

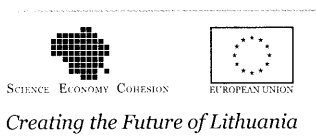
DARIUS BARONAS, S. C. ROWELL

The Conversion of Lithuania
From Pagan Barbarians
to Late Medieval Christians



THE INSTITUTE OF LITHUANIAN LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE
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Contents

PREFACE	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
1. Tepid Beginnings and the First Martyrs: Adalbert-Wojciech and Bruno of Querfurt	21
2. High Hopes on Difficult Terrain: Mindaugas – the First and Last King of Old Lithuania	55
3. How to Play with Western Christians: a Battle of Wits between the Literate and the Illiterate	119
4. Going East, Facing West: Pagan Lithuania and Christian Neighbours	149
5. Orthodox and Franciscan Martyrs: Spiritual and Bodily Arms Talk	175
6. Grassroots Christianity in Pagan Lithuania and the Final Turn: the Road from Vilnius to Cracow	221
7. The Demonstration of Christian Power in Vilnius in 1387 and Its Aftermath	261
8. How to be Big in Europe: Convert the Pagans, Reduce the Schismatics	327
9. Bulwark of Latin and Greek Christendom?	379
10. Supplications and Indulgences	403
11. Lithuanian Catholics go to Court	437
12. Diocesan Structures and Reform	459
EPILOGUE: From Pagan Europe to Christian Europe	519
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	557
<i>Manuscript sources</i>	559
<i>Bibliography</i>	561
<i>List of maps and illustrations</i>	613
<i>Index</i>	615

Preface

...Vos etenim, patres eximii ... pisces magnos de mari oceano trahentes
ad litus salutis attrahitis, nos nempe e diverso in mari magno et
spacioso terrarum nostrarum versus orientem reptilia, gentem scilicet
Samagiticam ... de profundo aquarum extrahentes ad hauriendum
aquas in gaudio conducimus salvatoris.

*Missive of King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas to the Fathers
of the Council of Constance (25 August 1417)*

This book is intended to be a guide through the murky waters of pagan and early Christian Lithuania. Notwithstanding the fact that the last twenty or so years have seen a remarkable increase in studies devoted to the territories that once formed the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the knowledge of medieval Lithuania in anglophone academia is still fragmentary and liable to fluctuations caused by oriental battles over the past. By 'oriental battles' we mean ideology masquerading as scholarship. Nowadays it would be quite impossible to imagine discussions between serious-looking French and German scholars as to how far the empire of Charlemagne was French or German. The legacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is large enough for every 'successor-state' to take pride in it. However, moderation in pride was not the strongest side of East European nations, be it early-twentieth-century Poles and Lithuanians or early-twenty-first-century Belarusians. Exclusivist claims to the heritage caused much rancour and actual fighting in the past, the wounds of which have not been healed fully to this day. The same pattern may repeat itself once again. The best proof of 'blood lands' coming back is Russian aggression against the Ukraine. What had been started as the negation of the Ukrainian nation as such, morphed, in just a few years, into 'hybrid warfare' accompanied by unparalleled world-wide campaign of deception. As a means of this aggression the pan-Russian recourse has been made to claims to the

legacy of Kievan Rus'. The legacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania may be manipulated similarly. Even in the scholarly world this no longer extant country is far from always being looked at in a value free mode of thought, as a thing in itself, interesting for its own colourful history. That is why we have tried to do justice to every piece of evidence subjecting it to critical, source-based assessment.

The topic of our present research is the Christianization of Lithuania, with emphasis being placed on the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries. By and large, the conversion of the last pagan state in Europe may be viewed as the mainstream of its 'civilizing process' (N. Elias), hence the 'development' from pagan barbarians to late medieval Christians. The image of 'pagan barbarians' is used in a conscious attempt to evoke the image of the early Middle Ages. It is to be noted that in the thirteenth century Lithuanian society bore structural resemblances to what Western Europe was like in the post-Migration period. As shall be presented, this *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* (R. Koselleck) was not always to the detriment of Lithuanian society when it came to face the late-medieval expansion of Latin Europe in the form of the 'northern crusades'. This new engagement with neighbouring countries served as a stimulus to accelerated changes that took a decisive turn with the country's official conversion in 1387. By the early sixteenth century Lithuanian society was essentially the same as the rest of Latin Europe. Some differences remained, some peculiarities were retained, as was the case in every country of Europe, but the gap was filled in an extraordinarily short period of time – during the 'long-fifteenth century'.

It would be trivial to say that Lithuania is a country lying between East and West. However, we would like to draw attention to this fact for purely pragmatic reasons related closely to our research topic. The Christianization of European countries may be viewed as a separate field of historical scholarship. The case of Lithuania is still relatively weakly represented here, largely because of medieval Lithuania's balancing act between the Latin Catholic and Greek Orthodox worlds. This state of affairs proved unpropitious for modern scholarship to tackle this topic that requires some

specialist knowledge on both parts of medieval Christendom(s). Being aware of our own limits, we have nevertheless decided to brave the space between the Baltic and the Black Seas, because it is our belief that thinking large may be helpful in bringing back the experiences of medieval people who ranged far and wide.

The Authors wish to express their gratitude for the kind assistance afforded them by the directors and staff of the Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Gnieźnie (Fr M. Sołomieniuk), Archiwum Diecezjalne w Płocku (Revd Dr D. Majewski) and especially the Archiwum Diecezjalne w Siedlcach (Revd Dr B. Błoński and Sr H. Redzik). The Revd Father Archivist of the Sacred Penitentiary and his staff in the Vatican City have been particularly helpful. Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz and the nearby library of Friedrich-Meinecke-Institute proved the best places in Berlin for conducting our research. Special thanks are due to H. E. Dr Irena Vaišvilaitė for her hospitality and lively discussion of the late-medieval Church in Lithuania. Our thanks also go to Arūnas Baltėnas, Fr Andrzej Bruździński (Cracow), Remigijus Černius, Jonas Drungilas, Artūras Dubonis, Fr Hieronim Fokciński SJ (Rome), Giedrė Mickūnaitė, Sergey Polekhov, Edmundas Rimša, Keith Robbins, Sergejus Temčinas, Tadeusz M. Trajdos and Oksana Valionienė.

The introduction, chapters 9 to 12, and the epilogue were written by S. C. Rowell, chapters 1 to 8 by Darius Baronas. The project was carried out at the Lithuanian Institute of History from 2013 to 2015.

Introduction

In 1935 a politically active physician was exiled from his urban home in northern Italy to the countryside several hundred kilometres away. There he found himself in a world of squabbling petty gentry, overworked peasants and negligent, fornicating clergy. Ordinary people had recourse in their spiritual life more often to folklore, witchcraft and superstition, the exile noted, than to the parish church and its despised priest. The people placed their faith in gnomes and magic spells. They even said of themselves that Christianity (and hence Civilization) had never reached as far as their land. Even so those same apparent pagans did attend Mass on high holidays and venerated the Blessed Virgin Mary. The physician in question was the Italian anti-fascist Carlo Levi; the apparently God-forsaken land was Lucania (Basilicata), in southern Italy, not Lithuania.¹ Similar stories of the remnants of ancient arcane behaviour might be told of peasants in other western European countries. When reading sixteenth-century Protestant polemical literature such as the *De diis Samagitarum caeterorumque sarmatarum et falsorum christianorum* of Jan Łaski with its list of the pagan deities and of the Žemaitijans and Sarmatians and *other false Christians*, or the Annual Reports sent to Rome by Lithuanian Jesuits describing their missionary efforts in the Lithuanian and Livonian countryside, we might wonder whether for them Christ had stopped at the Polish border.²

¹ C. Levi, *Cristo si è stato a Eboli* (Turin, 2010). The book was published first in 1945.

² Jonas Lasickis, *Apie žemaičių, kitų sarmatų bei netikrų krikščionių dievus = De diis Samagitarum caeterorumque Sarmatarum et falsorum Christianorum* (Vilnius, 1969), reprinted in: N. Vėlius (ed.), *Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai*, vol. II: *XVI amžius [BRMŠ]* (Vilnius, 2001), 571–603. The most recent study of this complex source is V. Ališauskas, *Jono Lasickio pasakojimas apie žemaičių dievus* (Vilnius, 2012). The Jesuit material (extracts of which are provided in *BRMŠ*, II, 616–33) led Karol Górski to date the conversion of Žemaitija to the first half of the seventeenth century: K. Górski, 'Probleme der Christianisierung in Preus-

Lithuania officially converted to Catholicism in 1387; a generation later the western area of Žemaitija came to the front (in 1416–17). These dates do not represent the eradication of the religious practices which prevailed in earlier times, but they do mark the end of the hesitant process by which a western Christian presence developed in the country over the previous century and a half or so from the reign of the Catholic convert King Mindaugas via the pagan rulers Gediminas and Algirdas, who expressed their interest in closer relations with the Catholic world and its religion to Grand Duke Jogaila, who in 1387 baptised his pagan subjects in order to take over government of the Kingdom of Poland (from 1386).³ The labourers in the vineyard were from Poland (the nearest friendly Catholic country, now a Jagiellonian domain), but the earthly vintner and his clan were Lithuanian. There would be no way back now: public religion and political service and the proximity to the monarch which these entailed were open only to (predominantly Catholic) Christians. The Church which received the Lithuanian neophytes was structurally much more advanced than that which had welcomed the pagan Germanic and western Slavonic tribes 500–900 years earlier: parish churches had already been invented and this tool of evangelization was ready to be imported and used, first by the monarch, later by his servant nobility. Religious orders, at least one of which had considerable experience of Lithuanian

sen, Livland und Litauen' *Die Rolle der Ritterorden in der Christianisierung und Kolonisierung des Ostseegebietes*. ed. Z. H. Nowak [*Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica*, 1] (Toruń, 1983), 9–34, here pp. 31–4. For a synthesis of current positive assessments of pagan relics in early-modern Lithuania, see M. Paknys, 'Ankstyvasis LDK krikščionėjimo laikotarpis XIV a. pab. – XVI a. vid.', *Krikščionybės Lietuvoje istorija*, ed. V. Ališauskas (Vilnius, 2006), 109–12.

³ The history of missions and international diplomacy under these rulers is analysed and the relevant literature cited below, pp. 77–108; 119–48; 221–60. Recent growth in Lithuanian academic interest in the mission of St Bruno-Boniface (1009) and the later reign of Mindaugas was reflected in a 2001 conference held in Vilnius to discuss the Christianization of Lithuania in its central-European context. Material from this international gathering was published in *Lietuvos krikščionėjimas vidurio Europos kontekste = Die Christianisierung Litauens in mitteleuropäischen Kontext*, ed. V. Dolinskas (Vilnius, 2005), an echo of the 1987 Lithuanian Conversion conference held in the Vatican, published as *La Cristianizzazione della Lituania: Atti del Colloquio Internazionale di Storia Ecclesiastica in Occasione della Lituania Cristiana (1387–1987)*. Roma, 24–26 Giugno 1987 [*Atti e Documenti*, 2] (Vatican City, 1989).

conditions, albeit not always positive, were committed to mission in the Baltic and Black Sea regions.⁴ Fraternities, indulgences, supplications and other spiritual infrastructure already functioned in neighbouring countries and could be introduced into Lithuania so that by the end of the fifteenth century theological fashion in Lithuania differed little among the gradually increasing number of those susceptible to it, from that in Poland, or elsewhere for that matter, except in detail, and perhaps in zeal. Printing, the tool which would fuel sixteenth-century religious developments (the Protestant and Catholic reformations), was on its way – in 1499 a canon of Vilnius cathedral, Fr Martin of Radom had an Agenda or handbook printed in Gdańsk for the instruction of parish clergy in the diocese. It reflects issues which we may presume to have been relevant to the Lithuanian Church, for it differs in composition and content from other contemporary handbooks for priests in other central European dioceses. It contains *inter alia* blessings for pilgrim staffs (for those travelling to Rome and Compostela), farm livestock and food products and mirrors, objects of particular interest to Lithuanian believers.⁵ Over the coming decades the nature of Christianity itself would change and the new insistence on the search for *the* True Religion would dominate not only sixteenth-century theological polemics but also later interpretations of the Lithuanian conversion. The theme of paganism would come to the fore in religious discourse as a weapon to attack the record of the Church of Rome. While little stress was placed on ‘pagan’ practices in fifteenth-century post-conversion Lithuanian sources (except as part of formulae in petitions to Rome or the grand duke, where the word pagan, like schismatic or Tatar, was almost guaranteed to ensure a positive response from the curia or the monarch’s court) or even in the statutes of the 1528 synod of Vilnius, by the mid-sixteenth century there was much talk of pagan deities and practices in Lutheran polemical literature and the 1582 synodal statutes speak of the bishop of Vilnius’ desire to seek out cases of heresy, the summoning of demons and the

⁴ Here we have in mind the Franciscans. The Dominicans were active in southern Lithuanian Rus’, where they ministered to possible Orthodox and Tatars converts. See below, pp. 191–204; 402; 462, n. 9.

⁵ See below, p. 487.

conscious resort to superstition. If we compare two almost identical emoluments issued by grand dukes to the parish of Ramygala to build a chapel of ease in Panevėžys in 1503 and provide it with woodland in 1531, we see that the first petition notes how great was the distance for parishioners to come to Ramygala and so people would gather for Mass in the countryside. However, the priest did not wish to appear pagan by praying to God and burning incense in the wild. A generation later the parish priest mentions that it is far for his parishioners to come to church and that they neither baptise their children, nor marry and they are buried in the marshes; they believe in serpents and pay no heed to God.⁶ Folk practices ignored in the fifteenth century (in Prussia clergy were accused of ‘leaving Prussians to be Prussian’) came to be the focus of attention of those theologians throughout north-eastern Europe whose conception of such matters had changed and this paganism had to be rooted out.⁷

The history of Christianity in Lithuania continues to be dominated by sixteenth-century polemics between Roman Catholic and Lutheran ideologues who sought to justify their own existence by pointing out the alleged failure of the fifteenth-century Roman Church to establish True Religion in the Grand Duchy.⁸ Ironically even in an apparently post-Catholic, post-communist country

⁶ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny katedry i diecezji wileńskiej = Codex diplomaticus ecclesiae cathedralis necnon dioeceseos Vilnensis [KDKDW]*, ed. J. Fijałek, W. Semkowicz (Cracow, 1932–48), no. 564, p. 677 (7 September 1503) and Vilnius, Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių bibliotekos Rankraščių skyrius [LMAVB RS], F 256, b. 3032 (1531), cited in Paknys, ‘Ankstyvasis LDK’, 110–11.

⁷ Folk practices similar to those in Lithuania were recorded in Polish sermons: M. Olszewski, *Świat zabobonów w średniowieczu: Studium kazania o zabobonach Stanisława ze Skarbmierza* (Warsaw, 2002), p. 26, n. 41, pp. 180–90: ‘Sermo iste tractat de diversis superstitionibus hominum, quae sunt contra fidem’. Cf. S. Bylina, *Religijność późnego średniowiecza: Chrześcijaństwo a kultura tradycyjna w Europie środkowo-wschodniej w XIV–XV w.* (Warsaw, 2009), 91–126. On the 1428 complaint of Heinrich Beringer to the effect that Prussian landowners urge clergy to ‘lasset Preussen Preussen bleyben’, see below, p. 503, n. 129. The Lutheran preacher Mikael Agricola (1510–57) drew up a list of twelve Finnic deities. On the reservation of heresy and demonic sins for episcopal absolutuion, see ‘Statuty synodu wileńskiego z dnia 12 ii 1582’, in *Concilia Poloniae. Źródła i studia krytyczne*, vol. II: *Synody diecezji wileńskiej i ich statuty*, ed. J. Sawicki (Warsaw, 1948), 138: ‘Casus nobis reservati: Crimen haeresis ... sortilegorum seu invocantium daemones et scienter superstitionibus utentium’.

⁸ As Ulinka Rublack has summarised the religious history of Western Europe after the sixteenth century: ‘completely different notions of what constituted a true

church history continues to be an ideological battleground using different ideological language. The image of wild pagans brought unwillingly to the fold by Polish missionaries is still to be found in studies from that country. This image has been taken up by Lithuanian nationalism as a proud badge of identity separating the Baltic tribes from their Slavonic neighbours. Of course such comments are not relevant to Lithuania alone. In self-proclaimed religiously moribund England it remains difficult for some ecclesiastical historians to accept the truth of zealous English Catholicism at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the face of overwhelming evidence, such is the faith in the deeply-rooted inevitability of the Protestant reformation. The other side of the strong coin of zeal is vulnerability.⁹ As the poet quips, 'Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned'.

What do we accept to be the yardstick for defining a Catholic Christian country, as opposed to a 'pagan' one? One long-standing definition provided by Polish historians claims that Christian conversion is complete when a territory where there is a distance of 10 km (or perhaps in special geographical cases 15 or 20 km) between parish churches.¹⁰ Rather than rely primarily on a geographical kinetic argument, we shall consider a country sufficiently christianised when the Catholic Church there has a stable, albeit imperfect infrastructure, and Catholic practices have taken root in society and are followed voluntarily by the ruling dynasty, the nobility, townsfolk and at least some of the peasantry; where public life is at least externally Catholic. This does not mean that older practices, ways of doing things do not persist in some places on some occasions.

religion coexisted ... opposing truth claims were dissected again and again': U. Rublack, *Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), 10.

⁹ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven–London, 1992). In the second edition of 2005 the author gives his response to reaction to his book from what might be termed the Protestant academic establishment: *ibid.*, pp. xiii–xxxvii. For the anti-revisionist point of view, see G. W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability before the Break with Rome* (New Haven–London, 2012).

¹⁰ The main proponent of this idea in the Polish context is H. Łowmiański, *Religia słowian i jej upadek (w. VI–XII)* (Warsaw, 1979), 314–16; the idea was applied to the diocese of Vilnius by J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu: Ustrój i uposażenie* (Poznań, 1972), 78–9; see below, pp. 470–3.

Conversion is a constant process for both individuals and the society in which they live, an evolutionary process, however revolutionary its beginning might be. In this respect we might follow St Gregory the Great's eirenic advice to Abbot Mellitus more closely than the Jesuits or Lutherans: *nam duris mentibus simul omnia abscindere impossibile esse non dubitum est*.¹¹ However, this does not mean that some medieval missionary writers on pagan societies did not seek to distinguish true faith from false, thereby depicting traditional social customs as pagan rites.¹²

The Christian *mos* or *ritus* was not associated by the Lithuanian pagans with a single universal religion, even if Gediminas asserts that the pope is his senior. Christianity was associated with different peoples – Russian, German or Polish for the most part and each had its own rite. As such Christianity was tolerated when it was practised by those peoples within the Grand Duchy so long as it did not disturb the Lithuanian cults which Gediminas as grand duke protected. In the oft-quoted assertion attributed to Gediminas by the ambassadors of the papal legates in 1324, he intended to ensure that ‘christianos facere Deum suum colere secundum morem suum, ruthenos secundum ritum suum, polonos secundum morem suum et nos colimus Deum secundum ritum nostrum et omnes habemus unum deum’.¹³ Gediminas was not tolerant in the sense that a person might choose his own religion and follow it unrestrained. Woe betide any Lithuanian who refused to take part in pagan public rituals or expressions of identity (by refusing to feast at court during Lent, for example). The ethnic Lithuanian Orthodox martyrs of Vilnius were released by Algirdas so long as they never oppose the prince's custom.¹⁴ Their Ruthenian priest remains unmolested because he was acting as Ruthenians were supposed to do. Official Conversion means changing ground rules of social life and the ruler must be strong enough to enforce it. In 1387 all pagans of the Lithu-

¹¹ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave, R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), i.30, p. 108.

¹² J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon society* (Oxford, 2005), 52.

¹³ *Chartularium Lithuaniae res gestas magni ducis Gedemine illustrans. Gedimino laiškai*, ed. S. C. Rowell (Vilnius, 2003), no 54, p. 184.

¹⁴ On the Lithuanian Orthodox Martyrs of Vilnius, see below, pp. 178–90.

anian nation were compelled to convert to Catholicism; the grand duke's Ruthenian subjects were left in peace. Bolesław the Brave of Poland smashed the teeth of Catholics who failed to keep the fast, as Kłoczowski says 'dans la logique d'un rigorisme bien établi dans la tradition et les coutumes. Il s'agissait surtout d'attitudes et de pratiques visibles publiques, susceptibles d'être observées par toute la société d'une localité'.¹⁵ In 1526 the Lithuanian chancellor, Albertas Goštautas argued (against increasing the number of judges in the Grand Duchy): 'dominia suos habent peculiare ritus... Lithuanos ergo Lithuanico more servandos censeo, Polonos Polonico, neque id ex re mea privata, sed ex re publica fieri iudico'.¹⁶ Religion, as Durkheim (among others) pointed out, is not only a matter of belief and individual conviction; it comprises collective ceremonial and ritual actions which serve in part to create or reinforce group identity.¹⁷

A ruler could not hope to change his subjects' religious practices, visible or otherwise, and survive unless he enjoyed the support of a considerable section of society, especially his kinsmen, his nobles and other prominent subjects, such as the burghers of late-fourteenth-century Lithuania (first and foremost Vilnius). Netimer failed (if indeed he was Lithuanian), Mindaugas failed (despite almost ten years of nominal Catholic kingship), Gediminas in the end was unwilling to risk failure.¹⁸ When Jogaila dared to convert himself and his people he did so with the support of his kinsmen, his leading boyars and the leader of the Vilnius merchants. When opposition to his rule came in 1390 it was led by Vytautas, a Christian, with the support of the Teutonic Order.

For a mission to have a chance of succeeding it had to have more than the support of a ruler who faced no serious internal opposition; it also had to offer new practices which met old needs already

¹⁵ J. Kłoczowski, 'Christianisation de la Pologne', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 22/23 (1988–89), 81.

¹⁶ *Acta Tomiciana*, vol. XI: *AD MDXXIX*, ed. Z. Celichowski (Poznań, 1901), no. 214, pp. 164–5.

¹⁷ E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (London, 1965) summarised in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus c. 900–1200*, ed. N. Berend (Cambridge, 2007), 3–4; cf. D. I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, 1988), 9.

¹⁸ See below, pp. 47–9; 105–6; 125–7.

felt in local society. As D. L. D'Avray notes pertinently, conversion programmes had a better chance of succeeding if they represented a 'system which overlaps significantly with their [those to be converted] existing convictions'.¹⁹ A prime example of this in the Lithuanian case is the memorial feasts celebrated by parish fraternities which fulfilled a purpose similar to that of the otherwise damnable pagan *šermenys*. These fraternities formed the heart of lay Christian life and community identity within Lithuanian parishes from the first half of the fifteenth century onwards.²⁰

From general medieval European experience it took at least two or three generations from official conversion for Christianity to gain a solid foothold in neophyte countries. Nora Berend, who has compared the conversion process (by which we do not mean 'full Christianization'), says that on average most polities were basically Christian 50–100 years after the baptism of the first Christian ruler.²¹ Over the course of the long fifteenth century (1387–1522) between the official conversion of Lithuania to Latin Christianity and the first known and carefully documented episcopal visitation of the Diocese of Vilnius Catholicism evolved from being the religion of a small minority of mostly foreign subjects of the grand duke to the faith of the ruling class practiced with increasing zeal by all social classes of the Grand Duchy. The Protestant Reformation in Lithuania could not have happened without the presence of a reasonably strong Roman Catholic tradition inadequately controlled by the local ecclesiastical hierarchy.

In this study we hope to present both the macrohistory and the microhistory of Christianity in Lithuania. The opening chapters of the book deal with the first acquaintance of Lithuanians with representatives of the Roman Church against the background of Baltic connections with the post-Roman World, and the development of the Lithuanian state. This context includes the ambitions of the

¹⁹ D. L. D'Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities: A Weberian analysis* (Cambridge, 2010), 84.

²⁰ See below, pp. 501–3.

²¹ *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, 25. Although Mindaugas was a Roman Catholic king in the mid-thirteenth century (see below pp. 79–92), it was Grand Duke Jogaila whose conversion marks the beginning of longterm Christian rule in Lithuania. St Bruno of Querfurt was barely an *hors d'oeuvre*.

neophyte Polish state and the Saxon Holy Roman Empire around the year 1000 and the Rus'ian interests of St Bruno. Two centuries or so would pass before central and northern European interest in the Baltic pagans revived and a new international phenomenon developed – the Baltic Crusade.²² After tracing the complicated history of how Lithuania was brought to the front, we shall move on to study how over time Lithuanians became Christian. Studies have begun of various aspects of the Christianization of late-medieval and early-modern Lithuanian society.²³

Sources for Lithuanian ecclesiastical and religious history

Before considering the written record, it is necessary to consider whether archaeology can provide us with a clear chronological analysis of changes in people's behaviour in the late Middle Ages. The archaeological record is very difficult to interpret. An object may appear to be Christian in its form but have no connection with Christian believers or belief; it may simply be a piece of jewellery. As Nora Berend argues, the pectoral crosses found in Hungarian graves and the possibility that pre-Magyar Christian communities may have survived cannot alone show whether there were conversions in tenth-century Hungary.²⁴ Similarly the presence of 'offerings' (animal bones, coins) in graves from post-conversion Lithuania do not in themselves bear witness to the survival of any pagan belief, merely the longevity of tradition. Those English Protestants or non-Christians who say 'touch wood' to ward off bad luck would certainly not accept that they are really Catholics referring to a relic of the Wood of the Cross. Archaeological artefacts are difficult to date

²² For a recent assessment of new research in this area, see S. Ekdahl, 'Crusades and colonisation in the Baltic: a historiographic analysis', *The North-Eastern Frontiers of Medieval Europe: The Expansion of Latin Christendom in the Baltic Lands [The Expansion of Latin Europe, 1000–1500, 4]* (Farnham–Burlington, 2014), 1–42.

²³ *Krikščionybės Lietuvoje istorija*, ed. V. Ališauskas (Vilnius, 2006); a translation into Polish: *Dzieje Chrześcijaństwa na Litwie*, tr. K. Korzeniewska (Warsaw, 2014).

²⁴ *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, 12.

with any precision when they lack a definite context. In the history of religion (or anything else) fifty or a hundred years here or there can be crucial to our understanding of how social behaviour developed. In some cases the archaeological evidence has been misrepresented in literature, especially where religious matters are concerned. The nature and dating of the site now occupied by Vilnius Cathedral has been mistaken and it defies reason to believe that penannular brooches from third-century sites in the Baltic Region are evidence of a Christian presence in the area (given the apparent witness their form bears to Omega, the symbol of Christ; no alpha brooches have been unearthed – so far)²⁵. John Blair has pointed out pertinently that the Roman Church has never condemned the deposition of gravegoods and thus during a conversion period ‘furnished burial... rarely tells us that people were Christian, it certainly does not tell us that they were pagan’²⁶.

Medieval written sources dealing with Lithuania and its pre-Christian and post-conversion religious culture are quite rare and almost all of them are written in formulae – to explain to a medieval reader or even a modern bureaucrat that a certain phenomenon exists or is required it was necessary to speak in figurative language; as a Byzantine one may wish to visit Rus’, but an educated man writes ‘Scythia’ or ‘Sarmatia’, geographical terms whose physical reality had not existed for a millennium, if indeed they had ever existed. In addressing the Papal Penitentiary supplications had to be written according to an established formula, otherwise they would not make it past the first inspection. When a Polish scholar or a Bohemian missionary described pagan Lithuania he would do so in terms which would be understood as pagan; it may well be, given the common features of Indo-European religion, that these descriptions fitted in with local practice, although not in every detail. In discussing the political, infrastructural development of Lithuanian relations with Christianity and Christendom we will have recourse to a wide range of descriptive, prescriptive, diplomatic texts. In order to study the

²⁵ E. Svetikas, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės christianizacija XIV a. pab.–XV a.: Archeologiniai radiniai su krikščioniškais simboliais*, 2 vols. (Vilnius, 2009).

²⁶ Blair, *The Church*, 59.

establishment of Christian practice among Lithuanians we will use material which was not used by traditional Catholic or communist ecclesiastical historians because it was not available widely or at all, or because when it was available it was ignored for being formulaic and providing few ‘interesting’ facts, namely indulgences, consistory court records, supplications, Cyrillic transcription of the pre-Tridentine Mass, parish-church inventories.

The main sources for the history of Christianity in Lithuania have been known more than a century: papal bulls, hagiography (especially the lives of martyrs such as St Bruno-Boniface of Querfurt, Franciscan friars), chronicles – from Rus’, Poland and Prussia, and sometimes even further afield, correspondence between Lithuanian rulers and Christians, mainly Roman Catholic (usually in Poland, Prussia²⁷ and other parts of central Europe), but sometimes Greek Orthodox (including the emperor in Constantinople).²⁸ These all have their particular interests to promote. Some have been taken at face value for many years to form the basis of modern narrative histories – the story Jan Długosz tells of the first seven churches built after 1387 has been removed from its symbolic milieu; the alleged seventeenth-century register of fourteenth-century correspondence between the dowager grand duchess of Lithuania Yuliana and the grand duke of Moscow Dmitry Donskoi concerning plans for Jogaila to become an Orthodox Christian, discovered by Cherepnin in a Moscow archive during the reign of Iosif Stalin are most likely a later forgery intended to prove the Orthodox (and hence rightfully Russian) destiny of Lithuania. The authenticity of this reference to a copy-book compiled during the reign of Ivan III (1462–1505), and known only from a reference in a 1626 register of the grand-ducal archives in Moscow has never been questioned.²⁹

The traditional early history of Christianity in Lithuania has tended to focus on official, structural concerns such as the formation

²⁷ *Liv-, esth- und curländisches Urkundenbuch, nebst Regesten [LU]*, ed. F. G. von Bunge, I–VI (Riga–Reval, 1853–71; Aalen, 1967–74).

²⁸ *Vetera Monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae gentiumque finitimarum historiam illustrantia [VMPL]*, A. Theiner, I–II (Rome, 1860–61); *KDKDW; Codex Medicensis seu Samogitiae Dioecesis [CM]*, ed. P. Jatulis, I [*Fontes Historiae Lituaniae*, III] (Rome, 1984).

²⁹ See below, p. 249–56.

of bishoprics and church-building (the parish emoluments of the sees of Vilnius, Medininkai and Lutsk)³⁰ or official prescriptive texts (episcopal and grand-ducal) which form the mainstay of the surviving record. Recently considerable progress has been made in the study of parish clergy with the compilation of a prosopographical handbook of clergy named in documents from the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century³¹. However there are sources which have received less or no attention but which offer insights into 'real' life. These are mainly legal texts, which have become available for consultation only during the past few decades, or have been ignored by historians studying the Christianization of the Grand Duchy. Most of them such as the material from Gniezno, Lutsk, Płock and Rome remain as yet unpublished.

The Bishopric of Płock provided many priests for Lithuanian parish churches during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; the Archdiocese of Gniezno heard appeals from litigants dissatisfied with the judgments of the Vilnius Consistory court; while the Diocese of Lutsk with its Consistory court in Janów Podlaski, now housed in the Archive of the Bishopric of Siedlce dealt with a great variety of primary cases. These three holdings are not quite the same in their structure. The Płock records separate the Official's court records, which appear to deal with more local cases, from the *acta* of the bishop, which preserve extra-diocesan pleas. The most sophisticated records from the point of view of classification come from the Consistory archive in Gniezno, which are divided into three

³⁰ J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latifundium biskupstwa wileńskiego (1387–1550)* (Poznań, 1963); idem, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*; G. Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka od XV wieku do początku XVII wieku: Uposażenie* (Poznań, 1992); idem, *Diecezja żmudzka od XV wieku do początku XVII wieku: Ustrój* (Poznań, 1993); L. Królik, *Organizacja diecezji łuckiej i brzeskiej od XVI do XVIII wieku* (Lublin, 1983); T. Jaszczolt, 'Fundacje kościelne na Podlasiu do końca XV wieku', *Kościół a państwo na pograniczu polsko-litewsko-białoruskim. Źródła i stan badań*, ed. M. Kietliński, K. Sychowicz, W. Śleszyński [Wspólne dziedzictwo ziem północno-wschodnich dawnej Rzeczypospolitej, 4] (Białystok, 2005), 14–52.

³¹ *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XIV–XVI a.* = *The Lithuanian Catholic Clergy (14th–16th c.)* [LKD], ed. V. Ališauskas, T. Jaszczolt, L. Jovaiša, M. Paknys [Bažnyčios Istorijos Studijos, 2] (Vilnius, 2009). The first in-depth study of parish clergy is an unpublished Vilnius University doctoral dissertation: R. Bružaitė, *Vilniaus ir Žemaičių vyskupijų parapiinė dvasininkija XV–XVI a. trečiajame ketvirtyje* (Vilnius, 2012. Diss.).

main sections, namely the *Acta Acticantia*, which for the most part describe the procedural progress of cases, including those sent on appeal from other dioceses. Books 1–85 and 148 cover the period 1466–1528 (*Acta Cons. A*). Witness records are held in the series *Acta Cons. B*, *Depositiones testium*. However, the eight books dating from 1460 to 1531 contain only one Lithuanian case. Sentences (interlocutory and definitive) are recorded in a third series, *Acta Cons. C: Prolatarium sententiarum*, of which Book 3 (1491–1525) contains material relevant to late-medieval Lithuania³². No Lithuanian case appears in books in all three series. Several cases recorded in Series A do not appear in Series C and vice versa. Scribes refer to relevant material recorded elsewhere but cross-referencing these three series as they now stand does not support the truth of these claims, or at least prove them to be long out of date. However, the records of procedure and sentencing often complement one another. Thus we learn that an appellant was a priest only from the final sentence; in the case of the disappearance of 200 *sexagenae* (12,000 groats) from the money chest of a Vilnius cathedral chapel, this hardly ‘irrelevant’ detail is revealed solely in C3, whilst the procedures recorded doggedly in several books of Series A never mention the real essence of the matter, because it was understood to have been detailed elsewhere: the formula runs *in actis cause huiusmodi expressis*. In this respect the more primitive organisation of the Lutsk records rewards the curious modern reader more generously. The Lutsk books cover several centuries and provide the earliest surviving consistorial records from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.³³ The first book (Siedlce Archive D1) covers the period 1469–1516. The same book records the legal procedure, witness statements and often the final sentence. The series continues with certain gaps until the eighteenth century. This source is particularly important not only because the diocese was a missionary one with a mixed ethnic and religious population (of Orthodox Rus’ians, Baltic pagans and

³² See S. C. Rowell, ‘Church court records as evidence for the Christianisation of Lithuanian society in the late-fifteenth- and early-sixteenth century’, *Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis*, 29 (2014), 33–52.

³³ S. Litak, S. Lazar, ‘Materiały Archiwum Kurii Siedleckiej’, *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 7 (1958), 327–32.

Catholic immigrants mainly from other parts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Duchy of Mazovia) but also because similar records from the late-medieval and early-modern consistory courts of Vilnius and Medininkai were destroyed long ago by fire and war, and what material does survive does so scantily and only in later copies. From Lutsk we learn that tithe disputes involved clergymen disputing possession of a given tithe (there is no record of a priest suing a landowner for nonpayment, except where an estate owner chose to pay to a different parish), laymen would choose to litigate in church courts rather than before the grand duke's judges (especially in the case of fraternity disputes). The witnesses and litigants (of all classes) summoned before the court are recorded for the most part as having made their annual confession and taken Holy Communion. We learn in passing that the basic prayers (the Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles' Creed) were known in the vernacular and that sometimes this vernacular was Lithuanian. Parishioners denied Holy Communion sued their priest for being a thief (that is denying them access to what was rightfully theirs, given that they met the conditions demanded of communicants). It may be surprising (or disappointing) that there are no witch trials or accusations of Lithuanian pagan practice in any of this trial material.

The archive of the Diocese of Płock has two main holdings, namely the *Acta Officialatus Pultuscensis*, which are less relevant to Lithuanian cases, and *Acta Episcopalia*, which contain slightly more material. The only case from the Pułtusk official's court involves one Matthias Albas de Krasne, who obtained subdiaconal, diaconal and priestly orders at the hands of Bishop George of Medininkai in the cathedral of that town during the Ember Days of 1462 before returning to Pułtusk to obtain the living at Sławomierz. The ordination letters issued by the bishop were copied into the court record.³⁴ Disputes involving Mazovian priests serving in the Vilnius Diocese

³⁴ Archiwum Diecezjalne w Płocku [ADP], *Acta Officialatus Pultusk* 9/2/110 (1461–67, 1489), fos 57v–58v. 'Georgius Dei gratia episcopus Mednicensis, Significamus tenore presencium, quibus expedit generaliter universis, quomodo de anno ... sabbato Quatuor Temporum, quo in ecclesia Domini canitur laus... intret sacrosanctorum ordines solempniter ... in ipsa ecclesia Mednicensi tali discretum Mathiam de Crasne electum dyocesis Plocensis vita examinatum ydoneum repertum ad gradum subdiaconatus promotum...'

are recorded in the *Acta episcopalia* during the late 1480s and early sixteenth century.³⁵ These appear to be clergy who worked or at least held benefices in Lithuania but retained close ties with their home see, or at least their family in Płock.

The only dispute between laymen heard at the court of Bishop Erasm Ciołek, one time secretary to Grand Duke Alexander and canon of Vilnius, was a case involving the Marshall of the Grand Duchy Jan Janowicz Zabrzeziński and Hanula (Itamila) Krupska of the Nasuta family, widow of Feliks Krupski, a member of the Davaina clan in 1510. The pair had concluded a secret marriage in 1508, despite being related within the forbidden third and fourth degrees of kinship via Sudimantas³⁶. It seems that Ciołek was chosen as judge because of his acquaintance with the Lithuanian elite. He also heard an appeal brought by the Vilnius goldsmith Vincentius Stigel in 1508 against the canons of Vilnius, who had broken tradition by not allowing him to keep silver left over from the making of a statue they had commissioned.³⁷

The richest source of incidental detail on the gradual embedding of Catholic practice in Lithuanian social relations comes from the Sacred Penitentiary. The petitions are formulaic, especially those concerning marriages within prohibited degrees of consanguinity or affinity. Noble or burgher couples assert their ignorance of family relationships before marriage – hardly credible on the part of people most keen to maintain their family distinction. However, it is worth noting that almost all were made after the consummation and solemnisation of the marital bond and usually after the birth of a child. We may deduce that Christian marriage was firmly established in Lithuania and that people saw the importance in society of maintaining the rules – a marriage indult from Rome safeguarded the family against future attacks on its legitimacy. Similarly many priests contaminated by contact with blood or death applied for graces lest failure to do so might harm their future career. Laymen

³⁵ ADP, *Acta Episcopalia* 2 [10], 698 (30 October 1489).

³⁶ J. Tęgowski 'Ślub tajemny Jana Janowicza Zabrzezińskiego. Garść uwag o powiązaniach rodzinnych elity możnowładczej na Litwie w XV i początkach XVI wieku', *Średniowiecze Polskie i Powszechne* 2 (2002), 246–57.

³⁷ ADP, *Acta Episcopalia* 6/9, pp. 100–1, 114, 116.

and clerics alike were keen to protect their reputation from possible infamy or defamation, a crime judged in the Consistory courts.

From such documents we discover interesting snippets of information which are not unique or unusual in any way but illuminate what otherwise might be inferred only from comparison with foreign material and common Catholic practice. Thus in 1480 Fr Andrew of Kyna (Kaunas?) requested a declaration that he was guiltless of any involvement in the death of vagabonds who robbed a merchant on the road. His request was quite normal. Priests were forbidden to take any part in the spilling of blood even by being a witness or scribe before a court in a capital case. From his rather complicated report we learn not only how prosecutions were brought in fifteenth-century Lithuania, but also the role played by church institutions in the judicial process. Andrew's story reveals that after witnessing the robbery and murder of a merchant acquaintance he reported the incident to the deceased man's wife. The account was notarised and presented to grand-ducal officials, who attempted to apprehend the culprits. Unfortunately the latter escaped and sought sanctuary in a Bernardine friary (in Vilnius, Kaunas or Tykocin). The friars refused to hand the men over to the officials. However, in time the murderers left the house, were captured, tried and executed. It is clear that Lithuanians understood and respected sanctuary rights and this is no surprise in itself. Nevertheless this is the only Lithuanian case known from fifteenth-century sources.³⁸

³⁸ Vatican City, Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica [APA], Registra matrimonialium et diversorum, 30, fos 198v–199r (27 May 1481): 'Andreas de Kyna, diaconus Vilnensis diocesis, quod olim quidam laicus maritus cuiusdam Barbare, amicus ipsius exponentis, mulieris dicte diocesis in quodam itinere tunc constitutus a quibusdam hominibus laicis occisus bonisque mobilibus, que secum ducebat et habebat, spoliatus fuisset et deinde per aliquos menses post occasionem huiusmodi, quidam alius homo laicus, cuius nomen proprium ignoratur, asserens se scire predictos homines interfectores et spoliatores, eidem Barbare nuntiasset. Ipsa quandam pecunie quantitatem prefato homini, si sibi revelaret eosdem, donare promisit, prout etiam item homo promissione huiusmodi interveniente predictam Barbaram assumens ad locum quendam, in quo exponens prefatus \ tunc/ moram trahebat et familiares cuiusdam iudicis secularis iustitie dicti loci existebant, secum duxit eidemque duos homines quos ipsam suspicabatur fore prout erant dicti sui mariti interfectores bonorum predictorum spoliatores in eodem loco tunc existentes demonstravit. Et propterea dicta Barbara et homo prefatus illos cuidam notario publico doctori iustitie secularis interfectores predicti

In 1481 Mikalojus Kybartas sought a grace from the Penitentiary in order to marry. Whilst very sick and fearing imminent death he had made a promise (*in sua mente*, not, apparently openly) to God that if he survived, he would take holy orders. After recovery from his illness, Mikalojus changed his plans and desired to marry. The case is interesting not for the petitioners change of heart but for the fact that he took his *private* pledge seriously enough to go to the trouble and expense of obtaining a dispensation from Rome.³⁹

The number of requests from clergy and magnate and gentry laymen (male and female) for portable altars increases during the second half of the fifteenth century, a period that coincides with the

mariti et bonorum huiusmodi spoliatores fore revelarent et accusarent, et ipse homo se hoc probaturum, prout est moris dicte patrie, affirmans, accusationem huiusmodi fecit in prothocollum prefati notary notari et scribi. Deinde vero dicta Barbara procuras apud iudicem prefatum ut propterea idem homines caperent ac sentiens quod pro libito sue voluntatis, idem iudex diligentiam non adhiberet, prefatus exponens postea precibus ipsius Barbare amice sue compulsus prefatum iudicem ut eidem Barbare contra homines interfectores et spoliatores prefatos pro recuperatione bonorum predictorum et non propterea ut morirentur ministraret iusticiam sepius rogavit, prout etiam dictus iudex eosdem duos et quendam alium de premissis || suspectum tertium homines per quosdam officarios prefate iustitie ad instantiam prefate Barbare capi mandavit cumque capti ducerentur et nondum ad ipsius iudicis presentiam pervenissent manus ductorum suorum evaserent, seque (ad) quendam domum fratrum ordinis minorum de observantia nuncupatorium, quam postea idem exponens non tum propter premissa sed ex quadam alia causa adyt, transtulerunt, quique exponens videns eosdem homines in eadem domo existentes non propterea ut morirentur, ut prefertur, sed ut huiusmodi bona prefate Barbare restituerentur, dixit quibusdam fratribus dicte domus, quod illos non admitterent, quia interfectores et spoliatores bonorum antedictorum existebant; quiquidem fratres responderunt se hoc facere nolle, et propterea eos admiserunt. Et tandem i(i)dem homines, qui sponte et non compulsi a prefata domo recesserant non tum sollicitatione neque procuracione ipsius exponentis per quosdam prefati iudicis officarios iterata vice capti et suis exigentibus demeritis ultimo supplicio, ex quo dies suos clausurunt, eximere traditi fuerunt. Cum autem p(ater) s(ancte) dictus exponens de morte dictorum hominum valde doluit et doleat de presenti, et in eorum morte aliquomodo, ut premittitur, culpabilis non fuerit, auxilium, consilium vel favorem non prestiterit, ac cupiet suo clericali caractere uti et ad omnes etiam sanctos ordines promoveri et in eis prosequi promotus fuerit libere et licite ministrare possit, a nonnullis etc Quantus ipsorum premissorum occasione nullos homicidiorum reatus interesse nullamque irregularitatis maculam sive inhabilitationem notam contraxisset sed premissis non obstantibus dicto suo clericali caractere uti et ad omnes etiam sanctos ordines promoveri et in eis postquam promotus fuerit libere et licite alio sibi non obstante canonice ministrare posse declarari mandare dignemini, ut in forma fiat ut infra. Julius episcopus Brictoriensis regens.'

³⁹ Ibid., fo 197r.

growth in parish foundations (churches and chantries). Noblemen and burghers asked for various confession letters allowing them to select their own confessor (freeing them from the obligation to confess to their parish priest rather than a monk, private chaplain or priest of a different parish) and or obtain full absolution from their sins.

From indulgence texts we gain insights into parish devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in the form of processions and fashionable prayers and hymns. The popularity of eucharistic devotion outside the Mass is reflected in the Vilnius synodal decrees of 1528 which seek to restrict the number of churches offering such services out of fear lest familiarity breed contempt rather than devotion for the Sacrament (or rather, reduce the income of 'approved' centres). Indulgences promote both devout practice on the part of the laity and financial by-products for parish clergy (from visiting believers). They are not always cheap or easy to obtain.

Membership of parish fraternities christianised memorial of the dead and former pagan death feasting (*šermenys*). Lithuanian pilgrims to Rome or Cracow would become members of foreign fraternities too. Becoming a member of the Confraternity of the Holy Ghost of *Saxony* in Rome usually accompanied other pious activities such as a Holy Year pilgrimage or the obtaining of spiritual graces from the Sacred Penitentiary.⁴⁰

Over time even parish emoluments begin to reflect a deeper liturgical literacy – specifying which type of Mass the donor required (for his sins, for the dead of his family, in honour of the the Five Wounds or specific feasts of Our Lady). They also learned how to make the most of their Mass obligation on the chantry priest or parish priest by requiring particular collects for differing intentions (sins, well-being, death, and so on).

The partial inventory of parish liturgical treasures drawn up during the diocesan Visitation of autumn 1522 – a *sui generis* snapshot of the see of Vilnius on the 'eve' of the Reformation – reveals that by the first quarter of the sixteenth century parish churches in the diocese of Vilnius were well endowed and capable of celebrating the

⁴⁰ D. Baronas, 'Piligrimai iš Lietuvos – Romos Šv. Dvasios brolijos nariai 1492–1503 m.', *LKMA Metraštinis*, 38 (2014), 15–25.

liturgy in considerable pomp. The vestments of the diocesan priests who gathered in Vilnius in winter 1522 to welcome the papal legate Zaccharia dei Ferreri to the city impressed the nuncio greatly.⁴¹ However, the archbishop's comment in 1519 to the effect that the bishopric was chaotic and out of shape finds a certain degree of confirmation in the Inventory's revelation that of the 68 churches it records almost one third (23) were not consecrated. Quite why this was so remains unclear. Some of the unconsecrated foundations dated back more than a century; some had been rebuilt. To take the case of Žasliai, which the Visitor notes to have been unconsecrated, although it was well-endowed with two silver chalices, four good chasubles and a frontal and cope. According to the emolument charter issued in 1455–65 by Mykolas and Jonas, sons of the founder, Petras Načkus Ginvilaitis († 1455), the Church of the Nativity and Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, and Ss John the Baptist and Barbara had been dedicated and consecrated by Bishop Nicholas (1453–1467).⁴² Even so, there are parishes whose church was consecrated within a year or two of foundation. It is not known whether the priests in charge of these churches had obtained a license from the bishop to allow them to use unconsecrated buildings. Certainly judging by the inventory they were not bereft of liturgical equipment. Half a century or two generations later this same problem was noted in the Žemaitijan Visitation records of 1579, although here we should take account of the disruption in parish life caused by the Protestant reformation. For example the church at Kaltinėnai was unconsecrated, while it was unclear whether the building at Ariogala was consecrated or not.⁴³ The Visitor had been instructed to require that the priest of an unconsecrated church obtain from his patron the papal indult permitting Mass to be celebrated in the building and ensure that it be consecrated within three months; if this should be impossible, the priest was to obtain such letters

⁴¹ *Acta Nunciaturae Polonae*, vol. II: *Zacharias Ferreri (1519–1521) et nuntii minores (1522–1553)*, ed. H. D. Wojtyśka CP (Rome, 1992).

⁴² R. Petrauskas, 'Didikas ir patronas: LDK diduomenės bažnytinės fundacijos XV a.', *Šviesa ir šešėliai Lietuvos evangelizacijos istorijoje = Light and Shadows in the History of Lithuania's Evangelisation*, ed. J. Boruta, V. Vaivada (Vilnius, 2011), 177.

⁴³ *Žemaičių vyskupijos vizitacija (1579) = Visitatio dioecesis Samogitiae (A.D. 1579)*, ed. L. Jovaiša, J. Tumelis (Vilnius, 1998), 214, 62.

within three months.⁴⁴ It should also be noted that in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries many churches in the diocese of Cracow were also unconsecrated.⁴⁵

How far Mass texts were available to laymen in the Grand Duchy is difficult to know. We do have at least two curious pointers in this direction. A manuscript preserved (as war booty) in the Synodal Library in Moscow contains a Ruthenian translation of a Marian Mass, probably the *Salve, Sancta Parens*, popular in the Grand Duchy at the end of the fifteenth century and a Cyrillic transcription of a Latin Mass produced in a 'pronouncable' version, that is separate words of the text are often run together into one sound-bite which reflects the way in which the text is said rather than an orthographically correct version. Julia Verkholtantsev suggests that these texts were produced in the Kleparz Convent in Cracow, which was established to abet the Lithuanian Mission at the end of the fourteenth century.⁴⁶

When all this ephemeral data from sources which have been used little by Lithuanian historians (church trials, indulgences, supplications, lists of liturgical vessels and vestments) is collated with emoluments the overriding impression we have of religious life in Lithuania by the end of the fifteenth century is vibrantly Catholic. The religious dynamic increases particularly during the last two decades of the fifteenth century. This picture of zeal, modishness and lack of effective central control marks the vulnerability of the Catholic Church in Lithuania which would lead to the Reformation when the local hierarchy was unable or unwilling to meet the the spiritual demands of their (radical) flock.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Another perceived 'weakness' of the Lithuanian Church is a shortage of clergy who could speak Lithuanian: Paknys 'Ankstyvasis LDK', 99–101. Similar complaints were made in the diocese of Cracow (regarding German and Polish, presumably): E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce: Struktura i funkcje społeczne* (Lublin, 2004), 159–61; the 1512 Statutes of the Archdiocese of Gniezno require parish priests who cannot speak the local language to hire a curate who can communicate in that tongue: *Kościół w Polsce. Średniowiecze*, ed. J. Kłoczowski (Cracow, 1968), 282.

⁴⁶ J. Verkholtantsev, *Ruthenica Bohemica: Ruthenian Translations from Czech in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania* [*Slavische Sprachgeschichte*, 3] (Vienna–Berlin, 2008), 45–51.

Tepid Beginnings and the First Martyrs: Adalbert-Wojciech and Bruno of Querfurt

Geographical lore about the Balts in the first millennium AD

The medieval ancestors of present-day Lithuanians and Latvians would have been surprised had some scholarly expert been able to come back in time to them and told them, ‘You are the Balts, people who share a common and yet distinct culture from the Lower Vistula to the upper reaches of the Nemunas River and down to the mouth of the Daugava’. In contrast to ancient pedigrees of Germanic or Slavic designations, the Balts were given their generic name only in the nineteenth century when owing to advances in philological studies it became imperative to distinguish a family of Indo-European languages that was neither Slavic nor Finno-Ugrian. It was the German scholar Georg H. F. Nesselmann who in 1845 suggested designating the languages of Old Prussians, Lithuanians and Latvians as *baltisch* (Ger., ‘Baltic’).¹ Since then this term came to stick and now its application goes far beyond the mere philological concerns of a small group of linguists. It plays its glorious role in promoting more cordial relations between Lithuanians and Latvians and helps to save from oblivion no longer extant Baltic tribes: Old Prussians, Curonians, Yatvingians, Semgallians and others.

From time immemorial the Balt tribes lived close to the Baltic Sea in lands covered with pristine forests, traversed by medium-sized

¹ For different shades of the meaning of ‘Baltic’, see E. Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past: A Cultural History of the Baltic People* (Budapest–New York, 1999), 6–12.

rivers and a myriad of streams, and rich in bogs and marshes.² It was mainly the proximity to the sea that made the contacts with the outside world more viable. The two great East European rivers, the Vistula and the Daugava, provided good means of river traffic, but, in a broad brush, they more framed than crossed the lands of the Balt tribes. So those who lived closer to the sea and on the banks of conveniently navigable rivers were most easily accessible. They were also the first who came to notice and the first who, sadly enough, were to succumb to the pressures of newcomers when the latter had the will and enough power to outweigh local resources of resistance.

It would be to take too low a start to begin our story from times immemorial, to wit from the times that are accessible mainly to archaeologists. Nor is it any better to start with Romans in the first centuries AD, but we think it is worth the attempt to give at least a shorthand guide as these were the centuries when Romans came to see the barbarians living along the northern seas better than ever before.³ They saw them or heard of them, and left the testimony of their knowledge in a written form, a medium which gave them a major advantage over their faraway neighbours who lacked the means of written communication – a soft medium but not infrequently more durable than stone...

It is hardly accidental that the tribes sitting on the shores of the Baltic Sea came first to be reported quite extensively at the time when the Roman Empire reached the peak of its territorial expansion under Trajan (98–117). No less a figure than Tacitus included in his description of Germania (98 AD) the faraway tribes and some of them may be assumed to have belonged to the Balts. According

² For the medieval and early modern image of Lithuania as a land of forests and marshes, see K. Gudmantas, “Miškų ir pelkių kraštas”. Keletas pastabų apie Lietuvos įvaizdį XIII–XVII a. raštijoje’, *Inter-Studia Humanitatis*, 7 (2008), 94–113.

³ It is possible that some Roman merchants used to sail along the Baltic shores reaching beyond the estuary of the Vistula. J. Kolendo, ‘Central Europe and the Mediterranean world in the 1st–5th centuries A.D.’, *Origins of Central Europe*, ed. P. Urbańczyk (Warsaw, 1997), 13. One Roman *equus* certainly reached the amber coast during the reign of Nero. This Roman expedition was the first to reach the Baltic littoral by going through Central Europe. For more on this expedition, mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his *Historia Naturalis*, see J. Kolendo, *A la recherche de l’ambre baltique: L’expédition d’un chevalier romain sous Neron* (Warsaw, 1981).

to him, the *Aestiorum gentes* lived along the 'right-hand' shore of the Baltic Sea: then to convey the idea of their character in a most comprehensible fashion was to say that their clothes were like those of the (Germanic) Suebes, and their language was closer to that of the Britons. They worshipped the mother of gods, they sported the protective talisman of wild-boar instead of arms, being confident in its protective qualities even in the midst of enemies.⁴ They used to collect amber on the shore that was reportedly given value only through the Roman desire to obtain this lucid material fit for personal ornaments and public displays. As if to anticipate modern sensitivities, Tacitus remarked that the Aestians tended to till their fields more patiently than lazy Germans.⁵

The Roman legions stationed on the northern banks of the Danube, in the province of Dacia, were poised in the second century AD to extend the Roman *humanitas* further north at the expense of the rough and rude *barbaricum*. Under Marcus Aurelius (161–180) they

⁴ The notion of weaponless barbarians is too romantic to be taken at face value. It is also at odds with archaeological finds. R. Banytė-Rowell, 'Romėnų įtakos ir baltų kultūrų klestėjimo laikotarpis', *Lietuvos istorija*, vol. 2: *Geležies amžius*, ed. G. Zabiela (Vilnius, 2007), 130. However, it is possible to surmise that here we have to do with a reference to a phenomenon of the so-called 'naked warriors'. J. Banaszkiwicz, 'Nadzy wojownicy' – o średniowiecznych pogłoskach dawnego rytu wojskowego (Prokopiusz z Cezarei, Paweł Diakon, Girald z Walii, Sakso Gramatyk i Gall Anonim)', *Człowiek, Sacrum, Środowisko: Miejsca kultu we wczesnym średniowieczu*, ed. S. Moździoch [*Spotkania Bytomskie*, 4] (Wrocław, 2000), 11–25. However marginal a position it might have assumed in the barbarian warfare of the Aesti, this feature was given pride of place by the more civilized author.

⁵ Tacitus, *Germania*, Chapter 45. The contrast drawn between the Germanic tribes and the *Aesti* can hardly allow one to suppose that Tacitus thought of the Aestians as one of Germanic tribes, as some scholars would like us to believe: Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past*, 30. It is true that Tacitus included the lands of the *Aesti* within the confines of the Germanic world, but this was done in cultural, not ethnic terms: A. Bitner-Wróblewska, *From Samland to Rogaland: East-West Connections in the Baltic Basin during the Early Migration Period* (Warsaw, 2001), 124. The term *Aesti* should by no means be viewed as an exceptional property of the Balts, as it could encompass the Baltic Finno-Ugrians and perhaps other tribes of the forest zone as well. There is a vast amount of literature dealing with the etymology of the word *Aesti*. Initially, a version of Germanic origins was preferred, and now the Baltic origin of the term seems to enjoy the upper hand (cf. *ibid.*, 104–6). Deriving from the stem **aist-*, the term, according to Simas Karaliūnas, means 'people belonging to the shore, bank, land, soil'. This scholar has recently produced the most extensive in-depth study on this topic. S. Karaliūnas, *Baltų praeitis istoriniuose šaltiniuose*, 2 (Vilnius, 2005), 11–187.

camped on the soil of the present-day Slovakia. It was a praiseworthy custom on the part of responsible Roman statesmen to collect information on their prospective subjects living as yet still beyond the Roman *imperium*. It was not likely a mere whim of fortune that it was at this time Ptolemy supplied his readers with the most up-to-date information about the shores of the Baltic Sea and the tribes living there.⁶

Dreams or even mere propaganda relative to further Roman conquests were shelved in the wake of the third-century crisis, and after it had been overcome largely thanks to the last great pagan emperor Diocletian, the defence of the *limes*, and not its expansion, came to be Roman top priority. It was a messy business, as neither the Romans nor the barbarians were able or even eager to defeat each other decisively, so a kind of a symbiosis was set in place. The Roman emperors used to display their qualities as *domitores gentium*, but in essence the Romans needed the barbarians to supplement their own dwindling manpower. In their turn, the aspiring newcomers needed the Roman Empire to show off the Roman insignia of authority and prestige amidst their kin and kith. Even the barbarian vocabulary of power and authority was largely derived from the Roman treasure trove of imperial imagery.⁷ Although these matters are quite well explored in scholarship in Western European languages, the discussions have largely omitted the barbarians further east, who happened to be neither Germanic nor Slavic. Nevertheless, the influence of the Roman Empire in terms of imported goods (ornaments and coins, mostly of bronze) is well attested in the archaeological finds of the Baltic barbarians.⁸ We may surmise that such ornaments were used for display and served as a means of concentrating local sources of power in the hands of the 'grandee' families.

⁶ Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past*, 75–6; A. Bitner-Wróblewska, 'The key problems of Late Migrations Period in the Balt lands', *Transformatio Mundi: The Transition from the Late Migration Period to the Early Viking Age in the East Baltic*, ed. M. Bertašius (Kaunas, 2006), 10–11; W. Nowakowski, 'Retrospekcja w archeologii: Galindai/Galinditae oraz Soudinoi/Sudavitae w świetle źródeł historycznych i znalezisk archeologicznych', *Studia Galindzkie*, 1 (2003), 7–12.

⁷ G. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568* (Cambridge, 2007), 150, 160–1, 369, 489–91.

⁸ Banytė-Rowell, 'Romėnų įtakos', 62–5, 72–4, 102–113.

Despite all setbacks, Roman emperors sought to save their empire. It goes without saying that this concern was inherited by Christian emperors. By legalizing the Christian Church Constantine the Great contributed heavily to its well-being by showering it with his imperial largesse.⁹ The networks of imperial patronage had also played their role in securing more converts for the new faith.¹⁰ It is trivial but true to say that by doing so he and his successors invested into an enterprise that survived the shipwreck of the Western Roman Empire and that, as if by default, became the inheritor of the Romano-Christian civilization. Starting with the sixth century, the most viable sources of civilization were to be found beyond the Alps as exemplified by the realms of the Merovingians, and still more vigorously later by the Carolingians. The North Sea assumed the role akin to that of the Mediterranean centuries before in making contact and the spread of the Word possible in north-western Europe.¹¹ The collapse of the western part of the Roman Empire and the resulting rise of the Barbarian ‘successor kingdoms’ did lead to the blurring of the divide between the civilized and the barbarian. By the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries the latter in Europe became tantamount to the pagan, and this usage continued well into the Middle Ages.¹²

The level of knowledge of the Baltic demonstrated by Ptolemy subsided for a long while, but this portion of the continent did not disappear from the stage altogether. There are sporadic and casual pieces of information. In the eyes of Jordanes, the Aesti represented predominantly peaceful tribes who in c. 375 were subjugated by

⁹ R. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity 371–1386 AD* (London, 1998), 19–22. More specifically, K. M. Girardet, *Die Konstantinische Wende* (Darmstadt, 2006), 41–56ff. On the problems related to the so-called Edict of Milan and the significance of the events of 312, see K. M. Girardet, ‘Verfolgt–geduldet–anerkannt: die Situation der Christen in diokletianisch-konstantinischer Zeit (303 bis 313)’, *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, 108 (2013), 171–91.

¹⁰ Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 100.

¹¹ P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000* (Oxford, 2004, 2nd edition), 434–52, 463–7.

¹² W. R. Jones, ‘The image of the Barbarian in medieval Europe’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 13 (1971), 388.

Ermanaric, the king of the Ostrogoths.¹³ As such tribal *regna* were far from permanent, the nature of the Gothic rule over East European tribes is a moot point, and perhaps is best described as some sort of a more or less loose state of dependence.¹⁴ This is not to deny the impact of the migration of the Goths all the way from the Lower Vistula to the Black Sea steppes, which certainly caused some upheaval among the Baltic tribes.¹⁵ Presumably, no less upheaval must have been caused by the Hunnic raiders who, after invading Eastern Europe in 375, ranged far and wide for more than half a century. Archaeological investigations in present-day Lithuanian territory have brought to light a number of nomadic-specific three-winged arrowheads: they lay in the traces of fires on hill-forts, or even were stuck in the remains of people buried in burial grounds.¹⁶ If left not by the Huns themselves, they certainly bear witness to the raids of people from the south who bore the nomadic style weapons.¹⁷

Despite all the turmoil in the era of migration of peoples, some trade with the southern regions of the European continent continued and some memories of the trade in amber lingered. The best proof to this is a letter of the Ostrogothic king Theoderic to the *Hesti* (523–526).¹⁸ The latter ethnonym sounds much like Tacitus's *Aesti*, and although many scholars assume the *Hesti* to refer to the Balts, it

¹³ 'Jordanis Romana et Getica', ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH AA*, V (Berlin, 1882), 63 (5.36); 89 (23.120). On the tradition of Ermanaric, see P. Heather, 'Gens and Regnum among the Ostrogoths', *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, W. Pohl (Leiden–Boston, 2003), 90–3, R. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Cologne–Graz, 1961), 471.

¹⁴ Cf. R. H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tr. T. J. Dunlap (Berkeley–Los Angeles, 1988), 86–9.

¹⁵ Cf. V. N. Toporov, 'Galindy v Zapadnoi Evrope', *Balto-Slavianskie Issledovaniia 1982* (1983), 129–38, Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past*, 109, Bitner-Wróblewska, 'The key problems', 1–13, Wolfram, *History*, 41, 235.

¹⁶ V. Kazakevičius, *Plinkaigalio kapinynas* [*Lietuvos Archeologija*, 10] (Kaunas, 1993), 79–80.

¹⁷ A. Bitner-Wróblewska, B. Kontny, 'Controversy about three-leaf arrowheads from Lithuania', *Archaeologia Lituana*, 7 (2006), 119.

¹⁸ 'Cassiodori Senatoris Variae', ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH AA*, XII (Berlin, 1894), 143–4, Wolfram, *History*, 317. On this collection of letters see A. Gillett, 'The Purposes of Cassiodorus' *Variae*', *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. A. C. Murray (Toronto, 1998), 37–50.

is far from certain to be the case in this particular instance. Amber is found from Jutland to the Sambian peninsula, and the label of *Aestii* could well have been attached to Germanic as well as Baltic, or even Finno-Ugrian tribes.¹⁹ With the arrival of the Avars at the end of the sixth century, the amber routes were sealed for good. The more introspective nature of the Mediterranean world is evident from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*: here the lands of the Balts are lost out of sight somewhere at the juncture of *Germania* and *Scythia Barbarica*, in the vicinity of the Hyperborean and Riphaen mountains.²⁰

The amber routes came to revive only after Charlemagne had destroyed the Avar chaganate late in the eighth century²¹. This was also the period of time when the history of the Baltic tribes became somewhat more transparent. A couple of sources provided references to the Aesti. Einhard just mentioned them (*Aisti*) in the life of Charlemagne (c. 833–836).²² *Geographus Bavarus* gave the first record of Prussians (*Bruzi*).²³ Although cursory, these notices represented, as it were, the break of silence after a couple of centuries. The empire revived in the West by Charlemagne was willing and able to overcome tribal particularism and to promote universalist claims by means of expansion, not infrequently hand in hand with preaching and sword.²⁴

Among these early sources the place of prime can justly be assigned to the account produced by the Anglo-Saxon merchant Wulfstan, who at the very end of the ninth century sailed to the

¹⁹ Cf. Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past*, 104–6.

²⁰ Cf. Isidoro di Siviglia, *Etimologie o origini*, ed. A. V. Canale, II (Torino, 2008), 184, 220–2 (Lib. XIV, cap. IV (3) and cap. VIII (7)).

²¹ M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300–900* (Cambridge, 2001), 369–75.

²² 'Einhardi vita Karoli imperatoris' ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH SS*, II (Hanover, 1828), 449.

