gdańsk was the leading city in the country, as the general schooling system for boys and girls was established there in 1525. In 1538–1570, the Catholic parish schools were transformed into Lutheran schools (with an unchanged curriculum comprising of three core subjects: religion, the basics of Latin, and classical literature). In 1558, the so-called *partykularz* (Latin: *studium particulare*) on the elementary level was created, and in 1580 the Academic Gymnasium was founded. Since 1589, there were classes of Polish as an independent school subject in the Gymnasium. Paradoxically enough, it was an effect of the conflict between Gdańsk and King Stephen Bathory. After the conflict had ended, the city decided to enliven the cultural and commercial contacts with the Commonwealth. As a consequence, it acknowledged the need to teach the Polish language, political doctrine, and customs. The Gdańsk model was followed by Elbląg (the gymnasium, which was created there in 1535, survived the failed attempts at its re-Catholicization, undertook by Stanisław Hozjusz in 1551–1583; in 1598, it was granted the rights of an academy, and since 1604 Polish was taught there) and Toruń (gymnasium in 1568, academy since 1594, and Polish gymnasium in 1600–1758).

Lutheran urban gymnasia employed most of modern teaching methods (disputes, declamations, school performances), which prepared students for working in public offices on the basis of analysis of the best available works of political theory. The donations of the Commonwealth's city councils were a way of funding the urban schools, which, in exchange, performed services for their cities – for example, students were obliged to participate in the funerals of citizens and sing at such ceremonies.

6.2. Reformed Noble Gymnasia

First gymnasia for the Reformed nobility were created around 1550 in Little Poland (Pińczów since 1547, and gymnasium since 1558; Secemin in 1556, Cracow in 1567–1591, Łańcut in ca. 1550). In the 1580s – despite the Counter-Reformation offensive – the Reformed school foundations continued to function in the Crown (Turobin in 1581; Lewartów in 1580; Kryłów in 1593–1612) and in Silesia (Wilamowice, Gierałtowice, Głębowice).

The special importance of education for the Reformed nobility stemmed from the doctrine of Polish Calvinism, in which the upbringing of children was to be held in piety and care for their education (*Konfesja sandomierska* [*The Sandomierz Confession*], 1570, art. XXV and XXIX). The obligation to teach children the basics of faith and the prohibition to send Reformed children to schools of “opposite” confession was mentioned eight times in the constitutions of the Lithuanian Unity in the 17th century (for the last time at the Synod of Bielica in 1686). The Reformed schools were funded by collecting private money, as well as by foundations and individual funds. An ideal (which was never accomplished) was to have elementary schools functioning next to every Reformed church in order to teach the subjects the principles of “true faith” – as a way of performing the lords’ responsibility for their souls (the so-called confessional constraint).

The Biržai branch of the Radziwiłł family set more ambitious goals, as they wanted to educate the youth “for the service of the Church and the Commonwealth.” Therefore, they founded the Reformed gymnasia in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Bielica, Zabłudów, Slutsk (1617) and Kėdainiai (1625). These foundations fulfilled the goals set by the synod of Toruń from 1595. Usually, in the vicinity of a gymnasium there was a house of alumni, where future clergymen, as well as the Reformed children of all estates, were educated. The curriculum of the Reformed schools comprised of grammar, logic, dialectics, and rhetoric as well as Latin and Greek, but it was gradually modernized with the passage of time. The gymnasium in Kėdainiai played a very significant role in the history of education in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It maintained its confessional identity until 1824, when it was liquidated as a consequence of the repressions against the Philaret and Philomat movement at the University of Vilnius.

6.3. Gymnasia in Raków and Leszno

The first half of the 17th century is the period when very reputable high schools of two other Protestant confessions functioned in the Commonwealth: the Unitarian school in Raków (1602–1638) and the Bohemian Brethren’s school in Leszno. J. A. Comenius, a Czech immigrant working in Leszno, created the first modern European handbooks for studying Latin (*Ianua linguarum reserata*, written in 1629 and published in 1631; *Vestibulum*, 1633). In the 1650s, he influenced a general modernization of teaching methods and techniques.

Comenius' book *Didactica Magna* (written between 1627 and 1638, but printed only in 1657) was a breakthrough in European pedagogy. It provided the basis for a reform of education in many German countries in the 1830s, propagating teaching through play and postulating universal access to education for all children, regardless of their social background. This new educational system, as Comenius envisaged it, had 4 levels: 1. The so-called motherly school educating children up to the age of 6; 2. Elementary school for children from the age of 6 to 12, in which classes were held in the mother tongue; 3. A 6-grade Latin gymnasium educating children aged 12–18, ending with a public exam; 4. An academy for the doctoral candidates and for the “heads of churches, schools, and public offices,” educating students up to the age of 24.

Apart from theoretical, practical, and pragmatic classes devoted to different fields of knowledge, a very unique feature of Comenius' school was the teaching of customs and attitudes (for example, virtue understood as persistence in work), and not only religious but also moral education.

7. Orthodox Education

7.1. Brotherhood Schools

In the 16th century, children of Orthodox families were usually educated at home, as until the mid-16th century church schools existed only in large cities. Before the Union of Brest (1596), the Orthodox brotherhoods began creating their own schools with ambitious (though not always realized) curricula of teaching the language of liturgy (that is, Old Church Slavonic), but also Greek and Latin (hence the name of “Slavic-Greek schools”). Education at the brotherhood schools was free and they were attended mostly by burgher children. Their level of teaching was definitely lower than that of the Jesuit schools; the Orthodox children also studied at the Catholic religious schools, and at the end of the 16th century there were both Protestant and Orthodox students at the Academy of Vilnius.

7.2. Academy in Ostroh

The first Orthodox school at the gymnasial level was the trilingual academy (Slavic-Greek-Latin), founded in 1576 in Ostroh by the Kiev voivode, Konstanty Wasyl Ostrojski, as a response to the claims of the prominent Catholics about the ignorance of the Orthodox clergy. Its main goal was to prepare the first printed edition of the Bible (1581) in Old Church Slavonic in order to prove the equality of languages of liturgy in the Eastern Churches with the languages considered sacred in the Latin tradition: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. This ambitious attempt to combine the two cultural traditions of Europe – that is, the Greek-Slavic and the Latin tradition – turned out to be an utopia. After the period of its heyday, in 1583–1585, the academy in Ostroh had fallen into decline. When its founder died in 1608, and his son, Janusz

Ostrogski converted to Catholicism there were no funds left to maintain the school – even though the excellent Academy of Zamość was established in its vicinity.

7.3. The Kiev-Mogila Academy

The breakthrough for the Orthodox education took place after the reforms of Peter Mogila, who was the Metropolitan of Kiev since 1633 (after the Orthodox church was re-legalized in 1632). He was a well-educated man, who had family ties with the most eminent magnate families of the Commonwealth. In 1632, he founded his own college, which was called a university or academy, even though the formal royal privilege was granted to it in the Act of Union of Hadiach in 1658, and later confirmed by charters issued by Peter the Great in 1694 and 1701.

7.4. Hospodar Schools in Moldavia and Wallachia

The importance of the Kiev-Mogila Academy was not linked to its number of students (ca. 2.000 in the last quarter of the 17th century), but the humanist profile of teaching, which influenced education in Moldavia and Wallachia, where in the second half of the 17th century high schools were established under the protectorate of the hospodars: Matei Besarab (1632–1654) and Vasyl Lupul (1634–1653). They were: the school of the monastery and the Church of the Three Hierarchs (the so-called Greek Hospodar School) in Iași (1639), the Greek-Latin school in Târgoviște, and the Hospodar Academy in Bucharest, a precursor of the Bucharest University (1694).

What weakened the influence of Latin culture in the Danube Principalities was the conflict within the Patriarchate in Constantinople. When in 1644 the supporters of the pro-Western patriarch Cyril Lucaris won, his main enemy Meletios Syrigos escaped to Moldavia together with a group of monks from the Greek Academy of Constantinople. As a result, the school of the Three Hierarchs became influenced by Greek culture and it educated hospodars in such spirit until its liquidation in 1821 by the Phanariotes.

8. Education of the Ethnic-Legal Groups

8.1. Jewish Schools

Tolerance and the development of Jewish municipal institutions fostered the burgeoning of intellectual life in the community. Until the mid-17th century, the Commonwealth remained the centre of Jewish scholarly life and the dwelling place of many magnificent scholars. In large cities, there were Jewish printing houses and higher Talmudic schools (*yeshivot*; sing: *yeshiva*) in Poznań, Cracow, Lviv, Lublin, and Przemyśl, which drew students from all over Europe. In the first half of the 17th century, the zeal in gaining knowledge weakened, although a Jewish chronicler, Nathan ben Moses Hannover, presented an idealized image of assiduous Jewish youth in the period preceding the Khmelnytsky Uprising.

All members of the Jewish community participated in educational process. The basic sources of learning were the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud (a Hebrew word for “study”), which was the principal text of Rabbinic Judaism. As soon as a child learned how to speak, his religious teaching begun and he was requested to repeat verses from the Scriptures. After he reached the age of 3, his father taught him the Hebrew alphabet, and at the age 7 he was finally send to a *yeshiva*. The system of education, in which rabbis occupied a higher social position than merchants, degraded in the 17th century, and the kahal schools became a haven for the poor. Apart from the kahal *yeshivot*, there were also private schools, whose importance grew in the second half of the 17th century due to the impoverishment of the Jewish communities that were no longer able to maintain public schools.

8.2. Tatar Schools

In Tatar confessional schools, the mullahs taught children the basics of Islam, as well as reading and writing in the Arabic alphabet (which was more common in the 16th century). In the next centuries, the mullahs continued to teach religion and the alphabet, which was useful in reading religious literature (*kitab*). By virtue of such education, 25 % of the Lithuanian Tatars remained connected to Muslim culture in the second half of the 17th century.

As there was no confessional education on the secondary or higher level, the improvement of education level of the non-Christian ethnic-legal groups always involved their assimilation.

9. Studies Abroad

School education in the Commonwealth was complemented by the “educational peregrinations” – essential especially for the Protestants, who were deprived of their own university. People between the age of 12 and 20 travelled abroad in order to complete their studies or – like the noble and magnate sons – took the “bachelor journeys” after graduating from school and before reaching full life stability.

The foreign universities were chosen basing on the fame of the professors, family tradition, and confession. Catholics went mostly to Italy (Rome, Florence, Padua), Catholic Austria or Germany (Ingolstadt, Vienna, Graz), and the Spanish Netherlands (Leuven). Protestants chose the universities in Protestant countries: in the Duchy of Prussia (Königsberg), the Reich (Frankfurt am Oder, Leipzig, Altdorf, Strasbourg, Wittenberg, and Heidelberg until 1621), Switzerland (Basel and Geneva), France (Sedan until 1630), and the Netherlands (Leiden). Everyone attended the French universities (Saumur, Sedan, Orleans), as well as German or Dutch and Italian (Padua).

Since the beginning of the Thirty Year’s War, not only confession but also politics and safety determined the journey’s route. Even during the wartime, it was possible to travel safely with a passport granted by the king of the Commonwealth. One of the educational goals was to prepare a student to become a professional soldier, and

that is why the youth from all over Europe went to the Netherlands, which were considered as a military polygon. After paying for the visit, one could observe the armed struggle of Spanish and Dutch armies, get into the Spanish war camp during the siege of Breda, and participate in the ceremony of the capitulation of the city (1625). The main disadvantage of the educational trips for the Commonwealth's youth, were the criteria of choosing the right destination. Instead of choosing the schools of chivalry, young magnates usually went to the universities. The schools of chivalry were very modern institutions of specialized education and were created mostly in Protestant German countries since the mid-16th century: in Hessen, Saxony, and the Margraviate of Baden, as well as in France. In Italy, where most Catholic youth from the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was educated, there was only one school of chivalry in Torino. Until 1635, the interest to modernize the forms of education were hindered by the pro-Habsburg faction at the Commonwealth's royal court and – during Jan Casimir's reign – by the wars, which interrupted the contacts between the Commonwealth and other countries.

Another negative element of the educational journeys was the preference of the Jesuit schools, which, from the perspective of a noble student, offered a very unpractical education (apart from rhetoric). That is why during the journeys abroad people usually chose private lessons, rather than university courses. The exclusivism, separating young Poles and Lithuanians from their surroundings as a means to protect them from corruption and keeping them within their national groups, resulted in poor results their studies. Also the expectations of their parents and protectors differed from the reality. For the students, apart from the will meet new people, also political, military, and linguistic factors were important.

The social composition of educational journeys changed with the passage of time. Until the mid-17th century, the travellers were mostly the noble sons, replaced after the Swedish wars with the magnate sons. An inquiry into this process conducted on the basis of the university metrics might be misleading. After all, most of the students were not officially registered, as they were not interested in earning academic degrees. The main benefit of these journeys in the 16th–17th centuries was the fact that the travelling students often became acquainted with the future great people of the Commonwealth, which was helpful for pursuing a career at home.

10. Military Education. Projects of the School of Chivalry in the Commonwealth of the 16th–17th Centuries

The projects of educating the noble youth in the Commonwealth in the art of war were laid down since the 16th century. In this respect, the writings of the Bishop of Kiev Józef Wereszczyński, connected with colonization plans in Ukraine at the end of the 16th century, were especially innovative, at least in the Polish context (*Droga pewna do prędkiego i snadniejszego osadzenia w ruskich krajach pustyni rycerstwem Królestwa Polskiego* [*The Way to the Rapid and Easy Settlement of the Deserted Ruthenian Lands by the Knights of the Polish Kingdom*], 1590). His idea was to establish

a Polish military camp and enable 10.000 young noblemen to practice the military skills. Piotr Grabowski, a parish priest from Pärnu (Polish: *Parnawa*), had similar ideas (*Polska niżna* [*Lower Poland*], 1596), which were also not realized. During the Sandomierz Rebellion (1606), there appeared an anonymous project of creating a voivodeship militia, financed from land and voivodeship treasuries, but it was not put into practice.

In the 1630s, Hetman Krzysztof II Radziwiłł planned to create a school of chivalry in Lithuania, which would employ the professors from the Reich's Protestant universities destroyed during the Thirty Year's War. The *pacta conventa* of the elective kings also stated the necessity of creating a military academy – from Wladislaus IV to Jan III Sobieski, who with the Sejm consent of 1676 and 1677 supported initiative of the royal military engineer Krzysztof Mieroszewski to found of the Martial Academy at the Academy of Cracow. Also the Wettin kings made pledges to create a school of chivalry, but primary to the lack of money, the projects remained merely on paper until the Stanisław August Poniatowski period.

11. The Reform of Education in the 18th Century

11.1. The Reform of Convent Education

Since the end of the 17th century, various attempts were made to overcome the crisis in the Jesuit education. In the 18th century all colleges underwent changes: they started to teach in Polish and introduced new subjects (history, geography, mathematics, physics, In the matter of the shaping of piety, they underscored positive theology and reading of the Bible in their curriculum. French and German courses were implemented as a means of further modernization. In 1715 (58 after the publication Comenius' *Didactica*) in Kalisz the first Jesuit handbook was published, in which the dignity of the student and the responsibility of the teacher were stressed. In many colleges, the libraries started to import new books from the West, but the reforms were stopped by the Great Northern War of 1700–1721.

During the Stanisław August Poniatowski times, strong Jesuit science centres were established in Vilnius (astronomy), Poznań (experimental physics), and Lviv (military art), with astronomical observatories, physical laboratories, and specialized libraries. The French Jesuits, expelled from their country in 1763, played a very significant role in teaching languages and sciences in the Commonwealth. A new type of schools was the noble college (*collegium nobilem*), created in the mid-18th century according to French models. They were separate administrative units, with their own dean and teachers. They were usually established buildings separated from the Jesuit colleges, with their own library, rules, and supply base. The conditions in such noble colleges were much better than in public schools (2–4 people bedrooms, servants, medical care, 4 meals daily, everyday pastimes, the right to go out 2 times a week and on Sundays and holidays). The education in the colleges took 7–9 years, and their curriculum comprised of geography, chronology, architecture, astronomy, horse riding, dance and music, fencing and wrestling.

Separate colleges for “lordlings” were criticized at the time, as they undermined the idea of equality; the best teachers were often taken over by new schools and therefore the level of learning decreased in public schools. Besides, there was no room for poor noble boys – who, in previous model, used to work as magnates’ servants in exchange of paying for their education. The Jesuit colleges (of both the old and new type) functioned until 1773, when the order was suppressed. After the suppression of the Jesuits, the schools known as *konwikty*, which worked similarly to the Jesuit colleges, were established in Polotsk (1780–1820), St. Petersburg (1802–1815), and – after the Jesuits were expelled from Russia – in Lviv (1842–1848).

Greek-Catholic (Uniate) schools played a very significant cultural role in the eastern borderlands of the Commonwealth. Since the 16th century, they were conducted by the Basilian order (Basilian Order of Saint Josaphat, the Greek-Catholic branch of the Basilians), which was very successful at creating public schools in the 18th century. They taught not only Old Church Slavonic but also the liberal arts, and were not focused on educating future clergy or the Ruthenians exclusively, even if some of their students indeed became the Uniate clergymen.

A new stage in the development of education began after the suppression of the Society of Jesus, when the Commission of National Education started to pursue its reforms, especially in the first decade after the Partitions. In the 1780s the parish (elementary) schools of the Basilians were established on a mass scale together with the secondary schools, which were subject directly to the Commission. There were 16 Basilian schools at the turn of the 18th and the 19th centuries. The number of teachers increased almost twofold after the First Partition: in 1773 there were 37 Basilian teachers, and at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries the figure rose to ca. 70.

The standard of teaching in the Basilian schools in the Crown was not lesser than the standard of academic schools, but the attendance was considerably greater, this was probably stemmed from the fact that the nobles trusted the religious schools more than they trusted the academic schools. Their students there were mostly the Greek-Catholic peasants and the Roman Catholic noble sons, as well as burghers (including Jews). Ca. 25 % students were the sons of clergymen.

11.2. The Piarist Reform and the Collegium Nobilium

Since the 1730s, the citizens of the Commonwealth learned about the concepts of natural law, rationalism, empiricism, and utilitarianism during their studies abroad. These conceptions were propagated especially by the works of Samuel von Pufendorf in *De Jure Naturae et Gentium* (1672), *De Officio Homini et Civis juxta Legem Naturalem Libri Duo* (1673).

His theses about the close connection of authority, government, and legislation with morality and upbringing inspired the project of patriotic-civic education formulated by a Piarist Stanisław Konarski, who had close ties with Stanisław Leszczyński. He came up with the idea that his generation was not able to do anything to repair the Commonwealth, and he therefore founded the Collegium Nobilium in 1740 – an exclusive school for the magnate sons, who were to become the

future governing elite. In 1752–1754 he reformed Piarist schools in a similar spirit. Using the didactical means, which were formerly used in the religious schools (the courses of rhetoric, school theatre, student parliamentary sessions), a new content was transmitted, concerning the political system of the Commonwealth and possible ways of improving it. Among the students of the Collegium Nobilium were the people who were to play a significant role in the public life and the reforms of the educational system of the Commonwealth: Ignacy and Stanisław Potockis and Antoni Popławski SP.

11.3. The Reforms of Military Education

Since the mid-18th century, nearby the borders of the Commonwealth, along with the growth of the armies, many military schools were established. They educated officers for the army and clerks for the state administration. The first one to establish such a school was the Elector of Brandenburg Friedrich Wilhelm (1653 Kołobrzeg, since 1756 Berlin). Similar schools were created in Austria (in Wiener Neustadt, 1752; reformed ca. 1769, after the First Partition Collegium Nobilium Theresianum in Lviv, 1776); in Russia (1731 Land Corps of Noble Cadets, reformed in 1763); in France (The Royal School of Chivalry in Vincennes, 1751; moved to Paris in 1756). The Noble Academy in Lunéville, founded by Stanisław Leszczyński in 1737 for the noble youth (including Poles), was slightly different as its curriculum came close to that of the former noble academies. As an emigration school, it could not serve the purpose of being a facility for professional military education for the needs of the Commonwealth.

In order to fill that gap, King Stanisław August Poniatowski established the Corps of Cadets in 1765. The school combined all the achievements of the Eastern and Western military academies, and was well adjusted to the internal needs. Although the postulate to found a school of chivalry (mainly for the poor noble youth) was contained in *pacta conventa* of all the monarchs since the times of Wladislaus IV, it was Stanisław August who fulfilled this promise.

The Crown and Lithuanian treasuries funded the Knight School. Since its very beginning, it was supposed to realize both military and civil goals (hence the name of the Civil-Military Corps). Since 1771, the following subjects were contained in the curriculum: history, geography, economy, modern languages, as well as spelling and reading in Polish. The teaching lasted for 6 years, and the specialized military knowledge was taught only in the final stage of education. The Commander of the Knight School (until 1768) was prince Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski (the author of *Katechizm Kadecki* [*The Cadet's Catechism*] 1774, which was a collection of advices on individual and civil ethics). His deputy responsible for the administration was Antoni Sułkowski. When A. K. Czartoryski refused to support of the Targowica Confederation and left the country, August Moszyński became the next Commander. He was a proponent of Russia, but at the same time a sworn opponent of the Targowica Confederation, who contributed to overthrowing it during the Sejm in

Grodno. Michał Hube (from Gdańsk), the last director of the school, struggled to preserve it in 1792–1794.

During the whole period of the Corps of Cadets' existence, it wrestled with financial problems and, as a consequence, had to significantly reduce the number of its cadets. It was funded by irregular donations from the king's own pocket. Only in 1773, the Sejm increased the amount of donations for the Corps, but the payments were constantly delayed. As a result, there were only 70 students, and not 200, as the Sejm constitutions from 1766 assumed. Among 650 graduates from the school there were many who took part in the Kościuszko Uprising in 1794.

The Corps of Cadets was finally closed on December 23rd, 1794. The outstanding wages of the pedagogic personnel and the commander A. Moszyński's (160.000 zlotys) were secured by the mortgage of the school's property, but they were never paid. The effects of education at the Knight School were evaluated ambivalently. According to Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz:

One of the disadvantages of our upbringing was that we were educated as we were great lords [...] and those who were not wealthy, and got used to richness [...] and were unable to accept an honest indigence, became a useless burden to the society.¹⁸⁶

11.4. The Reforms of the Commission of National Education

A significant breakthrough in the history of education in the Commonwealth was the suppression of the Jesuit Order by the Pope Clement XIV in 1773, preceded by the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal (1759), France (1762–1764), and Spain (1767). The information on the suppression reached the Commonwealth in the first days of September 1773, and became a subject of dispute in a special delegation of the Partition Sejm. The suppression was seen as a catastrophe for those noblemen who were educated in the Jesuit colleges. Claims to the post-Jesuit property were by the Church and especially by the teaching orders: the Piarists and the Basilians. There were also those who called for the nationalization of this wealth, and others who wanted to obtain a refund of the sums donated by their ancestors. The Jesuit annual income was estimated to be around 800.000 Polish zlotys.

The proponents of the Enlightenment managed to use the former Jesuit wealth for the purposes of a general education reform. On October 14th, 1773, the Sejm founded the Commission of National Education, and the universal of October 24th stated that all "general academies, gymnasia, academic colonies, and public schools" were to be subjected to its authority. The said universal also assumed appointing sworn inspectors, who were tasked with evaluating the former Jesuit wealth for the Commission within 2 months. It soon became clear that the deadline was too short, and the Commissions of Distribution, which were established on April 29th, 1774 – the Crown Commission (with the Poznań bishop Andrzej Stanisław Młodziejowski)

186 Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki czasów moich*, prep. J. Dihm, vol. 1, Warsaw, 1957, p. 57.

and the Lithuanian Commission (with the Lithuanian bishop Ignacy Massalski) failed in their endeavour. They were supposed to retrieve the money from the sale and renting of the former Jesuit property, but what they achieved instead is the title of “Scavenger Commissions.” Indeed, it is estimated that ca. 30 % of the wealth was embezzled. Finally, in 1776, the Sejm decided to pass the right to administer the post-Jesuit property to the Commission of National Education, which by virtue of legal action, managed to put the affairs in order. The exemplary management of the Commission made it even possible to accrue some financial reserves every year. Yet, the necessity to deal with the financial problems hindered the activity of the Commission, which was initially created to pursue organizational and didactical reforms of education.

