THE OXFORD HISTORY *of* POLAND-LITHUANIA

VOLUME I: The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, 1385–1569

ROBERT FROST

OXFORD HISTORY OF EARLY MODERN EUROPE

General Editor: R. J. W. EVANS

The history of eastern European is dominated by the story of the rise of the Russian empire, yet Russia only emerged as a major power after 1700. For 300 years the greatest power in Eastern Europe was the union between the kingdom of Poland and the grand duchy of Lithuania, one of the longest-lasting political unions in European history. Yet because it ended in the late-eighteenth century in what are misleadingly termed the Partitions of Poland, it barely features in standard accounts of European history.

The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union 1385–1569 tells the story of the formation of a consensual, decentralised, multinational, and religiously plural state built from below as much as above, that was founded by peaceful negotiation, not war and conquest. From its inception in 1385–6, a vision of political union was developed that proved attractive to Poles, Lithuanians, Ruthenians, and Germans, a union which was extended to include Prussia in the 1450s and Livonia in the 1560s. Despite the often bitter disagreements over the nature of the union, these were nevertheless overcome by a republican vision of a union of peoples in one political community of citizens under an elected monarch. Robert Frost challenges interpretations of the union informed by the idea that the emergence of the sovereign nation state represents the essence of political modernity, and presents the Polish-Lithuanian union as a case study of a composite state.

The modern history of Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Belarus cannot be understood without an understanding of the legacy of the Polish-Lithuanian union. This volume, now issued in a paperback edition with minor revisions and corrections, is the first detailed study of the making of that union ever published in English.

Robert Frost was educated at the universities of St Andrews, Cracow, and London. After teaching for eighteen years at King's College London, he moved in 2004 to the University of Aberdeen, where he currently holds the Burnett Fletcher Chair in History. He is interested in the history of eastern and northern Europe from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. His principal research interests are in the history of Poland-Lithuania, and in the history of warfare in the early modern period.

The Oxford History of
Poland-Lithuania

*Volume I: The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian
Union, 1385–1569*

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

In Memoriam
Oskar Halecki (1891–1973)
Adolfas Šapoka (1906–1961)
Mykhailo Hrushevsky (1866–1934)
Matvei K. Liubavskii (1860–1936)

Preface

This is not the history of a state, or a nation, the usual concepts that frame the writing of political history, but of a political relationship: a political union that grew and changed over time, and expanded to include more peoples and cultures than the Poles and Lithuanians who established it in its original form in 1386. Historians often write of state- and nation-building; they rarely write of the formation of unions, and if they do, they usually do so from the point of view of one or other of the states or nations that form the union. After the process usually—and erroneously—referred to as the 'partitions of Poland' removed Poland-Lithuania from the map between 1772 and 1795, the complex historical development of the lands that once formed Poland-Lithuania has resulted for much of the time since 1795 in the union being presented in a negative light: it is seen as a failure, and above all an episode in Polish history, in which the Poles extended political control over the territories of what now constitute the modern states of Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Latvia, and parts of what became Estonia, Russia, and (until 1945) Germany. This approach has led many non-Polish historians to portray the Polish-Lithuanian union as an exercise in Polish imperialism that stunted their own national development, while there is a strong tradition in Polish historiography, dating back to Michał Bobrzyński and beyond, that blames the union for the partitions. Yet the union was no empire. In its origin it was a classic late-medieval composite state, in which the various realms that came together under the rule of the Jagiellonian dynasty between 1386 and 1569 gradually formed a strong political union through negotiation and consent, despite some spectacular disagreements as to its nature and form. Its disappearance in 1795, just as revolutionaries in France were proclaiming the doctrine of the sovereign nation, one and indivisible, means that the history of east central Europe has been written largely through the eyes of the partitioning powers and their successors—above all Russia and Germany—or by historians of the individual nation states that fought for the independence that was only secured after 1918 or 1990. Yet the largely negative assessments of the union fail to explain why it came to be, and why it lasted so long. This book attempts to answer the first of those questions.

When, more years ago than I care to admit, Robert Evans invited me on behalf of Oxford University Press to write a history of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth from 1569 until 1795, I had originally intended the story of the making of this union between 1386 and 1569 to be a brief introductory section. I soon realized, however, that it is impossible to understand the political dynamics of such a complex political construct as the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth without a clear grasp of how it was formed. There is no detailed study in English of the making of this union; indeed there is very little on it in English at all, since the Anglo-Saxon scholarly world has for far too long been largely content with the versions of the history of eastern Europe written by Russianists and Germanists.

With this in mind, and aware that there has been no comprehensive re-evaluation of the making of the union since Oskar Halecki's classic two-volume *Dzieje unii jagiellońskiej,* published in 1919, I suggested to OUP that I might publish a two-volume study of the union from its formation in 1386 to its dissolution, against the will of its citizens, in 1795. This book is the result. It takes the story from the origins of the union in the late fourteenth century up to its consummation at Lublin in 1569. Halecki's great work was written as the partitioning powers imploded in the maelstrom of the First World War, and published as Poles and Lithuanians began a war over Vilnius, the former capital of the grand duchy of Lithuania. While it is sympathetic to the Lithuanian and Ruthenian inhabitants of the former grand duchy, and is frequently critical of Polish policy towards them, it is written from a Polish perspective. This book is an attempt to provide a history of the making of the union that eschews any national perspective, and which suggests that the non-Polish peoples within the union state played as great a part in its formation as the Poles. It therefore tells the story from multiple viewpoints in order to explain the success of the union, which remains, despite its inglorious end, one of the longest-lasting political unions in European history, whose cultural legacy is evident to this day. It is the first part of a two-volume attempt to study the union on its own terms, and not to judge it for failing to be what it did not try to be. Above all, it seeks to restore the history of the largest state in late medieval and early modern Europe to the general story of European development after years of historiographical neglect outside eastern Europe.

This first volume is not and cannot be an *histoire totale* of the vast geographical area that constituted the union state. It is conceived as a political history that tells the story of the union's making; it is therefore largely a *histoire événementielle*, and only deals with economic, social, and cultural factors of direct relevance to the making of the union, such as the political role played by religion, and the development of the rural economy, which was of crucial importance to the nobility that formed—although never exclusively—the union's citizen body. There will be a fuller, thematic treatment of important issues such as religion, the Renaissance and the influence of humanism, and the union's unique urban world in volume two.

The book is dedicated to the memory of four great scholars of the Polish-Lithuanian union: a Pole, a Lithuanian, a Ukrainian, and a Russian. They had very different attitudes towards it, and one of them—Mykhailo Hrushevsky—loathed it and all it stood for. All of them lived through the traumas of the twentieth century in eastern Europe, and suffered for their fearless and uncompromising attitude towards their scholarship. Two of them—Oskar Halecki and Adolfas Šapoka—ended their lives in exile, without access to the sources that nourished and sustained their scholarship; two of them—Matvei Liubavskii and Mykhailo Hrushevsky—ended theirs in Soviet detention, as their works were denigrated or suppressed by the communist regime. None of them ever abandoned their integrity as historians: this work owes much to all of them. Its shortcomings are entirely the responsibility of its author, who has had the good fortune to live in an age when the difficulties they faced have largely evaporated,

and the peoples of the successor states of the Polish-Lithuanian union have mostly—although alas not yet entirely—had the freedom to explore its history on their own terms. I hope that they will accept this view from an outsider in the spirit in which it was written.

Robert Frost

Warsaw, January 2014

Acknowledgements

Contents

IV. CONSOLIDATION AND CHANGE

V. DYNASTY AND CITIZENSHIP

VI. REFORM

VII. UNION ACCOMPLISHED

List of Maps and Tables

MAPS

TABLE

List of Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

AA	*Akta Aleksandra króla polskiego, wielkiego księcia litewskiego itd. (1501–1506)*, ed. Fryderyk Papée (Cracow, 1927)
AF	*Altpreussische Forschungen*
AHR	*American Historical Review*
Annales	Johannes Dlugossius (Jan Długosz), *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*
APH	*Acta Poloniae Historica*
ASP	*Acten der Ständetage Preussens unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens*
ASPK	*Acta Stanów Prus Królewskich*
AT	*Acta Tomiciana*
AU	*Akta Unji Polski z Litwą 1385–1791*, ed. Stanisław Kutrzeba and Władysław Semkowicz (Cracow, 1932)
AUNC	*Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici*
AW	*Ateneum Wileńskie*
AZR	*Акты относящіеся къ исторіи Западной Россіи* [Akty otnosiashchiiesia k istorii Zapadnoi Rossii]
BCzart.	Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich, Cracow
BPGdańsk	Biblioteka Gdańska Polskiej Akademii Nauk
BHA	*Беларускі Гістарычны Агляд*
BZH	*Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne*
CDMP	*Codex diplomaticus Majoris Poloniae*
CDP	*Codex diplomaticus Poloniae*
CDPr	*Codex diplomaticus Prussicus*
CESXV	*Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*
CEV	*Codex epistolaris Vitoldi magni ducis Lithuaniae 1376–1430*, ed. Antoni Prochaska (Cracow, 1882).
CIP	*Corpus iuris polonici, Sectionis primae: Privilegia statuta constitutiones edicta decreta mandata regnum Poloniae spectantia comprehendentis,* iii: *Annos 1506–1522 continens,* ed. Oswald Balzer (Cracow, 1906)
CPH	*Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*
Dnevnik	*Дневник Люблинского сейма 1569 года: Соединение Великаго Княжества Литовского с Королеством Польским,* изд. М. Коялович (St Petersburg, 1869)
dod.	*dodatek (appendix)*
EcHR	*Economic History Review*
HUS	*Harvard Ukrainian Studies*
Ius Polonicum	*Ius Polonicum: Codicibus veteribus manuscriptis et editionibus quibusque collatis*, ed. Wincenty Bandtkie Stężyński (Warsaw, 1831)

JGO	*Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*
JMH	*Journal of Modern History*
KA	*1385 m. rugpjūčio Krėvos Aktas*, ed. Jūratė Kiaupienė (Vilnius, 2002)
KH	*Kwartalnik Historyczny*
KHKM	*Kwartalnik Historyczny Kultury Materialnej*
LHS	*Lithuanian Historical Studies*
Liublino Unija	Glemža, Liudas and Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, Ramunė (eds), *Liublino unija: idėja ir jos tęstinumas* (Vilnius, 2011)
LIM	*Lietuvos Istorijos Metraštis*
LIS	*Lietuvos Istorijos Studijos*
LSP	*Lituano-Slavica Posnaniensia: Studia Historica*
LTSRMAD	*Lietuvos TSR Mokslų Akademijos darbai*
MPH	*Monumenta Poloniae Historica*
NP	*Nasza Przeszłość*
ORP	*Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*
OSP	*Oxford Slavonic Papers*
PER	*Parliaments, Estates and Representation*
PH	*Przegląd Historyczny*
P&P	*Past and Present*
PSB	*Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, 49 vols (1935 to date)
PSRL	*Полное Собрание Русских Летописей* (*Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisei*)
PW	*Przegląd Wschodni*
PZ	*Przegląd Zachodni*
RAU	*Roczniki Akademii Umiejętności*
RAUWHF	*Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności: Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny*
RDSG	*Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*
RG	*Rocznik Gdański*
RH	*Roczniki Historyczne*
RIB	*Руссая Историческая Библиотека* (Russkaia Istoricheskaia Biblioteka)
Roczniki	Jan Długosz, *Roczniki czyli kroniki sławnego Królestwa Polskiego*
RSAU	*Rozprawy i Sprawozdania z posiedzeń Wydziału Historyczno-Filozoficznego Akademii Umiejętności*
SEER	*The Slavonic and East European Review*
SH	*Studia Historyczne*
Skarbiec	*Skarbiec diplomatów papieżkich, cesarskich, królewskich, książęcych, uchwał narodowych, postanowień różnych władz i urzędów posługujących do krytycznego wyjaśnienia dziejów Litwy, Rusi Litewskiej i ościennych im krajów*, ed. Ignacy Daniłowicz, 2 vols (Wilno, 1860–62)
SMHW	*Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*
SR	*Slavic Review*

SPS	*Społeczeństwo Polski Średniowiecznej*
SRP	*Scriptores Rerum Polonicarum*
SRPr	*Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*
SŹ	*Studia Źródłoznawcze*
TK	*Teki Krakowskie*
UAM	*Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań*
UIZh	*Український Історичний Журнал*
UPK	*Urzędnicy Prus Królewskich*
UWXL	*Urzędnicy centralni i dostojnicy Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*
VC	*Volumina Constitutionum*
VL	*Volumina Legum*
ŹDU	*Źródłopisma do dziejów unii Korony Polskiej i W. X. Litewskiego*, ed. A. T. Działyński (Poznań, 1861)
ZH	*Zapiski Historyczne*
ZNUJPH	*Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego: Prace Historyczne*
ZO	*Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*
ZOF	*Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*
ZPL	*Zbiór praw litewskich*, ed. A.T. Działyński (Poznań, 1841)

A Note on Personal and Place Names

There is no completely satisfactory solution to the problems, both practical and political, of rendering the personal and geographical names of eastern Europe in a text written in English. A balance has to be struck between scholarly exactitude and readability for those who do not know Slavic or Baltic languages. I have tried to strike such a balance. With regard to personal names, I have generally used English equivalents for the names of ruling princes and their families: thus Casimir, not Kazimierz; Sigismund, not Zygmunt; and Catherine, not Katarzyna. Where there is no exact English equivalent, I have preferred the native version over archaic anglicizations: thus Władysław and Lászlo, not Ladislas; Vasilii, not Basil, although I have preferred the German forms of Slavic names for the Germanized Slavic families who ruled in Silesia and Pomerania: thus Wladislaus and Bogislaw. I have preferred Louis of Anjou to Ludwig, Ludwik, or Lewis. For the man who instituted the union, I use the Lithuanian form Jogaila until his conversion to Catholicism, from which point I use the Polish form Jagiełło, since this is mostly how he is known in the English-language literature. I have used the Lithuanian form of Vytautas rather than the Polish Witold or the transliterated Russian form Vitovt, and Žygimantas for his brother, rather than Sigismund, to distinguish him from Sigismund of Luxembourg, Sigismund I, and Sigismund August. In order to help readers without Slavic and Baltic languages to discriminate between the different backgrounds of the individuals and families I have discussed, I have adopted a scheme in which Polish forms are used for Poles, and Lithuanian forms for Lithuanians until the mid sixteenth century, when Polish spread rapidly among the Lithuanian and Ruthenian elites. I have signalled the gradual switch to Polish in the sixteenth century by using Polish forms for Lithuanian names for the generation politically active in the lead-up to the Lublin union. This is the point at which the Radvila become the Radziwiłł, though the fact that Polish was the first language of Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black (Czarny) and Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Red (Rudy) says nothing about their national identity.