²³ *MPH*, ed. A. Bielowski, I (Lviv, 1864), 11. For the dating of this description to 830s–840s, see H. Łowmiański, 'O pochodzeniu Geografa Bawarskiego', *Roczniki Historyczne*, 20 (1955), 36–7, 52–3.

²⁴ L. E. von Padberg, 'Unus populus ex diversis gentibus. Gentilismus und Einheit im früheren Mittelalter', *Der Umgang mit dem Fremden in der Vormoderne: Studien zur Akkulturation in bildungshistorischer Sicht*, ed. C. Lüth, R. W. Keck, E. Wiersing (Cologne, 1997), 155–93; Fletcher, *Conversion*, 194–5; A. Barbero, *Charlemagne: Father of a Continent*, tr. A. Cameron (Berkeley–Los Angeles, 2004), 43–9.

Baltic Sea on the orders of King Alfred (848–899) and reported back on the tribes clustered along its shores. His information was preserved in the updated Anglo-Saxon version of Orosius's *Historiarum adversus paganos libri septem*.²⁵ Curious people in the British Isles came to know by empirical experience that the Aesti (*Ēstum*) lived at the eastern end of the Baltic Sea, just beyond the Vistula River. Wulfstan was presumably the first traveller ever to have set his inquiring gaze on the Prussians and to have described some of their customs: their kings and nobles would drink mare's milk (to wit *kumis*), while the poor and the slaves were accustomed to mead. There was a lot of warfare among them. The richer the dead, the longer his funeral rites continued: feasts and games could last for weeks and months, after that the rest of his wealth was distributed among the winners of horse races. Only then the deceased was ready to be consigned to flames. In order to preserve their dead for so long in tolerable condition, some kin groups of the Aesti were in possession of a secret lore to produce cold, be it winter or summer. We are told that some remnants of this freezing technique were still available in the early modern period.²⁶

Despite the fact that Wulfstan was presumably the first man to have bequeathed to posterity the first-hand knowledge of the Baltic pagans, the true 'discoverer' of the Baltic world was Canon Adam of Bremen.²⁷ With his *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesie pontificum* Adam supplied us with first-rate information on the progress of Christianity in the then far north.²⁸ Book 4 – 'On the northern islands' – is

²⁵ *King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of the Compendious History of the World by Orosius*, ed. J. Bosworth (London, 1859), 22 and 50. There is an opinion that the Aesti may have been mentioned in the somewhat earlier poem of Widsith under the guise of *Íste*. See S. Karaliūnas, *Baltų praeitis istoriniuose šaltiniuose*, 2 (Vilnius, 2005), 113–15.

²⁶ *BRMS*, vol. I: *Nuo seniausių laikų iki XV amžiaus pabaigos*, ed. N. Vėlius (Vilnius, 1996), 165.

²⁷ N. Blomkvist, *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (AD 1075–1225)* (London–Boston, 2005), 5–6.

²⁸ For the problems related to the transmission of the text, for the way Adam of Bremen saw the 'other', see V. Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde: Identität und Fremdheit in den Chroniken Adams von Bremen, Helmolds von Bosau und Arnolds von Lübeck* (Berlin, 2002) and D. Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden: Vorstellungen und Fremdkategorien bei Rimbart, Thietmar von Merseburg, Adam von Bremen und Helmold von Bosau* (Berlin, 2005), with references to further literature.

particularly important.²⁹ In it, Adam lavishes his attention on the Prussians living in the ‘vicinity of Rus’ians and Poles’. The Prussians from the Samland peninsula were singled out for special praise: they were ever ready to come to rescue shipwrecked merchants. Adam of Bremen seems to have wanted to give a special lesson to his intended audience by drawing their attention to the Prussian ability to stay immune to the pernicious influence of gold, silver and precious furs – the things whose baleful influence had so lamentably permeated Western consumers.³⁰ In more general terms, Adam tended to regard Prussians as most humane northerners, except for their vicious inclination to persecute Christians who dared to come too close to their sacred sites.³¹

Precious metals and furs help us to appreciate why travellers and traders from warmer climes risked life and limb to approach the tribes who, according to ancient lore, inhabited a most inhospitable seventh zone of the *oikumene*.³² It was far more important to know about trade goods than to enquire about barbarian tribes and their manifold names. It is no coincidence that the Romans first came to know of amber and only then of some *Aestiorum gentes*.³³ In time, people also came to be of some interest. As regards the Slavs, Balts and those Finno-Ugrians who were still within reach, they all tended to fall within the purview of traders interested not only in furs, but also in slaves. The demand for slaves was alive and well in Carolingian and even more so in Muslim lands.³⁴ There was no need for Christian or Muslim merchants to come so far to the north to avail themselves of slaves. This job was done largely by

²⁹ ‘Magistri Adam Bremensis Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae’, ed. B. Schmeidler, *MGH SRGUS* (Hanover–Leipzig, 1917), 226–80.

³⁰ The use of the image of humane barbarians was, of course, not unique to Adam of Bremen. Cf. Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*, 255; Scior, *Das Eigene*, 215–16. On the other hand, the same Adam of Bremen could qualify the Curonians, the neighbours of the Prussians, as the *gens crudelissima*: ‘Magistri Adam Bremensis Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae’, 244.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 245–6.

³² *Źródła arabskie do dziejów słowiańszczyzny*, ed. T. Lewicki, I (Wrocław–Cracow, 1956), 195–7.

³³ Cf. Kolendo, *A la recherche*, 75ff.

³⁴ E. Flaig, *Weltgeschichte der Sklaverei* (Munich, 2009).

local chieftains (we recall the many wars attested by Wulfstan)³⁵ or Scandinavian Vikings who were virtually unsurpassed in their semi-piratic activities that were equally well geared up to conduct trade and low-intensity warfare. Precious furs and slaves could well be exchanged into ready cash – Arabic dirhams.³⁶ These goods constituted one of the main export commodities from Eastern Europe.³⁷ As has been established long ago, the main reservoir of such slaves was the pagan lands of the Slavs. We simply have to add that the Baltic lands were also part and parcel of the same slave-supply system.

First Christian impulses

From time to time this rather gloomy context served as a background for more eventful and diverse encounters between the members of different tribes: those eager to subdue, and those eager to chase away intruders.³⁸ Like Western Europe, so Eastern European tribes had to deal with one big nuisance in the form of Scandinavian Vikings. It is known that from the ninth century onwards the Danes

³⁵ Traffic in slaves may have started in Central Lithuania in as early as the first centuries AD and probably continued throughout the Early Middle Ages. Cf. M. Bertašius, *Vidurio Lietuva VIII–XII a.* (Kaunas, 2002), 24, 65. It must be noted that recent geological research has revealed that the actual mouth of the river Nemunas formed only from about AD 900. Prior to that this river ran along its original bed up to Rambynas Hill (now in the Kaliningrad District), then turned south along the bed of the Pregel river to the Vistula Lagoon. For more on this and on the significance of the Nemunas River as a trade artery in the first millennium AD, see V. Žulkus, ‘The lower reaches of the Nemunas (Memel) and Prieglius (Pregel)’, *Transformatio mundi: The Transition from the Late Migration Period to the Early Viking Age in the East Baltic*, ed. M. Bertašius (Kaunas, 2006), 17–19.

³⁶ See *Źródła arabskie*, 69 (excerpt from Ibn Hurdadbeh’s (†912/913) treatise *Kitab al-Masalik Va’l-Mamalik*).

³⁷ For more on this, see McCormick, *Origins*, 759–76. In contrast to other Baltic rim countries, where finds of Arabic dirham are counted in thousands, the territory of present-day Lithuania has so far revealed only some 650 dirhams from fifteen hoards: T. S. Noonan, ‘Dirham hoards from medieval Lithuania’, *JBS*, 23 (1992), 395–414.

³⁸ This was, of course, not the only mode of interaction. Far-reaching trade and intermarriage contacts among the elites of distant areas have also been attested. See, for example, Bitner-Wróblewska, *From Samland to Rogaland*, 87–8, 121–4.

became increasingly interested in the eastern parts of the Baltic Sea, and soon some of them settled in certain Prussian maritime trading outposts.³⁹ In about 853 they tried to expand their rule further to the north-east to reach the Curonian tribes who enjoyed then a span of freedom from Swedish interference. The invading Danes were beaten sorely, but by doing so the Curonians invited the Swedes eager to make a name for themselves where the Danes had miserably failed. After capturing the fort accessible from the sea by ships (*Seeburg*, now Grobiņa)⁴⁰, the Swedes proceeded on foot further inland to reach the well-manned stronghold of Apuolė (*Apulia*), which offered stiff resistance. The battle raged for eight days from dawn to dusk. The Swedes seemed on the brink of losing heart as they discovered that no god was predisposed to help them. However, their host included not only warriors, but also merchants, who advised them to call on Christian God, whom a holy man, St Anskar, had preached to them.⁴¹ After invoking this God, the Swedes regained their fighting spirit. It was now, unsurprisingly, the defenders' turn to lose heart and offer terms of surrender. The terms were generous, but even they could hardly calm down the hot-heads among the Swedish young, and finally only thanks to the sound advice of Olaf (*Oleph*) and his senior men that no more blood was shed. After taking booty and hostages, the Swedes returned home full of praise for Christ (*quod vere magnus super omnes deos esset*).⁴² Had it not been for this timely and effec-

³⁹ W. Duczko, *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe [The Northern World. North Europe and the Baltic c. 400–1700 AD. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 12]* (Leiden–Boston, 2004), 113. Their activities in the southeastern corner of the Baltic Sea are attested better in written sources from the tenth century onwards. Cf. A. Mickevičius, *Normanai ir baltai IX–XII a.* (Vilnius, 2004), 113–16.

⁴⁰ B. Nerman, *Grobin–Seeburg: Ausgrabungen und Funde* (Stockholm, 1958).

⁴¹ *Vita Anskarii auctore Rimberto. Accedit vita Rimberti*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRGUS* (Hannoverae, 1884) 60–2. On the activities of St Anskar in Scandinavian countries, see W. Seegrün, *Das Papsttum und Skandinavien bis zur Vollendung der nordischen Kirchenorganisation (1164)* (Neumünster, 1967), 23–37.

⁴² This turn of events had to validate what was being discussed in the general council (*Thing*) of Swedes in 852. Cf. W. Lammers, 'Formen der Mission bei Sachsen, Schweden und Abotriten', idem, *Vestigia Mediaevalia: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur mittelalterlichen Historiographie, Landes- und Kirchengeschichte [Frankfurter Historische Abhandlungen, 19]* (Wiesbaden, 1979), 182–8.

tive advice on the part of the Christian merchants, Rimbert, the biographer of St Anskar, most likely would not have mentioned such goings-on among the barbarians.⁴³ However, thanks to this we have the first written evidence of Christian influence that could be carried not only by missionary men, but by merchants as well. Such a joint-venture would be a phenomenon recognizable in centuries to come.

The Swedish rule over the Curonians remained, if at all, precarious, as most of their energies found outlet along the great East European rivers, such as the Volkhov, the Volga, and, understandably, the Dnieper.⁴⁴ The Norsemen in Eastern Europe were engaged busily in building a new power structure that was historiographically, albeit somewhat misleadingly, known as Kievan Rus'. Stretching from the north to the south along the river routes by the early tenth century the Riurikid clan finally found a focal point in Kiev.⁴⁵ A superb site on easily defensible hills along the Dnieper, it also served well as a point of control over the land route stretching along the east-west axis.⁴⁶ From this base the Rus made their 'rounds' to gather tribute from Slavs, Balts, and Finno-Ugrians. With the coming of spring they marshalled their fleets bound to Constantinople.⁴⁷ As described by

⁴³ Cf. D. Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*, 220–4.

⁴⁴ Cf. B. Nerman, *Die Verbindungem zwischen Skandinavien und dem Ostbaltikum in der jüngeren Eisenzeit* (Stockholm, 1929), 49–53, 162–4 and Mickevičius, *Normanai ir baltai*, 112. See also S. Franklin, J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus, 750–1200* (London–New York, 1996), 9. Duczko, *Viking Rus*, 86. The Scandinavian presence on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea is best attested by material excavated at such ports of trade as Truso, Kaup-Wiskiauty, Palanga, and Grobiņa. The Scandinavian penetration deeper inland to the territories of present-day Lithuania and Western Belarus is a more complicated matter. On the multiethnic composition of population at the confluence of the Nemunas and Neris rivers, see Bertašius, *Vidurio Lietuva*, 128, 208. On the Scandinavian presence in the upper reaches of the Nemunas see p. 49 n. 101.

⁴⁵ Franklin, Shepard, *The Emergence*, 107–11.

⁴⁶ On the importance of east-west trade route, see A. V. Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh: Mezhdistsiplinarnye ocherki kul'turnykh, torgovykh, politicheskikh svyazei IX–XII vekov* (Moscow, 2001), 71–121. J. Žemlička, 'Dux "Boemorum" und rex Boemie im mitteleuropäischen Wettstreit (nicht nur aus tschechischen Sicht gesehen)', *Böhmen und seine Nachbarn in der Přemyslidenzeit*, ed. I. Hlaváček, A. Patschovsky (Ostfildern, 2011), 94–5.

⁴⁷ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, R. J. H. Jenkins [*Dumbarton Oaks Texts*, I. *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, I] (Washington DC, 1967, n. e. 2006), 56–62.

Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, this annual routine looks trivial and monotonous, but its repetitive nature suggests the determination with which the Riurikids and their men were engaged in their exercise of power: to subject those whom it was possible to subject, and push, as far as possible, outsiders out of the way. Their raw force was not their only option at hand as collaboration with the local population had also played its part. The most significant, no doubt, was collaboration with Slavic tribes who by then constituted the majority of the population in the middle Dnieper region.⁴⁸ As their numbers were on the rise and their language constituted the *lingua franca*, it was all too natural that from the second half of the tenth century their Norse overlords went ever more native in their social and linguistic milieu. Protection by the Norse and tribute to them from the Slavs proved to be a working solution. This, of course, was not due to some specifically Slavic features, because much the same routes of seeking protection and fortune were also taken by those groups of the Balts who migrated, for example, from their more southerly regions to Staraja Ladoga further north once this site became operative as a hub of long-distance trade. This was certainly not an isolated instance.⁴⁹

Such behaviour is viewed by scholarly literature as state formation. The very vastness of Eastern Europe, the limits of manpower, or simply the lack of will to tap in resources where the input of energy might yield too trifling returns – all this means that in the tenth and eleventh centuries there were vast swaths of territory still beyond

⁴⁸ Although the literature on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs is very vast, there are still many moot points regarding the dating and the process by which the Slavs disseminated in that northern part of Eastern Europe which prior to their arrival was occupied by the Balts and Finno-Ugrians. The Slavs seem to have penetrated the Pripiat' marshes from the south in the eighth century: C. Goehrke, U. Kälin, *Frühzeit des Ostslawentums* (Darmstadt, 1992), 33–4. The Slavic colonization in the forest zone further north-east is tangible by the ninth century: P. M. Barford, *The Early Slavs: Culture and Society in Early Medieval Eastern Europe* (Ithaca–New York, 2001), 102. With the formation of Kievan Rus' there comes another additional aspect of colonization – the resettlement of Slavic speakers from the south to the present-day territory of Belarus: *ibid.*, 149.

⁴⁹ Franklin, Shepard, *The Emergence*, 14–5, 46–7, 128, 140.

the control of the Riurikid clan.⁵⁰ New and unexpected departures were still feasible there: the arrival of newcomers and challenges in the form of a new religion might well lead to changes in the then usual constellation of power relations.

The tenth century was a great age for the expansion of Christianity in Central-Eastern Europe. Thanks to the conversion of the Balkan countries, of Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, there came into being a region that may rightly be called a 'New Christendom' or 'Younger Europe'.⁵¹ Kievan Rus' should certainly be included, as its adoption of the Greek rite (c. 988) was no less European than its western neighbours. The new polities in this part of Europe came into being relatively quickly and proved to be more or less durable formations. The Christian faith had certainly made a positive contribution to the formation and legitimisation of monarchical order in these newly-converted countries – a process that is largely tantamount to state formation.⁵² Thus the state-organised societies and Christianity came to coincide. Where there was no Christianity, there was, as a rule, no state and the pagan tribes continued in their old ways, being exposed, from time to time, to temptations to convert to one jealous God. Such initiatives would come from the neighbouring Christian countries.

One such early attempt to convert the Old Prussians came from Bolesław the Brave of Poland who found an enthusiast in the person of Bishop St Adalbert of Prague. His was a colourful personality: as bishop of Prague he did not cleave too much to the decorum of his office, hence his readiness in the dead of the night to clean the shoes of the courtiers of Otto II (973–983). As a missionary, he was rash

⁵⁰ On the expansion of Rus', see A. N. Nasonov, «Russkaia zemlia» i obrazovanie territorii Drevnerusskogo gosudarstva: Istoriko-geograficheskoe issledovanie (Moscow, 1951). D. B. Miller, 'The many frontiers of pre-Mongol Rus', *Russian History*, 19 (1992), 232, 236–7. On the presence of the Norse rivals to the Riurikids, see Duczko, *Viking Rus*, 126–7. The presence of would-be 'kings' was certainly not an East-European peculiarity. Men with royal aspirations could be found in eleventh-century Scandinavia, too. Cf. P. H. Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings: Scandinavia and Europe AD 700–1100* (London–New York, 1994), 147.

⁵¹ J. Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa: Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w kręgu cywilizacji chrześcijańskiej średniowiecza* (Warsaw, 1998), 11–13.

⁵² See the contributions collected in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus' c. 900–1200*, ed. N. Berend (Cambridge, 2007).

enough to catapult himself beyond the reach of the protective hand of a good Christian ruler.⁵³ His Polish sponsor provided him and his three team members with a boat and had them escorted to the far end of his realm. Upon reaching the Prussian frontier at the mouth of the Vistula River, the missionaries found themselves in a hostile environment. Here Adalbert, his half-brother Gaudentius (Radzim), Benedict-Bogusza (probably a Pole), and at least one interpreter could rely only on the protection of God.⁵⁴ The arrival of these strangers seemed to have caused too much of a strain on the locals. The behaviour of Adalbert turned out to be totally unacceptable: he sang Psalms from his holy book. In an oral society, where communication was only face-to-face, speaking to a book must have come across as a manifestation of some very evil action.⁵⁵ Accordingly, the stranger-in-chief was given a blow in the back with an oar and thus the holy man and the scattered remains of the holy book flew to the ground.⁵⁶ Having thanked God for this, Adalbert and his companions reached the opposite bank of the river whence they were led to the village. The message of salvation delivered by Adalbert was greeted by the locals' banging their sticks on the ground and sending threats of a violent death, unless the strangers agreed to retreat with no delay. They left the village, but not the country. After a while they went to some market place (probably *Truso* in the vicinity of present-day Elbląg)⁵⁷ where a multitude of people was present. Among them it was

⁵³ In this he acted unlike many a Carolingian missionary, who did not reject, as a rule (to which St Boniface is a notable exception), the protection provided by the secular hand. Cf. R. E. Sullivan, 'The Carolingian missionary and the pagan', *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 733–4.

⁵⁴ G. Labuda, *Święty Wojciech: Biskup-męczennik, patron Polski, Czech i Węgier* (Wrocław, 2000), 184.

⁵⁵ V. Ališauskas, *Sakymas ir rašymas: Kultūros modelių tvėrmė ir kaita Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje* (Vilnius, 2009), 14–15. In commenting on the encounter with the 'other', scholars usually tend to emphasize the strange appearance of St Adalbert that caused a sort of a cultural shock on the pagan audience. I. Wood, 'Missionaries and the Christian frontier', *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. R. Bartlett, A. MacKay (Oxford, 1989), 212–13. Labuda, *Święty Wojciech*, 219–20. The different modes of communication (written *versus* oral) should not be, however, left outside the scope, and that is why we have brought this feature to the fore.

⁵⁶ 'S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris vita prior', ed. J. Karwasińska, *MPH*, n. s. IV/1 (Warsaw, 1962), 41–2.

⁵⁷ On this location and the place of the murder near the fort *Cholinun*, see Labuda, *Święty Wojciech*, 212–19, 224.

possible to see even men with dog masks – *cynocephali* of a sort.⁵⁸ The reaction after the inquiry was much the same: banging on the ground with sticks and expressions of vociferous indignation. Nevertheless, it was possible to understand what was at stake: the arrival of these strangers must have heralded bad and terrible things to come – crops not growing, animals becoming sterile, the old ones dying, and the whole order of things turning topsy-turvy.⁵⁹ Once again, the foreigners were to choose between death or quick escape. The missionaries had some time to ponder over what was going on as they faced the ultimate ‘other’: perhaps Adalbert and his companions should let their beards and hair grow long to become more like local men, or perhaps they should settle in and be engaged in manual labour so as to gain self-sufficiency and more natural access to the pagans.⁶⁰ Now it is impossible to say with certainty whether such reconsiderations of missionary tactics, as described by Bruno of Querfurt, were due to St Adalbert or to his biographer, which seems more likely. Anyway, it is clear that such failures to convert the pagan gave missionaries food for thought. Personal martyrdom was precious, but not enough. The final encounter between Adalbert and the pagans was played out more swiftly: after Mass, the missionary crew took a snack and reclined on the grass. They needed some repose, but it was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of a pagan mob. The most active among them was a certain Sicco (*sacerdos idolorum et dux coniuratae cohortis*), who delivered the first blow and others joined in to finish the deed (on 23 April 997).⁶¹ Afterwards they removed the head from the corpse and placed it on a pole for their joyous return home. The frontier between ‘us’ and ‘them’ was braved, but the impact on the other side of the cultural divide was negligible as compared with what took place on the Christian side in just a few years’ time.

⁵⁸ I. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1500* (Harlow, 2001), 219, 252–3.

⁵⁹ ‘S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris Vita altera auctore Brunone Querfurtensi’, ed. J. Karwasińska, *MPH*, n. s. IV/2 (Warsaw, 1969), 31–2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 32–3. On the boundary separating the culturally familiar from the ‘other’ more profound than mere distinction between pagan and Christian, see Wood, ‘Missionaries’, 211–12.

⁶¹ ‘S. Adalberti ... vita prior’, 45–6. ‘S. Adalberti ... vita altera’, 39: ‘dux et magister nefarię cohortis’.

The martyrdom of St Adalbert had great resonance throughout Latin Europe. He was canonised in 999. That same year, a synod in Rome decided to establish an archbishopric in the Polish town of Gniezno. The next year the Emperor Otto III and the pope's representative Robert arrived in Gniezno where the establishment of the Polish ecclesiastical province was finalised. It was Gaudentius, the brother of St Adalbert, who became the first archbishop of Gniezno.⁶² The circumstances surrounding this establishment had, in a sense, a forward-looking message: the propagation of faith. This was much to the heart of Emperor Otto III who made sure his personal devotion to St Adalbert would have far-reaching public consequences.⁶³ He presented Bolesław the Brave with royal rights to nominate bishops in Poland and in whatever lands Bolesław might conquer from the pagans.⁶⁴

The death of St Adalbert inspired certain hermits and monks with a desire for martyrdom. It looks likely that this desire found most

⁶² Labuda, *Święty Wojciech*, 227–57.

⁶³ H. Ludat, 'Piasten und Ottonen', *L'Europe aux IX^e–XI^e siècles: Aux origines des Etats nationaux* (Warsaw, 1968), 331, 337–8; K. Görich, *Otto III. Romanus, Saxonicus et Italicus: Kaiserliche Rompolitik und sächsische Historiographie* [*Historische Forschungen*, 18] (Sigmaringen, 1993), 48–9; G. Althoff, *Otto III* (Darmstadt, 1996), 151–72; J. Fried, *Otto III. und Boleslaw Chrobry: Das Widmungsbild des Aachener Evangelisars. der 'Akt von Gnesen' und das frühe polnische und ungarische Königtum* (Stuttgart, 2001, 2nd edition), 146–7; R. Michałowski, *Zjazd gnieźnieński: Religijne przesłanki powstania arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego* (Wrocław, 2005), 123–6, 151.

⁶⁴ Although these prerogatives were so forcefully put down only in the early-twelfth-century chronicle of Gallus Anonymus, the very idea is assumed to be relevant to the time of Bolesław the Brave. See 'Galli Anonymi Cronicae et Gesta Ducum sive Principum Polonorum', ed. K. Maleczyński, *MPH*, n. s. II (Cracow, 1952), 17, 20. Cf. H. Ludat, 'Piasten und Ottonen', 331; G. Labuda, 'Aspekty polityczne i kościelne tzw. 'Zjazdu gnieźnieńskiego' w roku 1000', *Ziemia polskie w X wieku i ich znaczenie w kształtowaniu się nowej mapy Europy*, ed. H. Samsonowicz (Cracow, 2000), 28–9, 32–3; G. Białuński, *Studia z dziejów plemion pruskich i jaćwieskich* (Olsztyn, 1999), 14–15. They were certainly relevant to the time of the Polish ruler Bolesław the Wrymouth (1107–1138) as some sort of inspiration and legitimation for his efforts to subdue the still pagan Pomeranians and, if possible, the Prussians. Cf. W. Dziewulski, *Postępy Chrystianizacji i proces likwidacji pogaństwa w Polsce wczesnofeudalnej* (Wrocław, 1964), 33; P. Wiszewski, *Domus Boleslai: Values and Social Identity in Dynastic Traditions of Medieval Poland (c. 966–1138)* [*East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, 9] (Leiden–Boston, 2010), 192–3. For the appearance of the very name of Poland c. 1000, see J. Fried, 'Der hl. Adalbert und Gnesen', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 50 (1998), 48, 64.

appeal among the hermits gathered around St Romuald. Thanks to cooperation between Otto III and Bolesław the Brave, two Italians, John and Benedict, were sent to Poland where they had to prepare themselves for the mission. Not only prayers and fasting were required: they also had to let their beards grow and to learn a difficult Slavic language as this time their mission should have been directed to the lands of pagan Luticians.⁶⁵ The head of their upcoming mission was to be Bruno of Querfurt, an ardent imitator of St Adalbert. The preparations in progress received a setback after the death of Otto III on 24 January 1002.

When Otto III was succeeded by Henry II, relations between the Holy Roman Empire and Poland became more complicated and less productive. Bolesław was intent on expanding his power base within the Empire through his connections with Saxon nobility and gaining political advantage at the expense of some of his neighbours. The things were bound to undergo a sharp change when in 1003 he established himself in Prague and declined to pay homage to Henry II as was incumbent on him as the new ruler of the Bohemians. The prospect of a full-scale armed conflict came within sight. Henry II went as far as to form an alliance with Luticians against Bolesław, a step that was lamented even by some of his supporters.⁶⁶ In such a situation it was uncomfortable for anybody to contemplate missionary activities directed towards the pagans. Naturally, Bolesław was then more concerned about the staving off the danger of this alliance, but he was far from relegating himself to defensive positions. He was more defiant and, unsurprisingly, wanted to use the holy men as intermediaries in his political moves and calculations that, probably, included the aspirations to gain the papally-approved royal crown. This was not much to the liking of those hermits whose prime aspirations were directed at gaining souls for Christ. Bruno could not join them as soon as he himself and his companions had wished. He sought a papal licence, and even when it came it was not to take effect immediately since it was stipulated to be contingent

⁶⁵ 'Vita quinque fratrum eremitarum seu Vita vel passio Benedicti et Iohannis sociorumque eorum auctore Brunone Querfurtensi', ed. J. Karwasińska, *MPH*, n. s. IV/3 (Warsaw, 1973), 59.

⁶⁶ Ludat, 'Piasten und Ottonen', 345–7; Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.*, 206–19.

upon the will and agreement of Henry II and Archbishop Tagino of Magdeburg. To make matters worse, on 10/11 November 1003, a group of violent men killed the two Italians and their three Polish companions. According to Bruno of Querfurt, the author of their *vita*, they did so in the vain hope of obtaining the silver which had been given to them by Bolesław to finance their trips on his behalf. The silver had been returned so quietly that the would-be murderers reportedly did not even catch a glimpse of their desired goal. A closer reading of this story may lend some credence to a hypothesis of a politically motivated murder: an indirect blow to Bolesław the Brave in the interest of Henry II.⁶⁷ However that may be, the final result was gruesomely clear: the would-be missionaries lay dead.

The net result of this unfulfilled mission was not totally devastating since the heavenly host increased by the saintly Five Brethren and Bruno of Querfurt received yet another nudge to speed up his mission. When at long last he took to the field he proved to be one of the most active and wide-ranging missionaries of the Early and High Middle Ages: his activities ranged almost as far and wide as the Baltic and the Black seas.⁶⁸ Accounts of his martyrdom on 9 March 1009 provide the first mention of the toponym Lithuania in Latin sources.

The mercurial presence of St Bruno of Querfurt in such a vast territory as well as his religious education and monastic experiences in Germany and Italy have certainly contributed to the rise of most diverse sources of evidence and to his biography and legacy being tackled in various countries of East-Central Europe.⁶⁹ It is

⁶⁷ P. Stróżyk, 'Śmierć eremitów w relacji Brunona z Kwerfurtu', *Roczniki Historyczne*, 69 (2003), 14–20, 30–1. Cf. also Dziewulski, *Postępy Chryścianizacji*, 39.

⁶⁸ Cf. Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 429. On the importance that Bruno of Querfurt attached to the mission among the pagans, see also Görich, *Otto III. Romanus, Saxonicus et Italicus*, 20; Wood, *Missionary Life*, 239–40.

⁶⁹ This is most obvious from the proceedings of conferences and other public events related to the millenium of his martyrdom (1009–2009). See, for example, *Święty Brunon: Patron lokalny czy symbol jedności Europy i powszechności Kościoła*, ed. A. Kopiczko (Olsztyn, 2009); *Der Heilige Brun von Querfurt. Eine Reise ins Mittelalter. Begleitband zur Sonderausstellung 'Der Heilige Brun von Querfurt – Friedensstifter und Missionar in Europa. 1009–2009' im Museum Burg Querfurt*, ed. Landkreis Saalekreis (Querfurt, 2009); *Brun z Kwerfurtu. Osoba–dzieło–epoka*, ed. M. Dygo (Pułtusk, 2010); *Brun von Querfurt: Lebenswelt, Tätigkeit, Wirkung*, ed. A. Sames (Querfurt, 2010); *Hittérítók és Pogányok. Querfurti Brúnó – egy vértanú Szent István korában*, ed. H. Miklós [*Belvedere Meridionale* 24], 4 (2012).

not our purpose here to tell the life of St Bruno. His violent death, however, falls squarely within the scope of this book. The sources that inform us about St Bruno's death come from widely separate areas. The information they provide is rather different: from a few lines in the closely contemporary *Annales Quedlinburgenses*⁷⁰ to the rather lengthy, albeit rather enigmatic digression coming from the life of St Romuald by St Peter Damiani (†1073).⁷¹ The sources at our disposal are also of different types: from annals to chronicles to hagiographies.⁷² Such diversity would be very welcome had it not contained mutually contradictory messages that make a plausible reconstruction of the martyrdom and its consequences all the more

⁷⁰ *Die Annales Quedlinburgenses*, ed. M. Giese, *MGH SS*, LXII (Hanover, 2004), 527.

⁷¹ *Petri Damiani Vita Beati Romualdi*, ed. G. Tabacco [*Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, XCIV] (Roma, 1957), 56–61. *Vita Romualdi* was one of the earliest works of Peter Damiani and was composed in c. 1042. F. Dressler, *Petrus Damian: Leben und Werk* [*Studia Anselmiana*, 34] (Rome, 1954), 239. On the date of his death, see J. Howe, 'Did St. Peter Damian die in 1073? A new perspective on his final days', *AB*, 128 (2010), 67–86.

⁷² Besides *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, the most important chronicle is that of Thietmar of Merseburg. Only recently the long-neglected Chronicle of Ademar of Chabannes received due attention mostly thanks to its re-evaluation by R. Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989–1034* [*Harvard Historical Studies*, 117] (Cambridge MA – London, 1995). There is no contemporary *vita* or *passio* of St Bruno of Querfurt. Besides an *excursus* in *Vita Romualdi*, Wibert's account of the martyrdom of Bruno may be ascribed to hagiography writ large. In essence it is a letter (*Bettelbrief*) concocted by Wibert, a man who pretended to be an eyewitness of the martyrdom in his efforts to solicit alms by recounting pious and terrible story. See 'Hystoria de praedicatione episcopi Brunonis cum suis capellanis in Pruscia, et martirio eorum', *MPH*, I, 229–30. The internal evidence of the letter shows that this Wibert could not have been a follower of Bruno of Querfurt (most conspicuous in this regard is his assertion that Bruno of Querfurt abandoned his episcopacy and his flock in order to go to Prussia. Bruno was *archiepiscopus gentium* and had no fixed see). On the other hand, it is rather safe to assume that he somehow managed to gain some credible evidence from hearsay. Wibert's account is known from only one copy contained in the manuscript belonging to the Bavarian monastery of Tegernsee. On this manuscript, see A. Rutkowska-Płachcińska, 'Pasje świętych Wojciecha i Brunona z tzw. kodeksu z Tegernsee', *SŻ*, 40 (2002), 19–20. The shortage of reliable evidence on the martyrdom of St Bruno in medieval Germany is also evident from his late medieval–early modern *vita* that should be viewed only as strictly contemporary evidence of his local cult in contemporary Saxony: 'Vita et passio sancti Brunonis episcopi et martyris Querfordensis', ed. H. Kauffmann, *MGH SS*, XXX/2 (Leipzig, 1934), 1350–67.

problematic.⁷³ In contrast to earlier and modern historiography which has given full credit to annals and chronicles because of their genre (*Annales Quedlinburgenses*, Thietmar of Merseburg) and dismissed hagiography because it is hagiography, we have chosen to try deciphering the different messages as reflections of different political and social networks, each pursuing their own agenda.

When one looks at the martyrdom of St Bruno from this point of view, one does not fail to notice that there are considerable differences in the location of the martyrdom. According to *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, he died *in confinio Ruscie et Lituae*. According to Thietmar, he died on the frontier of Prussia and Rus'.⁷⁴ According to both these Saxon sources, St Bruno and his eighteen companions were slaughtered upon entering the land. When reading this account one is left with the impression that there were people who surpassed the killers of St Adalbert in their savagery and outdid the Pechenegs, whom Bruno had described as the cruellest pagans on earth (*omnium paganorum crudelissimos*).⁷⁵

Quite another story is to be found in *Vita Romualdi*. The main difference from the Saxon version is that it has a plot, it represents a *drama*.⁷⁶ Peter Damiani tells us that at the end of his journey St Bruno

⁷³ The problem of those sources is presented in greater detail in D. Baronas, 'The year 1009: St Bruno of Querfurt between Poland and Rus', *Journal of Medieval History*, 34 (2008), 2–9.

⁷⁴ *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi chronicon*, ed. W. Trilmich [*Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, IX] (Darmstadt, 1960), 344 (VI. 95). The issue of the location of the martyrdom has been discussed exhaustively with no tangible results. This was only to be expected taking into account the lack of sources which could give us a clue as to the approximate location of the martyrdom. It may be noted that majority of Polish scholars are inclined to locate the martyrdom of St Bruno in the land of Yatvingians (in present-day Poland), while their Lithuanian counterparts want to see St Bruno having acted and been killed in Lithuania. In our opinion, the former downplay the significance of the indication 'in confinio Ruscie et Lituae' supplied by the *Annales Quedlinburgenses*: as a kind of *lectio difficilior* it should be given priority over the looser location furnished by Thietmar of Merseburg. Some Lithuanian scholars tend to stretch the message of the *Annales Quedlinburgenses* too far: *in confinio* does not mean within the confines of a country. An overview of these theories, including those propounded by German scholars, is provided by G. Białyński, *Misja pruskolitewska biskupa Brunona z Kwerfurtu* (Olsztyn, 2010), 7–23.

⁷⁵ 'Epistola Brunonis ad Henricum regem', ed. J. Karwasińska, *MPH*, n. s. IV/3 (Warsaw, 1973), 98.

⁷⁶ See *Petri Damiani Vita Beati Romualdi*, 56–61.

encountered a certain king, *rex russorum*. When the poorly clad and barefoot missionary first introduced himself he made no impression on his audience who regarded him as nothing more than a beggar. After this failure, Bruno made up his mind duly to impress the pagans. Clad in episcopal garments he received due attention⁷⁷ and, after successfully undergoing the test by not catching fire in the midst of raging flames, he convinced the ruler and his men to receive baptism. Not all were happy with the new developments. One brother of the ruler refused to be baptised and was killed for that. This happened in the absence of Bruno, who was then on the way to meet another reluctant brother. The latter, having refused to listen to the missionary, had him killed by decapitation. The main instigator was struck with blindness, the others became as dumb and immobile as stones. All of them were brought back to their senses only after prolonged prayers had been offered by the ruler and other Christians. Now the choice was upon them: either to receive penitential baptism, or to meet certain death from 'vengeful swords'. They chose baptism and took part in building a church above the body of the martyr.

Such is the story as it is depicted by Peter Damiani. It certainly contains unverifiable evidence, miracles and edifying teachings – things that make many a modern historian nervous. It is more important to note a very basic difference between the Saxon sources and Peter Damiani. The former do not contain any hint about a ruler, or the last to the audience to which Bruno brought his final message. The pagans are non-existent in the Saxon sources, except as tools of evil forces in their rage against the Christian message. Peter's story is more humane in this regard. It must be said that Damiani relied on evidence supplied by people who knew Bruno personally. Thus we must not cast out of hand all his information about the last stage in Bruno's life. We must also note that some evidence in the accounts by Damiani and Wibert coincides.⁷⁸ As

⁷⁷ This was a common way to impress the pagans. Cf. Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 457.

⁷⁸ We have in mind: (1) a miracle with fire; (2) the killer (brother of the *rex russorum* in Peter Damiani and *dux* acting independently of the converted *rex*, *Nethimer nomine*, in Wibert); (3) the type of murder – decapitation (Thietmar of Merseburg and the *Annales Quedlinburgenses* concur in this, though the latter source verbalizes it as *capite plectus* which may not necessarily mean decapitation).

there is no textual relation between them, the similarity should be seen as based on fact. There is one more thematic coincidence and it concerns the accounts of Peter Damiani and Ademar of Chabannes. The most striking feature is what we call a ‘Rus’ian element’: the *rex russorum*. Furthermore, it is evident from a unique piece of information provided by Peter Damiani and relating to the spiritual joys of the Rus’ian Church because of the glorious martyr St Bruno of Querfurt: ‘cum Bonifatio viro clarissimo, quem nunc felicissimum martirem se habere Russiana gloriatur ecclesia...’.⁷⁹ These joys were still to be alive in the 1040s.

It is true that in later centuries Roman Catholic men of letters used this piece of information extensively to drive home a message that from its very inception the Rus’ian Church was in unity with Rome and so it had to be for ever. Nineteenth-century Russian Orthodox historians and their modern counterparts as a rule have not been happy with such far-reaching suggestions and thus have concentrated their efforts on ‘proving’ that Peter Damiani’s information was deeply flawed by its legendary character. Their arguments are no longer convincing. In passing it should be noted that: (1) Peter Damiani generally provides reliable and sometimes unique information on St Bruno because he drew on the milieu of those hermits who had stayed in touch with the martyr in question and soon after his death managed to receive news of his death;⁸⁰ (2) the information provided by Peter Damiani corresponds well with Bruno’s cordial relations with Vladimir of Kiev and local ecclesiastics as reported by Bruno himself in his well-known letter to King Henry II;⁸¹ (3) finally, Western and Eastern Churches were (technically) still united and there was no impediment for the Rus’ian Church to

⁷⁹ *Petri Damianii Vita Beati Romualdi*, 54.

⁸⁰ H. G. Voigt, *Bruno von Querfurt: Mönch, Eremit, Erzbischof der Heiden und Märtyrer* (Stuttgart, 1907), 10–11; J. Bieniak, ‘Wyprawa misyjna Brunona z Kwerfurtu a problem Selencji’, *Acta Baltico-Slavica*, 6 (1969), 189.

⁸¹ ‘Epistola Brunonis ad Henricum regem’, 98–9; J. Korpela, ‘Ein Bischof zwischen zwei Heiligen. Bruno von Querfurt, St. Vladimir und Heinrich (II.) der Heilige’, *Bayern und Osteuropa. Aus der Geschichte der Beziehungen Bayerns, Frankens und Schwabens mit Rußland, der Ukraine und Weißrußland*, ed. H. Beyer-Thoma (Wiesbaden, 2000), 122. A recent detailed study on the letter and its wider context is by W. Fałkowski, ‘The letter of Bruno of Querfurt to King Henry II’, *FS*, 43 (2009), 417–38.

display its devotion to St Bruno.⁸² Some support for the idea that the Rus'ian element was not taken by Peter Damiani out of the blue may be also gathered from Ademar Chabannes. According to him it was the Rus'ian people who redeemed the remains of the martyr from the Pechenegs (sic!) and built a monastery at the site of his last resting place.⁸³ To be sure, this piece of information commands no respect from most historians and, taken in isolation, carries no great conviction, because the more respected author, Thietmar of Merseburg, provides diametrically opposite information: it was the Pole Bolesław the Brave who redeemed the relics of the martyr.⁸⁴ Historians are usually convinced that the last piece of information is absolutely truthful, and they feel awkward only when they have to try to explain why there is no any other corroborating evidence coming from Poland itself: no relics, no cult, and no local tradition about St Bruno of Querfurt. All this stands in sharp contrast to the glory that was lavished on St Adalbert. Even if compared with the memory of the Five Brethren in medieval Poland, St Bruno pales into insignificance.⁸⁵ With due respect to Thietmar of Merseburg, we should now be content with acknowledging that the surest thing we can say is that the German chronicler simply retold what others had told him. Whether these others (who?) really did tell him the truth is beyond our means to prove one or the other way. It is perhaps more important to note that here we may grasp an instance of rivalry arising from different sources of power: one could easily imagine what a boon it must have been for any Christian prince

⁸² For more on Russian views on the last mission of St Bruno of Querfurt, see D. Baronas, 'Święty Brunon w historiografii litewskiej i rosyjskiej', *Święty Brunon. Patron lokalny czy symbol jedności Europy i powszechności Kościoła*, ed. A. Kopiczko (Olsztyn, 2009), 375–80.

⁸³ *Ademari Cabannensis Opera Omnia*, vol. I: *Ademari Cabannensis chronicon*, ed. P. Bourgain, R. Landes, G. Pon [*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, CXXIX] (Turnhout, 1999), 152–3.

⁸⁴ *Thietmari chronicon*, 344 (VI. 95).

⁸⁵ On the cult of the Five Brethren, see K. Górka-Gońska, 'Kult Pięciu Braci Męczenników w Kazimierzu Biskupim i rozwój towarzyszącej mu legendy', *Roczniki Historyczne*, 61 (1995), 111–14, 136–8; R. Michałowski, 'Translacja Pięciu Braci Polskich do Gniezna. Przyczynek do dziejów kultu relikwii w Polsce wczesnośredniowiecznej', *Peregrinationes: Pielgrzymki w kulturze dawnej Europy*, ed. H. Manikowska, H. Zaremska [*Colloquia Mediaevalia Varsoviensia*, 2] (Warsaw, 1995), 173–7, 182–4.

to possess these precious relics.⁸⁶ This competition gains an even sharper edge when we read Ademar of Chabannes further and learn that a few days after the martyrdom of St Bruno a Greek bishop came to convert the part of the country unconverted by St Bruno.⁸⁷ It goes without saying that Ademar of Chabannes' details are too colourful to give them full credit, but, on the other hand, his information finds some sort of corroboration from Peter Damiani's reference to the veneration of St Bruno by the Rus'ian Church. Why should we view this Greek bishop as a totally fictive figure when it is known quite well that some Greek prelates came to Rus' to baptise local people and stayed there.⁸⁸ It is safer to assume that they should have taken an interest in the last mission of Bruno of Querfurt than to suppose that they remained indifferent to the undertakings of a missionary of such renown as Bruno was. They ought to have been aware of his further intentions: in 1008, Bruno stayed in Kiev and enjoyed the assistance of its ruler. More general considerations should also be taken into account. It has been noted that missionary targets within and without Rus' could be a probable way of action for Vladimir to follow, as was the case in many other instances when yesterday's pagans became today's missionaries to their remaining pagan neighbours.⁸⁹ We must also keep in mind some indirect evidence suggesting that Vladimir's wife, Anna, must have played a prominent part in spreading and strengthening the Faith in her

⁸⁶ On the significance of the relics in medieval society in general, see P. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990).

⁸⁷ *Ademari Cabannensis chronicon*, 153. In our opinion, it is an exemplification of attempts to gain territories in the lands 'opened up' by Christian missionaries. On this phenomenon in Western Europe of the early Middle Ages, see M. de Jong, 'Religion', *The Early Middle Ages: Europe 400–1000*, ed. R. McKitterick (Oxford, 2001), 147–8.

⁸⁸ 'Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa'ïd d'Antioche', *Patrologia Orientalis*, XXIII/3 (Paris, 1932), 423. On the presence of Greek prelates in the first centuries of Christian Rus', with references to further literature, see E. Hösch, 'Griechische Bischöfe in Altrussland', *Zwischen Christianisierung und Europäisierung: Beiträge zur Geschichte Osteuropas in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit. Festschrift für Peter Nitsche zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Hübner, E. Klug, J. Kusber (Stuttgart, 1998), 208–20.

⁸⁹ S. A. Ivanov, *Vizantiiskoe missionerstvo: Mozhno li sdelat' iz «varvara» khristianina* (Moscow, 2003), 221–3. For his contribution in English on Byzantine missions, see S. A. Ivanov, 'Religious missions', *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. J. Shepard (Cambridge, 2008), 305–32.

adopted country.⁹⁰ She was still alive in 1009. So even though there is no any other independent and direct evidence corroborating the activities of the Greek bishop, the circumstantial evidence increases considerably the plausibility of this piece of information as retold by Ademar of Chabannes.

In sum, the fate of St Bruno may be viewed as yet another instance of rivalry between the Latin and Greek Churches.⁹¹ All in all, one irony of history is that despite such claims, the medieval cult of St Bruno took root in neither Poland nor Rus'. Although the rulers of both countries still had the task of converting their military virtuosity into firmly rooted territorial holdings,⁹² neither Bolesław the Brave nor Vladimir the Great exerted themselves too much in this direction. Thus, despite its promising beginning, the cult of St Bruno of Querfurt did not take off, and, with hindsight, looks like a damp hagiographical squib.

As regards the interested Saxon party, it is to be noted that it provides only the most stereotypical image of the martyrdom: Bruno

⁹⁰ J. Shepard, 'Otto III, Boleslaw Chrobry and the "Happening" at Gniezno, A. D. 1000: some possible implications of Professor Poppe's thesis concerning the offspring of Anna Porphyrogenita', *Byzantium and East Central Europe*, ed. G. Prinzing, M. Salamon, P. Stephenson [*Byzantina et Slavica Cracoviensia*, 3] (Cracow, 2001), 33.

⁹¹ Consider, for example, the case of Moravia or Bulgaria in the ninth century: A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge, 1970), 14ff., 155ff; Shepard, 'Otto III', 34–48.

⁹² J. Shepard, 'Conversions and regimes compared: The Rus' and the Poles, c. 1000', *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. F. Curta (Ann Arbor, 2008), 256. The frontier between the two emerging states of Poland and Rus' was far from settled. This was an on-going process with ups and downs throughout the centuries; it affected much more the strategically important so-called Cherven towns than the far-away north-eastern and north-western corners of, respectively, Poland and Kievan Rus'. For more on the frontiers, see G. Rhode, *Die Ostgrenze Polens: Politische Entwicklung, kulturelle Bedeutung und geistige Auswirkung*, vol. 1: *Im Mittelalter bis zum 1401* (Cologne–Graz, 1955), 57–70. For more on the period under consideration, see, for instance, G. Labuda, 'Der Zug des russischen Großfürsten Vladimir gegen die Ljachen im Jahre 981: ein Beitrag zur Ausbildung der polnisch-russischen Grenze im 10. Jahrhundert', *Ostmitteleuropa. Berichte und Forschungen*, ed. U. Haustein, G. W. Strobel, G. Wagner (Stuttgart, 1981), 11–19. On the possible projection of the notional sphere of Polish influence by expanding the concept of Prussia as far to the east as Rus', see: D. Baronas, 'The year 1009', 10–11. Regarding the overlapping of *provincia* and *regnum* in East-Central Europe in the High Middle Ages, see H.-J. Schmidt, *Kirche, Staat, Nation: Raumgliederung der Kirche im mittelalterlichen Europa* (Weimar, 1999), 78.

and his companions set off into wilderness only to be slaughtered by savages. It is tantamount to saying that this was nothing special when compared with the martyrdom of St Adalbert. Thus, where the ultimate scene leading to the martyrdom is concerned, the Saxon sources seem to be poorly informed. The ultimate source of the information reflected in the *Annales Quedlinburgenses* and Thietmar of Merseburg's chronicle must lie in the Polish court. This may be supposed from the rather restricted means of oral communication of the time in which only Saxon-Polish relations could have come into play and this may be also inferred from the presence of Bolesław-related information in the chronicle of Thietmar.

So why is there such a dearth of information on the last mission of St Bruno of Querfurt in the Saxon sources when their authors were in touch with informants in possession of first-rate knowledge: the exact date and previously unheard-of place name (*Litua*).⁹³ One way to try to explain this is to say that Bruno of Querfurt went too far, literally and figuratively. He reached a place where he could not enjoy the protection of his royal patron, be he Bolesław the Brave or Vladimir the Great. He also baptised some local ruler, a fact that could hardly fall to the liking of Bolesław, who was eager to build and expand his own power and not that of others through the good offices of holy men.⁹⁴ There can hardly be any doubt that the last mission of Bruno of Querfurt was most promising not to

⁹³ In this respect the prime of place should be attributed to the *Annales Quedlinburgenses* which give the correct date (9 March 1009). The same date is indicated in the *Necrologium Magdeburgensis ecclesiae*. See *Die Totenbücher von Merseburg, Magdeburg und Lüneburg*, ed. G. Althoff and J. Wollasch, *MGH Libri memoriales et Necrologia*, II (n. s.) (Hannover, 1983), 41. Thietmar of Merseburg provided the date of 14 February. More on the dating, see Białuński, *Misja*, 97–9.

⁹⁴ On Boleslav the Brave's Carolingian style of rulership, see R. Wenskus, *Studien zur historisch-politischen Gedankenwelt Bruns von Querfurt* (Münster–Cologne, 1956), 195; K. Zielińska-Melkowska, 'Stosunki polsko-pruskie w X–XIII wieku', *Europa Środkowa i Wschodnia w polityce Piastów*, ed. K. Zielińska-Melkowska (Toruń, 1997), 178–81; H. Ludat, *An Elbe und Oder um das Jahr 1000: Skizzen zur Politik des Ottonenreiches und der slavischen Mächte in Mitteleuropa* (Weimar, 1995), 86; S. Weinfurter, *Heinrich II. (1002–1024): Herrscher am Ende der Zeiten* (Darmstadt, 2000), 209. On the engagement of Bolesław the Brave in supporting missionary activities as a means of ideological upgrading of his relatively fresh political status vis-à-vis rulers with Carolingian pedigree, see Fałkowski, 'The letter of Bruno of Querfurt', 435–6.

his old supporters Bolesław or Vladimir, but to his newly-discovered ruler whom he managed to persuade to receive baptism. How can we characterize this man in no-man's land?

Taking into account that the Norsemen active in Eastern Europe were known in Western Europe as the Rus, it is natural to suppose that Peter Damiani's *rex russorum* represented one of the sort. Had this ruler (Netimer)⁹⁵ managed to capitalize on the chance offered to him by Bruno's arrival, he would have probably managed to give rise to some new polity. It must be emphasized once again that Bruno of Querfurt represented the best possible chance for this ruler. He was a missionary man who was too independently-minded and hard to manipulate. This is the impression left from studying the written material produced by Bruno himself and from reading various modern comments on his personality.⁹⁶ He used to comment favourably on Otto III or Henry II, but he also felt free to criticise both of them when they fell far too short of his high expectations. Although there is no sufficient evidence to make similar observations with regard to Bolesław the Brave or Vladimir the Great, it is safe to assume that St Bruno was no more subservient to those rulers than he was to his imperial overlords. So we have to deal with a personality that managed to maintain a relatively free hand even in a most complicated situation. The margin for his free action could be more or less narrow, but, in our opinion, Bruno of Querfurt was always keen on keeping it within his reach. Here we may recall that he accorded the utmost importance to the idea of mission among the pagans.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ The name of this ruler is known only from Wibert's account: 'Hystoria de praedicatione', 229.

⁹⁶ The opinions concerning personal relationships between Bolesław and Bruno are divided. Most Polish historians emphasize the cordial aspects of this relationship, while others are inclined to underline its more complicated nature: Dziewulski, *Postępy Chrystianizacji*, 41. One may even come across a conjecture about the final hostility between them – an opinion which seems too far-fetched. For differences in 'pro-Polish' and 'pro-German' schools of interpretation, see Baronas, 'The year 1009', 14–15. See also F. Lotter, 'Christliche Völkergemeinschaft und Heidenmission. Das Weltbild Bruns von Querfurt', *Early Christianity in Central and East Europe*, ed. P. Urbańczyk (Warsaw, 1997), 163–74.

⁹⁷ Cf. H.-D. Kahl, 'Compellere intrare: die Wendenpolitik Bruns von Querfurt im Lichte hochmittelalterlichen Missions- und Völkerrechts', *Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsgedanke in der deutschen Ostpolitik des Mittelalters*, ed. H. Beumann (Darmstadt, 1963), 246, 250; Görich, *Otto III. Romanus, Saxonicus et Italicus*, 20.

As a missionary he could do this by wearing a pallium and by being a self-conscious servant of St Peter.⁹⁸ In this capacity Bruno of Querfurt may be viewed as a representative of papal missions which generally were most promising to the political aspirations of newly-converted rulers in contrast to Carolingian missions which implied conversion and subjection simultaneously.⁹⁹ However free Bruno of Querfurt was in his dispensation of baptism to the *rex russorum*, the latter did lose his chance and now modern scholars are sure that out of a number of roaming Scandinavian bands in Eastern Europe, only the Riurikids managed to develop a political structure.¹⁰⁰

The late tenth – the first half of the eleventh century was still a period of time when it was possible to meet some adventurers from the Scandinavian world in some backwaters along the river-ways ‘from the Varangians to the Greeks’. The region along the upper Nemunas offered such a haven.¹⁰¹ In this regard this region was not exceptional. The same characteristics also apply to the upper reaches of the Dnieper, the Volga and the Oka rivers, where archaeologists detect a considerable Scandinavian presence even from as late as the first decades of the eleventh century. People lived there, some of them even thrived in huge settlements (as in Gniozdovo), but they disappeared, leaving almost no trace in written record (they were too far even for Bruno of Querfurt to reach them).¹⁰² The Riurikids absorbed

⁹⁸ On the significance of Rome for Bruno of Querfurt, see Wenskus, *Studien*, 105–6; Görich, *Otto III. Romanus, Saxonicus et Italicus*, 25, 28, 39–40. On St Peter as his patron and protector, see Fałkowski, ‘The letter of Bruno of Querfurt’, 430.

⁹⁹ On the differences between papally-inspired and royal (Carolingian-style) missions, see A. Angenendt, *Kaiserherrschaft und Königstaupe: Kaiser, Könige und Päpste als geistliche Patrone in der abendländischen Missionsgeschichte* (Berlin–New York, 1984), 164ff.

¹⁰⁰ O. P. Tolochko, ‘The Primary Chronicle’s “Ethnography” revisited: Slavs and Varangians in the middle Dnieper region and the origin of the Rus’ state’, *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. I. H. Garipzanov, P. J. Geary, P. Urbańczyk (Turnhout, 2008), 187.

¹⁰¹ For evidence of the Norse (or Viking) presence along the Nemunas River, see A. S. Kibin’, *Ot iatviazy do Litvy: Russkoe pogranič'e s iatviagami i Litvoi v X–XIII vekakh* (Moscow, 2014), 56–9.

¹⁰² Rare written evidence on the three kinds of Rus’ is provided by the tenth-century Muslim writer Istakhri. Cf. Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings*, 116. See also J. Korpela, *Beiträge zur Bevölkerungsgeschichte und Prosopographie der Kiever Rus’ bis zum Tode von Vladimir Monomach* [*Studia Historica Jyväskyläensia*, 54] (Jyväskylä, 1995), 38–9, 46–54.

them in the course of the eleventh century. However exquisite and interesting the material and spiritual culture of the Scandinavians in Eastern Europe might have been, it did succumb to the pressure of Byzantine civilization transplanted far to the north.¹⁰³ The same also rings true with regard to the region of the upper Nemunas, where in the course of the eleventh century such Rus'ian outposts as Grodno, Novgorodok, Iziaslav' came into being.¹⁰⁴ They represented the westernmost fringes of the Rurikid lands. The expansion of the Rurikid rule and the demographic expansion of the Slavs coincided in this region like in many others. This interaction between the military elite of the Norse origin and the Slavic agriculturalists was most instrumental in bringing the new geopolitical reality to life. It was neither total nor irreversible. Beyond the reach of Rus'ian princes there still lay the lands in which the pagan Yatvingian and Lithuanian tribes were ensconced. The eastern frontier between the Lithuanian Balts and their Eastern Slav neighbours remained comparatively stable for centuries: the two ethnic groupings were separated by a wilderness from 15 to 60 km wide that extended only slightly from the modern Lithuanian territory into the western parts of modern Belarus. Cultural interaction is almost negligible on either side of the frontier, and this may be explained, at least to some extent, by tense or hostile relations between the neighbours.¹⁰⁵ Did the expansion of Rus' reach its limits after having encountered too defiant tribes living in impenetrable woods and marshlands?

There were some attempts by Rus'ian princes to subdue these tribes. Yaroslav the Wise made a raid against the Yatvingians in

¹⁰³ Cf. Duczko, *Viking Rus*, 258.

¹⁰⁴ Kibin', *Ot iatviazy do Litvy*, 92–7.

¹⁰⁵ L. Kurila, 'Lietuvių etninė riba rytuose IX–XII a. (1. Archeologijos duomenys)', *Lietuvos Archeologija*, 27 (2005), 59–84; L. Kurila, 'Lietuvių etninė riba rytuose XI–XIV a. (2. Rašytinių šaltinių duomenys)', *Lietuvos archeologija*, 28 (2005), 121–32. In contrast to the Lithuano-Slavic frontier zone in the east, its sector in the south has not been elucidated so far. In part this is due to the lack of representative archaeological research. One may also suppose that the multi-ethnic character of the stretch of land along the Nemunas from Grodno to Novgorodok was more strongly pronounced. To date, the most exhaustive investigation of the Lithuano-Slavic frontier based on historical and philological sources?'] is produced by J. Ochmański, *Litewska granica etniczna na wschodzie od epoki plemiennej do XVI wieku* (Poznań, 1981).

1038 and against Lithuanians in 1040.¹⁰⁶ It is possible to come across an idea that he then managed to impose a tributary dependence on these tribes,¹⁰⁷ but as there is no any trace of Rus'ian outposts constructed deep in Yatvingian or Lithuanian lands there is no solid base to assume that something more than occasional raids and extortions used to take place from time to time.¹⁰⁸ The evidence for them is very scant, and the failure of the Rus'ian expedition to Lithuania in 1132 provides us with a picture of the still free pagans defying the will to rule over them.¹⁰⁹ Whatever meagre gains might have been brought in by such occasional raids, they were not to be consigned to oblivion. They were regarded as indications of claims to the pagan lands.¹¹⁰ It was for this purpose that the monk (Nestor) from the Kiev Cave monastery compiled a list of tributary tribes among which one can find not only Lithuanians, but much more westerly located tribes, like the Semgallians on the left bank of the Daugava, or the Curonians on the shore of the Baltic Sea.¹¹¹ Such claims may well have been kept in memory by retaining close contacts between Novgorod, Kiev and the potentates from the Scandinavian world.¹¹² They were to be publicized to the local audiences.

No Orthodox missionaries are known to have ventured to the pagan lands of the Balts, with one possible exception of the Greek bishop mentioned in relation to the last mission of Bruno of Querfurt.

¹⁰⁶ *Povest' vremennykh let*, ed. D. S. Likhachev, I (Moscow–Leningrad, 1950), 103. These raids are to be seen in connection with the actions of Yaroslav in support of the Polish duke Casimir I the Restorer who was facing an opposition led by the Mazovian prince Miecław, who was supported by Pomeranians, Yatvingians and probably Lithuanians: J. Bieniak, *Państwo Miecława: Studium analityczne* (Warsaw, 1963, 2nd edition 2011), 147ff; Białyński, *Studia*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. E. Gudavičius, 'Lietuvos vardas XI a. – XII a. I pusės šaltiniuose', *Lietuvos TRS Mokslų akademijos darbai*, series A, 3(84) (1983), 81; Korpela, *Beiträge*, 37.

¹⁰⁸ On the resistance to the imposition of Rus'ian rule, see A. N. Nasonov, «*Russkaia zemlia*», 48, 152–8; V. T. Pashuto, *Obrazovanie Litovskogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1959), 10–12. Cf. also Barford, *The Early Slavs*, 240–1. As regards the lands of Estonians and Letgallians, see A. Selart, *Livland und die Rus' im 13. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2007), 55–68.

¹⁰⁹ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', *PSRL*, II (St Petersburg, 1908), 294.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings*, 20.

¹¹¹ *PVL*, I, 13.

¹¹² On the Scandinavians residing at or seeking support from the court of the rulers of Rus' in the eleventh century, see S. Mikheev, 'Eimund-ubiitsa Borisa, Ingvar Puteshestvennik i Anund iz Rusi: k voprosu o shvedakh na Rusi v XI veke', *Ruthenica*, 5 (2006), 19–36.

Individual attempts by some distinguished Latin missionaries to reach the lands of the pagan Balts revealed the gap wider than, perhaps, previously imagined. To meet the Germanic pagans living closer to the old Christian lands was one thing, to meet the Slavic or Baltic pagans on the Baltic littoral or deeper inland was another.¹¹³ Differences in religious outlook and social habits were too deep to bridge by simple preaching. The opinion of Gallus Anonymus about the inhabitants of Prussia, who lived happily without recognition of any lord among themselves, may be regarded as far-fetched and stereotypical.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, it demonstrates a rejection on the part of the Prussians of the order of things that in the contemporary context are to be viewed as the 'state'. They were not alone in this, as the same characteristics may well be applied to the majority of Polabian Slavs.¹¹⁵ However big the differences between the emerging Christian order and restive primordial paganism were, contact was still maintained on a more mundane level and by less ambitious personalities.

It seems quite clear that the Balts had at least passive knowledge of their Christian neighbours and their faith.¹¹⁶ One indication

¹¹³ Cf. I. N. Wood, 'The northern frontier: Christianity face to face with paganism', *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 3: *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100*, ed. T. F. X. Noble, J. M. H. Smith (Cambridge, 2010), 245–6.

¹¹⁴ 'Galli Anonymi Cronicae et Gesta Ducum sive Principum Polonorum', 111–12, 153–4. With regard to Polish-Prussian relations, see e.g. H. Łowmiański, 'Stosunki polsko-pruskie za pierwszych Piastów', *PH*, 41 (1950), 159; K. Wiliński, *Walki polsko-pruskie w X–XIII w.* (Łódź, 1984).

¹¹⁵ R. Schmidt, 'Das Heiligtum der Lutizen als Heiden-Metropole', *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger*, ed. H. Beumann, 2 (Cologne–Vienna, 1974), 368; C. Lübke, 'Forms of political organization of the Polabian Slavs (until the tenth century A. D.)', *Origins of Central Europe*, ed. P. Urbańczyk (Warsaw, 1997), 118–21; C. Lübke, 'The Polabian alternative: paganism between Christian kingdoms', *Europe around the Year 1000*, ed. P. Urbańczyk (Warsaw, 2001), 385.

¹¹⁶ A number of crucial Christian terms were adopted by the Lithuanian language through the mediation of the Greek Orthodox Eastern Slavs well before the official conversion to Roman Catholicism at the end of the fourteenth century. A case in point is none other than *krikštas* (baptism): N. Borowska, 'Wpływy słowiańskie na litewską terminologię kościelną na podstawie *Dictionary Szyrwid*', *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej*, 2 (1957), 364. In modern Lithuanian, *krikštas* signifies baptism, the primary meaning of 'cross' has been retained only in dialects and ethnological literature. The same holds true for *Kalėdos* = Christmas, *Velykos* = Easter, *bažnyčia* = church and some other terms. The most recent study on this topic is: Z. Zinkevičius, *Krikščionybės ištakos Lietuvoje: Rytų krikščionybė vardyno duomenimis* (Vilnius, 2005), 7ff.

of this kind of knowledge may be provided from the western extreme of the Baltic population. Adam of Bremen noted that a Norse merchant, supported by a Danish king, had a church built in Curonia.¹¹⁷ Such a chance church could not cause much change in the surrounding pagan landscape, but at least it made the sojourn for some Christian merchants and their ilk more comfortable. The people who used to come to Curonia from such faraway lands as Spain were not averse to consulting pagan soothsayers: the cultural shock, if any, could well be mollified, since the latter would be clad like Christian monks!

Had not Adam of Bremen qualified the Curonians as the cruelest tribe, one might easily be (mis)led into believing that the land of the Curonians was a place of multicultural tolerance, where a few Christians and a multitude of pagans could be found at ease. Such snippets of information can hardly allow one to do anything more than to say that dealings between pagans and Christians were possible. The conditions for staying would have been negotiated and renegotiated time and again. They had to be respected. This last point is made clear by the same Adam of Bremen, who reported that 'the most humane' Prussians were at the same time the most active persecutors of Christians. The knowledge of the Christian faith and its elements could seep into the lands of the Balts, but the faith could not be imposed, nor could it find sufficient appeal within local communities to cause profound changes. Qualitatively new departures became feasible only in the thirteenth century.

¹¹⁷ 'Magistri Adam Bremensis Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae', 244. This church was probably built in c. 1069, but attempts to pinpoint Palanga or some other settlement as its potential location are not convincing as long as the remnants of the church remain undiscovered. Cf. V. Žulkus, 'The Balts: economy and society', *The Neighbours of Poland in the 11th Century*, ed. P. Urbańczyk (Warsaw, 2002), 202.