4 senators and 4 representatives of the Chamber of Deputies (both from the royal faction and the clients of the Russian ambassador, Otto Magnus von Stackelberg) were invited to join the Commission. The actual responsibility for the program, organization, and execution lay on the Association for Elementary Books, which was established in spring 1775 and comprised of great educators (Antoni Popławski SP, an ex-Jesuit Grzegorz Piramowicz, and the director of the Corps of Cadets, Christian Pfleiderer). The commissioners had two main duties: since 1774 they inspected the venues (personally or through their representatives) and made the general decisions concerning state education.

In March 1774, the Commission finished working on its first draft of the reform project, which was more ambitious than reality could hold. There were plans to create 26 voivodeship schools with 5 professors, a preacher, chaplain, as well as a dormitory (for at least 20 students) and medical care. Each voivodeship was to have 2 smaller district schools (52 in the whole country). 2.500 parish schools were to be open, given that there would be 1 school for 10 villages. There were also plans to establish the Academy of Science and Arts in Warsaw. Gradually, some of these ideas were set aside (like that of creating the Great Poland Academy or the Academy of Science and Arts), and a main focus was brought upon the reform of the Academies of Cracow and Vilnius in 1777–1793, and the establishment of the first school statute, as well as the system of educating new – secular – teachers.

H. Kołłątaj, a graduate of the Academy of Cracow, who was the inspirer and reformer of academic life in the Commonwealth, understood the fine sciences as those, which were based on observation and experience, as well as history, law, and literature – useful both for the individual and for the society. In 1777 he started the reform of the Academy of Cracow (with the president of the Commission of National Education and future primate Michał Poniatowski), beginning with the Faculty of Philosophy, and subsequently dealing with other faculties in 1778–1780.

At the same time, the Academy of Vilnius was reformed. Its strongest department was that of astronomy, represented by its dean, an ex-Jesuit, Marcin Poczobutt-Odlanicki, who created an astronomical observatory, which met European standards. In 1776, there were attempts to create a medical faculty in Vilnius. In 1777, the reform of both academies was announced, which from then on were renamed the Main Schools (Crown from 1786 and Lithuanian from 1783). Both these academies

were completely restructured. Instead of four (Cracow) or three (Vilnius) traditional faculties, they were divided into two colleges: the moral college (*Collegium Morale*) and the college of physics (*Collegium Physicum*). Gradually the teaching methods were modernized, opening new schools associated with the college of physics. It is estimated that there were ca. 1.000 students in 1780–1794 in the Crown Main School; in Vilnius the number of students was probably smaller. The students were recruited mostly from the middle and petty nobility and burghers, and very few from the peasantry. Also the professors were burghers and average nobles – the social composition of the intellectual elite was basically the same as before the reform.

The Commission of National Education would not be able to conduct a national education reform without newly educated teachers. That is why in the Crown Main School a seminary for academic candidates was opened in 1780. 30 students attended this seminar, which was headed by Antoni Popławski SP (renowned for reforming the Piarist system of education). The system of teaching future teachers changed 4 times in 14 years, which only proves that there was no clear conception on how to deal with this problem. As there were too few teachers, the students of the seminary were sent to work after 2 or 3 years (and not after 4 as it was planned), without a proper professional preparation. In Lithuania, there were fewer candidates than in the Crown, but there were many monks (Basilians and Dominicans), who were better educated in literature, history, and Latin (the language of teaching in Vilnius) than in sciences. All in all, there were 140 secular teachers employed in the academic schools in 1780–1794, and most of them supported the Commission of National Education during the Stanisław August Poniatowski period and after the Partitions.

The students were divided into two groups: the “fund” students, whose education was financed by the state, and those, whose parents could afford paying for their studies. The original plan to have dormitories in every voivodeship school for “poor noblemen” was reduced, and since 1783 only 10 dormitories were created in the Crown (funded by the state and from private donations). A total of ca. 350 students could study for free in the whole country.

The Commission of National Education, unable to maintain all the former Jesuit schools, or simply considering some of these endeavours as futile, decided to pass some of them to convents. Apart from the Basilians, who had 10 schools, a large part of them was acquired by the Piarists, Cistercians, Benedictines, and Canons Regular of the Lateran. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, all former Jesuit colleges functioned as academic schools, and only the college in Merkinė (Polish: *Merecz*) was given to the Dominicans. As a result, there were 17 academic schools in the Crown and 25 religious schools (from 1792 – 1827). In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania there were 19 academic schools (from 1791 – 1812) and 10 religious schools. In the late 1780s there were 35 academic schools and 36 religious schools in the whole country, which only proves the extent to which the financial conditions limited the initial aspirations of the Commission.

The preparation of secular teachers was an element of the process of secularization of education. The second element was the introduction of moral studies and the teaching of natural law, which – together with the teaching of the Catholic

religion – was a step forward towards the civic education. Apart from that, the curriculum comprised of the courses in ancient history (Polish history was taught in the last grade, which was attended by very few students), pronunciation, classical literature, and Latin (modernized by the introduction of a handbook by Onufry Kopczyński SP). This block of subjects was supposed to make it easier for the students to understand the rules of social coexistence and to teach them how to apply these rules in life. The mathematical and natural sciences, in turn, were supposed to help them understand the state's economy and the necessity of economic reforms. In the first years of the reform, the worst results were achieved in the teaching of sciences (because of the lack of handbooks) and Latin (because the older teachers boycotted the new methods of teaching and Kopczyński's book). With the passage of time, the most stubborn teachers were made pensioners and the teaching became more effective.

The parish school was the lowest level – and at the same time the weakest element – of the educational system invented by the Commission of National Education. The aim of the reformers was to make the parish school the elementary step for both students and teachers (as the latter were supposed to begin their career precisely in this kind of school). The curriculum of the parish school, described in *Przepis do Szkół Parafialnych* (the *Rules for Parish Schools*, ca. 1776), was modest and comprised of the courses of reading, writing, and counting (in Polish, not in Latin).

The civil-military order commissions, established by the Four-Year Sejm, with the right to punish rectors, who did not fulfil their duties, accelerated the development of the parish schools. As a result, the number of such schools increased in the Crown (from 183 in 1783–1784 to ca. 377); the results in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were not as impressive. The modern handbooks for students and teachers of parish schools were published as late as in the 19th century (*Elementarz dla szkół parafialnych* [*ABC for the Parish Schools*], 1776–1785; *Powinności nauczyciela w szkole parafialnej* [*The Duties of a Teacher*], 1787 by Grzegorz Piramowicz).

The Constitution of May 3 strengthened the position of the Commission of National Education among the 4 commissions that were maintained. After the Partitions, in 1803, the Polish educational system was used as an exemplar in the western provinces of Russia, where the reforms of education were conducted by Adam Czartoryski and other commissioners, including Jan Śniadecki, the rector of the University of Vilnius (1807–1815), Tadeusz Czacki and Hugo Kołłątaj, the founders of the Lyceum in Krzemieniec (1805–1832).

Chapter Ten

Art – Science – Literature

1. Terminology and Periodization

The chronological scope of this book (1572–1795) encompasses three periods of the history of art, literature, and science: Mannerism, Baroque, and the Enlightenment. Their time frames, delineated according to the stylistic categories, is differently defined by different scholars. Moreover, the application of aesthetic categories to intellectual culture and political history becomes increasingly dubious as the research progresses.

Also the attempts to apply the alternative caesuras, like “the culture between the Renaissance and the Baroque” (J. Tazbir), “art after 1600”, “literature and culture after the [Swedish] Deluge” (Barbara Otwinowska, Janusz Pelc), or the categories of “the Renaissance breakthrough” (Kazimierz Budzyk) and of the “turn of the 16th and 17th centuries” (J. Pelc, B. Otwinowska, A. Mączak) are not satisfactory and exhibit certain helplessness when confronted with historical reality. That is why we use these terms only as auxiliary concepts and follow the traditional division of cultural periods as a means of simplification, which, to be sure, is merely arbitrary.

The problems with terminology and periodization also stem from the differences in rhythm by which new tendencies emerged in the fields of architecture, art, music and literature, and their coincidence in time in different countries, regions, and even in different stages of development of a given artist, and finally – from the shift of the arbitrary starting points of the cultural periods in the countries to the north of the Alps, where the Italian trends were imported with a considerable delay. An additional hindrance in the Commonwealth was the uneven pace of the emergence and evolution of cultural phenomena in the Crown, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and other provinces and fiefs.

Another issue is the traditional definition of the cultural heritage of the Commonwealth in the 16th to the first half of the 18th century as the “Old Polish culture.” Nowadays, it is more and more often questioned, because of the transnational nature of artistic creation (painting, sculpture, music), and the multiethnic, multiconfessional, and multicultural structure of the Polish-Lithuanian state. That is why in further parts of this chapter we shall refer to the Polish and Lithuanian culture merely in the state-territorial (and not ethnic) sense, in order to stress their difference from the neighbouring countries. The only exception from this assumption shall be made in the discussion of literature in national languages.

1.1. Renaissance – Reformation – the Renaissance Breakthrough

“The Renaissance” and “the Reformation” are the concepts, which concern different domains: the first is related to intellectual culture and lifestyle, and the second to religion and social/political relations. The Renaissance was much earlier than the Reformation, as the phenomena typical of this current were visible in Italy in the 14th century. It is under debate whether the late medieval “heresies” (like the Husites) gave a stimulus to the Reformation (as older historiography tends to assume), since both their origins and social scope were different. The territories, where the Renaissance and the Reformation started, were also different, and their convergence in time in the countries to the north of the Alps stems simply from the fact that they appeared at the same time in East Central Europe (the 1520s). It is impossible to define their final turning point in this region, since they lasted there much longer than in the West. For example, in Muscovy the Renaissance tendencies emerged as late as the second half of the 17th century.

The origins and ways of reception of the Renaissance and the Reformation in both parts of the federative Commonwealth were different. In the Crown, they were a natural continuation of Latin culture, while the social elites of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania adopted the medieval and Renaissance culture of the West as late as in the 15th and first half of the 16th centuries, because earlier they remained under the influence of the Ruthenian and Byzantine culture. In Lithuania, the Latinization of culture, followed by the awakening of interest in national tradition, took place by virtue of the influence of the Reformation. As a result, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were exceptionally ambiguous in terms of their social, geographical, and chronological scope.

According to some scholars (K. Budzyk), the so-called Renaissance breakthrough between the Middle Ages and early modernity encompassed two centuries in the Commonwealth: from its early signs in the mid-15th century to its mature phase in the mid-17th century. J. Pelc was right to question such broad understanding of this breakthrough: “a breakthrough starts only when the elements of the new become so powerful that they can start the final battle for victory and dominance. [...] As soon as the ‘new’ wins, the breakthrough ends.”¹⁸⁷

1.2. Art and Literature. Between Renaissance and Baroque

The period, which is traditionally considered as the end of the Renaissance in the Commonwealth (the 1570s to the 1620s), was a transitional period in which there was no dominant style. Although it is usually hard to establish correspondence between the political and aesthetic caesuras, the transformation of the political system of the Commonwealth at the beginning of the period of elective monarchy

187 Janusz Pelc, *Renesans w literaturze polskiej. Początki i rozwój*, in *Problemy literatury staropolskiej*, series 1, Wrocław, 1972, p. 45.

(1573–1586) converged with the ideological and intellectual changes, as well as with the shift in aesthetic tastes: the advent of Mannerism, followed by the early Baroque (1600–1630).

To show the arbitrary boundary between the epochs, one can invoke, following J. Pelc, the dates, which anticipated changes in the whole European culture: in 1600 Giordano Bruno died, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra began his work on *Don Quixote* (part I in 1605), and William Shakespeare started writing *Hamlet* (first performed ca. 1601). In the field of science the novelty of methods was signalized even in the titles of most important works (*Astronomia Nova* by Johannes Kepler, 1609; *De Magnete – Nova Phisiologia* by William Gilbert, 1600; *Novum Organum* by Francis Bacon, 1620). In 1600 Santi Gucci died in the Commonwealth, in 1603 the statute of the Cracow Academy was changed, and between 1601 and 1618 Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno published his translations of Aristotle with abundant *Przydatki* (*Commentaries*), in which he expressed his own ideas.

2. Mannerism

In order to describe the unique pieces of architecture, arts, and literature, which were created between the Renaissance and the Baroque, since 1920s the term “Mannerism” is employed. Mannerism was a current, which started in Italian art (1520–1600) and realized the aesthetic ideal of the highest artistry and the perfection of form and technique. Mannerist art no longer followed the Renaissance ideals of order and harmony. Instead, it exhibited a tendency towards complex formal arrangements, sophisticated artistic invention, and the mastery of skill (manner). In architecture, it manifested itself as a freedom to rearrange the classical architectural elements, which no longer had a clearly defined function, and as a tendency to create astonishing set designs.

As distinct from the Renaissance, which was mostly an urban phenomenon, Mannerism in the countries to the north of the Alps (except for Netherlands) developed in the court centres (Fontainebleau, Prague, Munich), which transformed the Roman and Florentine models. In the Commonwealth, it appeared first in the large cities of Royal Prussia, which maintained vivid commercial contacts and cultural exchange with the United Provinces.

2.1. Architecture and Arts

The term *northern Mannerism* (or Dutch Mannerism) is used to describe the architecture of northern Europe based on the ancient architectural order established by Vitruvius in an anti-classical manner. This kind of architecture emphasized the decoration, rather than the construction. One of the main centres of the northern Mannerism since the 1560s was Gdańsk, where eminent architects worked: for example, Anthonis van Obbergen, a Fleming from Mechelen, the designer of the Old City Hall (1586–1595) and (together with Jan Strakowski and Abraham van den Blocke) the Old Arsenal (1602–1605), which was one of the most magnificent examples of

Mannerism in Europe. The façade of the Arsenal lacks columns and pilasters, and is covered with a limestone ferrule ornament (imitating the blacksmith's fittings of door and furniture), with a typically Mannerist duplication of architectural elements: two decorative portals, two towers on the edges, and two peaks. Also Willem van den Blocke (who died in 1628) was a great Flemish Mannerist architect living in Gdańsk (since 1584). He was the creator of tombstones on the graves of patricians in the St. Mary's Church and (together with his son Abraham) the author of the city walls, including The High Gate (1588). Willem's talented son Abraham was the designer of the Golden Gate (1612–1614) located at the end of the Long Lane, with a two-layer decoration – a design called *cabochon* (imitated gemstones with convex surfaces) combined with a lattice made of Ion and Corinthian columns, cornices and imposts (stone blocks at the top of pillars) with sculptures.

The van den Blocke family played a great role in the artistic life of the Commonwealth. Willem, the court sculptor of Stefan Batory and Sigismund III, introduced a new type of tombstone with a kneeling figure in the Baltic-Pomeranian region (the tombstones on the graves of: cardinal Andrew Bathory, the king's nephew, in Barczew in Varmia, 1598, the Kos family in the Cathedral of Oliwa, 1605 and 1618, the Bahr family in the St. Mary's Church in Gdańsk, 1614–1620 – the work of Willem's son – Abraham). His epitaphs and tombstones were exported to Vilnius, Zamość, Łowicz, Gniezno, and even to Denmark, Sweden, and Transylvania. His son Isaak (who like his father and brother died in 1628 from an infectious disease) was one of the main Mannerist painters in Gdańsk (25 ceiling paintings with the central *Apotheosis of Gdańsk*, in the Red Chamber of the city hall, 1608, and 5 allegorical paintings in the Winter Chamber of the City Council, 1611–1614). Mannerism was also represented in this chamber by the allegorical paintings of Hans Vredeman de Vries (who died after 1604).

Around 1600, the realistic tendencies, typical of the early Baroque, started to manifest themselves in the Gdańsk paintings. Anton Möller painted realistic scenes from the Bible combined with the scenes of Gdańsk everyday life commissioned by the Lutheran City Council – *Grosz czynszowy* (*Penny Rent*, 1601) and *Budowa świątyni* (*The Building of the Temple*, 1602) in the city hall and *Sąd ostateczny* (*The Last Judgement*, 1602–1603) in the Artus Court.

The second centre of the Dutch Mannerist sculpture was Lviv, which competed with Cracow. The main artist there was Johann Pfister, who was born in Wrocław and lived in Berezhany (Polish: *Brzeżany*). He was the author of the Ostrogski family tombstone in the Tarnów cathedral. The piece was made of a dark brown marble, partly covered with an alabaster decoration exposing the macabre aspect of death – a skeleton with a scythe, crowning the whole concept. The Mannerist influence was also visible in Cracow and in the Kraków Voivodeship (the palace in Książ Wielki), as well as in Lviv (the Observant church) and in the project of Zamość – which was the first magnate city, and at the same time a centre of latifundia, built as a unique architectural-urban entity by Bernardo Morando for Jan Zamoyski. At the end of the 16th century, also the magnates (the Leszczyński family in Baranów) and noblemen

(Stanisław Szafranec in Pieskowa Skała) built their dwellings in the new style. The Silesian dukes, in turn, built their castle in Brzeg on the model of the Wawel Castle.

In the garden art of the late Renaissance and Mannerism nature was subjected to elaborate compositions of greenery and architectural elements, artificial caves, collections of sculptures, and labyrinths (the Boboli Gardens in Florence, Villa Lante at Bagnaia, Fontainebleau in France, Heidelberg in Germany, Łobzów and Ujazdów in the Crown).

At the end of the 16th century, also sacral architecture changed: the elements typical of the post-Tridentine style appeared together with the architectural styles promoted by the Jesuits. They brought the model of the Roman church of Il Gesù (1584) first to Nesvizh in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1588), and then to the Crown. Many churches were rebuilt in order to fit this style: in Lublin (1586) and Kalisz (1588), with a ceiling that was modelled on the Bernadine church of Lublin (1603–1607). It gave a start to the Lublin type of sacral architecture – churches without towers and with a ceiling decorated with stucco decorations in the form of a band of the so-called “Egg-and-tongue” ornaments, consisting of a series of fanciful (square-, heart-, or star-shaped) surfaces of small size.

This type of ornamentation, used also in the churches of the Gothic mass, was widespread in the Commonwealth – from Kiev to Druya located on the left bank of the Daugava River, and from Kalisz to Rzeszów. It was also used in secular architecture, especially in the Polish attics drawing on the medieval tradition of hiding the so-called “butterfly roofs” behind small decorative walls. This architectural current, which was initiated in Cracow (the Boners’ tenement and the Cloth Hall), flourished in the first half of the 17th century (the Orsetti family tenement in Jarosław, the Przybyłas’ tenements in the market square of Kazimierz Dolny on the Vistula, 1615).

Similar changes took place in the field of tombstone sculpture, which was produced in two forms: either with a lying figure or with a bust. The lying figure on the first type of tombstone almost always depicted a Christian knight clad in armour. An anachronism in Europe in the mid-16th century, it was nonetheless popular in the Commonwealth until the end of the Vasa period (presumably due to the influence of the tombstones of the two last Jagiellonians in the Sigismund’s Chapel and Stephen Bathory’s grave monument). Along with the change in the attitudes towards death, there also came a shift in the way of presenting the figure – not as the deceased (like in Gothic art) or a person sleeping with closed eyes (like in the Renaissance). In the Mannerist period a tombstone figure awakes to a new life. The Baroque tombstones depict living human beings, plunged in meditation, with their eyes wide open and looking at the altar or doing something else; “only a skull or inscription informs us that the person is dead.”¹⁸⁸

The changes were also visible in the tombstone sculptures depicting the deceased in the form of a bust with two hands, sometimes down to the waist. This manner of presentation was predominant in the funerary sculpture between 1541 (the tomb-

188 Mariusz Karpowicz, *Sztuka Polska XVII wieku*, Warsaw, 1983, p. 37.

stone of Anna Pipan in St. Barbara's church in Cracow) and 1655 (the monuments of bishop Piotr Gembicki in the Wawel Cathedral and in the St. Mary's Basilica in Cracow). Both the appearance of this new form of tombstone in the Commonwealth before the mid-16th century and its great popularity in the 1620s are unique, given the fact that it appeared in Western Europe as late as in the 1630s, as a typical Baroque tombstone with the representation of a living, "active" figure of the deceased). At the end of the 16th century in Santi Gucci's workshop in Cracow another type of tombstone (namely, with kneeling figures) was created, revealing the spirit of the post-Tridentine period to the fullest. Chęciny in Little Poland was the location of a brown marble quarry, where the most original sepulchral sculptures originated – the tombstones shaped as an altar (for example, the tombstone on the grave of bishop Piotr Tylicki in the Wawel Cathedral, 1615), epitaph inscriptions, and grave plaques, which became popular after 1600 in Great Poland, Kielce, Masovia, and Rzeszów region.

2.2. Literature

Regardless of the formal aspects of Mannerism, the essence of this style was to abandon the humanist ideology of the Renaissance, its optimistic vision of nature and the abilities of man. In fact, it was a result of the confessionalization of European societies – in some countries in the form of the Counter-Reformation and the Catholic Reform, while in others in the form of "the second Reformation" (Calvinist). After the "sunny" period of the Renaissance, Polish literature became infused with the sense of anxiety, loneliness, and hopelessness that manifested themselves already in the late works of Jan Kochanowski, *Odprawa posłów greckich* (*Dismissal of Greek Envoys*, 1577), with Cassandra's gloomy prophetic visions, and *Treny* (*Threnodies*, 1580).

According to some historians of literature (P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, Adam Karpiński), Mannerism in literature can be described in terms of a generation change: the writers active at the turn of 16th century (e.g. S. F. Klonowic, ca. 1545–1602) belonged to a generation, which grew up in the greatest times of the Polish Renaissance, but they were too young to co-create it. The end of the Renaissance was announced by the poetry of Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński (1550–1581), which broke the classical formal structures. The posthumous edition of his *Rymy albo wiersze polskie* (*Polish Rhymes and Verses*, 1601) belonged the European trend of the so-called "converted poets" (like Torquato Tasso 1544–1595, John Donne 1572–1631, and Sebastian Grabowiecki ca. 1540–1607 in the Commonwealth).

A separate phenomenon in the Commonwealth of the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries is the polemical religious writing, which emerged after the Union of Brest (1596). The shock, which the union meant for the Eastern Churches, became an inspiration for the Orthodox intellectuals who opposed the Latinization of culture. The number of prints in the Cyrillic increased together with the popularization of handwritten and printed polemics, pamphlets, sermons, treatises, and open letters. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania between 1577 and 1666 more than 140 works were

printed both for and against the union, even though there were only two men capable of arguing with their adversaries on a high intellectual level: the Uniate Płock Archbishop of Polotsk Meletius Smotrytsky and the Orthodox Kiev Metropolitan Peter Mogila. It was not ethnicity that determined on which side one would find himself: for example, a Ruthenian Teodor Skumin-Tyszkiewicz supported the union, whereas a Pole Jan Zamoyski defended the Orthodox believers. Confessional polemics did not directly influence the development of Ruthenian (Old Belarusian) language.

The transitional period between the Middle Ages and the early modern times in Ruthenian literature of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania can be described in terms of democratization and individualization of artistic activity, breaking with the medieval syncretism, and an increasing diversification of literary genres. As distinct from the authors of earlier annals in the Old Belarusian language (Polish: *latopisy*, sing. *latopis*), the authors of diaries and journals of the turn of the 16th and the 17th century were concerned not only with the state history and great political events but also with the lives of individual men. As a result, a particularly formalized official language was increasingly more often replaced by a living language, which was saturated with proverbs and comparisons. As an example, one may consider the letters of the Orsha starosta, Filon Kmita Czarnobyłski (1530–1587), the diaries of a Novahrudak subjudge Teodor Jewłaszewski (1546–1619), the so-called Chronicle of Berkałubowo, the diaries of a nobleman from Nowogródek, Samuel (1580–1642) and Bogusław (ca. 1625 – 1683) Maskiewiczz, or the diary of an Orthodox monk Athanasius of Brest-Litovsk (1597–1648).

The fact that the mighty families of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania started to use the Polish language meant the loss of patronage over Ruthenian literature. There were a few Orthodox exceptions, like Bohdan Stetkiewicz, thanks to whom the printing house in Orsha could function until the 1630s, or Bohdan Ogiński, who made it possible to open the printing house in Vievis (Polish: *Jewie*) belonging to the Orthodox brotherhood of Holy Spirit in Vilnius. Thanks to such people, a new current of ambitious literature in Old Belarusian emerged, represented by school plays and rhymed panegyrics. Theological literature in this language was virtually non-existent. As distinct from Old Church Slavonic, Ruthenian never developed an abstract vocabulary, and remained merely “a simple language.”

The culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the turn of the 16th and the 17th centuries underwent two parallel processes: the Polish language gained a strong position in the public life, but at the same time books in Lithuanian (both Catholic and Protestant) came to be gradually published. The Polish, Belarusian, and Lithuanian translations of the Bible were the most popular publications, followed by the legal, historical, and religious polemics in Polish. The late Renaissance literature was often published in multilingual editions.

Learning Lithuanian, Polish, and Latin was equally important, which can be proved by the trilingual publication of the dictionary (ca. 1620) by Konstantinas Sirvydas, a graduate of the Vilnius Academy, who was also the alleged author of the first book of Lithuanian grammar, published in 1653 in Königsberg by Daniel

Klein. In 1629 and 1645, K. Sirvydas published *Punktai Sakymų* (*Elements of Sermons*) the first original collection of Lithuanian sermons. Regardless of their theological function of teaching young clergymen and students, these publications definitely contributed to the development of Lithuanian language and literature, which (in the 17th and the 18th centuries) was published mainly in Royal Prussia.

2.3. Music

The most widespread form of music in the 16th century was church and secular song, polyphonic or monodic. As it was not very complex, people with scarce music education could compose it, and therefore the circle of its recipients was wider. Secular songs of this period were devoted mostly to history (kings of the Commonwealth), “God’s deeds” (for example, natural disasters), or current events. They were often composed for the mighty patrons or rulers.

Since the mid-16th century, the Reformation and Protestant hymnals – published all over the Commonwealth (Cracow, Luślawice, Grodzisk, Nesvizh, and Vilnius) – contributed to the popularization of songs. Their aim was to popularize “the true Word of God” in a simple and comprehensible form, which is to say, in vernacular languages. The most important was the Lutheran chant book by Jan Seklucjan (Königsberg, 1547), and the Bohemian hymnal by Walenty of Brzozów from 1554, as well as the Polish Protestant hymnals: Bartłomiej Groicki’s *Pieśni duchowne* (*Spiritual Songs*, Cracow 1559), Mikołaj Gomółka’s *Melodie na psalterz polski* (*Melodies for the Polish Psalter*, Cracow 1580) – a quadraphonic version of 150 psalms with Jan Kochanowski’s lyrics, Mikołaj Rybiński’s *Psalterz* (*Psalter*, Raków 1605) „to the tune of French psalms,” and finally *Kancjonał, to jest Księgi psalmów, hymnów i pieśni duchownych* (*The Hymnal, that is: the Book of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*, Gdańsk 1646).

In the Catholic milieu the “old notes” (that is, the Gregorian chant) were dominant in provincial centres up to the mid-17th century. The repertoire, which was outside the official liturgy (carols, Lent and rosary songs), was influenced mainly by folk music. Polyphonic Catholic songs accompanied with music were a part of lavish religious processions. The polyphonic music was also cultivated in the Jesuit colleges, where it was used as accompaniment to school theatre plays.

Both Protestant and Catholic clergymen protested against the polyphonic and figural music performed in churches, claiming that it was “noisy” and unclear. As P. Skarga complained,

The church music has deteriorated over the years, and today the composers resemble these Italian painters who [...] want to be commissioned for work, but do not create it for the social good. They damage the art, creating feminine and soft music for multiple voices, which does not inspire piety.¹⁸⁹

189 Piotr Skarga, *Kazanie o siedmi sakramentach...*, Cracow, 1600, quoted from: *Z dziejów polskiej kultury muzycznej. Kultura staropolska*, ed. by Z.M. Szweykowski, Cracow, 1958, p. 109.

Krzysztof Kraiński, a Calvinist preacher, wrote about the same tendency:

If people sing with their lips only, they must be of the Roman confession [...]. Such people do not pay attention to the meaning of the words that they sing. They only care for their smooth voices, and there are rich sounds, shrieks, noises, squeaks, and screeches; in fact, they only gnash their teeth and howl.¹⁹⁰

Music was an indispensable element of everyday life of the courtiers, nobility, burghers, and peasants. In the preserved inventories of burgher houses there are many musical instruments listed: clavichords, lutes, cymbals, cornets, trumpets, harps, trombones, and Jew's-harps. Since the 16th century, the associations of musicians were established, which had guild rights. They were divided into the "Italians" (playing more sophisticated music) and "Serbs" (who played popular and folk music). The difference in repertoire was reflected in a different choice of instruments.

The lute was the most popular instrument in the 16th and the mid-17th centuries, both in the burgher and manor milieu. The best lute players and composers were: Valentin Beff-Bekwark, a Saxon born in Transylvania and a musician at the court of Sigismund Augustus; Wojciech Długoraj, a lute player at the court of Samuel Zborowski, and later at the court of King Stephen Bathory; Jakub Polak – a lute player at the court of King Sigismund III and the royal lute player in Paris; and French lutenist, Gallot d'Angers.

Bagpipes and violas were the favourite instruments among the peasants. Music served to accompany or to emphasize various events of life, including family and tavern meetings. In the 16th century, most of the noble manors in the country had their own musical ensembles. In the 17th century, many noblemen started to complain about the huge expenses of maintaining a musical band. According to the calculations of Piotr Widawski from the beginning of the 17th century (*Exorbitancyje..., albo o Rzeczach w Każdym Królestwie Szkodliwych [Exorbitancyje..., or on the Things Harmful to Every State]* Cracow, 1603), it was an annual expense of a few hundred zlotys for an average band.

The royal musical ensemble of the 17th century accompanied all royal weddings and funerals. In Jesuit centres, music was performed by various bands comprising of both clergymen and laypersons. The main instruments used during magnate and petty nobility's carnivals, sleigh parties, and other festivities were trumpets, bagpipes, cymbals (played by Jews), and Cossack torbans. Military music had a different repertoire based mostly on trumpets, oboes, and drums. The Janissary bands playing for hetmans were a specific Commonwealth's phenomenon: they comprised of a couple flute players and drummers, who must have made a lot of terrifying noise.

190 *Katechizm z naukami i z pieśniami i z modlitwami kościoła powszechnego apostołskiego na Jezusie Chrystusie jedynym fundamentie zbudowane słowem Bożym przez Krzysztofa Kraińskiego, Raków, 1603.*

3. Baroque

Baroque is a word of unknown origins, initially meaning peculiarities and irregularities in art. It was first used in aesthetics in the mid-19th century to describe a degenerate form of the Renaissance style, but the term was subsequently rehabilitated and popularized. Almost all great scholars of the Baroque stress the interdependence between art and literature and other domains of culture and political life, resulting in the emergence of different styles in different European countries: especially, court-Catholic Baroque (Italy, Germany) and burgher-Protestant Baroque (France). The former appealed to senses and was decorative, while the latter was more classical in form.

In the Commonwealth, Baroque was surely the longest cultural period, but its inner periodization has been differently presented by different scholars. On the one hand, some historians of literature, like Czesław Hernas, put forward a division into mature Baroque (the 1620s-70s) and late Baroque (the 1680s– the 1720s). Others (J. Pelc) divided this period into: victorious Baroque (the 1620s-late 1660s), sceptical Baroque (the 1680s), and late Baroque (the turn of the 17th and the 18th centuries). On the other hand, art historians (Mariusz Karpowicz) divided the evolution of the architecture and art into three distinct stages of development: early Baroque (ca. 1600–1630), mature Baroque (ca. 1630–1670), and late Baroque (ca. 1670–1770). This last periodization, which seems to be the clearest one, is here applied also to the development of science, literature, and music.

3.1. Sarmatism versus Baroque

The question of the relation between Sarmatism and Baroque (especially the so-called Slavic Baroque) remains open. Some cultural historians (Claude Backvis, Endre Angyal) emphasize the common elements of the noble cultures in the Commonwealth and other central European countries of the 16th–18th centuries. Bohemian, Hungarian, and Slovak noble cultures of the period also combined the ideals of chivalry with rustic tendencies, and this combination was precisely the function of geopolitical reality. According to art historians (Tadeusz Mańkowski), Sarmatism belongs to the Polish Baroque, and can be understood as a background for studying the art of this period.

According to J. Tazbir, Sarmatism is, on the one hand, a subculture limited to certain social stratum, and, on the other, an artistic current, which reached almost all social groups and milieus. Therefore, it is hard to speak about the “Sarmatian court of the Vasa dynasty.” Rather, it is appropriate to say that the royal court was variously influenced by the Baroque culture. Sarmatism only partially reached the magnates, who usually shared the aesthetic tastes of European aristocracy. The influence of Sarmatism (and especially of the myth of origin) was also limited in the Lutheran Prussian cities. Moreover, the lifestyle of the Protestant (including Polish Brethren – despite their ideological differences) nobility did not differ from that of other noblemen.

Also the content of Sarmatism did not overlap with the Baroque culture. Except of some unique features of the Polish style, the “Sarmatian taste” was not visible in architecture, sculpture, or music, as they were created mainly by the foreign masters, who brought the cosmopolitan patterns to the Commonwealth. The Sarmatian and Baroque influences crossed each other especially in literature.

In Polish – or, more precisely, East Central European – painting, a typical Sarmatian portrait was created, which distinguished itself with a depiction of oriental dress and realistic plasticity of the head. Its unique type was the coffin portrait, which was connected with the Polish tradition of placing the portrait on the head of the coffin. It was painted on a polygonal plate made of zinc (from the 16th century up to the Stanisław August Poniatowski times; the last one is dated in 1809). The main feature of the coffin portrait was naturalism, as it was the image of the deceased painted right after his death and modelled on the deceased or on earlier depictions. The epitaph portraits were oval; they were often painted, when the depicted persons were still alive. In the mid-17th century, the epitaph portrait underwent rapid development: the most popular (and the cheapest) one was a black marble epitaph with a portrait painted on copper plate.

3.2. The Social and Geographical Range of the Baroque

Baroque culture was shaped by various religious disputes (the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation), theological disputes (the relation between the Bible and science, Jansenism, and Gallicanism), and philosophical disputes (the critiques of classical philosophy and scholastics in the name of Scepticism and Neostoicism).

In Western Europe the development of science supported the attempts to create scientific systems and synthesis; in theology, the issues of free will and predestination continued to be debated. In terms of religious practice, the most popular was the Catholic piety, which was triumphant, sentimental and based on liturgical rituals, rather than contemplation of the main truths of faith.

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the main centre of Catholic post-Tridentine reform and Latin culture was the Jesuit Academy of Vilnius (*Academia et Universitas Vilnensis Societatis Jesu*). Its graduates, after 5–7 years of studies in Latin grammar, poetics, and rhetoric, were able to write occasional pieces useful in family and social life (speeches, greetings, dedications, epigrams, epitaphs, panegyrics). Latin was the language of school plays (usually religious, didactic or panegyric), as well as theological, philosophical, and rhetorical dissertations.

The most illustrious professor of the Vilnius Academy was (apart from M. Śmiglecki and M. K. Sarbiewski) Sigismund Lauxmin (1596–1670), a Jesuit, the author of a rhetoric handbook *Praxis oratoria et praecepta artis rhetoricae* (Vilnius 1645), which was reprinted in 14 editions throughout the 17th–18th centuries in many European cities (Frankfurt am Main, Köln, Munich, Prague, Vienna, Würzburg).

Thanks to the Vilnius Academy, the Baroque style in literature, architecture, and art was popularized in the whole Grand Duchy of Lithuania, including the

Lithuanian provinces, where it turned out to be long lasting (e. g. in wooden sacral architecture).

The development of Baroque culture coincided with the weakening of the imperial position of the Commonwealth, and since the 17th century it was accompanied by warfare and political and economic crises. The style created ca. 1650 became incorporated in cultural life and, with the force of inertia, survived the Deluge and the Cossack wars. The level of writing decreased after the Deluge, but culture became more diversified. In the second half of the 17th century, the Sarmatian Baroque not only became more original but also had a wider range, as it encompassed other countries of East Central Europe: Muscovy, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Croatia. Polish became the diplomatic language of central and southeastern Europe. Lithuanians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Moldavians, and Prussians published their works in Polish. The Commonwealth was a crossroads of cultural influences and achievements (also in material culture) of the West and the East.

Until the times of the Deluge, political changes did not have much influence on cultural life, and therefore it is hard to speak about a “regress” during the Vasa period. The triumphant Catholicism had decisive influence upon the Baroque culture and art, which nonetheless encompassed also the Protestant circles. Polish and Lithuanian Protestants, who had intense contacts with the West, also popularized European Baroque intellectual and artistic achievements in the Commonwealth.

3.3. Early Baroque (1600–1630)

Characteristic Baroque features appeared first in architecture and arts ca. 1600, and around 1612–1614 in literature. Early Baroque art, with its interesting elements influenced by Mannerism, emerged at the beginning of the reign of Sigismund III Vasa, who was specifically fond of monumental art inspired by the court of Philip II of Spain (1527–1598).

In architecture, early Baroque was introduced in the Commonwealth right after its emergence in Italy. The main propagator of this style was the Jesuit order in the Crown, and the magnates (converters mostly) in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, who belonged to the formation of the so-called new Catholics, involved in the post-Tridentine propaganda. The main change took place in the use of materials: white limestone and alabaster were replaced by dark brown marble from the Chełciny quarry. Giovanni Trevano conducted the Baroque works in Wawel and most probably designed the Royal Castle in Warsaw (1596–1611, although recent research indicate Santi Gucci as the designer) – the first early Baroque realization in secular architecture, as well as the residence in Ujazdów (1606–1619). He was also the one who gave the final touch to the Jesuit Church of St. Peter and Paul in Cracow (1605–1619), which is considered to be the best achievement of Early Baroque in the Commonwealth in the field of sacral architecture. Also other orders took up this style, like the Carmelites and royalist senators: Mikołaj Wolski the Grand Crown Marshall (the Camaldolese Hermit Church in Bielany in Cracow, 1617–1642) and the Voivode of Cracow Stanisław Lubomirski (the castle and parish church in

Wiśnicz). Calvaries were very specific forms of the Baroque Counter-Reformation architecture – complexes of chapels for Easter mystery rituals of Christ’s Passion. In 1603–1609, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (cloister, church, a few hundred chapels) was founded and soon other complexes following its model (in Wejherów, Góra Kalwaria, Pakość) were built.

4. Mature Baroque (1630–1670)

4.1. Architecture and Arts

During the Baroque period, very important changes took place in arts, especially in the field of architecture. In the Commonwealth, Italian, Dutch, and French influences were not merely passively recreated. In fact, an original Polish Baroque style was developed, inspired by native artistic tradition, seen first in the Lublin territory and in Great Poland. In the first half of the 17th century Baroque influences were visible in sacral and palace architecture, as well as in urban architecture.

A significant change in the ratio of brick and wooden buildings was noticed, as well as the modernization of wooden architecture. As a result of brick architecture development, and removing wooden elements from it, carpenters lost their equal position with stonemasons, as they still used medieval construction details. New techniques permeated the carpenter milieu in Warsaw and northwestern provinces of the Commonwealth.

The Counter-Reformation, as well as the progressing power shift between the monarchy, the magnates, and the nobility – since the end of the 16th century – initiated the heyday of brick architecture: sacral and residential (especially in 1640, 1690–1700). Until the end of the Vasa dynasty period, artisans did most of the work. However, even in the cities where guilds and artisan workshops were very strong (Cracow, Poznań, and Lviv), guild masters were pushed down to the role of mere realizers of other people’s projects.

A very important phenomenon indicating social change in the field of culture was the differentiation of artists from artisans. A new profession emerged: that of an architect, and in the 17th century mostly engineers and people of the arts took up this position. They received their education in their master’s workshop and later read a lot of books, completed math research, and travelled abroad (usually to Italy, Netherlands, and France). Different architectural specialties emancipated, like stuccowork, performed mostly by artists from northern Italy. At the end of the 16th century, Cracow lost its leading position in the arts and Gdańsk, Lviv, Poznań, Warsaw, and Vilnius gained influence. Another important aspect was the fact of building magnate residences away from both capitals of the Commonwealth, especially in the eastern borderlands.

In 1630–1670, architecture in the Commonwealth became more internally integrated, without the differences prevailing before (native versus cosmopolitan). Many factors determined such a state of affairs: the rising position of an architect, the collaboration with Dutch and Italian artists, the growing professionalization,

and the emergence of new forms of patronage. Also materials changed. Around 1630, brown marble from Chęciny was replaced by black marble from Dębnik near Cracow, from the quarry belonging to the Carmelites in Czerna.

The royal court of Sigismund III and magnate patronage introduced a fashion for white marble, alabaster or golden bronze placed on a black background. Black marble was transported not only from Dębnik, but also from Belgium. It was first used in Gdańsk, brought as sailing ballast on empty corn ships, in the 16th century (the tombstone of Jan Konopacki, 1594–1605, church of St. Nicholas). Black marble became really popular after 1630, when it was introduced in Gdańsk and Cracow. In the second half of the 17th and in the 18th centuries the range of black marble in the Commonwealth stretched from Kaunas and Płock to Żywiec and Wschowa, and reached out to Silesia (Wrocław, Głogówek) and to Vienna.

The most typical examples of mature Baroque architecture are magnate residences. In the Crown: the palace in Wiśnicz Nowy and Łañcut (belonging to the Lubomirski family), in Pidhirtsi (Polish: *Podhorce*) (1635–1640, belonging to Stanisław Koniecpolski), the Krzyżtopór in Ujazd (1626–1644, belonging to Krzysztof Ossoliński), in Rytwiany (belonging to the Opaliński family), in Biała Podlaska (Radziwiłł family), in Leszno (Leszczyński family), or in Kielce (1637–1641, the Cracow bishop Jakub Zadzik).

In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania what was new were huge Baroque magnate palaces and convent complexes in the cities. Nesvizh, the main residence of the Catholic line of the Radziwiłł family, was an example of a quickly developing private city. Magnate residencies in Lithuania and Belarus usually had a representational and military character (Biržai, Mir, Nesvizh, Slutsk, Bykhaw). Some eastern castles were built of wood (Shkloŭ [Polish: *Szklów*]) and were surrounded by large fortifications.

The architectural endeavours of the nobility, clergy, and patriciate of larger cities were comparable with the magnates' foundations. On the one hand, the residential centres supported the western European trends in the Commonwealth, on the other – conducted cultural patronage (the royal court, magnates, rich nobility, the urban patricians), which stimulated the emergence of new trends in external structure and internal design.

Architectural development in the cities took place up until the Deluge. Two types of tenement houses were developed at the time: Little Polish (Kazimierz Dolny, Lublin, Lviv) – with great attics, and Pomeranian-Great Polish-Masovian (Gdańsk, Toruń, Elbląg, Poznań, Warsaw) – with a rich front elevation. Prussian cities were the most important scientific and cultural centres of the Commonwealth: Gdańsk and (to a lesser extent) Toruń. In the town hall rooms in Gdańsk, Poznań, Cracow, and Toruń there were royal portraits and historical paintings – all indicating the deepening of the state consciousness.

The wars of the mid-17th century brought about terrible losses, especially in the eastern provinces of the Commonwealth, which never regained their former position. The invaders robbed all collections of paintings, sculptures, libraries, and lavish interior decoration. And yet it was the second half of the 17th century, when full Baroque style in the Commonwealth prevailed. After the destructions of war,

many public buildings were refurbished in new style, which became dominant in the Wettin times.

By virtue of the patronage, the social position of an architect changed. In fact, this profession became a precursor of an engineer as a distinct social role. The representatives of this milieu achieved a lot in the field of mechanics, technical device construction – including hydraulics and the construction of garden fountains, and military fortifications. Stanisław Solski (the author of *Architekt Polski* [*Polish Architect*], 1690) was one of the most prominent architects of the period, along with military engineers: Adam Freytag and Józef Naronowicz-Naroński.

In order to leave evidence of greatness of their families, magnates founded splendid temples. These were usually treated as family mausoleums. In the Crown the best examples were the church and cloister in Rytwiany (1603, the foundation of the last member of the Tęczyński family), the collegiate church in Klimontów with an elliptical nave built by Laurentius de Sent (1643–1650, the foundation of Jerzy Ossoliński), or the parish church in Grodzisk Wielkopolski, built by Cristoforo Bonadura the Elder (1628–1648, the Opaliński foundation). In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the most magnificent examples of Baroque architecture are the Sapieha family foundations: the church of St. Michael in Vilnius and the Carthusian convent in Byaroza (Polish: *Bereza*). Another great example is Reformed church in Kėdainiai in Samogitia founded by the Biržai line of the Radziwiłł family.

In the second half of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th centuries, a new type of wooden Baroque church emerged – usually single-nave, with a less steep roof than in Gothic architecture. Also Jewish and Muslim sacral architecture developed (wooden and brick synagogues and mosques).

Old buildings – both secular, as well as Gothic churches (Przeworsk, Szczeczebrzszyn, Leżajsk, Kazimierz Dolny) were rebuilt according to new trends and tendencies. It enlivened decorative arts: woodcarving, goldsmithing, and stuccowork. In churches lavish epitaphs were still popular (bishops, senators, and rich burghers). Sculpture and painting all served sacral duties, but also to show the wealth and prestige do the patrons – living or dead.

The triumphs of the Counter-Reformation influenced sacral painting, which became a Catholic propaganda tool. Religious paintings were created – as the Council of Trent advised – in strict collaboration with the patron, theologian and the painter. Very often they were given present content, with contemporary characters as patrons or enemies of faith from former centuries. In the first half of the 17th century, the Gdańsk artist, Herman Han, was famous for creating sentimental predellas, and a new form of the painting, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, in the main altar in Pelplin, which was widely imitated in Pomerania, Great Poland, Kujavia, and even in Masovia and Warsaw.

The most outstanding painters commissioned by the Vasa court were Bartholomeus Strobel and Tommaso Dolabella, an Italian educated on the works of Venetian masters from the end of the 16th century (Jacopo Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese). Initially, he was employed as the decorator of Wawel, and then he had commissions

from mighty Cracow convents (the Chapel of St. Jack, and the refectory of the Dominican cloister in Cracow, 10 huge paintings 1620–1628).

Another current of Baroque painting – not Venetian colour but drawing and chiaroscuro – was represented by Venanto da Subiaco, a Camedolese monk and author of paintings for the convent of his cloister in Rytwiany. Apart from the Italian group of Italians with T. Dollabella, his students and imitators, there was also a strong group of Dutch painters working in Cracow: like Jacob Mertens, a Fleming from Antwerp, a proponent of the Mannerist style. An effect of the synthesis of Italian and Dutch trends were Cracow workshops dating back to ca. 1640 and the historical painting, *The Vision of St. Casimir* by Tyburcy Nowakowicz, a Pauline of the Jasna Góra monastery.

After the disaster of the Deluge and civil wars, a division in Polish art took place: the provincial current followed the “Sarmatian” Baroque art with some success, and the other one – based in Warsaw – created a classicist Baroque at the end of the 17th century.

Art continued the Baroque tendencies during the “native” kings period and the Wettin dynasty without invoking the Vasa tradition. There were a few reasons: changing the material and using stucco in architecture and sculpture in the last 30 years of the 17th century, impressing the spectator by all means, symbiosis of architecture, sculpture, and painting, sometimes music. The most interesting realizations of the period were stucco decorations covered with three-dimensional paintings (e. g. half of a putto painted on the wall, half on the stucco). Such a concept of an object of art, as a synthesis of all art genres, operating with a mass, colour, and an optic illusion, where by artistic means the spectator receives more space, an open vault, or material illusion (fake marble) – is (according to M. Karpowicz) the greatest achievement of the consistent strain of European art development in the 15th–17th centuries. The most distinguished examples can be found in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – especially in monasteries commissioned by the Pac family: Krzysztof Sigismund – the Lithuanian Chancellor and Michał – the king’s chamberlain – in Pažaislio (Polish: *Požajście*) near Kaunas for Camaldolese Hermits (1664) and in Antakalnis in Vilnius for Canons Regular (1668).

The architecture of the Pažaislio monastery complex is quite unique, as is has a very modern structure (a high dome above the central hexagonal corpus), and it is one of the few churches in the Commonwealth, which has the interior covered with marble and stone. Michelangelo Pallodi, the court painter of Jan III Sobieski, decorated it with more than 100 frescoes. They are typical illusionist paintings, which created an illusion of great spaces. By showing heavenly realm filled with angels and saints they invoke motifs characteristic of the Baroque theatre.