The situation is even more complex with regard to names of Ruthenians, a term used to denote the inhabitants of what was known as Rus′. Modern Slavic languages distinguish between Rus′ and Russia, a distinction that was unknown in the period covered by this book. Modern nationalist battles, however, make it important to distinguish between Russian (*rosyjski* in Polish) and Rus′ian (*ruski* in Polish). In order to avoid the awkward form Rus′ian in English, I have followed convention by using the English form Ruthenian, derived from the contemporary Latin. The Ruthenians in this book are the ancestors of modern Belarus′ians and Ukrainians, although Ruthenians in this period did not know any such distinction. Since Ruthenians spoke a number of different dialects of eastern Slavic, and orthography was by no means fixed, I have transliterated largely from modern forms of the names, using Ukrainian forms for Ruthenians from the southern lands,

Belarusian forms for Ruthenians from the lands of modern Belarus, and Russian forms for Muscovites. I have simplified the transliterations, omitting soft signs and diacritics to make the text more readable for non-Slavic specialists; thus I use Hrushevsky, not Hrushevs′kyi; Ostrozky, not Ostroz′kyi. For families of Lithuanian origin who became Ruthenianized and Orthodox, I have used the Ruthenian version of their names: thus the Holshansky, not the Alšeniškiai.

Similar principles are used with regard to geographical names. Where there is a standard English form, I have used it: thus Warsaw, Cracow, Moscow, Vienna. My general principle is to use the language in which places appear most often in the sources, and which is used by the dominant elites in a city or province. Thus I prefer the German forms Danzig, Thorn, and Elbing to the Polish forms Gdańsk, Toruń, and Elbląg. Matters are more complex in the lands of the grand duchy of Lithuania, where the linguistic map has altered considerably since the period covered by this book. On the whole, I have therefore used Lithuanian forms for places within the territory of modern Lithuania (Vilnius, not Wilno or Vilna; Trakai, not Troki), and Ruthenian forms for territories with a largely Ruthenian population. Rather than adopt one of the numerous variant spellings that appear in the sources, I have preferred to use the modern place names in Belarusian, Ukrainian, and Russian. Thus I use Kyiv, not Kiev—although I do refer to Kievan Rus′; Navahrudak, not Nowogródek; Hrodna, not Grodno. The exception is for Red Ruthenia, most of which is now in Ukraine, but which was part of the Polish kingdom from the 1340s until 1795, and where Polish was the dominant language among most of the elites by the late fifteenth century. Thus I prefer Lwów to L′viv, although I use Kamianets (Podilsky) not Kamieniec Podolski, since this territory was disputed between Poland and Lithuania.

Transliterations from Cyrillic are based on a modified form of the Library of Congress system, omitting diacritics. It has long been standard for bibliographic information in footnotes to be transliterated, but computerization has made it easier and less expensive to print different alphabets. I have therefore left titles in the bibliography and footnotes in the Cyrillic alphabet. Those who read east Slavic languages do not need them to be transliterated; for those who do not, it may be useful to be able to tell at a glance whether a source is in Russian, Belarusian, or Ukrainian, rather than Polish. I have provided a gazetteer with equivalents for place names in the various languages of the region. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

A Note on Currency

Until 1569 Poland and Lithuania had different currencies, as did Mazovia until 1529 and the Prussian lands, until the currency union with Poland established between 1526 and 1530. Polish monarchs also maintained a separate system of coinage in Red Ruthenia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The Polish monetary system in the fourteenth century was heavily influenced by the currency reforms carried out in 1300 by Václav II of Bohemia, king of Poland 1300–5, and the introduction of a gold coinage in Bohemia in 1325. The silver Prague *grosz*—the name derives from the Latin *denarius grossus*, or large penny— circulated freely in Poland, as did the gold Bohemian florin in this period, at a rate of roughly twelve groszy to the florin. Władysław Łokietek's 1315 currency reform owed much to the Bohemian example. From 1315, 48 groszy were minted from one mark of silver—*grzywna* in Polish—which weighed half a pound; this was worth 576 pennies (*denary*). In 1315, one grosz contained 3.6 grams of silver, equivalent to the Prague grosz. By 1384–86, there were 16 pennies to the grosz, and 768 were struck from one mark.

The silver content of the grosz declined steadily between 1300 and 1530, and the Polish grosz devalued substantially against its Bohemian equivalent: if in 1300–10 they both contained 3.6 grams of silver, in 1400–10 the Polish grosz contained 1.38 grams compared with 1.75 grams contained by the Prague grosz; by 1530 the figures were 0.77 grams and 1.18 grams. The mark remained a money of account.

Łokietek and his son Casimir III (1333–70) minted gold ducats, probably largely for representational reasons, and Bohemian and Hungarian ducats long remained the main gold coins circulating in Poland. Under John I Albert (1492–1501) the problems caused by fluctuations in the value of silver and gold led to a half-hearted currency reform whose major achievement was the introduction of a new gold coin, the Polish złoty (*florenus polonicus*; *aureus polonicus*), as the equivalent of the ducat, whose value was established at 30 groszy, although this was raised to 32 groszy in 1505. In 1528 Sigismund I's currency reform laid the foundations of the bimetallic system for the rest of the early modern period. It established a new ducat or red złoty (*czerwony złoty*). Henceforth, the złoty became a money of account; in 1528, one ducat or red złoty was worth $1^1/_2$ złoties. In 1558 Sigismund August raised the weight of the mark from 198 to 202 grams. Between 1547 and 1571 one ducat or red złoty was worth 54 Polish groszy.

Lithuania in the fifteenth century adopted the Culm mark (*hryvna*) from the Teutonic Knights at a weight of 191.29 grams. In 1500, 100 Lithuanian groszy were worth just over 136 Polish groszy; after the reforms of Sigismund I, the figure was 100:125. Monetary calculations in Lithuania and Ruthenia were often carried out in kop groszy, in which a *kopa* was a unit of measurement denoting 60 pieces. Thus 100 kop groszy was worth 6,000 Lithuanian groszy.

A Note on the Genealogies

The genealogies in Figures 1–3 are based on Darius Baronas, Artūras Dubonis, Rimvydas Petrauskas, *Lietuvos Istorija*, iii: *XIII a.–1385 m.* (Vilnius, 2011), 338–9, 356–9; Stephen Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending* (Cambridge, 1994), genealogical tables 1–4; Леонтій Войтович, *Княжа доба на Русі: Портрети еліти* (Била Церква, 2006) and *Удільні князівства Рюриковичів і Гедиміновичів у XII–XIV ст.* (Львів, 1996); and Jan Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia Giedymino-wiczów* (Poznań and Wrocław, 1999), table 1, 304–5. The exact order and number of the children of Gediminas, Algirdas, and Kęstutis is a matter of some controversy. With regard to Algirdas's children, I have accepted the traditional view of Andrei of Polatsk as the eldest son of Algirdas's first marriage, and Jogaila/Jagiełło as the eldest son of the second. This is the view of Rowell and Nikodem. Tęgowski and *Lietuvos Istorija,* iii: 356–7 take a different view. The order and birth dates of Algirdas's children are based largely on Jarosław Nikodem, 'Data urodzenia Jagiełły: Uwagi o starszeństwie synów Olgierda i Julianny', *Genealogia*, 12 (2000), 23–49. For a full discussion of the problem, see Chapter 8, 74–5.

PART I
TOWARDS UNION

1

Krėva, Крэва, Krewo

The small, sleepy town of Kreva is little more than a straggling village, hard to distinguish from the rolling wooded countryside in which it lies. Rundown wooden houses with hens running free in their vegetable gardens cluster haphazardly round a large, whitewashed Catholic church. There is a small café with parking for the odd bus-party of tourists visiting the ruins of an imposing fourteenth-century fortress. The scaffolding erected at some point to effect repairs has mostly collapsed. A sign declares the castle to be a valuable historical and cultural monument of the republic of Belarus, and that anyone damaging the ruins will be prosecuted. One is tempted to ask whom the authorities intend to prosecute for neglect.[1]

Little about Kreva today suggests that it was ever of any great importance. In the fourteenth century, however, it was Krėva, a power-centre of the Gediminid dynasty. In 1338 it was given by Gediminas, grand duke of Lithuania (1317–41), to his son Algirdas (*c.*1300–77). Long after Algirdas became grand duke in 1345, he in turn bestowed it upon his chosen heir, Jogaila. It was here that Jogaila was imprisoned in 1381 after being deposed by his father's brother and co-ruler Kęstutis. It was here that Kęstutis was imprisoned a year later after Jogaila overthrew him. Five days later Kęstutis was found dead in mysterious circumstances. Besieged and sacked by the Perekop Tatars between 1503 and 1506, the castle was visited by the imperial ambassador Sigismund Herberstein en route to Moscow in 1518. It was at Krėva that Andrei Kurbskii took refuge after 1564 from the blood-spattered rule of Ivan the Terrible. Thereafter, Krėva lost its military and political significance. When Napoleon Orda sketched it in the mid nineteenth century in his classic survey of the historic monuments of the former Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, the castle had long been an abandoned ruin. It suffered further damage during the First World War, when for three years Krėva lay on the front line. Abandoned by its inhabitants, who were evacuated deep into Russia, it was heavily bombarded in 1916, and was at the centre of a major battle in 1917 as the Germans pounded the Russian line.

It is for other reasons that Kreva has gone down in history. It was here, on 14 August 1385, that Europe's political geography was transformed by a document of a mere 26 lines and 560 words. It was written in Latin, on a parchment to which were attached the seals of Jogaila, his brothers Skirgaila, Kaributas, and Lengvenis, and his cousin, Kęstutis's son Vytautas. The seals disappeared during the nineteenth century, but the document is preserved in the chapter archive of Cracow

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[1] Kreva's population in 2004 was 726, down from a peak of 2,300 in 1909, <http://krevo.by/readarticle.php?article_id=17> accessed 2 July 2010.

cathedral. It marked Jogaila's acceptance of terms agreed in Cracow the previous January for his marriage to Jadwiga, elected queen regnant of Poland in 1384, two years after the death of her father, Louis of Anjou, king of Hungary and Poland. Since Jadwiga was a minor, Skirgaila travelled to Buda to secure the consent of her mother, Elizabeth of Bosnia, who sent a delegation to Krėva where the document known as the Krewo Act was agreed.[2]

It took five months to consummate the relationship. In December Duke Siemowit IV of Mazovia, from a cadet branch of the Piast dynasty that had ruled Poland until 1370, was persuaded to resign his claims to the throne. On 11 January 1386 a Polish delegation met Jogaila in Vaukavysk, between Vilnius and Brest, presenting him with a document in which his safety was guaranteed and the Poles confirmed their promise to elect him as their king.[3] The election—or rather pre-election, since Jogaila would not be crowned until he had fulfilled his promises—took place in Lublin on 2 February, whence Jogaila travelled to Cracow, where he was baptized on 15 February, adopting the Christian name Władysław in homage to Jadwiga's great-grandfather, Władysław Łokietek, who had refounded the Polish kingdom in 1320. Vytautas and Jogaila's pagan brothers Vygantas, Karigaila, and Švitrigaila were baptized alongside him. Three days later Jogaila married Jadwiga; on 4 March he was crowned by the Polish primate, Bodzęta, archbishop of Gniezno.[4]

Thus did the pagan grand duke Jogaila metamorphose into the Christian king Władysław II Jagiełło (1386–1434) and two very different realms were united in an association that was to last 409 years. Why the Krewo Act should have laid the foundations for what remains one of the longest political unions in European history is hard to glean from the brief documents agreed at Krėva and Vaukavysk, which left a great deal unsaid and contained much that was unclear. There was nothing inevitable about the momentous decision that Jogaila took in committing Lithuania to a political relationship with the Poles and their western, Catholic, culture, and much to suggest that this association would prove as short-lived as the Polish unions with Bohemia (1300–6) and Hungary (1370–82).

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[2] *AU*, no. 1, 1–3; *KA*, 17–20.   [3] *AU*, no. 2, 4.
[4] Grzegorz Błaszczyk, *Dzieje stosunków polsko-litewskich od czasów najdawniejszych do współczesności*, i: *Trudne początki* (Poznań, 1998), 206–8; Jadwiga Krzyżaniakowa and Jerzy Ochmański, *Władysław II Jagiełło* (Wrocław, 2006), 94–7. For a translation of the Vaukavysk document, see Stephen Rowell, '1386: The marriage of Jogaila and Jadwiga embodies the union of Poland and Lithuania', *LHS*, 11 (2006), 137–44.

2

Poland

The Krewo Act was the result of contingency rather than any long-term process. The immediate cause was Louis's failure to produce a male heir. On his death in 1382, his Polish and Hungarian subjects had the opportunity to reconsider the personal union that had begun on Louis's accession to the Polish throne in 1370. For the Poles, the relationship had been difficult. Hungary was the senior partner: the crown of St Stephen was long established, and its bearers ruled a populous, dynamic, and wealthy realm. The Polish monarchy rested on fragile foundations. Since the establishment of the Polish state, first mentioned in written sources in the 960s, only four of its rulers, Bolesław I (992–1025), his son Mieszko II (1025–34), Mieszko's grandson Bolesław II (1058–79), and Przemysł II (1295–6) had been crowned. Only Mieszko enjoyed royal status for long: Bolesław I was crowned around Easter 1025, shortly before his death in June. Bolesław II only received papal permission for his coronation in 1076, eighteen years after succeeding his father, and was driven from his throne in 1079 after ordering the murder of Stanisław, bishop of Cracow; he died in exile in 1081. Przemysł II claimed the title of king of Poland, but only controlled Pomerania and his own duchy of Wielkopolska. He did not long enjoy his status: crowned in 1295, he was kidnapped and murdered in 1296 on the orders of the margraves of Brandenburg. Other Polish rulers bore the title *książę*, rendered in Latin as *dux* or *princeps*, whether they ruled over all, or only part, of the Polish lands.

The Piasts were bedevilled by dynastic rivalries. These were exacerbated by the attempt of Bolesław Krzywousty (the Wrymouth) (1107–1138), to provide for his five surviving sons and to systematize the opaque principles of succession among the burgeoning numbers of Piast dukes. Patrilineal inheritance and male primogeniture were not Slavic customs. Collateral succession was the norm. Brothers took precedence over sons, and rulers nominated their successor.[1] Wrymouth's testament divided the kingdom among his sons, establishing a complex system in which the senior member of the dynasty held Cracow and exerted supreme authority over other family members. He does not deserve his popular reputation as the man who wilfully smashed the unity of the Polish state: he tried to solve an increasingly intractable problem, prevent the worsening of the position through his own fecundity—altogether he fathered seventeen children—and to protect the position of his four sons born of his second wife Salomea. Nevertheless, while a

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[1] Marek Barański, *Dynastia Piastów w Polsce* (Warsaw, 2005), 218. For Polish succession law see Oswald Balzer, *Królestwo Polskie 1295–1370*, 2nd edn (Cracow, 2005), 515–86.

common dynastic sense lingered after 1138, Wrymouth's testament undermined the hereditary principle by establishing non-hereditary duchies for his sons. The failure of the principle of seniority, by which the duke of Cracow was to preside over the rest, brought nothing but confusion. The once-proud kingdom disintegrated over the generations into a mess of petty, squabbling duchies, whose rulers grew in assertiveness as their territories declined in size: if there were still only five duchies in 1202, there were nine by 1250, and seventeen by 1288.[2] It was not until 1320 that Louis of Anjou's maternal grandfather Władysław Łokietek (the Short) secured the permission of Pope John XXII for his coronation and revived Poland's status as an independent monarchy.