High Hopes on Difficult Terrain: Mindaugas – the First and Last King of Old Lithuania

The changing background, avenues and dead-ends

Our account of the earliest arrival of Christianity in the Balt lands has demonstrated that in general terms these tribes were not naturally predisposed to embrace Christianity. They were certainly unlike the Irish who embraced the new faith of their own volition. They were not exposed so much to the arguments of the ‘Iron tongue’ as was the case with the Saxons and, to a degree, with the Polabian Slavs.¹ So, for the time being they were left to their own devices. As erstwhile Viking societies became more settled and the pagans on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea grew more self-assertive, it was now for the Danes and Swedes to think how to provide means for their own security in the maritime approaches to their lands against the threat posed by the Curonians and Estonians, when from the mid-eleventh century onwards these tribes started to mount their seafaring Viking-style raids.² It is to be stressed that up until the twelfth century all involved parties pursued only limited goals:

- 1 Brown, *The Rise*, 428–33. For a balanced approach to this phenomenon, see Kahl, ‘Zum Geist der deutschen Slawenmission des Hochmittelalters’, *Heidenmission*, 156–76. Kahl, ‘Compellere intrare’, *ibid.*, 191–200; R. A. Markus, ‘Gregory the Great and a papal missionary strategy’, *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. G. J. Cuming [*Studies in Church History*, 6] (Cambridge, 1970), 29–38; O. M. Phelan, ‘Catechising the wild: the continuity and innovation of missionary catechesis under the Carolingians’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), 463ff.
- 2 For more on this, see Mickevičius, *Normanai ir baltai*, 50–3, 123–4. Such raids seem to have subsided in the twelfth century but did not disappear altogether until the end of the first decade of the thirteenth century: *ibid.*, 137–9.

plundering raids, occasional tributes, and long-standing commercial interests by and large maintained a subtle balance between relatively stronger and weaker parties.³ However, this could not last indefinitely as the core areas of Christian Europe entered a vigorous period of internal colonization and external expansion.⁴ One sign of new things to come was the successes of professional German and Danish merchants who largely succeeded in elbowing amateur traders out of the island of Gotland and their more easterly located counterparts. The dawn of the new age was encapsulated in the rise of the mercantile Hansa made possible by the establishment of the port of Lübeck in 1159.⁵ Another sign was the application of crusading ideology to the northern Baltic Sea world. The idea of penitential warfare was already there in the second half of the eleventh century, but the first clear sign of the desire to follow in the steps of the first crusaders to the Holy Land became apparent when a call to set out against the pagan Slavs was issued by German prelates in 1108.⁶ They were not alone in this, as the vigorous deeds of Danish archbishops Eskil (1134–1177) and Absalon (1178–1202) of Lund amply show. The cumulative result of this new kind of sensitivity and activity was the so-called Wendish Crusade of 1147, which received encouragement from no less a figure than St Bernard of Clairvaux.⁷ This first Baltic crusade involved participants

³ E. Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier 1100–1525* (London, 1980), 6ff.

⁴ R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (London, 1993), 5ff. On the ideologically pragmatic preconditions for this kind of expansion, see also S. Weinfurter, *Das Reich im Mittelalter: Kleine deutsche Geschichte von 500 bis 1500* (Munich, 2008), 91.

⁵ For advantages of the Hansa merchant and the limits he faced, see H. Wernicke, 'Das Aufkommen und die Aufnahme des frühhansischen Kaufmanns im Osteerraum', *Culture Clash or Compromise: The Europeanisation of the Baltic Sea Area 1100–1400 AD. Papers of the XIth Visby Symposium held at Gotland Centre for Baltic Studies, Gotland University College, Visby October 4th–9th, 1996* [Acta Visbyensia, 11] (Visby, 1998), 251–8.

⁶ I. Fønnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades 1147–1254* [The Northern World. North Europe and the Baltic c. 400–1700 AD, 26] (Leiden–Boston, 2007), 29; H. Beumann, 'Kreuzzugsgedanke und Ostpolitik im hohen Mittelalter', *Heidenmission*, 133.

⁷ H.-D. Kahl, 'Wie kam es 1147 zum 'Wendekreuzzug'?', *Europa Slavica – Europa Orientalis: Festschrift für Herbert Ludat zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. K.-D. Grothusen, K. Zernack (Berlin, 1980), 286–96; H.-D. Kahl, 'Zum Ergebnis des

from Denmark, Germany, and Poland. The dukes of Orthodox Galich–Volyn’ did not stand by when their Catholic neighbours were in the grip of such religious enthusiasm.⁸ The immediate gains were, however, far from spectacular to say the least, but the new way of thinking and the sustained effort certainly contributed to the final end of the public cult of the Polabian Slavs in 1169.⁹ With hindsight, it looks quite natural that the next turn was for the East Baltic pagans to face a more determined stand taken up by their Christian neighbours from across the sea.

Great deeds start from humble, even haphazard origins. According to a half-legendary report, the first German merchants reached the estuary of the Daugava River in about 1159 after being swept away there by a storm.¹⁰ After going ashore they managed to strike a mutually beneficial deal with the local Livs after some skirmishes. Henceforth German merchants were a usual sight there: seasonal visitors reaching the mouth of the trade avenue leading to the even more promising lands of Rus’.¹¹ Permanent communication between Northern Germany and the Lower Daugava area was established. By the same token, routes opened up for missionaries as well. The Austin canon Meinhard of the monastery of Segeberg (Holstein) was one of the first priests to arrive in the company of German merchants in c. 1182–84. Soon he found his true vocation in winning the souls of pagans for Christ. His mission was of a peaceful nature; he managed to form a small community of local Christian neophytes and became the first bishop of Livonia (1186–1196). However, there was some friction with remaining pagans that made the hope that the propagation of the faith could

Wendenkreuzzugs von 1147. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des sächsischen Frühchristentums’, *Heidenmission*, 275–316; F. Lotter, ‘The Crusading idea and the conquest of the region east of the Elbe’, *Medieval Frontier Societies*, 285–92.

⁸ The Ruthenians are likely to have participated in this crusade as supporters of the Polish princes: Białyński, *Studia*, 45–6.

⁹ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 17.

¹⁰ *Livländische Reimchronik mit Anmerkungen, Namenverzeichnis und Glossar*, ed. L. Meyer (Paderborn, 1876, 2nd edition Hildesheim, 1963), lines 127–200.

¹¹ ‘Heinrici Chronicon Lyvoniae’, ed. W. Arndt, *MGH SS*, XXIII (Hanover, 1874), 241. On the general situation along the Daugava trade route in this period, see A. Rādiņš, ‘Some notes on the Daugava Way. The end of 12th – beginning of 13th century’, *Culture Clash or Compromise*, 188–9.

be furthered without outside help increasingly unlikely.¹² Crusade was an option close to hand.

Meinhard's successor was a former Cistercian abbot of Loccum (south of Bremen) named Bertold, a man prone to a more heavy-handed approach to pagans.¹³ Once given, the promises to accept baptism could not be retracted so easily: the washing away of baptism in the waters of the Daugava River was no argument in the eyes of Christians. Such apostates had to be dealt with accordingly. Attempts to talk to the Livs from a position of force ended in clashes which claimed the life of Bertold in 1198.¹⁴ The situation of the locally-based Christians seemed rather bleak. However, there were men across the sea who were not going to relent on what had begun in the new vineyard of the Lord.

By this time the papacy had already been given some chance to exert its influence over the course of events on the eastern Baltic coastlands as it had to respond to Christianising initiatives emanating from secular and religious lords in Denmark, Germany and Sweden.¹⁵ Spiritual awards were on offer and pilgrims were encouraged to go in aid to local Christian communities facing the threat from neighbouring pagans. Prompted by the urgent need to defend 'the Church in Livonia', Pope Innocent III issued a crusading bull in October 1199.¹⁶ The crusades to the Baltic region, as elsewhere, were thus served well by defensive rhetoric. It was artificial to a degree,¹⁷ but it would be anachronistic to qualify such

¹² For more on the mission of Meinhard, see M. Hellmann, 'Die Anfänge christlicher Mission in den baltischen Ländern', *Studien über die Anfänge der Mission in Livland*, ed. M. Hellmann [Vorträge und Forschungen, 37] (Sigmaringen, 1989), 19–33. Selart, *Livland*, 69ff.

¹³ On the contribution of the Cistercians to the conversion of Livonia, see N. Bourgeois, 'Les Cisterciens et la croisade de Livonie', *Revue Historique*, 307 (2005), 548ff.

¹⁴ B. U. Hucker, 'Der Zisterzienserabt Bertold, Bischof von Livland, und der erste Livlandkreuzzug', *Studien über die Anfänge*, 45–51. W. Urban, *The Baltic Crusade* (DeKalb, 1975), 36–7.

¹⁵ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes*, 23ff.

¹⁶ *LU*, ed. F. G. von Bunge, I (Reval, 1853), no. 12, col. 14 (5 October 1199).

¹⁷ Cf. T. Nyberg, 'Deutsche, dänische und schwedische Christianisierungsversuche östlich der Ostsee im Geiste des 2. und 3. Kreuzzuges', *Die Rolle der Ritterorden in der Christianisierung und Kolonisierung des Ostseegebietes*, ed. Z. H. Nowak [*Ordines militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica*, 1] (Toruń, 1983), 94.

moves as unprovoked aggression against the peace-loving pagans. The unpredictable behaviour of the local tribes with no central authority lends some credibility to the defensive rhetoric, even if the amount of the response to hit-and-run forays may appear, to a modern observer, to have been out of proportion. The crux of the matter lies in perspective. The locals could well imagine that their squabbling and feuding with some deserters from their ranks and a few newcomers from overseas represented nothing new in the long history of elbowing each other out in the area of the Lower Daugava. To the sensitive Christians, however, even a small ambush on a Christian community represented an instance of an all-out assault on the Church that should not go unpunished. If some pagan land was conquered in the process by whatever means available, it was still beyond any doubt a most laudable enterprise.¹⁸

The man who managed to make critical use of such dispositions was none other than Albert von Buxhövdén, a canon of Bremen and bishop of Livonia from 1199.¹⁹ In a matter of just a few years he succeeded in crossing the point of no return. He was bent on creating a permanent power structure in the region of the Lower Daugava and he did it: he founded Riga in 1201, built a new cathedral church, thus providing a stable seat for a new bishopric.²⁰ By expanding his possessions, first of all along the lucrative Daugava trade route, Albert became the first territorial lord in Livonia as well. He was an indefatigable organiser and traveller. During his thirty-year incumbency he crossed the Baltic Sea to and fro twenty seven times. His outreach extended to Gotland, Denmark, Friesland, and, of course, to the pope. The bishop knew how to tap spiritual and material resources by pleading the cause of the Livonian church far and wide.

¹⁸ Perhaps the most eloquent testimony to this kind of mindset is provided by the fourteenth-century Teutonic chronicler Peter of Dusburg. See W. Wippermann, *Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie: Das Bild des Deutschen Ordens in der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung und Publizistik* (Berlin, 1979), 42–9; J. Trupinda, *Ideologia krucjatowa w kronice Piotra z Dusburga* (Gdańsk, 1999), 99ff. On the topos of a noble savage applied by Dusburg to pagan Prussians, see R. Mažeika, 'Violent victims? Surprising aspects of the just war theory in the chronicle of Peter von Dusburg', *The Clash of Cultures*, 123–6.

¹⁹ G. Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert von Riga: Ein Bremer Domherr als Kirchenfürst im Osten (1199–1229)* (Hamburg, 1958); Selart, *Livland*, 78–102.

²⁰ F. Benninghoven, *Rigas Entstehung und der frühhansische Kaufmann* (Hamburg, 1961), 19ff.

The continual involvement of the papacy in Eastern Baltic affairs started with Bishop Albert of Riga. The sheer success of the mission made it imperative to address a variety of issues from indulgences to the pilgrims, to the treatment of the newly converted, to the adjudication of squabbles between interested parties.²¹ An analysis of the indulgences promised to pilgrims by Pope Innocent III shows that during his pontificate the Baltic crusade was not upgraded so as to equal that to the Holy Land in terms of spiritual merit. To him, the need to recover the Holy Land was much more urgent.²² This set of priorities did not discourage Albert: it was reportedly at the stage provided by the Fourth Lateran that the bishop called the newly-converted Livonia the 'Land of Mary' and met with understanding from the Fathers of the Council.²³ The atmosphere created by the proceedings at Lateran IV was favourable to the upgrading of the northern crusades carried out by the new pope Honorius III (1216–1227) in 1217–18.²⁴ They became as meritorious as those to the 'Country of the Son'. This new status of the crusades applied to both Livonia and Prussia which in its turn was a target of missionary activities from the early thirteenth century.

One of the crucial innovations implanted in the East Baltic was the creation of the Order of Sword-Brothers in 1202. The mastermind behind this knightly order was yet another Cistercian, Theodoric.²⁵ By helping this order to come to life he fell back on the model provided by St Bernard of Clairvaux, who helped the Order of the Templars to come out of age. Humbler Cistercian figures had similarly contributed to the creation of smaller Spanish crusading orders.²⁶ Such

²¹ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes*, 117–18.

²² *Ibid.*, 98.

²³ Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert von Riga*, 64–5, 117; S. Ekdahl, 'Die Rolle der Ritterorden bei der Christianisierung der Liven und Letten', *Gli Inizi del Cristianesimo in Livonia-Lettonia* (Vatican City, 1989), 241–2; Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes*, 84–5. For the name of Livonia and the mental emergence of this new Christian region, see M. Tamm, 'Inventing Livonia: the name and fame of a new Christian colony on the medieval Baltic frontier', *ZfO*, 60 (2011), 186–209.

²⁴ Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes*, 138–40.

²⁵ F. Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder* (Cologne–Graz, 1965), 39–44, 51–2; Urban, *Baltic Crusade*, 53.

²⁶ Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder*, 7–11; Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 264–6.

parallels do show that much the same means were applied both for the Muslim ‘Saracens’ in the Mediterranean and for ‘the Northern Saracens’ of the Baltic region.

The German crusaders and colonists were quick in recognizing intertribal hostilities and making use of them. Besides, they enjoyed some crucial military advantages: heavily armed knights on strong warhorses, infantrymen with crossbows, siege engines, stone castles, and sea-worthy ships – cogs.²⁷ By combining political acumen and military action, they managed to secure their foothold and succeeded in expanding deeper inland along the Daugava and the Gauja rivers. In initial phases, most conquests were made by the joint forces of crusaders and Sword-Brothers. As a knightly order, the latter were no match for the great orders of the Hospitallers or the Templars, but even the most basic function of keeping castles manned throughout the year made a difference in the north. Quite soon the Sword-Brothers found out that winter was a most welcome season for military exploits in marshy woodlands.²⁸ Those locals (Livs and Letts) who flocked to the German side were given protection from the more unruly pagan Estonians or Lithuanians. Within the first decade, the Lithuanian warbands were pushed away from the Lower Daugava where they had had vested interests from the late twelfth century. By the middle of the second decade of the thirteenth century the Livs and Letts living along the Daugava were freed from dependence on the Rus’ian princelings who nested in the strongholds of Koknese and Jersika.²⁹ Bishop Albert was eager to concentrate his temporal possession along the Daugava and to keep the Sword-Brothers away from this lucrative trade avenue. The Sword-Brothers were thus compelled to advance upstream along

²⁷ Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades*, 87; Ekdahl, ‘Die Rolle der Ritterorden’, 71–7; K. V. Jensen, ‘Bigger and better: arms race and change in war technology in the Baltic in the early thirteenth century’, *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, ed. M. Tamm, L. Kaljundi, C. S. Jensen (Farnham, 2011), 247–58; A. Mäesalu, ‘Mechanical artillery and warfare in the chronicle of Henry of Livonia’, *ibid.*, 265–90.

²⁸ Urban, *Baltic Crusade*, 83–4.

²⁹ For more on Bishop Albert’s relations with Rus’ians, see M. Hellmann, *Das Lettenland im Mittelalter: Studien zur ostbaltischen Frühzeit und lettischen Stammesgeschichte, insbesondere Lettgallens* (Münster, 1954), 122–38; Selart, *Livland*, 78ff.

the river Gauja in the direction of Estonia. Their advance into this country was checked in 1218, when Novgorod Rus'ians stepped in. As locally available Germans were too weak to push them out, the Danish king Waldemar II was approached for help. His fleet sailed to North Estonia and carved out a Danish lordship, which remained in Danish hands up until 1346. Subsequently the fighting concentrated around the stronghold of Tartu defended by pagan Estonians and Orthodox Russians. When it was finally captured in 1224, most of the defenders were put to sword. As means of intimidation it proved effective; free Estonians surrendered and the Rus'ians lost their interest in Estonia for a while.

Having secured Estonian lands for good, the Germans resumed their advance south of the river Daugava and west towards the shore of the Baltic Sea where they had to face Semgallian and Curonian tribes, respectively. The Semgallians were subjugated by 1229 and the major part of Curonia in much the same time. Now the most natural target in the south was the lands of the Lithuanians. Prospects should have been bright, all the more so that the raid of 1229 brought great success: some 2000 dead pagans and some 2500 horses as booty.³⁰ The campaign of 1236 was well prepared in advance; however, its timing in late September proved a liability. The incursion was directed against the western Lithuanians known as Žemaitijans (Samogitians). It ended in a crushing defeat of the Christian forces made up of German crusaders, Sword-Brothers, duty-bound tribesmen, and auxiliary contingents from Pskov and Novgorod.³¹ The defeat at the Battle of Saulė (somewhere in the region of present-day Šiauliai) brought the Order of the Sword-Brothers so low that it could recover no more. In 1237 it was amalgamated with the Teutonic Order, a newcomer to the Baltic Sea region, but already in possession of an impressive record of conquests made in Prussia. Now it was their business to retake the lands that had slipped into revolt. After a series of vicissitudes the

³⁰ *LR*, lines 1834–44.

³¹ A. Dubonis, 'Du šimtai pskoviečių Saulės mūšyje (1236)', *Lituanistica*, 1 (1990), 13–24; A. Dubonis, 'Naugardas prieš Lietuvą: Saulės mūšio (1236 m.) epizodo liudijimas apie politinių santykių permainas tarp lietuvių ir jų šiaurės rytų kaimynų', *Lituanistica*, 55 (2009), 1–11.

Order managed to reassert and consolidate its control over most of Livonia by the end of the thirteenth century, and thus, for the sake of convenience, scholars call this branch of the Teutonic Order the Livonian Order. It proved, however, beyond Germans' capabilities to occupy the southernmost part of Semigalia, which in the course of time became North Lithuania. Similarly, those Semigallians who fled their German overlords became Lithuanians. They were not alone in this as over the course of the thirteenth century pagan Lithuania became a land of refuge for those Prussians and Yatvingians who chose to escape from the rule of the Teutonic Order or the local bishops. Those Prussians who stayed faithful to the Order rendered it valuable military services as they proved ruthless warriors in warfare whose savagery was proverbial even in conditions of intertribal conflict which in some respects continued unabated in fourteenth-century conditions of the 'perpetual crusade'.³²

Such is the backdrop looking from the western perspective for dealing with the rise of medieval Lithuania, which proved to be the last pagan state in Europe. Developments in Eastern Europe were no less striking. The first incursion of Tatars in 1223 was followed by the great invasion of 1237–40, which brought Kievan Rus' down and imposed a new tributary regime over its principalities. At first the Riurikid princes had to go to Karakorum to have their rights confirmed by the great khan. With the fragmentation of the Mongol Empire and the formation of the Kipchak Khanate (popularly known as the Golden Horde) in 1260s, the sovereign rights over former Kievan Rus' lands belonged to Chingisid khans residing in Saray on the Lower Volga. There is a huge literature on the Tatar rule over Rus' and its consequences for the later development of Russia,³³ but there is still no recent attempt at dealing with what consequences the Tatar invasion of Rus' had on the rise of Lithuania. Earlier attempts to explain this as almost a direct consequence of the Tatar onslaught on Russia suffer from too much schematism

³² A. Ehlers, 'The Crusade of the Teutonic Knights against Lithuania reconsidered', *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150–1500*, ed. A. V. Murray (Aldershot, 2001), 21–44.

³³ D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 2000) discusses this problem and different schools of thought.

and from not paying enough attention to earlier and subsequent events. The Lithuanian raiding parties began their incursions into the lands of Rus' from about 1183 and continued, by fits and starts, throughout most of the thirteenth century being gradually replaced by the annexation of new territories and more regular modes of exploitation.³⁴ So the shock created in Rus' by the Tatar invasion made it easier for Lithuanian warbands to roam in Rus', but it did not create preconditions for raids of booty, nor did it weaken the Riurikid princes so much as to render them incapable of taking countermeasures against unwelcome intruders from a marshland situated somewhere beyond the upper reaches of the Nemunas.³⁵ As long as the Golden Horde was there to stay, it was a power to be reckoned with. The interplay between Lithuania, Rus' principalities, and Tatars must therefore be considered in the context of changing circumstances throughout the period covered in this book.

Now it is time to give some consideration to the issue of what kind of entity was represented by Lithuanians and Lithuania. If we arrange all available evidence in a strictly chronological order, it is quite clear that Lithuanians were a pagan Baltic tribe different from their Orthodox Christian Slavic neighbours, who in linguistically diverse sources were called by the name Rus' and its derivatives. If one reads about the 1208 incursion of the Sword-Brothers and their Semigallian allies into the land of the Lithuanians, it is absolutely clear that these Lithuanians were close neighbours to Semigallians since the tentative raid of the latter away from home took only one day.³⁶ When one reads about the Sword-Brothers rushing to meet their fate in the land of *Littowen* near present-day Šiauliai in 1236, it is clear that they raided in the direction of Žemaitija.³⁷ When one reads that in the second half of the thirteenth century a Lithuanian prince Vaišvilka (Vaišelga, Voishelk) had an Orthodox monastery

³⁴ Thirteenth-century Lithuano-Rus'ian relations are discussed in detail in H. Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie a Moskwa*, vol. 1: *Litwa a Moskwa w XIII i XIV wieku* (Warsaw, 1933), and in his *The Origin of Russia* (London, 1954).

³⁵ This topos is expressed in the mood of lamentation by the author of *Slovo o pogibeli Russkoi Zemli*. See Iu. K. Begunov, *Pamiatnik russkoi literatury XIII veka* «*Slovo o pogibeli Russkoi zemli*» (Moscow-Leningrad, 1965), 183.

³⁶ 'Heinrici Chronicon Lyvoniae', 263.

³⁷ *LR*, line 1898.

built between Novgorodok and Lithuania, one gets a clear indication that this land must have laid further north of the upper reaches of the river Nemunas.³⁸ When a reader of Peter of Dusburg's chronicle comes across a passage informing that after finishing battles against the Prussian tribes the Teutonic Knights reached the Lower Nemunas and embarked on a war against the hard-necked Lithuanians who lived across the river it is quite clear that he did not have Belarusian ancestors in his mind.³⁹ Peter of Dusburg knew that Novgorodok was located in the land of Krivichians.⁴⁰ Put together, this evidence belies in strongest possible terms some nebulous theories in the dim light of which the original Lithuania is assumed to have existed somewhere in the region of the upper Nemunas where a putative Balto-Slavic contact zone must have existed.⁴¹ It may be admitted frankly that

³⁸ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 859; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis. Doslidzhennia. Tekst. Komentar*, ed. M. F. Kotliar (Kiev, 2002), 127.

³⁹ 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', ed. M. Töppen, *SRP*, I (Leipzig, 1861), 146.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 180–81.

⁴¹ The Belarusian nationalist theories about the origins of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are largely based on the approaches informed by the nineteenth-century Russian imperialist historiography. The difference is that what had been considered as the preponderance of pure 'Russianness' in the history of the Grand Duchy has now been turned into a unilateral suprematist affirmation of Belarusian claims across the whole of the history of the Grand Duchy. Such holistic approaches have been a well-known feature of young nationalisms across East-Central Europe in modern times. Lithuanian historians have largely overcome this school of thought which is now in full swing in modern Belarus bent on creating national consciousness among its wider layers of population. Unsurprisingly, the need to meet this 'public demand' has resulted in numerous distortions of the medieval and early modern history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This state of current Belarusian historical scholarship has already been addressed by Lithuanian historians and those Belarusian scholars who remain faithful to the basic principles of historical craft. Cf. E. Gudavičius, 'Following the tracks of a myth', *LHS*, 1 (1996), 38–58; G. Saganovich, 'Velikoe Kniazhestvo Litovskoe v sovremennoi belorusskoi istoriografii', *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos tradicija ir 'dalybos'*, ed. A. Bumblauskas, Š. Liekis, G. Potašenko (Vilnius, 2008), 73–91; A. Dziarnowicz, "'Poszukiwanie Ojczyzny". Dyskurs na temat Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego we współczesnym społeczeństwie białoruskim', *Dialog kultur pamięci w regionie ULB*, ed. A. Nikžentaitis, M. Kopczyński (Warsaw, 2014), 134–51. See also A. Dubonis' review of A. K. Kraucevich, *Stvarenne Vialikaga Kniasstva Litouskaga* (Minsk, 1998), *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, 4 (1999), 151–57, and a response to it by A. Kraucevich, 'Dyskusia tsi svarka?', *Gistarychny Al'manakh*, 5 (2001), 172. See also J. Zejmis, 'Belarusian national historiography and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a Belarusian state', *ZfO*, 48 (1999), 383–96. Some egregious tenets of Belarusian national agenda have been appropriated uncritically by N. Davies, *Vanished Kingdoms: The History of Half-Forgotten Europe* (London, 2011), 243.

we lack rock strong evidence to satisfy the most demanding modern critics asking for a proof beyond any reasonable doubt that medieval Lithuanians spoke Lithuanian. At this point the central problem is that up until the introduction of Catholic Christianity in 1387, the Lithuanians represented a totally oral culture without means of recording their deeds in writing.⁴² Even in this case the not-so-direct evidence is available. Perhaps the best is presented by the 1420 letter of Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania addressed to Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg. In it, the grand duke explained that Lithuanians constituted one nation and that Lithuania was made up of two integral parts, *Žemaitija* and *Aukštaitija*.⁴³ As much as he may have been politically motivated to emphasize the unity of *Žemaitija* with the rest of Lithuania in the face of the still ongoing territorial disputes with the Teutonic Order, he was quite right in his etymologising: *Žemaitija* is a Low Land (< Lith. **žemas*, 'low'), *Aukštaitija* is an Upper Land (< Lith. **aukštas*, 'high, tall').⁴⁴ It is fairly reasonable to suggest that the language spoken at his court was Lithuanian: when in 1429, during a conversation amidst high-ranking foreign personalities Vytautas wanted to be confidential with King Jogaila of Poland, he spoke Lithuanian⁴⁵; when he was preparing for his would-be coronation he specially invited Heinrich Holt, the Grand Marshal of the Teutonic Order, because he knew the language of 'our land' and therefore would be able to converse with 'our people'.⁴⁶ As the majority of Vytautas' high-ranking men were Roman Catholic

⁴² It may be noted that the first Lithuanian common (not proper) noun was written down only at the end of the fifteenth century by the Italian humanist Filippo Buonaccorsi active in Poland. It was *gyuotem*, modern Lithuanian *gyvatė*, that is snake: Ališauskas, *Sakymas ir rašymas*, 44.

⁴³ *Codex Epistolaris Vitoldi Magni Ducis Lithuaniae, 1376–1430*, ed. A. Prochaska [*Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia*, VI] (Cracovia, 1882), 816: 'Nos vero in lithwanico diximus ad vos'.

⁴⁴ This etymology is still largely current in modern Lithuanian philological scholarship: cf. K. Būga, *Rinktiniai raštai*, 3 (Vilnius, 1961), 85–6; Z. Zinkevičius, *Lietuvių kalbos istorija*, 2 (Vilnius, 1987), 13. It is not improbable that the term *žemaičiai* may derive from *žemė* (land, soil). Cf. E. Fraenkel, *Litauisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2 (Heidelberg–Göttingen, 1965), 1299; W. Smoczyński, *Słownik etymologiczny języka litewskiego* (Vilnius, 2007), 777–8.

⁴⁵ CEV, no. 1345, p. 816.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 1428, p. 920. See also A. Szweda, *Organizacja i technika dyplomacji polskiej w stosunkach z Zakonem Krzyżackim w Prusach w latach 1386–1454* (Toruń, 2009), 175–6.

still bearing their Lithuanian names, it would be hard to imagine that in this case other than the Lithuanian language was expected to serve as the spoken language.⁴⁷ It is true that late-medieval and early-modern scholars with humanistic inclinations were not unanimous as to which language family the language of the Lithuanians and their cousins (Prussians and Latvians) should be attributed to. Some thought of it as Slavic, some as Finno-Ugrian, some as different from both of them and akin to still others. One of the earliest authors to come up with the idea of the Lithuanian language as separate from the Slavic ones was the Polish chronicler Jan Długosz (1415–1480).⁴⁸ He thought that the Lithuanian language was most likely derived from Latin.⁴⁹ Of course, such a theory of ‘origins’ has long been abandoned, but the discovery of the Lithuanian language as separate from Slavic and Finno-Ugrian languages has remained valid and now it is a basic fact shared by philologists of most diversified backgrounds.

Having arrived at the conclusion that it is highly advisable to call a spade a spade, we may reiterate: in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Slavic term *Litva* (Lithuania) was applied to the Baltic speakers located north of the Nemunas River.⁵⁰ But who were they? What mix of ethnic elements were they made of? And what political manifestations did they represent? These are the questions that

⁴⁷ There can be no doubt that the interpreters serving for the Teutonic Order could tell the difference between Lithuanian and Ruthenian. In relating the bragging of drunken Lithuanian boyars in the castle of Veliuona in 1412, one interpreter noted that the garrison spoke Lithuanian, Polish, Ruthenian and Tatar: Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, OBA 1772. For more about the use of the Lithuanian language in late-medieval and sixteenth-century Lithuania, see A. Dubonis, ‘Lietuvių kalba Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje nuo XIV a. pabaigos iki pirmosios knygos (1547): vartojimo politika ar politinis vartojimas?’, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės istorijos kraštovaizdis: Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys. Skiriama profesorės Jūratės Kiaupienės 65-mečiui*, ed. R. Šmigelskytė-Stukienė (Vilnius, 2012), 35–59.

⁴⁸ On this and many other issues related to the history of the philology of the Baltic languages in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see P. U. Dini, *Alliteoesavr. Linguistica baltica delle origini: Teorie e contesti linguistici nel Cinquecento* (Livorno, 2010), 152–6; idem, *Prelude to Baltic Linguistics: Earliest Theories about Baltic Languages (16th century)* (Amsterdam–New York, 2014), 46–50.

⁴⁹ Długosz, Jan, *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae. Liber decimus (1370–1405)*, ed. D. Turkowska (Varsaviae, 1985), 164.

⁵⁰ Kibin’, *Ot iatviazy do Litvy*, 81, 135.

have been addressed by generations of scholars. Even in areas much better served by historical records and up-to-date archaeological research, the issues related to the so-called process of ethnogenesis are notoriously difficult to tackle. Here we will outline the basic considerations that seem to us to be most convincing to date and necessary for a proper understanding of the process of conversion.

There is no scholarly consensus as to the etymology of the name of Lithuania or Lithuanians. Some decades ago, when Lithuania was still isolated from the free world, the theory that the name of Lithuania derived from the rivulet *Lietauka* was the most current among philologically-wise academics.⁵¹ But even then, this theory did not carry much conviction outside this circle, because any commonsensical person was free to wonder how on earth a mere eleven-kilometre-long rivulet could have given rise to the name of a people and a land of no small proportions. This theory seems all the less convincing if we take into account that in 1009, at the time when Bruno of Querfurt perished somewhere *in confinio Ruscie et Lituae*, the latter term had already come to designate a region with no signs of political centralization whatsoever. That is why it is virtually impossible to find a reasonable explanation for the hydronymic origin and the spread of the name *Lietuva*.

As we have noted, the Quedlinburgian *Litua* is a Slavicized form of Lithuania and here it must simply denote the land of Lithuanians. Philologists have conclusively demonstrated how the East Slavic *Литѡва* derived from *Lietuva/Leituva*.⁵² Russian chronicles retained a dual meaning of *Litva* throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: the same word *Litva* designated the people and their land simultaneously, and it is not always instantly clear from the context which meaning is implied. Recent philological and historical research has resulted in highly probable explanations that allow the insights of both fields of knowledge to meaningfully converge. The philologist Simas Karaliūnas has advanced a thesis that Lithuania/Lietuva/Litva must originally have meant the coming together of men to form a retinue or warband, corresponding basi-

⁵¹ K. Kuzavinis, 'Lietuvos vardo kilmė', *Kalbotyra*, 10 (1964), 8–10.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 12; Zinkevičius, *Lietuvių kalbos istorija*, 2, 13.

cally to Old Scandinavian institution of *lið*.⁵³ The historian Artūras Dubonis has explored most comprehensively a certain social group of Lithuanians within Lithuanians who retained the original name of Lithuanians, *Leitis*.⁵⁴ From historical sources coming down from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries it is clear that they represented grand-ducal servitors rendering services more or closely related to the military sphere: horse breeding, participation in military campaigns, guarding of the frontier.⁵⁵ When these discoveries became known to the outside world, they were further developed into a theory about a common Lithuanian-Latvian tribe called *Leitis* and its wide-ranging migrations resulting from the Slav pressure on the region of the middle and upper Dnieper river.⁵⁶ As this theory represents a bundle of shreds of evidence from chronologically extended period of time, it loses much of its force. There is absolutely no certainty what the Eastern Baltic tribes exposed to Slav pressure used to call themselves. The social group *leitis* could come into being only when grand-ducal power already existed (that is, not earlier than the reign of Mindaugas), so references to this group while dealing with pre-state period are out of the question. It means that *Litva* existed prior to servitors called *leitis*. If Karaliūnas is right, then it is likely that the members of warbands forming beyond the western rim of the East Slavic expansion could well have called themselves something like *leitis* (in singular) and their group *leituva/lietuva*. Their range of activities or simply the phenomenon of the rise of warbands in a linguistic milieu whose speakers only later became aware that they spoke *Lithuanian* provides a clue as to why Lithuanian/Lithuania succeeded in covering quite a wide area at the time when there could be no talk of any state-like political structure. Thus by the early eleventh century *Lietuva* acquired additional (territorial) meaning. It gave rise to the name *lietuvis*,

⁵³ S. Karaliūnas, 'Lietuvos vardo kilmė', *Lietuvių kalbotyros klausimai*, 35 (1995), 78–88. On *lið* in Sweden, see P. Line, *Kingship and State Formation in Sweden, 1130–1290* [*The Northern World. North Europe and the Baltic c. 400–1700 AD. Peoples, Economies and Cultures* 27] (Leiden–Boston, 2007), 255–61.

⁵⁴ A. Dubonis, *Lietuvos didžiojo kunigaikščio leičiai: Iš Lietuvos ankstyvųjų valstybinių struktūrų praeities* (Vilnius, 1998). Cf. also Karaliūnas, 'Lietuvos vardo kilmė', 81–2.

⁵⁵ Cf. Dubonis, *Ldk leičiai*, 25–34, 68–82.

⁵⁶ Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past.*, 132–3, 135–7.

an inhabitant of Lithuania. It is conceivable that this name did not gain exceptional currency as the existence of the very name of the aforementioned grand-ducal servitors *leitīs* demonstrates. The latter were used as agents to bring more problematic or simply more necessary areas under grand-ducal control.⁵⁷ This was the case in some districts of Žemaitija and in some parts of present-day Belarus. These Lithuanians contributed (unwittingly) to the wider diffusion of their own name: there are quite a few localities in present-day Lithuania still bearing names *Leičiai*, *Laičiai* and the like.⁵⁸ They also contributed to a much more widespread diffusion of the name *Litva* in various districts of Belarus in the sixteenth century.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the existence of the name *lietuvis* (Lithuanian) may be inferred from the grand-ducal title which in the times of pagan Lithuanian stressed the rule over people (*rex lithuanorum*), not territory. In sum, the rise and diffusion of the name Lietuva/Lietuvis/Litva has much in common with the name of Rus'. The Swedish art of rowing, which gave the name to Viking adventurers in Eastern Europe,⁶⁰ was no more special than the 'Lithuanian' habit of taking part in warband life. The difference is that the name *Rhos* and its derivatives came to be appropriated and recycled by ethnically different groups. By contrast, Lithuanians retained their old name, to the chagrin of some modern Belarusian nationalists. It is very likely that thanks to their distant ancestors, nameless Eastern Baltic tribes were prompted to be called and to become Lithuanians.

It seems very probable that the tenth-century advance of the East Slavs archaeologically detectable in the upper reaches of the Nemunas and Neris rivers as well as in the very vicinity of Kievan Rus' prompted the still free local Baltic society to adapt to new circumstances and challenges. The advance of the Rurikid rule must have been conducive to the formation of numerous warbands and thus to the adaptation of local communities to hierarchical structures of power. In this respect the Lithuanians differed significantly

⁵⁷ Dubonis, *Ldk leičiai*, 55–7, 59–60, 74–8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 22–5.

⁵⁹ Cf. Dubonis, *Ldk leičiai*, 40–3.

⁶⁰ G. Schramm, 'Die Herkunft des Namens Rus': Kritik des Forschungsstandes', *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 30 (1982), 12ff. See also Franklin, Shepard, *The Emergence*, 27–50.

from rigidly conservative Prussians, who, even in the face of the Teutonic onslaught in the thirteenth century, remained true to their egalitarian principles.⁶¹

The Eastern Slavs, the ancestors of present-day Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Russians, came to know Lithuanians as members of such roaming warbands. The earliest notice of *Litva* to date is contained in the inscription of birch-bark No. 590: 'Litva made war on the Karelians'.⁶² After a recent redating it must be dated to the late eleventh century.⁶³ As now there is no good clue to relate this piece of information to any known event, it is impossible to tell whether Novgorodians feared or rejoiced when this happened. From somewhat later time, the second half of the twelfth century, Lithuanians are known to have played a role of mercenary troops in internecine wars between the Rurikid princes.⁶⁴ It was the job of Lithuanians to get pay and booty for their military service. Thanks to such employment, the leaders of warbands became ever more self-assertive and in time they would launch their raids unsolicited by Rus'ian potentates. As Rus' then represented a patchwork of principalities, the coordinated response to the threat from the Lithuanians was largely unforthcoming.⁶⁵ From the late twelfth

⁶¹ Cf. A. Nikžentaitis, 'Zur Frage der Fürstenschicht in der baltischen Gesellschaft des 13. Jahrhunderts', *Lübeck Style? Novgorod Style? Baltic Rim Central Places as Arenas for Cultural Encounters and Urbanisation 1100–1400 AD. Transactions of the central level symposium of the Culture Clash or Compromise (CCC) project held in Talsi September 18–21, 1998* [CCC papers, 5] (Riga, 2001), 334–5.

⁶² <http://gramoty.ru/index.php?no=590&act=full&key=bb>. http://www.kirjazh.spb.ru/biblio/pizv_bg/pizv_g0.htm#590 (last accessed on 1 June 2015).

⁶³ *Ibid.* It must be noted that close upon its discovery in 1981, this birch-bark letter was dated to the last decades of the twelfth century and its earliest commentators viewed it in the context of an all-out regional conflict in which Lithuanians moved against the allies of Novgorod, the Karelians, and thus were supposedly acting on the side of the Swedes: V. L. Ianin, A. A. Zalizniak, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste (iz raskopok 1977–1983 gg.). Kommentarii i slovoukazatel' k berestianym gramotam (iz raskopok 1951–1983 gg.)* (Moscow, 1986), 50–1. Now, when this piece of birch-bark was considerably redated, the said interpretation looks like a product of the Cold War imagination. For the later redating, see V. L. Ianin, 'Berestianaia gramota № 590', *Istoricheskaia arkheologiya: Traditsiia i perspektivy. K 80-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia D. A. Avdusina* (Moscow, 1998), 387–8.

⁶⁴ Kibin', *Ot iatviazy do Litvy*, 132–3.

⁶⁵ Cf., for example, measures undertaken by Novgorod in 1198 to prevent Lithuanian predatory activities in its domains. *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis' starshego i mladshhego izvodov* [NIL], ed. A. N. Nasonov (Moscow–Leningrad, 1950), 44.

century the presence of Lithuanian warbands was felt along the main northern trade routes from the Lower Daugava (Dvina) all the way to its upper reaches, and along the river Lovat in the direction of Lord Novgorod the Great.

By the early thirteenth century Lithuanian raiders began to pay occasional visits to the lands of Volyn' and Galich in the south-west Rus'. The very distance and direction of Lithuanian raids show that these warriors were well familiar with routes and local political constellations within Rus'. By then Lithuanians were quite at home in such lands as Polotsk and small Rus'ian principalities of Koknese and Jersika on the Daugava River. Such activities were conducive to the emergence of strong men (*kniazi*, dukes) who, although not immune to temptations to eliminate each other, somehow managed to form a consensual agreement geared up to mounting raiding parties into neighbouring lands. Therefore it is reasonable to reconstruct the evolution of Lithuanian martial activities from defensive to mercenary to expansionist in character. Arrangements struck for such purposes were inevitably shaky ones, but the structure with more powerful families/clans atop of less powerful came into being. That is why it is possible to speak of the confederation of the Lithuanian lands from the first decades of the thirteenth century.⁶⁶ Then the lands of Lithuanians operated as an interconnected network for spawning warbands. This characteristic feature is perhaps most graphically expressed by Henry of Livonia.⁶⁷ In describing how, in 1207, a Lithuanian duke sought to exact revenge on the Sword-Brothers for the annihilation of his lieutenant and warriors, the chronicler remarked that for this purpose he gathered volunteers

⁶⁶ E. Gudavičius, '1219 metų sutarties dalyviai ir jų vaidmuo suvienijant Lietuvą', *Lietuvos TSR Aukštųjų mokyklų mokslo darbai: Istorija*, 22 (1982), 33–46; idem, 'Dėl Lietuvos valstybės kūrimosi centro ir laiko', *Lietuvos TRS Mokslų akademijos darbai*, series A, 2(83) (1983), 61–70; idem, 'Dėl lietuvių žemių konfederacijos susidarymo laiko', *Lietuvos TSR Aukštųjų mokyklų mokslo darbai: Istorija*, 24 (1984), 12–28.

⁶⁷ For his person see A. V. Murray, 'Henry of Livonia and the Wends of the Eastern Baltic: ethnography and biography in the thirteenth-century Livonian mission', *Studi Medievali*, 54 (2013), 809–14. On his 'Chronicon Livoniae' see *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*.

from all over Lithuania.⁶⁸ A more stable structure of Lithuanian ruling clans came to spotlight thanks to the peace treaty of 1219 concluded between Lithuanian dukes and the rulers of Galich–Volyn'.⁶⁹ Lithuanian lands were represented by twenty-one dukes, among whom five – Živindubas, Daujotas, Dausprungas, Mindaugas, Vili-gaila – were senior. It is worth paying attention to the fact that these five men and the rest of the group bore ethnic Lithuanian names (this was, incidentally, not a men-only club, as there just happened to be one widow, *Plikosova*, named so after her late husband, whose name must have been *Plikis*, that is, 'Baldy').

We also have to stress that the 1219 treaty included dukes from Žemaitija. This land in west Lithuania has of old been a subject of much speculation and rumination among archaeologists, linguists, and historians alike. Were Žemaitijans a different ethnic group subsumed by Eastern Lithuanians to form a unitary modern Lithuanian nation, or were they simply Lithuanians with more pronounced local cultural features and more acute sense of regional identity? Most Lithuanian archaeologists tend to subscribe to a view that Žemaitijans constituted a separate ethnic group identifiable in the area of archaeological culture known by the name of Samogitian Flat Cemeteries (or Burial Grounds) Group in as early as the fifth century AD.⁷⁰ Most Lithuanian linguists tend to view Žemaitijans in geographical and philological terms, because, according to them, there is no ground for treating Žemaitijan as a separate language – it is one of the dialects of the Lithuanian language. It is to be noted that since each of these interpretative camps has its own 'dissidents', we may be sure that this debate will not die down

⁶⁸ 'Heinrici Chronicon Lyvoniae', 259: 'Post hec recordati Lethones omnium occisorum suorum a Rigensibus et Semigallis ante duos annos, miserunt per totam Lethoniam, colligents exercitum magnum'.

⁶⁹ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 735–6; E. Gudavičius, *Mindaugas* (Vilnius, 1998), 137–43; recapitulated by Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past*, 176–8. This treaty is traditionally dated to 1219, though it is more probable that it was concluded at the turn of 1219–20: D. Dąbrowski, *Daniel Romanowicz król Rusi (ok. 1201–1264): Biografia polityczna* (Cracow, 2012), 103.

⁷⁰ A good overview of the Balt cultures during the Migration period in English is given in A. Bitner-Wróblewska, *From Samland to Rogaland*, 21–31.

for long.⁷¹ Lithuanian historians seem to be divided more evenly, but at present time it seems that the majority of them are still going along with the majority of linguists. There are some inherent drawbacks in all these fields of scholarly inquiry. In our opinion, Lithuanian archaeologists have relied too heavily on the mode of thinking characteristic of Gustaf Kossinna or Yulian Bromley as may be inferred from their haphazard rush to identify different archaeological cultures with 'respective' tribes or ethnic groups.⁷² Lithuanian linguists jump too rashly to their final conclusions on the basis of linguistic evidence alone. As for Lithuanian historians who are in possession of evidence dating from not earlier than the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, it is hard for them to engage in a debate with archaeologists, because the main stock of arguments of the latter lies in the time of the Great Migrations.

It is clear that at present there is no possibility to give answers or supply clues that would satisfy every specialist in every field of specialisation. For the purposes of our study, some observations would suffice that are, in our view, most pertinent and helpful for a better understanding of the conversion of Žemaitija, which will

⁷¹ The best overview of this debate and the most comprehensive treatment of the 'Žemaitijan question' to date is provided by P. Kalnius, *Žemaičiai: XX a. – XXI a. pradžia* (Vilnius, 2012), 75–122.

⁷² The phenomenon of G. Kossinna and I. Bromley and the impact of their theories on archaeologists have been amply discussed by F. Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube region c. 500–700* (Cambridge, 2001), 15ff. The preoccupation of Lithuanian archaeologists with certain ethnic groups in identifying certain archaeological cultures is perhaps most graphically expressed in the 'invention' of the tribe of Aukštaitijans (Lith., *Aukštaičiai* = Eastern Lithuanians). This notion and term also occur in many a historical textbook (for instance, H. Łowmiański, *Studja nad początkami społeczeństwa i państwa litewskiego*, 2 (Vilnius, 1932), 69–70). There are several meanings of *Aukštaitija* in thirteenth-to-fifteenth-century sources: (1) a settlement; (2) a small area of land (*territorium*) extending in radius of 20–30 km from the confluence of the Nemunas and the Neris rivers; (3) as a counterpart to binary structure of ethnic Lithuanian lands Žemaitija/Aukštaitija, see A. Dubonis, 'Kas buvo aukštaičiai Lietuvoje XIII–XV amžiais?', *Ministri Historiae. Pagalbiniai istorijos mokslai Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės tyrimuose: Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys, skirtas dr. Edmundo Rimšos 65-mečio sukakčiai*, ed. Z. Kiaupa, J. Sarcevičienė (Vilnius, 2013), 97–9, 103. In contrast to Žemaitija, *Aukštaitija* was and has remained only a geographical term. The application of this term to people living in Central and Eastern Lithuania is a comparatively modern development displaying only quite recent ethnographic features.

be discussed in Chapter 8. So we are consciously placing a strong emphasis on the activities of Lithuanian warbands, because it is their military deeds which riveted the attention of Russian and German chroniclers in the thirteenth century. We think this is not accidental. It is hard to imagine any other wide-ranging sort of activities in the conditions of a more or less subsistence economy and in the absence of an articulate political culture. The prospect of booty and the related increase in prestige and power served as a bond that would occasionally bring together the warrior elites from eastern Lithuania and Žemaitija alike. Despite the proximity of the material culture of the Žemaitijans to that of the Semgallians, these two tribes went their separate ways.⁷³ Semgallians had their own catchment zone for troops.⁷⁴ We may suppose that this process was facilitated by the linguistic proximity between the people of Žemaitija and Eastern Lithuania. This relationship was also reinforced by marital ties that brought some leading families of Eastern Lithuania and Žemaitija together. And even allowing for the self-evident truth that such deeds and relations were not sufficient to keep cooperation in a long-term mode and up to such a degree of permanence as could be observed in modern nation-states, their importance should not be underestimated.

Eastern Lithuania and Žemaitija formed some sort of a political entity – the Lithuanian land – that was recognizable to Rus'ian and German chroniclers in the thirteenth and especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁷⁵ What gave Žemaitija her regional and, in time, cultural peculiarity was the course of subsequent history that was somewhat different from that of the rest of Eastern Lithuania.⁷⁶ The grand-ducal domain lay in Eastern Lithuania in the area de-

⁷³ The material cultures of the Žemaitijans and the Semgallians were very similar in the fifth to eighth centuries. With the introduction of cremation and the adoption of swords in Žemaitija in the tenth century, the differences between these tribes began to increase making Žemaitijans and Eastern Lithuanians more alike. See I. Vaškevičiūtė, *Žiemgaliai V–XIII amžiuje* (Vilnius, 2004), 92–3 with references to further literature.

⁷⁴ 'Heinrici Chronicon Lyvoniae', 263: 'Qui mittentes per omnes fines eorum congregaverunt exercitum magnum...'

⁷⁵ O. Halecki, *Litwa, Ruś i Żmudź jako części składowe Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego* (Cracow, 1916), 25–8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 31–42.

linedated by the middle flow of the Nemunas and the Neris rivers.⁷⁷ Lands further north were subsumed as annexes in the second half of the thirteenth century. This was not the fate of the central part of Žemaitija, which lay beyond the immediate reach of the Lithuanian grand dukes and their agents from the thirteenth and up until the beginning of the fifteenth century.⁷⁸ Another decisive factor in keeping Žemaitija relatively apart from the rest of Lithuania is to be seen in the continual attempts of the Teutonic Order to subjugate Žemaitija as the land of strategic importance separating Prussia and Livonia. Some sort of cleavage was already there during the reign of Mindaugas and was partly due to the peculiar circumstances of his conversion to be discussed presently. Further cultural factors underlying the peculiarities of the development of Žemaitija in terms of social and cultural history need not occupy us here. In sum, they represent part of the ongoing ethnogenesis of the Lithuanian nation: from eastern Baltic tribes to a medieval *natio* under the rule of one dynasty, to the modern Lithuanian nation built largely by self-conscious intelligentsia of peasant extraction starting from the second half of the nineteenth century. Also of note is the fact that there is no evidence showing that in medieval or early modern times Žemaitijans ever thought of themselves as an ethnic group, let alone a nation, different from the rest of the Lithuanians.⁷⁹ That is why, we think, the attempts to conceptualise their history

⁷⁷ H. Łowmiański, *Studja*, 2, 106–11. Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 138–43.

⁷⁸ It must be kept in mind that the core area of Žemaitija comprised some 7600 square kilometres extending over the upland of Žemaitija (central part of modern Western Lithuania, Žemaitija proper). Here the tribal structures remained intact up to the early fifteenth century and were presided over by tribal aristocracy thus called because of this archaic social structure. In political terms, when it came to delineate Žemaitija with regard to larger territorial units (Prussia, Livonia, Eastern Lithuania), the territory of Žemaitija might approximate some 20000 square kilometres, thus providing ground to call it ‘Greater Žemaitija’ as proposed by Eugenijus Saviščevas in his fundamental study: E. Saviščevas, *Žemaitijos savivalda ir valdžios elitas 1409–1566 metais* (Vilnius, 2010), 35–7.

⁷⁹ It seems that this idea came to be operative in some radical circles soon after the Lithuanian state was re-established in 1990. On the one hand, this was due to a response to a wave of neotribalism that had swept Western Europe in the second half of the twentieth century; on the other, it was caused by fallacies contained in a book by an esoteric trickster: C. L. T. Pichel, *Samogitia. The Unknown in History* (Wilkes-Barre, 1975). It was translated into Lithuanian in 1991 and reprinted in 2007.

as that of 'a failed nation-building' are too far-fetched.⁸⁰ Belarusian nationalist phantasies of present-day Lithuanians as a by-product of Žemaitijans are ill-informed at best, or infused with anti-Lithuanian mania at worst. Their attempts to depict modern Belarusians as erstwhile Lithuanians are starkly reminiscent of the Esopian donkey masquerading as a lion. It is a pity that such a prominent scholar like Norman Davies has failed to recognise nationalistic fury raging behind a very thin veneer of (quasi)scholarly discussion.

The rise and fall of the Roman Catholic Kingdom of Lithuania

The political structure of twelfth–early-thirteenth-century Lithuania may best be described as chiefdom. It had no central power radiating its authority all over the country, but it had dukes with their retinues. That is why the coming of a sole ruler seems, with hindsight, to have lain within the reach of some more resourceful, more brutal, or perhaps simply more fortunate potentate. In 1219, the narrow circle of five senior dukes included young Mindaugas who was lucky enough to become the first sole ruler of Lithuania. Mindaugas made his way to occupy a dominant position among other Lithuanian dukes in the 1240s. The actual circumstances leading up to his dominant position are not sufficiently clear. The chronicle of Galich-Volyn' informs us that he started hostilities against some of his kin: some of them were either killed or expelled

⁸⁰ M. Niendorff, *Das Großfürstentum Litauen: Studien zur Nationsbildung in der Frühen Neuzeit (1569–1795)* [Veröffentlichungen des Nordost-Instituts, 3] (Wiesbaden, 2006), 179–99. By the way, the view that Žemaitija was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania on a par with its Ruthenian annexes dates back to some nineteenth-twentieth-century Russian and Polish authors. For example, M. Liubavskii, *Oblastnoe delenie i mestnoe upravlenie Litovsko-Russkogo gosudarstva ko vremeni sozdaniia pervago Litovskago statuta* (Moscow, 1892), 2, 35; L. Kolankowski, *W pięćsetlecie Horodła* (Cracow, 1913), 6. An opposite view maintains that Žemaitija was an integral part of Lithuania with more pronounced regional features that obtained legal force over the course of the fifteenth century: Halecki, *Litwa Ruś i Żmudź*, 25ff. Cf. also S. Zajączkowski, *Studia nad dziejami Żmudzi wieku XIII* (Lviv, 1925), 2–5.

from Lithuania.⁸¹ Mindaugas' nephews Tautvilas and Gedvydas, together with their maternal uncle Vykintas, were offered the chance to look for their fortune in the direction of Smolensk.⁸² They seem to have acceded to this 'proposal', perhaps harbouring hopes that in the wake of the Tatar onslaught fame and riches might be rather easy to achieve. They failed in their attempt to carve out a lordship. First the dukes of Suzdal' beat them soundly, though they managed to escape with their lives. Then Mindaugas sent his men to get rid of them for good. However, he failed to eliminate them since news of the approaching danger travelled faster than the duke's troops. They fled to their brother-in-law, Duke Daniil of Galich. The latter refused to hand them over to Mindaugas. Daniil viewed such developments as a golden opportunity to strike the rising pagan polity. He sent his messengers to Polish dukes asking for their participation in the joint action: it is high time for Christians to move against the pagans for they are fighting each other.⁸³ Although Polish help was unforthcoming⁸⁴, Daniil managed to collect a conspicuous array of allies: the bishop of Riga, the Master of the Teutonic Order in Livonia, disgruntled tribesmen from northern Žemaitija and Yatvingia (south-west of Lithuania). Mindaugas was thus encircled by his enemies. After the first attacks from the south led by the Rus'ian dukes, in 1250 the Teutonic Order managed to penetrate

⁸¹ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 815; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 112–13. The immediate cause of this enmity remains elusive. Even so partial with regard to Mindaugas a source as the Chronicle of Galich-Volyn' admitted that a feud started because of a *mutual hostility*. Methods applied by Mindaugas in his coming to sole rule prompted a number of historians to compare him with Clovis, or Merovingian rulers in general: J. Latkowski, *Mendog król litewski* (Cracow, 1892), 22–3; Z. Ivinskis, *Lietuvos istorija iki Vytauto Didžiojo mirties* (Rome, 1978; repr. Vilnius, 1991), 162–3. Cf. Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 177.

⁸² 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 815; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 112. A more detailed discussion in: M. Giedroyć, 'The arrival of Christianity in Lithuania: early contacts (thirteenth century)', *OSP*, n. s., 18 (1985), 11–12; Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 211–15.

⁸³ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 815; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 112; Giedroyć, 'The arrival... (thirteenth century)', 20–1.

⁸⁴ This matter has been a moot point in historiographical research so far. The position of the Polish Piasts, most probably Bolesław the Shy of Cracow and Siemowit of Mazovia, might best be explained by a 'wait and see' attitude. Cf. Dąbrowski, *Daniel Romanowicz*, 306. See also W. Nagirnyj, *Polityka zagraniczna księstw ziem halickiej i wołyńskiej w latach 1198 (1199)–1264* (Cracow, 2011), 271.

deeper into Lithuania than ever before or after.⁸⁵ About this time his major rival Tautvilas received baptism at the hands of Bishop Nicholas of Riga.⁸⁶ This baptism might be viewed as an attempt by Tautvilas and his sponsors to replace a pagan ruler with a Christian one, if the direct conquest of the country proved beyond the reach. The sponsorship at the baptism of Tautvilas invested the bishop of Riga with not negligible moral advantages as compared with the Livonian master.

The devastation caused to Mindaugas and his allies by the military campaigns of 1249 and 1250 prompted him to seek a way out of this awkward situation by trying to win over the Livonian landmaster Andrew of Stirland. Mindaugas' proposals did not fall on deaf ears. The anti-Mindaugas coalition began to crumble and now new horizons were open to the duke through the good offices of the Livonian Order. The Teutonic Knights supported Mindaugas in beating back the last most serious attack by his enemies. Early in 1251 Mindaugas was baptized into the Catholic Church. The Pope became more accessible to Mindaugas than ever before.⁸⁷

Mindaugas established contacts with Innocent IV when his envoys, accompanied by Teutonic Knights, were received by the Pope in Milan in July 1251. The news was good: a ruler on the far eastern marches of Latin Europe had received baptism. On this occasion the Pope issued six bulls that showed how it was planned to introduce Christianity into Lithuania, and how natural law should be supplanted by the Law based on divine authority. Acceding to Mindaugas' own request, the Pope declared him a special son of the Church, and took him, his family and his possessions under papal protection.⁸⁸ The bishops of Ösel (Saaremaa) and Kurland were commissioned by the Pope to take care of ensuring for Mindaugas

⁸⁵ Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 219.

⁸⁶ There is an opinion that the bishop who sponsored the baptism of Tautvilas was Albert Suerbeer: Giedroyc, 'The arrival... (thirteenth century)', 22. This opinion is untenable because Tautvilas was baptised in Riga in 1250 and then the local ordinary was Bishop Nicholas (1229–1253): Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 215.

⁸⁷ All this internal strife in Lithuania, in which its neighbours were taking active part, has recently been discussed in Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 211–27.

⁸⁸ *Senās Latvijas Vēstures Avoti [SLVA]*, ed. A. Švābe, II/2 (Riga, 1940), no. 336, pp. 308–9. *VMPL*, I, no. 102, p. 49 (17 July 1251).

freedom from unwarranted molestation that might have imperilled his newly-acquired status and the lands brought under the papal protection.⁸⁹ Bishop Heidenreich of Kulm was empowered to crown the newly converted ruler.⁹⁰ The same bishop also had to find a suitable candidate for the office of bishop, to consecrate him and to receive his oath of allegiance to the Holy See⁹¹. The bishops of Dorpat (Tartu) and Ösel were prompted to lend their support, together with the Teutonic Knights, on behalf of this neophyte ruler eager to convert and subjugate the remaining pagans.⁹² In sum, all these bulls convey the impression of a new Christian kingdom *in statu nascendi*. By allowing the new convert to be crowned a king and by creating a new bishop directly subordinate to the Holy See, the Pope prepared ground for two seminal institutions that were useful (but not indispensable, of course) to any independent state in Medieval Europe: a crown and an ecclesiastical province. Such institutions could well be used as a means to infuse the new Catholic kingdom with articulate political culture and the necessary ideological outfit. One of its salient features would be the propagation of the faith. This strain was reinforced even more when in 1255, acceding to the request of Mindaugas, Pope Alexander IV confirmed his rule over the already occupied Rus'ian lands and justified the new kingdom's expansion into Rus' as conducive to the propagation of the Catholic Faith among the Orthodox believers.⁹³ From his Teutonic tutors Mindaugas should have received the first lessons in political theology. It is conceivable that in his approach to the pope he was spurred on by much the same privileges as had already been granted to Daniil of Galich in the late 1240s, at the time when he and his subjects showed some inclination towards Church Union.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ *SLVA*, II/2, no. 337, p. 309; *VMPL*, I, no. 103, p. 49 (17 July 1251).

⁹⁰ *SLVA*, II/2, no. 335, p. 308; *VMPL*, I, no. 104, p. 50 (17 July 1251); A. Wiśniewska, *Henryk-Heidenryk pierwszy biskup chełmiński* (Pelplin, 1992), 70–5.

⁹¹ *Urkundenbuch des Bistums Culm*, vol. 1: *Das Bisthum Culm unter dem Deutschen Orden 1243–1466*, ed. K. P. Wölky [*Neues preussisches Urkundenbuch. Westpreussischer Theil*] (Danzig, 1885), no. 28, p. 15; *VMPL*, I, no. 105, p. 50 (17 July 1251).

⁹² *SLVA*, II/2, no. 338, pp. 309–10; *VMPL*, I, no. 106, pp. 50–1 (26 July 1251).

⁹³ *VMPL*, I, no. 123, p. 61 (6 March 1255).

⁹⁴ B. N. Floria, *Issledovaniia po istorii Tserkvi: Drevnerusskoe i slavianskoe Srednevekov'e* (Moscow, 2007), 200.

One can already note a discrepancy between what was being discussed in the core areas and high places of medieval Latin Europe and what was done on the ground in the more far away places. Pope Innocent IV is rightly famous for his teaching on the rights of infidels to property and lordship.⁹⁵ In this he was clearly at odds with a canon lawyer called Hostiensis, who taught that after the birth of Jesus Christ, pagans ceased to have any title to legitimate rule and property, and all this could rightfully be taken away by Christians if their actual possessors were so blind as not to accept the truth of the Word. Such high-flown discussions would have fallen on deaf ears in the still largely barbarian lands between the principalities of Poland and Rus', so a more straightforward way of consolidating a newly Christian monarch's power was allowed. If the theory of Hostiensis served well for the Teutonic Order, the bulls of Innocent IV could have served Mindaugas just as well had he managed to achieve such successes as could already be seen on the part of the Teutonic Knights. The bulls of Innocent IV concerning Lithuania under Mindaugas may serve as an illustration of the major role played by petitioners in getting what they desired most. On the eastern outskirts of the Latin Christendom, fine speculative differences tended to give way to more clear-cut certainties.

By outmanoeuvring his enemies, Mindaugas succeeded in splitting up their camp effectively. Tautvilas, seeing no more sense in staying in Livonia, bade good-bye to the well-meaning bishop of Riga and moved to his friends in Žemaitija. He was still in touch with Daniil of Galich, but their joint attack on one of Mindaugas' main castles was beaten off: Mindaugas had some Teutonic troops fighting successfully on his side. After some further inconclusive fighting a peace was reached between Mindaugas and Daniil. Tautvilas also came to terms with Mindaugas and managed to install himself as duke in Polotsk. Some decades later, considering the final outcome of all this fighting, a Ruthenian chronicler vented his understandable indignation: it was Master Andreas, corrupted as he was by

⁹⁵ J. Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels: The Church and the Non-Christian World 1250–1550* (Philadelphia, 1979), 29–48. For antecedents and further literature, see A. Angenendt, *Toleranz und Gewalt: Das Christentum zwischen Bibel und Schwert* (Münster, 2009), 403ff.

the gifts from Mindaugas, who created this non-Christian Lithuania from which Germans suffer misfortunes to this very day!⁹⁶

Having come out of this war with the upper hand, Mindaugas was in a safe position to receive a royal crown. The coronation took place some time at the the turn of July 1253.⁹⁷ The location of this ceremony remains elusive to this date.⁹⁸ The settlement of ecclesiastical matters was a bit more complicated. Instead of Bishop Heidenreich of Kulm, it was Archbishop Albert Suerbeer of Prussia and Livonia who received papal authorization in 1253 to consecrate his brother-priest, Christian, as Bishop of Lithuania.⁹⁹ The archbishop received from him the oath of allegiance, which was not to the liking of Mindaugas, because allegiance was now due to the archbishop and not the pope. Mindaugas appealed to Innocent IV and the latter had to authorize the bishop of Naumburg to accept the required oath of allegiance.¹⁰⁰

It proved still more difficult to provide adequate material support for the new bishop and to remunerate the Teutonic Order for its recent services. Mindaugas found himself in great difficulties when he had to found a cathedral church and to provide its clergy with adequate incomes. The bishop of Lithuania was granted landed possessions not in Eastern Lithuania, where the domain of Mindaugas

⁹⁶ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 817; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 113.

⁹⁷ There is a more or less general consensus among Lithuanian historians that the coronation must have taken place on 6 July (Sunday) 1253. This date has been deduced by the historian Edvardas Gudavičius and now is a Lithuanian national holiday, the Statehood Day.

⁹⁸ The vision that the coronation of Mindaugas took place in Novgorodok (Belarus) is rather widespread nowadays in professional and non-professional circles of Belarus, though it is a pure invention first advanced by the sixteenth-century chronicler Maciej Strykowski.

⁹⁹ *VMPL*, I, no. 111, p. 53; *LU*, ed. F. G. von Bunge, VI (Riga, 1873), no. 2733, coll. 22–3 (24 June 1253). Fr Christian OT is explicitly mentioned in yet another bull of Pope Innocent IV: *LU*, I, no. 254, col. 337 (21 August 1253); Wiśniewska, *Henryk-Heidenryk*, 73–4.