4.2. Royal Patronage and the Propaganda of Power

According to Juliusz A. Chrościcki, the kings from the Vasa dynasty cannot be called patrons of art, that is, people who supported art permanently, consistently and gratuitously (maybe apart from music). However – like other rulers of the Baroque

period – they used artistic means to build the splendour *principum* (dynastic and state propaganda). The basic tools of royal propaganda in the 17th century were the arts: painting, graphics, and medallic art.

Portrait in the second half of the 17th century was the most popular form of easel painting. Idealized royal portraits were inevitably linked with propaganda – stressing the *sacrum* and *officium* of the ruler. Royal portraits had unique features – which rendered it possible to distinguish a royal portrait from that of a commoner. Majestic kings and their wives were painted in their coronation robes, heroically with the sceptre, crown or sword, often with victorious battles in the background, or horseback portraits – reserved for kings until the 17th century (for example, T. Donabella, *Sigismund III at the Battle of Smolensk*, 1611), later these poses were taken over by the magnates. Allegories of the ancient times were used in historical and battle oil painting, which was to promote and praise the success of monarchs, commanders, and politicians.

The propaganda aim of these paintings was not to show the individual features of individual models, but to put Polish-Lithuanian kings and their families in the conventions of European royal portraits. The choice of how to be represented was conscious and depended on current political aims, that is why the Vasa kings preferred northern European painting (mostly Dutch and German) and Italian, which was changed by King Jan III Sobieski in favour of the French orientation.

Also important political and military events were painted in different graphical techniques.

The most prominent painter of the Vasa period was Daniel Schultz, who was born and died in Gdańsk, but who was educated in the Netherlands, Flanders, and France. He painted the portraits of three kings: Jan Casimir, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, and Jan III Sobieski, as well as a gallery of preeminent Polish politicians: Janusz and Bogusław Radziwiłł, Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski, Łukasz Opaliński, Krzysztof Pac and others. Schutz's paintings are the most splendid achievement of the Old Polish portrait (e. g. *The Portrait of Jan Casimir in Polish Dress*, 1649), imitated even in the 18th century.

In the times of Wladislaus IV and Jan Casimir, an evolution from stiff constructivism towards more complex and creative techniques, which led to the level of mature Baroque, was stopped by the invasion of the Swedes in 1655–1656.

4.3. Belles Lettres

Literature quickly felt the consequences of the Counter-Reformation, which censored also Catholic works: for example, those of Wespazjan Kochowski (1633–1700), a historian and poet who was accused of being too frivolous. Because of church censorship, but also self-censorship exercised by the people who did not work as professional writers, a lot of precious poetic and scientific work never came out in print. It would be an unjust simplification to judge the Baroque literature only on the basis of the printed Polish heritage, as ca. 30 % were devotional prints and panegyrics. Apart from that, also poetic pieces of universal significance were cre-

ated. Their authors were of all confessional backgrounds: Reformed (Daniel Naborski), Unitarian (Wacław Potocki, Zbigniew Morsztyn, Olbrycht Karmanowski), and Catholic (Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, Samuel Twardowski).

Literary activity, interrupted by wars, had a two-layer path. The first one was the illustration of the level of literacy in the society and the popularity of school teaching of poetry writing and rhetoric, and the second one was sophisticated art. The most prominent poet of the Catholic current of belles lettres was M. K. Sarbiewski, who was also known as the Christian Horace. He wrote in Latin, and his poems were read all over Europe. Invoking the Bible, he claimed that the main topic of poetry should be man, and that a poet not only imitates reality but also creates it. In the oeuvre of Sarbiewski, one can find the duality of Catholic metaphysical poetry of the Baroque period, in which innovative formal means were always subject to diligent Church teaching.

Baroque literature, on the one hand, was deeply interested in religiousness, especially personal piety and the relation between man and God. On the other hand, it was profoundly erotic. A good example is the poetry of J.A. Morsztyn, who wrote sophisticated poems about courtly love, but, at the same time, was the author of religious reflections (*Pokuta w Kwartanie* [*A Feverish Atonement*]). The poetry of W. Potocki was much more Sarmatian in character. His epigrams show noble daily life, not always full of hospitality, equality and estate solidarity, as it was widely claimed. A lot of the poets wrote poetic epic poetry, describing historical events in which they participated.

A Unitarian and Radziwiłłs' client, Zbigniew Morsztyn, described the ordeals of war and the loneliness of a soldier and prisoner of war, betrayed by his friends, doubtful about his salvation and seeking refuge in God. His private experience of the Deluge made him put that in writing in *Rytmy Marsowe* (*The Martial Rhythms*). Samuel Twardowski was also an epic poet who was rather critical towards the Sarmatian reality. W. Kochowski, in turn, was the proponent of the Golden Liberty and the political system of the Commonwealth, *Psalmodia polska, Roczników polskich klimakter* (*Polish Psalms. The Times of Doom of Polish Generations*).

Burgher literature, after its heyday at the beginning of the 17th century, underwent a decline, but it was nonetheless still widely read and older texts were reprinted even in the 1720s. This genre of literature influenced the neighbouring countries. In Silesia, for example, the Lutheran ministers: Jerzy Bock of Oleśnica and Adam Gdajusz of Kluczbork wrote pieces with realistic descriptions of the life of the burghers and peasants, along with criticism of nobility.

The popularity of literature during this period was connected with the social unrest, mobility, wartime, which presented a new image of the world. War campaigns and different human ordeals – especially during the Swedish Deluge – inspired a new genre of memoirs, which mostly remained in manuscript. Soldiers' memoirs (by Samuel and Bogusław Maskiewicz, Jan Cedrowski, Mikołaj Jemiółowski, Jan Chryzostom Pasek, and many others), as well as diaries, private journals, family chronicles, and *silvae rerum* were very popular. It is also a period when women took pens in their hands. Political writing became especially popular during periods of

interregnum, rebellions, and confederations. Correspondence, kept until today in archives and public record offices, concerned a wide variety of private and public matters.

4.4. Science

In the cosmopolitan milieu of Baroque scholars, confession and social background were of secondary importance. Indeed, medicine and other applied sciences were, apart from the military service, the only ways of social advancement not dominated by the nobility. Relative religious tolerance, compared with most countries of Western Europe, of the first half of the 17th century, which brought to the Commonwealth many non-Catholic intellectuals seeking asylum, made it possible for science to flourish. Some of the intellectual immigrants were: Johann Ludwig von Wozogen, a Unitarian, doctor and philosopher, John Jonston – known as Scoto-Polonus, who was a Calvinist and polymath, and who graduated from the universities in Leiden and Cambridge, or a Bohemian brother, John Amos Comenius – known as the forefather of modern pedagogy, who resided at Leszczyńskis' court in Leszno in 1628–1655. All of them were escapees from the Habsburg state, which was in the final stage of Catholic confessionalization, and in the Commonwealth they were able to find magnate patrons.

Europe was also under the influence of the philosophical and social thought of Polish Brethren, known as Arians (in the Commonwealth and as Socinians in the West) – initially, from the gymnasium in Raków and, after it was shut down in 1638 and the anti-Arian bills were issued in 1658–1668, from the Netherlands, where most of them found asylum. Socinian literature was read in many countries, especially in England: notably, the philosophy of John Locke – the precursor of liberal thought – was influenced by it.

Thanks to Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno, who created Polish philosophical and political terminology, philosophy (including political thought) was able to flourish. Adam Burski – a philologist and philosopher, professor of the Academy of Zamość, commentator of Cicero and a predecessor of Francis Bacon in the inductive methodologies for scientific inquiry; Grzegorz Knapski (Cnapius) – a Jesuit and the author of *Thesaurus Polono-Latino-Graecus* (1621). There was also a profound interest in the oriental studies, including a translation of the Quran by Piotr Starkowiecki. Szymon Starowolski (1588–1656) was a polymath, and like others of his kind aimed to encompass many disciplines of science in one oeuvre. He was the author of about 70 works ranging from history, via political thought, geography, to military art.

In their vast majority, the nobles did not understand the need for theoretical reflection, as most of their education was practical – they gained the knowledge that was necessary for the pursuit of a political, military or legal career. Also among the magnates, there were only a few people who had authentic intellectual interests: like Ł. Opaliński, a political writer and the Crown Court Marshall, or J. A. Morsztyn, a diplomat and poet. The royal patronage of King Jan III Sobieski (much smaller than during the Vasa period) limited itself to supporting individual scientists, like

a Gdańsk astronomer Johannes Hevelius (since 1677), who was given a lifelong salary of 1000 zlotys and whose breweries exempted were from taxation. Hevelius named one of the constellations which he had discovered *Scutum Sobiescii* as a token of gratitude.

The interest in the past, inherited from the Renaissance, contributed the development of historiography, even though it was based on false general assumptions (the Sarmatian myth). However, it was now its methodology was improved. The profession of a historian was an honour. History became part of the curriculum in the 17th-century private and public education, and was a tool of patriotic upbringing of both nations of the Commonwealth. The need to gather and protect monuments from the past was also a new phenomenon. The scope of interest was quite wide, from political history (W. Kochowski, Szymon Rudawski), confessional history (Stanisław Lubieniecki, a Unitarian, author of *Historia Reformationis Polonicae*, 1685; Calvinists Andrzej and Wojciech Węgiński) or the history of science (Jan Brożek). Kasper Niesiecki, wrote *Korona polska* (*The Polish Crown*, 1728–1743), a genealogy of European noble families, and King Jan III Sobieski supported his court historiographer W. Kochowski and a mathematician and librarian in Wilanów, the Jesuit Adam Kochański.

Political practice was connected with works written by prominent parliamentarians, who presented their ideas of reforming the state (the turn of the 17th and the 18th centuries) and generally were the proponents of republican interpretation of *monarchia mixta*. *Monita Politico – Moralia et Icon Ingeniorum*, 1664 is a collection of private and public maxims by Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro, which illustrates this tendency.

Economic thought was mostly connected to monetary issues. Polish mercantile thinkers (Stanisław Zaremba, Krzysztof and Łukasz Opaliński, Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro) fostered a wider development of the economy, supporting cities, commerce, and industry. Fredro was the first Polish economist who promoted industry more than agriculture.

In the sciences, theoretical speculation was combined with experiments and the principle of utility. The development of metrology and fortification was connected with a progress in mathematics. Jan Brożek, professor of the Academy of Cracow (research in stellate polygons), Stanisław Pułdowski (theory of numbers and logarithms), Joachim Stegmann, Adam Kochański (mechanics and the construction of clocks), S. Solski, Bartłomiej Nataniel Wąsowski – all based their research on Western European achievements. In astronomy the most prominent names were J. Hevelius of Gdańsk, the creator of modern selenography and J. Brożek, one of the first scientists who – despite the Church censorship – propagated the heliocentric theory of Nicolas Copernicus. Famous physicists Valerianus Magnus and Tito Livio Burattini worked on the court of Wladislaus IV. Kazimierz Siemionowicz, a general of artillery, was the precursor of rocket armies in the first half of the 17th century.

4.5. Theatre

Interest in theatre, which was typical of Baroque culture in Europe, was also prevalent in the Polish royal court. At the beginning of the 17th century, an English theatre troupe performed one of Shakespeare's plays at the court of Sigismund III Vasa, and the Vasa weddings with Habsburg duchesses were always accompanied by ballet. The first Vasa king was more interested in chamber music, so theatre was rather incidental. Wladislaus IV created a theatre chamber in the royal castle, and then they became popular in magnate residencies (Łańcut – Lubmirski family, in Białystok – Branicki family, also at the Potocki, and Radziwiłł courts). Initially, foreign theatre ensembles were invited, but Polish translations and plays followed soon.

Everyday rituals in family and public life were also very theatrical (see Chapter Seven, 1.8). Speeches, music, dance, and tournaments resembled a theatrical performance and demanded that the spectators were sufficiently informed in order to fully participate in them. The commoners were in touch with theatre through religious mysteries.

A separate type of theatre was school theatre, which existed in Protestant cities of Toruń, Gdańsk, and Kėdainiai, as well as in the Jesuit colleges. Even though most of the staged plays were devoted to religious matters, and moralising in tone, during the interludes various scenes from everyday life were performed. The best Protestant theatre was located in Leszno, at the Polish Brethren college. J. A. Comenius was the author of their plays and he followed the rule "playing to learn." The Italian concepts of commedia dell'arte were used, with the figure of Arlecchino. In Great Poland, by virtue of the magnate patronage of the Leszczyński family, the first performance of Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (*The Bourgeois Gentleman*; published in Leszno in the print shop of Michael Buk in 1687) took place.

The social reception of didactic plays performed in Jesuit schools was much wider. Among 30 stages of this sort in the first half of the 18th century, the Kalisz college seemed extraordinary. Cnapius was the most famous playwright of the time. Realistic interludes were introduced in order to better appeal to the spectators – with scenes of everyday life performed in Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian. The performances were usually accompanied with music, which was much more popular in the court theatres.

4.6. Music

Polyphonic music was popular in the Commonwealth, but during the early Baroque it was performed mostly in the vocal-instrumental version. Its main centres were:

1. Court ensembles (with the royal ensemble) practicing instrumental music (dance and entertainment) as well as a new secular form called *dramma per musica*, and then Italian opera, which was replaced by oratorios, motets, and cantatas during the Advent and Lent period.

2. Church ensembles (cathedral, collegiate, convent) and parish bands, which performed religious but also secular forms of music with religious lyrics (vocal-instrumental concerts, psalms during vespers, with organs, cantata litanies).
3. School bands: Jesuit, and since the second part of the 17th century also Piarist and Theatine – usually not as good as the professional ones, with a mixed repertoire.

Information about royal court music dates back to the Vasa period, there are no earlier records. Since the 15th century, grandiose moments of royal life were accompanied with music: vocal and instrumental, depending on the occasion. In the 17th century music was a constant element of court life. Ca. 1611 the private royal ensemble of Sigismund III Vasa moved from Cracow to Warsaw. The first conductor was Krzysztof Klabon (who earlier worked for Stephen Bathory), and in 1603–1623 Asprillo Pacelli; in 1624–1625, the position was occupied by Giovanni Francesco Anerio, and then by Marco Scacchi, when the royal ensemble had 60 musicians, mostly Italians. Zygmunt Gonzaga Myszkowski and Mikołaj Wolski, the Crown Marshals, were responsible for inviting Italian musicians to the royal court, and in return they were given royal promotions and considerable wealth.

At the beginning of the reign of Jan Casimir (1648–1652), the royal ensemble headed by Kaspar Förster consisted of 36 musicians (including 12 Italian singers), but before the Deluge it had to be diminished because of the lack of a patron. The ensemble at the court of Jan III Sobieski was renowned, even though it did not have many great artists, apart from Viviano Augustini and Jacek Różycki. King Jan III Sobieski did not find much delight in music; according to the contemporary Kazimierz Sarnecki, he preferred private bandura performances, rather than French music.

The Vasa dynasty patronage brought formal progress in the matter of composition. Adam Jarzębski – one of the first Eastern European composers of instrumental music with harmonic influences from Italy, who composed canzoni and concerti ca. 1620 – is a great example. A lot of interesting original Polish composers (Bartłomiej Pękiel, Jacek Różycki, Stanisław Sylwester Szarzyński, Marcin Kretzmer SJ) composed new music. B. Pękiel (the next conductor after M. Scacchi at the royal court of Jan Casimir) composed an oratorio *Audite mortales*, a splendid example of sacral art. Its topic was the Last Judgment.

Opera was another genre, which developed at the royal court of Wladislaus IV, especially *dramma per musica*, a theatrical spectacle with vocal parts and ballet (the term opera appeared after 1650). The date of the performance of the first opera in the Commonwealth is unknown. Some musicologists believe that it was in 1621. It was the first Italian opera at the court of Stanisław Lubomirski, which was performed for the next 20 years. The second opera centre was the Warsaw royal court.

Prince Wladislaus travelled to Italy in 1624–1625 and saw different operas, such as: *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* and *La regina Sant Orsola*. Thanks to him, the first Polish opera, *Galatea*, was performed in Warsaw in 1628. It had many intermissions and special machinery, built by a theatre engineer brought from Mantua. In 1635–1648, 12 operas and 3 ballets premiered at the royal theatre. A court playwright, Virgilio Puccitelli, wrote the libretti and several distinguished

composers wrote the music. The last *dramma per musica* was staged at the Warsaw castle a month before the king had passed (*Circe delusa*). As a result of the Swedish Deluge, royal theatre collapsed. After the war, operas were staged occasionally, just for the state celebrations.

Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki organized ballets and comedies at the Warsaw court. Jan III Sobieski used theatre as a means of propaganda. For example, in the piece *Balet podczas szczęśliwej koronacji Króla JMci Jana III* (*A Ballet During the Fortunate Coronation of His Majesty King Jan III*) Glory and Europe were protected by the king against the Turkish threat. Plays by Jean Racine (*Andromaque*, 1667 [staged in the Commonwealth 1675]) and Molière (*Les Femmes savantes* [*The Learned Ladies*], 1672 [1684]) were staged for an evidently political purpose: to show the European level of the Polish-Lithuanian court and to present the aspirations of its monarchs in international relations. Also the Jesuit school theatre and magnate theatre were used either to strengthen the royal authority or to weaken it.

The Baroque church was very much concerned about embellishing religious ceremonies by adding polyphonic music and chant. It involved building organs in churches – the most impressive organs are still preserved in the Observant church in Leżajsk (1682). Church concerto, petits motets, and vocal-instrumental mass were the most common genres in sacral music at the time. Its most notable composers were Marcin Mielczewski (the conductor of Prince Charles Ferdinand Vasa in Ujazdów) and Franciszek Lilius, working at the Wawel ensemble. In the mid-17th century, after the wartime turmoil, hunger and plague, there was another wave of sacral compositions. The compositions of S. Szarzyński, an author of sonatas, and Grzegorz Gerwazy Gorczycki, who wrote chorales and traditional Polish songs, can serve as an example of Mature Baroque music. In the Cracow milieu, associated with the *bursa* of music, new forms, such as litanies and psalms, besides concerti, predominated. It was a sign that the Baroque came to an end.

At the same time, some changes in the choice of musical instruments were noted. The lyre was the favourite instrument of the Renaissance and Mannerism, and during the Baroque period it was replaced by the organs. Great organists in the Commonwealth were mostly foreigners: Vincenzo Bertholusi, who died in 1608 in Copenhagen, and Paul Seifert, who worked in the Warsaw ensemble until he moved to Gdańsk in 1612. There were also some citizens of the Commonwealth active in the royal ensemble: Adam Mosiążek (ca. 1615), Jan Schmidt from Lubawa (1638–1655) and Stanisław Rembach (ok. 1655), who were also famous abroad, and Michał from Cracow (Cracovita), a royal organist in Copenhagen in 1633, or Andrzej Niżankowski (died in 1655), an organist in the Basilica di Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome.

Naturally, apart from organists in secular ensembles, there were also church organists, especially among the Dominicans, Augustinians (in Cracow and Warsaw), Franciscans, Observants, Cistercians (in Mogilev) and others. After the Deluge, many organs were fixed, and also new ones were established: in Olkusz, in Leżajsk (1682), in Sandomierz (1693), and at the end of the Baroque period in Oliwa.

Polyphonic songs of the Baroque were composed for religious confraternities (by the Dominican church in Cracow or the Benedictines in Staniątka). Apart from vocal-instrumental ensembles in the vicinity of cathedrals, collegiate churches, and convents, there were also the *a capella* choirs (like of the Wawel until 1872). Some of them used the organs as a support for the choir (like in the Łowicz collegiate). Besides, motets and hymns were performed.

Among popular church songs were collections of carols. There are 378 carols from the 18th and the 19th centuries preserved to our times and a few hundred univocal melodies: from pure Rococo style of Antonio Vivaldi and Arcangelo Corelli to the marches, kujawiaks, mazurs,¹⁹¹ and polonaises. Lent songs were very popular, performed at Easter Sepulchres and during flagellation processions organized by burgher confraternities and student organizations up to the times of Stanisław August Poniatowski. Primate Michał Poniatowski prohibited processions of the so-called “kapnicy” (dressed in hooded robes with skeleton shins). In 1786, he prohibited rituals outside the so-called agendas (approved rituals). Pilgrimage songs are another example of Baroque chants.

Protestant hymnals were also composed: *Niektóre psalmy Dawidowe, częścią poprawione, częścią znowu przełożone na stare nuty* (Davidic Psalms, Partly Corrected, and Partly Transcribed for Old Melodies) Salomona Rysińskiego, in Gdańsk in 1610; *Kancjonał, to jest księgi psalmów, hymnów i pieśni duchownych* (The Hymnal that is Hymns, and Spiritual Songs) by Jan Turnowski in print up to 1776, the hymnal of Piotr Artomiusz- Krzesichleb, to 1646; and Unitarian: *Pieśni nabożne* (Pious Songs) by Stanisław Lubieniecki printed with psalms by Smalcus (Valentin Schmalz) in 1610 and 1615, *Modlitwy i pieśni nabożne* (Prayers and Pious Songs) from 1638 by Jan Stojęński and *Kancjonał* (Hymnbook) by Stanisław Lubieniecki the Younger, who died in 1675. Polish Protestants in Silesia used *Doskonały kancjonał* (A Perfect Hymnbook, Brzeg 1673) by Jan Accoluthus, a minister in Wrocław. Protestant Masurians had their own chant book by Jerzy Wasiński.

In terms of secular music, popular song of petty nobility, burghers and the populace gained acclaim. It was usually sung to popular melodies, but also some new tunes were composed. From the beginning of the 17th century to the times of Sobieski, soldier songs were popular, along with historical songs and chivalric “dumki” – for example, in honour of Gabriel Hołubek, the victor of Byczyna, to commemorate Aleksander Józef Lisowski or Samuel Korecki (who played the wind pipe in prison after the battle of Cecora). Hunting songs were a Baroque feature, which later remained in folklore. Songs accompanied every noble feast, (according to the papal nuncio Giovanni Paolo Mucante from 1596) as the nobility worked in the morning, having a late dinner, which was always accompanied by music for the whole night. Throughout the 17th century, there were at least 20 booklets with 300 songs written by the teachers from the Academy of Cracow teachers, cantors, and students, which were performed during dances. Burgher poetry was written without

191 Mazur is a traditional folk dance from Masovia.

the tunes, and folk music was put down on paper only if it was somehow connected with the nobility, e. g. the song about hetman Wincenty Korwin Gosiewski. Folk music developed its typical forms, like the mazur, which influenced European music, including the sonatas of Georg Philipp Telemann. That confirms the existence of fairly wide range of music performed in the countryside (ail houses, weddings).

5. Late Baroque and Rococo (1670–1770)

5.1. Architecture and the Arts

In the 18th century, during the 60 years called the Wettin times, intellectual and cultural stagnation was prevalent, and a cultural enlivenment was noticed only in the 1740s and 1750s. Secular and sacral architecture was very lavish. In Warsaw the Saxon Office for Architecture was founded, which was a modern institution directed by great architects and engineers, with a qualified personnel and workers brought from Saxony.

The Saxon Axis – a palace-garden-urban complex in Warsaw – expressed the royal ambitions of Augustus II. A huge residence imitating Versailles was to be built in contemporary Piłsudski Square in Warsaw. Between Karowa Street and the election field in Wola, a long urban axis was planned. The first segment was supposed to pass through the rhomboidal garden leading to a palace, situated on this axis at the crossing of two diagonal streets. The Saxon architect Matthäus Daniel Pöppelman, the creator of the Dresden Zwinger, managed to realize a part of the garden (1727) and a garden pavilion (1724). The Saxon Park in Warsaw is what remained after these plans, and it has the largest collection of Rococo park-sculptures in Poland. The Saxon Palace was created at the time of Augustus III, who rebuilt the Morsztyn Palace, which existed since the 17th century (since 1744, designed by Carl Friedrich Pöppelman, the son of Matthäus), but according to E. Rostworowski, it was a majestic decoration of an empty stage.

In palace architecture, French-Dresden Rococo – a European art style – was prevalent ca. 1720–1770. Architects left the pompous monumental style of Louis XIV and adjusted garden pavilions and smaller palaces to the modern lifestyle. Rococo first appeared in Poland ca. 1740. Magnates built new palaces or refurbished their old ones in Warsaw (Bieliński and Brühl palaces) and in Puławy (the Czartoryski family), designed mostly by the Saxon architects. Actual residences were created in the provinces. The most impressive one was in Białystok and belonged to Hetman Jan Klemens Branicki, often referred to as the Podlasiian Versailles; also the Potocki family had their palace in Radzyń Podlaski. Rococo residences were usually lavish, with gardens, pavilions, and artificial caves and ruins, which was the perfect scenery for courtly theatre, garden plays, and eroticism.