His achievement was made possible by a reaction to the dark days following Przemysł II's assassination, when the Bohemian Přemyslid dynasty briefly sustained its claim to the Polish throne. Łokietek's own claims, as the third son of Casimir I of Cujavia, were weak. Yet he managed to unite the core provinces of Wielkopolska and Małopolska, though he lost control of Pomerelia and with it access to the Baltic Sea to the Teutonic Order in 1308–9, and was unable to recover Silesia or Mazovia. Rejecting Łokietek's advances, the Silesian dukes swore homage in the 1320s to John of Luxembourg, king of Bohemia, who sustained the Přemyslid claim to the Polish throne. The Mazovian dukes were fiercely protective of their independence. One of them, Konrad I, invited the Teutonic Order into Prussia in 1226 to aid Mazovia against attacks by the pagan Prussian tribes to his north. Wary of Łokietek, the Mazovian Piasts swore homage to John of Luxembourg in 1329. For them, as for the Silesian Piasts, the resurrection of a Polish monarchy was unwelcome. As so often in dynastic politics, blood proved thinner than water.

Łokietek's son Casimir III (1333–70) built impressively on the foundations laid by his father, but his major successes lay in the east, not the west, where he had to accept the status quo. He exploited the deaths without issue of Bolesław III of Płock in 1351 and Casimir I of Czersk in 1355 to secure oaths of homage to him personally, but not to the Polish kingdom: the vassal status of both duchies lapsed on his death, and the Mazovian dukes, like their Silesian cousins, were to be thorns in the side of Polish monarchs for generations to come.[3] For all his achievements, Casimir faced daunting rivals. Apart from the Order, he had to deal with the fundamental shift in political gravity following the extinction of the Árpáds in Hungary (1301) and the Přemyslids in Bohemia (1306). The flourishing economies of these established kingdoms drew the attention of more powerful dynasties, with roots in western Europe and tendrils that snaked across the continent: the Neapolitan branch of the Angevins, which claimed the Hungarian crown, and the Luxembourgs, who succeeded the Přemyslids in Bohemia. The contrast between the dingy Piast capital of Cracow and the glittering courts of Buda and Prague was

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[2] Benedykt Zientara, 'Społeczeństwo polskie XIII–XV wieku', in Ireniusz Ihnatowicz et al. (eds), *Społeczeństwo polskie od X do XX wieku* (Warsaw, 1988), 96.

[3] *Historia Śląska*, ed. Marek Czapliński (Wrocław, 2002), 70–1; *Dzieje Mazowsza*, i, ed. Henryk Samsonowicz (Pułtusk, 2006), 251–4, 266–7. For the reigns of Łokietek and Casimir, see Jan Baszkiewicz, *Odnowienie królestwa polskiego 1295–1320* (Poznań, 2008) and Paul Knoll, *The Rise of the Polish Monarchy: Piast Poland in East Central Europe, 1320–1370* (Chicago, 1972).

all too evident; the more so after the election of the glamorous cosmopolitan king of Bohemia, Charles IV of Luxembourg, as Emperor in 1347.

Casimir was a pragmatist. He abandoned thoughts of recovering eastern Pomerania, ceding it to the Order at Kalisz in 1343, thereby surrendering Poland's direct access to the Baltic. His major problem, however, was his lack of a male heir. He therefore turned to the Angevin king of Hungary, Charles Robert, husband of his sister Elizabeth. In March 1338 Charles Robert agreed with the Luxembourgs that the Polish throne should be inherited by the Angevins in return for a promise that Charles Robert would do all he could to persuade Casimir to renounce his claims to Silesia, something that Casimir, aware he had little chance of recovering it, duly did in February 1339. He agreed that, should he die without a male heir, Elizabeth would succeed him and, through her, Charles Robert or one of his three sons; the agreement was probably sealed at Vysegrád following the death of Casimir's beloved Lithuanian wife Aldona in May 1339, although its existence is only known indirectly.[4]

In 1339 Casimir was only 29 and had fathered two daughters with Aldona. His prospects of a male heir were ruined by his disastrous second marriage to Adelheid of Hesse who, after a brief period of spectacular conjugal disharmony, was despatched to a remote castle where she stubbornly refused an annulment, only leaving Poland in 1357. By 1355 Casimir was ready to sign away his daughters' rights, putting flesh on the bones of the 1339 treaty by agreeing a succession pact with his nephew Louis, Charles Robert's only surviving son, who was to succeed him should he die without male heirs. Casimir did not help Poland's prospects of avoiding an Angevin succession by bigamously marrying his mistress, the widowed Krystyna Rokičana, daughter of a Prague burgher, in 1357 and then, in 1364 or 1365, after declaring himself divorced from her, Hedwig, daughter of the Piast duke Henry of Sagan, on the basis of a falsified papal dispensation purporting to deal with the issue of consanguinity, but not the more awkward one of bigamy. Hedwig bore him three daughters, all of them eventually legitimized by Urban V and—after Casimir's death—Gregory XI. Polish law did not recognize succession in the female line, however, and Casimir confirmed his arrangement with Louis in a treaty signed in Buda in February 1369.

In 1370, just before his death, Casimir reconsidered. He negotiated with Charles IV for a marriage between Charles's son and one of his daughters, and legitimized his favourite grandson, Casimir (Kaźko) of Stolp, son of Bogislaw V of Pomerania, whose sister Elizabeth had married Charles IV in 1363. Casimir probably did not intend to challenge Louis's accession, for all the pro-Luxembourg sentiments of his chancellor, Janusz Suchywilk, and vice-chancellor, Janko of Czarnków. Louis's lack of a male heir, however, meant that the succession was not secure, and it is likely that Casimir's intention was to make Kaźko the heir presumptive should Louis die without a male heir. After Casimir's unexpected death Louis duly

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[4] Paul Knoll, 'Louis the Great and Casimir of Poland', in S.B. Vardy, Géza Goldschmidt, and Leslie S. Domonkos (eds), *Louis the Great, King of Hungary and Poland* (New York, 1986), 108–9; Stanisław Szczur, 'W sprawie sukcesji andegaweńskiej w Polsce', *RH*, 75 (2009), 64–71, 101–2.

succeeded him under the terms of the 1355 and 1369 agreements, although his rapid arrival in Poland in 1370 and hasty coronation in Cracow suggest he was nervous of his prospects (see Map 1).[5]

The brief personal union of Poland and Hungary was not a happy one. Louis may have earned the title 'Great' in Hungary, but he did not in Poland, which he barely visited during his reign, feebly claiming that the climate was disagreeable.[6] He appointed as governor his formidable mother, Elizabeth Łokietkówna, who proved unpopular, partly because of the Hungarians who thronged her court. In 1376 resentment boiled over in a rising in which some of her Hungarian entourage were massacred. Elizabeth fled to Hungary; she was replaced by Wladislaus duke of Oppeln, a Silesian Piast, until her return in 1378.[7]

It was not so much Elizabeth's unpopularity, however, as uncertainty about the succession that lay behind the political instability. Since Krzywousty's testament dealt only with males, the fact that Polish customary law did not recognize succession through the female line gave the kingdom's powerful elites considerable room for manoeuvre, not least because Louis's tenure of the throne was based on their acceptance of Casimir's disinheritance of the Piast cadet lines. In order to secure an agreement that on his death one of his three daughters would succeed him, in 1374 Louis granted a set of privileges at Kassa in the kingdom of Hungary—Košice in modern Slovakia; Koszyce in Polish—the foundation stone of the liberty of the Polish szlachta.[8]

The Koszyce agreement allowed Louis to choose which of his daughters should inherit the Polish throne. Several magnates swore oaths of loyalty to Catherine on behalf of the kingdom, but her death, aged eight, in 1378 threw Louis's plans into disarray. Between 1373 and 1375 he negotiated the betrothal of Catherine's younger sister, Mary, born in 1371, to Sigismund of Luxembourg, second son of Charles IV and great-grandson of Casimir III, who was three years her senior.[9] Jadwiga, his youngest daughter, underwent a ceremony of *sponsalia de futuro*—a form of betrothal—with William, son of Leopold III von Habsburg, in 1378, when Jadwiga was four and William eight. After Catherine's death Louis anointed Mary as his choice for the Polish throne, with Jadwiga intended for Hungary, as her nuptial agreement with William stipulated. At Kassa in August 1379 representatives of the leading Polish lords were invited to swear homage to Mary as their future queen. To overcome their evident reluctance, Louis shut the city gates, preventing them from leaving until the oath was sworn.[10] In February 1380 he confirmed the arrangements

    [5] Knoll, *Rise*, 229–30; Wanda Moszczeńska, 'Rola polityczna rycerstwa wielkopolskiego w czasie bezkrólewia po Ludwiku Wielkim', *PH*, 25 (1925), 88–91.

    [6] Jarosław Nikodem, *Jadwiga, król Polski* (Wrocław, 2009), 64–5. Polish historians generally reject Dąbrowski's claim that Louis was also a great king of Poland: Jan Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie lata Ludwika Wielkiego 1370–1382*, 2nd edn (Cracow, 2009).

    [7] Jerzy Wyrozumski, *Królowa Jadwiga*, 2nd edn (Cracow, 2006), 44; Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie*, 318–20.

    [8] See Chapter 6.

    [9] Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie* 18–23. Hoensch mistakenly suggests she was eight, confusing her with another Mary, born in 1365, who died soon after her birth: Jörg Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund: Herrscher an der Schwelle der Neuzeit 1368–1437* (Munich, 1996), 45.

    [10] Johannes de Czarnkow, *Chronicon Polonorum*, ed. Jan Szlachtowski, *MPH*, ii (Lwów, 1872), 711.
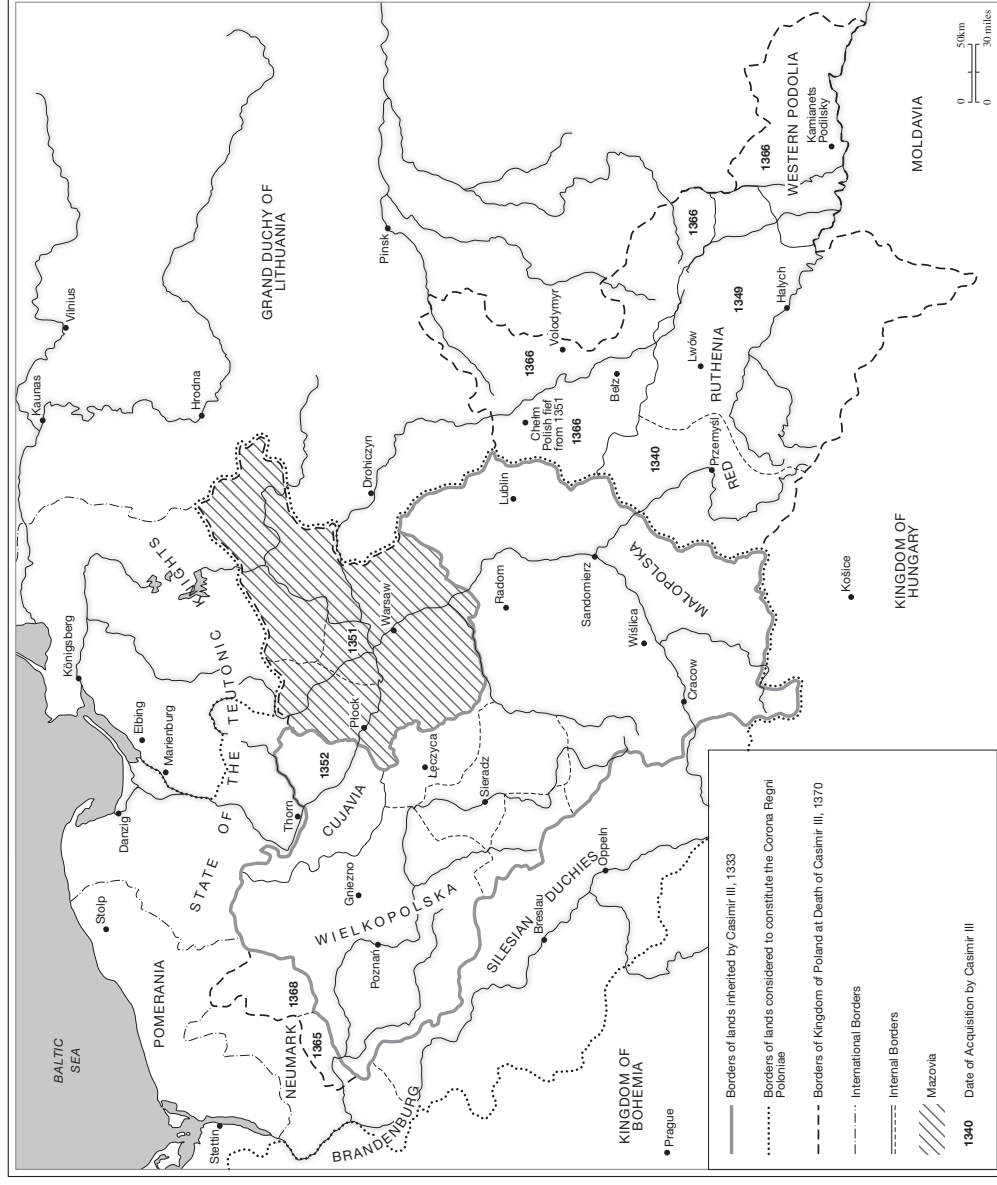
Map 1. The Kingdom of Poland in the fourteenth century.

BALTIC SEA

KINGDOM OF BOHEMIA

• Prague

BRANDENBURG

• Stettin

NEUMARK
1365
1368

POMERANIA

• Stolp

• Danzig

• Elbing

• Marienburg

• Königsberg

STATE OF THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

Thorn

CUJAVIA

1352

Płock

1351

• Gniezno

• Poznań

WIELKOPOLSKA

SILESIAN DUCHIES

• Breslau

• Oppeln

Sieradz

Łęczyca

• Warsaw

Mazovia

• Radom

Lublin

Drohiczyn

Pinsk

GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA

• Hrodna

• Kaunas

• Vilnius

• Sandomierz

• Wiślica

• Cracow

MAŁOPOLSKA

KINGDOM OF HUNGARY

• Košice

Chełm
Polish fief
from 1351
1366

• Bełz

1366

• Volodymyr

1366

RED RUTHENIA

• Przemyśl
1340

• Lwów

• Halych
1349

1366

WESTERN PODOLIA
1366

• Kamianets
Podilsky

MOLDAVIA

Borders of lands inherited by Casimir III, 1333
Borders of lands considered to constitute the Corona Regni Poloniae
Borders of Kingdom of Poland at Death of Casimir III, 1370
International Borders
Internal Borders
Mazovia
1340 Date of Acquisition by Casimir III

0   50km
0   30 miles

for Jadwiga and William's marriage, stipulating that it should take place as soon as Jadwiga reached the canonical age in 1386, and secured Hungarian recognition of these arrangements.[11] In July 1382 he extracted another oath of loyalty to the fourteen-year-old Sigismund from representatives of the Polish nobility at Zólyom.