¹⁰⁰ *VMPL*, I, no. 120, p. 58 (3 September 1254). A special bull concerning the direct subordination of Bishop Christian to the Holy See was issued on 20 September 1254: *ibid.*, no. 121, p. 59. The bishop of Dorpat was informed about these most recent developments and ordered to help keep the bishop of Lithuania safe from any interference that might be contrary to the true will of the pope: *LU*, I, no. 275, coll. 356–7 (20 September 1254). These matters were discussed extensively by Z. Ivinskis, 'Mindaugas und seine Krone', *ZfO*, 3 (1954), 360–86, and M. Hellmann, 'Der Deutsche Orden und die Königskronung des Mindaugas', *ibid.*, 387–96.

lay, but in Žemaitija.¹⁰¹ After an apparent failure to get what was his due there, Bishop Christian passed his rights over to the Teutonic Knights.¹⁰² These rights had to do with collecting tithes, which were notoriously difficult to introduce in all the Baltic lands even if a direct conquest was involved. Thus the Teutonic Order added one more charter to those already received from Mindaugas. Most of these grants were about lands in Žemaitija, a region that was not controlled by the king.¹⁰³ How are we to interpret such grants that were notoriously difficult to take effect? Was Mindaugas involved in double-dealing, cunningly sabotaging his bishop and his Teutonic allies? This interpretation seems to strain the available evidence too much. There is no sign of any ecclesiastical censure invoked by the bishop or the pope; there is no sign of displeasure shown by the Teutonic Order for inadequate remuneration from the king. It seems more plausible to suggest that Mindaugas simply did not want to undermine his position in Lithuania by alienating his supporters and subjects through donations to Germans. It was another matter with major parts of Žemaitija: lands that had been in direct opposition to his rule could well be written off without much ado.

Much the same socio-political constraints should be borne in mind when we consider the fate of the cathedral church that had to be built by Mindaugas. A theory that Mindaugas had a cathedral church built in Vilnius is quite widespread. This theory came to full blossom in the 1980s, when the remains of some earlier church structure were discovered beneath the floor of the present-day cathedral church of Vilnius.¹⁰⁴ Sensational news about the remains of the cathedral church of Mindaugas was published

¹⁰¹ *LU*, I, no. 263, col. 345 (12 March 1254).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, no. 266, coll. 348–50 (6 April 1254).

¹⁰³ These donations were published several times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The issue of their authenticity was discussed in detail by K. Małczyński, 'W sprawie autentyczności dokumentów Mendoga z lat 1253–1261', *AW*, 11 (1936), 1–56.

¹⁰⁴ It may be noted that a theory about Vilnius as the capital of Lithuania already in the thirteenth century was advanced in as early as 1966. See R. Batūra, 'XIII a. Lietuvos sostinės klausimu', *Lietuvos TRS Mokslų akademijos darbai*, series A. 20 (1966), 141–65. Although it has had no foundation in contemporary sources, it nevertheless facilitated the rise of 'interpretations' advanced by the archaeologists who failed to correctly attribute the layers to respective periods of time, when they came to excavate the basements of the Vilnius cathedral church.

without bothering too much with chronological indicators, without a critical analysis of medieval sources, and by showing excessive confidence in legendary passages of sixteenth-century chronicles and nineteenth-century romantic historians (such as Teodor Narbutt or Simonas Daukantas).¹⁰⁵ It must be also borne in mind that it was the time when the six-hundredth anniversary of the conversion of Lithuania was approaching (1387–1987).¹⁰⁶ It must not be forgotten that at this time the notion of the study of history as a patriotic duty was widespread. All this and the unforgettable years of the late 1980s combined to produce a very strong public demand for such ‘eye-opening’ discoveries as the cathedral of Mindaugas. This theory was also supposed to provide some substance to yet another theory: that the town of Vilnius had already existed in the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁷ Although much has changed in the study of Lithuanian archaeology and history since then, Western scholars remain largely unaware of what is going on the ground currently. So it is not surprising that a theory of the cathedral of Mindaugas is still reflected in some Western textbooks, when in Lithuania itself it has already been basically reviewed and found wanting.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ N. Kitkauskas, A. Lisanka, ‘Nauji duomenys apie Viduramžių Vilniaus katedrą’, *Kultūros barai*, 5 (1986), 58.

¹⁰⁶ A. Kajackas, ‘History and recent archaeological investigations of Vilnius Cathedral’, *La Cristianizzazione della Lituania* (The Vatican, 1989), 265–72. Cf. also M. Jučas, *Krikščionybės kelias į Lietuvą: Etapai ir problemos* (Vilnius, 2000), 33. A skeptical opinion was voiced by Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa*, 325.

¹⁰⁷ There is a curious habit to be observed in certain circles of Lithuanian scholars of assigning Lithuanian institutions to as early a date as possible. The rise of such theories is partly due to personal rivalries, partly to a widespread belief in that the ‘older’ is tantamount to what is viewed as something better, purer and more genuine and authentic. This may be illustrated by attempts to see Vilnius as a town already in the thirteenth century. Apart from just cited article by Batūra, ‘XIII a. Lietuvos sostinės klausimu’, see also his ‘Lietuvos metraščių legendinės dalies ir M. Strykovskio “Kronikos” istoriškumo klausimu’, *Lietuvos TRS Mokslų akademijos darbai*, series A, 21 (1966), 265–83. The same holds true with the attempts to antedate the rise of the Lithuanian state prior to Mindaugas. The most recent instance of this school of thought is T. Baranauskas, *Lietuvos valstybės ištakos* (Vilnius, 2000). By and large, such theories may be viewed as Lithuanian counterparts to Belarusian nationalist theories discussed above.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 505–6; *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, 35; J. Tauber, R. Tuchtenhagen, *Vilnius. Kleine Geschichte der Stadt* (Cologne, 2008), 14–15. The actual state of research is presented in a chapter dealing with a theory of pagan temple, which allegedly stood in place of the cathedral church of Vilnius. See Chapter 7.

It must be stated that what is known about the cathedral in Lithuania during the reign of Mindaugas is that it was only planned to be built. Pope Innocent IV required that the consecration of the first bishop of Lithuania be carried out on condition of the ruler having provided a plot of land for a cathedral church to be built.¹⁰⁹ We know that the bishop was consecrated and this would supply the strongest indirect evidence that a church may have been built. From reading Innocent's bulls on the vicissitudes of the consecration of Christian it becomes clear that the bishop of Lithuania was already consecrated, but his king was still doing no more than intending to provide everything necessary for a cathedral church. Thus the original condition of what things were to be first was circumvented. From a legal point of view not everything was so bad, because the bull of 24 June 1253 to Archbishop Albert Suerbeer did not stipulate so rigidly the prior condition of getting funds before consecrating the bishop.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, this evidence does indicate that a cathedral church was not built yet. The matter of providing the new bishop of Lithuania with a decent income seems also to have been met halfway at best. In our opinion, this should not be viewed as a sign of bad faith on the part of Mindaugas. As said, such failures did not incur any censure from the pope or any other cleric. True, Mindaugas did receive an admonition from Pope Alexander IV to defend the bishop of Lithuania, whose diocese was exposed to pagan attacks on all sides, but this may be viewed as a natural reaction on the part of the pope to what he had been told.¹¹¹ This admonition should not be subjected to overinterpretation: standard papal pleas for Christian rulers to ensure due respect and protection for clergy are not (usually) taken to indicate that one ruler or another was

¹⁰⁹ VMPL, I, no. 105, p. 50 (17 July 1251).

Cf. *ibid.* and *ibid.*, no. 111, p. 53 (24 June 1253).

¹¹⁰ *Preußisches Urkundenbuch. Politische Abtheilung*, ed. R. Philippi, I/1 (Königsberg, 1882), no. 312, p. 230 (7 March 1255). Relations between the Teutonic Order and Mindaugas seem to have been a bit strained precisely in 1254–1255, due to the Order's dealings with Polish and Ruthenian rulers with regard to the lands of Yatvingians, and this may have had a bearing on the relations between Mindaugas and Bishop Christian, who was a member of the Teutonic Order. The relations between Mindaugas and the Order were mended at the end of 1255. See K. Stopka, 'Misja wewnętrzna na Litwie w czasach Mendoga a zagadnienie autorstwa "Descriptiones terrarum"', *NP*, 68 (1987), 249.

pious or impious. The problems with the foundation of Church organisation in mid-thirteenth century Lithuania might appear rather as a more down-to-earth business if we consider that all this was not easy in a country with no towns, no monetary economy, with no people accustomed to paying taxes or rendering services on a permanent basis.¹¹² This state of affairs was quite clear to Pope Innocent IV, who at the very outset of creating Church organisation in Lithuania instructed the bishop of Kulm to advise the would-be bishop and his priests to be as lenient as possible in demanding tithes, lest neophytes were scandalized and diverted from their own *bono proposito*.¹¹³ So, in given circumstances Bishop Christian had no other choice but to accompany his itinerant king, Mindaugas. One may suppose that his life was not easy. In as early as 1257 he left Lithuania and since then acted as a suffragan bishop in various German lands (Cologne, Münster).¹¹⁴ In a word, there were no possibilities and too little time for a cathedral church in Lithuania to have been constructed.

By lavishing papal benefactions on Mindaugas, Innocent IV showed much confidence in the neophyte ruler and originally this must have been grounded in what he had been told by the envoys of the Teutonic Knights from Livonia and by Mindaugas' envoys from Lithuania.¹¹⁵ Much the same predisposition was characteristic of Pope Alexander IV. All this was far from personal predilections

¹¹² Cf. Wiśniewska, *Henryk-Heidenryk*, 74, n. 55.

¹¹³ *SLVA*, II/2, no. 334, p. 307; *VMPL*, I, no. 101, p. 49 (15 July 1251).

¹¹⁴ Bishop Christian left Lithuania in about 1257 never to return, and since that year his presence is attested in Germany (Cologne, Münster, Mainz); he died in 1270: D. Wojtecki, *Studien zur Personengeschichte des Deutschen Ordens im 13. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1971), 148–53. See also *SRP*, II, 43; *Regesta Lithuaniae ab origine usque ad Magni Ducatus cum Regno Poloniae Unionem*, vol. 1: *Tempora usque ad annum 1315 complectens*, ed. H. Paszkiewicz (Warsaw, 1930), nos. 363–5, 370, 391, 392, 443a, 478a, 488. The motives for his departure are not known. Presumably, neither Mindaugas nor the Teutonic Order managed to create adequate conditions for pastoral care as he saw fit. In this respect his fate is similar to that of a number of other thirteenth-century bishops, who, being unable to maintain their position in precarious conditions prevailing in thirteenth-century Livonia, acted as suffragan bishops in various German dioceses: K. Eubel, 'Der Minorit Heinrich von Lützelburg, Bischof von Sempgallen, Curland und Chiemsee', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 6 (1885), 92–103, see also Hellmann, 'Die Päpste', 41.

¹¹⁵ J. Stakauskas, *Lietuva ir Vakarų Europa XIII a.* (Kaunas, 1934; 2nd edition Vilnius, 2004), 87.

and the popes, as practical men, also had their own expectations of Mindaugas. Now we can cast a tentative glance at Mindaugas as a Christian ruler.

The mid-thirteenth century, when Latin Europe lived under the threat of Tatar invasion, was an uneasy time. After the Tatar incursion into Central Europe in 1241–42, Pope Innocent IV had to take care of developing preventive and defensive measures against a repetition of this invasion. Franciscan and Dominican friars were sent out to see what the new scourge of God was like, and to try to establish how far the Mongols were pliable to accommodation with Christians. Neither John of Piano Carpini nor William of Rubruk brought back a consolation to the West. The correspondence which took place between Innocent IV and Khan Güyük revealed a chasm in communication – two worlds apart.¹¹⁶ Therefore the idea of creating a defensive ring of Christian buffer-states was readily picked up by the papacy.¹¹⁷ That is why the emergence of a Catholic ruler next door to Orthodox Rus' and relatively close to the Tatar sphere of operations earned the additional value for Mindaugas in the pope's eyes. All the more so that the only thing that could be held most fresh in the memory of the Roman Curia was news brought by Carpini about Lithuanians who stealthily pillaged the lands of Southern Rus' in the wake of Tatar invasion.¹¹⁸ Now the current change seemed much for the better. Similar hopes were entertained by the pope with respect to Daniil of Galich who, in the same year as Mindaugas, was crowned by Opizo, legate to Poland

¹¹⁶ Cf. K.-E. Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels* [Studi e Testi, 291] (Vatican City, 1981), 182–6 (a letter of Khan Güyük addressed to Pope Innocent IV, 1246). See also P. Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow, 2005), 46–7.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 95; J. H. Lind, 'Mobilisation of the European periphery against the Mongols: Innocent IV's all-European policy in its Baltic context – a recantation', *The Reception of Medieval Europa in the Baltic Sea Region* [Acta Visbyensia 12] (Visby 2009), 77–80. In the light of the arguments advanced by Witalij Nagirnyj, the idea of an anti-Tatar front is to be viewed with more circumspection. Cf. Nagirnyj, *Polityka zagraniczna*, 259–62.

¹¹⁸ Giovanni di Pian di Carpine, *Storia dei Mongoli*, ed. E. Menestò (Spoleto, 1989), 304, 308.

and Prussia.¹¹⁹ The need for the crusade against the Tatars was upheld by the next pope – Alexander IV.¹²⁰ No rescue from the West was likely to materialise. However, one military action against the Tatars did indeed take place in 1256. Mindaugas and Daniil decided to cooperate in their anti-Tatar effort which ultimately must have led to the capture of Kiev.¹²¹ It is telling that the chronicle of Galich-Volyn' ascribes to Mindaugas this ultimate goal of the campaign.¹²² The coordination between their troops was, however, poor and even led to mutual clashes.¹²³ Such a failure must be explained by a lack of confidence between the two kings. This is not surprising if we take into account the fact that, after all, they were competitors in a power struggle within Rus'. Perhaps some surprise may be aroused by simple daring on the part of Mindaugas: the ruler, who had only recently survived thanks to external help, went out of his way to reach out as far as Kiev. This is an indication that he tried to take up seriously the role of a Christian king.

Evidence coming from the contemporary and near-contemporary sources of Catholic provenance offers us a number of insights into Mindaugas as a Christian and his milieu. It is known that before and after baptism Mindaugas received instruction from Christian, a member of the Teutonic Order, who in due course became bishop of Lithuania.¹²⁴ It is known that Martha, wife of Mindaugas, was

¹¹⁹ K. Kwiatkowski, 'Przeciw Batu-chanowi czy Mendogowi – okoliczności, wymowa i znaczenie polityczne koronacji Daniela Romanowicza Halickiego na króla Rusi w 1253/1254 roku', *Klio. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym*, 5 (2004), 37–61; Dąbrowski, *Daniel Romanowicz*, 356–8. The place of the coronation in Drohichyn is viewed as a political statement by the newly-crowned king vis-à-vis his pagan neighbours (Yatvingians) and his Polish allies.

¹²⁰ *LU*, I, no. 268, col. 350 (9 March 1254).

¹²¹ Daniil, of course, had his own interests with regard to Kiev: Dąbrowski, *Daniel Romanowicz*, 281, 284, 388–9, 398–9.

¹²² 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 2, 838. *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 120.

¹²³ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 839–40. *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 120–1; M. Bartnicki, *Polityka zagraniczna księcia Daniela halickiego w latach 1217–1264* (Lublin, 2005), 176–7.

¹²⁴ *LU*, I, no. 254, col. 337 (21 August 1253). Mindaugas gave testimony to his religious zeal in a letter addressed to Pope Alexander IV. The letter has not survived but its general contents are known from the papal reply. *VMPL*, I, no. 123, p. 60 (6 March 1255). It might be regarded as a mere lip service were it not consonant with other actions – see below.

a sincere Christian woman.¹²⁵ Priests of the Teutonic Order, who remained in Lithuania after the coronation of Mindaugas found themselves in circumstances enabling them to carry on the work of evangelization.¹²⁶ There was a Dominican and Franciscan presence in Lithuania and in the very milieu of Mindaugas. Mention should be made of Bishop Heidenreich of Kulm, who crowned Mindaugas in 1253. Friar Sinderamus OP was mentioned among witnesses to documents issued by Mindaugas.¹²⁷ It is most likely that the author of the *Descriptiones terrarum*, who left a vivid description of the prospects for the mission in Lithuania and in neighbouring countries in the time of Mindaugas, may have been a friar of the Dominican or the Franciscan order.¹²⁸ All in all we can observe a

¹²⁵ Cf. *LR*, lines 6426–56 and 6544–64.

¹²⁶ *LR*, lines 3569–72 and 3598–601.

¹²⁷ *LU*, I, no. 252, col. 334 (July 1253); no. 354, col. 451 (mid-June 1260). The latter document is spurious. For Sinderamus, see A. Selart, 'Die Bettelmönche im Ostseeraum zur Zeit des Erzbischofs Albert Suerbeer von Riga (Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts)', *ZfO*, 56 (2007), 494–5.

¹²⁸ The issue of the authorship of this tract has received ample attention from scholars, who proposed a number of possible identifications as a result. According to the Polish historian Karol Górski, he may have been a Dominican friar, Henry, Bishop of Yatvingians from about 1249: K. Górski, 'Descriptiones terrarum (Nowo odkryte źródło do dziejów Prus w XIII wieku)', *Zapiski Historyczne*, 46 (1981), 11–13. His arguments were found not quite convincing by Jerzy Ochmański, who suggested a Dominican named Sinderamus, and a Franciscan named Adolffus (both witnesses to the coronation of Mindaugas, which the author also attended). He saw them as the most likely candidates for authorship, with a slight preference given to the latter: J. Ochmański, 'Nieznany autor "Opisu krajów" z drugiej połowy XIII wieku i jego wiadomości o Bałtach', *Lituanoslavica Posnaniensia*, 1 (1985), 113. A valuable contribution to the discussion was presented by Krzysztof Stopka, who acknowledged that while it was impossible to deny that a Franciscan might have been the author, the circumstantial evidence favoured more the Dominican option: Stopka, 'Misja wewnętrzna', 256–8. Additional arguments in favour of the Dominicans have been adduced by Gunar Freibergs, who saw St Hiacynt, the leader of the Polish Dominicans of the first generation, as the most likely author of the tract: G. Freibergs, 'The Descripciones Terrarum: its date, sources, author and purpose', *Christianity in East-Central Europe*, ed. J. Kłoczowski, 2 (Lublin, 1999), 195. Only an essay by Jarosław Wenta has been presented in favour of the Franciscan option, in which one can find a plea calling for attention to the milieu of the Franciscan Bartholomew of Bohemia. J. Wenta, 'Do Goga z Magog. Głos w sprawie autorstwa "Descriptiones terrarum"', *Drogą historii: Studia ofiarowane Prof. Józefowi Szymańskiemu w 70 rocznicę urodzin*, ed. P. Dymmel, K. Skupieński (Lublin, 2001), 32–8. A certain argument in favour of an eventual possibility that, after all, a Franciscan might have been the author, may be seen in the literary 'escort' of the tract: the manuscript held at the Trinity College in

cluster of Dominicans active in Lithuania. It must be emphasized that this appearance overlapped not only with the Christian rule in Lithuania, but also with incumbency of the fifth Master General of the Dominican Order, Humbert of Romans, who was actively engaged in keeping the missionary spirit among his brethren alive.¹²⁹ The presence of Franciscans in Lithuania in the time of Mindaugas is attested too: we know of Fr Adolph and several of his brothers as being present in Lithuania in 1253.¹³⁰ Judging by their German names and considering the then most active channels of collaboration, it is legitimate to suppose that most of Dominican and Franciscan friars came to Lithuania from Livonia. The traces of the friars in Lithuania disappear from the early 1260s.¹³¹ Their disappearance there seems to have stood in direct relation to the fate of the Lithuanian Catholic kingdom.

As far as it can be inferred from reliable evidence with regard to the dynastic policy of Mindaugas, it looks likely that he was conscious of the need to safeguard the succession of his Catholic heir to the throne. This is evident from two letters of Alexander IV issued on 6 March 1255. Although they deal with matters affecting different internal and external affairs, they have something more in common than the rendering of their contents in clichés of the Roman Curia. First the pope allows Mindaugas to crown his would-be

Dublin (Ms no. 347) contains copies of the Testament of St Francis of Assisi and of the prophecies of Joachim of Fiore. This indicates that the manuscript may have belonged to some Franciscan friar: G. Labuda, *SŻ*, 28 (1983), 258. See also Selart, 'Die Bettelmönche', 496. The 'Descriptiones terrarum' is dated to 1255–1260. The last year is deduced from the (supposed) apostasy of King Mindaugas (Górski, 'Descriptiones terrarum', 8) and therefore cannot serve as a reliable guide as regards the *terminus ante quem*. The tract must have been written when King Mindaugas was still alive (1263) and, probably, before the end of the pontificate of Alexander IV (1254–1261). See Ochmański, 'Nieznany autor', 110.

¹²⁹ B. Altaner, *Die Dominikanermissionen des 13. Jahrhunderts: Forschungen zur Geschichte der kirchlichen Unionen und der Mohammedaner- und Heidenmission des Mittelalters* (Habelschwerdt, 1924), p. X; Richard, *La Papauté*, 66, 117; E. T. Brett, *Humbert of Romans: His Life and Views of Thirteenth-Century Society* [Studies and Texts, 67] (Toronto, 1984), 55–6.

¹³⁰ *LU*, I, no. 252, col. 334 (July 1253); no. 354, col. 451 (mid-June 1260). The latter document is spurious.

¹³¹ This low ebb of mission activities in Lithuanian lands coincides with a similar break in the lands held under Mongol control. Cf. B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde: Die Mongolen in Rußland 1223–1502* (Leipzig, 1943), 233.

heir, and then confirms his acquisitions in Rus'.¹³² These cases may characterize Mindaugas' aspirations and will allow us to see what the final outcome was.

The decision of Mindaugas to have one of his sons crowned as heir-apparent indicates that Mindaugas wanted to see a Catholic on the Lithuanian throne.¹³³ It was thus intended to initiate the Roman Catholic succession of Lithuanian kings. As the well-informed author of the *Descriptiones terrarum* informs us, Mindaugas received his kingdom from the Roman see and enjoined his heirs to recognize the same.¹³⁴ Such a scenario can hardly be regarded as a matter-of-course if we take into account that paganism in Lithuania was still alive and well in the thirteenth century. By doing so, Mindaugas wanted to demonstrate that the new order of things ought to be viewed as irreversible.¹³⁵ It is impossible to tell even approximately how many native Roman Catholic Christians there were in Lithuania during the reign of Mindaugas. Scholars tend to assume that besides Mindaugas and his family, his closest allies and people from his entourage must have included some Christians. Parbus, a prince from the land of Neris who headed Mindaugas' embassy to Innocent IV in 1251, was most certainly a Christian. However, this was not yet a rule. Mindaugas' brother-in-law Daumantas (Dovmont in Russian), the future Orthodox Saint Timofey of Pskov, must have still been pagan in 1263.¹³⁶ It is also remarkable that we do not know the Christian names of Mindaugas or other Christian Lithuanians, with

¹³² *VMPL*, I, no. 123, p. 61.

¹³³ His name was probably Ruklys: Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 254.

¹³⁴ M. L. Colker, 'America rediscovered in the thirteenth century?', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), 722: 'Hec habet etiam ad orientem conterminam Ruscie terram Lectavie. Cuis rex primus Mendogus baptizatus est et in coronacione sua me ibidem existente regnum suum a sede Romana recipiens hoc idem reliquid suis posteris faciendum dummodo eandem ad huiusmodi factum curam adibeant diligentem'.

¹³⁵ It is conceivable that Mindaugas was not as hard-pressed by the spectre of a possible pagan reaction as some British kings in the Early Middle Ages had been. The latter happened to spare some of their sons as pagans so as to be able to safeguard a throne for their family in case a pagan opposition grew too dangerous for a continued Christian rule: Cf. Angenendt, *Kaiseherrschaft*, 179–81. See also Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 362. Lithuanian pagans in the time of Mindaugas do not appear to have been oversensitive as to what rite a king or duke would follow.

¹³⁶ S. C. Rowell, 'Between Lithuania and Rus': Dovmont-Timofey of Pskov, his life and cult', *OSP*, n. s. 25 (1992), 1–33.

one notable exception of his wife, Martha. There is some paradox in mid-thirteenth-century Lithuania: there was no opposition to Christian rule as such, but there was no much Christian headway either. This kind of stalemate may partly be explained by rough conditions then prevalent in the lands that may loosely be called Lithuanian and by reference to the still on-going warfare that was in full swing.

It was not only Bishop Christian who felt he was attacked by pagans on all sides. Mindaugas seems to have imagined that he had to operate in the midst of pagans as well. He displayed a desire to see such pagans converted through the help of the Roman Church. In the conditions of the time this was nothing short of calling for a crusade.¹³⁷ He was not alone in this since the Polish dukes were no less eager to avail themselves of the crusades directed to the lands of Yatvingians and Lithuanians. A series of contemporary references to Lithuanians as targets of crusades show that there were still numerous pagan Lithuanians who were not subject to the rule of Mindaugas.¹³⁸ Some of them operated in concert with Yatvingians in the regions that were still free from the rule exercised either by the Teutonic Order, or the Polish dukes, or the kings of Galich-Volyn', or Lithuania.¹³⁹ The 1250s witnessed a flurry of activity directed at this no-man's land. In 1253, the Mazovian Duke Siemowit sponsored the consecration of a Dominican friar, Wit, as bishop of Lithuania in the hope of advancing his own territorial claims, and those of his Ruthenian allies vis-à-vis the Teutonic Knights in a stretch of disputed Yatvingian lands.¹⁴⁰ The Teutonic Order had also made considerable progress in this direction, and a tripartite arrangement on how to divide the recently conquered lands was reached at Raciąż on 24

¹³⁷ Stakauskas, *Lietuva ir Vakarų Europa*, 243.

¹³⁸ Pashuto, *Obrazowanie*, p. 50.

¹³⁹ G. Błaszczuk, *Dzieje stosunków polsko-litewskich od czasów najdawniejszych do współczesnych*, vol. 1: *Trudne początki* (Poznań, 1998), 27–8.

¹⁴⁰ J. Wyrozumski, 'Litwa w polityce Piastów', *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Historia*, 26 (1992), 56; A. Szweida, 'Problem biskupa litewskiego Wita', *KMW*, 3 (2002), 341. The date of the consecration of Bishop Wit is not known for certain. *Terminus a quo* for his consecration by Archbishop Pełka of Gniezno is 1 November 1253. See *ibid.*, 329; 'Rocznik kapituły Poznańskiej, 965–1309', ed. B. Kürbis, *MPH*, n. s. VI (Warsaw, 1962), 33; *Kronika wielkopolska*, ed. B. Kürbis [*MPH*, n. s. VIII] (Warsaw, 1970), 100.

September 1254.¹⁴¹ The next year saw Polish and Ruthenian dukes succeeding in conquering much of Yatwingia.¹⁴² In this context the issue of the presence of Bishop Wit in (nominally) Lithuanian lands is a moot point. Presumably, he may have been present there before or after his consecration as bishop. In any event, he had first-hand experience in his envisioned missionary field, which stood in sharp contrast to the bright hopes on the part of the author of the *Descriptiones terrarum*. As bishop he could have hardly had more than one occasion to try to set his foot among his would-be flock. No progress was made and the impressions left on the missionary may be deduced from the title of his letter 'On the deplorable condition of Christians in Lithuania'.¹⁴³ Wit was compelled to ask for release from the obligations normally incumbent on a bishop. Pope Alexander IV discharged him, and from 1257 he acted as suffragan bishop in the dioceses of Olomouc, Wrocław and Poznań.¹⁴⁴

There has been much speculation about possible relations between Bishop Wit, Bishop Christian, and King Mindaugas. There is no sign that Wit had any dealings with Mindaugas, as there is nothing to suggest that the bishops, Wit and Christian, had any connections with each other. As they retained the character of missionary bishops, there was not much opportunity to raise disputes over which of them was the true bishop of Lithuania. In the face of bewildering difficulties this would have been absolutely out of

¹⁴¹ Białuński, *Studia*, 100–102.

¹⁴² The date of this campaign is usually dated to the winter of 1253/1254, but probably it took place a year later as recently suggested by Nagirnyj, *Polityka zagraniczna*, 280–81.

¹⁴³ Seemingly this letter was entitled 'De christianorum in Lithonia conditione deplorabili, ad sanctissimum et beatissimum patrem dominum Innocentium papam quartum, fr. Viti de Ordine Praedicatorum, episcopi Lithoniensis, epistola'. Its existence is mysterious, as it is said to have been preserved in the Cracow Dominican friary up until the great fire of 1848; however, there is no medieval or early modern reference to it, no copy, and all we know about it comes from a reference to M. Wiszniewski, *Historia literatury polskiej*, 2 (Cracow, 1840), 158. On bishop Wit, see Stakauskas, *Lietuva ir Vakarų Europa*, 115–24; K. Stopka, 'Próby chrystianizacji Litwy w latach 1248–1263', *AC*, 19 (1987), 53–4; Szweda, 'Problem biskupa', 327ff.

¹⁴⁴ *Analecta Vaticana, 1202–1366*, ed. J. Ptaśnik [*Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana, III*] (Cracow, 1914), no. 73, p. 39 (1 March 1255). See also Szweda, 'Problem biskupa', 329.

question. However, shared missionary interests and attempts at converting the pagans in general and at reducing the schismatics in particular should be given due weight. This need was emphasized in the process of the 1253 canonization of Bishop Stanisław of Cracow in which Polish Dominicans and Franciscans were actively involved.¹⁴⁵ There were numerous forces (the Teutonic Order, Polish dukes, and the rulers of Galich-Volyn' and Lithuania) bent on promoting missions with a view to obtaining territorial gains. However, it was much easier to lay claims than to fulfil them.

This is clear from the fate of Bartholomew of Bohemia OFM, who was envisaged as a leading figure in the future crusade and a future bishop of Lukow. His future see must have been placed in the then far east of Mazovia, close to the confines of 'the Lithuanians and other infidels' as described in a papal letter.¹⁴⁶ The enterprise was promoted by Bolesław the Shy of Cracow and his saintly wife Salome; it received support from the papal legate Opizo and the Templars were ready to throw in their lot.¹⁴⁷ The necessary authorization was granted by Pope Alexander IV early in 1257. However, within half a year everything was reversed as the same pope revoked all prerogatives accorded to the friar and would-be bishop. Most frequently this turn of events is imputed to the diplomatic skills the Teutonic Order brought to bear at the Roman Curia. Presumably it was they who were interested in not having a rival missionary project launched, as it must have been directed to the perceived detriment of their exceptional claims with regard to the lands of the Baltic pagans.¹⁴⁸ This explanation is compatible with a general picture of how the Teutonic Order used to pursue its own interests with regard to its rivals, be they Polish or Rus'ian dukes. In the last

¹⁴⁵ See MPH, ed. A. Bielowski, II (Lviv, 1872), 779–80; K. Kantak, *Franciszkanie polscy*, vol. 1: 1237–1517 (Cracow, 1937), 99; K. Przybyszewski, *Święty Stanisław Biskup-Męczennik* (Rzeszów–Łańcut, 2005), 519–20.

¹⁴⁶ VMPL, I, no. 143, p. 72: 'in confinio Letwanorum et aliorum infidelium' (1 February 1257).

¹⁴⁷ M. Starnawska, *Między Jerozolimą a Łukowem: Zakony krzyżowe na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu* (Warsaw, 1999), 187, 201.

¹⁴⁸ Kantak, *Franciszkanie*, 100–101; J. Powierski, 'Sprawa Prus i Jaćwierzów w polityce Zakonu Krzyżackiego i książąt polskich w okresie po ugodzie wrocławskiej z 4 sierpnia 1257 roku', *KMW*, 3 (1979), 257–8, 263; Stopka, 'Próby', 58–61; J. Wyrozumski, 'Litwa', 57–8.

resort it must be noted that such an explanation is based more on learned deductions than on a source-based proof. In this case other factors might well have been at play.¹⁴⁹ However it may be, it is clear that Bartholomew's mission petered out without a trace. If we set this failure in a chain of similar setbacks suffered by the advancing Catholic Christians in the late 1250s and 1260s, it is nothing special: one more withdrawal from territories that proved far too hard to turn into 'normal' Christian lands. For more than a century Lukow remained a wasteland – 'a belt of devastation' – exposed to periodical raids of Tatars and Lithuanians.¹⁵⁰ However, in the late 1250s contemporaries were unaware of what the future was holding in store for them. Christian enthusiasts were still casting their nets in the turbid waters of the Baltic world. In the 1250s we observe numerous attempts at bringing the remaining Baltic pagans under the Christian rule: crusades, missionaries, application of force and persuasion, encouragement and support given to foreign and local rulers were involved in this process. In sum, we can characterise this period as one of high hopes.

The author of the *Descriptiones terrarum* communicated the message that it would be easy to bring pagan Lithuanians and Yatvingians to the font because from their early days they were brought up by Christian wetnurses.¹⁵¹ The geographical and encyclopaedic treatises composed by Franciscan friars Bartholomew Anglian and Roger Bacon had to facilitate familiarity with and access to lands that until recently had been quite unknown.¹⁵² Bacon must have been surprised somewhat upon learning that there were numerous

¹⁴⁹ For example, one may take into account the claims of the diocese of Leubus to jurisdictional rights in the Ruthenian lands: Abraham, *Powstanie*, 160–2, 195–6; A. Weiss, *Organizacja diecezji lubuskiej w średniowieczu* (Lublin, 1977), 78–87. There exists a theory that internal problems of the Franciscan Order, absolutely unrelated to the policy-making in the Baltic lands, may have impeded Friar Bartholomew from carrying out his mission: J. Wenta, 'Do Goga z Magog', 38. See also Selart, 'Die Bettelmönche', 492–3.

¹⁵⁰ Błaszczak, *Dzieje*, 1, 73–4.

¹⁵¹ Colker, 'America rediscovered', 723. On the phenomenon of captive women spreading the Christian faith, see A. Sterk, 'Mission from below: captive women and conversion on the east Roman frontiers', *Church History*, 79 (2010), 29ff.

¹⁵² *The 'Opus Majus' of Roger Bacon*, ed. J. H. Bridges, I (Oxford, 1897), 301: 'Et haec cognitio locorum mundi valde necessaria est reipublicae fidelium et conversioni infidelium et ad obviandum infidelibus et Antichristo, et aliis.'

pagans so close to hand in Lithuania: the latter, he thought, was separated from the heartlands of Latin Europe by a distance as small as that between Paris and Rome.¹⁵³ All such references taken together leave one with the impression that mid-thirteenth-century hopes and prospective with regard to missionary fields bear a stamp of, let us say, modest optimism.¹⁵⁴ They were, however, to be dashed in the near future.

By the end of 1250s, most of the lands of Prussians, Yatvingians, Curonians and Sengallians were largely under Christian control. The kingdom of Lithuania was officially a Christian realm, which could be expected to become as Christian as the rest of neighbouring lands. In contrast to this Christian advance, the situation in Žemaitija was profoundly different. Pagans in Žemaitija took no heed of donations made at the court of the king of Lithuania, nor the king could do much to exact his will. The Teutonic Knights were simply given green light to apply systematic pressure upon Žemaitijans. As a prelude for battle, they built a castle and founded the new town of Memel (Klaipėda) near the former Curonian settlements. Klaipėda was located in a strategically important place commanding easy access to the Baltic Sea and very close to the Curonian Spit, which from 1255 served as a land bridge connecting the Prussian and Livonian holdings of the Teutonic Order. This castle was to serve as a springboard for further conquests in Žemaitija. The Žemaitijans proved a hard nut to crack. Time and again they mounted their own raids into Curonia and inflicted either defeats or tangible casualties to their Teutonic enemies. A critical moment was reached in the summer of 1260. Prussian and Livonian branches of the Teutonic Order organised a huge rescue operation to lift siege of the stronghold of Georgenburg on the right hand bank of the Nemunas River. It had been sealed off from the outside world by Žemaitijans in 1259. Instead of waiting to be attacked, Žemaitijans

¹⁵³ *Fr. Rogeri Bacon Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, ed. J. S. Brewer, I (London, 1859), 403.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Freibergs, 'The Descripciones Terrarum', 195–6; Altaner, *Die Dominikanermis-sionen*, 235. For more on Roger Bacon's view, see D. Bigalli, 'Giudizio escatologico e tecnica di Missione nei pensatori francescani: Ruggero Bacone', *Espansione del Francescanesimo tra Occidente e Oriente nel Secolo XIII: Atti del VI convegno internazionale* (Assisi, 1979), 153–86.

invaded Curonia and thus compelled the Order's military command to adjust to new realities. The enemies clashed by Lake Durbé and after a hard battle on 13 July 1260, the Teutonic Knights suffered their greatest defeat ever in the thirteenth century: Master of Livonia Burckhardt von Hornhausen, Marshal of Prussia Heinrich Botel, and some 150 knights lay dead.¹⁵⁵ The numbers of the dead among the humbler folk were unheard of before. Such was the impression of Peter of Dusburg writing in 1320s.¹⁵⁶ All in all, in the conditions of the north this was a severe blow to receive. It served as a spark to prompt the Great Prussian Uprising (1260–1274).¹⁵⁷ It also complicated the chances of survival for the Catholic kingdom of Lithuania.

The trajectory of the last years of Mindaugas' reign is difficult to chart with any certainty. This is largely so not so much because of the lack of written sources, but because of the highly partisan nature of the main narrative accounts. The most pertinent issue here is that of the king's religious allegiance in the last years of his life. There is a widely spread opinion that at the end of his life Mindaugas renounced his Christian faith and reverted to paganism.¹⁵⁸ Another opinion asserts that he remained faithful to Christianity.¹⁵⁹ The extremes of these two opinions are reached when one speaks of the apostasy, and another tells that Mindaugas died almost as a Christian martyr. Some historians have preferred to occupy a

¹⁵⁵ Urban, *Baltic Crusade*, 207–9.

¹⁵⁶ 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 97.

¹⁵⁷ J. Powierski, 'Wybuch II powstania pruskiego a stosunki między Zakonem Krzyżackim i książętami polskimi (1260–1261)', *KMW*, 3 (1980), 305–10.

¹⁵⁸ J. Voigt, *Geschichte Preussens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Untergang der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens*, 3 (Königsberg, 1828), 179–80; E. Bonnell, 'Mindowgs Abfall vom Christentum und seine Ermordung', *Mitteilungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte Liv-, Esth- and Kurlands*, 9 (1860), 307–16; J. Totoraitis, *Die Litauer unter dem König Mindowe*, 124–32; Zajączkowski, *Studia nad dziejami Żmudzi*, 229; K. Maleczyński, 'Sprawa chrztu i apostazji Mendoga w świetle krytyki dokumentów', *Pamiętnik VI Powszechnego zjazdu historyków polskich w Wilnie, 17–20 września 1935 r.*, vol. 1: *Referaty*, ed. F. Pohorecki (Lviv, 1935), 559–60; Urban, *Baltic Crusade*, 215; Giedroyc, 'The arrival... (thirteenth century)', 24; Wyrozumski, 'Litwa', 58.

¹⁵⁹ T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego*, 4 (Vilnius, 1838), 205–8; J. Latkowski, *Mendog król litewski* (Cracow, 1892), 101–18; W. Kętrzyński, *O dokumentach Mendoga króla litewskiego* (Cracow, 1907), 39.

non-committal position over this issue.¹⁶⁰ Nowadays, the opinion that Mindaugas reverted to paganism still seems to prevail.¹⁶¹

The thesis that Mindaugas renounced Christianity and reverted to paganism was most seriously challenged by the Lithuanian medievalist Juozapas Stakauskas in as early as 1934. He proposed a systematic revision of the theory of Mindaugas' alleged apostasy and finally brought forward his own arguments as to why Mindaugas should be viewed as a Christian to the end of his earthly life.¹⁶² He noted sensibly that historians, who upheld a thesis of the apostasy, viewed the renunciation by Mindaugas of the alliance with the Teutonic Order in 1261 as tantamount to renunciation of Christianity: as though Mindaugas accepted Christianity due to political considerations, and renounced it when this became politically expedient.¹⁶³ Being aware that his opponents treated the account of the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle as a very reliable proof for their view, Stakauskas subjected it to textual analysis. Nowadays it would be no revelation to say that direct speech by Žemaitijans in the presence of Mindaugas as reported by a German chronicler some thirty three years later, should not be taken as a proof in this controversy, but at the time such a remark hit the mark. Having come across a passage on Mindaugas finally following the advice of the pagan Žemaitijans and coming to their 'site', Stakauskas advanced an opinion that here this word should be understood not as 'customs' (as was suggested by the editor Leo Meyer), but as 'side'.¹⁶⁴ This reading seems to be

¹⁶⁰ K. Chodyncki, 'Próby zaprowadzenia chrześcijaństwa w Litwie', *PH*, 18 (1914), 247; Ivinskis, 'Mindaugas', 371–2; P. Rabikauskas, 'La Lituania tra Oriente e Occidente nel Medioevo', *The Common Christian Roots of the European Nations: An International Colloquium in the Vatican*, 2 (Florence, 1982), 73; R. Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism. Lithuanian negotiations for conversion, 1250–1358', *Varieties of Religious Conversion in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Muldoon (Gainesville, 1997), 132: 'probably apostatized'; Jučas, *Krikščionybės kelias*, 33–4.

¹⁶¹ Cf. J. Ochmański, *Historia Litwy* (Wrocław, 1982, 2nd edition), 50; Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 134; Urban, 'Roger Bacon', 367; *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*, 35; Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 506; Lind, 'Mobilisation of the European periphery', 84.

¹⁶² Stakauskas, *Lietuva ir Vakarų Europa*, 185–240. This question has remained controversial ever since. Cf. Ivinskis, *Lietuvos istorija*, 156; Stopka, 'Próby', 33; Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 289–92.

¹⁶³ Stakauskas, *Lietuva ir Vakarų Europa*, 187.

¹⁶⁴ *LR*, lines 6427–30: 'Dô der kunic sô vernam, / den cristen wart er wider gram / und volgete gar irs râtes mite / und hielt sich an der heiden site.'; Stakauskas, *Lietuva ir Vakarų Europa*, 193–5.

preferable because of the immediate context which shows that the essence of Mindaugas' action was a *pogrom* against the Germans in Lithuania, and not the renunciation of the faith and a return to his old gods. Because the Teutonic chroniclers and their audience used to speak of themselves as Christians *par excellence*, they tended to cast their enemies as pagans, apostates, and enemies of the Church in general.¹⁶⁵ It must be noted that in the context of contemporary German vernacular literature, the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle displays a very archaic and aggressive vocabulary, which brings it closest to the most conservative genre of Middle High German epic poetry, originating in a pagan age and possessing only a thin veneer of Christianity.¹⁶⁶ Black-and-white perspective was what was most readily available to the intended audience of grim warriors and military pilgrims. That is why there can be no surprise that the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle depicted Mindaugas in his final years as Christian no more because he turned to fight against the Christians of Livonia and their friends from overseas. By the late thirteenth century such a view was a *fama communis* in Livonia.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ In this they were not exceptional. The champions of anti-Gregorian reform and their opponents, for example, exchanged such labels as Antichrist and the like: C. Schneider, *Prophetisches Sacerdotium und heilsgeschichtliches Regnum im Dialog: 1073–1077. Zur Geschichte Gregors VII. und Heinrichs IV.* [Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften, 9] (Munich, 1972), 146ff.

¹⁶⁶ A. V. Murray, 'The structure, genre and intended audience of the Livonian rhymed chronicle', *Crusade and Conversion*, 247.

¹⁶⁷ Different opinions and rumours on the circumstances leading up to the return of Mindaugas to paganism may be found in the 1312 hearings of witnesses conducted by Franciscus de Moliano: *Franciscus de Moliano. Conscriptio inquisitionis testium 1312 = Franciska no Moliano izmeklēšanas protokols 1312. gadā*, ed. Ē. Mugurevičs (Riga, 2010). As differences between the Livonian Order and the Archbishop of Riga grew, the idea to lay blame on the Order for Mindaugas' turning away from Christianity became increasingly acceptable (e. g. *ibid.*, 112 (VIII.16), 146–8 (XIII.16), 178 (XVII.16), 220 (XIX.16)). It is important to note that memory of Mindaugas all but evaporated from Lithuania: when in 1322 Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania made a reference to his Christian predecessor, he did this relying on the information supplied by his allies in Riga: *Chartularium Lithuaniae res gestas magni ducis Gedemine illustrans. Gedimino laiškai*, ed. S. C. Rowell (Vilnius, 2003), no. 14, p. 38. Such a state of oblivion may be explained by the coming of a new dynasty (the future Gediminids) to rule Lithuania at the end of the thirteenth century, and by the lack of social structures conducive to the preservation of memory in pagan Lithuania. This topic and the retrieval of the memory of Mindaugas in fifteenth-sixteenth century Lithuania were discussed by R. Petrauskas, 'Užmirštas karalius: Mindaugas LDK visuomenės savimonėje XIV a. pabaigoje – XVI a. pradžioje', *Mindaugas karalius*, ed. V. Ališauskas (Vilnius, 2008), 51–63.

Undoubtedly its currency was facilitated by the fact that at this time the Lithuanian pagans and the Livonian Christians fought against each other as they did throughout most of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

By disclosing the tendencies of the narrative sources composed several decades after the events they purport to describe, Stakauskas vigorously pleaded for making heavy use of contemporary sources.¹⁶⁸ In this regard he saw the bull of Pope Clement IV, in which Mindaugas was described as a king of bright memory (*clare memorie*), murdered by the sons of perdition, as a testimony of exceptional significance.¹⁶⁹ Should a witness as remote as a pope in Italy be credited with so much confidence? Did the papacy not pursue its own political agenda that could twist the information in the required direction? The agenda is indeed crystal-clear: the pope urged King Přemysl Ottokar II of Bohemia to reconstitute the Catholic kingdom of Lithuania by the use of military might. There is a suggestion that it was the Teutonic Order that led Pope Clement IV into believing that King Mindaugas lived and died as a good Christian, and this spin was made as if out of fear that if proven otherwise (an apostate!) this might have imperilled the validity of Mindaugas' donations to the Order.¹⁷⁰ This is pure speculation. It may also serve as an illustration of the insufficient attention paid to the workings of the papacy by those historians, who dealt with the question of the alleged apostasy of Mindaugas.

It is important here to recall that the papacy in the High Middle Ages was already an awesome bureaucratic institution with its routine procedures and feelers reaching the far eastern approaches of Latin Europe and sometimes even further. They all bear witness to papal responsibility for the whole Christian body politic.¹⁷¹ We

¹⁶⁸ Stakauskas, *Lietuva ir Vakarų Europa*, 225–6.

¹⁶⁹ *VMPL*, I, no. 151, p. 79; *Codex Diplomaticus et Epistolaris Regni Bohemici* [CDERB], vol. V/2: 1267–1278, ed. J. Šebánek, S. Duškova (Prague, 1981), no. 538, pp. 96–8 (20 January 1268).

¹⁷⁰ R. Mažeika, 'When crusader and pagan agree: conversion as a point of honour in the baptism of King Mindaugas of Lithuania (c. 1240–63)', *Crusade and Conversion*, 204.

¹⁷¹ Cf. W. Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London–New York, 2003), 6, 146.

have already indicated that Pope Innocent IV had shown much confidence in Mindaugas. This may serve as one of a number of illustrations indicating the pope's generally positive predisposition towards the new ruler. However, this confidence was not blind. Papal support and the royal status of the new king depended on Mindaugas' allegiance to the Holy See. Thus the bishops of Ösel-Wiek and Kurland were commissioned not only to help keep Mindaugas free from troublemakers to his rule, but also to look after the state of Mindaugas' soul. It should be noted that by the very fact of royal consecration the king became answerable to his consecrators and subject to canonical rules.¹⁷² His consecrator, Bishop Heidenreich of Kulm (1245–1263) was still alive, as was Bishop Heinrich von Lützelburg OFM of Kurland (1251–1263) and, probably, Heinrich I OP of Ösel-Wiek (1234–1260/1262). All of them belonged to mendicant orders.¹⁷³ It is almost unbelievable that any of them would have remained silent if a most flagrant breach with the Church – apostasy! – had really taken place. It would be a crass violation of ecclesiastical discipline with regard to the pope himself, who *ex officio* had the general responsibility for the salvation of souls, and who had 'to represent Christian kings and all others before the divine tribunal in order to render an account of their doings.'¹⁷⁴ The king, let alone a special son of the Church, was not a man whose rejection of the faith might have gone unnoticed.

It goes without saying that arguments *ex silentio* are unavoidably weak ones. However, this silence becomes rather eloquent when we see that a much minor case as the lack of zeal for a Church

¹⁷² J. Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought, 300–1450* (London–New York, 1996), 59.

¹⁷³ It is true that their access to information related to the affairs in the Baltic hinterland may have been impaired by the fact that a number of such Livonian bishops acted as suffragans in Germany due to virtual impossibility of their carrying out their pastoral duties in their dioceses exposed to upheavals of the crusading environment. Cf. J. B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge MA, 1977), 68. See also Selart, 'Die Bettelmönche', 479–80.

¹⁷⁴ W. Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power* (London, 1955), 282. It must be noticed that the apostasy, if it really had taken place, would have called forth the crusade as was then the rule with regard to heretics and apostates. Cf. Fannesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes*, 10. We can see nothing of the sort in the case of Mindaugas.

union with Rome on the part of Daniil of Galich resulted in a papal admonition and warning.¹⁷⁵ We remember that Mindaugas himself received a reproach from the pope for his apparent lack of support for Bishop Christian in the face of threats from the pagans. Silence on the apostasy is, in a word, consistent with Pope Clement IV's statement '*clare memorie*' and, in sum, means that Mindaugas, to all probability, died as a Christian. The theory of his apostasy came into being some decades later, mostly due to the specific (black-and-white) mode of making sense out of the upheavals during the last years of the reign of Mindaugas as seen and evaluated by the milieu which produced the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle.

Here we may recall the Galich-Volynian chronicle, whose testimony about the fake Christian Mindaugas has been used to prove the thesis of his apostasy. The Ruthenian chronicler declares that the baptism of Mindaugas was false from the very start and he was much beholden to the pagan public cult.¹⁷⁶ Consequently, the author does not know about the apostasy that allegedly should have taken place after a while. It must not be overlooked (as it happens far too frequently) that this part of the chronicle (namely, the Galich chronicle) was composed in the late 1250s, that is before the time when the alleged apostasy took place (in 1260 or 1261), so that is why this sort of evidence is simply irrelevant in the discussion on the (alleged) apostasy of Mindaugas. There is nothing in the Galich-Volynian chronicle to suggest such a course of events. Here the disproportionate attention to the paganism of Mindaugas and of his Lithuanians serves like a smoke screen to hide any trace of Christianity. Here there is not a slightest notice of Mindaugas having received a crown from the pope, not any mention of bishops or missionaries going about their business in Lithuania. The country is depicted as pagan through and through, with the exception of the 'false' baptism of Mindaugas. The diatribe of the Galich-Volynian chronicle against Master Andrew of Stirland accuses him of creating the pagan Lithuania from which they, the Germans, now suffer

¹⁷⁵ *Documenta Pontificum Romanorum historiam Ucrainae illustrantia*, ed. A. G. Welykyj, I (Rome, 1954), 50 (13 February 1257).

¹⁷⁶ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 817; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 113.

themselves.¹⁷⁷ This actuality refers to the time of Traidenis and his immediate successors, when Mindaugas had been long dead. Had his apostasy really taken place, it would have presented itself as a chief argument to show how false a Christian Mindaugas was indeed. The Galich chronicler and subsequent adaptors of the text, working on it up until 1289/90, did not go this far, simply because they knew nothing of any apostasy. It was enough for them to show that Mindaugas was so deeply superstitious that he was even afraid of a hare running out from a (holy) grove.¹⁷⁸

The downfall of the Catholic kingdom of Lithuania must be considered in the wider context of international politics. Here we must return to the Tatars. Although the campaign to Vozvyagl in 1255 undertaken by both Daniil of Galich and Mindaugas of Lithuania ended inconclusively, it was not forgotten by the Tatars.¹⁷⁹ Revenge was conceived as part of a more general assault towards East-Central Europe. So before delivering a blow to Poland, Khan Berke of the Golden Horde sent his military leader Burundai, who forced the troops from Galich-Volyn', to take part in the winter campaign of 1258/59 against Lithuania.¹⁸⁰ A joint Tatar-Rus'ian army devastated Lithuania unopposed.¹⁸¹ This Tatar assault, deep into Lithuania's territory, has been researched by historians a number of times. Nevertheless, it seems that long-term consequences of this campaign have not been given enough consideration, even though this débâcle was assumed to be one of the most horrific in the history of thirteenth-century Lithuania.¹⁸² Partly, this is due to the fact that Lithuania remained and the Tatars did not take care

¹⁷⁷ On landmaster of Livonia Andrew of Stirland see Hellmann, 'Der Deutsche Orden', 390–2.

¹⁷⁸ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 817.

¹⁷⁹ S. Krakowski, *Polska w walce z najazdami tatarskimi w XIII wieku* (Warsaw, 1956), 180–1.

¹⁸⁰ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 846–8; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 122–3. See also J. Powierski, 'Książęta polscy i Zakon Krzyżacki a problem bałtyjski w okresie od schyłku 1258 do połowy 1260 roku', *KMW*, 4 (1979), 368–9. Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 256–62. Dąbrowski, *Daniel Romanowicz*, 409–14. Nagirnyj, *Polityka zagraniczna*, 284–5.

¹⁸¹ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 847–8.

¹⁸² Cf. J. Pelenski, 'The contest between Lithuania-Rus' and the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century for supremacy over Eastern Europe', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 2 (1982), 306; Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 262.

to perpetuate their rule in the wake of the invasion. Nevertheless, certain data indicate that Burundai's attack was a turning point in the life of Mindaugas' Lithuania. Contemporary sources speak about the awful situation in Tatar-devastated Lithuania. According to the chronicler of Novgorod, 'That same winter the Tatars conquered the whole land of Lithuania, and slaughtered them [the Lithuanians]'.¹⁸³ In much the same vein, Pope Alexander IV informed the margrave of Brandenburg that the Tatars had already destroyed much of Lithuania.¹⁸⁴ The sense of emergency is felt from other papal documents, too. Of particular interest is the letter of 25 January 1260, by which the pope took care of all Teutonic Order's possessions donated to him in Rus' or in the lands occupied by the Tatars.¹⁸⁵ The same guarantee was extended to the lands donated by Mindaugas – that was indicated in Alexander IV's letter of the same date in which the lands donated by Mindaugas and the bishop of Lithuania were attributed to the Teutonic Order.¹⁸⁶ It is noteworthy that in the first of these bulls Lithuania was not mentioned at all, and while reading it one gets the impression that the legal validity of the former papal safety guarantees issued to the king of Lithuania were upheld and directly transferred to the Order. Taking into consideration that the papal letter of 25 January 1260 did not mention

¹⁸³ *NIL*, 82.

¹⁸⁴ *LU*, I, no. 355, col. 453 (9 September 1260): 'quod saepedictis fratribus, quos et continua paganorum affligit crudelitas ac exterret etiam crudelis vicinitas Tartarorum, qui contiguam praefatae Prusciae Lettoviam iam pro maiori parte destruxisse noscuntur'.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 345, coll. 440–41. A bull of this kind was secured by the Order most probably to avoid any interpretational ambiguities – the pope took care of those pagan lands which the Order managed to occupy; *ibid.*, no. 346, coll. 441–2 (25 January 1260). Subsequently the Teutonic Order made ample use of this bull to bolster its claims to rule and retain in perpetuity the originally pagan lands which had never been subject to any other Christian rule. This and other papal bulls and imperial charters of privileges of Frederick II (1245) and of Louis IV (1337) retained their value for the Order at least until the time of the Council of Constance: L. Ehrlich, *Paweł Włodkowiec i Stanisław ze Skarbimierza* (Warsaw, 1954), 147–51; E. Weise, 'Der Heidenkampf des Deutschen Ordens (II)', *ZfO*, 12 (1963), 661–2; Powierski, 'Książęta polscy', 378; K. Ożóg, 'Udział Andrzeja Łaskarzyca w sprawach i sporach polsko-krzyżackich do soboru w Konstancji'. *Polska i jej sąsiedzi w późnym średniowieczu*, ed. K. Ożóg, S. Szczur (Cracow, 2000), 170–7; W. Świeboda, *Innowiercy w opiniach prawnych uczonych polskich w XV wieku: Paganie, żydzi, muzułmanie* (Cracow, 2013), 175–99.

¹⁸⁶ *LU*, I, no. 347, coll. 442–3 (25 January 1260).

Lithuania and that its application covered the territory of Lithuania as well, a conclusion can be drawn that after Burundai's invasion Lithuania was as if obliterated from the political map, and its status, in the eyes of the Roman Curia, became equal to that of Rus', that is, a territory subject to the Tatars. Subsequent bulls were again directed against both the pagans and the Tatars, and these actions should be treated as a case of non-recognition of the newly-changed geopolitical situation. Direct confrontation between the crusaders and the Tatars was avoided not only due to the complications following the Battle of Durbė (13 July 1260) and the beginning of the Great Prussian Uprising in the same year, but also because the Tatars left for their steppes early in 1261. The papal letter of 8 April 1261 stated that the situation of the Christians improved after the retreat of the Tatars.¹⁸⁷ It did improve, but not to such a degree as to make the Kingdom of Lithuania visible from Rome again. In this regard, its fate was gloomier than that of Hungary, the only Roman Catholic country which is considered to have suffered the most devastating Tatar invasion in 1241–42.¹⁸⁸ The vociferous fears of King Bela IV about the possible restoration of the pagan ways in his country did not come true, but this was exactly what happened in Lithuania.

The impression of the fall of Christian Lithuania in the aftermath of Burundai's invasion in the eyes of the Roman Curia only partly reflected Mindaugas' awkward situation at that time. Although Burundai's raid did not destroy his power at one go, it nevertheless dealt a heavy blow to his power base and unleashed processes that culminated in the assassination of Mindaugas. The victories of the pagan Žemaitijans over the Teutonic Order must have been finding strong echoes of approval among Lithuanian warriors. The pagan gods seemed as strong as ever. It is ironic that as a Christian king Mindaugas did not score military victories and therefore was unable to impress raw warriors with the most tangible arguments in

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., no. 360, col. 458: '... quod Tartari omnino de regionibus ipsis abierint, nullusque timor vel dubietas a fidelibus regionum ipsarum de illorum incursibus habeatur.'

¹⁸⁸ N. Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and 'Pagans' in Medieval Hungary* (Cambridge, 2001), 163–6.

favour of his new faith. In contrast, his nephew Treniota managed to mount raids deep into Poland, Prussia, and Livonia, and score victories in terms of plunder and victories on the battlefield.¹⁸⁹ Finally, all this made a difference. Before long Treniota was able to gain such military following that was almost a match for the king of Lithuania.¹⁹⁰ So an alternative focus of power came to be operative. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that when after the victory of Durbė Žemaitijans and Treniota pushed ahead with their anti-Teutonic agenda, Mindaugas yielded to their pressure and turned against the Teutonic Order. One more sequel to this change was an alliance between Mindaugas and Alexander Nevsky of Suzdal'. The latter is known as one of the most docile subjects of the Tatars.¹⁹¹ The prior pro-Catholic, anti-Tatar policy of Mindaugas was reversed. In 1262, he attacked (unsuccessfully again) the headquarters of the Livonian Order at the castle of Wenden (Cēsis), to be followed some months later by Alexander's attack on Dorpat.¹⁹² All this reorientation on the part of Mindaugas did not contribute to the weakening of Treniota, who in collaboration with Daumantas did away with Mindaugas and his two sons in the autumn of 1263.¹⁹³ Thus the Roman Catholic branch of the first Lithuanian king was severed.

However, it was only the beginning of the battle over the legacy of Mindaugas. His old rival, Tautvilas, seems to have been involved in the conspiracy against Mindaugas. After the murder, he accepted

¹⁸⁹ One of the most devastating Lithuanian invasions of the entire thirteenth century was that which befell Mazovia and the land of Kulm in June 1262. Then the Mazovian duke Siemowit was killed and burned, and his son Conrad taken into captivity. For more on this raid, see A. Gieysztor, 'Działanie wojenne Litwy w r. 1262 i zdobycie Jazdowa', *Studia historyczne S. Herbstowi na 60-lecie urodzin w upominku uczniowie, koledzy, przyjaciele* (Warsaw, 1967), 5–14; Białuński. *Studia*, 105–6, 110–11; Błaszczuk, *Dzieje*, 1, 41–4. The troops headed by Treniota emerged victorious once more on 9 February 1263, when they defeated the Livonian knights in a night-time battle near the Cistercian convent of Dünamünde. *LR*, lines 6891–950.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, lines 7125–28.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, 36–7, 90–1; J. L. I. Fennell, *The Crisis of Medieval Russia, 1200–1304* (London, 1983), 107–9; C. J. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History* (London, 1987), 49–50; R. O. Crumme, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304–1613* (London, 1987), 30.

¹⁹² *LR*, lines 6471–544, 6607–662; *NIL*, 83; E. Gudavičius, *Kryžiaus karai Pabaltijyje ir Lietuva XIII amžiuje* (Vilnius, 1989), 133–7; idem, *Mindaugas*, 294–6.

¹⁹³ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 859–60; *LR*, lines 7121–32; Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 304–6.

the invitation of Treniota to parcel out the dead king's fortune. Treniota and Tautvilas were thinking the same thing with regard to each other, but Treniota was quicker and had Tautvilas killed.¹⁹⁴

It is generally assumed that the killer of Mindaugas, Duke Treniota, was a pagan.¹⁹⁵ This historiographical belief is a direct correlation of the theory of the alleged apostasy of Mindaugas. As we have said, this theory was based on a razor-sharp contrast between paganism and Christianity, which was produced by the author of the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle. A shortcut to a theory of pagan reaction is convenient, of course, but not infrequently it precludes one from seeing more complex developments in their proper light.¹⁹⁶ That is why the bull of 31 December 1263 merits special attention. Pope Urban IV issued it in response to the initiative of the Duke Bolesław V the Shy to evangelize pagan Lithuanians. It is not clear which Lithuanians and what kind of 'other pagans' had expressed their wish to be converted; the only indication given is that it was the ones who attacked the city of Cracow and its diocese frequently.¹⁹⁷ Such characteristics may apply to the Lithuanians under Treniota. That is why it is supposed that such an initiative may have involved Treniota eager to get in touch with Latin Christian world through Polish mediation, because the German channel was out of the question due to the active anti-Teutonic policy pursued by Treniota and his followers.¹⁹⁸ The issue of this bull suggests that within a few months after the death of Mindaugas, the cause of evangelization proved to be more pressing than a crusade against the (apostate) pagans, which would naturally be expected had the papacy and other neighbouring Christian powers had to cope with a pagan reaction at the time. In sum, there is no means to establish the religious affiliation of Duke Treniota. In any case, as a ruler he did not reveal any pagan (or Christian) characteristics. Some months after his bloody coming to power he was killed by servants of Mindaugas who acted in the interest of

¹⁹⁴ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 860–1.

¹⁹⁵ Giedroyć, 'The arrival... (thirteenth century)', 25.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. C. Lübke, 'Das "junge" Europa in der Krise: gentilreligiöse Herausforderungen um 1000', *ZfO*, 50 (2001), 495.

¹⁹⁷ *VMPL*, I, no. 148, pp. 76–7.

¹⁹⁸ E. Gudavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, vol. 1: *Nuo seniausių laikų iki 1569 metų* (Vilnius, 1999), 64–7.

Vaišvilkas, the last surviving son of Mindaugas.¹⁹⁹ Only then did the pope become uneasy about the situation of Catholic Christianity in Lithuania. He was worried about the rise to power of the Rus'ian schismatics and pagan Lithuanians who acted as the accomplices of the Tatars.²⁰⁰ Such news reached Pope Urban IV through the mediation of the Teutonic Knights. Pope Urban IV asked King Přemysl Ottokar II of Bohemia to conquer this once Catholic land for himself and his successors with due consideration being paid to the rights of the Teutonic Order.²⁰¹ The king was not rash enough to exploit these new opportunities, and Vaišvilkas could have his way untroubled by crusaders from the West.

Vaišvilkas – the only Greek Orthodox ruler of Old Lithuania

Vaišvilkas represents one of the most interesting figures in the history of medieval Lithuania. A blood-thirsty pagan and then a dove-like Orthodox Christian monk eager to tap the spiritual resources to be found on Mount Athos. Then, again, a revengeful ruler and, finally, an innocent victim of manslaughter during a drinking bout. All these adventures and the violent end of his life contributed heavily to his popularity in medieval Rus'ian chronicles and to the rise of his subsequent legend. Inevitably, such personalities attract much attention from scholarly community too. With no exaggeration Vaišvilkas now may be viewed as the Lithuanian duke who has received most diverse attention from international academia.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 861.

²⁰⁰ *VMPL*, I, no. 149, p. 77 (4 June 1264).

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² D. P. Ogitskii, 'Velikii kniaz' Voishelk', *Bogoslovskie Trudy*, 27 (1983), 171–96; Giedroyć, 'The arrival... (thirteenth century)', 15–20; D. M. Goldfrank, 'The Lithuanian prince-monk Vojšelk: a study of competing legends', *HUS*, 11 (1987), 44–76; M. Smorağ-Różycka, 'Romans chrześcijański "Barlaam i Jozafat" w kulturze średniowiecznej Europy. Uwagi o dwóch miniaturach w Ewangeliarzu Ławryszewskim', *Slavia Orientalis*, 42 (1993), 9–27; D. Dąbrowski, "'Powieść o Woiśielku". Szkic historiograficzny', *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės istorijos šaltiniai: Faktas. Kontekstas. Interpretacija*, ed. A. Dubonis (Vilnius, 2007), 31–66; G. Mickūnaitė, 'Imitatio viri sancti arba Vaišelgos pėdsakų beiškant'.

Vaišvilkas concerns us here because he encapsulates a vision of Orthodox Lithuania that for some time was pursued by the dynasty of Galich-Volyn' and was given immortal passages in the chronicles of Galich-Volyn' and Novgorod.²⁰³

There is no need here to discuss all the relevant scholarly output. We will rather focus on some problematic issues that at first glance seem not so problematic and therefore command a rather wide scholarly consensus. It is to be recalled that the narrative structure of the life of Vaišvilkas is mostly (in)formed by two tales found in different parts of the Galich-Volynian chronicle: one Galichian, another Volynian.²⁰⁴ Their differences were noted long ago and represent the main source of modern judgements as to what did or could have happened. The former (Galichian) story is considered earlier, the second (Volynian) later. The author of the latter made certain use of the former and in the process produced a new story of his own with some additional material, the value of which is disputable.²⁰⁵ It is known that Vaišvilkas was instrumental in concluding peace between Mindaugas of Lithuania and Daniil of Galich in c. 1254. It was he who gave his sister in marriage to Shvarno, son of Daniil, it was he who gave Novgorodok to Roman, another son of Daniil, and then went over to the latter to become a monk and a pilgrim to Mount Athos some time in 1254–57.²⁰⁶ It is assumed that

Pirmavaizdis ir kartotė: Vaizdinių transformacijos tyrimai, ed. M. Iršėnas, G. Surdokaitė [*Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis*, 35] (Vilnius, 2004), 19–26.