The eastern provinces of the Commonwealth flourished during the Wettin times. It was the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Red Ruthenia, and Volhynia that had the most impact on art in the Commonwealth – next to Warsaw and Cracow. The patrons there were most generous and invited the most talented artists to work. The

Vilnius School of Architecture was famous for its sacral constructions: churches with azure towers, multi-storey buildings with complex wavy shapes of facades and peaks. This led to such a fracturing of the building and sophisticated effects of chiaroscuro that the structure of the edifice was completely vague (especially in the 1760s). The church in Hlybokaye (1715) is considered to be the first building of this sort and the church and monastery in Berezwecz (1756–63) as an architectural complex, which exemplifies this artistic orientation. It was designed by an unknown architect for the Basilians (the patronage of the Korsak family), and apart from that there were hundreds of smaller buildings in Vitebsk, Polotsk, Druya, Mogilev, Vilnius Calvary, Minsk, Dzyatlava (Polish: *Zdzięcioł*), Łużki, Grodno etc. Also the church of St. George in Vilnius (rebuilt in 1755) represents this type of architecture.

The interior of the churches designed by the Vilnius group did not have much woodwork and the architects created the brick or stucco altars. As a result, the integration tendencies are visible in the shapes of the churches, as in the Dominican church in Vilnius (rebuilt after the fire in 1748, and 1758 until 1770), where the confessional transforms into a pulpit and finally becomes an altar.

Another feature of mid-18th century architecture was the use of curved lines and chiaroscuro. The Cistercian abbey complex in Jędrzejów (1751–1754) and the massive column façade of the Jesuit church of St. John in Vilnius (1740–1752), which has stucco imitating marble and 10 altars in filers and in naves, where the main altar is a huge structure combining three smaller altars.

In wooden and brick architecture, the Baroque style supplanted the Gothic forms. Especially northwestern provinces (urban and rural territories) of the Commonwealth were intensely colonized by German and Silesian immigrants. That is why in the 18th century a visible division into modern northwestern architecture and conservative southeastern architecture (drawing mostly on medieval tradition) was noted.

Sarmatian artistic taste of Polish-Lithuanian artists was more visible in interior design – also in older buildings, which caused a specific mixture of styles. Façades were rather simple, but the interior was dominated by lavish design. Figural sculptures made by Polish woodcutters were very expressive, altars had many levels and stellae, and organs were filled with ornaments. Observant's church in Leżajsk, the Corpus Christi Basilica in Cracow were all decorated according to the principle of *horror vacui* without a single empty spot. According to M. Karpowicz, a similar tendency was visible in Spain – a country also situated on the borderland of Eastern (Arabic) and Western culture.

Illusion wall painting flourished. Magnates commissioned mythological, historical, and representative heroic portraits. At the same time, Sarmatian portraits developed. Exoticism and oriental fashion was predominant in decorative arts, and palace walls were decorated with lavish carpets. Since Jan III Sobieski, these carpets and incrustated weapons were produced in the Commonwealth, and the dominant aesthetic taste was influenced by sacral and court art, which was appealing not only to the nobility but also to the burghers.

5.2. Literature

The writing of the Wettin period was dominated by devotional literature and panegyrics, in which Baroque rhetoric and poetics were so pretentious, that they verged on grotesque. Magnates, priests and many women were writers; the most famous woman writer of the Wettin times was Elżbieta Drużbacka.

Political occasional writings encompassed rhetoric means along with vulgar pasquils. Cracow and Zamość academics produced “learned” calendars, which contained astrological forecast, economical and medical advice, where pieces of practical knowledge intertwined with superstition. They were collected by priest Benedykt Chmielowski in *Nowe Ateny, albo Akademia wszelkiej scjencji pełna* (*New Athens, or an Academy Full of All Science*, 1745). Such literature was practiced in all European countries at the time but in the Commonwealth of the first half of the 18th century it was the mainstream – which only revealed the rustic and conformist mentality of the society. High literature focused on copying old schemes, and was rather dull, whereas noble and burgher folklore of the Wettin times was full of fantasy, expression, and a certain type of humour (anecdotes, facetiae, riddles). Some of it (collections of church songs, carols and facetiae) survived in oral tradition of the noble manor up to the 19th century.

5.3. Science

At the end of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th centuries, scientific research was hindered not only by political and economic crisis in the Commonwealth but also by the Counter-Reformation. Catholic schools plunged in futile speculations and lost touch with Western European centres. Church censorship rendered free exchange of thoughts impossible. Even academic professors were not allowed to read publications from the *index librorum prohibitorum*. Representatives of the *scientia curiosa* continued baroque polimathia: Gabriel Rzączyński (*Historia naturalis curiosa Regni Poloniae et Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae*, 1721) and Jesuit Wojciech Tylkowski, who exposed *raritates*, *curiositates*, *mirabilia* in his *Philosophia Curiosa* (1669). Besides useful works on mechanics, agriculture or music acoustics, they also wrote pseudo-philosophical works, which made a mockery of the Late Baroque scientific discourse in the eyes of the posterity.

5.4. Music and Theatre

Since 1699 (the third year of the reign of Augustus II the Strong Wettin), regular performances of Dresden opera were presented at the Warsaw Castle. Their shows were in Neapolitan style and together with the king they travelled between Warsaw, Cracow and Dresden. The first show was a 1725 ballet *Proserpina*, conducted by the royal Kapellmeister Johann Christian Schmidt. In 1724, a theatre building was erected in Królewska Street, in the vicinity of the Saxon Garden. That is how the first public opera house in the Commonwealth was created.

Augustus III Wettin was much more fond of opera and invited magnate ensembles to Warsaw (e.g. from the Grand Lithuanian Chancellor Michał Fryderyk Czartrycki), so that there were more than 100 musicians performing on stage. Opera performances took place twice a week, but due to the expenses the repertoire was changed only twice a year. The operas lasted a few hours, the king was a constant goer, but in general the theatre was empty. In 1748, 24 years after erecting the provisional building, the Wettin king had it redone in Italian style, with the ground floor for the nobility, benches for burghers and three levels of lodges. During the time when August III was constantly in the Commonwealth (1758–1762), 11 operas were staged. His royal composer, Johann Adolf Hasse, composed them all with libretti by Pietro A. D. Trapassi (known as Metastasio), the Vienna court poet. After the death of Augustus III, the opera was closed for two years, the ensemble was dispersed, and the building was put down in 1772.

Starting from the second half of the 18th century, also the magnate vocal-instrumental ensembles were active (e.g. at the court of Hetman Adam Sieniawski, 1724), as well as Italian operas (in the theatre of the voivode of Kiev, Stanisław Lubomirski). At the Radziwiłł court in Nesvizh, the ensemble existed since 1733, but opera performances were initiated by princess Urszula Wiśniowiecka – Radziwiłł, the wife of Michał known as Rybeńka, who since 1749 staged her own comedy plays with intermezzi and libretti in Polish. After her death, the actor troupe existed in Slutsk until 1760. Rybeńka's son Karol alias Panie Kochanku maintained the artistic troupe and the opera kept on working. In 1761, his orchestra had 25 people, who were mainly Polish; only virtuosi were foreigners. When Stanisław August Poniatowski was elected, “Panie Kochanku” – who opposed the newly elected king, emigrated and hence the ensemble stopped functioning. Also the court of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł in Biała Podlaska had an opera house and ballet, which comprised of peasant children, as well as black children brought from abroad. Italian opera was also performed at the courts of Franciszek Salezy Potocki in Tartaków (1763), Wacław Rzewuski in Pidhirtsi and Jan Klemens Branicki when he married Izabella Poniatowska.

5.5. The Beginnings of the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment in the Commonwealth started by virtue of its contacts with the foreigners. The Polish-Saxon personal union did not cause the expansion of German culture, and it fostered the popularity of French culture to spread. The Dresden court followed the European fashion at the time and it was not German, but French in which language the Wettin kings communicated with Polish noblemen. Also the Lorraine court of Stanisław Leszczyński (1737–1766) was very influential in terms of supporting French culture among Polish elites.

French language and culture created a new cultural formation. The social range of the French language was much wider than Sarmatian Latin in schools, courts and offices, which became a jargon understood only between the members of the Old Polish Bar (like Ruthenian in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). In political theory

and practice, the *reverentia antiquitatis* diminished in the mid-17th century in most European countries, as republican ideology lost with Enlightened absolutism.

Catholic Commonwealth also became an eager recipient of the French religious literature, and especially after 1740, the number of Polish translations of French prayer books, collections of sermons, and theological handbooks increased. This shaped the ambience of Enlightened Catholicism, which continued the Tridentine reform and juxtaposed wise “religion of decent men” with superstition and fanaticism. There were also Polish translations of French, English, and Italian philosophical books, texts in economy and theory of law, as well as French love stories.

An additional factor contributing to the enlightened modernization was the influx of foreigners, imported to work in manufactures and magnate courts as professionals, artists, teachers and secretaries. The majority of them were Saxons (and among them many Protestants), but also Frenchmen, Italians, and Swiss. Some of them settled down in Poland as entrepreneurs or bankers. In Warsaw a very active foreigner community began to take shape, and along with that came a vogue for foreign fashion and intellectual novelties. The magnate courts were during the Wettin reign was great places for artistic development. Foreigners could easily reach ennoblement, especially if they were architects of fortifications. German artists did not assimilate that easily due to their constant contacts with Saxony.

Immigrants from Western Europe supported the Commonwealth’s intellectual elite (originating mostly from among magnates and clergy). The magnates were becoming more and more fluent in French and much more often travelled across Europe (no longer only for education purposes or as “bachelor’s journeys”), where the main goal was the royal court in Dresden, and Italy with the Holy See, but also Paris, England and Switzerland. In the 1740s freemasonry became popular among the magnates, which also enlivened international contacts. The clergy always maintained close relations with Rome, which became an intellectual enlightened centre during the papacy of Benedict XIV.

Confrontation with Europe also revealed the discrepancy between the Commonwealth and the West in terms of reform attempts. Political literature at the times of Augustus III contained reform programs and modernization plans: *Głos wolny ubezpieczający* (*Free Voice Securing Freedom*, 1743; assigned to Stanisław Leszczyński but most probably written by one of his supporters), Stanisław Ponia-towski’s (the father of future king) *List ziemianina* (*A Letter of a Landowner*, 1744), Stefan Garczyński’s *Anatomia Rzeczypospolitej* (*The Anatomy of the Commonwealth*, 1751), and especially Stanisław Konarski’s *O skutecznym rad sposobie* (*On the Means of Effective Counsels*, 1760–1763). All of these treatises were very critical of the social-political reality and the mixed political system of the Commonwealth.

As the development of education progressed, there was also progress in science and scientific research. Royal Prussian cities were scientific centres during the Wettin times. There were scientific associations – a typical European burgher way of assembling academics in the first half of the 18th century. These were: in Gdańsk *Societas Litteraria* 1720–1727 and *Societas Physicae Experimentalis* 1745; in Elbląg *Societas Litteraria* 1721–1732. These were centres of: history (Gottfried Lengnich),

astronomy, physics and chemistry (Michał Krzysztof Hanow), zoology and botany, geography, medicine.

The Załuski brothers were active in Warsaw: Andrzej Stanisław the Bishop of Cracow and Józef Andrzej the Bishop of Kiev who created Załuski Library in Warsaw – one of the largest European libraries (ca. 300 000 printed volumes and 10 000 manuscripts) and the first public library opened in 1747. Just like in Western Europe, there was a critical tendency in historiography, connected with collecting primary sources. Maciej Dogiel, who was closely connected with the Załuski Library, published a collection of international treatises (*Codex diplomaticus Regni Poloniae et Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae* 1758–1764); Jan Daniel Janocki was a bibliographer; Lorenz Christoph Mizler von Kolof, a polymath published scholarly journals, like „Acta Litteraria” (1755–1756) or *Nowe Wiadomości Ekonomiczne i Uczzone* (*Economic and Scientific News*, 1758–1761); Stanisław Konarski started publishing a monumental collection of the Sejm constitutions *Volumina Legum*. At the same time, he was a very active defender of the purity of Polish language with his work on linguistic faults (*De emendandis eloquentiae vitiis*, 1741).

Marcin Świątkowski wrote a study on methodology (*Prodromus Polonus eruditae veritatis*, 1765) and in Vilnius Tomasz Żebrowski was a famous astronomer. In 1745, the second edition of Gabriel Rzączyński SJ work on the natural world of Poland and Lithuania was published (*Historia Naturalis...*). Most scientific endeavours in the Commonwealth during the Wettin times were rather ephemeral, and remained on the margin of science in late Baroque and early Enlightenment.

6. The Era of King Stanisław August Poniatowski

6.1. Civilizational Changes

The inhabitants of the Commonwealth of the second half of the 18th century lived and thought pretty much in the same way as their ancestors of the Sarmatian cultural formation. When juxtaposing the Wettin times with the Stanisław August Poniatowski period, one must keep a sense of proportion. Yet, it is beyond doubt that the changes taking place within European civilization century accelerated and became more widespread in the second half of the 18th. Agriculture, industry and commerce flourished, and population rose, urbanization progressed, the great accumulation of wealth went along with ferocious exploitation of colonies. Social contrast increased and the polarization of wealth and poverty grew, which was expressed by the constant tendency for the faster growth of prices than salaries.

Discrepancies between European countries rose. England, which entered the phase of industrial revolution distanced France and other countries of the Continent in terms of economic growth. Regardless, elite lifestyle and mentality became much more alike. Aristocracy was no longer content with ostentatious luxury: now, they were concerned rather with everyday comfort, got bored with living in the countryside, and hence started moving to the city. The elites of the Commonwealth during the Stanisław August Poniatowski times became more involved in international

circulation of thoughts and fashions. The Sarmatian mentality was overthrown by sophisticated elegance of ideas and concepts. Burgher elites became richer and tried to imitate aristocracy in lifestyle and their political aspirations became visible at the end of the 18th century.

The modernization process was hindered by the relics of estate structure and the economic and intellectual potential of the privileged and not privileged. The emergent awareness of the growing disproportion between reality and the possibilities of progress brought about criticism characteristic of the Enlightenment across Europe. A new social stratum formed: intelligentsia, which comprised of lawyers, clerks, doctors, bookkeepers, editors, scholars and writers – as well as secular intellectual groups. The second “*respublica litteraria*” or “the sect of philosophes” in early modern Europe – after Desiderius Erasmus gained much influence on public opinion in the salons and governments.

The new opinion formers were utilitarian and optimistic, they believed in administration, economy and judiciary reforms in order to create a world guided by reason. The state, which became the centre of interest, which expanded its control over the society in the 18th century. It contributed to the higher level of public safety, law and order in the cities, and comfort on public roads. At the same time it led to the growth of fiscal apparatus, army and navy. Yet, the society of the Commonwealth during the Wettin period lived almost completely outside any governmental structure.

The date of the election of Stanisław August Poniatowski is an important date, as it was the first time after 200 years when categories of the good of the state were brought up. It was a weak state, dependent on foreign protection and in constant turmoil, but it started initiatives in economy and made it possible for courts to function. The political events (the Bar confederation) weakened the magnates, but accelerated political and ideological emancipation of a great part of the nobility, which found an opportunity in public administration.

The rise of the new elites is visible in the reform activity of the second term of the Four-Year Sejm and the Kościuszko Uprising. Considering the international political situation and external threat, it should not be surprising that the short time of liberation from Russian control was not enough to make up for 200 years of civilizational delay. There is no clear answer to the question whether life of the Commonwealth’s citizens was better during the Wettin or Stanisław August Poniatowski period. Certainly they had a lesser sense of security, stability and wealth, but more opportunities to develop “Polish liberty” and “the public good”, which were a demagogic phrases rather than reality during the time of the mixed political system.

6.2. International Propaganda of Polish Reforms

Stanisław August Poniatowski worked on maintaining contacts with the European cultural elite from the very beginning of his reign; to gain acceptance for his reforms of the system of education, and to improve the image of the Commonwealth in international circles. Not all of his attempts were successful. Voltaire, with whom

the king corresponded and whom he invited to Poland, was very generous in complimenting him, but at the same time supported Catherine II in the dissident case and the Bar confederation. Denis Diderot did not react to the king's actions and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Gabriel Mably won over by Michał Wielhorski, supported the Bar confederation. Also the journey of Marie Thérèse Rodet Geoffrin to Warsaw in 1766 did not bring the expected results.

The king's correspondence brought more fruits. The diplomatic actions undertaken by his co-workers and by him personally, among the less illustrious representatives of the European "republica litteraria" and press organs: („La Gazette de Leyde”, „Le Courrier du Bas Rhin”). In 1778 he was admitted to the Petersburg Academy of Sciences and in 1791 to the Berlin Academy of Sciences. The heyday of Stanisław August Poniatowski's reforms was during the time of the Constitution of May 3, when the moderate phase of the French Revolution praised "the Polish revolution" and "the patriotic king."

6.3. The Enlightenment Influences in the Stanisław August Poniatowski's Commonwealth

The Enlightenment ideas permeated to the Commonwealth from the West in many different ways. Stanisław August employed many foreigners in his administration. Many of them, like Scipione Piattoli SP played a significant role during the Four-Years Sejm. The Roman Enlightenment influenced the modernization of Polish Catholicism in the field of moral teachings and upbringing, which was supported by educated clergymen (Stanisław Konarski, Hugo Kołłątaj). The Primate Michał Poniatowski was an admirer of German Enlightenment ideas of Febronianism and Josephinism, which stipulated a significant role of the clergy in building a modern state. The erudite compendia from Germany were an inspiration for the Polish scientific literature, like the *Pamiętnik Historyczno-Polityczny* (*Historical-Political Journal*) of a former Jesuit Piotr Świtkowski.

The Polish enlightenment was in closest contacts with France. Some of the Bar confederates (M. Wielhorski, I. Massalski) had close ties with J.-J. Rousseau, G. Mably and the French physiocrats. Bishop Massalski, as the President of the Commission of National Education employed Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, a well-known physiocrat. A lot of Frenchmen were involved in Polish political literature.

6.4. Urban Elites in the Enlightenment

Intellectual activity, mainly in urban milieu was connected with politics and social thought to an unprecedented degree. Warsaw was a centre for people of many different orientations: both burghers and nobility, who often shared their opinions. In the mid-18th century, there were also new places where one could meet and maintain social contacts: coffee shops and teashops, lecture cabinets, bookshops. A new phenomenon was born: the collaboration of burgher elites, parliamentary

leaders, and enlightened noble ideologists as well as intelligentsia coming from different estates of the realm.

Freemasonry was another characteristic form of assemblies of the period. It was an international ethical movement. Masonic lodges were closed associations, but not secret ones. The first lodges were created in Warsaw in the Wettin times (the Red Confraternity 1721, the lodge of the Three Brothers 1729–1767 with some breaks), and then in Poznań, Lviv, and Gdańsk. During the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, freemasonry flourished: the Lodge of the Virtuous Sarmat 1767, in 1769 transformed into the Great Lodge of the Virtuous Sarmat; The Great Lodge of the Polish Great East 1781, from 1784 to 1794 known as The Great East of the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The king himself was a free mason, and magnates had high positions in the lodge: August Czartoryski and his sons, the Potocki family, Michał Wielhorski, prince Józef Poniatowski, general Henryk Dąbrowski, Ignacy Działyński, as well as many foreigners and noble politicians. The ideas of humanitarianism and natural equality of people were fostered by freemasonry.

Freemasonry was particularly significant during the period of the Four-Year Sejm. More than seventy masons (usually supporters of the Constitution of 1791) were parliamentary members. As freemasonic lodges operated within wide international network, and thus masonry became a platform of new ideologies, concepts and ideals of the European Enlightenment – especially the right of each individual to have his own opinions and the right to express them.

6.5. Warsaw and the Province

The discrepancy between Warsaw and the province was a characteristic phenomenon of the period. Warsaw was the residence of the king (as during the Vasa period), but also as a real capital with urbanization tendencies. A new phenomenon known as enlightened Sarmatism developed – among people circulating between Stanisław August Poniatowski Warsaw and noble provinces. The contrast between the generation of fathers and sons was visible (according to Jerzy Michalski) in the Radom and Bar confederations against Warsaw and the enlightened Four-Year Sejm and Uprising.

6.6. Patronage

The royal patronage played a great role in the spreading of Enlightenment ideology and new aesthetic currents. Also some magnate residences were significant in this endeavour: Puławy of the Czartoryski family, Łańcut of the Lubomirski family and Slonim of the Ogiński family. Stanisław August surrounded himself with great artists. He worked with Polish architects: Jakub Fontana, Szymon Bogumił Zug, an artist from Toruń Ephraim Schröger and younger ones – Jakub Kubicki, Stanisław Zawadzki, and painters: Jan Bogumił Plersch, Łukasz Smuglewicz. But among the king's favourite artists were foreigners: Marcelo Bacciarelli, Bernardo

Bellotto (known as Caneletto) since 1767; Jean Pillement 1765–1767; Per Krafft the Elder 1767 and architects: Domenico Merlini since 1773 – after Fontana’s death the main royal architect of the Commonwealth, Johann Christian Kammsetzer – the second architect of the state. The king consulted the refurbishment of the royal Castle with Victor Louis, a French architect who spent 2 months in Warsaw in 1765 and sent his projects (unrealized) from Paris regarding exterior and interior design, and furniture design.

Stanisław August employed only foreign sculptors: André Le Brun (since 1768) and Giacomo Monaldi (from 1768 until his death in 1798), Franciszek Pinck and Tomasso Righi in the 1660s. In 1766, he invited Johann Philip Holzhaeusser from Berlin to work as a medallist, together with Jan Regulski. Stanisław August also employed less known painters (for renovation and decoration) and many craftsmen, with whom he remained in friendly terms. In 1781–1782 he held “Italian dinners” which he had with his artist friends. He also funded foreign scholarships for artists: painters Aleksander Kucharski, Franciszek Smuglewicz, Anna Rajeczka and Józef Wall, sculptors: Ephraim Schröger (in Italy, France, The Netherlands and Germany) and Johann Christian Kammsetzer (in Turkey). He discovered the talent of the painter Zygmunt Vogel. He commissioned European paintings – according to the 1795 inventory, the king had 2289 paintings in his collection.

The king’s literary patronage covered translation of ancient writers: Tacitus, Horace, Seneca and French writers: Jean de la Fontaine, Charles Louis Montesquieu, and above all financial support for artists. The king supported Stanisław Trembecki, Franciszek Salezy Jezierski, Franciszek Bohomolec, Franciszek Zabłocki, and Adam Naruszewicz.

In 1773, the king granted the Jesuit Stefan Łuskina the exclusive right to publish newspapers in Poland – which hindered the development of press until the Four-Year Sejm. The king supported print house owners and editors: Piotr Darfour and Michał Gröll, he granted Świtkowski with the „*bene merentibus*” medal. The king also supported the library and bookshop owner Józef Lex. The famous Thursday Dinners, which began in 1770 assembled artists, intellectuals, architects and politicians, which increased social prestige of artistic activity.

The cost of the royal patronage and the results he achieved cannot be evaluated with the current state of research. The king was often accused of being financially irresponsible and his patronage was treated as an excuse for spending money, which should not have been spent.

6.7. Architecture and Arts

In the last quarter of the 18th century, more monumental buildings were erected. As a result of the administration, military and education reforms, buildings of public utility were erected mainly in Warsaw. Royal cities, as well as private cities were subjected to the Commissions Boni Ordinis.

As a result, the significance of architecture rose in social consciousness. It found its place also in the academic curricula – as a scientific domain and several ar-

chitectural treatises were written. The works on the theory of architecture in the 16–17th centuries were mostly aimed for educated investors and architects with artistic aspirations, and usually did not look for technical detail. *Krótką nauką budowniczą podług nieba i zwyczaju polskiego* (*Short Instruction in the Building of Manor Houses, Palaces, Castles According to the Polish Sky and Customs*, 1659) ascribed to Łukasz Opaliński – made it easier for wealthier noblemen to build fashionable manors – but it was not technical in character. Jesuit handbooks of architecture started by Bartłomiej Wąsowski SJ (*Calliteconicorum seu de pulchro architecturae sacrae et civilis compendio collectorum liber...*, 1678) also lacked this kind of information. In the 18th century, when civil engineering developed (research in the persistence of material and construction), also new treatises were created and service design handbooks, like: *Budowanie wiejskie* by Piotr Świtkowski (*Countryside Constructing*, 1782). At the times of the Polish Kingdom they were very popular (post offices, churches, etc.).