Whatever Louis's intentions, after his death on the night of 10/11 September 1382, the vultures circling the Angevin inheritance discovered that the elites of his kingdoms had their own ideas and were as ready to break their promises as their royal masters. Five days later the Hungarians declared Mary, not Jadwiga, to be their queen, leaving the regency council appointed in 1381 after Elizabeth Łokiet-kówna's death with an interesting dilemma and an enticing opportunity.[12] Sigismund entitled himself *Herr des Kunygreiches zu Polen* despite not being married yet, and secured oaths of loyalty from several Wielkopolskan towns and some members of the clergy. He met significant resistance, however, from the province's nobility, who sought a commitment that after his coronation Sigismund would reside permanently in Poland.[13]

The Poles had had their fill of absentee monarchy, but this was an undertaking to which Sigismund, who knew of Mary's election, was unwilling to agree. Whatever Louis's intentions, Sigismund had always been more interested in Hungary than Poland. He refused to enter into any commitments in Poland that might compromise his position in Hungary. Encouraged by Konrad Zöllner von Rottenstein, the Order's grand master, Sigismund returned to Hungary to secure his throne; no easy task as it transpired. His candidature was by no means dead, but his refusal to accept their terms left the Poles with a dilemma. They could remain loyal to Louis's broad intentions—if not his last wishes—and the oaths they had sworn since 1374, and seek to avoid another absentee monarch by supporting Jadwiga's accession. Yet Jadwiga was eight years old.[14] She had never visited Poland, had been raised in expectation of the Hungarian throne, and was the ward of her mother, Elizabeth of Bosnia. She was betrothed to a German princeling largely unknown in Poland who was no match for the mighty Luxembourgs. There were other candidates, not least Siemowit IV of Mazovia, who attracted supporters, especially in Wielkopolska; Wladislaus of Oppeln; and the last surviving male in the royal Piast line, Władysław the White, who had already mounted a claim to the throne in 1370, when he had unexpectedly stirred himself from his Benedictine monastery in Dijon. He only reached Poland after Louis's accession; although he had some support in Cujavia and Wielkopolska, having failed to persuade the pro-Angevin pope, Gregory XI, to release him from his vows, he could do little more than seize Gniewkowo, his hereditary duchy. In 1373 and 1375–6 he laid siege to several Wielkopolskan and Cujavian towns, before his final defeat after the siege of Złotoria in 1377, at which

[11] Nikodem, *Jadwiga*, 72–6.
[12] Jacek Gzella, *Małopolska elita władzy w okresie rządów Ludwika Węgierskiego w latach 1370–1382* (Toruń, 1994), 146.
[13] Hoensch, 'König/Kaiser Sigismund, der Deutsche Orden und Polen-Litauen', *ZOF* NF 46 (1997), 3–4; Wyrozumski, *Jadwiga*, 76.
[14] She was probably born on 18 February 1374: Nikodem, *Jadwiga*, 80.

Kaźko of Stolp, who had joined his cause, was fatally wounded. Louis bought Władysław out of Gniewkowo and granted him an abbacy in Hungary. Clement VII, who was hostile to the Angevins, issued a bull in September 1382 releasing Władysław from his vows, but Władysław showed no inclination to leave his abbey. Wielkopolskan resentment at Angevin rule was channelled into support for Siemowit IV, an experienced politician who had many links to Wielkopolska, not least with the archbishopric of Gniezno, which had substantial estates around Łowicz in Siemowit's lands.[15]

Whatever the merits of the various candidates, none was in a position to dictate to the Poles who should rule over them. By 1382 they had developed an ideology that justified their right to decide, and the institutional means to effect that decision. Both rested on the concept of the *corona regni Poloniae*—the crown of the Polish kingdom—formed during the fourteenth century, influenced by contemporary developments in Bohemia and Hungary.[16] The concept of the *corona regni* in east central Europe embodied the idea that, as Susan Reynolds puts it in her study of western Europe:

> A kingdom was never thought of merely as the territory which happened to be ruled by a king. It comprised and corresponded to a 'people' (*gens*, *natio*, *populus*), which was assumed to be a natural, inherited community of tradition, custom, law, and descent.[17]

Reynolds argues that this concept, which she terms 'the community of the realm', was deeply embedded in medieval political consciousness. The idea of a political community distinct from the person of the ruler was familiar across Europe, although its expressions varied according to local conditions. Whereas in Bohemia it was used by Charles IV to give institutional coherence to the eclectic collection of realms he had gathered under his rule, in Scotland it provided a theoretical basis for setting limits to the power of the crown: the 1320 declaration of Arbroath, which claimed the right to depose Robert I should he recognize English claims to suzerainty over Scotland, was drawn up in its name.[18]

The Polish concept of *corona regni* was influenced by contemporary Hungarian and Bohemian examples, but developed somewhat differently. As in Bohemia, it was originally nurtured from above by Łokietek and Casimir, for whom it served

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[15] Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie*, 210–15; Józef Śliwiński, *Powiązania dynastyczne Kazimierza Wielkiego a sukcesja tronu w Polsce* (Olsztyn, 2000), 122–42; Oswald Balzer, *Genealogia Piastów*, 2nd edn (Cracow, 2005), 640–7.

[16] The classic account is Jan Dąbrowski, *Korona Królestwa Polskiego* (Wrocław, 1956; repr. 2010), abridged, tr. Ch. Woesler, as: 'Die Krone des polnischen Königtums im 14. Jahrhundert', in Manfred Hellmann (ed.), *Corona Regni: Studien über die Krone als Symbol des Staates im späteren Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1961), 399–548. Cf. Balzer, *Królestwo*, 586–649; Knoll, *Rise*, 40–1, 170.

[17] Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900–1300*, 2nd edn (Oxford 1997), 250.

[18] Josef Karpat, 'Zur Geschichte des Begriffes *Corona Regni* in Frankreich und England', in Hellmann (ed.), *Corona Regni*, 70–155; Fritz Hartung, 'Die Krone als Symbol der monarchischen Herrschaft im ausgehenden Mittelalter', in Hellmann (ed.), *Corona Regni*, 1–69; Edward Cowan, *For Freedom Alone: The Declaration of Arbroath, 1320*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, 2008). For a full discussion of her views, see Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, 250–331.

the purposes of strengthening royal authority and asserting the essential unity of the Polish lands. Although Casimir was forced to accept the de facto loss of eastern Pomerania and Silesia, the concept of the *corona regni* allowed him to claim that although control over these territories had been lost, they still formed an integral part of the regnum: the Silesian dukes were referred to in Poland throughout the fourteenth century as *duces Poloniae* despite paying homage to the Bohemian crown.[19] Initially the monarch's right to alienate parts of his realm was not questioned: as Janisław, archbishop of Gniezno put it in 1339: 'the king of Poland is lord of all lands that constitute the kingdom of Poland, and can grant them to whomsoever he wishes'.[20] Yet when Casimir bequeathed Łęczyca, Sieradz, and Dobrzyń to Kaźko of Stolp in his testament, the concept of *corona regni* was invoked to block the move. Louis was inclined to respect Casimir's wishes, but strong opposition persuaded him to refer the matter to a tribunal, which decided that no monarch had the right to treat the territory of the *corona regni* as his patrimony, a verdict that Louis accepted.[21]

The triumph of the concept was apparent at Louis's coronation, when he became the first Polish monarch to swear to maintain the kingdom's territorial integrity: not only was he not to reduce it, but he swore to augment it through recovering lost provinces, a pledge he renewed at Koszyce in 1374.[22] Under Casimir and Louis, the central government asserted its authority against the local and provincial institutions established before 1320. The chancellor and vice-chancellor were no longer referred to as 'of Cracow' or 'of the court': Jan Radlica, chancellor from 1381 to 1382, styled himself '*regni Poloniae supremus cancellarius*'. The separate chancellors for the various provinces disappeared, and central control was asserted by starostas appointed by the king, who acted on his orders; of particular importance were the starostas general, who had responsibility for a whole province.[23] The influence of these officials, and of a small group of leading lords, particularly in Małopolska, grew during the unpopular governorships of Elizabeth Łokietkówna and Wladislaus of Oppeln. Louis's decision to appoint a regency council after Elizabeth's death placed substantial powers in the hands of this overwhelmingly Małopolskan group. Since Jadwiga was ten years old when she was crowned in October 1384, it was not until Jagiełło's coronation in February 1386 that royal authority was restored.

For all the powers vested in the regents, they struggled to dictate the course of events. There was some unrest, notably in Wielkopolska, where, in 1377, the powerful position of the Grzymalita family was sealed by the appointment as starosta general of Domarat of Pierzchna, a dedicated Angevin loyalist and the province's only member of the regency council. Wielkopolska, the main centre of power under the early Piasts, had long resented its loss of political influence to Małopolska. Przemysł II's murder in 1296 deprived it of its duke, while Łokietek and Casimir based their power in Cracow and openly favoured the Małopolskan

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[19] Dąbrowski, *Korona*, 72.   [20] Quoted in Dąbrowski, *Korona*, 77.
[21] Dąbrowski, *Ostatnie*, 145–6, 150–3 and *Korona*, 83.   [22] Dąbrowski, *Korona*, 85.
[23] Dąbrowski, *Korona*, 87.

elite. Louis ignored Wielkopolskan demands and chose to be crowned in Cracow rather than—as was traditional—in Gniezno, a decision that provoked resentment, especially when he broke a promise to attend a ceremonial welcome in his coronation robes in Gniezno cathedral.[24]

There were good reasons for choosing Jadwiga. One of Casimir's greatest achievements had been his acquisition of the Ruthenian principality of Halych-Volhynia after the murder of its young ruler Bolesław/Iurii, a Mazovian Piast, in 1340. Halych-Volhynia had emerged relatively intact from the destruction of Kievan Rus′ by the Mongols, despite its subjection to Mongol power in 1246. Stretching from Lwów and Przemyśl in the north-west, it had originally included Volhynia, Black Ruthenia, and the cities of Halych, Volodymyr, Bełz, and Chełm. Orthodox in religion, its economy blossomed in the fourteenth century as the Mongol grip slackened, the Ottoman stranglehold on the Bosphorus tightened, and eastern trade sought alternative overland routes.

The murder of Bolesław/Iurii, who had claimed the throne after the death of its last Rurikid prince in 1323, saw Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary advance claims to this strategically vital territory. Hungary had included the claim to be *rex Galiciae et Lodomeriae* in the titles of the crown of St Stephen since the early thirteenth century, while Casimir's claim rested on the fact that Bolesław/Iurii had designated him his successor.[25] During the 1340s Casimir occupied much of Red Ruthenia; concerned at possible conflict with the Angevins, he signed an agreement with Louis in April 1350 in which both sides gambled: Louis signed away his rights to the territory for Casimir's lifetime; if Casimir had a male heir, it would be sold to Hungary for the knockdown price of 100,000 florins. If, however, Louis or another Angevin should inherit the Polish throne, it would remain Polish. Louis thereafter supported Casimir's military campaigns against the Lithaunians, and in 1366 they agreed to divide the principality between Poland and Hungary.[26] On his accession Louis ignored these agreements, treating Halych-Volhynia as a Hungarian possession. By his death in 1382 he had recovered lands seized by the Lithuanians after 1370 and had put Hungarian garrisons into its major cities.

Louis's Ruthenian policy drove a wedge between him and the Małopolskan lords, who had long supported Casimir's Ruthenian ambitions, foreseeing rich pickings for themselves. They had, however, a powerful incentive to support the candidacy of one of Louis's daughters: according to the 1350 treaty, under an Angevin ruler Ruthenia would legally belong to Poland. As the Hungarian garrisons streamed home in 1382 to fight in the bitter struggles over the Hungarian throne, Jadwiga's claim as Louis's heir was asserted. Following her coronation Polish control was gradually re-established.

Whatever the arguments in favour of Jadwiga, it was the way in which the succession was settled that was to have the greatest significance for the future. In the

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[24] Moszczeńska, 'Rola', 71–2, 98.   [25] Wyrozumski, *Jadwiga*, 70.

[26] Knoll, 'Louis', 110; Wyrozumski, *Jadwiga*, 70–1; Матвей Любавский, *Областное деление и местное управление Литовско-Русского государства ко времени издания первого Литовского статута* (Moscow, 1892), 38–9.

name of the *corona regni*, decisions over the vacant throne were taken at substantial assemblies of—to use Reynolds's term—the 'community of the realm'. The most important were at Radomsko (25 November 1382), Wiślica (6 December 1382), and Sieradz (27 February and 22 March 1383).[27] These assemblies marked an important stage in the development of the Polish political system. The setting aside of Casimir's testament marked the end of patrimonial dynasticism in Poland. Memory of the fragmentation of the realm between 1138 and 1320 was still fresh, while under Louis the principle that the monarch must consult with the community of the realm over the succession had been firmly established. What is remarkable, given the experience of other European states facing disputed successions, is the relative lack of bloodshed, despite the existence of several potential candidates in both 1370 and 1382–4. In part this was due to the fact that Polish succession law did not privilege male primogeniture. As in other Slavic societies, Polish custom allowed considerable latitude to the ruler to decide his successor, but Casimir's promise of the succession to the Angevins had required the consent of leading figures in the realm. Louis was a Piast on the distaff side, but given the lack of support for succession in the female line in Polish customary law he was already in a weak position before his lack of a male heir ensured that he had to make further concessions to secure the throne for one of his daughters. In 1384 those agreements were honoured, at least in spirit. Despite strong support in Wielkopolska for a Piast, which led to a short-lived armed conflict that never quite degenerated into full-scale civil war, general opinion, particularly in Małopolska, was in favour of remaining true to the oaths sworn to Louis. The fact that it was the community of the realm, not the dynasty that would ultimately decide helped contain the violence and established an important precedent.

In his classic history of the institution of confederation in Poland, Rembowski singles out the assemblies of 1382 as being of particular significance for the development of what became a distinctively Polish form of political organization.[28] While they were not the first Polish assemblies to use the concept of confederation, they were the first with such broad aims, and which so manifestly acted in the name of the whole political community: the *regnicolae regni Poloniae*. The concern for legality was underlined by a strong attachment to procedure throughout the interregnum, and a determination to reach decisions collectively. After the initial rejection by the Wielkopolskans of Sigismund's candidature, a general assembly for Wielkopolska and Małopolska was summoned to Radomsk on 25 November 1382. It formally confederated itself to provide a legal basis for its actions, before deciding 'unanimously' to honour the promises concerning the accession of one of Louis's daughters. There was initial opposition from Bodzęta and Domarat of Pierzchna, yet two of the most powerful political figures in the kingdom could not shake the consensus. The community of the realm had taken charge of the

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[27] Wyrozumski, *Jadwiga*, 76–7.
[28] Aleksander Rembowski, *Konfederacja i rokosz*, ed. Jola Choińska-Mika, 2nd edn (Cracow, 2010), 264.

interregnum; if there were to be an Angevin succession, it would have to be on terms negotiated with that community.[29]

The phrases used in these accounts encapsulate the way in which the community of the realm was conceptualized. The Radomsk declaration of 27 November 1382 was made on behalf of the 'lords and the whole community' of Wielkopolska, represented by the barons and the '*nobiles*' and '*milites*', who were individually named, and representatives of the communities of Małopolska, Sieradz, and Łęczyca.[30] The documents talk of 'inhabitants of the kingdom' (*regnicolae*), or 'the whole community of lords and citizens' (*toti communiti dominorum et civitatum*).[31] In these assemblies, the participants stressed that the community of the whole realm of Poland was formally uniting its constituent parts to form an alliance (*foedus*) to provide a legal basis for its actions. This represented far more than simply the coming together of separate political units for a common aim: the documents express clearly the concept of a political community that transcended the local communities from which it was formed, using phrases such as 'the community of this land' (*communitas ipsius terre*) to denote the local communities which, taken together, formed the 'the whole community' (*tota communitas*) or 'the whole kingdom of Poland' (*universitas regni Poloniae*).[32]

Thus by 1382 there was a strong conception of the *corona regni* as a political community that transcended the various terrae of which it was composed. Although it was not until 1420 that the term was rendered in Polish as *wszystkie korony pospólstwo* (the whole commonality of the crown), the concept had taken root by the 1380s. While the monarch was seen as part of the community of the realm, and as necessary for the smooth functioning of the kingdom, the community of the realm was perfectly capable of running its affairs without a monarch, as it demonstrated between 1382 and 1386: even after Jadwiga's 1384 coronation, her status as a minor meant that she was in office but not in power.