²⁰³ D. Baronas, 'Katholisches und Orthodoxes Litauen im 13. Jahrhundert', *Lietuvos valstybės susikūrimas europiniame kontekste*, ed. A. Nikžentaitis, R. Petrauskas, M. Borgolte (Vilnius, 2008), 273–8.

²⁰⁴ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 830–1 and 858–9; *Galits'ko-Volyns'kii Litopis*, 117 and 127.

²⁰⁵ Goldfrank, 'The Lithuanian prince-monk Vojšelk', 47–9. Most scholars accept that this new material is of a historical character. Cf. Dąbrowski, *Rodowód Romanowiczów książąt halicko-wołyńskich* (Poznań–Wrocław, 2002), 199; P. Tolochko, 'Litovskii kniaz' Voishelk v russkikh letopisiakh', *Ruthenica*, 5 (2006), 119. Relying on her literary-textological observations, T. Vilkul considers its factual value to be 'zero': T. Vilkul, 'Galits'ko-Volyns'kii litopis pro postrizhennia litovs'kogo kniazia Voishelka', *Ukrains'kii istorichnii zhurnal*, 4 (2007), 29. After a while she produced a less negative attitude: eadem, 'Postrizhennia kniazia Voishelka: politika kniazia Danila i strategii litopistsiv', *Kniazha doba: Istorii i kul'tura*, 2 (2008), 126 and 128.

²⁰⁶ M. Hrushevsky, 'Khronol'ogiiia podii Galits'ko-Volyns'koi litopisi', *Zapiski Naukovogo Tovaristva imeni Shevchenka*, 41 (1901), 43.

he was baptized in c. 1254.²⁰⁷ Such a sequence of events is based on the Galichian account. The Volynian account displays unmistakable hagiographical overtones, and, as much as the former, has no chronological grid. These stories represent a continual flow of biographical details the dating of which is generally regarded as posing no awkward questions. Some difficulties arise when scholars pay attention to the fact that in the winter of 1258/59, Vaišvilka acted not like a monk, but as a capable leader who kidnapped the son of Daniil, Roman, so deftly that his father was unable to retrieve him ever again.²⁰⁸ Such activities on the part of Vaišvilka have induced modern scholars to advance a theory that he must have renounced his cloistered life and taken back the ducal throne at Novgorodok from Roman some time before 1258/59.²⁰⁹ There is one more recent theory suggesting that, in the process of making peace in c. 1254, Daniil somehow managed to capture Vaišvilka and made him take monastic vows – this was, as it were, a usual way in Rus' to render a political opponent harmless.²¹⁰ Recently advanced by prominent specialists in Russian chronicles, Piotr Tolochko and Tatiana Vilkul, these theories are ill-founded because they invent 'new facts' without providing source-based arguments and play on remote parallels. Situational parallels drawn by Vilkul between Ihor Olgovich, the Kievan duke-turned-monk, and Vaišvilka are simply misleading because the former saw himself ousted by his rival, while the latter

²⁰⁷ Nagirnyj, *Polityka zagraniczna*, 280.

²⁰⁸ Now it is generally assumed that Vaišvilka may have had his hand in the putative murder of Roman. This theory contains some plausibility, but as there is no any direct evidence and there were many ways to die in Lithuania, the fate of Roman will remain a secret forever. In our opinion, however, the close relations between Vaišvilka and the princely family of Galich-Volyn' provide more ground for assuming that he was not directly responsible for the death of Roman than *vice versa*.

²⁰⁹ Tolochko, 'Litovskii kniaz' Voishelk', 119.

²¹⁰ Vilkul, 'Galits'ko-Volyns'kii litopis', 28. Much the same argumentation is reiterated in her 2008 paper. On comparison, it transpires that the only new insight is a reference to the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle which provides additional information on Vaišvilka, which might lend some indirect support for the thesis about his enforced tonsure. This is one more example of attempts to impart one's own meaning to the text at the expense of the plain message about unity between the newly-installed ruler and his Lithuanian subjects. Cf. T. Vilkul, 'Postrizhennia kniazia Voishelka', 125 and *LR*, lines 7202–3.

made peace on behalf of his father. Does it make any difference? The free application of assumptions that Rus'ian chroniclers were in the habit of twisting historical reality beyond recognition leads to theories that in their turn cannot be based on source material. By contrast to these new theories, our point of departure is the belief that the closeness of actual events and their description puts a brake on the imagination of chroniclers to concoct totally fictitious stories. By contrast to literary interpretations, we will give some consideration to socio-political factors that are helpful in trying to make more sense of obscure places in the text which have a direct bearing on the picture of the life of Vaišvilkas.

The Galichian account of how Vaišvilkas concluded peace with Daniil have been read by many scholars and students. Close reading is good advice to start with.²¹¹ The text *per se* is not complicated, but in these few lines it contains references to events that took place over a number of years. The interpretation of the text becomes more interesting when we begin to consider the changing status of its main protagonist, Vaišvilkas (Vojšelk). As a lay ruler he gives in marriage his sister; as a monk he gives the towns of Novgorodok, Slonim and Volkovysk to Prince Roman. All these activities are deeply political: how could a monk be capable of political action, when in medieval Rus' and Byzantium alike it was common practice to make a ruler politically dead was to make him a monk. Did such rules not apply to Vaišvilkas? The probability of such an exception is very low. All the more so, when we consider the contractual character of Roman's rule over Novgorodok and other Rus'ian towns. They were given him as if from the hand of Mindaugas and Vaišvilkas, in a way that is reminiscent of Western-style relations between a lord and his vassal. As long as peace and alliance between Lithuania and Galich-Volyn' was in force, Roman could enjoy the benefits of ruling in Novgorodok. However, as soon as Rus'ian forces joined the Tatars

²¹¹ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis", 830–1; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 117: 'По томъ же Войшелкъ сътвори миръ съ Даниломъ, и въда дъщерь Миндогодову за Шварна, сестру свою, и прійде в Холмъ къ Данилови, оставивъ княженіе свое и въспріемъ мнишескій чинъ, и въдасть Романови, сынови королеву, Новогородокъ отъ Миндога и отъ себе и Слонимъ и Волковьескъ, и всѣ города, а самъ просися ити въ Святую Гору, и найде ему король путь у короля угорьского, и не може дойти Святое Горы и воротися въ Българехъ.'

in their invasion of Lithuania in 1258/59, Roman was kidnapped by Vaišvilkas and was seen no more. Such vicissitudes imply that both Mindaugas and Vaišvilkas were well aware of the situation on the southern approaches to Lithuania. To take measures against the onslaught was surely not a monk's business. There can be, of course, one more interpretative possibility visible in a theory that Vaišvilkas threw off his cowl some time before taking action against Prince Roman. Scholars supporting this theory must invent one more 'fact' (desertion of the monastery)²¹² and to subscribe to the underlying idea that changing status from lay to religious was easy in the medieval Orthodox world. When such instances did occur, they were due to very extraordinary events: this is evident, for example, from Tsar Boris of Bulgaria, who emerged from his cell when in 893 his son Vladimir tried to re-establish pagan ways in his country.²¹³ This is evident from Vaišvilkas himself (see below). Such events are known and we see no compelling reason to invent 'new facts' when it is possible to get by without unnecessary inventions.

The reading of the Galichian account has disclosed that it is a commemorative story.²¹⁴ The inconsistency stemming from its author's failure to distinguish between prince-Vaišvilkas and monk-Vaišvilkas in the latter's political activities, allows us to characterize the account as a not-too-tidy flow of memories. Consequently, the events recorded in the Galichian account may have taken place any time from c. 1254 to c. 1263. To make sense of this mess we should turn sensitively to other pieces of source information. It follows from the Volynian account and the Novgorod chronicle that Vaišvilkas enjoyed an uninterrupted span of monastic life until the violent death of his father.²¹⁵ On the other hand, we have seen that in 1258/59 Vaišvilkas acted most vigorously as a prince. This reasoning leads us to the conclusion that the conversion of Vaišvilkas

²¹² Tolochko, 'Litovskii kniaz' Voishelk', 119, 121.

²¹³ D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (London, 2000), 96–7; F. Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250* (Cambridge, 2006), 177–8. A rebellion against the newly converted ruler must not invariably involve the restoration of paganism as may be inferred from somewhat earlier revolt led by dissatisfied Christian nobles against Boris: *ibid.*, 169.

²¹⁴ Tolochko, 'Litovskii kniaz' Voishelk', 118.

²¹⁵ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 858–9; *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 127; *NIL*, 84–5.

to the religious life and his subsequent attempt to reach Mount Athos must have taken place between 1259 and 1263. It is known that through the good offices of Daniil of Galich, King Bela IV of Hungary ‘found a road’ for Vaišvilkas, but, upon reaching Bulgaria, the latter had to turn back due to turmoil then raging there.²¹⁶ As this piece of information contains no concrete datable evidence, it lends itself to a number of dating possibilities. The most popular is that of c. 1257.²¹⁷ In our view, equally good conditions for the travel of Vaišvilkas were in place when the Hungarian army invaded Bulgaria in 1261.²¹⁸

It has been important for us to address chronological issues relating to the life of Vaišvilkas because his vicissitudes illustrate a more general trend – the decline of Roman Catholic power in Lithuania in the wake of the Tatar onslaught of 1258/59 and the pagan Žemaitijan victory at Durbė in 1260. We regard the change in Vaišvilkas from a layman to an Orthodox monk as one more example in this trend. We consciously refrain from attempting to fathom the sphere of personal motivation, because there is no reliable guide here: if you accept his conversion in c. 1255 you propose one motivation, if you accept his later conversion you propose another, but in neither case you have Vaišvilkas at hand to explain. So we must be content with essentially non-committal interpretations. Even this is not safe. It is not difficult, for example, to imagine that Mindaugas would not have been very happy when his son Vaišvilkas was spending his days in an Orthodox monastery at the time when his military service was, presumably, a more pressing necessity. But if we take the Volynian account to substantiate the thesis that there was a tension between father and son over the life in the monastery, we would certainly be told that all this is nothing more than pious hagiographical clichés. When we consider that Vaišvilkas could not build his own monastery ‘between Lithuania and Novgorodok’ by his own hands, we are compelled to acknowledge that some sort of

²¹⁶ ‘Ipat’evskaia letopis’, 831; *Galits’ko-Volins’kii Litopis*, 117.

²¹⁷ Cf. Dąbrowski, *Rodowód*, 201.

²¹⁸ J. V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1994), 174.

help must have been forthcoming from his father.²¹⁹ The reaction to the violent death of Mindaugas shows that there was no break in relations between the father and the son as hagiographical clichés would have us believe.²²⁰ When the news of the murder reached Vaišvilka, he fled from his monastery to neighbouring Pinsk for refuge. Those who killed Mindaugas considered Vaišvilka a potential threat, and they were right.

As soon as the news of the murder of Treniota in 1264 reached Vaišvilka, he took men from Pinsk for his return to Lithuania. On the way his following was joined by men from Novgorodok. When they reached Lithuania proper there was no need for Vaišvilka to fight his way to the throne, because ‘the Lithuanians gladly received the son of their ruler’.²²¹ They certainly represented only the partisans of the late Mindaugas and his family. Upon his coming to power, Vaišvilka released those (German) Christians who remained imprisoned from the time of Mindaugas’ turn against the Teutonic Order, and thus established friendly relations with the Livonian Order. The Order turned a blind eye to the ‘schismatic’ power in Lithuania, abandoning its rights there for a while. It was still engaged busily in pacifying pagans in Prussia and Livonia, and Vaišvilka was still far from having satisfied his desire for revenge.

In 1264 his enemies were still alive and well in those Lithuanian lands which lay to the north of the Neris River (Deltuva and Nalšia). Now Vaišvilka’s connections with the Galich-Volynian princely clan proved their value. With the support of Volynian troops Vaišvilka managed to stage a bloodbath there: many were killed or forced to

²¹⁹ This foundation is related to the Lavryshev monastery and this identification seems to be substantially true. For the discussion of various later versions of the foundation of this monastery, see Giedroyc, ‘The arrival... (thirteenth century)’, 18–9. The earliest remains revealed by archaeological investigations are datable to the fourteenth century or perhaps somewhat earlier time: A. Kraucevich, ‘Arkhealagichnyia dasledavanni Lauryshauskaga manastyra na Paniamonni’, *Z Glyby Viakou. Nash Krai*, 1 (1996), 231, 234.

²²⁰ Cf. ‘Ipat’evskaia letopis’, 859 and *NIL*, 84. A theory of tense relations between the father and the son has been almost universally accepted: Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie*, 96–7; Giedroyc, ‘The arrival... (thirteenth century)’, 17; Gudavičius, *Mindaugas*, 253; Baronas, ‘Katholisches und Orthodoxes Litauen’, 274–5.

²²¹ ‘Ipat’evskaia letopis’, 861. Cf. *LR*, lines 7200–6.

flee, to the satisfaction of Rus'ian chroniclers writing in Volyn' and Novgorod alike.²²² The Volynian narrative betrays a very conscious tendency. Covering the years 1259 to 1269 its author would extol his hero Vasilko Romanovich and twist the facts accordingly.²²³ That is why he lays a very strong emphasis on Vaišvilkas' recognition of Vasilko as his 'father and master'. The repetitive affirmation of this 'fact' by the Volynian chronicle makes it look rather suspicious and diminishes its factual value. However, it is certain that the appearance of these strands of evidence was due mostly to rival interests within the clan itself: who should be viewed as a legitimate heir to Vaišvilkas, the family of Daniil Romanovich or that of Vasilko Romanovich. As the Volynian chronicler had the chance to twist the story of the life of Vaišvilkas, it is now impossible to disentangle satisfactorily a maze of interests played out in the twilight. Most likely Vaišvilkas had to tiptoe delicately between the princes of Galich and Volyn'. He could not do this indefinitely, because upon leaving the monastery as an avenger for his father's death, he took a vow to return to monastic life within three years. When in 1267 he renounced his throne, he did so in favour of Shvarno, his brother-in-law. Vaišvilkas went to live in the Ugrovsk monastery in Volyn'. His abdication, however, caused dissatisfaction within the ranks of the Galich-Volynian dukes: Shvarno was not sure of being able to consolidate his power in Lithuania, his brother Lev felt rancour at being denied the throne, and the feelings of Duke Vasilko remain a total mystery. All this bad faith came to a head during a carousal in the princely company. Prince Lev, being in a state of heavy inebriation, killed Vaišvilkas, who found himself devoid of the protection promised by Vasilko.²²⁴

By killing Vaišvilkas, Lev also dashed the hopes of his brother Shvarno to rule in Lithuania. Blood vengeance, not obedience to the would-be ruler, was on the mind of those who felt allegiance to the family of Mindaugas. Recent research has shown that Shvarno did not manage to take hold on the grand-ducal power in Lithuania

²²² 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 863. *NIL*, 85.

²²³ *Galits'ko-Volins'kii Litopis*, 51–5.

²²⁴ 'Ipat'evskaia letopis', 867–8.

at all, despite the strained efforts on the part of Volynian chronicler to prove the opposite.²²⁵

Seemingly the abdication of Vaišvilkas created a power vacuum and prompted the Teutonic Order to recall its rights to Lithuania. Its old ally, King Ottokar II of Bohemia, arrived in Prussia late in 1267 to take part in his crusade which was in the making since about 1257.²²⁶ Very soon, however, the king of Bohemia stopped his crusade. His hopes to see Bohemian interests safeguarded and the see of Olomouts promoted to the rank of archbishopric met with a far from positive response on the part of Pope Clement IV.²²⁷ Nature was on the side of the king, who due to bad weather conditions took a thaw as an excuse enough to regard his crusading vow as fulfilled and returned to Prague in February 1268. He did not miscalculate: when letters of Pope Clement IV reached him, it turned out that the pope again expected of the king of Bohemia to have the kingdom of Lithuania restored to the general benefit of the faithful and the Church.²²⁸ The eventually restored kingdom was to be given over to a devout ruler, obedient to the Holy See. King Ottokar II would be freer to dispose of other lands that he might eventually conquer from Lithuanians and other infidels.²²⁹ In either case, the rights of the Teutonic Knights were to be respected. Bishop Bruno von Schauenburg of Olomouc was encouraged to apostolic labours, though the prospect of the elevation of his see was not in view.²³⁰

When different interests of the Roman Catholic camp were being calibrated, Lithuania was caught in turmoil caused by the abdication and then the violent death of Vaišvilkas (December 1267). The exact circumstances remain unknown, but it was Traidenis, a pagan duke of Kernavė (previously unknown from sources), who

²²⁵ A. Dubonis, *Traidenis: Monarcho valdžios atkūrimas Lietuvoje 1268–1282* (Vilnius, 2009), 43–55.

²²⁶ J. K. Hoensch, *Přemysl Otakar II. von Böhmen: Der goldene König* (Graz, 1989), 149; *CDERB*, ed. J. Šebánek, S. Duškova, V/1 (Prague, 1974), no. 413, pp. 614–5 (4 June 1264).

²²⁷ Hoensch, *Přemysl Otakar II.*, 147–51.

²²⁸ See n. ...

²²⁹ *CDERB*, V/2, no. 541, pp. 100–1 (26 January 1268).

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 540, pp. 99–100 (25 January 1268). See also, *ibid.*, no. 539, pp. 98–9 (20 January 1268).

emerged as the new leader (1268–1282). He effectively restored monarchical power, which was no longer Christian.²³¹ His coming to power prompted Duke Vasilko, the ‘father and master’ of Vaišvilkas, to try to make good his rights. Peace was reached after inconclusive warfare. The new pagan duke had to be recognized. Unsurprisingly, he was stigmatized most vehemently by the Volynian chronicler, who ‘out of shame’ could not find enough words to describe all his impieties. In his eyes Traidenis was as bad as Antiochus of Syria and Herod of Jerusalem, and worse even than Nero of Rome.²³² Such diatribe is the best proof of the project of ‘Orthodox Lithuania’ lying in tatters.

These seven years after the murder of Mindaugas buried almost everything that had to do with the Catholic Kingdom of Lithuania. Even the memory of Mindaugas himself evaporated from local tradition, and only evidence produced or preserved abroad allows us to try to look into his dim epoch. During the reign of Mindaugas Lithuania had a chance of becoming part of medieval Latin Christendom, but ultimately remained within Eastern Europe together with Orthodox Rus’ians and pagan Tatars. The law of succession as it was anticipated by Mindaugas and his clerical advisers would probably have made the central authority more stable. Instead, fourteenth-century successions bespeak affinity to the collateral inheritance patterns characteristic of Kievan Rus’.²³³ The introduction of Christianity would have initiated written culture and written law. Instead, oral culture and customary law enjoyed free rein in Lithuania for more than a century. These phenomena served as a useful fulcrum enabling Lithuanian rulers to make their u–turns without losing face. This had a direct bearing on the issue of conversion to the Christian faith. Subsequent grand dukes of Lithuania would make overtures to the effect of demonstrating their willingness to embrace the Christian faith. This was so with Traidenis some time

²³¹ Dubonis, *Traidenis*, 63ff.

²³² ‘Ipat’evskaia letopis’, 869.

²³³ Cf. A. P. Tolochko, *Kniaz’ v Drevnei Rusi: Vlast’, sobstvennost’, ideologiia* (Kiev, 1992), 22–3; Franklin, Shepard, *The Emergence*, 191–3.

in 1274–76 and with Vytenis at the turn of the fourteenth century.²³⁴ In either case we have to deal with lip service paid to their Livonian collaborators in order to assuage their apprehensions in coming to terms with pagans at the time when the Teutonic brethren were spilling their blood ‘in defence’ of Christianity in Livonia and Prussia. Such overtures were very shaky indeed and the pagan dukes could swiftly move from peace talks to intimidation: ‘What I have done until now is nothing when compared with what I am going to do in the future’, said Traidenis to his guests from Riga who came to Lithuania to try to set their incarcerated envoy, a respectable burgher named Arnold the Iron Hand, free.²³⁵ No surprise that pagan Lithuanians figured quite prominently in the bleak picture of Eastern Europe presented by Bishop Bruno of Olomouc to Pope Gregory X on the eve of the Council of Lyons in which most urgent issues of Christendom were to be discussed.²³⁶

²³⁴ On Traidenis, see Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie*, 126–7; Dubonis, *Traidenis*, 107–9. On the collaboration of Vytenis with the burghers of Riga during their civil war with the Livonian knights, see W. Urban, *The Livonian Crusade* (Washington, 1981), 29–43; M. Giedroyc, ‘The arrival of Christianity in Lithuania: between Rome and Byzantium (1281–1341)’, *OSP*, n. s. 20 (1987), 10.

²³⁵ *Hansisches Urkundenbuch*, ed. K. Höhlbaum, I (Halle, 1876), no. 1015, p. 351 (5 February 1287); Dubonis, *Traidenis*, 105–7. On Lithuania under Vytenis, see S. C. Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire within East-Central Europe, 1295–1345* (Cambridge, 1994), 54ff.

²³⁶ ‘Relatio de statu ecclesiae in regno Alemanniae’, ed. I. Schwalm, *MGH Const.*, III (Hanover–Leipzig, 1904–1906), 590: ‘Lethwani et Prutheni velud gentiles plures episcopatus Polonie iam penitus deleverunt’ (16 December 1273). See also K. Górski, ‘Probleme der Christianisierung in Preußen, Livland und Litauen’, *Die Rolle der Ritterorden in der Christianisierung und Kolonisierung des Ostseegebietes*, ed. Z. H. Nowak [*Ordines militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica*, 1] (Torun, 1983), 15.

How to Play with Western Christians: a Battle of Wits between the Literate and the Illiterate

The correspondence of Grand Duke Gediminas (1322–1324)

In their self-imposed exile in Avignon, the popes of the early fourteenth century maintained an active mission policy.¹ The first tentative contact was tried out in 1317. When Archbishop-elect Borzysław of Gniezno, who was in Avignon for his confirmation to the post and with a mission to promote the cause of the restitution of the Polish royalty, told Pope John XXII that his country was exposed to continual depredations at the hands of pagan Lithuanians and schismatic Ruthenians, the pope decided to invite them to convert or to join the Roman Catholic Church.² The letter to the Lithuanian ruler spoke of the Almighty God who commanded the winds and the seas; it referred to original sin and the Lord's grace, and contained an invitation to join the Church, outside which there could be no salvation.³ Written *sub specie aeternitatis*, this message could equally well be produced at any other time and delivered to any other ruler. It produced no feedback.

It was five years later that Grand Duke Gediminas decided to reach out further afield. Peace with the Teutonic Order and the promotion of economy seem to have been what motivated him first

1 J. Richard, 'Les papes d'Avignon et l'Évangélisation du monde non-Latin à la veille du Grande Schisme', *Colloques Internationaux du C.N.R.S.*, vol. 586: *Genèse et débuts du Grand Schisme d'Occident* (Paris, 1980), 305–15.

2 T. Nowak, *Władysław Łokietek – polityk i dowódca* (Warsaw, 1978), 135.

3 *Chartularium*, no. 12, pp. 32–5 (3 February 1317).

of all.⁴ In the course of 1322 to 1324 seven open letters were written on behalf of Gediminas addressed to the pope, Franciscan and Dominican friars in Saxony and to burghers of the Baltic Hanseatic towns and, in general terms, to towns all the way to Rome itself.⁵ It would be no exaggeration to say that there is no match to this corpus in all medieval history of Europe because it is the pagan side who speaks from these letters. This language is mediated through Latin, imbued with some contemporary scholarly clichés, tailored to suit the expectation of Christian audience, but despite all that the pagan duke's message gets across the divide separating oral and written cultures. The exceptional character of Gediminas' letters has been recognized for a long time and been discussed professionally a number of times.⁶ They represent a text that can be read and reread time and again because it offers a sort of dialogue between two very different cultures. Here we would like to concentrate our attention on communicational side in an attempt to highlight those advantages that could be exploited by an illiterate but cunning man. First it must be admitted that in his contacts with westerners Gediminas was aided by the lack of one 'small thing': he did not have conscience, a notion devoid of sense in a society where honour and power was all that mattered most.⁷ This position offered some advantages and involved some disadvantages.

Gediminas knew full well that the Teutonic Knights justified their aggression by the idea of the need to fight the pagans in order

⁴ On immediate political circumstances leading to this outreach, see Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 189–95.

⁵ *Chartularium*, no. 14, pp. 38–41 (to Pope John XXII, summer 1322); no. 16, pp. 46–49 (to all Christians, 25 January 1323); no. 17, p. 50 (to Dominican friars in Saxony, 26 May 1323); no. 18, p. 51 (to burghers of Saxony, 26 May 1323); no. 19, p. 52 (to Franciscan friars in Saxony, 26 May 1323); no. 20, p. 54 (again to Pope John XXII [26 May 1323]). One letter to the pope is missing.

⁶ P. Rabikauskas, 'Commentaries on the "Letters of Gediminas"', *Lituanus*, 15 (1969), 47–54; J. Wyrozumski, 'Próba chrystianizacji Litwy w czasach Giedymina', *AC*, 19 (1987), 73–85; S. C. Rowell, 'The letters of Gediminas: "Gemachte Lüge?" Notes on a controversy', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, n. s. 41 (1993), 321–60. Proceedings of the 1994 Vilnius Conference on the letters of Gediminas are published in *Metrašėiai ir kunigaikščių laiškai [Senoji Lietuvos literatūra, 4]* (Vilnius, 1996).

⁷ Cf. D. Pociūtė, 'Sąžinės atradimas Lietuvoje', *Tipas ir individas Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės kultūroje*, ed. J. Liškevičienė, T. Račiūnaitė [AAAV, 24] (Vilnius, 2002), 51–2.

to convert them. This war provided continual trouble for Lithuanian rulers who happened to be distracted from slave-raiding in Poland or expansion into Rus'. That is why the need to secure the safety from the side of his Teutonic adversaries must be viewed as the most immediate cause for Gediminas to apply to the pope. Aided by his allies from Riga, he brought forward the case of his predecessor, King Mindaugas. He emphasized that it was only due to the misdeeds of the Teutonic Knights that the king in question defected from Christianity and that is why we 'remain in the error of our ancestors to this day'.⁸ There can be no doubt that Gediminas wanted to arouse hopes in the pope that eventually he and his people would be baptised. After enumerating the atrocities perpetrated by the Teutonic Knights against his envoys and Christians in Livonia, Gediminas made a final statement: 'we do not fight against the Christians in order to destroy the Christian faith, but in order to resist injustices done to us like Christian kings and princes do'.⁹ Thereby he voiced a principle of a basic justice that should apply to Christian and pagan alike. It would seem that this principle could provide a basis for common language with those canonists who, like Innocent IV, advocated peaceful coexistence between Christian and infidel societies.

The Franciscan scribes of Gediminas, and perhaps the duke himself, are likely to have indulged their taste in the parlance of papal bulls. As the title of *servus servorum Dei* did nothing to retract from the dignity of the pope, so there was nothing for Gediminas to lose in the acknowledgement that in appearance he was the least among other kings. Surely he did not forget to stress that he was the highest in his own country where he had full authority to 'command and require, to put to death and save, to close and open'.¹⁰ Gediminas emphasized that if the pope could broker a peace between him and the Teutonic Order, he would be ready to obey in everything to the will of the pope like 'other Christian kings' were used to. Not

⁸ *Chartularium*, no. 14, p. 38 (summer 1322).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 21, p. 60 (26 May 1323, to Saxon towns): 'licet omnium regum minimus apparemus, tamen Dei providencia in propriis maximus, in quibus habemus precipere et imperare, perdere et salvare, claudere et reserare.'

only the pope, but also much wider audience was informed of this commendable desire on the part of Gediminas. The pope may have felt delighted by so filial a readiness to obey. On the other hand, the reference to the exemplary behaviour of 'other Christian kings' in the conditions of the high-handed assertiveness of the kings of France and in the course of struggle raging between Pope John XXII and Louis the Bavarian allows us to suspect that Gediminas did not care to keep himself up-to-date as regards real political actualities in the faraway core areas of medieval Europe.¹¹ His vision of the power of the pope was like that of the Mongol khans from a century before. From distant Karakorum the pope might well appear like a spiritual leader of all the western kings able to exert a temporal rule over them. Vilnius was closer to the West, but this physical proximity did not imply better knowledge.

Such an image of relations between pope and king is an indication that Gediminas and his addressees belonged to different communicational spheres. Franciscan or Dominican friars occasionally called in to mediate between the two worlds were unable to fill all the gaps of knowledge in the mind of a pagan strongman and his entourage. That is why it is possible to find more indications demonstrating a bit awkward mode of communication between the pope and the pagan ruler. Thus from the pope's reply it transpires that Gediminas had asked the pope to commission the Archbishop of Riga Frederick Pernstein with a task of adjudicating between him and the Teutonic Order. The matter of making peace and demarcating frontiers should have been top priority.¹² It is clear that Gediminas knew about the suit filed at the curia by the same archbishop against the Teutonic

¹¹ This is not surprising taking into account casual and narrow contacts between pagan Lithuania and the core areas of Latin Europe. Even a man with first-hand knowledge could be found out of step with *Realpolitik*, as was the case with Gediminas' ally Frederick of Riga, who was unable to make any headway in his politics against the Teutonic Order. See K. Forstreuter, 'Erzbischof Friedrich von Riga (1304–1341). Ein Beitrag zu seiner Charakteristik', *ZfO*, 19 (1970), 658–60. Too strong a reliance of Gediminas on Archbishop Frederick was criticized by Friar Nicholas OP, who advised to lay more hope in the kings of Bohemia or Hungary: *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 188 (3 November 1324). Cf. also Rowell, 'The letters of Gediminas', 324.

¹² Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 195–8.

Order. He also knew that relations between the archbishop and the Teutonic Knights were then at their lowest. It is clear that the archbishop of Riga could by no means act as an impartial judge. Such a request begs the question on how well informed Gediminas was of the principle of impartially selected jury to adjudicate between the parties. Such a principle of Roman law was something to be taken for granted by the pope, and thus two Benedictines were appointed as his legates: Bishop Bartholomew of Alet and Abbot Bernard of St Theofred.¹³

In general, the correspondence of Gediminas shows that he tried to do his best in making a most positive image of himself and his country. Among persons to whom a most welcome acceptance was promised, pride of place was to be taken by 'bishops, priests and monks of any religious order'; a caveat was made only with regard to those unspeakable monks who turned their abodes into 'speluncam latronum' (cf. Mt. 21:13. Mc. 11:17. Lc 19:46).¹⁴ If holy men were welcome to a pagan country, then there was nothing to be feared of by the Christian rank and file.¹⁵ Soldiers, merchants, smiths, carpenters, cobblers, furriers, bakers, tavern-keepers, and any others with technical skills were called on to come to settle in Lithuania.¹⁶ They all were welcome: farmers were to till their plots of land without paying any taxes for ten years; merchants were offered freedom to come and go without any hindrance; knights and men-at-arms were promised fiefs commensurate with their status; humbler folk were to enjoy Rigan law until something better could be figured out by the grand-ducal council of wise men.¹⁷ A plan for the modernization of pagan Lithuania was thus outlined.¹⁸ It was emphasized yet more strongly in subsequent letters which promised freedom from

¹³ *Chartularium*, no. 36, pp. 114–22 (31 May or 1 June 1324).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 16, p. 46 (25 January 1323). This general exception refers to the Cistercians who in 1305 sold their monastery at Dünamünde to the Teutonic Order, which installed there a military outpost able to hinder the maritime trade of Riga: Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 204.

¹⁵ The safety from any possible molestation was underlined most emphatically in the letter addressed to German burghers: *Chartularium*, no. 21, p. 60 (26 May 1323).

¹⁶ Giedroyć, 'The arrival ... (1281–1341)', 23–4; Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 135–7.

¹⁷ *Chartularium*, no. 16, pp. 46–8 (25 January 1323).

¹⁸ A. Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas* (Vilnius, 1989), 28ff; Gudavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, 109.

taxes and obligatory services to all newcomers who could leave the country absolutely free, if they only wished to do so. The prospective audience of farmers was given to know that after ten years of complete freedom they would have to pay tithes in relation to the fertility of the soil as was usual in 'other kingdoms'.¹⁹ In any event, it would be highly profitable to invest and work in Lithuania because here crops would be more abundant than in other (Western) kingdoms.²⁰ To the peasantry and craftsmen in the neighbouring countries afflicted by the economic recession, all this could have appeared like a ray of hope.²¹ Gediminas was sensitive to the religious needs of his expected newcomers, so he did not miss to point out that he already had two churches – one for Franciscans, another for Dominicans – built in his royal town of Vilnius.²² They also were told that friars were given all necessary freedom to administer sacraments. The Franciscans were even requested by the grand duke himself to pray for the spiritual well-being of his children and wives.²³ Such a blip as wives (in plural!) might have risen some eyebrows in some devote quarters but could hardly disturb an almost idyllic picture of the life in pagan Lithuania. The promises of the ruler and his commitments were sealed with rock-strong assurance: 'iron will turn into wax and water into steel before we retract our word'.²⁴ In a word, Gediminas offered such a peace to Christians which they 'have never seen'.²⁵ It is noteworthy, however, that in his letters to the pope, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, Gediminas did not provide any specific mention of his approaching baptism, nor did he ask for any religious instruction; more down-to-earth matters dominate the tenor of his letters.²⁶

¹⁹ *Chartularium*, no. 21, p. 60 (26 May 1323).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 21, p. 60 (26 May 1323).

²¹ Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 199–200.

²² *Chartularium*, no. 16, p. 46 (25 January 1323). On the issue of this Dominican church see p. 134f.

²³ *Ibid.*, no. 16, p. 46: 'in remedium salutiferum filiorum et uxorum nostrarum' (25 January 1323).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 21, p. 58 (26 May 1323).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 21, p. 60 (26 May 1323). Major part of this letter is translated into English by Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 135–6.

²⁶ A. Nikžentaitis, '1323 m. gegužės 26 d. Gedimino laišakai Vokietijos miestams ir dominikonų bei pranciškonų ordinų vienuoliams: ekonominiai ir politiniai laišku parašymo motyvai', *Metraščiai ir kunigaikščių laišakai*, 124–33; Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 133–6.

For a while everything seemed to be going predictably. After checking the sincerity of Gediminas' peaceful overtures, a treaty between Lithuania and Livonia was concluded in Vilnius on 2 October 1323.²⁷ Subsequently it was sent to the pope for ratification. The Franciscans were happy to accept good news from Gediminas and asked the pope to permit them to build new houses in Estonia and Prussia from which it would be more convenient for their missionaries to reach Lithuania.²⁸ One missionary trip was indeed undertaken by a group of Franciscans in 1324, but on their way back to Riga one of their leaders, Friar Gerhard of Dordemuere, was intercepted by the Teutonic Knights and jailed in the castle of Ascherad for quite a long time.²⁹ In general, conditions on the ground were far from peaceful. The Teutonic Order went on counter-offensive ranging from encouraging Prussian clergy to decry the falsity of Gediminas intentions, to maltreatment or killings of his envoys abroad, to engaging in double-dealing and enticing sabotage within the country.³⁰ Despite such setbacks, peace was not revoked by Gediminas and his Livonian allies and it was forced on the Order by the papal edict on 31 August 1324. The first major barrier seemed to have been overcome.³¹ Thus the pope instructed his legates to impose a four-year truce between Prussia and Lithuania. So even before converting to the Christian faith Gediminas was given a chance to taste the first fruits of the eagerly desired peace with the Teutonic Knights. It was also a sign that his promise to 'accept the faith' was taken seriously by the pope. The archbishop of Riga and his burghers might equally well be happy at the prospective conversion of a pagan ruler. Nobody would be able to reproach them for collaborating with the pagans.

When the papal legates reached Riga in autumn 1324, they first sent their envoys to Vilnius to collect first-hand evidence on how serious the ruler was in his dealings with the pope. The crucial point was whether the pagan ruler was committed to undergo baptism.

²⁷ Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 211.

²⁸ Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 137.

²⁹ *Chartularium*, no. 57, p. 206.

³⁰ Giedroyć, 'The arrival ... (1281–1341)', 25–6.

³¹ Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 213–5.

Before admission to an audience, they chatted with the Dominican friar Nicholas. He was a well-informed man with most recent news from the grand-ducal court. He told them that the duke had completely changed his mind with regard to his baptism. The same information was corroborated by local Franciscan friars. All boded ill for the mission. After Mass and a meal they were invited to the presence of the grand duke. They did not rejoice in finding him not alone but surrounded by his closest advisers (some twenty men). The envoys decided to be circumspect and did not fall head-on on what was the key to everything else – baptism. They first informed him about the investigation instituted by the pope against the Teutonic Knights, about the repatriation of prisoners of war, and the restitution of property pending the peace. The duke was delighted and thanked them heartily. After the presentation of their mission and its objectives, Gediminas put a surprisingly plain question as to whether they *knew* what was written in his letters addressed to the pope and the entire world. They responded that his *intention* was to embrace the faith of Jesus Christ and be baptized. The grand duke responded that he did not order this to be written. And if it happened to be written, then all culpability must fall on the man who wrote this. Thus a Franciscan friar, Bertold, was made a scapegoat for so deplorable a misunderstanding. Now Gediminas did not want to be vague and holding up promises. He stated clearly: ‘If I have ever thought of the baptism, may the devil baptise me’.³²

The narrow difference between *knowledge* and *intention* was in reality a vast field for a man like Gediminas to play. Was an orally pronounced word the same as that which became committed to writing? To what extent did a sentence in Lithuanian coincide with its translation into German or Latin? The less you see such questions as problematic, the more they serve as an indication of your engulfment in the ‘self-evident’ premises of your own (Christian. European) written culture. S. C. Rowell has aptly noted that the term by which the upcoming baptism of the pagan ruler appeared to have been intimated (‘fidem recipere’) was intentionally vague and ambiguous.³³ It would be implausible to suggest that this term

³² *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 184 (3 November 1324).

³³ Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 197.

was put forward by Gediminas himself. Rather, what is clear is that Gediminas was avoiding to use the explicit term for baptism in reference to his own conversion and that of his people. The indefinite and malleable nature of a living word was what gave Gediminas safe grounds for his contention with the envoys and their local Christian well-wishers. What mattered to Gediminas was not what had been written, but what he said.³⁴ Therefore it was not difficult for him to beat his interlocutors on several counts.

It was one thing for a Christian to acknowledge the pope as his or her father, and it was another for a pagan to say so. Thus there was no problem for Gediminas to admit readily that he held the pope for the father – he was as magnanimous as to hold in such esteem every man older than him, to treat his equals as his brothers, and to look upon younger ones as his sons.³⁵ He let the envoys know that his permission for the clergymen to come to his country should not be understood as an invitation for a wholesale conversion of the pagan population: Christians are simply allowed to venerate God according to their customs just like Russians and Poles are permitted to do the same according to their own rites. Here pagan Lithuanians are brought into the same line, because ‘we venerate God according to our own rites and we all have one God’.³⁶ Clearly such a statement owed almost everything to this particular situation, but it served well for the moment. The envoys had nothing to do but to admit that in his letters Gediminas corroborated everything but the baptism. The first round ended in the victory of Gediminas, but it meant that the job was only half-done.

Another day witnessed one more investigation into the art of interpretation by the scribes. A company made up of the grand-ducal commissioner and the envoys went straight to the Franciscans and talked directly to Friar Bertold. In response he replied that he wrote nothing but what came straight from the royal lips, namely, that the ruler wanted to become a son of obedience, to come to the fold of the

³⁴ E. Banionis, ‘Žodžio ir papročio kultūros pėdsakai Gedimino laiškuose’, *Metraščiai ir kunigaikščių laišškai*, 27–8.

³⁵ *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 184 (3 November 1324).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Church, to welcome Christians and propagate the Christian faith.³⁷ The grand duke admitted that he stood in error. The friar was willing to tell more, but his story was cut down to size by the glib remark of the commissioner: 'so you recognize that you were not ordered to write about the baptism'. Now all Christians present were unanimous in their sure knowledge that to be a son of obedience and of the Church signified nothing else but the baptism. The commissioner remained unimpressed and his conclusion was unassailable: it was Friar Bertold who caused such confusion. Friar Nicholas concurred with him, both turned around and left. The Dominican may have felt some satisfaction at finding out his intellectual superiority over too loose an interpretation on the part of the Greyfriars.

The envoys of the papal legates were desperate to convince Gediminas to allow himself to be brought to the font. The men close to the grand duke were told that the legates had full power to accomplish anything that was necessary for the exaltation of the newly-converted ruler, his realm and his people.³⁸ The only thing that Gediminas was really interested in was whether Christians were to abide by the peace after his final will became evident. He declared himself ready to keep peace with those willing to keep peace, and made no secret of his willingness to respond by force to those who would choose to come back on the military path. Naturally, the envoys could not tell this and both sides agreed on sending grand-ducal envoys to Riga to get informed on eventual decisions.

The refusal by Gediminas to receive the baptism proved that the supporters of the Teutonic Order were right after all. As early as November 1323, Fr Nicholas, the provincial of the Friars Minor in Prussia, along with local Franciscan wardens, claimed that the promise of Gediminas about his baptism was mendacious.³⁹ He al-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 54, p. 186 (3 November 1324).

³⁸ Giedroyć, 'The arrival ... (1281–1341)', 27–8.

³⁹ *Chartularium*, no. 29, p. 94 (addressed to all Christians, 25 November 1323): no. 30, p. 96 (addressed to Pope John XXII, 25 November 1323). It may be noted that relations between the Teutonic Order and the Franciscans in Prussia were friendly all the time: H. Niedermaier, 'Die Franziskaner in Preußen, Livland und Litauen im Mittelalter', *ZfO*, 27 (1978), 12–16. This circumstance, however, does not detract from the veracity of their statements which was only increased by the subsequent unequivocal refusal on the part of Gediminas.

ready knew that Gediminas was capable of pronouncing blasphemy, a thing that the envoys had an occasion to experience themselves in November 1324. Why did all this happen this way – this is the question that has attracted comments and answers from many a historian who has ever had to deal with the relations between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania. It is usual to find out that the blame tends to be left at the door of the Teutonic Order. It must have been its subversive activities and dirty deeds that compromised Christianity in the eyes of Gediminas so much that he turned away from his own initial sincere wish to become a Christian believer. The bad faith and atrocities perpetrated by the Teutonic Knights have been assumed to go a long way to explain why Gediminas became exasperated so as to level rounded criticism at all Christians *in corpore*: ‘What are you telling me about Christians? Where can one find more injustice, more iniquity, violence, destruction and usury if not among Christians, and especially among those who appear as crusading monks but commit every kind of evil things...’⁴⁰ Less emotional and more political motivation for the refusal of Gediminas to embrace the Catholic faith has also been adduced. It was stridently pagan Žemaitijans and Orthodox Ruthenians who were the most vociferous opponents to the possible Catholic option of their ruler.⁴¹ It is supposed that the Žemaitijans were bribed by the Teutonic Knights to act in this anti-Catholic vein so boldly that they were bragging of being ready, together with the Teutonic Knights, to topple Gediminas from his throne.

⁴⁰ *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 184 (3 November 1324). Owing to this sort of criticism, Grand Duke Gediminas can hardly be compared to Celsus, whose medieval counterpart had been found missing. Cf. H.-D. Kahl, ‘Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtlichen Mittelalters. Bausteine für eine Phänomenologie bis c. 1050’, *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, vol. 2/1: *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters*, ed. K. Schäferdiek (Munich, 1978), 23. However, as a pagan ruler Gediminas is unusually loquacious. It is our assumption that, besides general references to what should be regarded as ‘right’, this was due to communication with ‘good’ Christians at the grand-ducal court.

⁴¹ Cf. Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie*, 278; Urban, *Livonian Crusade*, 79; Giedroyc, ‘The arrival ... (1281–1341)’, 28; Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 32–3; idem, ‘Die friedliche Periode in den Beziehungen zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und dem Großfürstentum Litauen (1345–1360) und das Problem der Christianisierung Litauens’, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 41 (1993), 5; Wyrozumski, ‘Próba’, 87–9; Gudavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, 112.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that the evidence for this opposition comes mainly from the report of the envoys of the papal legates composed after their return to Riga. It contains the description of the negotiations conducted in Vilnius in November 1324, and in itself is a most extraordinary document. We must be thankful for them because of their perseverance in trying to ferret out the true reasons behind the scene. At the very outset, it must be stated that the investigation carried out by the envoys did not result in unambiguous results. So special attention must be paid to the question as to whose testimony we have before our eyes. Conducted from this point of view, our investigation has allowed us to advance a hypothesis that all the evidence pointing in the direction of a strong anti-Catholic opposition comes from the milieu that was connected with the grand-ducal court. It was the Franciscans Henry and Bertold who acted as the scribes for the grand duke, and some laymen who shared with the envoys their knowledge of the Žemaitijans bribed by the Teutonic Order. The testimony of Friar Nicholas OP alludes to the opposition to the grand duke. He admitted that the ruler made a mistake in choosing as his father the archbishop of Riga, who was so weak as not to be able to defend his cause even at the Roman Curia: 'How can he defend you if he cannot help himself?'⁴² The pope would not be a much better choice because he is far away, and 'before his help could come you would be utterly destroyed', the learned Dominican was sharing his insights further. 'If conversion was intended, the right way was to turn to such strong kings as those of Hungary and Bohemia, because they can defend and protect you'. These political cues were dished out in response to Gediminas' question as to what to do next. We do not know what exactly Gediminas asked the Dominican, but it is clear that the answers were heavily predicated on the questions formulated by the same Gediminas who therefore could not be viewed as an impartial observer of the political scene in pagan Lithuania in 1323–24.

The arguments, on which a theory of an anti-Catholic opposition is based, do not carry much conviction. The sources emanating from the grand-ducal court or coming from people closely associated

⁴² *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 188 (3 November 1324).

with it reflect a twisted picture of power relations in the country. Franciscan friars seem simply to have retold what was told them in advance. They may have been convinced sincerely that something ominous was afoot. There is a continuous thread of suspension running throughout the letters of Gediminas. He repeatedly spoke of his uneasy impatience in waiting for the arrival of the papal envoys.⁴³ He expressed his fear of some seductive fraud.⁴⁴ What this could have been was, to all probability, a consciously construed mood of suspension. All this could have been intended as a backdrop offering a leeway for the turn to one or other direction. For the same purpose even the closest allies of Gediminas, the Rigan burghers, were left in the dark. Before signing the peace of Vilnius in 1323, the Livonian envoys were instructed specifically to investigate the issue of baptism. To their straight question Gediminas responded evasively: 'As long as the papal envoys, whom I am expecting every day, have not come, only God knows what is in my heart'.⁴⁵ But when in November 1324 the envoys were finally in place no evasion was possible and necessary. The issue of baptism was relegated to the status of deplorable misunderstanding on the part of Franciscan simpletons. That was not enough. To make the grand duke safe from incrimination, he was represented as a victim of circumstances and for this reason a spectre of Žemaitijan pagans and Rus'ian Orthodox believers was conjured up.

The nature of the sources pertaining to Žemaitija of the time is such that there is no way to prove or disprove the presumed activities of pagan Žemaitijans by drawing on any other independent sources of information. However, a general picture of Žemaitija within the realm of pagan Lithuania makes it very hard to believe that there were prerequisites in place for such an opposition to be called into life. For one thing, Žemaitijan nobles, who showed

- ⁴³ Ibid., no. 21, p. 58: 'nostros nuncios cum litteris misisse ad patrem nostrum gloriosissimum, dominum Iohannem papam, ut nos vestiat stola prima, cuius nuncios cum grandi timore et tedio de die in diem expectamus' (26 May 1323). See also ibid. no. 21, p. 60. On *stola prima*, see Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 206.
- ⁴⁴ *Chartularium*, no. 21, p. 62 (26 May 1323). See also S. Žukas, 'Gedimino laiškų semiotinė analizė', *Metraščiai ir kunigaikščių laiškai*, 180–1.
- ⁴⁵ *Chartularium*, no. 22, p. 68 (after 8 September 1323). See also Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 133–4.

inclinations towards collaboration with the Teutonic Order at the end of the thirteenth century, were effectively discouraged by grand-ducal troops without delay.⁴⁶ It seems likely that the same Gediminas, then acting as a lieutenant of his brother, had played a role in this.⁴⁷ The castle named after him (*castrum Gedeminne*) and known from 1305 was still standing in Žemaitija, and the grand-ducal vicegerents were in position to supervise Žemaitija. The most graphic illustration of the power of the grand duke of Lithuania in Žemaitija may be given from an aftermath of the crusade led by the knightly Bohemian King John of Luxembourg in 1329.⁴⁸ After the crusading army penetrated deep enough to reach the central parts of Žemaitija and destroy five strongholds in the process, some six thousand (!) pagans were baptised at the suggestion of the King instead of being put to sword as was proposed by the battle-hot Grand Master Werner von Orseln.⁴⁹ When soon afterwards the crusading army left, the noble neophytes of Žemaitija were calling on the Teutonic Order to defend them from the wrath of the Lithuanian ruler. To no avail. The Order did not show capability for defending the neophytes and they had returned to their old ways 'like a dog

⁴⁶ 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 159; A. Dubonis, 'Das Grenzgebiet zwischen Litauen und dem Deutschen Orden: soziale, wirtschaftliche, administrative, ethnische und kulturelle Kommunikation in den Jahren 1290–1422', *Tannenberg–Grunwald–Žalgiris 1410: Krieg und Frieden im späten Mittelalter*, ed. W. Paravicini, R. Petrauskas, G. Vercaemer [*Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau. Quellen und Studien*, 26] (Wiesbaden, 2012), 60–1.

⁴⁷ Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 16–22.

⁴⁸ This campaign of 1329 received exceptional coverage in contemporary chronicles and other literary works. Cf. 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 215; 'Kronika Františka Pražského', *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, ed. J. Emler, IV (Prague, 1884), 403; Guillaume de Machaut, *Le Confort d'Ami (Comfort for a Friend)*, ed. R. Barton Palmer [*Garland Library of Medieval Literature*, Series A. 67] (New York–London, 1992), 156–9; 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', ed. T. Hirsch, *SRP*, II, 462–3; *Ly Myreur des Histors: Chronique de Jean des Preis dit d'Outremeuse*, ed. A. Borgnet et. al., VI (Bruxelles, 1880), 415–16. A comparative analysis of these sources and of the imagery related to King John of Bohemia fighting the 'Saracens' in Žemaitija is provided by D. Baronas, D. Mačiulis, *Pilėnc: ir Margiris: Istorija ir legenda* (Vilnius, 2010), 85–96. On the campaign of 1329, see also F. Meltzer, *Die Ostraumpolitik Königs Johans von Böhmen: Ein Beitrag zur Ostraumfrage im 14. Jahrhundert* (Jena, 1940), 46–9; Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 41; Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 239–41.

⁴⁹ 'Die Chronik Wigands', 463.

returning to its vomit'.⁵⁰ Even after so strong a blow, which in its impact is sometimes compared to the 1255 deeds in Prussia performed by King Přemysl Ottokar II, whose conscious imitator John of Luxembourg was, Žemaitija did not fall out of the Lithuanian realm.⁵¹

Within the context of such power relations it is highly improbable that anti-Catholic Žemaitijan threats could be repeated time and again all year round in the presence of the grand duke himself as was claimed in the report of the papal envoys. That is why such information looks like a reflection of some spectacle to be served up to gullible westerners. It looks unlikely that local Franciscans in Vilnius, whose knowledge of the local language was rather circumscribed, were in a position to be immersed so deeply in channels of communication as to be able to sieve the information presented to them.⁵² The image of the opposition coming from the ranks of the Orthodox believers was conjured up for the same purpose – to show how strong the anti-Catholic hysteria in Vilnius was when the news of the possible conversion to Catholicism spread. The wise advice of Fr Nicholas OP was prefigured by the question formulated by Gediminas. Friar Nicholas may have felt like a modern expert in European affairs called in to give advice on strategic questions, but

Ibid., 465. Cf. 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 215. It must be noted that in this as in the subsequent joint campaigns of the Bohemian king and the Teutonic Knights in 1337 and 1345, Lithuania was not their greatest concern: their real interest lay in cooperation against the king of Poland in an attempt to make good their claims to Silesia and Pomerelia, respectively. For more detail, see U. Arnold, 'Preußen, Böhmen und das Reich – Karl IV. und der Deutsche Orden', *Kaiser Karl IV. Staatsmann und Mäzen*, ed. F. Seibt (Munich, 1978), 167–8.

On the 1255 campaign, see 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 90–2; Hoensch, *Přemysl Otakar II.*, 74–7.

Franciscans Henry and Bertold, both friars who composed the letters of Gediminas, acknowledged that they had not been invited to the grand-ducal council for a year. Only the Dominican Nicholas was given such an opportunity. The Franciscans did not feel happy about such a change and expressed their misgivings that perhaps it was Friar Nicholas who spoiled all the matter and caused the ruler to change his mind. Such an allegation is absolutely improbable but it serves well to show how 'well' the Franciscans knew what was going just a few hundred metres from their abode. Cf. *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 182 (3 November 1324). In our opinion, Chodyncki went much too far in his suggestion that Friar Nicholas may have been acting as a secret agent in the interest of the Teutonic Order: Chodyncki, 'Próby', 270–4.

his expertise seems to have been redundant. Gediminas showed no interest in seeking out the protection of any Christian king either before or after Fr Nicholas gave his valuable advice.

All in all, the explications presented to the envoys serve only one clear purpose – to exculpate Gediminas from any suggestion that he himself may be responsible for dashing the bright hopes of the pope and other Christian leaders. The most graphic illustration of this trend is the story of how bitterly Gediminas wept over not being able to come to the font. We have before our eyes the information gathered almost from under the grand-ducal bed. A woman from the queen's *familia* confided most sensitive information to a Franciscan friar. She found out that after the audience with the papal envoys had been over, the ruler went to his chamber with his kinsman Erudo and wept there most bitterly (*amarissime*). After a pause the ruler did this again and again, three times in all; and he did the same thing every night as long as the envoys were present in Vilnius.⁵³ This piece of information placed at the very end of the report must have proved beyond any reasonable doubt that Gediminas was absolutely innocent and was a victim of unfavourable circumstances.

That this view is totally one-sided and partial is clear from the confession of the grand-ducal interpreter, a local Christian Henekin. In private, after he had been reminded of the Doomsday, Henekin agreed to tell the envoys what he knew: at first the ruler had a strong commitment to convert, because he greatly desired to see letters written and dispatched, but why he changed his mind the informant simply did not know. According to Henekin, the Devil must have been involved in this.⁵⁴ Not a very helpful explanation. But we must pay attention to the fact that the admission of ignorance was made by the man who knew local vernacular language and acted as an interpreter between the grand duke and those friars who composed his letters. It is significant that he gave out his information under oath, reminded of his own baptism and the Last Judgement. Still more significant is that he specially asked the envoys to keep his opinions safely sealed as a true confession, because otherwise he could lose his life. Why fear for one's life if everybody was expected to know

⁵³ *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 190 (3 November 1324).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

and freely to communicate that the volte-face of the grand duke was the result of the most vicious and vociferous opposition staged by pagan Žemaitijans and Orthodox believers. That is why we consider the publicly stated reasons for the grand dukes' change of mind to be nothing else but the court-produced propaganda. It had to prove that Gediminas was innocent and to be helpful for the continued validity of the peace treaty with Christian powers. Gediminas and his advisers were largely successful in this. To illustrate the slyness of Gediminas it is opportune here to devote some special attention to the issue that is generally regarded as substantially true. It is the issue of the Dominican church mentioned by Gediminas as built in Vilnius.

It is assumed that the earliest churches in Vilnius were built some time before 1323 when Gediminas wrote in his letters that he had recently had two churches constructed in Vilnius: one for the Friars Minor, and another for Dominicans. To our knowledge, virtually all authors dealing with this evidence (including myself) have believed in the veracity of this piece of information.⁵⁵ However, on closer analysis of the letters of Gediminas, some problems do arise. It is true that there is no reason to doubt the existence of the Franciscan church, because it is mentioned in such a superb document as the report of the envoys of the papal legates.⁵⁶ The case with the Dominican church is much more complicated. In contrast to the letter addressed to the Franciscans of Saxony, in which there is a mention of a church built for their Order,⁵⁷ there is no mention of a church built for the Dominicans in the letter addressed specifically to them.⁵⁸ The Dominican church is just mentioned in a general missive to all Christians, in which there is a statement that the church in question was built before two years (*infra duos annos*).⁵⁹ However, in the letter of 26 May 1323 to the Franciscans Gediminas did state that he

⁵⁵ Ibid., no. 16, p. 46 (25 January 1323). Cf., for example, Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 91; Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 132; M. Jučas, *Lietuvos parapijos XV–XVIII a.* (Vilnius, 2007), 12; D. Baronas, A. Dubonis, R. Petrauskas, *Lietuvos istorija*, vol. 3: *XIII a.–1385 m. Valstybės iškilimas tarp Rytų ir Vakarų* (Vilnius, 2011), 288. By contrast cf. E. Remecas, 'Vilniaus gaisro datavimo problematika: ar tikrai Vilniaus pilis sunaikino 1419 m. gaisras?', *Lietuvos pilys*, 6 (2010), 83.

⁵⁶ *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 182 (3 November 1324).

⁵⁷ Ibid. no. 21, p. 62 (26 May 1326).

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 21, pp. 56–8 (26 May 1326).

⁵⁹ Ibid., no. 16, p. 46 (25 January 1323).

was only going to commit one church to friars preachers some time in the future⁶⁰. This discrepancy certainly makes a difference. Adding to this the absence of any other contemporary evidence or later tradition about the Dominican church in Vilnius in the fourteenth century, it must be concluded that Grand Duke Gediminas did exaggerate his 'good news' to the neighbouring Roman Catholic world in general, and to the Dominicans in particular. No one among the contemporaries of Gediminas were looking for or even missing this church. For this, just like for his blank refusal to accept baptism, Gediminas was not taken to task. The day was carried by the artful propaganda served up to Western Catholic leaders. The pope, the archbishop of Riga, the legates and their envoys seem to have been convinced. More pressing issues were on the order of the day. The truce was not revoked and remained in force until 1328.⁶¹

Sham negotiations over receiving baptism in the time of Algirdas and Kęstutis (1345–1377)

After Gediminas had enjoyed to the full the four-year truce with the Teutonic Order, Lithuania once again was subjected to the devastating raids from both Prussia and Livonia alike. After the strike at Žemaitija, in 1330 the Teutonic Knights reinstated full control over the city of Riga, once a close ally of Vytenis and Gediminas.⁶² In no time the Livonian knights resumed their raids to Lithuania. In 1334 they even managed to penetrate as close as some 40 kilometres to the capital town of Vilnius. On the other hand, the anti-Teutonic alliance of Lithuania and Poland concluded in 1325 did not work well, ended up inconclusively after a joint campaign in September 1330, and the cooperation just petered out in 1332.⁶³ Afterwards both

⁶⁰ Ibid., no. 21, p. 64: 'et etiam de Praedicatoribus, quibus dabimus ecclesiam tempore successivo' (26 May 1323).

⁶¹ Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 134.

⁶² 'Hermannii de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', ed. E. Strehlke, *SRP*, II (Leipzig, 1863), 63–5.

⁶³ J. Powierski, 'Międzynarodowe tło konfliktu polsko-krzyżackiego przed kampanią wrześniową 1331 roku', *Balticum: Studia z dziejów polityki, gospodarki i kultury XII–XVII wieku ofiarowane Marianowi Biskupowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę*

countries had to deal with the Teutonic Order separately. Despite his stated desire to get rid of the threat of the Order, Gediminas returned to peace negotiations no more. In all probability he could see it through that after such a spectacular failure to 'receive the faith' it would be impossible to step into the same river again. He seems to have been of the opinion that his subjects would be able to wage continuous war indefinitely. True, there was one more rash attempt to induce Lithuanians to embrace the Catholic faith at the very end of Gediminas' lifetime and it ended in the martyrdom of two Franciscans.⁶⁴ As Gediminas persevered in his old ways, so the Order continued its mission of first conquering the pagans, and telling them to become Christians later on. In the late 1330s the knights began to build their new forts on the northern bank of the Nemunas. They were to serve as points of departure for further conquests along the Nemunas, where Lithuanian castles (Junigeda/Veliuona, Pieštė, Paštuva etc.) were still serving relatively well. In February 1336, the Order and its crusading supporters took the castle of Pilėnai.⁶⁵ A chaotic defence with suicidal behaviour on the part of some defenders exemplifies well the horror and desperate mood of people trapped in a poorly fortified castle. Forgotten in medieval Lithuania, in later centuries this episode was considerably reworked and embellished by chroniclers and historians to assume, in the long run, the role of a Lithuanian Massada in the romantically-framed historical imagination of modern Lithuanians.⁶⁶ In the actual fact, this was no more than a defeat of disproportionate size, adding one more link in a chain of similar setbacks. One's defeat is another's victory. It is no accident that precisely at this time the Order must have felt a certain élan. In 1337, the Knights took care to avail themselves of the two charters from Louis the Bavarian by dint of which Lithuania was given (again) as a prize for the Order to take.⁶⁷ It made Lithuania no

urodzin, ed. Z. H. Nowak (Toruń, 1992), 270–1, 282–3; Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, 1, 130–47. See also P. W. Knoll, *The Rise of the Polish Monarchy: Piast Poland in East Central Europe, 1320–1370* (Chicago–London, 1972), 42ff.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 5.

⁶⁵ 'Die Chronik Wigands', 488–9.

⁶⁶ Baronas, Mačiulis, *Pilėnai*, 57ff.

⁶⁷ *PU*, ed. M. Hein, III (Königsberg, 1944), nos. 134, 135, pp. 96–101 (15 November 1337 and 12 December 1337). See also Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 48–50; Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 254–5.

easier to conquer for that, and no major offensive was in sight up to 1345. Then the flower of European chivalry arrived in Prussia: King John Luxembourg of Bohemia, his son Charles, then count of Moravia, King Louis of Hungary, Counts William IV of Holland, Günther of Schwarzburg, Henry of Holstein, and some other two hundred lords 'eager to fight against the enemies of Christ'.⁶⁸ A campaign similar to that of 1329 was imminent, but it fell short of achieving anything worthy of notice. For one thing, the leadership of the Teutonic Order was in a state of internal disarray; for another, when the crusading army reached the enemy territory a rumour spread that pagan troops had invaded and posed a threat to Königsberg itself. The gallant knights rushed back only to discover that this was a false signal. The campaign was over. Meanwhile the pagans turned north and devastated Livonia at will. Many guests and even the Teutonic Knights found a scapegoat in the person of Grand Master Ludolf König. The man, who had been prone to melancholy even before, came to deep despondency and finally resigned his post. Such was the aftermath of the 1345 campaign that proved to be the last attempt to mount a full-scale invasion.⁶⁹ After that more mobile, more lightning raids became the order of the day. The direct conquest of pagan Lithuania seems to have receded. The Order probably came to see clearly that however despicable the pagans were, they after all were necessary as an object of perpetual crusade.

Against this backdrop we have to deal with the so-called attempts at conversion of pagan Lithuanians to the Roman Catholic faith during the reign of Algirdas. There were at least four such occasions in 1349, 1351, 1358, and 1373. Scholars tend to view events as a direct continuation of negotiations conducted by Gediminas in 1322–24.⁷⁰ They are viewed as a policy inherited by his sons. However, there were significant differences. If we compare the policies of Gediminas

⁶⁸ 'Die Chronik Wigands', 504–5; Meltzer, *Die Ostraumpolitik König Johanns von Böhmen*, 215–6; K. Conrad, 'Der dritte Litauerzug König Johanns von Böhmen und der Rücktritt des Hochmeisters Ludolf König', *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag*, 2 (Göttingen, 1972), 382–93.

⁶⁹ Cf. H. Boockmann, *Der Deutsche Orden: Zwölf Kapitel aus seiner Geschichte* (Munich, 1994), 159–64; Nikžentaitis, 'Die friedliche Periode', 1–23.

⁷⁰ Cf. J. Jurginis, *Lietuvos krikštas: Feodalinės visuomenės socialinės ir kultūrinės raidos studija* (Vilnius, 1987), 117ff; Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 137.

with those of his sons, certain differences become apparent. During Gediminas' reign, the initiative for talks about conversion usually came from Vilnius. We cannot say the same about Algirdas and Kęstutis. Although negotiations over possible baptism were more frequent, there is no comparably strong evidence to suggest that the main protagonists were Lithuanian dukes themselves. Rather it was Polish and Hungarian and Bohemian kings who looked likely to be far more interested in the conversion of the Lithuanians than the rulers of the latter. So that is why the perspective of our investigation must be adapted accordingly.

In 1349 King Casimir of Poland annexed Galich and his expansionist pressure came to bear on the Lithuanian possessions in Volyn'. It was in these circumstances that Casimir informed the pope of the desire of Kęstutis and some other pagan dukes to be baptised.⁷¹ The pope urged King Casimir to do everything he could to induce the pagans to convert. The archbishop of Gniezno was authorized to provide everything necessary for the conversion and care of the neophytes.⁷² As regards the Lithuanian dukes themselves, the pope was ready to offer them papal protection and royal crowns if only they accepted the Christian faith.⁷³ Nothing came of these far-reaching hopes, because King Casimir did not wait for the papal letters and went on a military campaign against the pagan dukes. The latter reciprocated next year by launching an invasion of Poland, thus securing Volyn' for themselves.

In 1351, King Casimir was ready to impress the pope again as he was telling him that he was going to extend the Church over so vast a territory that no less than seven bishoprics with a metropolitanate could be established there.⁷⁴ It was in the context of the next major invasion led by King Louis of Hungary that negotiations over

⁷¹ ASV, Registra Vaticana 62, fo 88r-v. *VMPL*, I, no. 691, pp. 525-6 (16 September 1349). Cf. A. Kučinskas, *Kęstutis – Lietuvių tautos gynėjas* (Marijampolė, 1938, n.e. Vilnius 1988) 124-7; Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, I, 170-74.

⁷² ASV, Registra Vaticana 62, fo 88v-89r. *VMPL*, I, no. 692, p. 526 (16 September 1349).