The patronage of Stanisław August in the field of architecture – stemmed from his authentic fondness, as well as representation needs, and was focused on three facilities: the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the Ujazdów Castle and the Łazienki complex of buildings. In 1766–1769 the king's private property – the Ujazdów Castle was rebuilt, with constantly changing projects and design plans – and cost 1.5 million zlotys. The king was not satisfied with the final result and abandoned Ujazdów in 1773, which soon became a ruin and in 1784 was transformed into barracks. In 1774 the king decided to arrange the former baths of Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, on the Ujazdów terrain, as his summer residence. Works continued in 1775–1776 and were finished in 1795, after the king had left Warsaw. The Łazienki palace was surrounded by gardens, in which the king had other building erected: 1774–1776: The White House; in 1775–1779 Myślewicki Palace, in 1786–1788 the Orangery with a theatre; in 1790–1791 the amphitheatre and a permanent decoration on the island. Since 1778, the Łazienki Park was arranged in the style of an English park and to some extent it became a public park.

The project of redoing the external façade of the Royal Castle remained only on paper. In 1779–1782 the king erected a library on his private land in the vicinity of the Castle. The main merit of Stanisław August was the refurbishment of the Castle's interiors (using huge money from the Commonwealth's treasury), also necessary after the fire of 1767. Some of the elements inside served patriotic propaganda. The style the king preferred most, his sense of aesthetics, which was eclectic and yet harmonious and original, gained a name of the Stanisław Style (W. Tomkiewicz).

Palace architecture, which developed across the whole country thanks to the refurbishment of old magnate residencies in the cities: for Heinrich von Brühl – the Ossoliński Palace in 1752–1759; the Karaś Palace in Warsaw 1769–1772; the Jabłonowski Palace in Kock rebuilt by Szymon Zug in 1779, and provincial residencies: palaces in Białystok and Puławy since 1728 and others.

During the reign of Stanisław August, Baroque, Classicism and Rococo elements were visible in the arts. Along with the process of creating a modern nation – patriotic art was created, with historical elements rather than cosmopolitan ones

highlighted. It is visible in the paintings in Łazienki and the Royal Castle – especially in the works by Marcelo Bacciarelli, Jan Piotr Norblin, Franciszek Smuglewicz, and Aleksander Orłowski.

6.8. Classicism (1770–1800)

The third phase of Polish 18th century art, which lasted since 1770 to the end of the century, was very historical in style. Ancient past has become the point of reference to all forms of art. Stanisław August's personal taste influenced the development of Classicism in the 1770s, which was very rigorous in terms of decoration – with French and English inspirations and a symmetrical design with columns and a centrally placed dome.

Warsaw accepted Classicism very easily. A lot of public utility buildings and tenement houses were built respecting this style: the Rezler and Hurtig shopping mall from 1784 in Krakowskie Przedmieście, commercial-bank facilities of Piotr Tepper, resembling a classicistic palace (1774), “Pod Białym Orłem” (“Under White Eagle”) Hotel in Warsaw, the “Gruba Kaśka” (“Fat Kate”) Well (both designed by Zug). Also urban houses are popular: Karol Schultz, a banker, built 100 houses for sale. Magnate palaces were composed within the Market Square and streets, like the Działyński Palace in Poznań, 1773–1787.

New trends in architecture reached the provinces quickly: classical palaces were built in Great Poland and Podolia, with an estimated number of 40. At that time, the nobility also built palaces in Great Poland. The palaces preserved in Great Poland are classical: Palace in Ciężen of the Poznań bishops 1760–1768; in Pępów of Józef Mycielski since 1760; in Rogalin of Kazimierz Raczyński after 1768; in Pawłowice of Maksymilian Mielżyński after 1776; in Czerniejew of Jan Lipski ca. 1771–1775, as well as smaller ones in other places. In the 1780s the castle of the Sułkowski family in Rydzyn was rebuilt and became one of the most beautiful buildings in Europe. Some changes were also introduced in Włocław Bishop residency in Wolborz (1768–1773). The royal hunting palace in Kozienice (1775–1778) is also an interesting building. The most prominent architects were employed to work on these palaces.

Classicism also influenced the wooden style of noble manors, with columns and a tympana and a mansard roof – popular in the West, or the so-called Polish even roof. Local wood craftsmen were employed to erect these buildings, which often imitated the palace style.

Baroque and Rococo styles were still popular in sacral architecture: the façade of the Nuns of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary church in Warsaw, the Piarist church in Cracow, the Dominican and St. Catherine churches in Vilnius; followed by the Classicistic sacral architecture: (The Observant Dominican church in Warsaw 1760–1771; Canon Regulars in Trzemeszno 1752–1766; Lutheran 1777–1779 and St. Anne's in Warsaw 1786–1788). Samuel Bogumił Zug designed the Protestant parish in Leszno in Warsaw in a classical manner as well (today the Warsaw Chamber Opera).

6.9. Applied Art

A characteristic feature of the Polish-Lithuanian Enlightenment is the emergence of native applied art, produced mainly in manufactures, and thus easily available to a wide range of customers. Polish national dress became very popular, and its inevitable element was a decorative sash. Polish national dress became very popular, and its inevitable element was a decorative belt. Initially these belts were produced in Persia for the Commonwealth's market, and after the collapse of the Persian state (ca. 1722), the production was taken over by Armenians in the southeastern borderlands – in Stanisław, Buchach, and Brody – in the lands of Józef Potocki, the Great Crown Hetman (ca. 1730), and since 1738 in the Persian manufacture of Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł „Rybeńka” in Slutsk, in the Belarusian lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (the Slutsk sashes).

The belts produced in a competitive manufacture in Grodno, designed for Stanisław August Poniatowski by Antoni Tyzenhauz (ca. 1768), were less popular. They employed weavers from Lyon, who combined Oriental design with Western European ornaments. Belt factories were created all over the country at the end of the 18th century, including Cracow and Gdańsk. They worked as long as the *kontusz* was a popular dress – that is, up to the 19th century. Applied art preserved the traditional Sarmatian ideology and culture and maintained the national spirit during the Partitions. Today Sarmatian ideology is treated as the most original expression of Polish culture in early modernity.

6.10. Literature

Literature of the Stanisław period was a breakthrough both in terms of the form and content of literary pieces. The comedies of Franciszek Bohomolec and Józef Bielawski were still more moralizing than funny. Adam Naruszewicz wrote traditional panegyrics and conventional bucolic pieces, but also ironic satires. Laughter became a dangerous polemical tool. Stanisław Trembecki expressed rationalism and a libertine praise of life in his occasional poems and epic poems. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz disguised his political writings as fables and comedies.

Ignacy Krasicki practiced most literary genres, but his satires, fables, and heroic poems are a masterpiece – where he derides the shortcomings of the Sarmatian society. The Bishop of Warmia (Krasicki) criticized the clergy, which he knew so well (*Monachomachia* 1778, *Antymonachomachia* 1780). In other times he praised the past, combining classical form with historic content (for example, in his poem *Wojna chocimska* [*The Khotyn War*]). In *Pan Podstoli* (*Mr. Master of the Pantry*), he criticized foreign fashion and invoked Old-Polish tradition – as a way of supporting patriotic propaganda during the Four-Year Sejm. In terms of other pieces, like the didactic novel with a utopian social vision *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki* (*The Adventures of Nicolaus Doświadczyński*, 1776), they were not artistically accomplished, but nonetheless remained a very important social phenomenon.

In sentimental lyrics, artists, who anticipated Romanticism, brought new tones. Franciszek Karpiński, known as the “poet of the heart,” Józef Szymanowski and Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin, who was inspired by Puławy Adam Czartoryski’s Romantic foray with an English garden, encompassing the ideals of J.-J. Rousseau’s philosophy (after 1783).

Political poetry connected with the Four-Year Sejm was inspired by Old Polish forms and tradition – mostly written by Franciszek Zabłocki, the author of several political pamphlets. During the Kościuszko Uprising, radical attitudes became to emerge – especially anonymous translations of French Jacobin poetry, which influenced the work of Jakub Jasiński.

At the same time, journalists fiercely debated political issues. The most notable and widely read were: Hugo Kołłątaj, Stanisław Staszic, and Józef Pawlikowski. Priest Kołłątaj, a descendent of middle nobility, was an education activist and reformer of the Cracow University, who had much influence over marshal Małachowski during the Sejm. Also Stanisław Staszic, who was a priest and son of the mayor of Piła (a small town in Great Poland), thanks to his access to taking up the clerical career, could study in Germany and in France, and then could work for the “enlightened magnate”, Andrzej Zamoyski. Józef Pawlikowski, son of a blacksmith from Rozprza near Piotrków, was educated by the reformed school system, and became a Jacobin activist and Kościuszko’s secretary. He published his main works at a very early age and anonymously: *O poddanych polskich* (*On the Polish Subjects*, 1788) and *Mysli polityczne dla Polski* (*Political Thoughts for Poland*, 1790). The ideas of these three writers are most representative for Polish political literature.

6.11. Science

The Stanisław times brought a lot of enlightenment in the organization of science. A lot of new assemblies and associations for scientists and writers were created and various scientific magazines were published. New places for the popularization of science were established – museums, which were initially private, as Michał Mniszech’s project of a national *Museum Polonicum* has never been realized. Research was practical and strictly connected to current social problems, both in terms of mathematical and human sciences. The most famous scientists of the time were: economists and lawyers (the Gdańsk born Ferdynand Nax and Pears: Antoni Popławski, Hieronim Stroynowski, Wincenty Skrzetuski i Teodor Ostrowski), and chemists and geologists connected with industry and mining (Pear Józef Osiański, Jan Jaśkiewicz).

Stanisław August paid special attention to the development of cartography. He organized an astronomical observatory at the Royal Castle, equipped with utensils imported from England, which he later donated to Cracow University. He supported astronomers: Marcin Poczobutt (who was granted the White Eagle Order) and Jan Śniadecki.

In terms of mathematics and astronomy, the Vilnius University achieved the best results. The Vilnius professors: Śniadecki (planetoids) and Poczobutt were world

famous. In chemistry: Jan Jaśkiewicz and Franciszek Scheidt used modern methods of Antoine Lavoisier. Priest Franciszek Kluk researched fauna and flora. Doctor Rafał Czerniakowski, known as the father of Polish surgeons, was the founder of medical school at the Cracow Academy.

History became not only the study of the past, but also a tool of changing the future of the Commonwealth by juxtaposing the Golden Liberty with the Piast and the Jagiellonian monarchy's achievements. Adam Naruszewicz's *Historia narodu polskiego* (*History of Polish Nation*) was a learned discussion of Polish history. It was the king's initiative to write *Historia polityczna państw starożytnych* (*Political History of Ancient States*): he committed this task to a few visitors of the Thursday's Dinners, who knew how to support an efficient government. He also inspired intellectuals to write about the lives of "some respectable Poles." Michał Mniszech wrote about Casimir the Great and Adam Naruszewicz – about Jan Karol Chodkiewicz. In order to commemorate national heroes, the king commissioned paintings and sculptures, which were placed in the Knight Room and library of the Royal Castle in Warsaw.

The erudite works of Feliks Łoyko had a propaganda significance to question the rights of the partitioning powers towards the Commonwealth. Source materials were gathered in the archives of the Royal Cabinet, and a continuation of *The Diplomatic Code* by M. Dogiel was planned. The archival research of John Baptist Albertrandi in Italy and Sweden was a basis for scientific investigation and above all the royal funded project of copying historical sources, which resulted in over two hundred Files by Naruszewicz. Legal science was flourishing as well (Teodor Ostrowski, Wincenty Skrzetuski).

6.12. Music and Theatre

Stanisław August was not a musical person. In the first years of his reign, the court's musical needs were fulfilled by small ensembles, which also served theatre. In 1779, a nine-person ensemble from Austria was employed. Jan Steffan, known as Stefani, who played a significant role in Polish musical life, conducted it. In 1781, Franciszek Ryx, the king's loyal butler, convinced his master to dedicate 36.000 zlotys for an over twenty people ensemble to serve as the court and theatre orchestra, and as a result in the second half of Stanisław August's reign, more concerts took place and of better quality.

The most important issue was the popularization of musical practice. Music was present in noble and burgher houses, music schools were established and music was advised in general education. Magnates kept their own palaces ensembles – as they used to, and there were many musically talented aristocrats, like Michał Kazimierz and Michał Kleofas Ogiński.

Theatre gained popularity in all social strata and around 20 buildings were taken for these purposes. The king was a great theatre lover, also aware of the prestige connected with theatre performance in the capital. In 1765, he brought French theatre to Warsaw, as well as Italian opera and ballet. He also opened the first national scene – the first public theatre ever.

Political crisis caused the liquidation of the national scene and Italian opera in 1767, and French theatre in 1769. The king had not visited the resurrected theatre until the end of the Partition Sejm. He convinced Franciszek Ryx to take over the theatre monopoly from August Sułkowski and to build a new theatre building in 1776 (with royal subvention). In 1780 the first Warsaw circus was built. A. Tyzenhaus transmitted his 30-people ballet ensemble to the king in 1785. The king had his private theatre in the Royal Castle with aristocratic amateur actors and in the summer two theatres in Łazienki Park: the small one (since 1782) and the island theatre (since 1785).

Original creativity followed after a period of French and Italian inspiration. Wojciech Bogusławski was the main animator of the Polish national scene. He was an actor, and the director of the national theatre, as well as a playwright. Theatre was treated as a tool of patriotic propaganda, according to the pedagogic tendencies of the Enlightenment. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz staged *Powrót posła* (*The Return of the Deputy*) during the Four Year's Sejm. Folk inspirations entered music – along with the polonaise, there were the mazurki and Polish opera *Cud mniemany, czyli Krakowiacy i Górale* (*A Supposed Miracle, or Cracovians and Mountaineers*) with Stafani's music, staged by Bogusławski during the Kościuszko Uprising. It was the first time in the Commonwealth's history when peasants appeared on stage as first plan actors.

This shows a shift in the approach towards the propaganda functions of theatre during the Vasa and Wettin reign, connected with the propaganda tendency of the Enlightenment: from the apology of a strong monarchic authority to the propagation of freedom and estate equality, encompassing also the peasants. Theatre – the most mass of all arts – was a reflection of the shift from the Sarmatian cultural formation towards the modernity.

Conclusions

Until recently, Polish historiography, shaped in the period of the Partitions, has looked for an answer to the following question: Why did Poland collapse? Was it the fault of its citizens or of the partitioning powers? The answer to this question cannot be unambiguous, and is inseparably interwoven with another question: Was the Commonwealth's fate and its history exceptional in the world? Was it indeed "the only and unique"? It seems that the negative answer is justified by both the beginning and end of the existence of the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Republic.

A majority of historians agree that in the 15th – first half of the 16th century the political system of the Commonwealth showed some analogies with other European states. It is the changes of the last quarter of the 16th and first two decades of the 17th century that have been thought to be crucial for the transformation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the following two centuries from a normal, indistinctive state among other European countries under the Jagiellonians into an anomaly as regards its political system, politics, and economy. Reflecting on how it happened, we should bear in mind that at that time there occurred a sharp transformation and identity crisis not only in the Crown but also in the whole continent, whose unity (cultural rather than political) was disintegrating, and the very notion of Europe was undergoing many metamorphoses.

Antoni Mączak reduced the specificity of history of the Commonwealth within the European context to a chain of anachronisms. The *Neminem Captivabimus Act* (1425–1433) was two and a half centuries ahead of the British *Habeas Corpus Act* (1679) – but already Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski was appalled by the inequality of people before the law. In the 16th-century Commonwealth, a civil society emerged (which included only several percent of the inhabitants of the state) – but this tendency was arrested by the development of magnate patronage. The Warsaw Confederation (1573) guaranteed to non-Catholics equality in religious worship and political rights (thus, more than tolerance only) – but their open-mindedness disappeared exactly at the same time when the Enlightenment was emerging in the West. When the main political economic doctrine in Western Europe was mercantilism – in the Commonwealth "anti-mercantilism" or "magnate mercantilism" prevailed: instead of economic unification of the country, each great estate transformed into a closed market unit, and countrywide bonds were weakening.

This spectacular comparison of paradoxes, however, does not explain their causes and is a testimony to the helplessness towards the specificity of political system of the Commonwealth, which – according to some historians – is a deformed form of the former system of noble democracy, in fact with no counterpart in the whole Europe. The validity of this thesis was being proved by indicating some significant difference in development trends between Western-European monarchies – with increasingly pro-absolutist tendencies, liquidating the importance of class representation and centralizing the executive power – and the Polish-Lithuanian state

in which parliament and other central institutions were weakening throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, and even degenerating.

The most-often quoted causes of the lack of centralized form of government in the Commonwealth of the 16th–17th centuries include: the weakness of the burgher class, being allegedly an indispensable support of absolutism; the loss of political subjectivity by the middle nobility; the growth, and then domination of the so-called “magnate oligarchy,” maximally reducing the importance of a centre of royal power. And for some historians, oligarchy is a developmental stage of noble democracy (Jerzy Topolski), while for others – its distorted form (Jarema Maciszewski), and for yet others – a meaningless and misleading term (Adam Kersten).

The problem, however, is much more complex, and a contrast with other governments in Western Europe exhibiting absolutist features is apparent, resulting from a superficial treatment both of that absolutism and the political system of the Commonwealth, based on listing, after Rousseau and Montesquieu, of Polish anomalies (Norman Davies), or overestimating, by older generations of historians, of absolutist tendencies as regularities (Józef Andrzej Gierowski, Zbigniew Wójcik).

There still prevails in Polish historiography the conviction that the path of development for the Commonwealth of Both Nations was set by Brandenburg, France or Russia, that is the states which developed a centralized form of government, identified with absolutism. However, in the whole early modern Europe absolutism was more a tendency rather than a finished phenomenon. It is presented as a form of state which advanced or restricted the economic growth – in the interest of pre-bourgeois strata of the third estate or feudal class, caused by a development of industry or other factors, for example war (Geoffrey Parker).

Absolutism did not automatically guarantee a success or durability of the state: Great Britain without absolutism, despite the revolutionary crisis of the mid-17th century, achieved success and created the largest empire in the world, while the absolutist Kingdom of Spain did not survive its crisis in the 17th century and lost its status of empire by the end of the 18th century, just like despotic Turkey (Nicolas Henshall). Neither the genesis of success nor explanation of failures of European states in the early modern era can be traced in the sphere of political transformations only, without taking into consideration traditions of power, social and economic situation in a given state.

The place of the Commonwealth within the European-wide changes was exceptional in that it continued well into the 18th century a model of political system which was shaped under the conditions of poorly developed money economy, with all its social consequences. From the perspective of the political theory of those times, the stability of mixed government was its advantage, but at the same time it blocked the possibilities of political changes – which could be regarded as a result and not as a cause of the significant development of early modern Europe, occurring under the influence of increasing economic stratification and concentration of land ownership in the hands of “truly rich.” A culmination of those processes took place in the second half of the 17th and in the 18th centuries. A change in political system of the state was occurring in the wake of (and not before) the growth of

importance of financial elites and their lifestyle in order to adapt the system to their needs (Adam Manikowski).

If we assume that the abovementioned changes of absolutist nature and a concurrent recidivism of the oligarchic form of government in the so-called free states were common, the Commonwealth of the 17th century fits in a general tendency of political transformations serving the needs of aristocracy. But Polish-Lithuanian magnates were operating under the conditions of formal egalitarianism and within the nationwide institutions (the Sejm, tribunals, ministries, army) – the difference being that they less and less administered those institutions and more and more corrupted them. The Commonwealth was exceptional in that in its history there is not even a one successful attempt at centralization of power in the hands of a king or magnates.

According to A. Kersten, the assumption that interests of a magnate class required political decentralization is false; centralizing and decentralizing tendencies were occurring simultaneously in Poland of the second half of the 17th and in the 18th century. In Emanuel Rostworowski's opinion, it is a misinterpretation to identify oligarchy with anarchy, because oligarchic tendencies surfaced in all free states and it did not lead to disorder. According to this approach, oligarchy is regarded not as degeneration of democracy but as regularity and chance for centralization of power. Whereas in the Commonwealth struggles of magnate coteries and parties with the king led gradually to erosion of its political system and anarchy; in the second half of the 17th century, the process was already well advanced, and reached its climax in the 18th century.

The answer to the question whether we have to do with a regress or it was just that Europe accelerated so much that neither Poland nor Turkey (with a somehow similar fate) was able to catch up with it, is qualified. On the one hand, there was the regress here, while on the other – a reluctance to adopt the Western European models of standing army and a state treasury regularly supplied by taxes stemmed not only from their opposition to fiscal oppression, but also from the awareness that the price they would have to pay for progress would be their resignation from democratic standards of public life, regarded as the highest value.

A definitive split between the ways of development of the Commonwealth and its neighbours was determined by a cumulation of these two tendencies in the times of the Wettin kings, a widening gap between absolutist reform projects of the court and republican feelings of the nobility. In the reality sphere, it was the consequence, which had been accumulating for centuries, of the lack of means to contain the huge territory (roads, transport) and to ensure an efficient communication in the scale of the whole country, which was impossible to impose by force in the mixed form of government, even if the central authorities had had the suitable administration and standing army, which was a necessary condition for political, cultural and social unification; the creation of modern state and nation.

A modernization was undertaken only in the last thirty years of the existence of the state, under the direct threat from Russia and Prussia. It was the result not only of operation of "outside potencies," which deliberately maintained a state of

anarchy in the Polish-Lithuanian state, but also of civilization underdevelopment and intellectual indolence of a greater part of the nobility. Only too late was the myth of an exceptional role played in Europe by the Sarmatians (the chosen nation) and the Commonwealth (the bulwark of Christianity) replaced with a desire to create a normal state: sovereign, rich, guaranteeing respect for and observance to the fundamental rights (to the dignity of life, property and freedom of conscience) to all inhabitants without exceptions.

The fall of the Commonwealth at the turn of the 19th century was not exceptional, as it was not “an isolated island on the political map of Europe” (Tadeusz Cegielski, Łukasz Kądziela). However, it is worth to notice that ultimately, also the partitioning powers paid for their usurpation of a special role in Europe and their daydreams of an imperialistic superpower the price, which was incommensurably high in comparison to their gains.

Glossary of Polish and Latin Terms

bene possessionatus – prosperous landowner.

castellan – originally the keeper of a royal castle. There were two kinds of castellans, both of whom sat in the senate: major castellans from the chief royal towns in each voivodeship, and minor castellans from less important towns. There were no minor castellans in Lithuania and Ukraine.

Chamber of Deputies (Pol. *izba poselska*) – the lower chamber of the Sejm, composed of deputies from local sejmiks.

Commonwealth (Pol. *Rzeczpospolita*) – the Polish-Lithuanian state (*respublica*) composed of the Kingdom of Poland (Crown) and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the vassalized Courland, Prussia and the condominium of Livonia, ruled jointly by the Crown and Lithuania.

compositio inter status – literally “agreement between the estates,” that is, between the clergy and the nobility. The conflict over *compositio inter status* was a conflict over separate jurisdiction and equal distribution of the burdens of taxation between the nobility and the clergy.

confederation – a league of nobles formed for a specific political purpose, usually in opposition to royal policy, but occasionally to defend the king against a magnate opposition; decisions of the confederation were taken by majority vote.

Crown (Pol. *Korona*) – the Kingdom of Poland, as opposed to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

crown land (Pol. *królewsczyzna*) – the land in the hand of the king; in the period of hereditary monarchy (under the Jagiellons) – lands owned by the monarch (his domain); in the period of elected kings – the state lands at the disposal of the king, usually leased to magnates in exchange for specific payments to the royal treasury (see: economies [*ekonomie*]). They existed in all European monarchies.

deputy (Pol. *deputat*) – a representative of the local nobility in the Tribunal or Sejm, elected at local sejmiks.

district (Pol. *powiat*) – administrative subdivision of a voivodeship.

dvorianstvo – initially, household servants at the courts of the Grand Duke of Moscow and Russian boyars, then a general term to describe the middle Russian nobility.

economies (Pol. *ekonomie*) – parts of the crown lands (Pol. *królewsczyzny*) portioned out in 1590 to provide funds to support the monarch and his court (the so-called *dobra stołu królewskiego* – table lands).

emphyteusis – leases granted for a long term or in perpetuity with most of the rights of full ownership, including the right of inheritance or transfer, which were protected in the courts.