Jadwiga's coronation represented an important victory for the community of the realm over her mother, who fought tenaciously to dictate the course of events. Although Elizabeth probably realized that Mary's claim was unsustainable by the time her envoys attended the Sieradz assembly in February 1383, she did not give up, even if her envoys had to promise to send Jadwiga to Poland after Easter. Jadwiga had not arrived when the assembly reconvened. Bodzęta asked whether the community of the realm wished Siemowit IV to be king. Although this proposal—which may have been merely a demonstration to Elizabeth that she

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[29] 'convenit universa multitudo procerum et primatum regni Poloniae in Radomsko . . . , ubi mature de statu suo et Poloniae regni salubriter pertractantes, unanimi volunte conglobati et mutuo foedere uniti, fide praestita, promiserunt invicem sibi auxiliari fidemque factam et homagium praestitum duabus filiabus: Mariae et Hedvigi Lodvici regis praemortui firmiter tenere et observare . . .' Johannes de Czarnkow, *Chronicon*, 723.

[30] The document lists the principal Wielkopolskan office-holders and dignitaries present, then adds '*ceterique nobiles, milites totaque communitas Maioris Polonie*'; similar formulae are used for Małopolska and the other territories. *CDMP*, iii, no. 1804.

[31] 'Conclusiones per dominos regni de unione regni et quomodo regi debetur usque ad regis novi electionem et coronationem', *CESXV*, i, no. 2, 3; Dąbrowski, *Korona*, 93.

[32] Dąbrowski, *Korona*, 93.

risked losing everything—was rejected on the grounds that there was significant dissent from Małopolska, Elizabeth missed several deadlines for Jadwiga's arrival in Poland during 1383, and even mounted a clumsy attempt to send Sigismund into Poland at the head of a small army, ostensibly to help put down unrest.[33]

At Sieradz, legalism and *Realpolitik* triumphed over sentiment. Siemowit would have brought little benefit to the realm. While his accession would have reunited his lands to the Polish crown, he did not even rule over the whole of Mazovia, which he shared with his elder brother Janusz I.[34] He had few resources to offer, and could not have challenged the Luxembourgs, who, if Sigismund were to secure the Hungarian throne, would rule Hungary, Brandenburg, and Bohemia; with the dynasty's close links to the Order, Poland would be all but surrounded. Under Siemowit, the tender young Polish monarchy was likely to wither in their shadow.

Most Poles did not want Sigismund either. He was politely turned back at the border, and when Elizabeth missed a further deadline in November, the community of the realm took steps to ensure that it had a proper institutional basis for running its affairs should a rapid resolution of the succession prove impossible. On 2 March 1384 it was stated that until a king was crowned, authority in the realm would lie with the 'community of lords and citizens', and would be exercised by the starostas, the main royal officials in each locality, together with the local lords and representatives of the cities, who were 'joined' to him. The starosta was to take decisions with the unanimous agreement of two consuls selected from the local community. In naming them, attention was paid to the need for representation of different regions, and of the cities. Oaths of loyalty were to be taken to this collective leadership; in return, the authorities swore that they would act for the good of the 'community and crown of this realm'.[35]

Those who depict authority in this period as 'feudal', based on lordship and a hierarchy of vertical allegiance to an ultimate suzerain, would do well to study the documents of the Polish interregnum of 1382–4. They do much to substantiate Reynolds's assault on the idea that medieval politics can be understood in such terms, and to demonstrate that, while the early modern debate on the nature of sovereignty lay far in the future, political communities had sophisticated ideas about the nature of political authority and the relationship between the monarch, the dynasty, and the community of the realm.[36] In the struggle between the Angevins and the Polish community of the realm, it was the dynasty that lost. The Poles stressed their wish to honour their commitments to Louis's daughters, who alone possessed hereditary rights to the kingdom. Yet these natural rights were limited: the claims of Louis's daughters ultimately depended upon the oaths taken by the community of the realm since 1374 to recognize those rights, and set aside Piast claims. These oaths were taken in good faith, but it was stressed after Louis's

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[33] Wyrozumski, *Jadwiga*, 77–80; Nikodem, *Jadwiga*, 101–10.

[34] Siemowit was duke of Płock, Rawa, Sochaczew, Gostyń, and Płońsk; Janusz was duke of Warsaw, Wyszogród, Ciechanów, Zakroczym, and Liw. Following agreements with their father, Siemowit III, the duchies of Czersk and Wizna were transferred from Siemowit to Janusz between 1379 and 1381: Balzer, *Genealogia*, 819–20, table x.

[35] *CESXV*, i/i, no. 2, 2; Dąbrowski, *Korona*, 92.   [36] Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, xi–lxvi.

death that while the Poles would honour them, they would do so only if the dynasty fulfilled its obligations: the community of the realm reserved the right to set aside natural rights to the throne, as it had with regard to the Silesian Piasts who, by swearing loyalty to the crown of Bohemia, were deemed to have broken with the *corona regni* and thereby released the community of the realm from its obligation to respect their natural rights.[37] The community of the realm reserved the right to decide which of Louis's daughters it wished to elevate to the throne. It was no longer to be the exclusive preserve of the dynasty to decide which of its members was most fitted to rule.

Thus although Jadwiga formally exercised royal power from the moment that she was crowned *in regem Poloniae* in October 1384, that power could only be exercised in concert with the community of the realm and after she reached her majority.[38] The dynasty's reduced authority was revealed by the annulment of Jadwiga's 1378 betrothal. Despite its formal nature—which constituted the basis of a Habsburg challenge in the Papal curia—by 1384, Poland's political leaders were considering other options. William, born in 1370, was young and inexperienced; he was from a junior branch of the Habsburgs; and he would bring little with him to the throne. If the Polish crown was to stand firm alongside the Luxembourg realms of Bohemia and Hungary, it would need a different kind of monarch.

By October 1384, there was an alternative. It is unclear just when Jogaila became a serious candidate. He was not an obvious choice. Poland's relations with Lithuania had recently been tense on account of the struggle over Halych-Volhynia. The fourteenth century had seen a decline in the frequency of Lithuanian raids, but Jogaila himself participated in a devastating attack on Sandomierz in 1376 that resulted allegedly—if implausibly—in the capture of 23,000 prisoners.[39] Yet circumstances were changing, and there was much to recommend a rapprochement with Lithuania and its pagan grand duke.

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[37] Dąbrowski, *Korona*, 72.

[38] Rowell questions the common assertion that Jadwiga was crowned king, not queen, of Poland in 1384, suggesting that, although some sources do use 'rex' or 'ad regem', they are outnumbered by those that state 'ad regnum', 'regina', or 'in reginam'. His suggestion that the occasional use of 'rex' merely acknowledged that Jadwiga was queen regnant, not queen consort, is sensible: Rowell, '1386', 139–40.

[39] Simas Sužiedėlis, 'Lietuva ir Gediminaičiai sėdant Jogailai į didžiojo kunigaikščio sostą', in Adolfas Šapoka (ed.), *Jogaila* (Kaunas, 1935; repr. 1991), 36–7; Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, i, 67.

3

Lithuania

The grand duchy of Lithuania was a remarkable creation. After 1200 its rulers, in little over a century, welded a cacophony of feuding Baltic tribes into a powerful, sophisticated realm that gradually extended its authority over the mixed Baltic and Slavic populations to its south by means that remain controversial. From their remote and isolated fastnesses among the network of lakes, rivers, and marshes that pierced the great forests of north-eastern Europe, the Lithuanians harassed and raided their neighbours, extending their sway in an astonishingly short period after 1240 over much of the vast territory that had been Kievan Rus′ before it was shattered by the Mongols.

The Lithuanian heartland was remote indeed: travelling fifteen leagues from Dyneburg to Vilnius in 1414, the diplomat Ghillebert de Lannoy entered a vast forest in which he travelled for forty-eight hours without seeing a trace of habitation.[1] Unlike related Baltic peoples—the Prussians, the Livs, and the Curonians—who succumbed to the far from tender rule of the Teutonic Order, their inaccessibility helped the Lithuanians not just to repel their enemies and survive in a hostile Christian world, but to establish their rule over one of the largest territorial agglomerations in European history, about 1 million km^2 at its peak around 1430 (see Map 2).[2]

The grand duchy was a sophisticated power system, under a princely dynasty that only entered the written record in the thirteenth century. Since Lithuanian—a member of the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family along with Latvian and several extinct languages, including Prussian—was not a written language until the sixteenth century, the names of Lithuania's rulers—apart from one reference to a *rex* Netimer in 1009—are unknown before the semi-legendary Ringaudas, who died around 1219. Ringaudas's son Mindaugas (1238–63) launched the spectacular expansion that—after an interruption following his 1263 assassination—

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[1] *Oeuvres de Ghillebert de Lannoy, Voyageur, Diplomate et Moraliste*, ed. Charles Potvin (Louvain, 1878), 38.

[2] Matthias Niendorf, 'Die Beziehungen zwischen Polen und Litauen im historischen Wandel: Rechtliche und politische Aspekte in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit', in Dietmar Willoweit and Hans Lemberg (eds), *Reiche und Territorien in Ostmitteleuropa: Historische Beziehungen und politische Herrschaftslegitimation* (Munich, 2006), 129. The best account in English is Stephen Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire within East Central Europe, 1295–1345* (Cambridge, 1994). For a warning against believing that the forests and lakes of the region were impenetrable, see Henryk Paszkiewicz, *O genezie i wartości Krewa* (Warsaw, 1938), 130.

Map 2. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1385.

Baltic Sea

Novgorod

LIVONIA

Pskov

Riga

Tver

Palanga

SAMOGITIA

① Polatsk

Moscow

② Vitsebsk

GRAND DUCHY OF
MUSCOVY

Königsberg

Kaunas

Vilnius

④

Smolensk

⑤

TEUTONIC
ORDER

Trakai

Medininkai

③

Kreva

AUKŠTAITIJA

L I T H U A N I A P R O P R I A

①

Hrodna

Minsk

Briansk

Navahrudak

②

③

④

Brest

A N N E X E D L A N D S

Lublin

Chernihiv

KINGDOM OF
POLAND

⑥

Lutsk

Kyiv

Cracow

Poltava

⑥

Bratslav

Košice

⑤

KINGDOM OF
HUNGARY

MOLDAVIA

CRIMEAN KHANATE
(FIFTEENTH CENTURY)

Black Sea

– – – Border of Grand Duchy of Lithuania 1430	① Lithuania & Samogitia CXIII
—— Border of Lithuania Propria	② Lands acquired to 1263
–·–·– International Borders	③ Lands acquired to 1341
·········· Internal Borders	④ Lands acquired by Algirdas 1345–77
	⑤ Lands acqiired by Vytautas 1372–1430
	⑥ Lands disputed with Poland

continued in the reigns of Vytenis (*c*.1295–1315) and his brother Gediminas (1315/16–1341/2).

What is striking is not so much the extent of that expansion—which was remarkable enough—but its lasting nature. Initially, the Lithuanians terrorized their neighbours. Between 1200 and 1236 they mounted regular destructive raids: twenty-three against the Curonians and Livonians to their north, fifteen against Ruthenian territories to their south and east, and four into the Polish lands to their west. In 1219, the Lithuanian political elite appeared in a written document for the first time, when one duchess and twenty dukes, including five recognized as seniors, witnessed peace with Halych-Volhynia.[3] By 1238 Mindaugas had established himself as overall ruler, although the term grand duke (*didysis kunigaikštis* in Lithuanian; *великий князь* in Ruthenian) was not common until its institutionalization by Gediminas's son Algirdas after 1345. It is sensible, however, to follow tradition in using one name for the prince instead of the varied forms found in the sources.[4]

The Lithuanians pushed south into lands where the devastating Mongol attacks that followed their first assault on Riazan in December 1237 exposed the incapacity of the squabbling Ruthenian principalities to defend themselves. Kievan Rus′, united for periods under strong rulers such as Volodymyr the Great (980–1015), Iaroslav the Wise (1019–54), and Volodymyr Monomakh (1113–25), followed the Slavic system of collateral succession, in which the prince of Kyiv was recognized as supreme ruler over the numerous Ruthenian principalities. As in Poland after 1138, this proved more pious wish than practical politics. In the period of disintegration that began in 1132, three main power-centres emerged in Halych-Volhynia, Vladimir-Suzdal′, and Novhorod-Siversky.[5] After the razing of Kyiv in 1240 and the extension of Mongol overlordship over the Rus′ian principalities, any vestigial political unity was destroyed, leaving Rus′ open for infiltration by a more dynamic and less traumatized political culture.

Lithuania's extension of power southwards was a complex process. It was not based on force alone. Lithuania deployed forces well suited to warfare in the sparsely populated terrain of eastern Europe; they were by no means solely Lithuanian, rapidly incorporating Ruthenians into their ranks, which indicates the nature of Gediminid rule. Although military force was undoubtedly important, it is insufficient to explain the speed of expansion, or its consolidation: by 1385 Gediminid rule over much of the former lands of Kievan Rus′ had lasted well over a century. Black Ruthenia—the lands along the upper reaches of the Niemen—already contained a mixed population. It had been settled by Baltic tribes before Slavic expansion into the region in the sixth and seventh centuries. Baltic and Slavic populations had mingled and assimilated ever since. Lithuanian grand dukes successfully extended their power in part because they faced few serious rivals. The Lithuanian and northern Ruthenian lands, protected by their great forests, in which the Mongol armies could not operate, had escaped the Mongol tsunami. Under Mindaugas, the cities of Black Ruthenia, including

³ Rowell, *Lithuania*, 50; Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, i, 34.   ⁴ Rowell, *Lithuania*, 50, 64–5.
⁵ Nancy Shields Kollmann, 'Collateral succession in Kievan Rus′', *HUS*, 14/3–4 (1990), 377–87.

Hrodna, Navahrudak, Vaukavysk, and Slonim, were absorbed gradually without any reference in the sources to their being taken by force.[6] The Lithuanian grand dukes emerged over the next half a century as the most effective force for resistance to Mongol domination, as they did not, like the shattered remnants of the already splintered Rurikid dynasty, have to bend their knee to the Mongol khan.[7] Where force was used, as in the wars over Halych-Volhynia after 1340, or in the capture of Kyiv in the 1360s, it was directed primarily against rivals for control: the kings of Poland and Hungary. This was not a conquest by a foreign national group—the 'Lithuanian occupation' as Hrushevsky terms it—but a complex process in which force, accommodation, and assimilation all played their part.