⁷³ ASV, Registra Vaticana 62, fo 89r-v. *VMPL*, I, no. 693, pp. 526-7 (19 September 1349).

⁷⁴ *VMPL*, I, no. 702, p. 532 (14 March 1351).

the baptism of the Lithuanian pagan dukes came to light again.⁷⁵ In 1351, King Louis of Hungary led a joint army of Hungarian and Polish troops, who after fifteen days' march through the forests emerged at the confines of the Lithuanian realm. The show of force was enough to induce Kęstutis to negotiate. He for himself and on behalf of his brother and people promised to be baptized if certain conditions would be met. The Hungarian king had to promise that he would take care to procure a royal crown from the pope and to see to it that Lithuania would have its own Church province (archbishopric). Something like a tripartite perpetual peace (between Hungary, Poland and Lithuania) was to come into force. Mutual obligations were also foreseen: the Lithuanian side would promise to come to the aid of the Hungarian king when necessary, who in his turn would help Lithuanians to defend themselves against the Teutonic Knights and the Tatars. The Lithuanians also showed an interest to regain the lands which allegedly had been taken from them by the Teutonic Order.⁷⁶ King Louis seemed to be ready to accede to such conditions. Historians explain such generosity on Louis' part as an attempt to outshine Casimir of Poland, who had made more modest proposals to the Lithuanians two years earlier.⁷⁷ Whatever the case may be, in our and most probably in Louis's eyes, too, these proposals contained good prospects for the Grand Duchy. It is difficult to imagine what more Kęstutis might have been able to ask for in return for his conversion. It remained only for Kęstutis to keep his promise. To this end he organised an impressive show. Kęstutis took out his knife and hurled it at a ruddy ox that was made ready for sacrifice. The knife hit the beast's jugular vein and the spurt of blood was a good sign. The dead beast's head was cut off and the

⁷⁵ Sometimes these events of 1349 and 1351 are regarded as separate (G. Błaszczuk, *Dzieje*, 1, 170–4). In our view, it is more pertinent to view the developments between Poland, Hungary and Lithuania as one 'missionary démarche', as has been suggested by M. Giedroyc, 'The arrival of Christianity in Lithuania: baptism and survival (1341–1387)', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, n. s., 22 (1989), 41–4. See also S. C. Rowell, 'A pagan's word: Lithuanian diplomatic procedure 1200–1385', *JMH*, 18 (1992), 152.

⁷⁶ *Chronicon Dubnicense cum codicibus Sambuci Acephalo et Vaticano, cronicisque Vindobonensi Picto et Budensi accurate collatum*, ed. M. Florianus (Leipzig, 1884). 161. See also Rowell, 'A pagan's word', 152–5.

⁷⁷ Błaszczuk, *Dzieje*, 1, 153–4.

prince and the other Lithuanians walked between the head and the carcase anointing their faces with blood and calling to their gods to let the same fate befall them if they broke their word. A minor issue remained outstanding – the journey to Buda for baptism. En route to the Hungarian capital, Kęstutis fled from the Christian camp during the night.⁷⁸ After that débâcle Louis showed no further interest in the conversion of the Lithuanians.⁷⁹

A similar scene was played out again a few years later with Charles IV of Bohemia, the Holy Roman Emperor, who probably made contact with the Lithuanians after Pope Innocent VI had forwarded him the news from Casimir the Great of Poland that some pagans from Lithuania were likely to accept baptism.⁸⁰ King Casimir requested the pope to urge the Emperor and the Hungarian king to make their contributions to the security of would-be neophytes who might have been exposed to imminent reprisals from ‘residual infidels’.⁸¹ King Louis remained aloof. Not so the emperor, who took this matter into his hands and on 21 April 1358 issued a ‘golden bull’

⁷⁸ *Chronicon Dubnicense*, 162. The 1351 oath of Kęstutis and its subsequent breaking became a widely known event to contemporaries and later generations of modern scholars alike. It was mentioned by Peter Suchenwirt and Petrarch. See *Peter Suchenwirt's Werke aus dem vierzehnten Jahrhunderte: Ein Beytrag zur Zeit und Sittengeschichte*, ed. A. Primisser (Vienna, 1827), 28 (IX, lines 140–3), 31 (X, lines 90–4), 46 (XIV, lines 270–1). The relevant excerpts reproduced by E. Strehlke, *SRP*, II, 157–9. On Petrarch's knowledge of the oath of (probably) 1351, see Rowell, ‘A pagan's word’, 159–60. The oath may have had a meaning invalidating its express purpose. On this and the parallels in words and deeds taken from Roman antiquity and the Scripture (notably Gen. 15,17 and Jer. 34,18–20), see Ališauskas, *Sakymas ir rašymas*, 28–31. From literary reactions it is clear that the Christian audience took the oath as valid and regarded its breaking as perjury.

⁷⁹ Pope Innocent VI would call on him not to forget this glorious task, but to little avail. Cf. ASV, Registra Vaticana 244G, fo 91; *BP*, vol. II: 1342–1378, ed. I. Sułkowska-Kuraś, S. Kuraś (Rome, 1985), no. 784, p. 128 (10 August 1355). Pope Gregory XI would make a similar address in 1373: *VMPL*, I, no. 935, p. 695 (23 October 1373).

⁸⁰ H. Grundmann, ‘Das Schreiben Kaiser Karls IV. and die heidnischen Litauer-Fürsten 1358’, *Folia Diplomatica*, 1 (1971), 94–5; R. Mažeika, ‘The relations of grand prince Algirdas with Eastern and Western Christians’, *La Cristianizzazione della Lituania*, 66–77; eadem, ‘Bargaining for baptism’, 137–40; Wyrozumski, ‘Litwa’, 55, 63–4. In contrast, Bernhart Jähnig lays emphasis on the mediation of the ex-member of the Teutonic Order, Heinrich von Plauen, who must have intimated to Charles IV the readiness of Lithuanian princes to receive baptism. Cf. B. Jähnig, ‘Der Deutsche Orden und Karl IV.’, *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte*, 114 (1978), 134–7, cf. also Arnold, ‘Preußen, Böhmen und das Reich’, 171.

⁸¹ *Analecta Vaticana, 1202–1366*, no. 375, pp. 357–8 (17 December 1357).

in which he generously invited the Lithuanian princes to convert to the Christian faith. In consequence he promised them his imperial protection in retaining all freedom and honour, and guaranteed them protection against attacks of any infidels.⁸² The Lithuanian princes did indeed show some interest in this proposal from the emperor himself. In July 1358 the Lithuanian ruler's brother (most probably Kęstutis) went to Nuremberg to tell the emperor that the ruler was willing to receive the faith in his land and be baptised.⁸³ As the matter seemed to be serious enough, the emperor sent out a high-ranking embassy to Lithuania, which included Archbishop Ernest of Prague, Wolfram von Nellenburg, a *Deutschmeister* of the Teutonic Order, and Duke Nicholas of Opava (in Silesia). It was commissioned *inter alia* to initiate peace talks between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania.⁸⁴ As this embassy was on its way to Lithuania, Charles IV went to Wrocław (Breslau) in November 1358.⁸⁵ The embassy, which reached Lithuania at great expenses covered grudgingly by the Teutonic Order, seems to have been given a promise of the Lithuanian ruler that he would arrive in Breslau on Christmas to receive baptism.⁸⁶ It looks likely that at the end of 1358 Charles IV was joined by Casimir III.⁸⁷ All waited for the arrival of the would-be Christians. The emperor was ready to play out his role as *monarcha mundi*. Instead he received a message from the Lithuanian ruler,

⁸² *PU*, ed. K. Conrad, V/2 (Marburg, 1973), no. 642, pp. 361–2 (21 April 1358): Grundmann, 'Das Schreiben', 92. The most exhaustive diplomatic investigation of this bull is provided by J. Karwasińska, 'Złote bulle Karola IV w sprawie Chrztu Litwy', eadem, *Wybór pism. Źródła archiwalne* (Warsaw, 1998), 178–96, originally published in *Cultus et cognitio: Studia z dziejów średniowiecznej kultury* (Warsaw, 1976), 233–49. For the metapolitical concerns aimed at bringing closer to salvation the world and its rulers as an overriding motive in this appeal of Charles IV, see F. Seibt, *Karl IV. Ein Kaiser in Europa 1346–1378* (Munich, 1978), 380–1.

⁸³ 'Chronica Heinrici Surdi de Selbach', ed. H. Bresslau, *MGH SS*, n. s. I (Berlin, 1922), 112–3.

⁸⁴ Peace talks as part of the conversion to the Christian faith are mentioned in the second bull of Charles IV (21 July 1358). This bull has not come down to us and its contents are known only partly from a sixteenth-century register, the so-called Inventory of Jan Zamoyski. See Karwasińska, 'Złote bulle Karola IV', 186–7. The text from the Inventory is published *ibid.*, 190.

⁸⁵ K. Conrad, 'Litauen, der Deutsche Orden und Karl IV. 1352–1360', *ZfO*, 21 (1972), 21–4. See also J. K. Vyskočil, *Arnošt Pardubic a jeho doba* (Prague, 1947), 503.

⁸⁶ Grundmann, 'Das Schreiben', 98.

⁸⁷ Mažeika, 'The relations', 71.

replete with fantastic demands. The Teutonic Order was to cede a considerable chunk of Prussian and Livonian lands to Lithuania and be relocated to the wilderness between Rus' and the Tatars.⁸⁸ The Order should fight against these infidels, but should enjoy no right to any Ruthenian territory, because 'all of Rus' ought simply to belong to the Lithuanians'.⁸⁹ No surprise that such maximalist demands broke all prospects of meaningful discussion and eventual baptism. Emperor Charles IV dropped that matter never again to show any serious interest in converting the (proud?) pagans of Lithuania. It would be difficult to find out a better means of showing more compellingly the rationale for the military mission of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic Sea region. At the end of 1360, Charles IV lent his moral support and granted some of the privileges to the Teutonic Order in his express wish to support it in the fight against the 'unbelieving people'.⁹⁰ The timing was welcome as from 1360 onwards the war between the Teutonic Knights and pagan Lithuania entered a new stage of heightened intensity.⁹¹ In this context King Casimir III of Poland looks like an eternal optimist. In 1360, he told the pope that if his grandson, also named Casimir (Kažko in diminutive form), would be granted dispense to marry Joanna, the newly-baptised daughter of Algirdas, this marriage might serve well to advance the cause of the conversion of the 'perfidious Lithuanian nation'.⁹² From the same request to the pope we come to know that the Polish king was going to found eight additional convents for the Franciscans. One of the reasons was that their sermons were

⁸⁸ The most reliable and well-informed extant source of information is Hermann von Wartberge. Cf. Conrad, 'Litauen', 26, 28; Mažeika, 'The relations', 69. The territorial claims of the Lithuanian rulers extended from Mazovia to the mouth of the Pregel river (that is, Königsberg) and then along the Baltic littoral to the mouth of the Daugava (that is, Riga), then upstream to the lands of Rus'. For more details, see 'Hermann de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', 80; Grundmann, 'Das Schreiben', 97.

⁸⁹ 'Hermann de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', 80. This 'simply' (= *simpliciter*) means complete, unlimited rights.

⁹⁰ Conrad, 'Litauen', 41. See also Jähnig, 'Der Deutsche Orden', 139–40. In general, however, relations between Charles IV and the Teutonic Order were disengaged. Cf. Arnold, 'Preußen, Böhmen und das Reich', 172–3.

⁹¹ Conrad, 'Litauen', 31.

⁹² *Analecta Vaticana, 1202–1366*, no. 393, p. 371 (27 July 1360). For their marriage, see J. Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia Giedyminowiczów* (Poznań–Wrocław, 1999), 96–7.

likely to be received with 'more devotion' from the infidels. The last papal attempt in 1373 to induce Lithuanian pagan rulers to accept the Christian faith and thus to bring disastrous warfare to an end produced no response at all.⁹³

So on the part of Latin Christians we can observe quite a lot of initiatives with regard to the possible conversion of the Lithuanian pagans. The receiving end was much more passive. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian art of flirtation with Christians about their prospective baptism is viewed as a sophisticated policy of their dukes to negotiate and renegotiate with their partners time and again.⁹⁴ How pragmatically useful this policy was depends on the interpreter's point of view. If pagan rulers wanted nothing more than to gain a temporary respite from pressure from their western neighbours, such a policy of having one's partners (perceived adversaries?) taken in and duped certainly bears a resemblance of a diplomatic success. During the negotiations of 1358 and some time afterwards they did enjoy peace on the western front (1358–1359) enabling them to pursue more actively an expansionist policy in Rus'ian lands and to conduct at ease negotiations with Polish dukes regarding border adjustments to mutual advantage and at the expense of the Order.⁹⁵ If pagan Lithuanian dukes did really want to get rid of the aggression of the Teutonic Knights, as Gediminas clearly admitted this in 1322–24, such a policy could hardly be viewed as a success. If they really did hope to receive part of the Order's territories as a prize for their conversion, they failed. A number of scholars have based their reasoning on the assumption that if such territorial demands would have been met, the Lithuanian rulers would have agreed to

⁹³ *VMPL*, I, no. 934, p. 695 (to the Lithuanian dukes, Algirdas, Kęstutis and Liubartas); no. 935, p. 695 (to the Hungarian king Louis I); no. 936, p. 696 (to Duke Siemowit III of Mazovia). All dated to 23 October 1373.

For more on the more sustained efforts of the Polish side to bring about the conversion of Lithuania, see T. Jurek, 'Nieznany list kanonika Dobrogosta Nowodworskiego z 1376 roku. Z antecedencji unii polsko-litewskiej', *Międzytekstem a znakiem. Prace ofiarowane Profesor Barbarze Trelińskiej w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. A. Jaworski, S. Górzyński (Warsaw, 2013), 10–19.

⁹⁴ Cf. Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 131; Giedroyć, 'The arrival... (1341–1387)', 35–6, 40, 48–51.

⁹⁵ Chodyncki, 'Próby', 292–3; Nikžentaitis, 'Die friedliche Periode', 21–2; Mažeika, 'The relations', 73–5.

accept baptism.⁹⁶ Rasa Mažeika has pertinently asked if Grand Duke Algirdas, as crafty a ruler as he certainly was, really could have been so naive as to believe that the Teutonic Knights would pack their bags and quietly leave the land.⁹⁷ They had full title to their lands in addition to the right of the conquest, the right which was known to pagan Lithuanians well enough. Such demands flying in the face of political and legal reality do allow us to prefer the opinion that such sham-negotiations over the issue of baptism were conceived as a means to deceive the partners in the hope of some short-term gains.⁹⁸ The high-flown political rhetoric, even if it is transmitted through Christian channels, conveys an impression that in the time of Algirdas, he and his close collaborators may have come to be (very) conscious of their unique status as pagans in the midst of the Christian world. The willingness of the Western rulers, including Holy Roman Emperor, the kings of Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary, and even the pope to see Lithuanian pagan rulers coming to the font may have inflated their self-esteem to the point that they were free to claim ever higher price for their conversion. Pagan strongmen may have gained the impression that their conversion was so desired as to be more necessary for the Latin Christian world than to themselves or their country and its population. So the price for the conversion was raised to unreal heights. Even when more rational and feasible demands were ready to be met and collaboration was in sight (as was the case with King Louis of Hungary), the Lithuanian rulers would step back. They do not seem to have seen any intrinsic value in baptism and conversion of their people. They seem to have been quite satisfied with their received wisdom and day-to-day reality with its wars, slave-raiding, hunting, and feasting. As long as such lifestyle was paramount there could be no real conversion. And it was not forthcoming. The territorial ultimata boded ill for the collaboration, let alone the conversion to the Christian faith.

⁹⁶ The position of Lithuanian scholars of the twentieth century is tackled by Mažeika, 'The relations of grand prince Algirdas', 71. Cf. also Conrad, 'Litauen', 27 (with an admission that the overpitched demands of the Lithuanians had something to do with the collapse of the negotiations).

⁹⁷ Mažeika, 'Bargaining for baptism', 139.

⁹⁸ Cf. Weise, 'Der Heidenkampf ... (II)', 667–8.

A more straightforward picture of gains and losses arises when one begins to consider advantages and disadvantages of such policy to the Teutonic Knights. The repeated failure to induce the Lithuanian pagan rulers to accept baptism certainly had considerable potential to substantiate the image of especially obdurate and hard-necked pagans, who first must be brought to their senses by military means and only then be persuaded to accept baptism. The image of warlike, aggressive and deceitful pagans was a most useful propaganda tool in making a perpetual crusade a meritorious business in spiritual as well as material respects. The fight ('defence') against the infidels was the *raison d'être* of the Teutonic Order in the Baltic Sea region.⁹⁹ Its moral grounds were secure as long as such policy of tricks and false starts was deliberately pursued by the pagan rulers of Lithuania. And it was the Teutonic Order that prospered most from the incoming crusaders. In order to fight the 'Northern Saracens', they had to be available.¹⁰⁰ That the Order was far from always being willing to do its best in the fight against the pagan Lithuanians is clear from its non-participation in the military initiative advocated by Margrave Louis of Brandenburg and carried out by King Casimir of Poland in 1355.¹⁰¹ The Order was then more concerned about collaboration with pagan rulers in mutually beneficial transactions of safeguarding trade routes, and of providing logistical services (bridges) through Lithuanian-controlled Ruthenian lands all the way to the domains of the Tatars.¹⁰² As long as Lithuanian pagan rulers wanted to remain the way they were, they gave ample evidence that the Order was in the right carrying its mission of armed struggle against the infidels in the Baltic region. How necessary a pagan military leader might have been on the path of war can be inferred from a highly instructive story. When in the

⁹⁹ M. Biskup, G. Labuda, *Dzieje zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach: Gospodarka, społeczeństwo, państwo, ideologia* (Gdańsk, 1988), 216–21.

¹⁰⁰ The image of Lithuanians as 'Northern Saracens' has recently been explored by: A. V. Murray, 'The Saracens of the Baltic: Pagan and Christian Lithuanians in the perception of English and French crusaders to Late Medieval Prussia', *JBS*, 42 (2010), 413–29.

¹⁰¹ Conrad, 'Litauen', 31.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 31–3. Jähnig, 'Der Deutsche Orden', 130–1, 133–4; R. Mažeika, 'Of cabbages and knights: trade and trade treaties with the infidel on the northern frontier. 1200–1390', *JMH*, 20 (1994), 72–3.

spring of 1361 Duke Kęstutis happened to fall into the hands of the Teutonic Knights, he was, in all probability, simply released from the dungeon in the castle of Marienburg half a year later.¹⁰³ After initial joy, the authorities of the Teutonic Order must have found themselves in a quandary about what to do with their famous, albeit pagan prisoner. No ransom was forthcoming; no political gains were in sight. So he was offered an opportunity to return (quietly) to Lithuania and to continue fighting in the war from which the Order drew more gain than suffered losses.¹⁰⁴ The war itself was far from always being brutal, especially for those who occupied top positions in their respective camps. It is no coincidence that some members of the Order showed great respect to Kęstutis and some of them were even his personal friends.¹⁰⁵ In certain respects this was a sign of knightly behaviour with one's enemy, a sign which lingered long enough to cast Duke Kęstutis into the image of a 'noble savage' in the fifteenth-century literary output of the Teutonic Order.¹⁰⁶

Taking a closer look at the contemporary context it seems that war offered an interface in which Teutonic Knights and their pagan

D. Baronas, 'Die Flucht des litauischen Fürsten Kęstutis (Kynstut) aus der Marienburg 1361 und die Frage, ob der Deutsche Orden an seiner Gefangenschaft interessiert war', *Annaberger Annalen über Litauen und deutsch-litauischen Beziehungen*, 12 (2004), 9–27.

¹⁰³ A number of historians (and writers) have treated the escape of Kęstutis from Marienburg as a most wonderful event and a confusing loss to the Order. The main source for the reconstruction of the most likely course of events is the chronicle of Wigand of Marburg. It has long been assumed that this 'escape' is retold there twice and in a garbled fashion: cf. A. Janulaitis, 'Kęstutis Marienburgo pilyje ir jo pabėgimas iš ten', *Praeitis*, 1 (1930), 64–93, with references to earlier scholars such as J. Voigt and E. Raczynski; A. Kučinskas, *Kęstutis* (Marijampolė, 1938, new ed. Vilnius, 1988), 62–5. However, after research of the text based on a 'close reading', a different picture has emerged: see Baronas, 'Die Flucht', 9–12. See also 'Die Chronik Wigands', 527–8 and 529–30. On the chronicle of Wigand of Marburg, see S. Zonenberg, *Kronika Wiganda z Marburga* (Bydgoszcz, 1994).

¹⁰⁴ The case of Commander of the Brandenburg castle (in Prussia), Günter von Hohenstein, is especially revealing in this respect. He was a godparent of Kęstutis' daughter Danutė-Anne, who was the wife to the Mazovian duke Janusz I. See S. C. Rowell, 'Pious princesses or the daughters of Belial: Pagan Lithuanian dynastic diplomacy, 1279–1423', *Medieval Prosopography*, 15 (1994), 56–61; R. Petrauskas, 'Litauen und der Deutsche Orden: Vom Feind zum Verbündeten', *Tannenbergrunwald-Zalgeris 1410*, 239–40; Tegowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 217–19. On the intensity of diplomatic contacts between Duke Kęstutis and the Teutonic Order, see D. Baronas, 'Lietuvių ir vokiečių taikaus bendravimo bruožai XIV a. karo sūkurėje', *Lituanistica*, 56 (2010), 7–9.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. 'Die ältere Hochmeisterchronik', ed. M Töppen, *SRP*, III (Leipzig, 1866), 593–4.

adversaries could most easily find common ground. However strange it may seem to (post)modern sensitivities, both sides shared the view that war was the best means for finding out who was the strongest and, consequently, right. Hard-necked Lithuanian policy was one of the factors contributing to the success of Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode.¹⁰⁷ In his day, the Knights were active organisers of crusade campaigns or *reyse* for noblemen from Western Europe against the pagan Lithuanians as an alternative to distant, costlier and more dangerous crusades in the Holy Land.¹⁰⁸ These military pilgrims not only satisfied their spiritual needs and societal requirements in battle with the pagans, they also brought in and left ready cash in the treasure chests of the Order and its subjects. On the other hand, Lithuania became a source of prisoners and other matériel. It was not always safe, but it was always worth the risk of breaking in. The picture is quite different on the Lithuanian side. As time went by, the Order's troops reached more and more distant corners of Lithuania and the grand dukes were unable to organise sufficient defences for their people. At the end of his life, Grand Duke Algirdas found it opportune to give a banquet to the Teutonic Knights in order to spare the more important quarters of his capital town of Vilnius from fire and devastation. The fifteenth-century Polish chronicler Jan Długosz exaggerated a good deal but was not totally out of step in his description of the sad predicament in which pagan Lithuanians were pondering about the possibility of getting rid of the Teutonic Knights by relocating themselves to the distant marshes. According to Długosz, it was the Poles who saved them from losing their homeland.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ On his rule, see B. Jähnig, 'Der Deutschordensstaat Preussen – die grosse: Hochmeister des 14. Jahrhunderts', *Die 'Blüte' der Staaten des östlichen Europa im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. M. Löwener [Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau: Quellen und Studien, 14] (Wiesbaden, 2004), 61–2.

¹⁰⁸ These *Reisen* have been amply documented and profoundly analysed by W. Paravicini, *Die Preussenreisen des europäischen Adels*, 1–2 (Sigmaringen, 1989–1995). See also S. Ekdahl, 'Crusades and colonisation', 6–7.

¹⁰⁹ Długosz, Jan, *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae. Liber undecimus (1413–1430)*, ed. D. Turkowska (Warsaw, 2000), 67–8. Jan Długosz was most interested to show to his readers and posterity that it was the Poles who saved the Lithuanians from extinction: U. Borkowska, *Treści ideowe w dziełach Jana Długosza: Kościół i świat poza Kościołem* (Lublin, 1983), 132; S. Gawlas, 'Świadomość narodowa Jana Długosza', *SŻ*, 27 (1983), 39; M. Giedroyć, 'Lithuanian options prior to Krėva (1385)', *La Cristianizzazione della Lituania*, 96–7.

Going East, Facing West: Pagan Lithuania and Christian Neighbours

Omnis Russia ad Letwinos deberet simpliciter pertinere – this plain statement reportedly made by Lithuanian rulers during negotiations over their conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1358 is regarded as the essence of all the expansionist drive of the Lithuanian polity: to reign supreme in all of Rus'.¹ Its imperialistic overtones are unmistakable.² It is true that the expansion of the Lithuanian realm into vast swathes of post-Kievan Rus' resulted in one of the biggest conglomerates of territories in late medieval Europe. The expansion of Lithuania, in fact, coincided, with the rise of the Lithuanian state itself. This was no accident: the predatory raids were most instrumental in projecting the power of Lithuanian warlords into the neighbouring lands of Rus' such as Grodno, Novgorodok, Pinsk, Turov, and Polotsk.³ When Mindaugas gained the upper hand against his Lithuanian rivals, preparatory work done over half a century before remained in place and served as a natural avenue for the closer integration of territories gained, or still to be gained. This process extended over centuries and consisted of a number of options: from outright aggression against targets of expansion to the search for a *modus vivendi* with local potentates, from open confrontation with foreign rivals to being satisfied with condominium solutions in territories where none of the neighbouring powers involved was strong enough to maintain its undisputed

¹ 'Hermanni de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', 80.

² Z. Norkus, *Nepaisiskelbusioji imperija: Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštija lyginamosios istorinės imperijų sociologijos požiūriu* (Vilnius, 2009), 226–42.

³ A. Dubonis, 'Dve modeli litovskoi ekspansii na Rusi (XIII – nachalo XIV veka): Ovladenie Polotskom i Novogrudkom', *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, 7 (2014), 59–82.

supremacy.⁴ It should be remembered that the sheer amount of territorial acquisitions gained in the course of the fourteenth century tends to obfuscate a down-to-earth reality. In a matter of fact, the expansion of Lithuania proceeded by fits and starts and was a far from easy business as a glance at a map might invite us to believe. Not a glorious procession from one triumph to another, but the upward struggle against all odds is an image more appropriate at trying better to understand the occasional leaps and bounds, and then setbacks of expansion.⁵

Until the end of the thirteenth century the rulers of Lithuania had to be satisfied with those Rus'ian areas that were part and parcel of the Lithuanian sphere of influence in the time of Mindaugas. No major territorial acquisitions under Traidenis are attested, although internal consolidation increased.⁶ Lithuanian dukes had their vested interests in Polotsk from the mid-thirteenth century, but it was only in about 1305 that the town itself was finally annexed to their polity.⁷ Southbound expansion was no easier. Some sort of dependence of the Ruthenian principalities in the Pripet basin (Pinsk, Turov) was as old as that with regards to Polotsk. As long as their princes found themselves placed in the uneasy field of rival interests between Lithuanian and Galich-Volynian Rus', they

⁴ Lowmiański, *Studja*, 1, 426–39; *ibid.*, 2, 328–48. Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie*, 25ff. H. Jablonowski, *Westrussland zwischen Wilna und Moskau: Die politische Stellung und die politischen Tendenzen der Russischen Bevölkerung des Grossfürstentums Litauen im 15. Jh.* (Leiden, 1955), 11ff; V. L. Ianin, *Novgorod i Litva: Pogranichnye situatsii XIII–XIV vekov* (Moscow, 1998), 82–8; O. Rusina, *Sivers'ka zemlia u skladi Velikogo Kniazivstva Litovs'kogo* (Kiev, 1998), 53ff.

⁵ Baronas, Dubonis, Petrauskas, *Lietuvos istorija*, 444–77.

⁶ Cf. Dubonis, *Traidenis*, 161–5.

⁷ The history of the principality of Polotsk in the second half of the thirteenth century is particularly dark. It was exposed to the expansionist drive of the Lithuanians. had to reckon with the hegemonial claims of Livonia and its stronger neighbours from Suzdal' and Smolensk until Vytenis finally made his claim good: Dubonis. 'Dve modeli litovskoi ekspansii', 64–72; see also A. Selart, *Livland*, 203ff. Most of the territory of present-day Belarus was annexed by Lithuania in the time of Gediminas. By 1326, Minsk was in Lithuanian hands. The Lithuanian expansion progressed further and in c. 1340 Duke Ivan Aleksandrovich of Smolensk had to recognize himself as 'younger brother' of Gediminas. See *Smolenskie gramoty XIII–XIV vekov*, ed. T. A. Sumnikova, V. V. Lopatin (Moscow, 1963), 69–70; Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellonowie*, 336–7; *idem*, *The Origin of Russia* (London, 1954). 210–11.

would remain uncommitted to either side. The Lithuanians seem to have come to dominate this region in more unambiguous terms only in the first decades of the fourteenth century. The relatively strong principalities of south-western Rus' still served as a dampener on the Lithuanian expansionist drive. By the end of the second decade of the fourteenth century, however, the Lithuanian expansion crossed the Pripet River and reached a strategically important town of Brest, allowing Gediminas to control trade along the Narev River. Possession of Pinsk and Turov offered him means of control over the Pripet route from Brest all the way to its confluence with the Dnieper. By securing the land of Podlesie (with Brest) and the principalities of Turov and Pinsk, the domains of Gediminas came to border on the land of Volyn'. Here even more conspicuous changes were bound to take place.

Changes were precipitated by the (untimely) death of the last descendants of the House of Romanovichi: Lev II and Andrei. The circumstances of their demise are shrouded in mystery and there has been much discussion among historians as to what might have happened to them, and why.⁸ It is known for certain that the last of them was dead by May 1323 and it was King Władysław of Poland who alarmed the pope at the unwelcome prospect of Tatars coming to exercise their immediate rule at the very confines of his newly rebuilt kingdom. Aided by Hungarians, Władysław succeeded in installing a Mazovian Piast, Bolesław in Galich-Volyn', who was prepared to endear himself to his new subjects by undergoing baptism in the Greek Orthodox rite and assuming the (second) name of his Ruthenian grandfather, Yury. Thus he became known to posterity as Bolesław Yury II (1324–1340). This ruler had Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian blood in his veins. He maintained friendly relations with the Teutonic Order. This did not prevent him from becoming a man close to Gediminas by taking to wife the latter's daughter,

⁸ The best critical review of different theories to date has been carried out by J. Bi-
eniak, 'Wygaśnięcie książąt halicko-włodzimierskich', *Aetas media, aetas moder-
na: Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Henrykowi Samsonowiczowu w siedemdziesiątą
rocznicę urodzin*, ed. H. Manikowska, A. Bartoszewicz, W. Falkowski (Warsaw,
2000), 387–92.

Euphemia, in 1331.⁹ By the same token the Lithuanian ruling family obtained a legal claim to a share in these rich and strategically important lands where Hungarian, Polish, Lithuanian and Tatar interests intersected. The Lithuanian penetration became all the more tangible when in about 1340 Gediminas' son Liubartas married a relative of the local prince Daniel Ostrogski, a distant offspring of the Romanovichi.¹⁰ This year was the last in the life of Bolesław Yury II, who for his harking back to Latin Christianity and promotion of German and Polish colonists stirred up an opposition of local notables who conspired to poison him in 1340.¹¹ One of the boyars, Dmitri Dedko, gained control of Galich, while Daniel Ostrogski opened the way for Liubartas to expand his domains in Volyn'. The new king of Poland Casimir III did not sit on his hands. He took to the field in the same year of 1340. His first territorial gains were small, because the Tatars called on by Dedko managed to undo most of them. These many-sided developments marked the beginning of the centuries-long rivalry between Lithuanian and Poland over the lands of south-western Rus', which also had to play their share in the conversion of Lithuania.

The south-eastern expansion of Lithuania seems to have been made more feasible by the developments taking place in Galich and Volyn' in 1320s. Although the Tatars of the Golden Horde were then busily engaged in their fight against the Il-khans of Persia, they still kept track of what was taking place in the far north-west of their domains.¹² Their envoys were present at the court of Gediminas in November of 1324, right at the time when the envoys of the papal legates were conducting their investigation of the true intentions of the Lithuanian ruler with regard to Catholic conversion.¹³ As the papal envoys were not privy to Lithuanian-Tatar negotiations and no other relevant sources are at hand, it may only be inferred that the

⁹ Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 246–8.

¹⁰ J. Tęgowski, 'Małżeństwa Lubarta Giedyminowica. Przyczynek do genealogii: dynastów halicko-wołyńskich w XIV wieku', *GSMH* 6 (1995), 24–5.

¹¹ W. Abraham, *Powstanie organizacji Kościoła Łacińskiego na Rusi* (Lviv, 1904), 216.

¹² Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 111–17. It is to be noted that almost in parallel to Lithuanian affairs the Roman Curia and the Franciscans were stepping up their efforts to induce the Tatars of the Golden Horde to convert to Christianity with the same negative result obtained already in 1323. Cf. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, 235–6.

¹³ *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 188 (3 November 1323).

situation in south-western Rus' and the possible implications of Gediminas' turning west should have been discussed. One of the known outcomes of Lithuanian-Tatar liaisons was the installation of Fëdor, brother of Gediminas, in Kiev.¹⁴ He was there to rule along with the Tatar representatives of the khan. The presence of Fëdor in Kiev is attested in 1331.¹⁵ In all probability his installation was an outcome of mutual concessions agreed upon a little earlier.¹⁶ Gediminas did not commit himself to an openly anti-Tatar policy, as was made clear by his refusal to embrace the Roman Catholicism. In their turn, the Tatars allowed a member of the Lithuanian ruling family to rule in Kiev, the mother of the cities of Rus'. The Lithuanians must also have known that they would not be safe from the Teutonic Order for long; they also had to think twice whether it would be worthwhile pressing their rights over Kiev too far. Such constraints affecting both the Tatars and the Lithuanians alike provided ground for the art of compromises interspersed with only occasional outbursts of armed clash.

Gediminas did not neglect eastern and north-eastern direction in his expansionist policies. Here he was also following in the footsteps of his brother Vytenis. Upon securing Polotsk the Lithuanian authorities were able to control traffic along the middle course of the Daugava River. The next big town upstream was Vitebsk. Algirdas, the son of Gediminas, married the heiress of the last Ruthenian duke in Vitebsk in around 1323, and upon the death of his father-in-law some time later inherited his principality.¹⁷ The expansion

- His kinship to Gediminas has surfaced only thanks to an extraordinary source, the so-called 'excerpts' produced in Greek in the milieu of Metropolitan Theognostos of Kiev and All Rus'. See: M. Priselkov, M. Fasmer, 'Otryvki V. N. Beneshevicha po istorii Russkoi Tserkvi XIV veka', *Izvestiia otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, 21 (1916), 58. See also O. Rusina, *Studii z istorii Kieva ta Küivs'koi zemli* (Kiev, 2005), 13, 55.
- 'Novgorodskaia 4-ia letopis', *PSRL*, IV/1 (Petrograd, 1915), 264. See also Pelenski, 'The contest', 307–8.
- F. M. Shabul'do, *Zemli Iugo-Zapadnoi Rusi v sostave Velikogo Kniazhestva Litovskogo* (Kiev, 1987), 31.
- The identities and names of Algirdas' first father-in-law and of his first wife cannot be ascertained with certainty. His wife may have been called Maria, or perhaps Anna: Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 48–9. The related evidence comes from late and unreliable sources. A notorious example of such sources is the Genealogy of the Dukes of Vitebsk explored by D. Dąbrowski, 'Rodosłowie kniazey Wytebskich – analiza porównawcza treści', *GSMH*, 14 (2002), 31–69.

then could proceed further upstream. The town of Toropets situated in the upper reaches of the Daugava seems to have been captured in the 1320s. Now it became possible to advance towards the upper reaches of the Volga.¹⁸ In terms of international trade, this region was of crucial importance from the Viking times onwards, and therefore it goes without saying that a sustained opposition to the Lithuanian advance was offered from Novgorod, Tver', and Moscow. The first clashes between Lithuanian and Muscovite forces were registered in this region in 1335.¹⁹

The principality of Moscow was still a minor power in the context of international relations in the first half of the fourteenth century. However, already during the reign of Ivan Kalita (1325–1342) it came to enjoy two significant advantages that proved of crucial importance for its spectacular rise in north-eastern Russia. In terms of *realpolitik* a special quality was imparted to the rulers of Moscow due to their willing subservience to the Tatar overlords of Russia. Like his brother Yurii Danilovich before him, so Ivan Kalita too knew how to exploit his relations with Khan Uzbek in his struggle against his Tverite rivals for supremacy in north-eastern Russia.²⁰ As collectors of tribute to Tatars from Russian lands, Muscovite rulers gained additional kudos and valuable experience which was put to use against Rus'ian (and Lithuanian) rivals and in time grew problematic to the Tatars themselves. In terms of political-ideological capital, a significant advantage to the rulers of Moscow was to be gained from the Russian Orthodox Church. A crucial step was made by Metropolitan Peter, who, dismissed by the Tverite duke Mikhail, looked for support to Ivan Kalita and in the last year of his earthly life transferred the metropolitan residence from Vladimir-on-

¹⁸ For the Lithuanian penetration in this area, see V. N. Temushev, 'Litovsko-Tverskaia granitsa (vtoraia polovina XIV – nachalo XVI v.)', *Vestnik Tverskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Istorii*, 4 (2007), 89; idem, 'Nachalo skladyvaniia moskovsko-litovskoi granitsy. Bor'ba za Rzhevskuiu zemliu', *Rossiiskie i slavianskie issledovaniia*, 1 (2004), 71–80.

¹⁹ *NIL*, 347.

²⁰ Cf. Cherepnin, *Obrazovanie*, 500–35; Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy*, 40; Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, 42; A. A. Gorski, *Moskva i Orda* (Moscow, 2000), 42–67.

Kliaz'ma to Moscow (1326).²¹ This choice of residence proved the beginning of a permanent tradition, which led to close collaboration between ecclesiastical and secular authorities. The residence of the metropolitan of All Rus' in Moscow made this principality much more special than a plethora of others. Support from the Tatar overlords and Russian ecclesiastics allowed the rulers of Moscow to construct a state of hybrid nature: a patrimonial monarchy relying on the Tatar practice of government and tapping the sources of Orthodox spirituality for justification of its foreign policy actions.²² Although the full significance of the support enjoyed by Moscow from the Russian Orthodox Church and the Tatars became evident only in the second half of the fourteenth century and in the course of the fifteenth, Moscow was too hard a nut to crack for Lithuanians already in the time of Gediminas. Moscow was proving itself as one of the most stubborn opponents of Lithuania, having its own reasons to pursue its political course aimed at annexation and exploitation of neighbouring principalities and, subsequently, countries. For the time being the Lithuanian dukes had more to do elsewhere.

If considered in terms of expansion and subsequent increase in power, the rule of Gediminas can rightly be considered a success. Since then Lithuania may be regarded as a major state within East-Central Europe and for the sake of convenience may henceforth be called the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.²³ The main prerequisite

²¹ G. Stökl, 'Staat und Kirche im Moskauer Rußland: die vier Moskauer Wundertäter', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 29 (1981), 485–7; J. Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia: A Study of Byzantino-Russian Relations in the Fourteenth Century* (Crestwood–New York, 1989, 2nd edition), 148–53.

²² A useful compendium on the patrimonial character of the Muscovite state is produced by R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York, 1974). On the hybrid nature of the Muscovite state, see D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy*. For a contrast, cf. W. Klug, 'Wie entstand und was war die Moskauer Autokratie?', *Zwischen Christianisierung und Europäisierung*, 91–113. See also A. Khoroshkevich, 'Das Moskauer Fürstentum unter Ivan Kalita (1325–1341) und Dmitrij Donskoj (1359–1389)', *Die 'Blüte' der Staaten des östlichen Europa im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. M. Löwener [*Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau. Quellen und Studien*, 14] (Wiesbaden, 2004), 80–92, 104–6.

²³ The state of Lithuania did not have an official title for quite a long time. It was called in descriptive terms as *terrae Letouie et Russie*, *terra Lithuaniae*, *terra Litvanorum*, *land czu Littawn* and the like. The title of the state 'Magnus Ducatus Lithuaniae' appeared only in 1430: J. Adamus, 'O tytule panującego i państwa litewskiego parę spostrzeżeń', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 44 (1930), 330–2.

for such an advance was that the grand duke of Lithuania was in possession of sufficient military forces that under certain conditions could make a difference. The Lithuanian military machine could tap local resources most part of which must have been raked in from trade tolls and slave trade. Gediminas was an accomplished player in that he knew how to strike a working balance between military pressure and the diplomatic modes of operation. No other ruler of pagan Lithuania was as eloquent and sly as Gediminas. He was blessed with a numerous progeny – a circumstance which made it imperative for him to provide his sons with new territorial acquisitions, and to marry off his daughters abroad to princes in Poland, Mazovia, Tver' and Moscow.²⁴ Such marriages did not always bring lasting peace or long-term alliances, but they certainly contributed to the viability of dynastic policy in forming a circle of friends and clients, or even neutral observers which in the case of pagan Lithuania was not a trifle thing to achieve.

This dynastic policy was inherited by Gediminas' son and successor Algirdas, who was no less ambitious and blessed with an even bigger family. To him applied the same imperative to provide his sons with sources of permanent income and to take care of his allies who happened to marry his daughters. That is why the expansion of Lithuania was primarily a family-run enterprise. After coming to power, Algirdas and his close ally Kęstutis had to deal with King Casimir III who directed Polish expansion towards Galich and Volyn'. Galich with its pivotal town of Lviv standing on the route leading from the Black Sea ports to Cracow and further into Central Europe remained in Polish hands. It took extraordinary measures for the Lithuanian dukes (Liubartas first of all) to keep at least Volyn' for themselves. A new stage in the story of the Lithuanian expansion into Rus' began after the fighting against the Poles subsided in 1355. An expansionist thrust was carried out almost simultaneously in the two regions north and south of the principality of Smolensk. It was about bringing Smolensk back to the Lithuanian sphere of influence after its ruler had switched sides in 1352 and went over

²⁴ On the matrimonial policy of the grand dukes of Lithuania, see Rowell, 'Pious princesses', 4–77; Błaszczuk, *Dzieje*, 1, 106–24.

to the Muscovite camp. In the region of the upper Volga Lithuanian forces took the fortress of Rzhev in 1356. In the same year Algirdas also captured Briansk. The attempts of Smolensk forces to dislodge Lithuanian garrisons from the upper reaches of the Volga largely failed. The territory extending from Toropets to Rzhev allowed the rulers of Lithuania to control a region in which the sources of the three major rivers – the Daugava, the Volga, and the Dnieper – lay.²⁵ At the same time these points marked the limits of the Lithuanian expansion in the north-eastern direction. There was something more to hope to achieve in the southern direction.

The turmoil which erupted with the assassination of Khan Berdibek in 1359 plunged the Tatar world into internecine strife, which made it much easier for the neighbouring powers to promote the erosion of their power from the Carpathian Mountains and all the way to Kiev and beyond.²⁶ Algirdas also took his chance to pursue a more aggressive policy closer to the steppe world. Contrary to widespread theories of the huge significance of the battle of the Blue Waters in 1362 where the Tatars were supposed to have been beaten soundly by the forces of Algirdas and most modern Ukraine was liberated from the Tatar yoke,²⁷ we subscribe to the view of Stefan M. Kuczyński who proved conclusively in 1965 that this battle was a later literary invention based on the depictions of the campaigns of Grand Duke Vytautas undertaken in 1397 and 1398.²⁸

²⁵ Temushev, 'Litovsko-Tverskaia granitsa', 90–1.

²⁶ P. Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895–1526*, tr. T. Pálósfalvi, ed. A. Ayton (London–New York, 2001), 166.

²⁷ Cf. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, 116–8; Pelenski, 'The contest', 318; Shabul'do, *Zemli Iugo-Zapadnoi Rusi*, 66–72. The Blue Waters was the name of the present-day Siniukha, a left-hand side tributary of the Dnieper.

²⁸ S. M. Kuczyński, 'Sinie Wody (Rzecz o wyprawie Olgierdowej 1362 r.)', idem, *Studia z dziejów Europy Wschodniej X–XVII wieku* (Warsaw, 1965), 166. It must be noted that the contemporary Rus'ian chronicle mentions only the devastation caused by the forces of Algirdas in the region of Korshevo and along the Blue Waters, and provides no clue that this campaign was really directed against the Tatars: 'Rogozhskii letopisets', *PSRL*, XV (Petrograd, 1922), 75. The criticism Jaroslav Pelenski raised against Kuczyński's thesis is not convincing. Cf. Pelenski, 'The contest', 309–11. For the overall international situation in the Black Sea region, see S. C. Rowell, 'Lietuva, Moldova ir Vengrija XIV–XV a. sandūroje', *Šventoji Jadvyga ir Lietuva: Pranešimai = Szen Hedvig és Litvánia: Előadások* (Vilnius, 2010), 28–32.

Nevertheless it may be assumed that Algirdas acted more daringly in the forest-steppe region since Tatars, engulfed as they were in internecine struggles, presented no serious threat of striking back. Lithuanian penetration became more assertive in Kiev some time between 1365 and 1370, and it is likely that only then this city came within the boundaries of the Lithuanian realm.²⁹ In all probability, this 'silent conquest' must have been brokered with the Tatars. This supposition is borne out by the fact that the tribute from much of the Ukrainian lands was paid to the Tatars much like before and the sovereign rights of the Golden Horde were not put into doubt until the late fourteenth century. These thoughts owe much to Olena Rusina, who recently has quite convincingly argued that in general terms Tatar-Lithuanian relations were far from always being confrontational and tended to be built much often on agreement and on finding a consensus.³⁰ Such a pragmatic approach allowed Algirdas to extend, without much bloodshed, his power over a vast region from Briansk, Chernigov and Podolia.³¹ The grand narrative suggesting the attraction of pagan Lithuania among Slavic population because of freedom from the Tatar yoke must be reconsidered in its basics. The Lithuano-Tatar condominium over much of the present-day Ukraine allowed both parties to enjoy the resources of these lands. Such relations did not result in close and committed collaboration, nor did they bring two sides to all-out war. The anti-Tatar policy with all its daring military campaigns and imagery was a phenomenon that came into being in a post-conversion Lithuania. But even then it was highly facilitated by the general decline of Tatar power in the steppe region caused by annihilating devastation at the hands of Tamerlane.

An outline of the Lithuanian expansion into Rus' demonstrates that from the very beginning Lithuania was a multi-ethnic polity. The consequences of the Lithuanian expansion into Rus' have been an object of much scholarly debate and controversy. At the very beginning the tone was set by nineteenth-century Russian histori-

²⁹ Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, 119.

³⁰ Rusina, *Sivers'ka zemlia*, 80.

³¹ The same must be said with regard to notions of preponderantly confrontational nature of Lithuanian-Tatar relations; see, for example, Pelenski, 'The contest', 311.

ans who viewed pagan Lithuanian as a culturally backward land, whose population was profoundly exposed to the benign influences of the (supposedly) much more advanced Christian Orthodox civilization: Lithuanians conquered Rus' lands, but were overpowered by Orthodoxy leading to their becoming much like the majority of East Slavic people.³² Hence a double name for the duchy itself – the 'Lithuanian-Russian state', as proposed by a prominent scholar of the time Matvei Liubavskii. Russian historians spent much effort to depict that the natural course of the history of Lithuania was to be subsumed by the Russian civilization, a course which received a (temporary?) setback only thanks to the unfortunate decision on the part of Jogaila to turn to Roman Catholic Poland. Of course, such an axiological attitude is fundamentally indebted to the task of providing an ideological justification for the rule of imperial Russia over Lithuania (and Belarus and Ukraine). It is equally clear that this view relies largely on anachronistic assumptions. The problem is that we know far too little about the actual conditions of life in pagan Lithuania to advance 'self-evident' truths to cover all the vast space of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. What we know, however, makes the appeal of Christian culture in general seem more problematic. How could the influence of the Orthodox faith be felt in the ethnic pagan core area, in which the only mode of communication was oral and contacts with the wider world tended to be limited to those on the battlefield and occasional imports?³³ Were such contacts sufficient for an overall remaking of inherited identity, when for the majority of people the limits of their world ended within one day's walking distance? In our opinion, this assumption applies equally well to both pagan and Orthodox peasants. Another matter, of course, is the more mobile, the more entrepreneurial noble estate. It is often given as a rule that the Lithuanian expansion into Rus' resulted in the removal of the old Riurikid princes by incoming Gediminid princes, who respected the actual order of

³² Cf. Makarii (Bulgakov), *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi*, book 3: *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi v Period postepennogo perekhoda ee k samostoiatel'nosti* (Moscow, 1995, 2nd edition), 341–3. Cf. Jablonowski, *Westrusland*, 22; Pelenski, 'The contest', 319.

³³ Cf. J. Jakubowski, *Studja nad stosunkami narodowościowymi na Litwie przed Unją Lubelską* (Warsaw, 1912), 12–14.

things and embraced Orthodoxy as a precondition for rule in their newly-acquired dominions. Such instances are known, but this was not a prerequisite.³⁴ The best example is that of Algirdas. He ruled in Vitebsk, was married to a Russian princess, and all his children from his first marriage became Orthodox Christians.³⁵ However, Algirdas himself remained a pagan throughout life.³⁶ Sometime after his first wife had died Algirdas married another Orthodox woman, Yuliana of Tver'. It is still not clarified why Metropolitan Theognostos was asked to express his opinion on this planned marriage, but it is likely that it was because of the marriage between a pagan man and a Christian woman, and a second one for the man. Despite these flaws, the marriage was allowed to take place (1350).³⁷ Now Algirdas was the grand duke of Lithuania, holding Vilnius as his centre of power. All of his sons born by Yuliana acquired ethnic Lithuanian names and remained pagan as long as they as adults after their father's demise decided for themselves to become either Orthodox or Catholic Christians. Yuliana had no power to provide Christian baptism even for her daughters, as the circumstances of the postponed baptism of one of her daughters might suggest.³⁸

It is true that most of the Gediminids ruling in Rus'ian principalities did away with their gentile identity and became Orthodox Christians. Once established in the Rus'ian towns, the sons of

³⁴ Sometimes the beginning of this practice is dated back to the time of Mindaugas, when his son Vaišvilkas converted to the Orthodox faith after ruling for some time in Novgorodok as a most cruel pagan.

³⁵ It is to be noted that the baptism of the children of Algirdas was not always a straightforward affair. The best example may be provided by his son Andrew who, although bearing this Christian name, remained unbaptized until he became the prince of Pskov in 1342. Cf. *Pskovskie letopisi*, ed. A. N. Nasonov, 2 (Moscow: 1955), 24.

³⁶ Chodynicky, 'Próby', 312–15; R. Mažeika, 'Was grand prince Algirdas a Greek Orthodox Christian', *Lituanus*, 33 (1987), 39–55.

³⁷ 'Simeonovskaia letopis', *PSRL*, XVIII (St Petersburg, 1913), 97. For familial relations between Yuliana of Tver' and Grand Duke Semion of Moscow, see Temushev, 'Litovsko-Tverskaia granitsa', 88.

³⁸ This daughter of Algirdas and Yuliana was baptised in Tver' in 1364 and received her baptismal name Euphrosinia. The ceremony took place on the initiative of her grandmother, Duchess Anastasia, with Metropolitan Alexius of Kiev and All Rus' being present in Tver' for the occasion: 'Rogozhskii letopisets', 76. Soon afterwards she was married to Grand Duke Oleg Ivanovich of Riazan': Tegowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 97–8.

Algirdas would most frequently embrace the Orthodox faith, but this, as far as we can judge, was the result of a more natural process of 'going native' to an adopted principality than an outcome of some supposed pressure coming from the local population. The same happened to most of those of their followers who emigrated along with them into Rus'. This is only natural that people tend to assimilate and to integrate themselves into their new milieu if they are predisposed to find their place *within* a local society. The same must also hold true of those Rus'ian or Polish captives who were resettled into ethnic Lithuania and merged with a host society. Despite the fact that a considerable part of the Gediminid princes ruling in Rus' embraced Orthodoxy and went native to their local surroundings, the majority of the Lithuanian nobles remained pagan up to their conversion to Roman Catholicism. The throne of the grand duke also remained in the hands of the pagan members of the dynasty. This was an expression of conscious policy to retain key positions in the hands of Lithuanian, and pagan, elite. Such exemplification has been necessary for us in order to emphasize more cogently that every single instance must be considered in its actual circumstances, and that the diversity of life and experience should not be subjected to some 'master idea' which, in our case, had been a one-sided theory of the domination of Orthodoxy in pagan Lithuania. The ups and downs of Orthodoxy in pagan Lithuania and the mutual interrelation between the institutional Church and pagan Lithuanian dukes may be best revealed by the study of the story of the Lithuanian Orthodox metropolitanate.

From the time of the conversion of Rus' in c. 988, her church organization was subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.³⁹ The supreme representative of Constantinople in Rus' was the metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'. As the very title of 'All Rus'' implies, the sphere of his pastoral care had to include all the vast territory inhabited by the Rus' people.⁴⁰ In this respect the metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus' was exceptional with regard to his

³⁹ A. Poppe, 'The original status of the Old-Russian Church', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 39 (1979), 5-45.

⁴⁰ Cf. A. Pliguzov, 'On the title 'Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'', *HUS*, 15 (1991), 345.

counterparts within the Patriarchate of Constantinople: although he held a humble position in the hierarchical order as compared to older metropolitanates, his one was by far the largest. The Patriarchate of Constantinople seems to have adhered to the principle of the single metropolitanate for All Rus' from early on.⁴¹ This was a rational choice in view of securing a better control over one institution however big than having to deal with a number of smaller ones. But there was more to it, because the principle reflected the idea that Rus' made up one Christian people and constituted one political entity.⁴² These practical considerations and idealistic imagination with regard to the perceived unity of Rus' goes a long way to explain why secular leaders and their ecclesiastical supporters, eager to see new metropolitan sees established within their own domains in Rus', rarely met with success in the times of Kievan Rus'.⁴³ Their successors in the fourteenth century had to negotiate the same principle of ecclesiastical unity upheld as a rule by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. As it proved it was not an impossible task, but no less difficult for that. It is evident from a chequered history of the Lithuanian Orthodox metropolitanate in the fourteenth century.

The precedent for a separate Lithuanian metropolitanate seems to have been provided by the establishment in 1303 of a separate metropolitanate for Galich sponsored by Duke Yurii L'vovich.⁴⁴ For one, such an establishment was a response to exigencies caused by the new situation after Metropolitan Maxim had left Kiev (and southern Rus') for north-eastern Russia and in 1300 chose as his residence the city Vladimir-on-Kliaz'ma, though retaining the traditional title 'of Kiev and All Rus'. The establishment of the Lithuanian metropolitanate sometime between 1315 and 1317 is not well

⁴¹ D. Obolensky, 'Byzantium, Kiev and Moscow. A study in ecclesiastical relations', *DOP*, 11 (1957), 23–78; A. Poppe, *Państwo i Kościół na Rusi w XI wieku* (Warsaw, 1968), 201–2; I. Ševčenko, *Ukraine between East and West: Essays on Cultural History to the Early Eighteenth Century* (Edmonton, 1996), 77–83.

⁴² H. Paszkiewicz, *The Making of the Russian Nation* (London, 1963), 224–44.

⁴³ The most famous attempt of this sort is that of Andrey Bogoliubsky: Fennell, *Russian History*, 54; Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 63–5. See also A. Poppe, *Państwo i Kościół*, 170–71.

⁴⁴ K. Chodyncki, *Kościół Prawosławny a Rzeczypospolita Polska: Zarys historyczny 1370–1632* (Warsaw, 1934), 3–7; F. Tinnefeld, 'Byzantinisch-Russische Kirchenpolitik im 14. Jahrhundert', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 67 (1974), 362–7; Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 74.

served by historical sources. Such a situation contributed to the rise of different explanations regarding the reasons and the main protagonists behind the scene. Traditionally historians from the nineteenth century onwards tended to explain the establishment of the metropolitanate in Lithuania first of all as the result of activities on the part of secular authorities. The supposed reasons for this sort of activities were either care taken by pagan Lithuanian rulers with regard to their Greek Orthodox subjects, or the perceived need to insulate one's Orthodox subjects from political influence coming from external powers (that is, Moscow) and mediated through the metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'.⁴⁵ Such a view implies a subservience of the ecclesiastical authorities to their secular overlords. This was far from always being the case as has been demonstrated by S. C. Rowell who drew attention to the fact that the Orthodox Church in the fourteenth century was much more autonomous and freer from secular interference as compared to later developments characteristic of Russia from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards.⁴⁶ So attention must equally be paid to the interests and ambitions of both the secular and ecclesiastical leaders.

The establishment of the metropolitanate in Lithuania occurred during the reign of Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328) and Patriarch John XIII Glykys of Constantinople (1315–1319). This plain fact is referred to in the list of the metropolitanates subject to the Patriarchate of Constantinople (*Notitiae episcopatum*).⁴⁷ As the presence of the unnamed metropolitan of Lithuanians in Constantinople is attested in 1317, this year may be regarded as the approximate date of the foundation of the new metropolitanate.⁴⁸ This date

⁴⁵ Cf. Chodynicki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 11–12; Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia*, 219; Ivinskis, *Lietuvos istorija*, 243; Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 74.

⁴⁶ Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 169–71.

⁴⁷ *Notitiae episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: Texte critique, introduction et notes*, ed. J. Darrouzès (Paris, 1981), 399, 407, 409, 413.

⁴⁸ *Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani, 1315–1402 [APC]*, ed. F. Miklosich, I. Müller, I (Vienna, 1860), no. 39, p. 72; *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel*, vol. I: *Edition und Übersetzung der Urkunden aus den Jahren 1315–1331*, ed. H. Hunger, O. Kresten (Vienna, 1981), no. 50, p. 334: '... τῷ Ἀντιπάδων' (August 1317). See also *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople, 1/5: Les Actes des Patriarches. Les Regestes de 1310 à 1376*, ed. J. Darrouzès (Paris, 1977), no. 2077, p. 55. As this foundation took place at the

is rather ‘inconvenient’ because it does not allow historians to pass a well-informed judgement as to which Lithuanian ruler must have endorsed this initiative: Grand Duke Vytenis was last mentioned in 1315, and his successor Gediminas seems to have ascended the throne in about 1316.⁴⁹

The actual deeds of Metropolitan Theophilos do not lend themselves to a narrative story. It is known that he was present in Constantinople on two more occasions in 1327 and 1329, taking part in synodal deliberations.⁵⁰ It is assumed that his see was situated in Novgorodok.⁵¹ Nothing more is known for certain. Even what appeared to be known has recently been subjected to critical revision. One such certainty was the knowledge that the newly-established Lithuanian metropolitanate had its own suffragan sees of Polotsk and Turov. It turned out that no suffragan bishops were available to Metropolitan Theophilos.⁵² It has been assumed that by distributing gifts and loans, he exercised wide-ranging activities reaching out as far as the south-western and north-eastern Rus’, thus stepping in the field that was under the pastoral care of Metropolitan Peter of Kiev and All Rus’. Such activities have been meant to prove the far-reaching ambit of jurisdictional power and political influence of, respectively, the

time of succession from Grand Duke Vytenis to Gediminas, it is natural that some scholars ascribe the leading role to Vytenis (Chodynicki, *Kościół Prawosławny*. 12; Giedroyć, ‘The arrival ... (1281–1341)’, 17–8), some to Gediminas (A. Pavlov. ‘O nachale galitskoi i litovskoi mitropolii i o pervykh tamoshnykh mitropolitakh po vizantiiskim dokumental’nym istochnikam XIV veka’, *Russkoe obozrenie*, 27 (1894), 239–40), some take a neutral position (Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*. 155), and some suppose that what was started under the auspices of Vytenis came to fruition at the beginning of the reign of Gediminas: C. Zuckerman. ‘Iz rannei istorii Litovskoi mitropolii’, *Belaruskae Padzvinne: Vopyt, Metodyka i Vyniki: Paliavykh i Mizhdyscyplinarnykh Dasledavanniau. Zbornik navukovykh artykulov II mizhnarodnai navukovoi kanferencyi (da 20-goddzia arkhealagichnykh i etnagrafichnykh ekspedycyi PDU) (Polatsk, 17–18 krasavika 2014 g.)*, ed. D. U. Duka, U. A. Lobach, S. A. Shydloouski, 2 (Navapolatsk, 2014), 147.

⁴⁹ Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 59.

⁵⁰ APC, I, no. 65, p. 143; RPK, I, no. 96, p. 542: ‘...τοῦ Λιτβῶν’ (January 1327); APC I, no. 67, p. 147; RPK, I, no. 98, p. 554: ‘...τοῦ Λιτβῶν καὶ ὑπερτίμου Θεοφίλου’ (April 1329).

⁵¹ Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 156; Zuckerman, ‘Iz rannei istorii’, 149. There are however, some doubts as regards the initial location of the Lithuanian metropolitan see in Novgorodok. Due to its missionary character, its first incumbent (Theophilos) may have not had a fixed place. Cf. *Les Regestes des Actes*, I/5, no. 2077, p. 55.

⁵² Zuckerman, ‘Iz rannei istorii’, 151.

metropolitan and the grand duke of Lithuania.⁵³ This sweeping vision has recently been profoundly reviewed by Constantin Zuckerman and found wanting. This scholar has quite convincingly proved that all the above-mentioned activities had nothing to do with Metropolitan Theophilus of Lithuania, but they simply reflected the connections of the late Metropolitan Peter and the activities of his successor Theognostos in reclaiming goods that were left in the hands of beneficiaries after his predecessor, Metropolitan Peter, had passed away.⁵⁴ The Orthodox metropolitanate of Lithuania was thus cut down to size, but, as if in compensation, it was recognized as some very distant germ of the modern state of Belarus.⁵⁵

After the death of Theophilus in about 1330, the metropolitanate of Lithuania became vacant for the rest of the reign of Gediminas. A qualitatively new departure for the Lithuanian Orthodox metropolitanate came with the reign of Grand Duke Algirdas (1345–1377).⁵⁶ His first candidate to the metropolitan see of Kiev was a certain Theodorite. Upon his arrival in Constantinople for consecration, he was turned down. He did not, however, acknowledge his defeat and went to Bulgaria instead, where Patriarch Theodosius II of Trnovo consecrated him.⁵⁷ In response the patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated him. He did not take it too seriously and was able to remain in his metropolitan dignity in Kiev itself for a while, until another candidate to the metropolitan dignity in the person of Roman came to light. He was a Tverite by origin and a relative of Algirdas' wife Yuliana. The succession to Metropolitan Theognostos proved one of the most troublesome for the Russian Orthodox Church in the Middle Ages. In June 1354, Patriarch Philotheos consecrated Alexius, scion of a Muscovite boyar family, as metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'.⁵⁸ Soon afterwards the protégé of Algirdas, Roman, arrived in Constantinople and was consecrated 'metropolitan of the

⁵³ Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia*, 209–11; Giedroyc, 'The arrival ... (1281–1341)', 29–30.

⁵⁴ Zuckerman, 'Iz rannei istorii', 147–8.

⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 152.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 164–9. Cf. also Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 75.

⁵⁸ D. Obolensky, 'Byzantium and Russia in the late middle ages', *Europe in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. J. R. Hale, J. R. L. Highfield, B. Smalley (London, 1965), 255–6.

Lithuanians' by new Patriarch Callistos by the end of 1354. Thus the Lithuanian metropolitanate was revived.⁵⁹ It acquired two suffragan bishoprics of Polotsk and Turov.⁶⁰ The major troubles began when the new Lithuanian metropolitan began to assert his pastoral power in such faraway sees as Chernigov, Briansk and Kiev. It is likely that in this he might have been emboldened by the expansionist drive that was then gathering momentum under Grand Duke Algirdas. The mutual accusations of the metropolitans Alexius and Roman reached the patriarch of Constantinople, who sent out his representatives to investigate the matter on the spot. Metropolitan Alexius was cleared of the accusations levelled at him, and Metropolitan Roman was ordered not to overstep his 'Lithuanian' limits. While the two metropolitans were fighting each other, a previously unheard-of division in the Russian Orthodox Church came to pass. Contemporaries could not remember anything of the sort.⁶¹ Despite Constantinopolitan adjudications, the quarrel between the two metropolitans did finally die down only when in 1362 Roman breathed his last. The Lithuanian metropolitanate became vacant once again, and the supreme ecclesiastical authority, as if by default, devolved to Metropolitan Alexius. As his relations with Algirdas remained tense, he was practically unable to tend to the Orthodox flock in Lithuania.

A number of historians dealing with the revival of the Lithuanian Orthodox metropolitanate in the person of Roman have been of the opinion that this battle over the supreme spiritual position in Russia went so far as to induce Algirdas to give promise to the patriarch to accept baptism in the Orthodox rite on condition that his candidate be given undisputed supreme power in the Russian Orthodox Church.⁶² The only evidence for this claim is a very problematic story provided by the Byzantine historian Nicephorus Gregoras.⁶³

⁵⁹ J. Meyendorff, 'Alexis and Roman: a study in Byzantino-Russian relations (1352-1354)', *Byzantinoslavica*, 28 (1967), 283-4.

⁶⁰ Zuckerman, 'Iz rannei istorii', 149.

⁶¹ 'Rogozhskii letopisets', 63.

⁶² Giedroyć, 'The arrival... (1341-1387)', 36, 45; Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa*, 32-7; Gudavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, 129. Cf. also Meyendorff, 'Alexis and Roman', 284.

⁶³ Cf. R. Guiland, *Essai sur Nicéphore Grégoras: L'homme et l'oeuvre* (Paris, 1927), 236-94; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, 1926), 466-7; Obolensky, 'Byzantium, Kiev, and Moscow', 28-31; Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 55.

He was passionately involved in the Hesychast controversy then agitating the Byzantine Church, found himself in strong opposition to one of the leaders of the Hesychast movement, Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople, and consequently to his favourite candidate for the Rus'ian metropolitanate, Alexius. On the other hand, he was a most vociferous supporter of Roman and his sponsor Algirdas, of whom he knew that he was a ruler of fire-worshippers. According to Gregoras, it was Roman who was consecrated legitimately first, and Alexius was an intruder who managed to make his way by being able to bribe the patriarch and his staff.⁶⁴ When the ruler of the fire-worshippers came to know about such despicable venality being rampant in the highest places in the patriarchate and the empire, he reneged on his promise to accept baptism and turned to worship the sun instead of the demon of the avarice to which the patriarch and the emperor (John VI Cantacuzenus) had succumbed so miserably.⁶⁵ The story of Nicephorus Gregoras conveys the moralistic overtones aimed at his enemies placed against the backdrop of the brave new world to come. It is to be stressed that Nicephorus Gregoras was sincerely convinced that the metropolitanate of Rus' united under Metropolitan Roman would have brought the centuries-long friendship between the Greek and the Russian peoples to new heights,⁶⁶ but everything was spoilt by Alexius.⁶⁷ In such a context, Nicephorus Gregoras cannot be regarded as a reliable witness, because in this particular instance he had immersed himself deeply in wishful thinking. It may also be noted that there is no evidence from Algirdas or his immediate milieu to substantiate the claim that he intended to turn Orthodox, if only Roman were given the highest authority in the Rus'ian Orthodox Church. After the death of Ro-

⁶⁴ *Nicephori Gregorae Historia Byzantina*, ed. I. Bekker, III [CSHB, XXVII] (Bonn, 1855), 517–18.