Executionist Movement (Pol. *ruch egzekucyjny*) – a 16th-century political movement in the Kingdom of Poland and, later, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was popular among petty, average, and even higher nobility, and it also enjoyed the support of the Polish king. In Polish, the movement is variously known as: *ruch egzekucyjny*, *egzekucja praw* (“execution [enforcement] of the laws”), or *egzekucja dóbr* (“execution of property”).

folwark (Ger. *Vorwerk*) – a serfdom-based agricultural holding, often of great size. Since the 14th century, folwarks functioned in the Polish Kingdom and spread to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th century. They were set up for the production of surplus of goods for export, mostly grain, but also livestock.

grzywna – an old Polish monetary unit, it was roughly equivalent to the western mark.

Henrician Articles (Pol. *Artykuły Henrykowskie*) – (1573) statement of the rights and privileges of the Polish nobility (*szlachta*) that all elected kings of Poland, beginning with Henry of Valois, were obliged to confirm and that severely limited the authority of the Polish monarchy.

hetman – a Polish-Lithuanian or Cossack chief military commander.

Incompatibilitas (meaning *incompatibility* in Latin) – a principle of the Kingdom of Poland (from 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) that forbade an individual to hold two or more official administrative positions. The principle of *incompatibilitas* evolved in the 15th–16th c. in response to a demand from average and lesser nobility to curtail the sway of more powerful high nobility and magnates.

indygenat (Lat. *ius indigenatus*) – rights and immunities with citizenship, bestowed by birth, usually linked to a particular region or territory; also members of the noble or burgher estate, usually those who owned land.

inkolat (Lat. *incolatus*) – rights and duties of foreign noblemen, associated with their dwelling in a certain place within the Commonwealth, acquired together with indygenat (see: indygenat).

jurydyka (Lat. *iuridicus* meaning juridical or legal) – a settlement near a royal town, occasionally in the urban lands, exempted from the jurisdiction of municipal authorities.

kahal – a self-governing Jewish community.

klecha (pl. klechy) – is a contemptuous name for a person, who failed to receive the Holy Orders and was usually employed as a servant in a church. Klechy often received some education (at the Academy of Cracow), but seldom very deep. The knowledge of Latin, porous as it might be, allowed them to teach in parish schools. As a result of general impoverishment and “overproduction” of intellectuals at the turn of the 16th–17th centuries, many of them lost or failed to get a job in education and were forced to lead vagrant life and to accept various

- odd jobs. Their frustration led to the emergence of a special kind of literature depicting their misery.
- knyaz (Pol. *kniaź*) – originally, the title denoting chieftain and (or) ruler in Slavic states; in the Commonwealth – the hereditary and official noble.
- quarter (Pol.: *kwarta*; Lat. *quarta pars*, literally: the fourth part) – the name of a tax established in 1563 imposed on the income of the Crown lands paid by their leaseholders; it was equal to one fourth, and after 1567 – to one fifth of revenues from the Crown lands, and was allocated to the formation and upkeep of the so-called quarter army.
- lan (Pol.: *lan*, Lat.: *laneus*) – a unit of land measurement used in medieval and early modern Poland, denoting any piece of land ranging from 6 to 16 hectares.
- Lauda* (Latin., sing. *laudum*) – in the early modern period they were legal acts issued by land sejmiks and sometimes by the general sejmiks of the Commonwealth's provinces. *Laudum* – in the form of a document issued in the name of senators and nobleman participating in a sejmik – was registered either in the land court records, or in the borough records (since the end of the 16th century, only in the borough records).
- lance (Pol. *kopia*) – a military unit centred around an armoured knight and his retinue.
- levée en masse* (Pol. *pospolite ruszenie*) – troops raised by the enlistment or conscription of nobles for military service.
- liberum veto* (Latin for: I freely forbid) – the right of individual deputies in the Sejm or sejmik to refuse consent to legislation; based on the principle of unanimity; used increasingly frequently after 1652 to break up the Sejm sessions.
- manostwo (from Germ. *Mannschaft*, Lat. *omagialitas*) – formerly: the vassalage, the classic institution of the Western feudal system, being the bond of tenure confirmed by the act of homage between the lord and the vassal, the latter surrendering himself to the lord and giving him an oath of fidelity.
- manowie – feudal tenants, vassals; petty nobility in the lands under the influence of German laws and culture, holding fiefs in magnate estates and in exchange bound to military service in his patron's unit.
- monarchia mixta* (Latin for: mixed monarchy) – mixed form of government, composed of three elements according to Aristotle: monarchy, aristocracy, and *politeia*; in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth symbolized by three estates represented in the Sejm: the king, Chamber of Deputies and Senate, without the consent of which it was impossible to pass any resolutions concerning the whole state (see: *Nihil novi (sine communi consensu)*).
- Neminem Captivabimus (nisi iure victum)* (Latin for: We will imprison no one except if convicted by law) – a principle guaranteeing that no nobleman will be imprisoned without a court sentence, formulated in a privilege issued by King

Wladislaus II Jagiello at Brest-Litovsk in 1425, confirmed in the privileges of Cracow (1430) and Jedlnia (1433).

Nihil novi (sine communi consensu) (Latin for: Nothing new without the common consent; Polish: *Nic o nas bez nas*) – the 1505 Act of the Sejm on the obligatory participation of the Chamber of Deputies (the nobility) in making decisions at Sejm sessions.

order (Ger. *Ordnung* – order, regulation; Polish: *ordynek*; plural: *ordynki*) – a form of division of urban population participating in municipal assemblies in the 16th century.

pacta conventa (Latin for: agreed articles) – a contractual agreement, from 1573 to 1764, between the “Polish nation” (the nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) and a newly elected king, concluded on his ascension to the throne, containing a list of personal undertakings of the king.

voivode (Pol. *wojewoda*) – a senator who ranked above the castellan (except for the castellan of Cracow). He organized the defence of his province, collected taxes, and in some voivodeships of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania exercised higher jurisdiction.

pan – the title used by and for nobleman when addressed in speech and writing.

quarter army (Pol. *wojsko kwarciane*) – the only permanent military formation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth created in 1563 to defend the south-eastern frontier of the state; the name was derived from the way taxes were paid for their upkeep – a quarter (*kwarta*) of income from the royal lands was to be used for that purpose.

rokosz – a type of confederation, form of a rebellion of the nobility against the abuse of power by the king.

Sejm – the bi-cameral Polish-Lithuanian legislative body, parliament.

sejmiki ziemskie (Lat. *comitia minora*) – land sejmiks, the assemblies of all noblemen from a land or voivodeship.

scartabellat – a specific form of ennoblement with certain legal limitations of newly ennobled people, who for three generations could not hold public offices or be deputies in the Sejm.

solectwo – hereditary endowment of land to a sołtys who was duty-bound to provide military service.

sołtys (Lat. *scultetus*) – a head of a village or group of villages, settled according to Polish law, with different social status in Crown lands, noble and Church estates, and bound to military service. In the 15th c. this group began to disappear as the nobility was exercising their right to buy out the lands of local sołtysi for the purpose of aggregation of land as manorial economy developed.

starosta (Pol.) – a high-ranking official of the crown who exercised judicial, administrative, or military functions.

starostwo niegrodowe – a territorial and administrative unit headed by the *starosta*, without judicial authority; a tenant of the county belonging to the royal lands (see: crown land [*królewszczyzna*]).

Tribunal – the highest appeal court in the Crown of the Polish Kingdom (from 1578) and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (from 1581) for cases within the body of customary law regulating relations between the nobility.

ujezd – a lower administrative unit in eastern provinces of the Commonwealth, derived from the Ruthenian tradition.

Unity (Pol. *Jednota*) – the highest administrative unit of Protestant Churches in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

viritim (Lat.) – personally, man by man.

szlachta – nobility.

vivente rege – a form of king's election, where the king's successor, usually of the same dynasty, was elected before the old king died.

voivodeship (Pol. *województwo*) – a territorial unit governed by the voivode.

wilkierz (Germ. *Willkür*) – a municipal legislative enactment in towns settled according to German law.

volost (Pol. *włość*) – a territorial unit in Kievan Rus and Ruthenian duchies governed by a knyaz, smaller than a district, preserved in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after the incorporation of the Ruthenian lands.

List of Polish Monarchs

Casimir IV Jagiellon (1447–1492)

Jan I Olbracht (1492–1501)

Alexander I Jagiellon (1501–1506)

Sigismund I the Old (1506–1549)

Sigismund II August (1548–1572)

Henry of Valois (1573–1574)

Stephen Bathory (1576–1586)

Sigismund III Vasa (1587–1632)

Wladislaus IV Vasa (1632–1648)

Jan II Casimir Vasa (1648–1668)

Michał II Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669–1673)

Jan III Sobieski (1674–1696)

Augustus II Wettin (the Strong) (1697–1706 and 1709–1733)

Stanislaus I Leszczyński (1705–1709 and 1733–1736)

Augustus III Wettin (1733–1763)

Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764–1795)

Main Historical Events of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1573–1795

1573 – Warsaw Confederation; first *viritim* election; Henry of Valois, duc d’Anjou elected king of the Commonwealth.

1573–1574 – Reign of Henry of Valois.

Henry of Valois (Polish: Henryk Walezy), born 19 September 1551 at Fontainebleau, France, on 15 February 1575 in Reims was married to Louise de Vaudémont, a princess of the house of Lorraine. He died on 2 July 1589 at Saint-Cloud near Paris.

1574 – Henry of Valois fled from Poland to become king of France.

1575 – Double election of Stephen Bathory and Emperor Maximilian Habsburg.

1576–1586 – Reign of Stephen Bathory.

Stephen Bathory (Polish: Stefan Batory), born 23 September 1553 at Szilágysomlyó (Șimleu Silvaniei), Transylvania, on 1 May 1576 in Cracow was married to Anna Jagiellon (1523–1596), queen of Poland, the daughter of King Sigismund the Old, died on 12 December 1586 at Grodno.

1577 – War with Gdańsk; the Roman Catholic clergy recognizes the decrees of the Council of Trent at the national General Council at Piotrków.

1578 – Establishment of the Crown Tribunal; creation of the so-called “drafted” or “chosen infantry” (*piechota wybraniecka*).

1579 – Campaign against Polotsk.

1580 – Campaign against Wielkie Łuki (*Velikie Łuki*).

1581 – Campaign against Pskov.

1582 – Treaty of Jam Zapolski (Yam-Zapolsky) between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Tsardom of Russia.

1584 – Beheading of Samuel Zborowski.

1585 – Rescission of Karnkowski’s Statutes; peace treaty (*Tractatus Portorii*) with Gdańsk

1587 – Double election of Sigismund Vasa of Sweden and Maximilian Habsburg archduke of Austria.

1587–1632 – Reign of King Sigismund III Vasa.

Sigismund III Vasa (Polish: Zygmunt III Waza), born 20 June 1566 at Gripsholm, Sweden, on 31 May 1592 was married to Anna, the daughter of Archduke Charles II of Austria and Maria Anna of Bavaria; after her death on 11 December 1605, to her sister Constance; he died on 25 April 1632 in Warsaw.

- 1588 – Victory of Byczyna over the troops of Archduke Maximilian Habsburg; the Third Lithuanian Statute.
- 1591 – Destruction of Evangelical churches in Cracow and Vilnius; the first Cossack insurrection (the so-called Kosiński Insurrection).
- 1591–1592 – The so-called Inquisition Sejm, debating Sigismund III Vasa’s secret negotiations with the Habsburgs about their takeover of the throne.
- 1591–1598 – Reign of Sigismund III Vasa in Sweden.
- 1594–1595 – Cossack uprising of Nalewajko (Nalyvaiko).
- 1596 – Union of Brest-Litovsk; the establishment of Eastern Catholic Church (Uniate Church) in the Commonwealth and delegitimization of the Orthodox Church.
- 1600 – Outbreak of a war with Sweden in Livonia; Zamoyski’s expedition to Wallachia.
- 1604–1605 – reign of False Dmitry on the Muscovite throne.
- 1605 – Battle of Kirchholm.
- 1607 – Polish operation in Moscow began on behalf of the second False Dmitry.
- 1606–1608 – Mikołaj Zebrzydowski’s armed rebellion against King Sigismund III.
- 1610 – Battle of Kłuszyno (Klushino).
- 1611 – Polish conquest of Smolensk; King Sigismund III extends the succession to the Prussian fief to the electoral line of the Hohenzollerns.
- 1612 – Polish forces are driven out of the Moscow Kremlin.
- 1613 – Election of Michael Romanov to the Moscow throne.
- 1617 – Treaty of Stolbovo ending the Swedish-Muscovy war.
- 1619 – Truce of Deulino between the Commonwealth and Sweden.
- 1620 – Battle of Cecora between the Turkish-Tatar troops and the Polish Crown army; death of Grand Herman Stanisław Żółkiewski; beginning of a Turkish-Polish war.
- 1621 – Battle of Chocim (Khotyn) and peace treaty with Turkey; lost of Riga in the war with Sweden in Livonia.
- 1622 – Truce with Sweden at Mitawa (Mitau).
- 1626 – Swedish invasion of Royal Prussia and beginning of a Prussian war with Sweden; loss of Prussian ports except of Gdańsk.
- 1627 – Battle of Oliwa.
- 1629 – Battle of Trzciana; truce with Sweden at Altmark (Stary Targ).
- 1632–1648 – Reign of King Wladislaus IV Vasa.

Wladislaus IV Vasa (Polish: Władysław IV Waza), born 9 June 1595 at Łobzów near Cracow, was married on 14 September 1637 to Cecylia Renata of Austria;

- after her death on 5 November 1645 he married Marie Louise Gonzaga de Nevers; he died on 19/20 May 1648 at Merecz.
- 1633–1634 – Smolensk War with the Muscovy.
- 1634 – Peace of Polanowo (Polyanov) with the Moscovy.
- 1635 – Treaty of Sztumska Wieś (Stuhmsdorf) with Sweden.
- 1637 – Death of Bogusław XIV, the last duke of the local dynasty; Sweden receives Western Pomerania; the Commonwealth regains Łębork and Bytów; Cossack uprising of Pawluk (Pavlyuk).
- 1638 – Cossack rebellion of Ostrzanin and Hunia (Yakiv Ostryanyn and Dmytro Hunia); forced closure of the Arian Academy at Raków.
- 1645 – *Colloquium Charitativum* called (unsuccessfully) on the initiative of Wladislaus IV Vasa to reconcile Christian confessions in the Commonwealth.
- 1648 – Division of Western Pomerania between Sweden and Brandenburg; outbreak of Bohdan Chmielnicki (Khmelnysky)'s uprising in Ukraine; battles between the Crown troops and the Cossacks at Żółte Wody (Zhovti Vody), Korsun and Piławce (Pyliavtsi).
- 1648–1668 – Reign of King Jan Casimir Vasa.
Jan Casimir Vasa (Polish: Jan II Kazimierz Waza), born 22 March 1609 in Cracow, was married in May 1649 to Marie Louise Gonzaga de Nevers, the widow of his brother Wladislaus IV; he died on 16 December 1672 at Nevers, France.
- 1649 – Siege of Zbaraż (Zbarazh) by Chmielnicki's troops and treaty of Zborów (Zboriv).
- 1651 – Kostka Napierski uprising in Podhale; battle of Beresteczko (Berestechko); treaty of Biała Cerkiew with the Cossacks.
- 1652 – Polish Crown troops defeat in the Battle of Batoh (Batih), which ended with a massacre of Polish captives; the first Sejm session broken off with an individual *liberum veto* by a delegate from Upita Władysław Siciński.
- 1654 – Council of Pereyaslav; left-bank Ukraine is ceded to Muscovy.
- 1654–1667 – Polish-Muscovite war.
- 1655 – Swedish invasion of the Commonwealth; Polish capitulation at Ujście; Agreement of Kedainiai (Kiejdany) which put Lithuania under Swedish protection; defence of Jasna Góra; Tyszowce Confederation.
- 1656 – Elector Frederick William places himself under Swedish protection; Lviv Oath of King Jan Casimir; battle of Warsaw.
- 1657 – Invasion of Transylvanian troops under György II Rákóczi; Treaty of Wehlau-Bromberg giving Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg full sovereignty over Ducal Prussia.
- 1658 – Arians (Polish Brethren) expelled from the Commonwealth.

- 1658–1659 – Expedition of the Crown troops to Denmark under the command of Stefan Czarniecki.
- 1660 – Swedish-Polish peace of Oliwa; battle with Russian troops at Polonka and Słobodyszczce (Slobodyshhce).
- 1661 – Polish troops regained Vilnius from the hands of Russians.
- 1661–1663 – Military confederations under the name of Sacred Union and Pious Union.
- 1665–1666 –Jerzy Lubomirski’s rebellion against King Jan Casimir Vasa.
- 1666 –Lubomirski’s victory over the king’s troops in the battle of Mątwy.
- 1667 – Truce of Andrusovo (Andruszów) with Russia – the Commonwealth lost the voivodeships of Smolensk, Chernihów and Kiev (without Kiev itself which was to be returned to the Commonwealth in 1669); winning back of Polish Livonia; Jan Sobieski’s victory over the Tatar-Cossack troops in the battle of Podhajce.
- 1669–1673 – Reign of King Michał II Korybut Wiśniowiecki.
 Michael Wiśniowiecki (Polish: Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki), born 31 May 1640 at Wiśniowiec, on 27 February 1670 married Eleanor Maria Josefa of Austria, the daughter of Ferdinand III, Holy Roman Emperor; he died on 10 November 1673 in Lviv.
- 1672 – Turkish invasion; the fall of Kamenets Podolsky (Kamieniec Podolski) and the Treaty of Buchach (Buczacz); confederations of Gołąb and Szczepreszyn.
- 1673 – Sobieski’s victory over the Turks at Khotyn (Chocim).
- 1674–1696 – Reign of King Jan III Sobieski.
 Jan III Sobieski, born on 17 August 1629 at Olesko, on 5 July 1665 married Marie-Casimire de la Grange d’Arquien; he died 17 June 1696 at Wilanów near Warsaw.
- 1675 – Secret treaty with France at Jaworów.
- 1676 – Battle near Zhuravno (Żórawno or Żurawno) and a treaty with Turkey.
- 1683 – Succour of Vienna; battle of Párkány against Turkey.
- 1684 – Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth joins the Holy League.
- 1686 – Grzymultowski’s Peace (the so-called Eternal Peace) with Russia, confirming the conditions of the Truce of Andrusovo – the final loss of left-bank Ukraine with Kiev; granting to followers of the Orthodox Church the observance of their in the territory of the Commonwealth.
- 1697–1733 – Reign of King Augustus II Wettin.
 Augustus II Wettin the Strong (Polish: *Mocny*; Germ. *der Starke*), was born on 12 May 1670 at Dresden, in January 1693 he married Christiane Eberhardine of Brandenburg-Bayreuth; he died on 1 February 1733 in Warsaw.
- 1699 – Peace of Karlowitz (Karłowice) between the Holy League and the Ottoman Empire

- 1700 – Civil war in Lithuania between the magnate families Wiśniowieckis, Radziwills, Pacts, and Ogińskis supported by middle and petty nobility on one side and the dominating in Lithuania Sapiehas on the other; victory of the anti-Sapieha coalition in the battle of Olkienniki: the confederated *levée en masse* of the Lithuanian, Samogitian and Livonian nobility defeated the comput army of Grand Lithuanian Hetman Jan Sapieha.
- 1700–1721 – Great Northern War (also called Second Northern War).
- 1702 – Occupation of Warsaw by the Swedish troops; battle of Klissow (Kliszów); Cossack rebellion of Semen Palii (Palij).
- 1704 – Confederations of Warsaw and Sandomierz; election of King Stanisław Leszczyński.
- 1705–1709 – First reign of Stanisław I Leszczyński.
Stanisław I Leszczyński (in full: Stanisław Bogusław Leszczyński) of Wieniawa coat of arms, was born on 20 October 1677 in Lviv; duke of Lorraine and Bar in 1738–1766, in 1698, he married Catherine Opalińska; he died on 23 February 1766 at Lunéville, France.
- 1706 – Treaty of Altranstädt between Augustus II and King Charles XII of Sweden; Augustus II renounces the Polish throne on behalf of Stanisław Leszczyński.
- 1709 – Defeat of Charles XII in the battle of Poltava with Russians; return of Augustus II to the Commonwealth.
- 1713 – Saxon troops enter the Commonwealth; Szczecin occupied by Prussia.
- 1715–1717 – Tarnogród Confederation – a confederation of the nobility against King Augustus II the Strong and the presence of the Saxon army in Poland.
- 1717 – Silent Sejm – one-day session of the Parliament of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, called Silent (also Dumb or literally Mute) because the deputies were not allowed to take the floor for fear of breaking off the Sejm. It was pacification Sejm, ending the fight between the king and the nobility with Russia as a mediator.
- 1720 – Potsdam agreement between Tsar Peter I and Frederick William of Prussia confirming the immutability of the old political system of the Commonwealth, including *liberum veto* and free election.
- 1724 – Tumult of Toruń (Germ. *Thorner Blutgericht* – literally Blood-Bath of Thorn), i. e. religious conflict between Protestants and Roman Catholics, which ended with nine Protestant participants and two Protestant mayors sentenced to death by a court called by King Augustus II that led to a serious diplomatic crisis.
- 1733 – Double election of Stanisław Leszczyński and Augustus III Wettin; dissidents deprived of political rights and banned from offices.
- 1733–1736 – Second reign of King Stanisław I Leszczyński.
- 1733–1763 – Reign of King Augustus III Wettin.

- Augustus III Wettin, born on 17 October 1696 at Dresden, on 20 August 1719 at Dresden married Maria Josepha, the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph I as elector of Saxony; he died on 5 October 1763 in Dresden.
- 1734 – Gdańsk seized by Russians; confederation of Dzików called by king-elect Stanisław Leszczyński, who after the joined intervention of the Saxon and Russian troops on behalf of Augustus III fled to Königsberg.
- 1736 – Abdication of King Stanisław I Leszczyński; the Pacification Sejm.
- 1740–1745 – Acquisition of Silesia by Prussia.
- 1764 – Reforms of the Convocation Sejm.
- 1764–1795 – Reign of King Stanisław August Poniatowski
Stanisław II August Poniatowski, of Ciołek coat of arms, born on 19 January 1732 at Wołczyn; from 1755 on Grand Lithuanian *stolnik*, and in 1756–1764 starosta of Przemyśl; he died on 12 February 1798 in Saint Petersburg. The last king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.
- 1767 – Radom Confederation formed under the protection of Russian Imperial Army in defence of the former political system of the Commonwealth in a response to the confederations formed at Sluck and Torun inspired by Russia and Prussia in defence of the rights of non-Catholics.
- 1768 – Peasant rebellion in Ukraine, the so-called Koliyivshchyna.
- 1768–1772 – Confederation of the Polish nobility formed at Bar in Podolia to defend the Catholic faith and the independence of the Commonwealth from the encroachment of the Russian Empire and against King Stanisław August Poniatowski enthroned by the protection of Empress Catherine II. The purpose of the confederation was to rescind statutes imposed by Russia, especially those giving equal rights to dissidents.
- 1769 – Annexation of Spiš by Austria.
- 1772 – First Partition of the Commonwealth.
- 1773–1775 – The Partition Sejm.
- 1788–1792 – The Four-Year Sejm (or the Four Years' Sejm), called the Great Sejm.
- 1789 – Black Procession, i. e. a demonstration of 294 representatives of 141 towns under royal charters held in Warsaw during the Great Sejm.
- 1791 – Act on Cities; Constitution of May 3.
- 1792 – Confederation of Targowica, officially convened at the frontier town Targowica (while actually in Saint Petersburg) by the leaders of a magnate camp of republicans to restore the old political system of the Commonwealth, under the banners of defence of threatened freedoms and liberties against reforms of the Constitution of May 3, which introduced a constitutional monarchy; war with Russia – battles of Zieleńce and Dubienka.
- 1793 – Second Partition of the Commonwealth.