Lithuanians and Ruthenians already traded with one another; penetration of the trade routes of White Ruthenia and other more easterly territories soon followed. By 1307 the grand dukes controlled Polatsk, while Vitsebsk—intermittently under their control—was secured when Algirdas, Gediminas's son, married the heiress of its last Ruthenian prince. Kyiv was first occupied by the Lithuanians in 1323; in 1332 there is evidence of a Lithuanian prince ruling there in a Lithuanian-Tatar condominium, although it was not until after the great Lithuanian victory at the Blue Waters in 1362 that it came under unchallenged Lithuanian control.[8]

The expanding dynasty was central to the extension of Lithuanian power. In contrast to Poland and Kievan Rus', where collateral inheritance promoted political fragmentation, the Gediminids largely contained and channelled the potential for disintegration posed by their staggering fecundity. Despite a system of succession similar to the Slavic communities surrounding them, in Lithuania the dynasty's rapid growth proved a spur to expansion, not fragmentation. Even ignoring the children of his brothers and cousins, Gediminas himself had eight sons and five or six daughters (see Fig. 1. Genealogy 1).[9]

Several of his sons were just as fertile, none more copiously than Algirdas, who, together with his younger brother Kęstutis, ousted their brother Jaunutis as grand duke in a coup in 1345. Although the details of the order and the number of his offspring are unclear, with his two wives Algirdas produced twelve or thirteen sons and nine or ten daughters (see Fig. 2. Genealogy 2).[10]

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[6] Генадзь Сагановіч, *Нарыс гісторыі Беларусі ад старажытнасці да канца XVIII стагоддзя* (Minsk, 2001), 60–1; Michał Giedroyć, 'The arrival of Christianity in Lithuania: Early contacts (thirteenth century)', *OSP*, 18 (1985), 15–16.

[7] Jaroslaw Pelenski, 'The contest between Lithuania and the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century for supremacy over eastern Europe', in *The Contest for the Legacy of Kievan Rus'* (Boulder, CO, 1998), 131–50.

[8] Rowell, *Lithuania*, 83–4; Pelenski, 'Contest', 134.

[9] Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, i, 110. Tęgowski suggests eight sons and six daughters: Jan Tęgowski *Pierwsze pokolenia Giedyminowiczów* (Poznań, 1999), table 1, 304–5; Rowell has seven sons and six daughters: *Lithuania*, genealogical table 2.

[10] This is based on Darius Baronas, Artūras Dubonis, and Rimvydas Petrauskas, *Lietuvos Istorija*, iii: *XIII a.–1385 m.* (Vilnius, 2011), 338–9, 356–9; Rowell, *Lithuania*, genealogical tables 1–4, Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, table 1, 304–5; and Tadeusz Wasilewski, 'Daty urodzin Jagiełły i Witolda: Przyczynek do genealogii Giedyminowiczów', *PW*, 1 (1991), 15–34. It is largely, informed, however, by Nikodem, 'Data urodzenia Jagiełły: Uwagi o starszeństwie synów Olgierda i Julianny', *Genealogia*, 12 (2000), 23–49, the most convincing analysis: see Ch. 8, 74–5.

Gediminas c.1275–1341 × 1342 Grand Duke 1315–41 × 1342													
Narimantas (Hleb), d. of Hrodna, Polatsk, Pinsk † 1348	Danutė/ Elžbieta = (1316) Wacław, d. of Płock † 1364	Vyrautas (?), d. of Trakai, † 1336	**Algirdas** Grand Duke 1344/5–1377 † 1377	Marija = (1320) Dmitrii, d. of Tver † 1349	Karijotas (Mykhailo), d. of Novaharodak † 1365	**Jaunutis** Grand Duke 1342–1344 d. of Zaslavl 1346–1366 † 1366	**Kęstutis** Grand duke 1381–1382 d. of Trakai = (c.1344) Birutė	Aldona (Anna) = (1325) Casimir III, king of Poland † 1339	Liubartas (Dmitrii) d. of Lutsk & Volodymyr 1340–1384 † 1384	Manvydas d. of Kernavė & Slonim † 1348	Eufemija = (1331) Bolesław/ Iurii, d. of Halych-Volhynia † 1341	Augustė (Anastasia) = (1333) Semen Ivanovich, duke of Muscovy † 1345	Unnamed daughter = Andrei Mstislavich of Kozelsk
1. Semen † after 1386 2. Patryk = Helena of Starodub † 1383 × 1387 2. Alexander † after 1386 3. Iurii, d. of Belz † 1392 4. Nikolai d. of Pinsk			**For children see Fig 2. Genealogy 2**		1. Iurii, d. of Podolia † 1374/5 2. Dmitrii = (1356) Anna, dtr of Ivan Ivanovich, d. of Muscovy † 1399 3. Alexander Duke of Volodymyr (1366) & Podolia (1374) † 1386 × 1388 4. Kostiantyn d. of Podolia † 1388 × 1392 5. Fedor. d. of Podolia, † 1409 × 1416 6. Vasyl, d. of Podolia (1390) 7. Anastasia = (c.1370) Roman 1 of Moldavia † 1408	1.Mikhail, d. of Zaslavl, † 1399 2. Hryhory 3. Semen	**For children see Fig. 3. Genealogy 3**		1. Fëdor d. of Lutsk (1383–c.1392); d. of Volodymyr (c.1392–1431); d. of Novhorod-Sevirsk (1393–5), † 1431 2. Lazar 3. Semen 4. Anna = (pre 1394), Přemek, d. of Opava † 1404 × 1406				

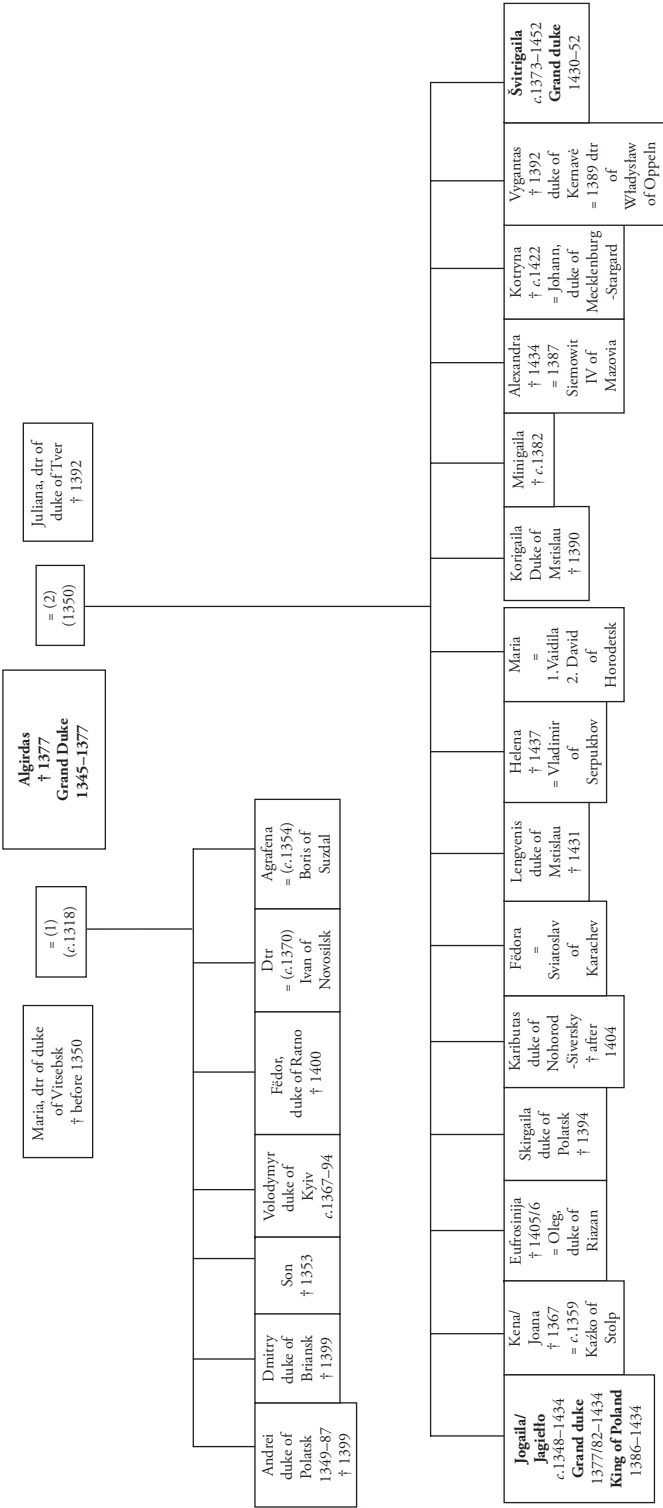**Fig. 1.** Genealogy 1. The Gediminids.

Fig. 2. Genealogy 2. The descendants of Algirdas.

Notes: Tęgowski and *Lietuvos Istorijos* regard Fёdor of Ratno as the eldest son of Algirdas's first marriage. For a discussion of the problem of the order and birthdates of Algirdas's children, see Ch. 8, 74–5.

Unlike Poland, hemmed in by the Holy Roman Empire to its west and Hungary to its south, Lithuania could expand to satisfy—for the most part—the ambitions of Gediminas's progeny. Daughters were married to Ruthenian princes, giving the Gediminids claims to Ruthenian territory when local dynasties died out.[11] Algirdas's first marriage to Maria/Anna of Vitsebsk opened the way to the absorption of a vital centre on the trade routes of northern Eurasia, while the marriage of his brother Liubartas to a Volhynian princess provided the basis of the Lithuanian claim to part of the kingdom of Halych-Volhynia.[12] Yet if dynastic manoeuvres played a significant role, it was the Gediminids' successful resistance to Mongol domination that ensured the loyalty of many Ruthenians.[13]

The results were impressive. By Algirdas's death in 1377 his sons ruled duchies across the Ruthenian lands. Of the sons of his first marriage, Andrei held Polatsk, Dmitry was established in Briansk, Fëdor held Ratno, and Volodymyr ruled Kyiv. Gediminas's other sons and their descendants were not neglected. Narimantas was duke of Pinsk and Polatsk, and governor of Novgorod for the brief period after 1333 when it swore allegiance to Lithuania. Four of Narimantas's five sons acquired Ruthenian duchies, while the sons of Karijotas, duke of Navahrudak, ruled Podolia.

Gediminid retention of Ruthenian duchies depended on the dynasty's rapid acculturation based on its adoption of Ruthenian as the language of government. A sophisticated written language, it was ideal for the purpose of building Gediminid authority, while its use meant that Ruthenians could integrate successfully into the Gediminid system. The Gediminids who held Ruthenian principalities, and the daughters who married into Ruthenian princely families, were baptized into the Orthodox faith and took Ruthenian names: Narimantas became Hleb and Karijotas was baptized Mykhailo; their children bore Slavic names.

The Gediminids fused Lithuanian and Ruthenian elements into a composite, dynastic system. The long argument between nationalist historians of Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine over whether this process produced a Lithuanian state, or a Ruthenian-Lithuanian state, in which the leading role was played by the more advanced culture of the Ruthenians, rather misses the point by concentrating on state power and projecting back an image of statehood that owes more to the nineteenth than the fourteenth century. The grand duchy was not a unitary modern state, but a successful dynastic condominium built on family loyalty. Its decentralized, composite nature explains its expansion and survival. Long before 1386 the Lithuanians and Ruthenians developed a system that allowed pagan and Orthodox cultures to survive and prosper alongside each other. Ultimate control lay with the pagan grand duke in the Lithuanian heartland, but paganism was no

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[11] Stephen C. Rowell, 'Pious princesses or the daughters of Belial: Pagan Lithuanian dynastic diplomacy 1279–1423', *Medieval Prosopography*, 15/1 (1994), 3–75.

[12] Rowell, *Lithuania*, 88; Любавский, *Областное*, 38–40.

[13] Alvydas Nikžentaitis, 'Litauen unter den Grossfürsten Gedimin (1316–1341) und Olgerd (1345–1377)', in Marc Löwener (ed.), *Die 'Blüte' der Staaten des östlichen Europa im 14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 2004), 66–8.

missionary faith, and the dynastic system held together well under the powerful rule of Gediminas, and then Algirdas and Kęstutis.

Lithuania was a formidable construct, suited to its environment. By Algirdas's death in 1377 it stretched from the shores of the Baltic virtually to the Black Sea. Yet if the Gediminids held the upper hand for much of the fourteenth century, they had important rivals in the Orthodox grand dukes of Muscovy, who were more attractive to successive patriarchs of Constantinople than the pagan Gediminids. Muscovy's first great success was the transfer of the Orthodox metropolitanate of all Rus′ from Vladimir-Suzdal′ to Moscow in 1325. Algirdas brought Smolensk precariously into the Lithuanian orbit, but despite his second marriage to Juliana of Tver, Tver and Novgorod preserved their independence by playing Lithuania off against Muscovy, and could not be absorbed. Algirdas led three attacks on Moscow: in 1368 he turned back after three days; in 1370 he stayed little longer, while in 1372 he refused battle although both armies were drawn up ready. Once intimidation failed, Algirdas was unwilling to risk all-out war against an Orthodox enemy who might use religion to subvert the loyalty of his Ruthenian subjects.[14] It was a dilemma that faced all his successors, and Lithuanian-Muscovite rivalry was to shape the history of eastern Europe for centuries to come.