⁶⁵ More on the image of pagan Lithuania, which in the eyes of Nicephorus Gregoras represented a pagan Rus', see D. Baronas, 'Byzantium and Lithuania: North and South look at each other', *Byzantium, New Peoples, New Powers: The Byzantino-Slav Contact Zone, from the Ninth to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. M. Kaimakamova, M. Salamon, M. Smorağ-Rózycka [*Byzantina et Slavica Cracoviensia*, 5] (Cracow, 2007), 304–7.

⁶⁶ *Nicephori Gregorae Historia Byzantina*, III, 513.

⁶⁷ Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 85.

man we see a situation similar to that after the death of Theophilos: the metropolitanate of Lithuania became vacant again. The issue of a new metropolitan for the Orthodox population under Lithuanian rule arose again after some eight years in quite different circumstances, when an open war between Lithuania and her allies and Moscow and her allies broke out (1368–1372).⁶⁸

This war is viewed as a high point in the rivalry between Lithuania and Moscow for the supreme position in Rus'. To be sure, it displays picturesque deeds that were bound to tantalize the imagination of the Polish and Lithuanian writers from the sixteenth century onwards. The immediate cause for war was the complaint put up by Algirdas' brother-in-law, Duke Mikhail of Tver', who was exposed to depredations at the hands of Grand Duke Dmitry of Moscow. Standing up to defend his relative, Algirdas and other Lithuanian dukes together with their Russian allies launched a major raid into the domains of Moscow in autumn 1368. New investigations have shown that the raid was mounted from the southern approaches to Moscow.⁶⁹ The joint army inflicted a defeat on the Muscovite defence troops and proceeded all the way to the city of Moscow, which was subjected to three days' siege. The Kremlin recently built in stone withstood, and the invaders took their toll by devastating suburbs and the countryside. Devastations must have been quite tangible, since, according to Rus'ian chroniclers, they bore resemblance to what had passed a whole of forty years ago when the Tatars wreaked a similar havoc.⁷⁰ A similar expedition was repeated by Algirdas two years later, when his army overcame Muscovite field forces once more, besieged the Kremlin for eight days, but again proved unable to capture it. Algirdas' third and last Muscovite campaign took place in 1372 and after inconclusive stand-off ended in the peace of Lubutsk.⁷¹

During this war Metropolitan Alexius acted most vigorously in support of Moscow. He used his spiritual weapons to handicap

⁶⁸ Paszkiewicz, *Jagiellowie*, 414–26; L. V. Cherepnin, *Obrazovanie russkogo tsentra izovannogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1960), 564–72.

⁶⁹ O. Khoruzhenko, "Pervaia litovshchina" v letopisnoi stat'e 1368 g., *IŠT*, 2 (2010), 35

⁷⁰ 'Rogozhskii letopiset', 90.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 103–4.

the enemies of the Muscovites. Once he acted as a guarantor of safe-conduct for the Tverite duke to conduct negotiations with Duke Dmitry of Moscow, but proved most helpful in taking the ruler of Tver' captive.⁷² Only Tatar intercession made the Muscovites release Mikhail from his dungeon. In the wake of Algirdas' campaigns, Metropolitan Alexius was quick to excommunicate his Russian supporters. These excommunications were upheld by Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople.⁷³ It is interesting to note that the same patriarch was opposed to using anathema as a weapon in political struggles.⁷⁴ However, such considerations seem to have applied only in Byzantium, a country with a more articulate political culture. As regards the 'barbaric' north, the use of anathema was to remain in force. It is evident that this spiritual weapon caused deep apprehensions among Rus'ian dukes anxious about their resurrection. Duke Sviatoslav of Smolensk was afraid that if he died excommunicate his dead body might be turned into a monstrosity: incapable of decaying and impossible to be buried in the earth.⁷⁵ It is these extraordinary circumstances that prompted Algirdas to take a rather unusual step: to have his letter written in Greek. It was addressed to Patriarch Philotheos and contained a plea of innocence and accusations against the openly pro-Muscovite metropolitan.⁷⁶ In its outspoken manner this letter resembles Gediminas' letter to Pope John XXII. Algirdas was concerned to show that he acted only in response to unprovoked attacks mounted by the Muscovites into his lands. He enumerated injustices suffered by his relatives and allies at the hands of the same Muscovites. In the eyes of Algirdas, Metropolitan Alexius was guilty of absolving too easily those who deserted him in breach of oaths corroborated by the 'kissing of the

⁷² Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 183ff.

⁷³ APC, I, no. 268, pp. 523–4 (June 1370); no. 269, pp. 524–5 (June 1370); D. Obolensky, 'A Philorhomaïos anthropos: Metropolitan Cyprian of Kiev and All Russia (1375–1406), *DOP*, 32 (1978), 85–6.

⁷⁴ M. T. Fögen, 'Rebellion und Exkommunikation in Byzanz', *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter: Historische und juristische Studien zur Rebellion*, ed. M. T. Fögen (Frankfurt/M, 1995), 48–51.

⁷⁵ The traces of this lore as propounded by the Greek churchmen active in Rus' may be found in Priselkov, Fasmer, 'Otryvki V. N. Beneshevicha', 53.

⁷⁶ APC, I, no. 320, pp. 580–1. See also Tinnefeld, 'Byzantinisch-Russische Kirchenpolitik', 371–2.

cross'. 'Not even our fathers knew such metropolitans as this metropolitan! He blesses the Muscovites to commit bloodshed. He never visits us. He never goes to Kiev. [...] The metropolitan should have blessed the Muscovites to help us, since we fight the Germans on their behalf. [...] Give us another metropolitan for Kiev, Smolensk, Tver', Little Russia, Novosil' and Nizhni-Novgorod!'⁷⁷ The lands of Algirdas and his allies thus had to be exempted from the rule of too pro-Muscovite a metropolitan.

Such complaints produced by Algirdas and Mikhail of Tver' did not fall on deaf ears. The timing for these complaints was most appropriate, because then the patriarch was about to abolish the Lithuanian metropolitanate, which formally had been vacant since Metropolitan Roman's death in 1362. As has been suggested by John Meyendorff, at the last moment he refused to sign the act and this seems to have been related to newly incoming information from Algirdas and Duke Mikhail of Tver'.⁷⁸ So Patriarch Philotheos chose to take a more balanced approach by intending to bring about lasting peace between the warring parties.⁷⁹ Metropolitan Alexius was rebuked for his neglect in providing spiritual care to Greek Orthodox believers in Lithuanian domains and was urged to mend the situation.⁸⁰ When this patriarchal warning went unheeded, Philotheos dispatched a monk, Cyprian, as his trusted envoy to investigate the situation on the spot.⁸¹

Having arrived in Lithuania in the winter of 1373/74 Cyprian managed to obtain good regards of Algirdas.⁸² Such an asset was a serious drawback in the eyes of Grand Duke Dmitry and other

⁷⁷ Quoted from: J. Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 288–9. The text in Greek has been published several times: *APC*, I, no. 320, pp. 580–1; republished *RIB*, VI (St. Petersburg, 1880), no. 24, coll. 135–40.

⁷⁸ Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 190.

⁷⁹ *APC*, I, no. 139, pp. 320–2; *RIB*, VI (St. Petersburg, 1880), no. 28, coll. 155–60 (a letter of 1371 to Metropolitan Alexius of 1371); *APC*, I, no. 328, pp. 590–2 (a letter of 1371 to Duke Michael of Tver').

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 139, p. 321.

⁸¹ Tinnefeld, 'Byzantinisch-Russische Kirchenpolitik', 374–5; Obolensky, 'A Philorhomaïos anthropos', 85–6; F. J. Thomson, *Gregory Tsamblak: The Man and the Myths* [*Slavica Gandensia*, 25/2] (Antwerp, 1998), 58.

⁸² Chodyncki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 20; Obolensky, 'A Philorhomaïos anthropos', 86ff.

Muscovites. Unsurprisingly, Cyprian was unable to break through a maze of particular interests of different parties. Faced with this, Patriarch Philotheos found a Solomonic solution: on 2 December 1375, he consecrated Cyprian as Metropolitan of Kiev and Lithuania, with a provision that after the death of metropolitan Alexius he would become a sole pastor of All Rus'.⁸³ The consecration of Cyprian when Metropolitan Alexius was still alive contained an element of improvisation, and therefore tends to be regarded as having been conducted against canonical requirements.⁸⁴ What prompted Patriarch Philotheos to act this way?

The ordination of Cyprian as Metropolitan of Lithuania is usually viewed as a concession on the part of the Byzantine Church to categorical demands made by Algirdas.⁸⁵ However, considering the demands and their implementation one cannot fail to notice some discrepancy. The splitting of the metropolitanate of Kiev and All Rus' was not to be permanent because Patriarch Philotheos envisaged Cyprian as Alexius' heir.⁸⁶ Cyprian's ordination was surely a compromise on the part of Patriarch Philotheos but he did not sacrifice the future for the present.⁸⁷ He, as well as Metropolitan Cyprian, preferred the interests of the Orthodox Church to those of Lithuanian or Muscovite rulers.⁸⁸ Sometimes Algirdas' threat is regarded like that of King Casimir III of Poland, who outspokenly declared to the Patriarch of Constantinople that if a metropolitan were not ordained for Galich, he would look for one in the Roman Catholic Church and would take care to have his Greek Orthodox subjects rebaptized in

⁸³ P. Sokolov, *Russkii arkhieriei iz Vizantii i pravo ego naznacheniiia do nachala XV veka* (Kiev, 1913), 451–2. On the changing titles of Metropolitan Cyprian throughout his tenure, see Pliguzov, 'On the title', 346–52.

⁸⁴ Thomson, *Gregory Tsamblak*, 58.

⁸⁵ M. N. Speranskii, *Serbskoe zhitie litovskikh muchenikov* (Moscow, 1909), 23–4; Kuchkin, 'Sergii Radonezhskii', 18. Cf. also J. Fijałek, 'Biskupstwa greckie w ziemiach ruskich od połowy w. XIV. Na podstawie źródeł greckich (II)', *KH*, 11 (1897), 21; T. M. Trajdos, 'Metropolici kijowscy Cyprian i Grzegorz Camblak (bułgarscy duchowni prawosławni) a problemy Cerkwi Prawosławnej w państwie polsko-litewskim u schyłku XIV i w pierwszej ćwierci XV w.', *Balkanica Posnaniensia*, 2 (1985), 214.

⁸⁶ Cf. B. A. Uspenskii, *Tsar' i patriarkh: Kharizma vlasti v Rossii (Vizantiiskaia model' i ee russkoe pereosmyslenie* (Moscow, 1998), 385–6.

⁸⁷ Obolensky, 'A Philorhomaïos anthropos', 86; Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 76.

⁸⁸ Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 253–4.

the Roman rite.⁸⁹ The patriarch duly acceded to this request and a metropolitan of Galich was appointed with no delay in 1371.⁹⁰ The request of Algirdas actually contains no threat. In his letter of 1371 he demands a new metropolitan relying on his basic considerations of what was right and wrong. There is nothing similar to what King Casimir had in store for the patriarch. The Roman Catholic spectre that has been invoked in modern historiographical works derives from the two synodal expositions that dealt with the issue of the legitimacy of the consecration of Cyprian. The first, composed in 1380 under Patriarch Neilos, was most negative to Cyprian, and the second, composed in 1389 under Patriarch Antony IV, revindicated his case in full.⁹¹ Despite their differences, both of them concur in that before the consecration of Cyprian, Patriarch Philotheos was presented with a possibility that unless Cyprian became metropolitan, they would look for a Roman Catholic one.⁹² These *they* could not apply to Algirdas because he was a pagan! In our view, it was Greek Orthodox dukes who, being in opposition to Metropolitan Alexius, put up such a threat. This group may have included not only Tverite princes, but also the Greek Orthodox Lithuanian dukes.⁹³ Their threat to turn to the Roman Catholic Church should not be taken too seriously or be viewed as a sign of their pro-Catholic inclinations. At the time even the Muscovites might have invoked the spectre of the Latins in order to achieve their ends.⁹⁴ There have always been people who simply knew what kind of blackmail was most effective in what audiences. In conclusion we have to state that as there is no reliable evidence that Algirdas ever intended to accept Roman Catholicism, there is equally no reliable evidence that he wished to do so for the Orthodox Christian camp.

⁸⁹ APC, I, no. 318, pp. 577–8 (1370); M. Giedroyc, 'The Ruthenian-Lithuanian metropolitanates and the progress of Christianisation (1300–1458)', *Nuovi Studi Storici*, 17 (1992), 328–9; Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 167.

⁹⁰ APC, I, no. 319, pp. 578–80 (May 1371); Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 191–3.

⁹¹ APC, ed. F. Miklosich, I. Müller, II (Vienna, 1862), no. 338, pp. 12–18 (June 1380) and no. 404, pp. 116–29 (February 1389). For the circumstances of the composition and their relative value as historical sources, see the remarks made by Obolensky, 'A Philorhomaioi anthropos', 87–8.

⁹² APC, I, no. 338, p. 14 and no. 404, p. 119.

⁹³ Cf. Jablonowski, *Westrussland*, 75.

⁹⁴ APC, I, no. 404, p. 121.

What is the relation between the vicissitudes of the Lithuanian Orthodox metropolitanate and the conversion of Lithuania? The propagation of the faith was one of the tasks of their incumbents. The suspension of the Lithuanian metropolitanate after the death of Theophilus was justified by the small number of the Christians in those lands that might be viewed as a potential part of the Byzantine Commonwealth.⁹⁵ It follows from this justification that initially the sponsors of this metropolitanate nurtured hopes that tangible gains could be made. The interest of this sort is an indication that it may well have been Byzantine secular and ecclesiastical authorities that sponsored the (tentative) establishment of the Lithuanian metropolitanate, rather than Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania.⁹⁶ The lack of evidence indicating contacts between him and Metropolitan Theophilus may be viewed as a sign that this pagan ruler did not see it worthwhile to cooperate with an ecclesiastic in his bid for Rus'ian lands. This situation was bound to change under his son Algirdas. It is highly symptomatic that the declaration of the Lithuanian rulers that All Rus' (*omnis Russia*) must belong to them was made at the time when Metropolitan Roman was in the process of making his own bid to gain a supreme position in the ecclesiastical structure of All Rus'. Since the Rus'ian Orthodox Church was then the only institution which could embody the notion of Rus' as a whole, it follows that the 'imperialistic designs' of Lithuanian rulers were predicated on the lessons they took from their Orthodox friends. It is also symptomatic that this high-flown demand never occurred again and its only mention need not be viewed as an indication that the rulers of Lithuania pursued a conscious programme of 'gathering of the Rus'ian lands'. Their mode of political activity proceeded in fits and starts and was based on considerations of what was achievable in a short-term perspective. However, it is clear that supreme rulers of Lithuania, even Algirdas who had been married twice to Russian Orthodox princesses, did not rush to become Greek Orthodox. This phenomenon is hard to be given satisfactory explanation. One tentative way of thinking may be provided by an insight of Ihor Ševčenko. This scholar notices that when Byzantine sources speak

⁹⁵ *Notitiae episcopatum*, 409. Cf. also Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 157–8.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Les Regestes des Actes*, I/5, no. 2077, p. 55.

of Lithuanian rulers in negative terms they are viewed as an element alien to Rus', when they do this favourably they are treated as part of Rus'.⁹⁷ The same phenomenon may be inferred from the verbal pictures of St Timofey (Daumantas) or Vaišvilkas that purport to say that the only good Lithuanian is a Rus'ian Orthodox Lithuanian. In sum, Greek Orthodox political realities and cultural milieu were hardly conducive to the likely formation of a separate Lithuanian Greek Orthodox identity. It is hard to tell to what extent Lithuanian grand dukes and men around them were aware that once they turned Orthodox they would have to pay heed to the metropolitan of the Church, which came to be entwined much more closely with north-eastern Russia than with any other part of erstwhile Kievan Rus'. By turning Greek Orthodox they could hardly hope to dislodge the Muscovite dynasty from its grand-ducal position in which in the second half of the fourteenth century they became ever more safely ensconced not only due to the whims of their Tatar overlords, but also thanks to much more predictable moral support provided by the influential circles in the same Rus'ian Orthodox Church. On the contrary, by accepting baptism in the Greek Orthodox rite the grand duke of Lithuania would have been running a most certain risk of turning into one of a plethora of Rus'ian princes. His freedom of action would have been much more circumscribed as compared to what he could do as a pagan ruler. By turning Orthodox, a man like Grand Duke Algirdas would have become vulnerable to Metropolitan Alexius with all his arsenal of spiritual weaponry. Was it an enticing perspective for a man who enjoyed the idea that All Rus' had to belong to Lithuanians? The Lithuanian expansion into Rus' and the reluctance of the grand dukes of Lithuania to convert to Greek Orthodox believers represents a truly idiosyncratic mix, hence 'going east, facing west'. For the time being it was possible to make headway even by taking so uncomfortable a posture. Grand Dukes Gediminas and Algirdas alike were, in essence, beholden to their old ways and shunned too radical changes. However strong rulers they were, it was not possible even for them to exercise control upon forces that were making their impact on the society of pagan Lithuania without their solicitation.

⁹⁷ Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 78–9.

Orthodox and Franciscan Martyrs: Spiritual and Bodily Arms Talk

Despite Lithuanian pagan grand dukes and their close collaborators paying no significant amount of attention to the issue of accepting baptism either in its Latin or Greek rite, the Christian faith would find some other ways to penetrate into a rather rough country. In this respect we have two extraordinary cases dealing with Orthodox and Roman Catholic martyrs. The first concerns those grand-ducal courtiers, who were put to death on the orders of Algirdas in c. 1347. These saints – Anthony, John and Eustathius – are also known as the Three Martyrs of Vilnius. The Franciscan martyrology related to pagan Lithuania or pagan Lithuanians contains three instances of friars' dying for the faith: twice in Vilnius, in c. 1341 and c. 1369, and once in Moldavia in 1378. The martyrdoms of Catholic and Orthodox martyrs are dealt with in one chapter because of our perceived need to show the influence of Latin Catholic and Greek Orthodox faiths as penetrating the pagan society of Lithuania *simultaneously*. Another reason for this two-track approach is a geographical one: Vilnius, the capital town of pagan Lithuania, was a place in which this kind of convergence and interaction seemed to have been at its most intense.

At the outset it must be noted that for quite a long time these instances of the ultimate testimony of the faith have not been integrated and therefore not given adequate consideration in historiographical representations dealing with the story of the conversion of Lithuania to the Christian faith. For one thing, it must be frankly admitted that the relevant sources are hagiographical in nature and therefore present additional and well-known problems of interpretation. The heavy-handed approach to hagiographical sources, so characteristic of the so-called positivistic historiography in the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries, did not encourage scholars to treat them as seriously and dispassionately as they deserved. The need to bust hagiographical legends was on the order of the day and in our case it was most cogently demonstrated by the Polish scholar Kazimierz Chodynicki in his two seminal papers dealing with Orthodox and Franciscan martyrs.¹ These studies caused a watershed, and previous views, which took the historicity of either the Franciscan or Orthodox martyrs, seemed to be outdated and overcome.² After that a new and wide historiographical consensus set in, the sense of which was that these martyrdoms represented a later-time pious legends of too credulous an age.³ This view affected the stories of the Orthodox⁴ and Franciscan martyrs alike.⁵

¹ K. Chodynicki, 'Legenda o męczeństwie czternastu franciszkanów w Wilnie', *AW*, 4 (1927), 53–78.

² Apart from nineteenth-early twentieth-century historiographical works, there are cases when even in the second half of the twentieth century some scholars happened to rely too heavily on the legendary stories about the Franciscan martyrs. Cf. Niedermaier, 'Die Franziskaner in Preußen', 23–4; T. M. Trajdos, *Kościół Katolicki na ziemiach ruskich Korony i Litwy za panowania Władysława I Jagiełły (1386–1434)*, 1 (Wrocław, 1983), 127.

³ As far as we know, there was only one dissenting scholarly reaction, but as it was voiced in some narrowly known publication and at very unfortunate time (in 1939), it went unheeded: D. Tyniecki, 'Legenda czy rzeczywistość... O czternastu męczennikach franciszkańskich w Wilnie', *Kalendarz Królowej Różańca Świętego: kościoła OO. Franciszkanów w Wilnie* (Toruń, 1939), 13–15.

⁴ Chodynicki was not alone in denying the very historicity of the Vilnius Orthodox martyrs. Cf., for example, W. Zahorski, 'Legenda o trzech męczennikach wileńskich', *Źródła Mocy*, 2 (1927), 68–72. His view of the martyrdom as a non-event was accepted by historians of rather different schools of thought. Cf., for instance, Z. Ivinskis, 'A contribution to the history of the conversion of Lithuania', *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*, 5 (1939), 18–19; Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia*, 219; J. Ochmański, *Dawna Litwa: Studia historyczne* (Olsztyn, 1986), 28–9; J. Bardach, 'La rencontre des Eglises catholique et orthodoxe sur les territoires du Royaume de Pologne et de Lituanie aux XIV^e – XV^e siècles', *The Common Christian Roots of the European Nations*, 2 (Florence, 1982), 820. H. Fros, 'Hagiographie Lithuanienne: les "martyrs" de Vilnius', *AB*, 101 (1983), 35–6; idem, 'Hagiographie brodée', *AB*, 103 (1985), 107; J. Jurginis, *Pagonybės ir krikščionybės santykiai Lietuvoje* (Vilnius, 1976), 35–9; Z. Ivinskis, *Rinktinės raštai*, vol. 4: *Krikščionybė Lietuvoje* (Rome, 1987), 22; M. Kosman, *Litwa: pierwotna: Mity, legendy, fakty* (Warsaw, 1989), 146–68; L. Korczak, *Litwa: Przechowana tożsamość* (Cracow, 1998), 84–5.

⁵ As regards the acceptance of Chodynicki's view on the Franciscan martyrs, see for example, Jurginis, *Pagonybės ir krikščionybės santykiai*, 39–43; V. Gidžiūnas, *De Fratibus Minoribus in Lituania usque ad definitivam introductionem observantiae (1245–1517)*, 1 (Rome, 1950), 31; idem, 'Legendariškieji', *Aidai*, 3 (1954), 111.

There was something more to the story of the Orthodox martyrs as a rather radical conclusion of their legendary character was meant to signify that all the story about the Vilnius Orthodox martyrs was no more than an ideological fiction constructed at the end of the fifteenth century by Muscovite propaganda as part of its attempts to denigrate Catholic Poland and Lithuania and their rulers.⁶ However strange such an explanation may appear, it nevertheless gained wide currency. Having been relegated to the safe preserve of medieval legends, these stories must have been viewed as having very little, if anything, to do with historical reality of pagan Lithuania. There is another no less important feature which allowed scholars to put up with this – then new – approach and its results. It is an assumption that takes religious tolerance in pagan Lithuania for granted.⁷ The best evidence for this tolerance has been seen in the letters of Gediminas who professed to have subscribed to a view that anybody is free to worship according to his/her own rite, 'and we all have one God'.⁸ So the combination of a hypercritical approach and of a theory of religious tolerance in pagan Lithuania proved most conducive to the rise of a wide scholarly and public consensus. In some quarters it is convenient and even flattering to have that feeling of being an heir to this centuries-old tradition of religious tolerance. These issues, however, proved to be not as straightforward as they seemed at first sight.

4 (1954), 179–80; P. Rabikauskas, *Krikščioniškoji Lietuva: istorija, hagiografija, šaltinių tyra*, ed. L. Jovaiša (Vilnius, 2002), 19, 77, 276–9; D. Karczewski, *Franciszkanie w monarchii Piastów i Jagiellonów w średniowieczu* (Cracow, 2012), 344–8; R. Kubicki, 'Działalność zakonów mendykanckich na pograniczu krzyżacko-litewskim do początków XVI w.', *Litwa i jej sąsiedzi w relacjach wzajemnych (XIII–XVI w.)*, ed. A. Kołodziejczyk, R. Kubicki, M. Radoch (Olsztyn–Gdańsk, 2014), 181. Viktoras Gidžiūnas (OFM) was the first scholar who introduced additional fourteenth-century sources (for instance, 'De conformitate vitae B. Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu' of Bartholomew of Pisa), but he did not subject to revision the views advanced by K. Chodynicki. Cf. also P. Rabikauskas, 'Pietro Gastoldo', *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, 10 (Rome, 1968), 837–8.

⁷ K. Chodynicki, 'Geneza i rozwój legendy o trzech męczennikach wileńskich', *Ateneum Wileńskie*, 4 (1927), 442–3.

⁸ Cf. J. Deveikė, 'The legal aspect of the last religious conversion in Europe', *SEER*, 32 (1953), 119; Jurginis, *Pagonybės ir krikščionybės santykiai*, 35.

⁹ *Chartularium*, no. 54, p. 184 (3 November 1323).

The Three Martyrs of Vilnius

The historiographical situation began to change when in early 1980s John Meyendorff and Dimitri Ogitskii produced their contributions, which proved beyond any doubt that the martyrdom of the three martyrs of Vilnius was a real historical event.⁹ With regard to the Franciscan martyrs a qualitatively new approach was braved by S. C. Rowell, who tackled fourteenth-century sources that until then had largely escaped the notice of scholars.¹⁰ The net result is that the stories of the Orthodox and Franciscan martyrs have been rehabilitated. Now there is no sense of casting any doubt on the historicity of these events themselves. The reasons, the possible concatenation with other events, and the significance of these martyrdoms in a wider political and cultural context are now naturally enough a matter of historiographical debate. For the purposes of the present narrative, we will put forward views and interpretations which, in our view, seem to be most probable and best compatible with circumstantial evidence. The format of this book does not invite us to present here an analytical study into relevant sources, all the more so because this kind of research has already been done.¹¹ It suffices here to admit that in relying, where necessary, on hagiographical sources, we will try to use them with circumspection in order to grasp what in them may be regarded as substantially true and applicable for the reconstruction of past reality.

⁹ J. Meyendorff, 'The three Lithuanian martyrs: Byzantium and Lithuania in the fourteenth century', *St. Vladimir Theological Quarterly*, 26 (1982), 29–44; D. P. Ogitskii, 'K istorii vilenskikh muchenikov', *Bogoslovskie Trudy*, 25 (1984), 226–46; D. Ogizki, 'Blutzeugnisse für Christus in Litauen des 14. Jahrhunderts. Legende und Wirklichkeit der drei Märtyrer von Vilna', *Stimme der Orthodoxie*, 5 (1984), 45–8; 7 (1984), 38–40; 8 (1984) 39–48.

¹⁰ S. C. Rowell, 'Lithuania and the West, 1337–41. A Question of Sources', *JBS*, 21 (1989), 310. See also R. J. Mažeika, S. C. Rowell, 'Zelatores maximi: Pope John XXII, Archbishop Frederick of Riga and the Baltic mission 1305–1340', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 31 (1993), 60.

¹¹ The relevant hagiographic, epigraphic, iconographic, and historiographical sources in Greek, Church Slavonic, Old-Russian, Latin and Polish have been analyzed and published in: D. Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai: Gyvenimas ir istorija (Istorinė studija ir šaltiniai)* (Vilnius, 2000), 147–345. Main results were also presented in D. Baronas, 'The Three martyrs of Vilnius', 85–101. Some other sources (*passiones*) were published earlier by Speranskii, *Serbskoe zhitie*, 26–31.

The three martyrs of Vilnius (or the Lithuanian martyrs) is a compound designation for Orthodox martyrs St Anthony († 14 January), St John († April 24), and St. Eustathius († 13 December; all died in c. 1347).¹² The hagiographical sources, which are extant in Church Slavonic in manuscripts coming down from the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, display a particular optics. Whereas almost all available sources for the study of fourteenth-century Lithuania (Teutonic and Rus'ian chronicles) represent a distant view from without, the *passio* provides a view as if from within the grand-ducal court. This proximity and even intimacy may be misleading and not every detail shall be taken at face value. In the conditions of the lack of any other comparably eloquent sources, let alone documents, we draw on the approach characteristic of social history studies. So that is why we do not look at the conversation between the grand duke and his courtiers (would-be martyrs) as a domestic issue in which the strength of faith of a Christian hero is tested by pagan fury and brutality. Rather we look at this as an instance that can be interpreted by means typical of social history studies.

The argument of the *passio* presents the brothers, Anthony and John, as servants of the Lithuanian fire-worshipping duke. They converted from paganism to Orthodoxy, adopted a new way of life, and after that were brought to trial by being forced to eat meat during fast days. Their refusal to fulfil this command brought them finally to the gallows: first Anthony and then John. The story of another Christian servant, named Eustathius, is much the same, although he is depicted as having suffered horrible tortures before finally he was hanged.¹³

¹² The earliest mention of the three martyrs of Vilnius is found in the entry for the year 1347 in the fifteenth-century 'Sofiiskaia pervaiia letopis' starshego izvoda', *PSRL*, VI (Moscow, 2000), 428, whence it was taken over by a number of other fifteenth-sixteenth-century chronicles. For example, 'Moskovskii letopisnyi svod kontsa XV veka', *PSRL*, XXV (Moscow-Leningrad, 1949), 177; 'Letopis' po Voskresenskomu spisku', *PSRL*, VII (St Petersburg, 1856), 214–5; 'Kniga stepennaia tsarskogo rodosloviia', *PSRL*, XXI/2, 390. A shortened version of this inscription is found in the Ermolinskaia chronicle of the second half of the fifteenth century, and in the later Russian chronicles which thence took it over: 'Ermolinskaia letopis', *PSRL*, XXIII (St Petersburg, 1910), 109; 'Letopisnyi svod 1518 g. (Uvarovskaia letopis)', *PSRL*, XXVIII (Moscow-Leningrad, 1963), 232; 'Lvovskaia letopis', *PSRL*, XX/1 (St Petersburg, 1910), 185.

¹³ Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 258–60.

Historians have advanced a number of suggestions in order to try to explain why all this took place at the hands of the ruler who was far from being inimical to Christians. Some scholars came to suggest that the murder of three Orthodox believers could have been one of the consequences of the coup d'état led by brothers Algirdas and Kęstutis against their brother Jaunutis (Grand Duke of Lithuania from 1341 to 1345).¹⁴ The dethroned duke managed to escape, arrived in Moscow, and eventually was baptised with his retinue.¹⁵ These scholars suppose that if Jaunutis fled to Moscow, he must have been sympathetic to Orthodoxy already in Vilnius. Consequently, the future Orthodox martyrs are supposed to have been his secret allies, uncovered and executed for political reasons. It is quite evident that there is too much guesswork at work here, and as available sources do not provide any link between Jaunutis and the three martyrs of Vilnius, so there could hardly be any meaningful rationale for imaginative connections.

Other scholars have been inclined to play down the personal guilt of Algirdas in giving his Christian courtiers over to violent death.¹⁶ According to Meyendorff, it was not so much a general persecution of Christians as rather the reluctance of the three young men to comply with external requirements at Algirdas' still pagan court that occasioned their martyrdom.¹⁷ Some scholars surmised that it may have been an expression of some pagan reaction in the wake of the death of Algirdas' first wife.¹⁸ There is also a suggestion that

¹⁴ Ogitskii, 'K istorii', 241; Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 67.

¹⁵ 'Simeonovskaia letopis', 95.

¹⁶ D. Ogitskii, J. Meyendorff, and R. Mažeika attached great importance to one fact from the *passio*, which admittedly had to be a proof of Algirdas' tolerance. While Algirdas and John were alone in the bathhouse, the latter confessed to be a Christian, but Algirdas, though full of wrath, did nothing (that is, was tolerant). Even if this episode were true, we can hardly expect the duke to do something more than he did in the given circumstances. Algirdas seems to have been prudent enough not to fulfil the functions of his guardsmen. Cf. Ogitskii, 'K istorii', 241; Meyendorff, 'The three Lithuanian martyrs', 31; R. Mažeika, *The Role of Pagan Lithuania in Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Religious Diplomacy* (New York: 1987. Diss.), 67–9.

¹⁷ Meyendorff, 'The three Lithuanian martyrs', 43.

¹⁸ Ogitskii, 'K istorii', 241; P. Rabikauskas, 'Lietuvių tauta ir ankstyvieji bandymai krikštytis', *Krikščionybė Lietuvoje*, ed. V. S. Vardys (Chicago, 1997), 28. Cf. also Meyendorff, 'The three Lithuanian martyrs', 32, 37–8. As regards the first wife of

the courtiers of the grand duke were put to death because of their refusal to abide by the principle of tolerance then in force in Lithuania.¹⁹ It must have been a rather special kind of tolerance if one is put to death for refusing to fulfil someone else's wishes.

In our opinion, a more promising avenue has been opened up by Rasa Mažeika, who proposed to interpret this martyrdom within the context of internal power relations between the ruler and his subjects. She noticed quite reasonably that the refusal of the martyrs to fulfil the orders of the duke might have been related to some kind of public defiance.²⁰ In our view, this public defiance was restricted within the limits of a very closed society – the grand-ducal court. So we have to address the issue of interpersonal relations between the duke and these particular subjects who happened to become Orthodox saints.

The *passio* does not present the duke as eager to punish his political opponents. It does not hint at the cries of the pagan mob demanding the execution of the deserters of the native religion. By contrast, we may see the pagans who disdain John because he failed to remain faithful both to his native and his new religion.²¹ We do not even see the pagan priests, who were depicted in the eighteenth-century Jesuit drama play and who were seen also by Romantic historians in the nineteenth century.²² What we see is the grand-ducal court. We can catch a glimpse of the duke feasting, hunting, or bathing. Certainly the most visible are those trouble-makers who go bearded and long-haired and seem strangers to

Algirdas, it must be stated she is virtually unknown, her name (presumably Maria or Anne) is indicated only in the late sources of the sixteenth century. The date of her death is also uncertain, but in any case she must have died by the end of 1349. On these problems see Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 48–52.

¹⁹ M. Giedroyc, 'The arrival of Christianity ... (1341–1387)', 51–2.

²⁰ Mažeika, *The Role*, 71, 73–8. Cf. Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 275. Perhaps this theory of 'public defiance' prompted Mažeika to redate the event from the commonly accepted date of 1347 to that of 1370, when the war between Lithuania and Moscow was in full swing. We have to note that there is no good reason for such redating: Baronas, 'The Three martyrs', 107–8.

²¹ Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 254.

²² *Ibid.*, 324ff. For example, G. Ia. Kipriianovich, *Istoricheskii ocherk pravoslaviia, katolichestva i unii v Belorusii i Litve s drevneishogo do nastoiashchego vremeni* (Vilnius, 1899, 2nd edition), 16–17.

neatly-shaven pagans²³ who, in short, observe a different custom. This aspect of court life has recently been noticed by S. C. Rowell. He acutely remarked that the martyrs were killed for violation of what was held to be law (customary, of course).²⁴ How widely this customary law was obligatory is (still) a matter of speculation, so now it is better to turn *ad fontes*.

The very drama of the martyrdom, especially in the case of Ss Anthony and John, evolves, as is hinted above, at the sovereign's court. This truth is so obvious that many historians did not consider it worthy of a more sharpened attention and too quickly fixed their eyes on the political events of the day. However, attempts to grasp the actual circumstances of the martyrdom inevitably lead to the close and even intimate proximity of the grand duke, to something which is called *Königsnähe* in German historical scholarship. It is in this courtly context that the power relations between the unequal parties were played out. The future martyrs attend court and are entitled to take part in a banquet. The future Saint John assists the duke in the bath, while another future saint, Eustathius, accompanies the ruler in hunting.²⁵ All three serve the fire-worshipping duke of the Lithuanians. According to their social status they were servants, but not ordinary ones. Not every man serving at the court was allowed to feast in company with the duke or to serve him in the bath. In his *encomium* of c. 1397 the Byzantine rhetor Michael Balsamon assumes that they were nobles (*γενναῖοι*).²⁶ The same writer:

²³ This curious contrast between long-haired and bearded Christians and short-haired and neatly-shaven pagans may be substantiated by reference to Jan Długosz, who in describing the pagans also noted that in the pagan times the Lithuanians observed the habit of wearing short clothes and used to shave their hair and beards, see Długosz, *Annales. Liber X*, 168.

²⁴ S. C. Rowell, 'Custom, rites and power in medieval and early modern Lithuanian society', *Kultūry sankirtos. Skiriama doc. dr. Ingės Lukšaitės 60-mečiui* (Vilnius 2000), 52.

²⁵ Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 254, 258.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 206. This eulogy was published several times in the twentieth century: Speranskii, *Serbskoe zhitie*, 35–47; M. Gedeon, *Νέα βιβλιοθήκη ἐκκλησιαστικῶν συγγραφέων*, 1 (Constantinople, 1903), 85–102; M. Gedeon, *Ἀρχαῖον ἐκκλησιαστικὴν ἱστορίαν*, 1 (Constantinople, 1911), 152–74. Despite the fact that these editions were produced from the same manuscript, they are rather different. Collating the latest edition of M. Gedeon and that of M. Speransky, Tatjana Alekniejeva prepared a new critical edition: Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 200–42. The manuscript containing M. Balsamon's eulogy is described in *Catalogue of the*

maintains frankly that Eustathius was ‘one of the ruler’s retinue’.²⁷ Such servants as these made up an escort of the grand duke, a formation which in Russian sources is called ‘the small retinue’. One of the most important obligations of such retainers was their loyalty to their lord. They were supposed to be the most reliable force and agents able to carry out confidential talks.²⁸ Despite fragmentary evidence in historical sources pertaining to medieval Lithuania, it is quite clear that such individuals were rather important ones. The ruler could not treat their loyalty with indifference, because they could be dangerous to him as well.

Upon their conversion, Ss Anthony and John adopted the Christian way of life, and the change in their souls became manifest in their appearance, too. They began to grow long hair and beards. The suspicion that they may be Christians was confirmed by their own confession. Then the duke felt the necessity to test their loyalty and ordered them to eat meat. They preferred to disobey, because it was the time of fasting then. So it became evident that they were more obedient to somebody else’s commandments. The same test was later applied to St Eustathius, and the same refusal was the result. No doubt such a narrative of the *passio* bears hagiographic overtones, but the very clash of different attitudes towards what one ought to do is quite natural and in a sense it could be viewed as some kind of public defiance.²⁹ Consequently it became clear that their loyalty to the duke was tempered with their allegiance to the new faith.

Such a confrontation of loyalties may seem rather odd to a (post) modern mind, but for barbarians this may have been something

Greek manuscripts in the library of the monastery of Vatopedi on Mt. Athos, ed. S. Eustratiades [*Harvard Theological Studies*, 11] (Cambridge MA, 1924), no. 541, p. 110. See also *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, ed. F. Halkin, 3 [*Subsidia hagiographica*, 8] (Brussels, 1957, 3rd edition), no. 2035, p. 9–10. The date of the composition of this eulogy has not been definitively established thus far. Drawing on the internal evidence of the text and the then actual political circumstances, we have advanced a hypothesis that the date of the composition might be narrowed to 1394–97, when Constantinople lay under siege by Sultan Bayezid, and when the celestial help and material support from distant Lithuania were most desperately needed: Baronas, ‘Byzantium and Lithuania’, 309–10.

²⁷ Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 228: ‘τῶν γὰρ τῆς ἐκείνου δορυφορίας τις’. Δορυφορία – bodyguard, escort.

²⁸ Baronas, ‘The Three Martyrs’, 113–14.

²⁹ Mažeika, *The Role*, 71.

quite natural. Here we may recall the instance of 1311, in which Vytenis performed his blasphemous acts in front of Christian prisoners of war. He urged them to refuse Christ and accept paganism, and fight against the Christians. This wording is certainly put into Vytenis' mouth by Peter of Dusburg and was subsequently expanded by more sinister undertones by Wigand of Marburg at the end of the fourteenth century.³⁰ However, a more prosaic promise made by the same Vytenis to his prisoners of war, and would-be subjects, bears a strong semblance of a real *quid pro quo*. In exchange of their loyalty Vytenis promised to support them in everything they needed.³¹ Such support is reminiscent of the duty of the warlord to support his men. The gifts of the lord were to strengthen the loyalty of his subjects, to stress his domination over them, for the real lord was he who was generous.³² Perhaps Vytenis would have succeeded in increasing the number of his subjects in this way then, had not the Teutonic Knights rushed in to attack his troops. The efforts to procure new subjects in a similar way were more successful to Algirdas and Kęstutis in 1365, when a number of inhabitants from the Skalvian land (north-eastern Prussia) 'surrendered to the power and religion of idolaters'.³³

By refusing to fulfil the order of their lord, the three martyrs of Vilnius violated the time-honoured relations between unequal persons who nevertheless were expected to maintain solidarity. In our opinion, this is the main reason for why they were put to death. At the same time, however, we should observe that they did not reject the secular authority as such. After their baptism they continued to serve at the grand-ducal court after all. Probably they imagined that their new religion and service were somehow compatible, as long as the duke's orders did not contradict the commandments of the Christian

³⁰ Cf. 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 176, and 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 456.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Gift-giving and generosity are universal phenomena that can equally well be applied to the study of the history of medieval Lithuania. Cf. A. Ia. Gurevich, *Kategorii srednevekovoi kul'tury* (Moscow, 1984, 2nd edition), 229, 241–2; J. Duby, *Le temps des cathédrales: l'art et la société 980–1420* (Paris, 1980), 23–4; M. Bloch, *La société féodale* (Paris, 1978), 233ff.

³³ 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 550.

faith. They remained faithful to the principle 'pay the emperor what belongs to the emperor, and pay God what belongs to God'.

So public defiance of the duke was played out in a relatively narrow circle of persons, but this was a highly important and sensitive circle. It was here where the power was most concentrated. By the same token the obligatory customary law could be and was applied in this particular environment and to particular persons. The impious test to the future martyrs seems to have been applied as a means of testing their loyalty and only because they were men close to the duke. Thus the martyrdom happened due to these special circumstances and owing to specific relations and obligations binding these particular subjects (members of the grand-ducal retinue) to their lord. Other persons, who were not directly related to the grand duke, could abide by their Christian habits unmolested. The presence of the Orthodox priest Nestor at the conversion of the courtiers in question and the presence of Christians in their subsequent burial indicate that we cannot talk of a general persecution of Christians, or generally anti-Christian attitude. These cases were individual in a sense that they ended in violent deaths due to very special position these persons had in close proximity to the pagan grand duke. These particular circumstances do indeed show that the rejection by a pagan of his native religion was not tantamount to the desertion of the tribe.³⁴ Orthodox Lithuanians differed from their pagan compatriots, but still they were not wholly marginalized. Blood relations and genealogical memory seem to have trumped the divide between paganism and Christianity in pagan Lithuania.

Now we may advance, as a conclusion, the statement that the martyrdom under consideration came about as a result of the conflict between the pagan ruler and his Christian courtiers, between two parties, each of which acted according to its own motivation. There is no ground to suppose that Algirdas acted as a zealous pagan

³⁴ In general, Lithuanian paganism in the late Middle Ages was unlike that of Germanic tribes in the early Middle Ages, when political and cultic facets of tribal life overlapped: Kahl, 'Die ersten Jahrhunderte', 33–4. A somewhat more relaxed attitude of pagans with regard to converts to Christianity may be observed in Sweden. Cf. A. Sanmark, 'The role of secular rulers in the conversion of Sweden', *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300–1300*, ed. M. Carver (Woodbridge, 2003), 553.

eager to suppress the Christian influence far and wide. His motivation seems to have been predominantly secular, his punitive action was measured at disobedient servants who, from his point of view, violated a time-honoured tradition of how mutual relations should be maintained. It was these Christian servants whose motivation not to comply with certain demands of the ruler was religious, because they preferred the Commandments of the Lord to those of the ruler. Their new Christian way of life was not neatly compatible to the pagan way of life, and that caused a spark that ignited all the drama. Within a tightly-knit group you could not be too different.

The circumstance that the martyrdom in question took place at the beginning of the rule of Algirdas has not received due attention so far. It seems that the rulers of pagan Lithuania would follow the custom of marking the inauguration of their rule by launching impressive military campaigns.³⁵ They presumably had to prove that a capable ruler came to the rudder of the military monarchy. Algirdas seems to have been one of the most active in this respect, because the first years of his rule were marked out by hectic military activity. Unsurprisingly, there was no lack of episodes of spectacular violence in such campaigns. During an Algirdas-led incursion to Livonia in 1345, Lithuanian warriors captured a young German merchant who, being caught unawares of military activities, was subjected to refined torture and finally sacrificed to pagan gods.³⁶ In the course of the same campaign, Algirdas ordered the native Livonian chieftain to be beheaded on the spot. The man was found guilty of having acted with too much familiarity regarding Grand

³⁵ This issue has not been clarified so far, but this phenomenon looks very probable. In this respect we would like to draw attention (1) to Mindaugas' campaign to Curonia in 1244, (2) to Treniota's attempts to consolidate his power by military exploits, (3) to the strong recrudescence of the Lithuanian militarism in the first years of the rule of Traidenis, and to slave-raids of Vytenis. It is to be assumed that Lithuanians, like many other barbarian peoples, expected victories of their rulers. Cf. W. Schlesinger, 'Das Heerkönigtum', *Das Königtum: Seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen [Vorträge und Forschungen, 3]* (Konstanz, 1956), 138. On the rationale of raids of booty in typologically akin medieval societies, see, for example, Žemlička, 'Dux "Boemorum" und rex Boemie', 95; T. Reuter, 'Plunder and tribute in the Carolingian empire', idem, *Medieval Politics and Mentalities*, ed. J. L. Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), 231–67.

³⁶ 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 505.

Duke Algirdas by claiming to be a king-elect of the locals.³⁷ That Algirdas was very sensitive to perceived offence to his honour is clear from yet another instance. When a Novgorodian official (*tysiatskii*) called him 'a dog', he went to war against Novgorod in 1346. Upon seeing their lands being subjected to devastation, the Novgorodians ordered the offender to be put to death.³⁸ We may say that such was a general climate and collective mood in which an affront from newly-converted Orthodox courtiers came to pass. This happened at the very grand-ducal court. The troublemakers suffered much the same fate as the victims of the raid into Livonia in 1345. The men in Livonia and the three courtiers of Algirdas may have been executed for different reasons, but the executions seem to have served as a demonstration of the power of the new grand duke, who came to the throne defying the succession arranged by his father Gediminas.

Most people can adapt to new circumstances and change over time. Algirdas seems to have been this sort of man. His flexibility comes to the fore when the case of his long-dead courtiers became an issue in international politics. This happened thanks to the arrival of the Bulgarian monk Cyprian in Lithuania in the winter of 1373/74, who was then the envoy of Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople in charge of the task of clarifying the complicated local political and ecclesiastical situation of the time.³⁹ When he arrived in the Orthodox lands under Lithuanian rule he found 'people living like brutes without their shepherd'.⁴⁰ Progressing further he reached the pagan lands and there he must have found some glimmer of hope – the relics of the local martyrs. They had been fire-worshippers like the rest of pagan Lithuanians, but then converted to Christianity and even died as martyrs. Cyprian must have grasped this opportunity in order to capitalize on it. It must be admitted that there is no direct evidence to prove conclusively a direct involvement of Cyprian with these local martyrs and their cult in its earliest stages. There exists, however, very strong circumstantial evidence allowing us to state that this was the case. The events to be

³⁷ 'Hermann de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', 72: 'Rustice, tu non eris hic rex!'.
³⁸ *NIL*, 358–9.
³⁹ See Chapter 5.
⁴⁰ *RIB*, VI, 183 (23 June 1378).

mentioned could hardly have taken place without participation or mediation of future Metropolitan Cyprian.

There is some significant overlapping between what we read in the *passio* and what we come across in the 1378 letter of Metropolitan Cyprian to St Sergius of Radonezh (†1392). The *passio* mentions a multitude of Christian prisoners of war who asked the Lithuanian duke to permit them to build a church.⁴¹ Already Mikhail N. Speranskii surmised that these must have been Russian captives taken prisoner during the campaigns of Algirdas against Moscow.⁴² This conjecture is corroborated by the evidence supplied by Cyprian as he stated that during his stay in Lithuania he made endeavours for the Christian prisoners of war to be released.⁴³ Algirdas agreed to their request and the church was soon built.⁴⁴ It is very likely that Cyprian's general reference to the churches built in Lithuania during his stay bears relation to one particular church in Vilnius, and it should be identified as the Holy Trinity church known from later sources as built on the site of the martyrdom.⁴⁵

Such events stand in sharp contrast to what had taken place at the beginning of the rule of Algirdas. The *passio* describes him as the cruellest tormentor who could fly easily into rage. If immediately after the martyrdom priest Nestor and some other Christians could only secretly take part in the burial of the martyrs, so a few decades later the picture altered beyond recognition. Now Algirdas released Christian prisoners of war and himself pinpointed the site on which the church was to be built. He even allowed some particles of the relics of the martyrs to be obtained and translated to Constantinople. That is why an exclamation of wonder of Michael Balsamon is self-understandable: 'is that not an all-surpassing

⁴¹ Speranskii, *Serbskoe zhitie*, 29; Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 256.

⁴² Speranskii, *Serbskoe zhitie*, 15.

⁴³ *RIB*, VI, 182 (23 June 1378). The release on a massive scale should be viewed as something out of the ordinary, because prisoners of war were a profitable staple ware either in the domestic or overseas slave-market. In our view it is not by chance that the Polish chronicler Jan Długosz noted that Lithuanians were very grudging when it came to granting freedom to prisoners of war. See Długosz *Annales. Liber X*, 168.

⁴⁴ Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 256–8.

⁴⁵ *RIB*, VI, 182 (23 June 1378). For these later sources see Baronas, 'The Three martyrs', 93.

exploit that this infidel did not grudge their remains to us, did not trouble to venerate them in common ceremonies and allowed the church to be built in the place of their martyrdom'.⁴⁶ All this must have taken place in c. 1374. The relics were safely delivered to Constantinople where they were received by Patriarch Philotheos and placed in Hagia Sophia. As Michael Balsamon attests, Patriarch Philotheos was the first in the (official) promotion of their cult by ordering hymns composed and icons painted in their honour.⁴⁷ All these events amount to nothing else but official canonisation of the three martyrs of Vilnius by the Orthodox Church in 1374. As John Meyendorff noted, it was not an ordinary thing to have Slavic (sic!) martyrs canonized by the Constantinopolitan Church.⁴⁸ He was of opinion that such a turn of events was facilitated highly by the wide-open outlook of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which promoted the Hesychast revival in the lands of Greek and Slavic Orthodox Christians encompassing Greek, south and northern Slavic lands. As far as pagan Lithuania is concerned in this continent-wide context, the propagation of the Orthodox Christian faith seems to have been a major consideration in the eyes of those who stood behind these events.⁴⁹ The likely missionary overtones can well be detected in the *encomium* of Michael Balsamon: 'Most Gracious [Lord], Thy honourable blood which was spilled forth to enlighten the whole of Creation has made a multitude of martyrs and by Thy will [even] barbarians die for Thee, clearly confessing Thee to be God!'⁵⁰ So the martyrdom under discussion could not but provide some additional ground for expectations at conversion and thus contribute to the promotion of Cyprian to the rank of the metropolitan at the time when old Metropolitan Alexius of All Rus' was still alive. Cyprian was the man who proved to be able to attend to the needs of Orthodox believers living under Lithuanian rule. The demand of the Lithuanian dukes to have a metropolitan was met.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 240.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Meyendorff, 'The three Lithuanian martyrs', 33.

⁴⁹ Ogitskii, 'K istorii', 242.

⁵⁰ Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 250.

⁵¹ For more detail, see Chapter 5.

There is no wonder that in such circumstances Grand Duke Algirdas preferred not to bother too much about his earlier misdeeds when far greater affairs were at stake. Such behaviour only testifies to Algirdas' flexibility and prudence, of which the Russian chroniclers were well aware.⁵² Similar prudence can be seen on the part of the Orthodox Church, too. Perhaps it is not by chance that the early *passiones* do not mention the tormentor by name. It was still time to wait for Algirdas' conversion which, however, never came. The cult of the three martyrs of Vilnius remained. Its inception is to be seen in the martyrdom itself and in its commemoration by local Greek Orthodox Christians.⁵³ With the events of 1374 in Constantinople this cult underwent transformation from a local to an international one. The martyrs of Vilnius came to be known in Greek and South Slavic, Romanian and Ruthenian and Russian lands.⁵⁴

The Franciscan martyrdoms of 1341, 1369, and 1378

In contrast to the local men who went so far as to become the three Orthodox martyrs of Vilnius, the story of the Franciscan martyrs represents another facet of the coming of the Christian faith. They were foreigners who came to Lithuanian lands in order to evangelize the local population. In order to understand better how, when, and why they came, we have to set them against a wider background of peaceful Christian missions directed to the Eastern Baltic region. In order to do more justice to this subject, we will also have to address the Dominican activity in the relevant missionary fields.

⁵² 'Simeonovskaia letopis', 118.

⁵³ The initial focal point of their cult must have been the Orthodox Church of St Nicholas in which the martyrs, according to Russian chronicles, were buried. This wooden church has not survived to this day (it finally succumbed to the great fire of Vilnius in 1610). Archaeological investigations conducted on this site in 1981 revealed that this place was one of the earliest in which the Orthodox believers settled in Vilnius. See G. Zabiela, 'Laidosena pagoniškoje Lietuvoje', *Lietuvos Archeologija*, 15 (1998), 358.

⁵⁴ Baronas, 'The Three martyrs', 122–5. The dissemination of their cult throughout the Orthodox *oikumene* is still not sufficiently explored.

The coming of the friars

The mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans may be regarded as the most original and enduring legacy of thirteenth-century Christian Europe.⁵⁵ The missionary impulse was inscribed in them by their founding fathers themselves. A visit by St Dominic in the company of Bishop Diego d'Acebes of Osma to Denmark in 1203 and 1205 brought him close to lands where pristine paganism was still alive. The desire of St Dominic to act as a missionary among the heathen is known from latter sources whose evidence is a little contradictory. Scholars approaching the issue as to which pagans Dominic wanted to evangelize tend to bring forward either the northern pagans (Prussians)⁵⁶ or the east-southern ones (the nomadic Cumans).⁵⁷ In our view, this issue should be addressed not in exclusive, but in mutually supplementing fashion, because both Prussians and Cumans were equally well placed to be preached the Word.⁵⁸ Soon after the final confirmation of the Order of the Preachers in 1217, Dominic experienced a call to extend their

⁵⁵ For similarities and differences between St Francis of Assisi and St Dominic Caleruega and their respective Orders, see R. B. Brooke, *The Coming of Friars* (London, 1975), esp. pp. 97–113.

⁵⁶ Cf. W. A. Hinnebush, *The History of the Dominican Order*, vol. 1: *Origins and Growth to 1500* (New York, 1965), 20–1; D. A. Dekański, *Początki Zakonu Dominikanów prowincji polsko-czeskiej* (Gdańsk, 1999), 85.

⁵⁷ *Storia del Cristianesimo: Religione–Politica–Cultura*, vol. 5: *Apogeo del papato ed espansione della Cristianità (1054–1274)*, ed. A. Vauchez, J. Kłoczowski (Rome, 1997), 737; V. Spinei, 'The Cuman bishopric – genesis and evolution', *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages: Avars, Bulgars, Khazars, and Cumans*, ed. F. Curta, R. Kovalev (Leiden–Boston, 2008), 414–15.

⁵⁸ Cf. Hinnebush, *The History of the Dominican Order*, 50. Arguments that it was Prussians who first came to notice of St Dominic during his two visits to Denmark and that he conceived a desire to evangelize the Cumans sometime between 1219 and 1221 are provided by M.-H. Vicaire, *Histoire de Saint Dominique*, vol. 1: *Un Homme Évangélique* (Paris, 1957), 131–2. Now a new consensus seems to set in, to the effect that it was bishop Diego of Osma who took notice of the pagan Cumans during his visits to Denmark, while St Dominic expressed his desire to evangelize the pagans 'in Prussia and other northern regions' in 1217. See S. Tugwell, 'Schéma chronologique de la vie de Saint Dominique', *Domenico di Caleruega e la Nascita dell'Ordine dei Frati Predicatori: Atti del XLI Convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 10–12 ottobre 2004* (Spoleto, 2005), 4, 13. For more about the mission of the Hungarian Dominicans among the Cumans, which survived until the Mongol onslaught in 1241, see Richard, *La Papauté*, 24–6. About the Cumans in Hungary, see Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, 87–93, 213–23.

preaching activities from narrow original confines around Toulouse to the wider world.⁵⁹ Still very few in numbers, the preachers were dispersed to go to chief university towns of Europe.⁶⁰ Further impulse to missionary activities world-wide was given at the General Chapter in Bologna in 1221. As far as Eastern Europe is concerned, already in 1221 Dominic sent Friar Hyacinth to plant the Order in Poland and neighbouring countries.⁶¹ In the same year the first Dominicans appeared in Hungary, too.⁶² St Dominic's desire to evangelize the pagans in the east of Europe came to be realized by his followers. Soon afterwards they were seen treading the roads to the farthest ends of the then known *oikumene*. The conquests of the Mongols and the resulting *pox Mongolia* allowed both Dominicans and Franciscans to reach lands an accurate knowledge of which was then in short supply in Western Europe.

St Francis of Assisi received his apostolic inspiration at the time when he was still a lonely penitent. When on St Mathew's day in 1208 he heard a priest reading a passage from the Gospel in which the closeness of the Kingdom of Heaven was proclaimed (Mt 10. 7–10)⁶³, he applied the lesson directly to himself.⁶⁴ Soon afterwards he greeted his first followers. It was an express wish of St Francis that he and his followers should not be restricted by the ideal of

⁵⁹ Hinnebush, *The History of the Dominican Order*, 50–1.

⁶⁰ R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London, 1990), 280; Brooke, *The Coming of Friars*, 93–4.

⁶¹ The first Dominican convent in Cracow was established in 1222. Soon afterwards others followed: Prague in 1226, Wrocław in 1226, and Gdańsk in 1227. J. Kłoczowski, 'Zakon braci kaznodziejów w Polsce 1222–1972: zarys dziejów', *Studia nad historią dominikanów w Polsce, 1222–1972*, ed. idem, 1 (Warsaw 1975), 26–7; Dekanski, *Początki Zakonu Dominikanów*, 46–7, 55–65, 92–3. The Dominican province of Poland was founded in 1228 and it included the lands of Prussia, Silesia, Bohemia and Moravia. A separate Dominican province of Bohemia (including Moravia) was set up in 1301: J. Kłoczowski, 'Klasztor dominikański w Krakowie w polskiej prowincji dominikańskiej w XIII–XV. stuleciu', *Cracovia–Polonia–Europa. Studia z dziejów średniowiecza ofiarowane Jerzemu Wyrozumskiemu w sześćdziesiątą piątą rocznicę urodzin i czterdziestolecie pracy naukowej*, ed. W. Bukowski (Cracow, 1995), 40–41.

⁶² Hinnebush, *The History of the Dominican Order*, 93.

⁶³ *Storia del Cristianesimo*, 5, 734. See also M. Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2006), 13–15.

⁶⁴ R. M. Huber, *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order: From the Birth of St Francis to the Division of the Order under Leo X (1182–1517)* (Milwaukee Wis. Washington DC, 1944), 8.

stabilitas loci, characteristic of Benedictine monks.⁶⁵ The mobility and the whole-hearted acceptance of voluntary poverty could do justice to the desire of St Francis to proclaim the Good News to all people by deed and word.⁶⁶ If in the earlier centuries of Christian missions they came about as a by-product of the ideal of pilgrimage so actively pursued by Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks, now for the Franciscans mission itself became top priority.⁶⁷ To call Christians to penitence and to preach the Gospel to the heathen were two sides of the same coin.⁶⁸ This broader missionary activism was started almost simultaneously in 1217 by both Dominicans and Franciscans.⁶⁹ St Francis himself went to Egypt and was given an opportunity to preach in front of Sultan al-Kamil in 1219.⁷⁰ At the same time another group of Franciscans left for Morocco to preach to the Muslims and thus to become the first Franciscan martyrs – the Five Brethren of Morocco – in 1220.⁷¹ The personal example of St Francis and the first martyrs set precedents for numerous other Franciscans

⁶⁵ Southern, *Western Society*, 214–39; H.-J. Schmidt, 'Establishing an alternative territorial pattern: the provinces of the mendicant orders', *Franciscan Organisation in the Mendicant Context: Formal and Informal Structures of the Friars' Lives and Ministry in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Robson, J. Röhrkasten [*Vita Regularis. Ordnungen und Deutungen religiösen Lebens im Mittelalter*, 44] (Berlin, 2010), 4–5.

⁶⁶ Cf. Huber, *A Documented History*, 10, 59; Pompei, 'La missione nelle fonti francescane', 317.

⁶⁷ Cf. Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 94, 232; N. Simonut, *Il Metodo d'Evangelizzazione dei Francescani tra Musulmani e Mongoli nei Secoli XIII–XIV* (Milan, 1947), 8–10.

⁶⁸ Cf. K. Elm, 'Franz von Assisi: Bußpredigt oder Heidenmission?', *Espansione del Francescanesimo tra Occidente e Oriente nel Secolo XIII: Atti del VI convegno internazionale, Assisi, 12–14 Ottobre 1978* (Assisi, 1979), 73–4.

⁶⁹ Cf. D. Berg, 'Kreuzzugsbewegung und Propagatio Fidei. Das Problem der Franziskanermission im 13. Jahrhundert und das Bild von der islamischen Welt in der Zeitgenössischen Ordenshistoriographie', *Orientalische Kultur und Europäisches Mittelalter*, ed. A. Zimmermann, I. Craemer-Ruegenberg [*Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, 17] (Berlin–New York, 1985), 60–1; C. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1989), 454–6; G. Odoardi, 'Le missioni dei frati Minori Conventuali nel corso dei secoli', *Impegno Ecclesiale dei Frati Minori Conventuali nella Cultura Ieri e Oggi (1209–1997)*, ed. F. Costa (Rome, 1998), 500.

⁷⁰ L. Lemmens, *Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen* (Münster/W., 1929), 2; J. Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan: The Curious History of a Christian-Muslim Encounter* (Oxford, 2009); P. Sella, 'Francesco e il sultano: L'incontro', *Studi Francescani* 108 (2011), 493–506.

⁷¹ J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford, 1998), 229.

to follow in their steps.⁷² The Franciscan rule delineated two basic modes of addressing the audience. For the sake of convenience, they may be characterized as (1) calm and obedient, and (2) inspired and active. They have been enshrined and remained in the Franciscan Rule. The first was advised generally, the second left to the missionaries' personal discretion. It was upon them to decide when a more active way of preaching would be more pleasing to God and more conducive to converting the audience to the Christian faith.⁷³

The Greyfriars reached the Baltic world from two directions. One way for them to go north was from Lübeck, across the Baltic Sea and all the way to Riga where their convent was established by 1238.⁷⁴ These Franciscans belonged to the province of Saxony. Another way led from Bohemian and Polish lands. The Franciscan convent in Prague was established in 1225 to 1232.⁷⁵ Soon other foundations followed: in Olomouc in 1230, in Brno in 1231⁷⁶. From Bohemia friars reached Poland, and their first convents were established in Wrocław in about 1236 and in Cracow in 1237.⁷⁷ The foundations in the *Ordensstaat* followed: Toruń in 1239 and Kulm in 1258.⁷⁸

⁷² Cf. Ibid. A. Pompei, 'La missione nelle fonti francescane: Scritti di san Francesco e biografie', *Miscellanea Francescana*, 106/107 (2006–2007), 311–12.

⁷³ *Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis*, ed. C. Esser OFM [*Bibliotheca Franciscana Ascetica Medii Aevi*, 12] Grottaferrata (Rome, 1978), 268–9: 'unus modus est, quod non faciant lites neque contentiones, sed sint subditi omni humane creature propter Deum (1 Petr 2, 13) et confiteantur se esse christianos. Alius modus est, quod cum viderint placere Domino, annuntient verbum Dei, ut credant: Deum omnipotentem Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, creatorem omnium, redemptorem et salvatorem Filium, et ut baptizentur et efficiantur christiani'.

⁷⁴ J. B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge MA, 1977), 61, 69. The convent of Riga belonged to the custody of Lübeck, which was part of the province of Saxony: Gidžiūnas, *De Fratribus Minoribus*, 7–8; Niedermaier, 'Die Franziskaner in Preußen', 19.

⁷⁵ J. Nemeč, 'Le Origini del Francescanesimo in Boemia e Moravia', *Miscellanea Francescana*, 89 (1989), 243–4. The spread of the Franciscans in Northern and Central Europe was largely due to the organizational skills of Gian Piano di Carpine: *ibid.*, 257.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁷⁷ Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 46.

⁷⁸ Freed, *Friars*, 63, 68–9. Initially these convents belonged to the the province of Bohemia-and-Poland, which itself was established in 1238/39. In about 1270, these convents were made over to belong to the province of Saxony. In time, some more Franciscan convents in Prussia were set up: Neuenburg (1282), Braunsberg (1297), Wehlau (1349), Wartenburg (1364), and Gdańsk (1419). All these convents formed a custody of Prussia from the early fourteenth century: Niedermaier, 'Die Franziskaner in Preußen', 4–11. See also Kubicki, 'Działalność zakonów', 175–92.

The networks of Franciscan and Dominican orders provided channels for their members to reach the lands of Lithuanians. With the collapse of the Kingdom of Lithuania, the presence of Dominican and Franciscan friars proved to be impossible there for several decades.⁷⁹ Viktoras Gidžiūnas was of opinion that the friars could reappear in Lithuania in the time of Grand Duke Vytenis.⁸⁰ In our opinion, it is possible to date their reappearance a little earlier.