- 1794 – Kościuszko's Insurrection – a national uprising against Russia and Prussia under the Supreme Leader of the Nation Tadeusz Kościuszko; Manifesto of Połaniec issued by Kościuszko in the name of the national government of the Commonwealth on the basis of IV article of the Constitution of May 3, granting a certain freedom to serfs; battles of Raclawice and Szczekociny; siege of Warsaw; battle of Maciejowice.
- 1795 – Third Partition of the Commonwealth; abdication of Stanisław August Poniatowski.

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Map 2: Division of the Commonwealth into the Sejmik Districts



Map 3. Strongholds in the Territory of the Commonwealth in the 17th Century



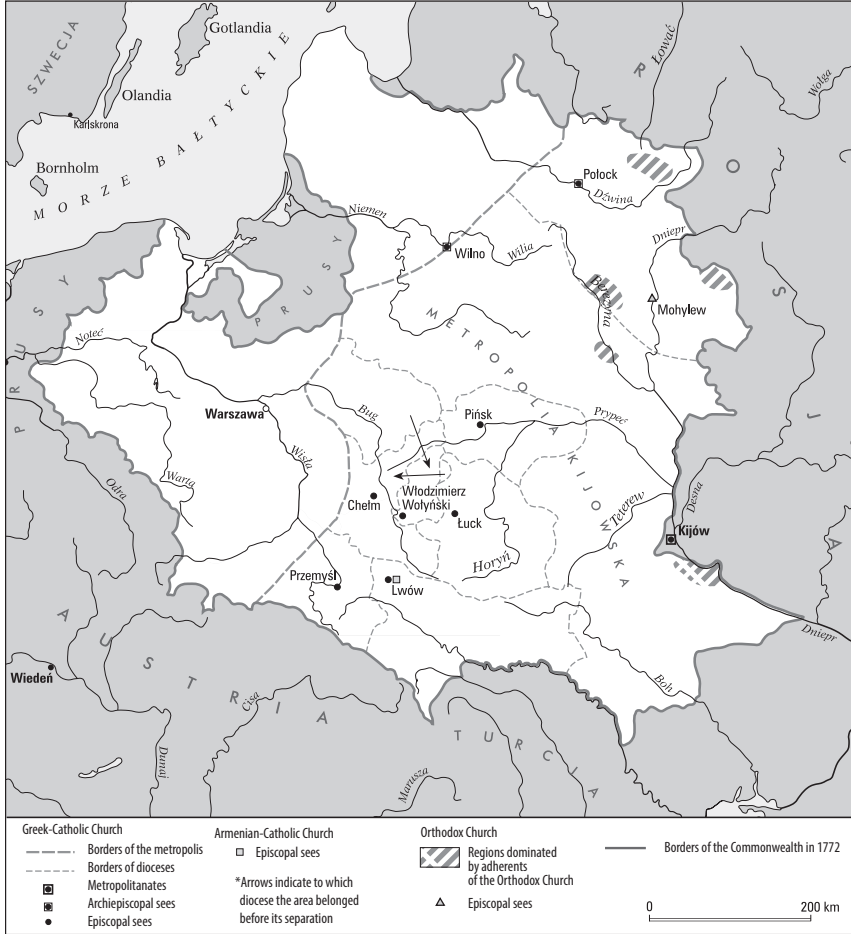
Map 4. Catholic Bishprics in the Commonwealth in 1772



Map 5. Protestant Churches (Congregations) in the Commonwealth of the 16th–18th Centuries



Map 6. Churches of the Eastern Tradition



Map 8. Printing Shops in the Commonwealth before the mid-17th Century



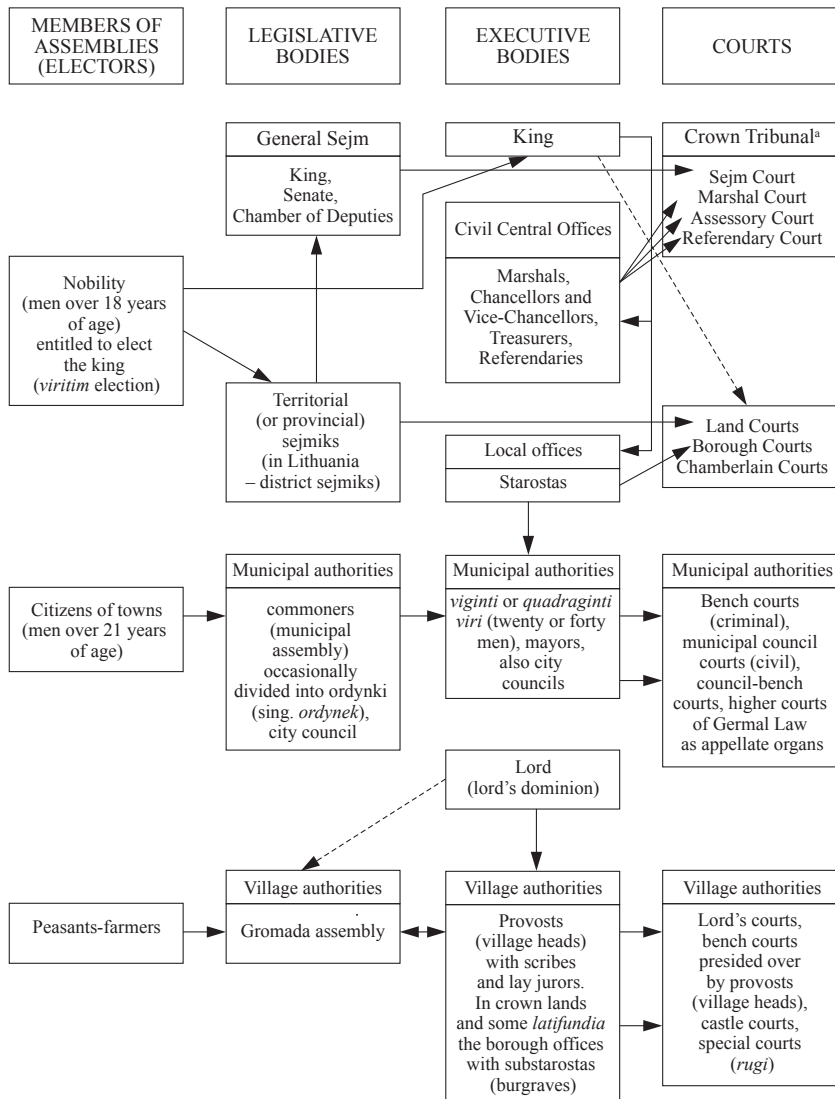
Map 9. Jesuit and Protestant Education in the 16th–18th Centuries



Map 10. Secondary Schools of the Commission of National Education in 1783



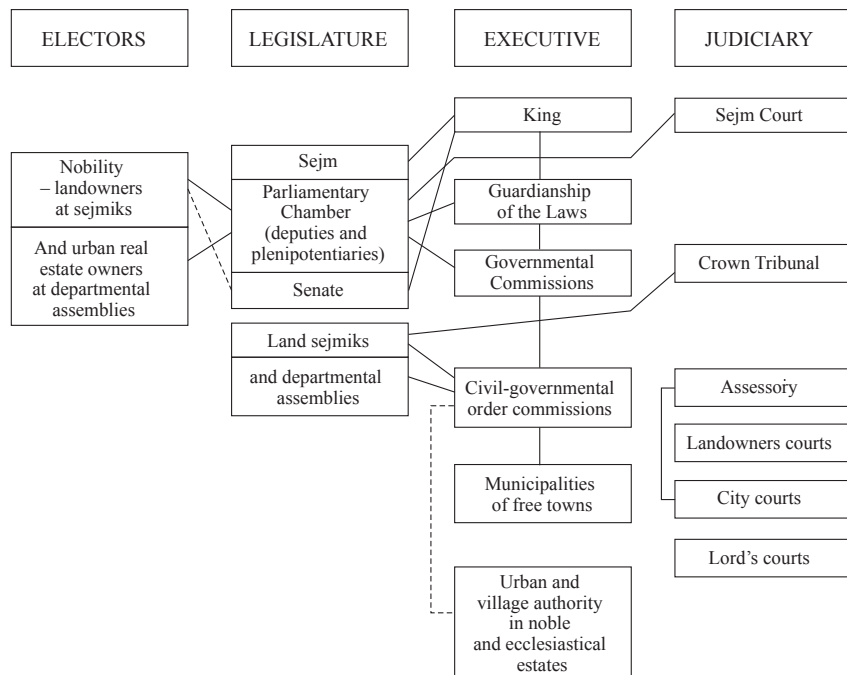
Diagram 1. Organization of the Commonwealth's Authorities in the 16th–18th Century



^a Deputies to the Crown Tribunal were elected at local sejmiks.

Source: Juliusz Bardach, Bogusław Leśnodorski, Michał Pietrzak, *Historia ustroju i prawa polskiego*, Warsaw, 1993, p. 180.

Diagram 2. The Political System of the Commonwealth in 1790–1792



- - - - dotted line means the right of sejmiks to present after the death of King Stanisław August candidates to vacated offices of senators and to recommend disciplinary commissions for private towns and villages.

Source: Juliusz Bardach, Bogusław Leśnodorski, Michał Pietrzak, "Historia ustroju i prawa polskiego," Warsaw, 1993, p. 311, in: *Historia Polski w liczbach*, Warsaw, 2003, p. 27.

List of Polish Geographical Names and Their English or Naturalized Counterparts¹

Sejmiks:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| s.c. – sejmik of Ciechanów for the Land of Ciechanów | s.s. – sejmik of Starogród (Starogard) for the districts of Gdańsk, Tczew and Nowe |
| s.ch. – sejmik of Chojnice for Człuchów district | s.so. – sejmik of Sochaczew for the Land of Sochaczew |
| s.g. – sejmik of Gąbin for the Land of Gostynin | s.ś. – sejmik of Świecie for Świecie district |
| s.m. – sejmik of Mirachowo for Mirachowo district | s.t. – sejmik of Tuchola for Tuchola district |
| s.p. – sejmik of Puck for Puck district | s.w. – sejmik of Wyszogród for the Land of Wyszogród |
| s.r. – sejmik of Różan for the Land of Różan | s.z. – sejmik of Zakroczym for the Land of Zakroczym |

Dioceses:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Diec. Smoleńska – Diocese of Smolensk | Diecezja Kijowska – Diocese of Kiev |
| Diec. Warmińska – Diocese of Warmia (Ermland) | Diecezja Żmudzka – Diocese of Samogitia |
| Diecezja Inflancka – Diocese of Livonia | Metropolia Kijowska – Kiev Metropolis |

Voivodships and Lands:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| WOJ. BEŁZKIE – VOIV. OF BELZ | WOJ. INOWROCLAWSKIE – VOIV. OF INOWROCLAW |
| WOJ. BRACŁAWSKIE – VOIV. OF BRATSLAV | WOJ. KALISKIE – VOIV. OF KALISZ |
| WOJ. BRZESKIE – VOIV. OF BRZEŚĆ KUJAWSKI | WOJ. KIJOWSKIE – VOIV. OF KIEV |
| WOJ. CZERNICHOWSKIE – VOIV. OF CHERNIHIV | WOJ. KRAKOWSKIE – VOIV. OF CRACOW |
| WOJ. INFLANCKIE – VOIV. OF LIVONIA | WOJ. LUBELSKIE – VOIV. OF LUBLIN |

1 The list contains only the names that are formally different from their counterparts on the maps.

WOJ. ŁĘCZYCKIE – LAND OF
 ŁĘCZYCA
 WOJ. ŁĘCZYCKIE – VOIV. OF
 ŁĘCZYCA
 WOJ. MALBORSKIE – VOIV. OF
 MALBORK
 WOJ. MIŃSKIE – VOIV. OF MINSK
 WOJ. MŚCISŁAWSKIE – VOIV. OF
 MSTISLAVL
 WOJ. NOWOGRODZKIE – VOIV. OF
 NOVAHRUDAK
 WOJ. PŁOCKIE – VOIV. OF PŁOCK
 WOJ. PODLASKIE – VOIV. OF POD-
 LASIA
 WOJ. PODOLSKIE – VOIV. OF
 PODOLIA
 WOJ. POŁOCKIE – VOIV. OF
 POLOTSK
 WOJ. POZNAŃSKIE – VOIV. OF
 POZNAŃ
 WOJ. RUSKIE – VOIV. OF RUS (RU-
 THENIA)
 WOJ. SANDOMIERSKIE – VOIV. OF
 SANDOMIERZ
 WOJ. SIERADZKIE – VOIV. OF
 SIERADZ

WOJ. SMOLEŃSKIE – VOIV. OF
 SMOLENSK
 WOJ. TROCKIE – VOIV. OF TRAKAI
 WOJ. WILEŃSKIE – VOIV. OF VIL-
 NIUS
 WOJ. WITEBSKIE – VOIV. OF
 WITEBSK
 WOJ. WOŁYŃSKIE – VOLHYNIAN
 VOIV.
 Z. BIELSKA – LAND OF BIELSK
 Z. CHEŁMSKA – LAND OF CHEŁM
 Z.D. – LAND OF DROHICZYN
 Z. DOBRZYŃSKA – LAND OF DO-
 BRZYŃ
 Z. HALICKA – LAND OF HALYCH
 Z. LWOWSKA – LAND OF LVIV
 Z. ŁOMŻYŃSKA – LAND OF ŁOMŻA
 Z. MIELNICKA – LAND OF MIELNIK
 Z. NURSKA – LAND OF NUR
 Z. PRZEMYSKA – LAND OF
 PRZEMYŚL
 Z. RAWSKA – LAND OF RAWA
 Z. SANOCKA – LAND OF SANOK
 Z.W. – LAND OF WARSAW
 Z. WIELUŃSKA – LAND OF WIELUŃ
 Z. WIZKA – LAND OF WIZNA

Countries, Towns, and Villages:

Arcyksięstwo Austriackie – Arch-
 ducy of Austria
 Azowskie M. – the Sea of Azov
 Baków – Bacău
 Bełz – Belz
 Biała Cerkiew – Bila Tserkva
 Białynicze – Białynichy
 Birże – Biržai
 Bobrujsk – Babruysk
 Boh – the Southern Bug River
 Bowsk – Bauska
 Braclaw – Bratslav
 Brandenburgia – Brandenburg
 Braślau – Brasław (Braslau)
 Briańsk – Bryansk

Brześć (Lit.) – Brest–Litovsk
 Brześć Kuj. – Brześć Kujawski
 Brześć Lit. – Brest–Litovsk
 Brzeżany – Berezhany
 Buczacz – Buchach
 Bug rz. – the Bug River
 Bujnicze – Bujnicze
 Bychów – Bykhov
 Bytów – Bytów
 Chanat Krymski – The Crimean
 Khanate
 Charków – Kharkiv
 Chocim – Khotyn
 Cisa – the Tisza River
 Czarne Morze – the Black Sea

Czechy – Bohemia
 Czerkasy – Cherkasy
 Czernihów – Chernihiv
 Czetwertnia – Chetvertnya
 Dąbrowica – Dubrovytsia
 Dago – Dagö (Hiiumaa)
 Derman – Derma
 Desna – the Desná River
 Dniepr – the Dnieper River
 Dniestr – the Dniester
 Dobromil – Dobromyl
 Doniec – the Donets River
 Dorpat – Derpt (Tartu)
 Dunaj – the Danube River
 Dyneburg – Daugavpils (hist. Dyne-
 burg)
 Dźwina – the Dvina (Daugava)
 Elekt. Brandenburgii – Electorate of
 Brandenburg
 Gdańsk – Gdańsk (Danzig)
 Gotlandia – Gotland
 Halicz – Halych
 Homel – Homel
 Horyń – the Horyn River
 Hoszcza – Hoshcha
 Humań – Uman
 Iłłusztka – Ilūkste
 Inflanty – Livonia
 J. Ilmeń – Lake Ilmen
 J. Pejpus – Lake Peipus
 Jassy – Iași
 Jazłowiec – Yazlovets
 Jewie – Vievis
 Kaługa – Kaluga
 Kamieniec Podolski – Kamianets-Po-
 dylskyi
 Kaniów – Kaniv
 Kiejdany – Kėdainiai
 Kijów – Kiev
 Kisielin – Kysylyn
 Kiszpork – Christburg (Dzierzgoń)
 Kłajpeda – Klaipėda (Memel)
 Kołomyja – Kolomyia
 Koniecpol Nowy – Kinetopol
 Kopyś – Kopys
 Korsuń – Korsun
 Korzec – Korets
 Kowel – Kovel
 Kowno – Kaunas
 Kraków – Cracow
 Kraków – Cracow
 Kretynga – Kretinga
 Królestwo Szwecji – the Kingdom of
 Sweden
 Królewiec – Königsberg
 Kroże – Kražiai
 Kryłos – Krylos
 Krystynopol – Chervonohrad
 (Krystynopol)
 Krzemieńczuk – Kremenchuk
 Krzemieniec – Kremenets
 Krzepice – Krzepice
 Krzyżtopór – Krzyżtopór
 Ks. Oświęcimsko-Zatorskie – Duchy
 of Oświęcim and Zator
 Księstwo Mołdawskie – The Princi-
 pality of Moldavia
 Księstwo Żmudzkie – Duchy of
 Samogitia
 Kułdyga – Kuldiga
 Kurlandia – Courland
 Kutein – Kutein
 Lachowicze – Lyakhavichy
 Łańcut – Łańcut
 Lidzbark – Lidzbark
 Łosk – Losk
 Łować – the Lovat River
 Lubar – Liubar
 Lubcz – Lubcha
 Lubieszów – Liubeshiv
 Łubnie – Lubny
 Lubowla – Stará Ľubovňa
 Łuck – Lutsk
 Łuków – Łuków
 Łuzki – Luzkai
 M. Azowskie – the Azov Sea
 M. Czarne – the Black Sea
 Marusza – the Mureș River

Merecz – Merkinė	Połonne – Polonne
Międzyrzec Korecki – Mezhirichi	Pomorzany – Pomoriany
Mińsk – Minsk	Poniewież – Panevėžys
Mitawa – Mitau (Jelgava)	Postawy – Pastavy
Mohylew – Mogilev	Poszawsze – Pašiaušė
Moldawia – Moldavia	Prezburg – Prešporok (Bratislava)
Morze Bałtyckie – the Baltic Sea	Prusy – Prussia
Moskwa – Moscow	Prypeć – the Pripjat River
Moskwa rz. – the Moskva River	Przeworsk
Moskwa (Wielkie Księstwo Moskiewskie) – Muscovy	Psków – Pskov
Mozyr – Mazyr	Rachmanów – Rochmaniv
Mścisław – Mstislavl	Radziejów – Radziejów
Nieborów – Nieborów	Rosienie – Raseiniai
Niemen – the Neman River	Rosja – Russia
Nieświerz – Nesvizh	Ryga – Riga
Nowe Miasto Korczyn – Nowy Korczyn	Rytwiany – Rytwiny
Nowogród Siewierski – Novhorod-Siverskyi	Rzeczyca – Rečyca
Nowogród Wielki – Velikiy Novgorod	Rzeżyca – Rēzekne (Rositten)
Nowogródek – Novahrudak	Sambor – Sambir
Odra – the Oder River	San – the San River
Olandia – Öland	Sejm – the Seym River
Orsza – Orsha (Orša)	Siedmiogród – Transylvania
Orzeł – Oryol	Śląsk – Silesia
Ostróg – Ostroh	Słonim – Slonim
Ostroróg – Ostroróg	Śluck – Slutsk
Oszmiana – Ashmyany	Smoleńsk – Smolensk
Owruć – Ovruch	Spisz – Spiš
Ozylia – Osel	Stanisławów – Stanislavov
Ozylia – Saaremaa	Stanisławów – Stanyslaviv (Ivano-Frankivsk)
Paniowce – Paniwci	Stary Bychów – Old Bykhov
Parnawa – Pärnu	Stężyca – Stężyca
Pecz – Pécs	Stratyń – Stratyn
Perejesław – Pereyaslav	Stryj – Stryi (Stryj)
Peszt – Pest	Szarogród – Sharhorod
Pilawa – Pillau	Szczuczyn Lit. – Shchuchyn
Piltyń – Piltene	Szklów – Škloŭ
Pińsk – Pinsk	Szwecja – Sweden
Pisioł rz. – the Psel River	Teterew – the Teteriv River
Poczajów – Pochav	Troki – Trakai
Podhorce – Pidhirtsi	Tulczyn – Tulchyn
Połock – Polotsk	Turcja – the Ottoman Empire
	Turów – Turaŭ
	Twer – Tver

Tylża – Tilsit
Uherce – Uhry
Uszacz – Ushachy
Warszawa – Warsaw
Warta – the Warta River
Węgry – Hungary
Wenden – Cēsis (Wenden)
Wiedeń – Vienna
Wielkie Łuki – Velikiye Luki
Wierzbołów – Virbalis
Wilia – the Neris (Viliya) River
Wilkomierz – Ukmergė (Vilkomir)
Wilno – Vilnius
Winnica – Vinnytsia
Wisła – the Vistula River
Wiśniowiec – Vyshnivets
Wisznia – Vyshnia
Wiszniew – Vishnyeva

Witebsk – Vitebsk
Włocławek – Włocławek
Włodimierz – Volodymyr–Volynskiy
Wołchow – the Volkhov River
Wołczyn – Vowchyn
Wołga – the Volga River
Wołkowysk – Vawkavysk
Wornie – Varniai (hist. Medininkai)
Wrocław – Wrocław (Breslau)
Zaporoże – Zaporozhia
Zasław – Zaslavye
Zbaraż – Zbarazh
Złoczów – Zolochi
Złoczów – Zolochiv
Żmudź – Samogitia
Żółkiew – Zhovkva
Żyrowice – Žyrovicy
Żytomierz – Zhytomyr

Index of People

The names of authors, editors, translators etc. of the sources and literature referred to in the endnotes are italicised.

- a. – author
- Abp. – archbishop
- archd. – archduke, archduchess
- Austr. – Austrian
- b. – born
- Boh. – Bohemian
- Bp. – bishop
- br. – brother
- Brandenb. – Brandenburgian
- co. – coat of arms
- col. – colonel
- Cour. – of Courland
- Cr. – Crown, of the Crown
- Crac. – of Cracow
- crt. – Court
- ct. – count
- d. – died
- da. – daughter
- Dan. – Danish
- dyn. – dynasty
- econ. – economic
- Emp. – emperor, empress
- Eng. – English
- f. – father
- f.m. – field marshal
- Fr. – French
- GD – Grand Duke
- Gda. – of Gdańsk
- GDL – Grand Duchy of Lithuania,
Grand Duke of Lithuania
- Gen. – general
- Ger. – German
- Gł. – of Głogów
- Gniezn. – of Gniezno
- Hung. – Hungarian
- It. – Italian
- Jew. – Jewish
- Jr. – junior
- Kal. – of Kalisz
- Kam. – of Kamianets-Podilskyi
- Ki. – of Kiev
- kn. – knyaz
- Kuj. – Kujavian, of Kujavia
- Lith. – Lithuanian
- Liv. – Livonian
- Lub. – of Lublin
- Lut. – Lutheran
- Mar. – of Marseille
- marsh. – marshal
- Mas. – Masovian
- milit. – military
- min. – minister
- Mst. – of Mstislaw
- Mus. – Muscovite
- Nether. – of the Netherlands
- Nor. – Norwegian
- Novah. – of Novahrudak
- Opol.-rac. – of Opole and Racibórz
- Ort. – Orthodox
- Pl. – of Płock
- Pol. – Polish
- polit. – political
- Port. – Portuguese
- Pozn. – of Poznań
- pr. – prince, princess
- Prof. – professor
- Prus. – Prussian
- Prz. – of Przemyśl
- Ref. – Reformed
- rel. – religious
- Rom. – Roman
- Rom.-Ger. – Roman-German
- Rus. – Russian
- Ruth. – Ruthenian

s. – son of, sister of
Sandom. – of Sandomierz
Sen. – senior
Sie. – od Sieradz
Śl. – of Słupsk
soc. – social
Sp. – Spanish
St. – saint

Swed. – Swedish
Transylv. – Transylvanian
Tus. – Tuscan
voiv. – voivode
w. – wife
woj. – of Wojnicz
Wro. – of Wrocław

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The list of abbreviations:

cas. – castle
star. – starostwo
dist. – district (Polish: *powiat*)
eas. – eastern
geog. reg. – geographical region
hist. reg. – historical region
l. – land (Polish: *ziemia*)
mount. – mountain

n. – north
riv. – river
sout. – south
t. – town
west. – western
vil. – village
voi. – voivodeship (Polish: *województwo*)

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