By 1377 the very factors that had enabled Lithuania's rapid expansion were causing the problems that are inevitable once territorial accumulation reaches its natural limits. Orthodox Ruthenians now considerably outnumbered pagan Lithuanians in the Gediminid realms. Given the rapid cultural assimilation of so many Gediminids, the possibility that the whole dynasty would be absorbed into the Slavic world was starkly apparent: all the children of Algirdas's first marriage accepted Orthodox baptism, and Algirdas's second wife, Juliana, noted for her piety, brought Orthodox influences to the heart of the Gediminid system. Algirdas and Kęstutis were strongly attached to their pagan faith, and too much trust should not be placed in later Ruthenian chronicles that suggest Algirdas converted to Orthodoxy on his deathbed and was buried, instead of undergoing the spectacular traditional pagan funeral by immolation attested by other sources.[15]

There were good reasons for remaining pagan. Lithuania straddled the great cultural faultline dividing the Orthodox east from the Catholic west. Its rulers were adept at playing off west against east and manoeuvring effectively between the Orthodox and Catholic worlds while avoiding long-term commitment to either. The dangers of opting for one side were demonstrated by Mindaugas. In 1251, in order to win the Livonian Order's support for a campaign against the Samogitians, he accepted baptism in the Latin rite, for which, in 1253 he was sent a royal crown by Innocent IV. Mindaugas was thus the first—and last—Lithuanian ruler before 1386 whose title of *rex* was recognized beyond its borders: Gediminas might style himself Gedeminne (*Dei Gratia*) *Letwinorum et* (*multorum*) *Ruthenorum Rex* or *Koningh van Lettowen*, but if popes might occasionally

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[14] Paszkiewicz, *O genezie*, 126.
[15] *PSRL*, xvii, col. 416. For the evidence see Sužiedėlis, 'Lietuva', 38–9.

use the title for politeness' sake they, like other Catholic rulers, did not recognize his royal status.[16]

The perils of conversion rapidly became apparent. The Lithuanian boyars and non-princely dukes were fiercely wedded to paganism, while Mindaugas's acceptance of sponsorship from the Livonian Order, which was busily subduing the pagan Baltic tribes, provoked opposition from those who saw it as Lithuania's deadliest enemy. Civil strife soon followed. In 1261 Mindaugas returned to paganism and expelled Catholics from Lithuania, although it was not enough to save him from assassination by Daumantas of Nalšia, acting on behalf of Mindaugas's nephew Treniota, who succeeded him, only to be assassinated in his turn, as were his two immediate successors, one of whom, Mindaugas's son Vaišvilkas, murdered in 1267, was a proselytizing Orthodox Christian.[17]

Order was only restored in the reigns of Vytenis and Gediminas. The resistance to Mindaugas's apostasy gives a tantalizing glimpse of the role of the *bajorai* (boyars), a word that entered Lithuanian from Ruthenian and that can—if with reservations—be translated as 'nobles'.[18] Fleeting references in the sources—all of them foreign—make it clear that although under Vytenis and Gediminas the dynasty had firmly established its control, it did consult with its boyars, especially before mounting military campaigns. The nature of this consultation is unclear, and too much should not be read into Peter of Dusburg's reference to one such assembly in 1308 as *parlamentum*.[19] Gediminid Lithuania was a patrimonial system, but the dynasty's authority was in practice limited by custom, not least because of Lithuania's rudimentary institutional structure. Authority depended on the charisma of the grand duke and his relationship with his brothers, sons, and boyars. Mindaugas's assassination was a warning that there were limits to charismatic power.

Gediminas learnt from Mindaugas's fate. He sought to diminish the significance of the metropolitan of Kyiv's relocation to Moscow by following the lead of Iurii I, prince of Halych-Volhynia, who successfully lobbied in Constantinople for the establishment of a separate metropolitanate in 1303. It only lasted five years, but a separate Lithuanian metropolitanate was established in Navahrudak at some point between 1315 and 1317. Thus Orthodoxy was more than simply tolerated. It was actively promoted by the dynasty, partly to ensure the loyalty of its Ruthenian subjects, and partly to advance Gediminid ambitions to rule all Rus′. Orthodox clerics contributed substantially to Lithuanian government and its relations with the Orthodox world.[20] Yet neither Gediminas nor Algirdas was willing to convert. The dangers of assimilation and the obliteration of Lithuanian culture were clear, paganism was deep-rooted and well organized, and resistance to any such move among the Lithuanian boyars was fierce.

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[16] Catholic sources described Gediminas as *rex sive dux*: Rowell, *Lithuania*, 63–4.
[17] Rowell, *Lithuania*, 51–2; Giedroyć, 'Arrival', 16–20, 22–6.   [18] See Ch. 26, 298.
[19] Peter von Dusburg, *Chronica terrae Prussiae*, in *SRPr*, i, 171–2; Rowell, *Lithuania*, 61–2.
[20] See Rowell, *Lithuania*, 149–88.

Lithuania's relations with western Europe were equally complex. Its acquisition of Ruthenian lands coincided with rising pressure from the Order, whose conquest of the pagan Prussians was complete by the 1280s. The decayed Livonian Knights of the Sword were placed under the control of the Teutonic Order in 1237, giving the Order a great incentive to seize control of Samogitia, which divided Livonia from Prussia. The Samogitians occupied a unique position. The heartland of the Lithuanian state lay in Aukštaitija, which contained the principal power-centres of Vilnius and Trakai. The Samogitian clans were closely related to the Aukštaitijans, but jealously guarded their separate identity, distinctive culture, and political autonomy. Samogitia was but loosely integrated into the Gediminid system and remained strongly pagan: Samogitians had been prominent in the opposition to Mindaugas's conversion.

In the fourteenth century, the revitalized Order increased the pressure. The fall of Acre in 1291 ended its long commitment to Palestine, while the destruction of the Templars after 1307 implicitly threatened all the military orders. A new role was required. In 1309 grand master Siegfried von Feuchtwangen prudently moved the Order's headquarters from Venice to the Marienburg in Prussia, which was reconstructed as a massive fortress-monastery at the centre of a vast network of subsidiary houses across the Empire. The Order channelled its considerable resources into the crusade against the remaining pagans of northern Europe. Its call for support met an enthusiastic response from across Europe, encouraged by John of Luxembourg. From the 1320s, foreign knights swelled the ranks of the north Germans who formed the core of the Order's recruits. As they came, raids became more frequent and more devastating.

To contain this growing threat, the Lithuanians turned west. Gediminas proved as adept an operator in the murky labyrinth of Latin diplomacy as he was in the Orthodox world. He flirted with the papacy, writing to John XXII in 1322 expressing his desire for peace with his Catholic enemies and hinting at possible conversion. Peace was signed in Vilnius in 1323 and ratified in Rome, but when John's envoys arrived in Vilnius in 1324 Gediminas refused baptism or support for their missionary activities. He allowed the construction of a church for foreign merchants in Vilnius dedicated to St Nicholas; and the Franciscans were permitted to build a hospital: they were to remain, ministering to the sick and providing Latin secretaries for the dynasty's increasingly frequent contacts with western Europe, although they had to be careful not to cross the line into missionary activity. When they did, they suffered: Franciscans were executed in 1341 and 1369 for publicly challenging paganism.[21]

As pressure from the Order grew, the number of Lithuanian raids on Poland declined: of fifty-two mounted between 1210 and 1376, thirty-four took place before 1300.[22] As raiding declined in intensity, the Gediminids played off the numerous competing powers to their west, including the Order. In 1229 Konrad I, duke of Mazovia, hired Lithuanian troops during his struggle with Władysław Laskonogi for

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[21] Rowell, *Lithuania*, 189, 274–5.   [22] Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, i, 77, table 1.

the Cracow throne. Mazovia was ravaged by Lithuanian raids, but in 1279, in an attempt to prevent them, Bolesław II married Gaudemantė, daughter of grand duke Traidenis; she was baptized into the Catholic church, taking the name Sophia. Thereafter the Mazovians sustained largely friendly relations until the Lithuanian occupation of Podlasie in 1323–4.

Gediminas used Lithuanian princesses as bargaining counters in the west as in the east. At some point between 1316 and 1318, his daughter Danutė or Danmila married Wacław, Bolesław II's son by his second marriage, taking the Christian name Elizabeth. In 1331, another, Eufemia, married Bolesław, Bolesław II's grandson, who took the name Iurii when he converted to Orthodoxy on becoming prince of Halych-Volhynia. The most significant marriage, however, was that of another daughter Aldona, christened Anna, who in 1325 married Łokietek's sixteen-year-old son, the future Casimir III. Historians have claimed that this was the centrepiece of the first formal Polish-Lithuanian alliance, seen by some as an important step on the road to Krewo. No treaty survives, but it is clear that there was some kind of agreement, though whether it took the form of a defensive-offensive alliance, a more limited pact, or a simple contract to hire Lithuanian troops is impossible to establish. There were Lithuanian troops in the army with which Łokietek attacked Brandenburg in 1326. The Poles and Lithuanians co-operated in campaigns against the Order until 1331, when a refusal by Łokietek's Hungarian allies to fight alongside pagans may have been the reason behind his failure to turn up for a joint campaign in which Gediminas—unusually, for he was no soldier—was to take part.[23] The rapprochement did not last long. It was destroyed by Casimir's decision to make peace with the Order in 1343, and the contest for control of Halych-Volhynia. Relations over the next three decades were hostile, with major Lithuanian raids on Poland in 1341, 1350 (twice), 1353, 1370, and 1376. Lithuania now stood alone against the Order, which flourished under Winrich von Kniprode (1351–82), raiding ever deeper into Lithuanian territory and threatening Samogitia.

By Algirdas's death in 1377, the Gediminid system was under strain. The emergence of Muscovy from the Golden Horde's shadow following Dmitrii Donskoi's 1380 victory at Kulikovo Field created a new and dangerous rival for the heritage of Kievan Rus′. The failure to subdue Muscovy meant that the days of easy territorial acquisitions to the east and south were over, while the Polish-Hungarian alliance under Louis of Anjou secured most of Halych-Volhynia. There would be no easy pickings for the next generation of Gediminids and no fat new duchies to distribute to ambitious princelings. By 1377 pagans were outnumbered by the Orthodox within the dynasty itself. This fact, as much as the extraordinary number of Gediminas's descendants—in 1377, three sons, at least thirty-five grandsons, and some thirteen great-grandsons were alive in the male line alone—threatened to undermine the remarkable dynastic cohesion that had sustained Lithuania's explosive expansion.[24]

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[23] Stanisław Zajączkowski, 'Przymierze polsko-litewskie 1325 r.', *KH*, 40 (1926), 567–617; Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, i, 130–49; Rowell, *Lithuania*, 232–7.
[24] See Figs 1 and 2. Genealogies 1 and 2, pp. 22, 23.

Dynastic strife was contained after Gediminas's death by Algirdas and Kęstutis, but it now threatened to break out in a new and more dangerous form. The successful collaboration of Algirdas and Kęstutis depended upon a division of labour: Algirdas controlled Vilnius and the grand duchy's eastern and southern Ruthenian lands, while Kęstutis, from his base in Trakai, ruled over much of the ethnic Lithuanian heartland, and Samogitia, where he enjoyed particular influence after his marriage to Birutė of Palanga, daughter of a powerful Samogitian boyar. It seems that Algirdas and Kęstutis intended this arrangement to continue after their deaths through their favourite sons and chosen heirs, Jogaila and Vytautas, who, according to chronicle accounts, were childhood friends and companions, born within a couple of years of each other.[25] According to Algirdas's wishes, Jogaila inherited Algirdas's grand ducal title, but Kęstutis was now the dynastic patriarch. The delicate balance established by Algirdas and Kęstutis was about to be severely tested.

It was a difficult balance to maintain against the ambitions of Algirdas's other sons. The eldest, Andrei, had ruled Polatsk since 1349; Dmitry was duke of Briansk; Volodymyr, duke of Vitsebsk, had been granted Kyiv in 1367; while Fëdor was duke of Ratno. The loyalty of these Orthodox princes to the pagan establishment was open to question now that Muscovy was a growing pole of attraction. Algirdas's testament raised potential problems for the pagan sons of his second wife, Juliana. For if Jogaila was bequeathed all of his father's extensive patrimony, his pagan brothers—Skirgaila, Lengvenis, Karigaila, Vygantas, Kaributas, and Švitrigaila—received little or nothing. Given that Kęstutis held much of pagan Lithuania as duke of Trakai and would undoubtedly expect to pass these lands on to his own sons, there was almost nothing that could be granted to them in the Lithuanian heartlands, and Kaributas converted to Orthodoxy in 1380 when granted Novhorod-Siversky.[26]

The favourable circumstances that had sheltered Lithuanian paganism in the fault line between the Latin and Orthodox worlds were coming to an end. The issues were laid bare after Algirdas's death, as Lithuania faced simultaneous threats from west and east. In July 1377 Louis of Anjou attacked areas of Halych-Volhynia in Lithuanian hands with a joint Polish-Hungarian force. Only duke Iury Narymuntovich of Belts offered any resistance. Fëdor, duke of Ratno and Algirdas's brother Liubartas, duke of Lutsk, swore loyalty to Louis, as did the three sons of Karijotas, who had accepted Catholic baptism, in Podolia.[27]

In the east, disorder was the result of Jogaila's first attempt to unravel the dynastic conundrum left by his father. Jogaila, aware of Andrei of Polatsk's resentment at being overlooked in Algirdas's testament, stripped him of his duchy in the winter of 1377–8, granting it to Skirgaila, his younger brother and right-hand man, who, like the other sons of Juliana, had received nothing from

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[25] Henryk Łowmiański, *Polityka Jagiellonów* (Poznań, 1999), 128; Zenonas Ivinskis, 'Jogailos santykiai su Kęstučiu ir Vytautu iki 1392 metų', in Šapoka (ed.), *Jogaila*, 47–8.

[26] Ludwik Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego za Jagiellonów*, i (Warsaw, 1930), 12.

[27] Krzyżaniakowa and Ochmański, *Jagiełło*, 58.

Algirdas.[28] Andrei fled, first to Pskov, and then to Moscow; within a year, he returned with Dmitrii Donskoi to ravage Sevirsk, as Skirgaila was chased from Polatsk by its inhabitants, reluctant to accept a pagan governor. Skirgaila converted to Orthodoxy, but failed to retake the city despite a thirteen-week siege.

Jogaila's deposition of Andrei was risky, but it confirms that the dynastic condominium was breaking down. Algirdas and Kęstutis had cooperated successfully, but although some historians talk of a system of diarchic rule, there was no formalized structure, and the system of Algirdas and Kęstutis rested on their personal relationship.[29] Relations between uncle and nephew soon deteriorated. In 1380 Jogaila allied himself with Mamai, khan of the Blue Horde, against Dmitrii Donskoi, only to arrive too late—probably deliberately—for the decisive battle of Kulikovo. Between 1377 and 1379 the Order plundered Samogitia and Podlasie and threatened Vilnius. Kęstutis could not mount any serious raids in response. Fearing that the Order might support Andrei, Jogaila persuaded Kęstutis to sign a ten-year truce in September 1379, although it did not cover Samogitia.[30] The Order, keen to drive a wedge between uncle and nephew, insinuated that Kęstutis was planning a coup. In February 1380 the Livonian Order signed a secret treaty with Jogaila alone, in which it agreed not to attack his lands. As mistrust grew, Jogaila signed another secret treaty in May 1380, promising not to aid Kęstutis if the Order attacked Trakai.

In 1381 the pot boiled over. The Order hinted to Kęstutis of its treaties with Jogaila. While Jogaila's forces were besieging Polatsk after Skirgaila's expulsion, Kęstutis marched into Vilnius where he caught Jogaila unprepared. He found the secret treaty with the Order, declared Jogaila deposed, and adopted the title of supreme duke, forcing Jogaila to renounce his powers in writing, and to swear an oath of loyalty.[31] Jogaila was deprived of his patrimony and granted the duchies of Krėva and Vitsebsk. If Kęstutis calculated that Jogaila would follow the example of Jaunutis, who had accepted his 1345 deposition with relatively good grace, he miscalculated badly.

Jogaila's brother Kaributas, encouraged by Jogaila, led the counterattack. As Kęstutis hastened south-east to confront him, Jogaila struck. The Vilnius merchants, fearing that Kęstutis's hostility to the Order might adversely affect trade, handed the city over to Jogaila. He formed an alliance with the Order, which besieged Trakai. When asked whether they wished to surrender to the Order or to Jogaila, the inhabitants chose Jogaila. Vytautas, hurrying to his father's aid, was routed in a bloody encounter beneath the walls of Vilnius. When Kęstutis and Vytautas deployed their forces outside Trakai opposite Jogaila's much larger army on 3 August 1382, Jogaila suggested that to avoid further bloodshed they should talk peace. Despite giving assurances of their personal safety, Jogaila arrested them,

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[28] For the problems of Gediminid genealogy, see Ch. 8, 74–5.

[29] Jonė Deveikė, 'The Lithuanian diarchies', *SEER*, 28 (1950), 392–405; the revival of the idea by Gudevičius and Nikžentaitis is criticized by Nikodem: 'Jedynowładztwo czy diarchia? Przyczynek do dziejów ustroju W. Ks. Litewskiego do końca XIV w.', *ZH*, 68 (2003), 7–30.

[30] Krzyżaniakowa and Ochmański, *Jagiełło*, 61.   [31] Kolankowski, *Dzieje*, i, 21.

sending Kęstutis in chains to Krėva, where he died in mysterious circumstances five days later, suffocated or strangled according to Vytautas and other sources favourable to him, although there is no independent confirmation of the allegation, and suicide has also been suggested. Jogaila did not execute Vytautas, who escaped dressed as one of his wife's female attendants, possibly because Jogaila deliberately ensured he was loosely guarded.[32] Kęstutis's duchy of Trakai was given to Skirgaila. There was to be no return to ducal rule, and apparently no place for the Kęstutids in Jogaila's Lithuania (see Fig. 3. Genealogy 3).

Jogaila had overthrown Kęstutis with the Order's support, but the Order had little interest in sustaining him. It sought to destabilize the Gediminid dynastic state, hoping to sever the pagan Lithuanian core from its Orthodox hinterland. Having supported Jogaila against Kęstutis, it kept the pot bubbling by offering a safe haven to Vytautas, despite signing peace with Jogaila on 31 October/ 1 November on the Dubissa river, where it exploited the political turbulence to inflict harsh terms. Jogaila agreed to support the Order against all its enemies, not to declare war without the Order's permission, to accept baptism for himself and all Lithuania, and, in the most painful clause, to cede Samogitia up to the Dubissa. The terms were so harsh that Jogaila refused to ratify them, and grand master Konrad Zöllner von Rottenstein declared war on 30 July 1383.[33]

If Jogaila was to feel secure on his throne, he would have to find a solution to the grand duchy's structural problems, exposed by Andrei's rebellion and Kęstutis's coup. By 1382 the days of paganism were numbered. Should more Orthodox Gediminids follow Andrei and Dmitry of Briansk in defecting to Moscow, control over the grand duchy's Ruthenian lands would be fundamentally threatened. An obvious solution would be for Jogaila to accept Orthodox baptism. Events to the east produced an apparently favourable conjuncture: in August 1382 Tokhtamysh (Tohtamış), khan of the Golden Horde, razed Moscow to avenge Kulikovo. Although Jogaila allowed his mother to negotiate a peace treaty with Dmitrii at some point in 1383–4, its terms constituted a Faustian pact. In return for the hand of one of Dmitrii's daughters, Jogaila promised to accept Orthodox baptism, but it was clear that Dmitrii expected him to recognize, if not his outright suzerainty, then at least his superiority. Should the Gediminids abandon paganism, the Lithuanians would be dominated or completely swallowed up by east Slavic culture, if Dmitrii did not serve them up to the Order.[34]

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[32] *SRPr*, ii, 712–13; Krzyżaniakowa and Ochmański, *Jagiełło*, 65–73. Nikodem suggests that Kęstutis died of natural causes, and that Skirgaila was not responsible for his murder, as rumour maintained: Jarosław Nikodem, *Witold Wielki Książę Litewski (1354 lub 1355–27 października 1430)* (Cracow, 2013), 68–9, and 'Rola Skirgiełły na Litwie do r. 1394', *Scripta Minora* 2 (1998), 99–100. For the fullest chronicle account, which claims Kęstutis was throttled by Jogaila's servants, see *PSRL*, xxxv, col. 64.

[33] Mečislovas Jučas, *Lietuvos ir Lenkijos unija (XIV a. vid.–XIX a. pr.)* (Vilnius, 2000), 104–6; Paszkiewicz, *O genezie*, 143–50.

[34] Krzyżaniakowa and Ochmański, *Jagiełło*, 79–81; Oskar Halecki, *Dzieje unii jagiellońskiej*, i (Cracow, 1919), 83–4; Jučas, *Unija*, 106.
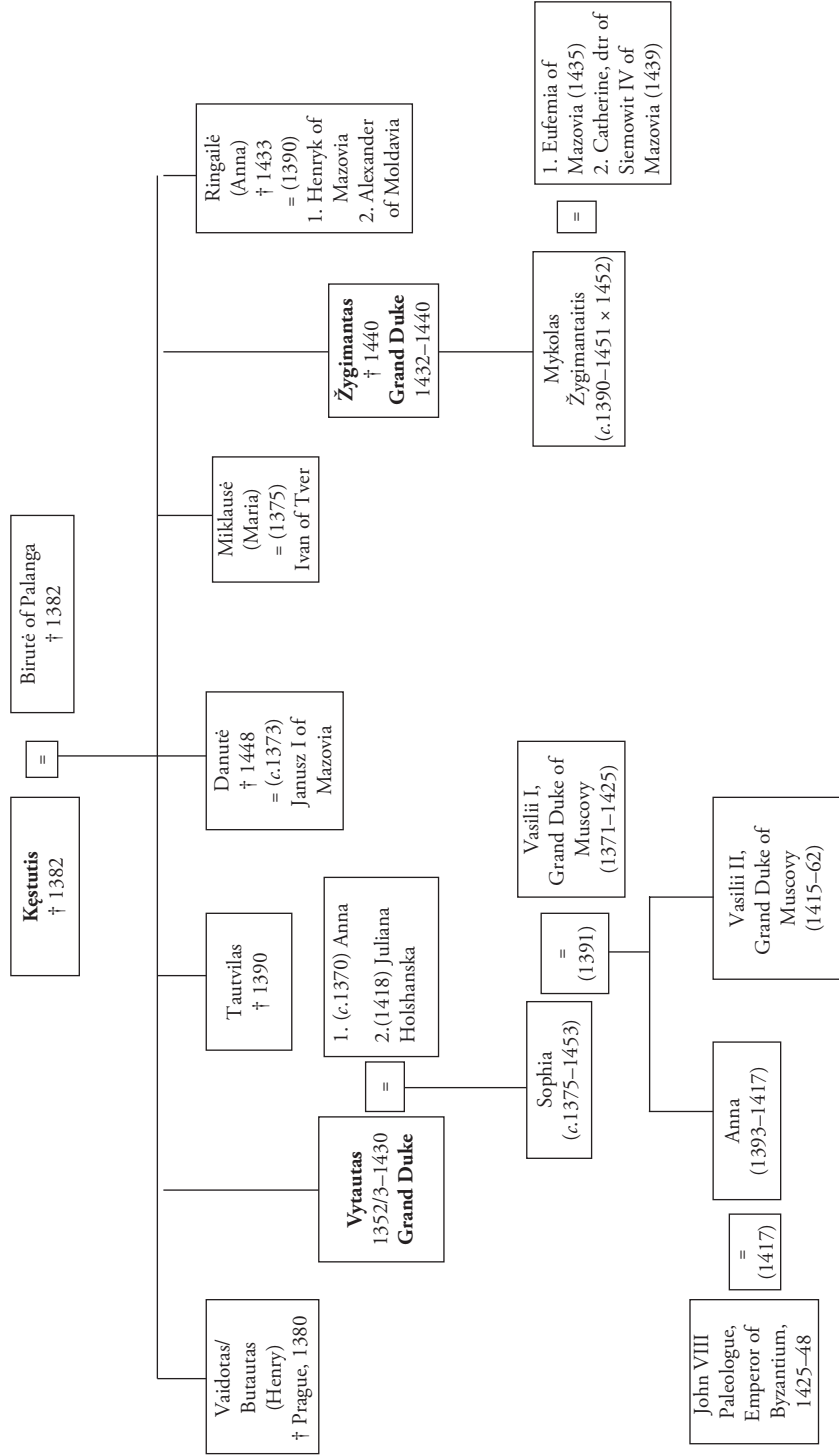
Fig. 3. Genealogy 3. The Kęstutids.

Notes: This is a simplified table. It follows Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, genealogical table 2b in only giving the seven children of Kęstutis known from verifiable sources. Rowell regards Vaidotas and Butuatas as dialect variations of the same name, unlike Tęgowski and *Lietuvos Istorija*, iii.

Jogaila had another iron in the fire. Historians have long argued about which side initiated the negotiations that led to the Krewo Act, with many Polish scholars following Halecki, whose classic 1919 account claimed that it was the Poles who first suggested a marriage between Jadwiga and Jogaila.[35] It is impossible to determine who made the first move: attempts to do so depend on intuition and creative reading of the scanty sources. Despite the unresolved conflict over Halych-Volhynia, where a *de facto* partition had embedded itself by the 1380s, several unconnected developments opened the way to a rapprochement. For the Poles, a political relationship with Lithuania was enticing. Although they had crowned Jadwiga *in regem* in 1384, it was vital to find her a husband to sustain the dynasty. Jogaila was an attractive candidate. A union with Lithuania would strengthen Poland after the severing of the link with Hungary. This was necessary given the prospect of Luxembourg control of Brandenburg, Hungary, Bohemia, and the Empire, where Sigismund's elder brother Wenzel (Václav) was elected King of the Romans in 1376. Union would end the Lithuanian raids that had caused so much damage to Poland's eastern palatinates and open the way to a settlement over Halych-Volhynia, while Jogaila's baptism and the conversion of his pagan subjects to Catholicism would strengthen Poland's position within the Catholic world and embarrass the Order. Yet it would be wrong to see hostility to the Order as the fundamental factor bringing the two realms together: Poland had been at peace with it since 1343, and although Krewo contained a clause in which Jogaila swore to regain lands lost by the *corona regni*, the Poles were reluctant to end the long peace. For the Małopolskan lords who played such a prominent role in the negotiations with Jogaila, Prussia was of little concern; they were far more interested in the south and east.

The Lithuanians, however, needed help against the Order. Not counting numerous minor border incursions, the Order mounted 96 raids on Lithuanian territory between 1345 and 1382: 66 from Prussia and 30 from Livonia. The Lithuanians managed 42 in reply: 31 on Prussia and 11 on Livonia.[36] By the 1370s the Order could strike deep into the Lithuanian heartlands, using the rivers as highways into the dense forests that were Lithuania's defensive barrier. It devastated the Trakai region in 1374, 1376, and 1377; Kaunas in 1362 and 1368; and attacked Vilnius itself in 1365 and 1377.[37] The cession of much of Samogitia in 1382, however temporary Jogaila regarded it, demonstrated all too plainly the dangers of dynastic strife. If Kaunas and the line of the Niemen fell, the Lithuanian heartlands would be dangerously exposed.

Conversion to Catholicism would have two advantages. Unlike conversion to Orthodoxy with its risks of cultural assimilation, it might allow Lithuanians to retain their separate identity within the grand duchy, while removing at a stroke the

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[35] Halecki, *Dzieje*, i, 83–112, and *Jadwiga of Anjou and the Rise of East Central Europe* (Boulder, CO, 1991), 118. Paszkiewicz, *O genezę*, 201–2. For the debate, see Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, i, 198–232.

[36] Zenonas Ivinskis, 'Litwa w dobie chrztu i unii z Polską', in Jerzy Kłoczowski (ed.), *Chrystianizacja Litwy* (Cracow, 1987), 24, 25.

[37] Jučas, *Unija*, 99.

Order's justification for its attacks, and securing the support of Poland, an important Catholic power with good links to the papacy. While conversion would undoubtedly complicate relations with Lithuania's Ruthenian territories and with the Orthodox Gediminids, for Jogaila union held out the prospect of strengthening grand ducal power by utilizing the sophisticated instruments of government developed in the Latin west. As Halecki put it, Jogaila would rather be king of Poland than a Muscovite vassal. His flirtation with Dmitrii was probably designed to put pressure on the Poles as the interregnum followed its tortuous course. Orthodox baptism would bring nothing to the table that was not already there, while the acquisition of a royal crown would strengthen Jogaila's position within the dynasty.[38]

Negotiations began in earnest after Jadwiga's coronation. In January 1385 a Lithuanian delegation led by Skirgaila arrived in Cracow with a formal request for Jadwiga's hand. There were many obstacles to the marriage, not least the attitude of Elizabeth of Bosnia, who in July 1385 expressed her readiness to fulfil the obligations entered into with Leopold von Habsburg for Jadwiga's marriage to his son William. Given that Jadwiga was soon to reach the canonical age for marriage, that William set out for Cracow to claim his bride, and that Jadwiga was nervous at the prospect of marrying a man three times her age rather than her childhood companion, supporters of the Lithuanian marriage had to move quickly: the Krewo Act was signed within a month of Elizabeth's declaration. The betrothal was a potentially serious obstacle but, although the Habsburgs asserted in a case they pursued in the papal curia that William had consummated his marriage with Jadwiga in Cracow, the young Queen was under the control of the Cracow lords who had committed themselves to the Lithuanian marriage; it is inconceivable that they would have allowed the youngsters to share a bed. Jan Długosz, who relished a good scandal, denies and then supports the rumours in his contradictory account, which relates the tale, almost certainly apocryphal, that Jadwiga was so determined to reach William she used an axe to break down the door of the apartment in Wawel castle to which she had been confined after his arrival. William slunk back to Austria, muttering about the 'Lithuanian Saracen'. He always considered himself Jadwiga's rightful husband, refused the 200,000 florins compensation negotiated by Elizabeth of Bosnia at Krėva, and did not marry until after Jadwiga's death.[39]

Jogaila now sought to heal the breach with Vytautas, to prevent the Order from disrupting the negotiations by exploiting dynastic divisions. After the breakdown of the Dubissa peace, the Order mounted a powerful raid in May 1384. Kaunas was

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[38] For Paszkiewicz, this was the most important motive: *O genezie*, 162–3, 256–7; cf. Gotthold Rhode, *Die Ostgrenze Polens: Politische Entwicklung, kulterelle Bedeutung und geistige Auswirkung*, i (Cologne, 1955), 297. Halecki, *Jadwiga*, 121.

[39] *The Annals of Jan Długosz: A History of Eastern Europe from A.D. 965 to A.D. 1480*, tr. Maurice Michael (Chichester, 1997), 346. This is an abridged translation from the modern Polish, not the original Latin version. While it gives a good flavour of Długosz's rich work, it is frequently unreliable and occasionally misleading. All future references are to the modern Latin edn. Nikodem, *Jadwiga*, 122–56 and 'Gniewosz-Jadwiga-Wilhelm: Krytyka przekazu "Annales" Jana Długosza', *PH*, 98 (2007), 175–96; Tęgowski, 'Wprowadzenie w życiu postanowień aktu krewskiego w l. 1385–1399', *Studia z dziejów państwa i prawa polskiego*, 9 (2006), 79, 83.

captured and razed, and the Order constructed a castle there that they called Neu-Marienwerder as a launching-pad for further conquests. Fearing a new civil war, Jogaila secretly contacted Vytautas in his Prussian exile. In July 1384 Vytautas accepted his offer, returned to Lithuania, and appended his seal to the Krewo Act. With William eliminated and Vytautas back in the fold the way was open to consummate the union.