The 1335 Franciscan catalogue of saintly men contains a reference to martyrs Conrad and Voislav, who suffered for the faith and rest in peace in Prussia.⁸¹ Although the data contained therein are generally reliable, the more exact whereabouts of their martyrdom remain unknown.⁸² Many other sources simply repeat this necrological inscription and provide no clue on how to relate this martyrdom to time and locality. It seems that only the compendium

⁷⁹ Gidžiūnas, *De Fratribus Minoribus*, 19. See also Kantak, *Franciszkanie*, 299.

⁸⁰ Gidžiūnas, *De Fratribus Minoribus*, 19–21.

⁸¹ *Fragmenta Minora: Catalogus sanctorum fratrum minorum. Quem scriptum circa 1335 edidit notisque illustravit fr. Leonardus Lemmens O.F.M.* (Rome, 1903) 38: 'In Prussia frater Conradus martyr et frater Woysclaus martyr, qui fuerunt pro praedicatione fidei martyrizati'. These martyrs are enumerated among other saintly Franciscan friars from Saxony, because Prussia constituted one of the twelve custodies of the province of Saxony. See *Provinciale Ordinis Fratrum Minorum vetustissimum*, secundum codicem Vaticanum nr. 1960 denuo edidit fr. C. Eubel (Quaracchi, 1892), 28–30. In the latter catalogue of Franciscan provinces, which was composed in c. 1334 by Paulinus of Venice, the martyrs Conrad and Voislav were mentioned in a marginal notice by the convent of Bamberg (Papenberg) belonging to the custody of Bavaria. *Ibid.*, 27: 'De quo [?] fratres Conradus et Woyslaus in Prussia pro fide martyrizati sunt'. The editor of this catalogue, Conrad Eubel, was of the opinion that this work was composed in c. 1343: *ibid.*, 4. Other scholars, however, antedated it to c. 1334. See Golubovich G., *Bibliotheca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente francescano*, II (Quaracchi, 1913), 101–2; Lemmens, *Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen*, 42. The *Provinciale* was edited again in *BF*, ed. C. Eubel, V (Rome, 1898), 579–604. Polish scholars suppose that part of this catalogue in which the convents in Rus'ian and Moldavian lands are enumerated, date to the final years of the reign of King Casimir III of Poland (1333–1370). Cf. Kantak, *Franciszkanie*, 273–4; Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 267–8.

⁸² In 1276, a general chapter convened in Padua passed a decision whereby provincial ministers were commissioned to collect data on St Francis and forward it to the minister general; the same requirement also applied to other brothers who excelled in saintly life: A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, tr. J. Birrell (Cambridge, 2005), 117–18. See also *Fragmenta Minora*, p. X. The decisions of this chapter are only known in part and only from the chronicle of Glasberger. See F. Ehrle, 'Die ältesten Redactionen der Generalconstitutionen des Franziskanerordens', *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters*, 6 (1892), 47–8.

of Franciscan chronicles, composed in the early sixteenth-century by Marian of Florence, allows us to connect the dots.⁸³ The said chronicle contains information that in about 1284 the general minister Bonagrazia sent out many brothers to the lands of the northern infidels. This geographical term denotes a vast stretch of lands, from the lands of the Golden Horde to the Caucasian Mountains.⁸⁴ But it is precisely this context in which Marian of Florence makes a mention of the martyrs of Conrad and Voislav, who, as we know, suffered in Prussia.⁸⁵ His information allows their martyrdom to anchor in time. Their departure to the northern infidels could not happen after 1283, because Bonagrazia was in office from 1279 to 1283. So the martyrdom of Conrad and Voislav seems likely to have taken place in about 1284. Their missionary activities overlap in time with another martyr, Conrad, who died at the hands of the Lithuanians. According to Peter of Dusburg, Conrad was a priest who came from Germany to the lands of Lithuanians in 1285. After staying there for two years, he was killed.⁸⁶ There is still no way of

⁸³ It may be noted that in Franciscan historical sources and auxiliary literature there are certain confusions regarding the place and time of the martyrdom of Conrad and Voislav. This martyrdom is dated to 1249 by Luke Wadding in his *Annales Minorum seu trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum*, vol. III: 1238–1255 (Quaracchi, 1931), 242. Wadding mentioned these martyrs once more in the entry of 1284, however, he presented the relevant information so as to appear that they suffered not in Prussia, but in Persia!: *ibid.*, 5, 142. Later he himself rectified this mistake in his later work: L. Wadding, *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum quibus accessit Syllabus illorum qui ex eodem ordine pro fide Christi fortiter occubuerunt* (Rome, 1906), 231. One may suppose that in doing this he made use of the compilation of Franciscan chronicles composed by Marianus of Florence, which is regarded as one of the main sources of Wadding's *Annales*. C. Cannarozzi, 'Una fonte primaria degli "Annales" del Wadding (Il "Fasciculus Chronicarum" di Fra Mariano da Firenze)', *Studi Francescani*, 3 (1930), 278–83.

⁸⁴ Marianus de Florentia, 'Compendium Chronicarum Fratrum Minorum', *AFH*, 2, 465: 'Hic devotus Generalis multos Fratres misit ad infidelium partes aquilonares. multumque dilatavit, et cum magna diligentia, Vicariam Aquilonis, non tamen absque passionis pane et aqua tribulationis.' The sending out of these missionaries is dated to 1279–84 and it looks likely that most of them reached the 'northern lands' by sailing across the Black Sea to the Crimea; Richard, *La Papauté*, 94.

⁸⁵ Marianus de Florentia 'Compendium Chronicarum Fratrum Minorum', *AFH*, 2, 466: 'Frater Corradus et frater Voisillus pro fidei Christi confessione sacrum martyrium susceperunt.'

⁸⁶ 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 205: 'Anno Domini LXXXV Conradus sacerdos de Alemania transiit ad terram Lethowie ad convertendum gentes ibidem. Qui cum moram fecisset per duos annos ibi, Lethowini ipsum interfecerunt. In loco autem, ubi interfectus fuit, postea candeles ardentes sepius sunt vise.'

telling from which part of Germany this priest came, or what his diocesan affiliation was. Taking into account that it was problematic for a secular priest to leave his flock for a prolonged period of time, it looks likely that this Conrad must have belonged to one of the mendicants Orders, most likely to the Franciscans. However this may be, his example represents the first case of a missionary acting alone (or in a group?) in pagan Lithuania without any tangible connection to the grand-ducal power. The lands of the Lithuanians became accessible to Christian missionaries once again. When it became possible to resume missionary activities in these northern lands, it was Franciscans who took the lead, while Dominican friars concentrated their efforts in the southern sector – the region of the Black Sea and between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf.⁸⁷

In the general context of the Christian missions it is clear that pagan Lithuanians did not invite as much attention as other more numerous peoples. The Baltic region was largely converted, but the need to evangelize the remaining pagans was not dropped. The Franciscan missionary and theoretician Raymond Lull displayed a profound knowledge of different missionary fields, and his vision encompassed the then entire known world. In advising the pope to set up schools for missionaries in Paris, Rome, Spain, Genoa, Hungary, Crimea, Armenia, and in Asia Minor he saw a necessity to see one such in Prussia as well.⁸⁸ Still more important is the fact that at the turn of the thirteenth century new missionary organisations began to take shape, first within the Dominican Order, and then among the Franciscans.

Dominicans and Franciscans were swift to recognize that a conventual life and the precise following of the rule may become a hindrance for devoted missionaries bent on exercising their vocation.⁸⁹ New solutions were thus necessary. The Franciscans came to organise missionary vicariates. At the end of the thirteenth century the first such two vicariates came into being: one of the Northern

⁸⁷ For more on this, see C. Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicaines et la Chrétienté Grecque aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles* [Collection de l'École Française de Rome, 237] (Rome, 1997), 25ff.

⁸⁸ Richard, *La Papauté*, 119.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 128.

and another of the Eastern Tartary. The first was made up of the custodies of Saray and Gazaria (so was then called the Crimea, especially its southern part), covering mostly the lands of the Golden Horde. The vicariate of the Eastern Tartary comprised the custodies of Constantinople, Trebizond, and Tabris (in Persia). The smallest organisational cell in each of the two custodies was represented by a convent or a dwelling-place (lat. *locus*). The most important Franciscan friaries were in the Crimea: Soldaia (from 1280) and Caffa (mentioned in 1287 and 1289).⁹⁰ Some time later Franciscans took up residence in Saray, the capital city of the Golden Horde.⁹¹ These monasteries cropped up along the trade routes, and in the colonies where Christian merchants had their abodes. Besides spiritual ministry to them, Franciscans retained an additional duty of preaching to the 'infidels'.⁹² As the friars travelled along with merchants, their dwelling places were to be found from the mouth of the Danube, across the lands of the Tatars, Mordvians, and Bashkirians, and all the way to China. For these biggest and most remote regions a vicariate of Cathay was established between 1320 and 1330.⁹³ The presence of the Franciscans in the domains of the Golden Horde was granted a legal basis through the *yarlyk* (patent) of Khan Menghu Timur. It was renewed by his successors, Tokhta (1291–1312) and Uzbek (on 30 March 1314).⁹⁴ The Franciscans enjoyed legal protection of the Tatar khans and, like clergymen of the other faiths, were free from military service and other duties.

The vicariate of northern Tartary was closest to the lands of Lithuania and, in theory, must have included them. So far there is no evidence about Lithuanian and Franciscans coming in touch with each other somewhere in the forest-steppe region. This possibility should not be ruled out, because both Lithuanians and Franciscans were quite mobile. The expansion of Lithuania began to reach the

⁹⁰ Ibid., 90.

⁹¹ This sort of activism may have received additional stimulus from the genuine interest in the missions entertained by Pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292), the first Franciscan friar in St Peter's chair: cf. J. D. Ryan, 'Nicholas IV and the evolution of the eastern missionary effort', *AHP*, 19 (1981), 95.

⁹² Richard, *La Papauté*, 94.

⁹³ Ibid., 128–9.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 92–3.

region of Kiev already in the time of Gediminas. The Franciscans working in the Tatar lands adapted to the nomadic way of life in order to be able to follow their nomadic Christian believers. They travelled on horseback or in waggons, and lived in tents. Several such tents were enough to form a mobile convent. These convents are considered the most original invention of the Franciscans of the Northern Tartary.⁹⁵

The arrival of the Dominican and Franciscan friars in the Baltic region occurred almost simultaneously. After Friar Hyacinth had established a convent in Cracow in 1222, soon other Dominican plantations followed: Prague in 1226, Wrocław in 1226, and Gdańsk in 1227.⁹⁶ The latter convent had to serve as a point of departure for those Dominican missionaries who were bound to go among heathen Prussians.⁹⁷ Soon Dominican friars became the chief preachers of Crusades against the pagans in Prussia and Livonia in 1230 and 1236, respectively.⁹⁸ After the Teutonic Order had arrived on the scene in 1230 and was destined to overtake the drive of all Christian enterprise, Dominicans came to collaborate all along with them: as priests, as crusading preachers, and as military chaplains to the crusading armies.⁹⁹ The expansion of Christian-ruled territories opened them up to new monastic plantations. From 1233 to 1238 a Domini-

⁹⁵ Richard, *La Papauté*, 96–7. The need to adapt to the nomadic way of life was also a task for those Orthodox clergymen who on their part were also engaged in missions among the Tatars: S. A. Ivanov, 'Mission impossible: ups and downs in Byzantine missionary activity from the eleventh to the fifteenth century', *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe: Byzantium, the Balkans and Russia*, ed. J. Shepard (Aldershot, 2007), 262. See also Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, 240–1.

⁹⁶ Kłoczowski, 'Zakon braci kaznodziejów', 26–7; Dekański, *Początki Zakonu Dominikanów*, 92–3.

⁹⁷ The conversion of Prussians was one of the expectations spelled out by the founder of the Dominican convent in Gdansk, Duke Swietoslaw of Pomerelia: Altaner, *Die Dominikanermissionen*, 162–3. This intention was made clear in a letter of Pope Gregory IX: *PU*, 1/1, no. 58, pp. 44–5 (5 May 1227). See also Freed, *Friars*, 67.

⁹⁸ T. M. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2006), 48–51.

⁹⁹ D. S. Bachrach, 'The friars go to war: mendicant military chaplains, 1216 – c. 1300', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 90 (2004), 623–4. On the conquest of Prussia by the Teutonic Order, see Biskup, Labuda, *Dzieje zakonu krzyżackiego*, 118ff; Boockmann, *Der Deutsche Orden*, 93–114; W. Urban, *The Prussian Crusade* (Chicago, 2000).

can convent was established in the land of Kulm, which had recently been reconquered from the Prussians. Subsequently a convent in Elbing was set up, the first in proper Prussian lands (1238).¹⁰⁰ All these monasteries belonged to the Polish province of Dominicans. The convent established in Riga in 1234 belonged to the Dominican pan-German province of Teutonia, and, when in 1303 the latter was subdivided, the Rigan convent came to belong to that of Saxonia.¹⁰¹

In contrast to Franciscans relying on missionary vicariates, Dominican friars found different means to address their missionary exigencies. In about 1300–04, their missionaries formed the Congregation of the Friars Pilgrims for Christ (*Societas fratrum peregrinantium propter Christum inter gentes*)¹⁰². This organization not only allowed missionaries to enjoy a freer hand in the field, but also permitted their vicar general to call on and muster friars from all of the Order's provinces who were eager to go on missions among the 'infidels' of whatever sort these might be. The vicar general of the Friars Pilgrims was directly answerable to the minister general. The structural backbone of this Congregation lay in the region of the Black Sea and was made up of the convents of Pera (north of Constantinople, across the Golden Horn), Caffa and Trebizond. Not by chance these points coincided with ports that were of special importance to the merchants of Genoa.¹⁰³ Another port of call for the Friars Pilgrims was the island of Chios, so important for the maritime empire of Genoa.¹⁰⁴

The *pax mongolica*, prevalent throughout most of the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century, allowed Western

¹⁰⁰ Biskup M., 'Średniowieczna sieć klasztorów w państwie Zakonu Krzyżackiego w Prusach (do 1525 roku)', *Zakony i klasztory w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej, X–XV wiek*, ed. H. Gapski, J. Kłoczowski (Lublin, 1999), 57; J. Sarnowsky, 'Dominikaner- und Franziskaner im Ordensland Preußen', *Franciscan Organisation*, 45–6.

¹⁰¹ SLVA, ed. A. Švābe, I/1 (Riga, 1937), no. 202, pp. 173–4 (8 September 1234). G. von Walther-Wittenheim, *Die Dominikaner in Livland im Mittelalter: Die Narren von Livoniae* (Rome, 1938), 7–8. Medieval Livonia boasted two more Dominican convents: in Reval/Tallinn (definitely from 1246) and in Dorpat/Tartu (1303). The first belonged to the Danish Dominican province, the latter's affiliation was like that of the Rigan convent: *ibid.*, 8–13.

¹⁰² R. J. Loenertz, *La Société des Frères Pérégrinants: Étude sur l'Orient Dominicain* (Rome, 1937), 2.

¹⁰³ Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicaines*, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Loenertz, *La Société*, 31.

merchants and monks to reach faraway eastern lands and to maintain their presence there. The Mongol Empire and its splinter state, the Golden Horde, were vitally dependent on the income coming from trade, therefore khans as a rule took care to ensure most favourable conditions for merchants travelling across their dominions.¹⁰⁵ That is why the friars could enjoy relative safety for their ministry. Some outstanding personalities could register, from time to time, quite impressive achievements as was the case with the Franciscan missionary John of Montecorvino, the first Roman Catholic archbishop of Beijing (d. 1328). His successes in the Far East encouraged the popes to lend support to the foundations of new ecclesiastical structures in the Mongol-ruled lands from the Black Sea all the way to China.¹⁰⁶ The more northerly bishoprics and those closer to China were most frequently ministered by Franciscan friars. The archbishopric of Sultania established in the capital city of Persian il-Khans in 1318 was in charge of the Dominicans. It is supposed that such a territorial division may have come into being in the wake of consultations and conferences of Dominican and Franciscan friars.¹⁰⁷ To render the province of Sultania more manageable, local Dominican convents were assigned functions that in old Christian lands were usually carried out by canons, diocesan clergy. The prior of such a convent used to act as a cathedral dean. The (Dominican) archbishop of Sultania and his suffragan bishops were answerable to the minister general of the Dominicans, or to the vicar general of the Friars Pilgrims.¹⁰⁸ Such solutions were predicated on special conditions in the relevant mission fields that stretched far away from Western Europe and were full of dangers of every sort. A similar order of things was in the province of Beijing, only that here the Franciscan convents were predominant. It was far from always being possible to ensure the regular residence of bishops in faraway dioceses, and not each and every Franciscan or Dominican convent proved capable of

¹⁰⁵ V. Ciocîltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, tr. S. Willcocks (Leiden–Boston, 2012), 11–20, 181–215.

¹⁰⁶ Richard, *La Papauté*, 124ff.

¹⁰⁷ Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicaines*, 19.

¹⁰⁸ Richard, *La Papauté*, 172–3.

surviving in long term. Despite all these and similar difficulties and setbacks we may observe extraordinary efforts on the part of the the Avignon papacy (1309–1377) to evangelize the remotest ends of the then known world. This sort of activities was carried out by founding missionary bishoprics in faraway lands. This was a novelty which was introduced after the traditional policy of converting rulers first and their subject in consequence had resulted in disappointing failures in the thirteenth century. Missionary bishoprics were called on to take care of Roman Catholic minorities and to advance the cause of evangelization as far as opportunities made it feasible.¹⁰⁹ A similar pattern will be observed in the foundation of the diocese of Vilnius: here the Franciscan house predated the episcopal see, whose first two incumbents were Friars Minor.

The vicissitudes in the proliferation and survival of Franciscan and Dominican houses in these eastern lands were subject to major fluctuations affecting both maritime and land-based empires. The situation was bound to change when the Golden Horde plunged into a vortex of civil wars in the wake of the murder of Khan Janibek (1357), and when the Mongol rule collapsed in China in 1368. Disturbances in Persian dominions and, last but not least, the raids of Tamerlane wreaking havoc far and wide rendered the overland trade routes unsafe and even more unattractive as compared to the routes by sea. This disruption not only meant that traditional trade routes were largely abandoned, but also contributed to the rise in importance of those lands that lay close to the Black Sea. The merchants of Genoa were quick enough to exploit these new opportunities. Their eyes came to be fixed more intensely on safer countries such as Rus', Poland, Hungary, and Moldavia, which stood at the crossroads of Polish and Hungarian interests.¹¹⁰ Such changes resulted in the much stronger concentration of trade from the mouth

¹⁰⁹ J. Richard, 'Les papes d'Avignon et l'Évangélisation du monde non-Latin a la veille du Grand Schisme', *Genèse et Débuts du Grande Schisme d'Occident [Colloques Internationaux du C.N.R.S., 586]* (Paris, 1980), 305–15. For the emphasis laid upon the the role of the mendicant orders, see J. D. Ryan, 'To baptize khans or to convert peoples? Missionary aims in Central Asia in the fourteenth century', *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, ed. G. Armstrong, I. N. Wood [International Medieval Research, 7] (Turnhout, 2000), 247–57.

¹¹⁰ Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicaines*, 27–30, 111–14.

of the Danube to the mouth of the Dnieper. The Genoan colonies, such as Vicina, Licostomo, and Kilia, established at the mouth of the Danube as early as the second half of the thirteenth century, became major commercial trade hubs linking Polish, Hungarian, and German lands.¹¹¹ Up until the time of Turkish conquests in the second half of the fifteenth century, the trade route linking Licostomo–Brasov–Buda remained a major tract through which eastern goods reached the markets of Central Europe.¹¹² These adjustments of trade routes had a direct bearing on the geography of the new foundation of the Dominican friaries. They began to appear in Red Ruthenia, Podolia and Moldavia from about 1370, and this process maintained its momentum up until about 1415.¹¹³ It seems that this inception of vitality had ripples that helped to re-establish the Friars Pilgrims: for some unknown reason their Congregation had been closed down in 1363 and then brought back to life again in 1374.¹¹⁴ Most of the newly-founded Dominican convents in Ruthenian and Moldavian lands were given over to Friars Pilgrims.¹¹⁵

This overview allows us to bring forward several features characteristic of the steppe world in the fourteenth century. As a rule, a new bishopric was founded where there was already a Franciscan or Dominican convent. Another feature of paramount importance was the tandem between Franciscan and Dominican friars on the one hand, and (mostly, but not exclusively) Italian merchants, on

¹¹¹ D. Deletant, 'Genoese, Tatars and Rumanians at the mouth of the Danube in the fourteenth century', *SEER*, 62 (1984), 511–14. See also M. Balard, 'Byzance et les régions septentrionales de la mer Noire (XIII^e–XV^e siècles)', *Revue Historique*, 288 (1992), 29–32.

¹¹² Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicaines*, 29.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 30, 105–6.

¹¹⁴ R. J. Loenertz, 'La Société des Frères Pèrigrinants de 1374 à 1475. Étude sur l'Orient dominicain, II', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 45 (1975), 107–9.

¹¹⁵ The recently established convents in Red Ruthenia and Moldavia (Lviv, Kamenets, Smotrich, Lancut, Peremisl and Siret) had until then belonged to the Dominican province of Poland. See Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicaines*, 30. The convents in Belz, Mościska, Sambor, Trembovla, Kolomyia, Chernonogrod, Lutsk, Kiev, and Vladimir-in-Volyn' acceded to Friars Pilgrims before 1456: W. Koszewierski, *Dominikanie klasztorów ruskich: Połowa XV–XVI wiek* (Lublin, 2006), 56–7; T. M. Trajdos, 'Dominikanie i franciszkanie na ziemiach ruskich Korony Polskiej i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego wobec władzy państwowej za panowania Władysława II Jagiełły', *Klasztor w państwie średniowiecznym i nowożytnym*, ed. M. Derwich, A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz (Wrocław, 2005), 429–45.

the other. It would have been next to impossible to pursue sustained mission activities without merchants travelling along distant trade routes by sea or overland. Franciscan and Dominican convents located in Eastern Europe and not too far way from the Black Sea will have to play a role in the final conversion of the Lithuanians. As the expansion of Lithuania progressed into the steppe world, ecclesiastical missionary structures were already there. It was a place where challenges and new opportunities were close to hand to either side. Franciscan and Dominican friars could reach Lithuanian lands from west, north, or south. In contrast to missionary initiatives coming from Prussia, and especially Livonia, in the thirteenth century and up to their climax in 1322–1324, subsequent initiatives of the Franciscans tended to emanate from southerly situated lands (Bohemia and especially Poland), and from the Black Sea region.

The martyrdom of 1341

The last year in the life of Gediminas witnessed an extraordinary event in his capital city of Vilnius. Two Franciscan friars, Ulrich of Adlenchovitz and Martin of Ahd, arrived in Vilnius from Bohemia. The first scholar to grasp the Bohemian connection was Alvydas Nikžentaitis, who thought that their martyrdom had something to do with the policy of the Crown of Bohemia vis-à-vis pagan Lithuania.¹¹⁶ However, it was R. Mažeika and S. C. Rowell who advanced important circumstantial evidence, which allowed them to put forward a hypothesis that the man who stood behind the arrival of the Franciscans in Vilnius was nobody else but Archbishop of Riga Frederick of Pernstein (1304–1340). He himself was a Franciscan friar hailing originally from Bohemia.¹¹⁷ After the failure to convert Gediminas, the archbishop excommunicated the Teutonic Order in 1325 and since then had to reside at the papal court in Avignon.

¹¹⁶ Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 51–67; A. Nikžentaitis, 'Legenda XIV v. o muchenichestve 14 frantsiskantsev v Vil'niuse i istoricheskaia istina', *Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie distsipliny*, 21 (1990), 257–69.

¹¹⁷ K. Forstreuter, 'Erzbischof Friedrich', 653–5.

where he was considered something of an expert on Bohemian and Polish affairs.¹¹⁸ Despite his physical distance from the eastern Baltic world he was still, to a certain degree, involved in the affairs affecting the Church in Prussia and Livonia. His record of interest in converting Lithuanians went to his early years as Archbishop of Riga. At the time when burghers of Riga and Grand Duke Vytenis were still allies, the archbishop asked Pope Clement V to allow him to found Franciscan and Dominican friaries in his archdiocese, which could be useful in promoting Christianity among local neophytes and prospective converts from pagan Lithuania.¹¹⁹ He was an active supporter of the policy of Gediminas in 1322–24, which, as it was hoped for, was supposed to culminate in the conversion of this ruler and his people. If Archbishop Frederick really had some influence in directing friars Ulrich and Martin to the place in which they could realize their missionary zeal, this would have been a sign of his life-long perseverance.¹²⁰ However, the most active battle was the lot of two die-hard Franciscan friars.

¹¹⁸ Mažeika, Rowell, 'Zelatores maximi', 54–9.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *VMPL*, I, no. 207, p. 123 (17 February 1311).

¹²⁰ It is to be noted that events involving Bohemian-Lithuanian relations are as a rule not taken into account when major developments, such as the promotion of the diocese of Prague to the rank of archbishopric in 1344, are discussed. Of course the main driving force was the conflict between the papacy and the German Emperor Louis IV Wittelsbach. When Archbishop Henry von Virneburg of Mainz chose the camp of imperialists, Pope Clement VI was able to overrule the claims of Mainz and finally to have Bishop of Prague, Ernest of Pardubice, consecrated archbishop and his see elevated to the rank of archbishopric in 1344. All this happened in line with the request of the papal allies, King John of Luxembourg and his son Charles: Vyskočil, Arnošt Pardubice, 112–26; G. Schmidt, 'Die Bistumspolitik Karls IV. bis zur Kaiserkrönung', *Karl IV. Politik und Ideologie im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. E. Engel (Weimar, 1982), 77–9. See also H.-J. Schmidt, *Kirche, Staat, Nation: Raumgliederung der Kirche im mittelalterlichen Europa* (Weimar, 1999), 160–2. However, we think that the Bohemian involvement in Lithuanian affairs in 1341, the establishment of the archbishopric in Prague, and the subsequent participation of both John and Charles in the 1345 crusade to Lithuania could be viewed as having the need to propagate the faith in common. Here it may be recalled that the Bohemian chronicler Beneš of Weitmille, who devoted relatively quite a lot of attention to what was going on in Lithuanian and Rus'ian lands, describes the 1345 crusade right after the description of how the see of Prague became archbishopric: 'Kronika Beneše z Weitmle', ed. J. Emler, *FRB*, IV, 495. Cf. also 'Kronika Františka Pražského', ed. J. Emler, *ibid.*, 437–8. In our opinion, this juxtaposition is not a pure accident. See also Conrad, 'Der dritte Litauerzug', 388.

When Ulrich and Martin reached Vilnius, they were not intending to sit on their hands with their locally based brethren. Even if before their arrival they had known next to nothing of where they were going, most probably they would have subscribed to the view of the writers of their heroic deeds: the local pagans were characterized as ‘the most impious idolaters adoring abominable things’.¹²¹ When Friar Martin celebrated Mass, his confrère Ulrich went out into a street full of pagans and urged them to forsake their false gods and to cast away superstitions, and called on them to believe in one God. The result was the indignation of the pagans, who took him to the grand duke. In his presence, too, the bold Franciscan continued to confess his faith and to denounce bad local customs. Now the duke became infuriated and sentenced him to death by ordering to cut his body into pieces. Upon coming to know that there was one more like-minded Franciscan, Gediminas ordered his servants to bring Brother Martin into his presence. His response that he had arrived in Vilnius to show that the duke and his people were in error and to urge them to convert and believe in one true God resulted in the capital punishment with the application of even more exquisite

¹²¹ ‘Chronica XXIV Generalium’, *Analecta Franciscana*, III (Quarrachi, 1897), 535: ‘Qui cum zelo fidei et fervore martyrii incitati venissent Vilnam castrum praefatum, ubi habitant idololatrae pessimi nefanda adorantes...’. The dating of this martyrdom is not known for sure. Some scholars date it to 1341: Chodynicki, ‘Legenda’, 75; Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 52. Others prefer approximate dating to 1338–42: Gidžiūnas, ‘Legendariškieji’, *Aidai*, 3 (1954), 107; or to 1340–42: see Rowell, ‘Lithuania and the West’, 309. In our opinion, the most likely date is that of 1341, because the description of the martyrdom of the Franciscans in Vilnius is placed in ‘Chronica XXIV Generalium’ between the martyrdom of the Franciscans in Almalyk, which took place in 1341/42, and the mention of the death of Pope Benedict XII, which occurred on 25 April 1342. The date of 1341 was indicated by the Franciscan chronicler John of Komorow in the early sixteenth century. See *Memoriale Ordinis Fratrum Minorum a fr. Ioanne de Komorow compilatum*, ed. K. Liske, A. Lorkiewicz, *MPH*, V (Lviv, 1888), 125–6. The idea to redate this martyrdom to 1329 lacks any sure foundation. Cf. Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 345. It was prompted by a theory according to which Gediminas contemplated his conversion to the Catholic faith at the end of his life and was, as a result, poisoned by opposition members. This theory was put forward by A. Nikžentaitis and subsequently refuted by S. C. Rowell, who has conclusively proven that the description of the poisoned ruler as reproduced by the Bohemian chronicler Beneš of Weitmile pertains not to Gediminas, but to Bolesław Yury II of Galich. Cf. A. Nikžentaitis, *Gediminas*, 52, and Rowell, ‘Lithuania and the West’, 303–10.

mutilations of his body. Friar Martin was forced to drink plenty of water and swallow a long piece of cloth, but not to its very last bit which was then pulled back abruptly and tore his intestines apart. The torture did not break the faith of the friar, who was then sent to the gallows.¹²²

The shrill depiction of the martyrdom of these two Franciscans contained in the near contemporary 'Chronicle of the XXIV Generals' fits ill with the widely current picture of the tolerant pagan duke, who once told far and wide that everyone was free to worship God according to his own rite, and who seemed to be much in the right when hurling his arrows of heart-felt criticism at the Christian side. And now, lo and behold, 'dux crudelissimus'! The easiest way to make generalizations about a tolerant duke was to ignore or simply think away uncomfortable things: it is all hagiography, a myth.¹²³ But when there is ample evidence of bodily punishments applied all over the world then and now, it would be futile to imagine that pagan Lithuania made an exception to this general rule.

The reaction on the part of Gediminas shows that he was a person capable of flying easily into a rage. It was probably still easier to infuriate a pagan group by the tactless behaviour on the part of the Franciscan missionaries.¹²⁴ No less telling about the prevalent local conditions is the fact that enraged pagans did not dare to take the matter into their own hands. They did not become a lynch mob. Grand-ducal power was too strong to allow them unauthorized actions involving violent deeds or death. It was the duke who had the right to bind and loose. On the other hand, it is clear that the duke and his people acted in unison: the duke did not take care simply to expel the troublemakers and did what apparently was most appreciated among the majority of pagans. You could not go unscathed if you insulted their gods. There was no room in Lithuania in which Franciscan friars could act the way Apostle Paul acted while address-

¹²² 'Chronica XXIV Generalium', 536. On this Chronicle, see M. T. Dolso, *La Chronica XXIV Generalium: Il difficile percorso dell'unità nella storia francescana* (Padua, 2003).

¹²³ This school of thought has already been discussed by Rowell, 'Lithuania and the West', 312.

¹²⁴ Cf. Gidžiūnas, 'Legendariškėji', *Aidai*, 3 (1954), 108, and Rowell, 'Lithuania and the West', 309–10.

ing the men of Athens in their Agora, nor were they meek preachers intent on discussing finer theological points. They arrived full of fervour for martyrdom and the very depiction of how Brother Ulrich confronted the pagans is couched in crusading language: he came out *'sumpto crucis vexillo'*, which is a standard way to refer to the sign of the cross.¹²⁵ The clash of gods was still possible in the geographical centre of Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century. This battle raged while Friar Ulrich was being mutilated by cutting off his nose and ears, and a miracle happened. One of the torturers reportedly asked the friar if he wanted something to eat. The answer was that the powerful God could prepare a fish ready to eat, and instantly a fish, perfectly-cooked not by human hands (*optime coctus*), appeared in front of him. On seeing this some pagan beholders converted to the 'Catholic faith', whereas others flew into a fury and tossed the half-dead body into the river.¹²⁶ That was not the end of miraculous happenings. Friar Martin's dead body lay intact for several days until an Orthodox nun and a sister of Gediminas (*monialis christiana licet schismatica*) took it and buried it in her monastery.¹²⁷ No public spectators are mentioned, but they may be implied.

This martyrdom demonstrates clearly that in pagan Lithuania under Gediminas it was still very dangerous to speak one's mind openly about pagan gods and apparently bad local customs. It is supposed that the two Franciscans were killed in Vilnius for disrupting the *pax pagana*¹²⁸ or disrupting the 'Lithuanian principle of religious toleration'.¹²⁹ This line of thought is essentially correct, but it must be kept within certain limits. The idea of disruption of religious tolerance should not be applied indiscriminately to both the three Orthodox martyrs and the Franciscan martyrs. Their social positions and the way of professing their faith were too different to make justice to the causes and reasons of their martyrdoms by rely-

¹²⁵ Cf. C. Gaposchkin, 'From pilgrimage to crusade: the liturgy of departure, 1095–1300', *Speculum*, 88, 1 (2013), 55.

¹²⁶ Close association between the miracle with a roasted fish and the baptism may hark back to the reading of Alcuin's letters. Cf. P. Cramer, *Baptism and Change: the Early Middle Ages, c. 200 – c. 1150* (Cambridge, 1993), 188–9.

¹²⁷ 'Chronica XXIV Generalium', 536.

¹²⁸ Rowell, 'Lithuania and the West', 313.

¹²⁹ Giedroyc, 'The arrival of Christianity ... (1281–1341)', 32.

ing on this one-way explication. As regards the Franciscan martyrs, *pax pagana* can more fittingly be applied in a way of explanation of the reasons leading to their violent death, but it should not be stretched to the point of implying that pagan Lithuanians in general were required to adhere to their ancestral faith, just like Germans, Poles, or Russians were allowed each to adore their God according to their rite. The frontal assault on the pagan religion was what caused the upheaval and warranted certain death. In this respect the situation was much like that in Muslim-ruled countries in which the same Chronicle of the XXIV Generals registers a whole series of Franciscan martyrdoms. It is equally clear that Ulrich and Martin chose an active and inspired mode of addressing the pagans and the result was unsurprisingly like that in a Muslim country, where open Christian preaching had always involved a mortal danger.¹³⁰ There were, however, certain differences. Unlike in Muslim countries, Franciscan friars in pagan Lithuania were not required to renounce their faith, and neither before nor after the martyrdom was there anything like an anti-Christian persecution. The Franciscans sitting quietly in their abode in Vilnius or the Orthodox sister of Gediminas taking care of the dead Franciscan could enjoy safety as undisturbed as before. The situation in pagan Vilnius with its emphasis on keeping one's behaviour within certain limits begs comparison with those multi-ethnic cities in the region of the Aegean or the Black Sea that fell under the rule of Italian maritime republics. Their *podestas* were intent on carrying on business as usual not bothering too much of the right belief of their subjects or guests, so that is why they were eager to keep overzealous Franciscan or Dominican friars at bay.¹³¹ As far as we know, there are no reported cases of punishment leading to martyrdom at the hands of Italian authorities eager in this way to keep law and order within their respective towns. That is why in this regard such Christian authorities may be viewed as more 'tolerant' than a pagan duke who once gave a lesson to the Christian world.

¹³⁰ Cf. Lemmens, *Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen*, 10–11; Simonut, *Il Metodo*, 23, 35–8; B. Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches towards the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984), 11–14; Richard, *La Papauté*, 38.

¹³¹ Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicaines*, 77–105.

In our view, the closest parallel to the religious policy of the pagan Lithuanian dukes is to be seen in the way the pagan Mongol khans treated religious minorities and their clergy. They did not compel them to accept one faith or another, and would grant privileges and exemptions to their clergy in the hope of securing their prayers for the sake of the Mongol rule. Such pragmatic tolerance should not be viewed through modern lenses, however, because it was predicated on the policy of 'divide and rule' and encouraged the leaders of minorities to vie with each other for the benevolence of the khan.¹³² Despite this general tolerance, occasional martyrdoms of Christians did happen from time to time.

The martyrdoms of 1369 and 1378

The second martyrdom of Franciscan friars in Vilnius occurred in c. 1369.¹³³ It is mentioned by Bartholomew of Pisa in his magnum opus *De Conformitate Vitae Beati Francisci ad Vitam Domini Iesu* (1385–1390). The most relevant piece of information is deplorably laconic: five friars were killed in Vilnius, where worshippers of trees live; a guardian was his hands and legs amputated and his head mutilated was put in a boat and floated downstream; the rest of the brothers were killed with swords.¹³⁴ The impression from this short description is that all the inmates of the house suffered the same fate and the presence of the Franciscans in pagan Vilnius must have been discontinued for a while.¹³⁵

In order to make sense of this fragmentary story, it is necessary to contextualize it in the more general picture of the mission policy

¹³² Cf. Jackson, *The Mongols*, 101, 121.

¹³³ Rowell, 'Lithuania and the West', 312. The most probable date of this martyrdom is indicated by the Franciscan historian Marian of Florence († 20 July 1523) in his compendium of chronicles produced at the beginning of the sixteenth century. See 'Compendium Chronicarum Fratrum Minorum', *AFH*, 3 (1910), 306. Some authors date this martyrdom to 1370, but do not adduce arguments in favour of this date. Cf. Lemmens, *Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen*, 52.

¹³⁴ Bartholomeus de Pisa, 'De Conformitate Vitae Beati Francisci ad Vitam Domini Iesu', *AF*, IV (Quarrachi, 1906), 335.

¹³⁵ Gidžiūnas, 'Legendariškieji', *Aidai*, 3 (1954), 109.

conducted then by the Roman Catholic Church. It was a time when upon his return from Avignon to Rome Pope Urban V devoted considerably more attention to the Christian missions directed to the non-Christian world. This upsurge of organizational activity took place in 1367–70.¹³⁶

In 1369, he authorized Franciscan missionaries to bring suit, if necessary, against those Christians who would impede their activities, and reissued the missionary bull *Cum hora undecima*, urging the Franciscans to preach the Word more actively.¹³⁷ At the same time the vicar of the vicariate of Bosnia, Bartholomew of Alverna, was given power to send back to their provinces those missionaries who were found inadequate to the task or simply idle, and to send Bosnian missionaries to other provinces where necessary.¹³⁸ To the Franciscans Bosnia, replete with heretics and ‘schismatics’, was one of the most important mission fields in Europe.¹³⁹ The year 1370 saw a new series of letters reflecting the increased mission activity on the part of the Franciscans and the high hopes on the part of the pope eager to see more and more souls saved through conversion.¹⁴⁰ The enthusiasm reignited in Bosnia began to overflow and to reach

¹³⁶ Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers and Infidels*, 93. See also G. Golubovich, *Bibliotheca Bio-Bibliografica*, vol. 5: 1346–1400 (Quaracchi, 1927), 144–6. It goes without saying that the papacy at the time was busy not only with the evangelization of pagans, but also with organizing crusades to stem the threat of the Turkish aggression and promoting the Church Union between Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox believers: N. Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305–1378* (Oxford, 1986), 41ff.; D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453* (Cambridge, 1993), 263–73.

¹³⁷ L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum seu trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum*, vol. VIII: 1347–1376 (Quaracchi, 1932), 250 (5 December 1369). See also *BF*, ed. C. Eubel, VI (Rome, 1902), no. 1070, pp. 432–3; no. 1071, pp. 433–4. The latter document grants Franciscans the right to collect alms in Hungary, Dalmatia, and Croatia, because in Bosnia, where they had to confront heretical Bogomils, they were facing shortages in food and clothing as local nobility affected by heresy was rather reluctant to offer them provisions for survival. On the bull *Cum hora undecima*, see J. Muldoon, ‘From frontiers to borders: the medieval papacy and the conversion of those along the frontiers of Christendom’, *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae*, 16 (2011), 108–14.

¹³⁸ *BF*, 6VI, no. 1072, p. 434 (13 December 1369).

¹³⁹ Cf. B. Pandžić, ‘I francescani di Bosnia. Sette secoli della loro attività’, *Fratese Francesco*, 59 (1992), 16–7.

¹⁴⁰ *BF*, VI, no. 1080, pp. 436–7 (12 March 1370); *ibid.*, no. 1081, p. 437 (12 March 1370).

the region of the Black Sea and further afield. The Franciscans were allowed to receive alms and other pecuniary aid from believers in Constantinople, Sudak and Caffa.¹⁴¹ It is possible to chart their way from Venice to Constantinople to Tana on the Azov Sea.¹⁴² Venetian maritime connections were proving their value for missionaries once again. The head of all the missionaries bound to go east was the recently consecrated Archbishop William de Prato of Beijing.¹⁴³ The memories related to the success of the mission of John of Montecorvino to China¹⁴⁴ were kept alive in the Roman Curia and proved helpful in trying to ensure continued spiritual care to believers in these faraway lands. New bishops were appointed to Saray (a Franciscan named Cosmas) and to Beijing (the above-mentioned William) in 1369 and 1370, respectively. They were to continue the labours initiated by their most illustrious predecessor.¹⁴⁵ The new archbishop of Beijing had to bring a letter to the great khan encouraging him and his people to accept the Christian faith and Christian laws. The promise for that was the gain of great honour and everlasting life.¹⁴⁶ The letters containing the same message were sent out to other rulers of Tatars and other nations living in the east and north.¹⁴⁷ All these documents demonstrate the active part played by the pope and the Franciscans in the missionary field. In which, at long last, the pagan Lithuanians also surfaced.

The presence of pagan Lithuanians within the brief of missionary activities could until then be sensed but not proven, because they were covered by the label of 'Ruthenians' or the anonymous 'other unbelieving eastern and northern nations'. The letter issued in 1370 by Pope Urban V to Nicholas Melsak OFM bears a more concrete perception of the necessity to direct quite a few Franciscan mission-

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 1083, p. 438 (23 March 1370).

¹⁴² ASV, Registra Vaticana 250, fo 56r-v (a letter to the bailo of Venice in Constantinople); fo 56v (an entry of the letter to the bailo of Venice in Tana: bear dated 5 December 1369).

¹⁴³ *BF*, VI, no. 1084, pp. 438-9 (27 March 1370).

¹⁴⁴ Richard, *Papauté*, 145-52; J. R. S. Phillips, *The Medieval Expansion of Europe* (Oxford, 1998), 80-84; Robson, *The Franciscans*, 108-18.

¹⁴⁵ Odoardi, 'Le missioni dei frati Minori Conventuali', 513. See also Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, VIII, 261-70.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 4, pp. 262-4 (26 March 1370).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 5, pp. 264-5 (26 March 1370); *ibid.*, no. 6, pp. 265-8 (26 March 1370).

aries to the lands of Rus', Lithuania, and Valachia, where numerous 'schismatics' and pagans abounded. For this purpose Friar Nicholas was allowed to pick up twenty-five suitable missionaries from any Franciscan province. They had to continue much the same activities which had been given boost a while earlier. From this letter we also come to know that Brother Nicholas Melsak was already a seasoned missionary aware of what needed to be done in this segment of the Lord's vineyard.¹⁴⁸

The overview of the letters issued by Pope Urban V demonstrates the increasingly wide scope of missionary undertakings ranging from Bosnia to China, and in this context the martyrdom of five Franciscans in Vilnius in 1369 should be viewed as part and parcel of the same more general developments. The exact reasons and circumstances indicating why the five Vilnius Franciscans were put to death will remain shrouded in mystery for ever. It is striking, however, that all locally based Franciscans died 'for the faith' (*ob fidem*).¹⁴⁹ They seemingly responded to the general enthusiasm within Franciscan circles, went out of their way by preaching to the pagans and in consequence were martyred like their predecessors Ulrich and Martin in 1341.¹⁵⁰ However, in contrast to the situation after the martyrdom of 1341, now we see rather an increase in missionary activities undertaken in the wake of the martyrdom. They were directed not only to faraway lands in the east and north, but also and specifically to the lands of the Lithuanians. These activities did maintain their momentum for a while.

It was a warlike context in which one more Franciscan martyrdom at the hands of pagan Lithuanians occurred. Bartholomew of Pisa is again our main source of information. He transmitted the news that the above mentioned infidels killed two Franciscan friars in Siret in Valachia Minor. This happened 'circa Annum Domini

¹⁴⁸ BF, VI, no. 1098, p. 445 (27 July 1370). The Franciscan missionary efforts at the time were not concentrated solely north of the Black Sea. Another group of twenty-five missionaries was sent out to Georgia in 1370: *ibid.*, no. 1104, p. 447 (22 August 1370). See also Richard, *La Papauté*, 185; *idem*, 'Les papes d'Avignon', 311–12.

¹⁴⁹ Bartholomeus de Pisa, 'De Conformitate', 556.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 335. 'Alii vero fratres gladiis sunt praedicatione fidei occisi'.

1378'.¹⁵¹ Bartholomew of Pisa represented these two martyrdoms under one heading and he did this twice. This connection between Vilnius in Lithuania and Siret in Moldavia offers us a convenient point of departure to discuss faraway Moldavian lands in which the same 'idolaters' could accomplish much the same deeds as in their native land.

The papal and Franciscan efforts at propagating the Catholic faith far and wide began to bear on the religious situation in Moldavia in the second half of the fourteenth century, to the point that the Moldavian ruler Lațcu began contemplating his conversion from Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism.¹⁵² He took care of establishing organisational structures of the Roman Catholic Church in his country and asked the pope to nominate a bishop to the capital city of Siret, who could instruct and keep him and his people in the Catholic faith.¹⁵³ In response, Pope Urban V commissioned Archbishop John Ochko of Prague, as well as the bishops of Wrocław and Cracow, to consecrate the Cracow Franciscan friar Andrew as Bishop of Siret.¹⁵⁴ It is significant to note that in an attempt to stave off the Hungarian claims, the Moldavian ruling elite had called on the Polish king, Casimir III, to mediate in this undertaking.¹⁵⁵ The latter stepped in. Although he did not live long enough to see the outcome, and Lațcu himself seems not to have turned Roman Catholic, the very initiative did not disappear without a trace.¹⁵⁶ The bishopric was established, its first shepherd was the same Andrew who in time would become the first bishop of Vilnius.¹⁵⁷ This translation may thus be regarded

¹⁵¹ Bartholomeus de Pisa, 'De Conformitate', 335.

¹⁵² C. F. Dobre, *Mendicants in Moldavia: Mission in an Orthodox Land* (Daun, 2009), 47–8.

¹⁵³ *BF*, VI, no. 1096, p. 443 (24 July 1370). See also Lemmens, *Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen*, 43.

¹⁵⁴ *BF*, VI, no. 1097, p. 444 (24 July 1370); I. Czamańska, *Moldawia i Wołoszczyzna wobec Polski, Węgier i Turcji w XIV i XV wieku* (Poznań, 1996), 41–2. Cf. D. Deletant, 'Moldavia between Hungary and Poland, 1347–1412', *SEER*, 64 (1986), 195–6; Dobre, *Mendicants in Moldavia*, 48–9.

¹⁵⁵ F. Solomon, 'Die katholische Kirche im Fürstentum Moldau in der zweiten Hälfte des 14. und Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts', *Sacri canones servandi sunt: Ius canonicum et status ecclesiae saeculis XIII–XV*, ed. P. Krafl (Prague, 2008), 186–7.

¹⁵⁶ Czamańska, *Moldawia*, 41–2.

¹⁵⁷ W. Abraham, 'Biskupstwa łacińskie w Mołdawii w wieku XIV i XV', *KH*, 16 (1902), 179–82; Abraham, *Powstanie*, 283–7. Probably the best modern biographical

a symbolic epitome of the spread of the Roman Catholic faith from the south to the north to reach the lands of Lithuania proper.

In the case of the martyrs of Moldavia, the information furnished by Bartholomew of Pisa is even more laconic than his news about the martyrdom of the Franciscan friars in Vilnius. No names, no circumstances, only a most general reference to the fact that Lithuanian warriors killed the two Franciscan friars during a military campaign.¹⁵⁸ The reasons of Lithuanians appearing so far away from their traditional places of raiding have been variously commented in historical scholarship. Some researchers have been of the opinion that the Lithuanian raid was provoked by the desire to avenge the death of George, who became a ruler of part of Moldavia in 1374, but was poisoned soon afterwards.¹⁵⁹ Some scholars have found this view not convincing enough.¹⁶⁰ Ilona Czamańska has advanced an opinion according to which the Lithuanian raid may have been due to the inspiration on the part of the Hungarians who lost control over part of Moldavia and were eager to restore it using the forces of those Karijotids who ruled then in Podolia. The Hungarian inspiration and the Lithuanian raiders are not an impossible mix, because the dukes Alexander and Boris were the vassals of King Louis I of Hungary in September 1377 demonstrably, and remained so up until his death in 1382.¹⁶¹ Further examination of the sources, however, led Czamańska to cast a doubt on whether this raid could be related to the Karijotids at all and whether it was really directed against Moldavian lands. Her scepticism is based on the 'Annals of the Toruń Franciscan', which inform us that Lithuanians raided Valachia without furnishing any more concrete details. That scepticism is partly superfluous, because she did not bring the

sketch of Bishop Andrew belongs to K. R. Prokop, *Polscy biskupi franciszkańscy: Słownik biograficzny* (Cracow, 2003), 19–22. On the origin and relatives of the Bishop see M. Sepiał, 'Krağ rodziny Andrzeja herbu Jastrzębiec biskupa Wilna 1388–1398', *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne*, 128 (2001), 71–6.

¹⁵⁸ Bartholomeus de Pisa, 'De Conformitate', 335, 556.

¹⁵⁹ Deletant, 'Moldavia', 200–1; Rowell, 'Lithuania and the West', 313. George Karijotaitis ruled part of Moldavia with a centre in Bîrlad, see Czamańska, *Moldavia*, 42–6.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 48; H. Paszkiewicz, *O genezie i wartości Krewa* (Warsaw, 1938), 137–40.

evidence supplied by Bartholomew of Pisa into play. As the raid of 1378 was directed to Siret, a recently founded bishopric see, it could really have hardly anything to do with the Karijotids, who were the promoters of Catholicism in this part of East-Central Europe.¹⁶² The 'Annals of the Toruń Franciscan' do not know about the fate of the two Franciscan martyrs; they simply say that Lithuanians suffered a failure there and managed to drive out only a negligible number of horses.¹⁶³ So it was a typical booty raid with hardly any political or strategic calculations.¹⁶⁴ The martyrdom of the Franciscan friars occurred incidentally. There is no telling if it was they who found an occasion to preach denouncing 'bad habits' of the pagans, or if they were simply ambushed. However that may be, their brethren took them as martyrs for the faith. Andrew, the bishop of Siret and the future bishop of Vilnius, could not fail to take notice of the fate of his two confrères.

What could be the possible, if any, repercussions of these martyrdoms upon the Lithuanian pagan society? Owing to the lack of relevant documentary evidence, this issue may be approached only tentatively. We base our reasoning on the assumption that these martyrdoms must have been extraordinary events. All the four martyrdoms took place within the span of one generation (1341–1378), and three of them happened in the same town of Vilnius, which at the time was still a relatively fresh foundation boasting a few thousand of inhabitants. It may readily be imagined that in such a location any louder noise or turmoil could easily be heard within the earshot of most inhabitants, and here there were no major dif-

¹⁶² In this respect Ilona Czamańska is right in supposing that not the Karijotids but other Lithuanian dukes must have been interested in launching this raid, but their identities remain elusive as there is no direct evidence allowing us to relate this to any particular person or a group of them: Czamańska, *Moldawia*, 49.

¹⁶³ 'Franciscani Thorunensis Annales Prussici', ed. E. Strehlke, *SRP*, III (Leipzig, 1866), 106–7: 'Item ante festum nativitatis Christi Lituani processerunt contra illos de Walachia et ibi fuerunt victi, ita quod paucos equos abduxerunt.'

¹⁶⁴ The idea that the Lithuanian raiders might have murdered the two friars out of revenge for the perceived role of the Franciscan Order in causing developments in Moldavia that ran counter to the interests of the Lithuanian dukes is to be regarded as too far-fetched: Solomon, 'Die katholische Kirche', 188. Even more out of step with the testimony of reliable sources is the idea that it might have been Moldavians themselves who killed the friars in the course of an anti-Catholic upheaval. Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 289.

difficulties in staying abreast with spectacles and pageants taking place close to the grand-ducal court.

The depiction of the martyrdom of the three martyrs of Vilnius allows us to imagine Christian (Orthodox) believers taking notice of what was happening to those former fire-worshippers who accepted the new faith. Even more interesting is the notice that the Orthodox sons of the tormentor (that is, Algirdas) took part in the burial of St Eustathius. They did this in secret.¹⁶⁵ Arguably they preferred to keep a low profile at the time when their father was eager to show off his power by applying the death penalty to those who mounted a perceived challenge to his authority. On the other hand, their participation demonstrates that in certain circumstances they could overcome their deference to their father and stood as one with their coreligionists. The veracity of this piece of evidence is probable, but critical cross-examination is impossible. There is no certain way to tell if we are dealing with a pious hagiographical cliché or some memory enshrined in a hagiographical text. However, it is compatible with the evidence supplied by Jan Długosz, who noted that Algirdas showed his exceptional predilection towards Jogaila at the expense of all his other sons.¹⁶⁶ The different stands taken by a pagan ruler on one side and his Christian sons on the other serve well to substantiate the almost self-evident thesis that Christianity with such manifestations as martyrdom was capable of engendering a split within a pagan society. In the wake of the miracle accompanying the passing away of Friar Ulrich some pagans converted. The activities of the patriarchal envoy Cyprian caused, as we have already seen, some pagan Lithuanians to convert to Orthodoxy. It is impossible to tell how all these converts could maintain their

¹⁶⁵ Baronas, *Trys Vilniaus kankiniai*, 260.

¹⁶⁶ Długosz, *Annales. Liber X*, 93. The preference shown by Algirdas to Jogaila was already noted by canon Mikołaj Kozłowski of Cracow, who delivered a commemorative speech in honour of Jogaila before the Fathers of the Council of Basel in July 1434. It is very likely that this text served as one of the sources for Długosz and therefore this information could be taken therefrom. Cf. K. Biedrowska-Ochmańska, J. Ochmański, *Władysław Jagiełło w opiniach swoich współczesnych. Próba charakterystyki jego osobowości* (Poznań, 1987), 18 and 73–4; *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, ed. A. Lewicki, II [*Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia*, XII] (Cracow, 1891), 326.

newly-acquired Christian identity. But it is clear that such events opened up cracks within the ranks of the pagan society. It was dangerous in pagan Lithuania for foreign missionaries to denounce the pagan cult and lifestyle too rashly. The overzealous local Christians could also invite trouble upon themselves, and, if placed in too sensitive a social position, could end up as martyrs as was the case with Ss Anthony, John and Eustathius. Such reactive measures could be and were indeed occasionally applied in particular circumstances. The repressive attitude behind such manifestations of violent behaviour was neither intended nor used as a means of making all Lithuanians observe their ancestral religion. To be a pagan and to be a Lithuania was not the same thing in pagan Lithuania. This means that in dealing with the conversion of Lithuania in the late Middle Ages we should not apply the same interpretative tools which could serve well with regard to early medieval *gentes*. The society of pagan Lithuanian was much more porous and diversified, we may even say more pluralistic. This state of religious diversity is succinctly but aptly expressed in the letter of 1387 issued by Jogaila, in which it was stated that all Lithuanians, no matter which 'sect' they belonged to, should accept the Roman Catholic faith.¹⁶⁷ It goes without saying that well before the official conversion to Christianity the pagan religion must have lost much of its appeal among its heathen population. It was possible in pagan Lithuania to slip away from paganism quietly by changing one's lifestyle and preferences. This seems to be the case with Jogaila well before he finally committed himself to baptism in Cracow in 1386.

His early formative years before becoming the grand duke of Lithuania in 1377 are poorly served by historical sources. It is supposed that he was born in Vilnius and it is known for certain that his mother, Yuliana of Tver', was an Orthodox Christian. It was, however, Jan Długosz, who advanced the idea that it was foremost his mother who taught Jogaila to observe strange daily habits, which he did not bother to explain to his casual Polish spectators.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ *KDKDW*, 1, no. 6, p. 13 (22 February 1387). Jablonowski, *Westrussland*, 49–50.

¹⁶⁸ Before going out in public, King Jogaila reportedly used to turn round three times and break a straw into three before casting its particles away before him: Długosz, Jan, *Annales seu cronicae incliti regni Poloniae. Liber XI et XII (1431–1444)*. ed.

Despite his mother's Christianity, Jogaila remained unbaptized and technically a pagan up until 1386. His pagan experiences all but vanished in his later life and left no meaningful trace in historical record. It may be that in time his proximity to the Greek Orthodox world proved conducive to his preferential treatment of Byzantine style frescoes that were introduced under his royal sponsorship to a number of Polish churches.¹⁶⁹ It is likely that Jogaila's encounter with Roman Catholicism in his early years produced a more lasting and profound impact on him. It is pure chance that we can adduce some evidence to the effect. When a Franciscan named Petros Philargis was elected Pope Alexander V in 1409, it became clear that there was a friendly relationship between him and Jogaila that went back to the time when Jogaila was still a young man, and Petros Philargis, Franciscan missionary. It is supposed that he may have been present in Vilnius in the 1370s, at the time when his presence in East-Central Europe is attested by other sources.¹⁷⁰ It is

C. Pirożyńska (Warsaw, 2001), 127. This habit is recorded in religiously positive terms in *Epitafium Jagiełły* by Grzegorz of Sanok. See 'Grzegorza z Sanoka – epitafium Jagiełły', ed. C. Ochał-Pirożyńska, *Eos*, 51 (1961), 339.

¹⁶⁹ A. Różycka-Brzyzek, *Bizantyjsko-ruskie malowidła w kaplicy zamku lubelskiego* (Warsaw, 1983); A. Naumow, 'Władysław II Jagiełło wobec prawosławia', *Kaplica Trójcy Świętej na zamku Lubelskim: Historia, teologia, sztuka, konserwacja. Materiały sesji zorganizowanej w Muzeum Lubelskim 24–26 kwietnia 1997 roku* (Lublin, 1999), 18; M. Smorąg-Różycka, 'Bizantyjskie freski w sandomierskiej katedrze: królewski dar na chwałę Bożą czy odbłask idei unii horodelskiej?', *Prace Historyczne*, 141 (2014), 235–55. Cf. also P. O. Scholz, 'Realizacja idei sakralnego królestwa w ikonograficznym programie kaplicy zamkowej w Lublinie', *Lietuvos kultūros karališkasis demuo: Įvaizdžiai, simboliai, reliktai*, ed. J. Liškevičienė, S. Maslauskaitė, G. Surdokaitė [AAAV, 65/66] (Vilnius, 2012), 107–131. For Byzantine style frescoes in the insular castle of Trakai, see G. Mickūnaitė, *Making a Great Ruler: Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania* (Budapest–New York, 2006), 52–62; G. Mickūnaitė, 'The gaze of power, the act of obedience: Interpreting Byzantine wall paintings in Trakai, Lithuania', *Images and Objects in Ritual Practices in Medieval and Early Modern Northern and Central Europe*, ed. K. Kodres, A. Mänd (Cambridge, 2013), 105–21. For the interpretation of the remains of stylistically akin frescoes uncovered in 2007 in the parish church of Trakai (founded in 1409), see G. Mickūnaitė, 'Maniera Graeca in Europe's Catholic East. Representation, imagination and tradition: A case study of the parish church of Trakai in Lithuania', *Ikona*, 6 (2013), 141–54.

¹⁷⁰ Długosz, *Annales. Liber X–XI*, 43. V. Gidžiūnas, 'Algirdo ryšiai su Rytų ir Vakarų Bažnyčiomis', *Lietuvių Tautos Praeitis*, 4 (1978), 42–3. Some historians subscribe more readily to the opinion that the encounter between Jogaila and Peter Philargis may have occurred in Lithuanian-dominated Rus': Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 351.

to be emphasized that this friendly contact was established in the context of the increased Franciscan missionary activity, which has just been described. Also, this friendship may be interpreted as a sign of benevolent disposition of pagan Jogaila with regard to the Roman Catholic faith. One more indirect but highly significant evidence also comes from a casual remark. The then dean Dobrogost of Cracow explained his absence from the session of the chapter by reference to his duties as diplomat bound to travel to Lithuanian for peace talks with her dukes. He used these talks for the promotion of the cause of the Christian faith, too. This was so in 1376.¹⁷¹ Some ten years later the same person, by then bishop of Poznań, would be able to greet Jogaila as King of Poland and would play a crucial part in establishing the cathedral church in Vilnius.

¹⁷¹ Jurek, 'Nieznany list', 10.

Grassroots Christianity in Pagan Lithuania and the Final Turn: the Road from Vilnius to Cracow

The princely entourage was not the only milieu receptive to Christianity. The thirteenth-century *Rigische Schuldbuch* mentions a few Lithuanian merchants by Christian names thus bespeaking their (likely) Christian identity.¹ In the next century Christian prisoners of war continued to be abducted to Lithuania and their role may have been similar to what the author of *Descriptiones terrarum* had to say about the benign influence exerted on pagan Lithuanians.² However, their influence need not be exaggerated. Sheer limitations imposed by servile life conditions abroad makes it increasingly difficult to subscribe to a view once widespread among Polish scholars, who used to emphasize the influence of Polish prisoners of war in spreading the Christian faith in pagan Lithuania. They imagined Polish captives to have been living in closely-knit village communities and ministered by (captive) Catholic clergy.³ Such an image relies more on the situation of the Vilnius region (so-called *Wileńszczyzna*) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than does justice to medieval realities.⁴

¹ *Das Rigische Schuldbuch (1286–1352)*, ed. H. Hildebrand (St Petersburg, 1872), no. 251, p. 19; Johannes Maseghe; no. 483, p. 36; no. 707 p. 49; no. 1715, p. 108; Johannes Bythovte, Johannes Bitovte; no. 1255, p. 82; Petrus Letowinus.

² See Chapter 2, p. 95.

³ Cf., for example, Abraham, 'Polska a chrzest Litwy', 12; A. Wróblewski, 'Chryścianizacja Litwy górnej', *Novum*, 7/8 (1971), 88. A historiographical debate of this issue was presented by J. Jurkiewicz, 'Kwestia polskiego osadnictwa jenieckiego na Litwie w historiografii', *Profesor Henryk Łowmiański: Życie i dzieło* (Poznań, 1995), 155–64.

⁴ Cf. also A. Niewiński, 'Jeńcy – problem relacji polsko-litewskich w XIV w.', *Litwa i jej sąsiedzi w relacjach wzajemnych (XIII–XVI w.)*, ed. A. Kołodziejczyk, R. Kubicki, M. Radoch (Olsztyn–Gdańsk, 2014), 51–2.

The focal points where the Christians and their faith were bound quite naturally to become a permanent factor were the incipient towns in Lithuania. Vilnius occupies the most significant place in the history of Lithuania. Its first mention dates back to the 1323 letters of Gediminas. Thenceforth Vilnius may justly be regarded as the nerve centre of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was certainly not by accident that it was precisely in Vilnius that the martyrdoms of the Franciscan in c. 1341 and c. 1369 took place.⁵ The same holds true with regard to the three Orthodox martyrs of Vilnius in c. 1347. The investigation into these events has disclosed that they bear direct witness to the presence of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox communities in Vilnius in pagan times.

In the course of the fourteenth century the town of Vilnius took shape. Its population lived in discrete communities in recognizably different 'quarters'. The establishment of a major grand-ducal residence and the resulting relations with Roman Catholics from Livonia and Orthodox believers from Rus' played a decisive role in turning the settlement into the town of Vilnius.⁶ Pagan grand dukes and their entourage stimulated demand for luxury goods and high quality services that were satisfied not only through the good offices of merchants, but also by Christian new settlers, be they from the Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox lands. The traces of the then brand new technology brought in Lithuania by Christian settlers are best evidenced in the case of Vilnius. Up until the second half of the thirteenth century, today's Lithuanian capital city was a small settlement on the hill by the confluence of the river Neris and the Vilnia (Vilnelė) stream. It was only under Traidenis that first new settlers came to inhabit this place. They were in possession of higher quality paraphernalia for everyday life as compared with neighbouring settlements.⁷ This may indicate that Vilnius was then turning into one of a number of grand-ducal manors. This settlement came to acquire more pronounced features of town when in c. 1297 a new massive wooden castle was built on the hilltop of the so-called

⁵ See above p. 190ff.

⁶ G. Vaitkevičius, *Vilniaus įkūrimas* (Vilnius, 2010), 39–47, 63–6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 51–3.

Gediminas' Hill. From then on Vilnius may be regarded as one of major residences of itinerant Lithuanian grand dukes. The growing town and the needs of the grand-ducal court made it natural to look for people who could bring along services and skills that were in greatest demand. The traces of such 'industrial quarter' have been identified on the south-western slope of Gediminas Hill, in what is now the Cathedral Square area. The traces that allow inferring about the presence of smiths have been identified.⁸ This first settlement seems to have undergone a profound transformation already at the turn from the rule of Vytenis to that of Gediminas, when a new archaeological stratum began to form and the first remains of stone and brick masonry came to light. It is impossible to say where these people living in this 'industrial quarter' came from, but the analysis of ceramic evidence (bricks, tiles, pottery sherds) point in the direction of Livonia, and people coming thence.⁹ Supposedly it was here where a colony or German artisans (and merchants?) was established in an area surrounded by a stone wall and towers.¹⁰ The pagans lived on the north side of Gediminas' Hill closer to the Neris, and on the hill east of the grand-ducal residence.

At some distance to the south of the grand-ducal castle and upstream the Vilnia, another quarter is discernible. The Greek Orthodox believers settled in the area which at the end of the fourteenth century was characterized as 'Civitas Ruthenica'¹¹. The beginning of their presence in Vilnius may be dated to the last quarter of the thirteenth century.¹² The almost simultaneous appearance of Latin and Greek Christians in Vilnius is to be seen as the result of the conscious policy of the grand dukes to avail themselves of the skilful

⁵ Ibid. 59.

⁹ Ibid., 60. Cf. also Giedroyć, 'The arrival ... (1281–1341)', 12.

¹⁰ Vaitkevičius, *Vilniaus įkūrimas*, 60–1.

¹¹ This name of the Ruthenian quarter of Vilnius is attested by Wigand of Marburg in his description of the 1384 siege of Vilnius by the troops of the Teutonic Order: 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 623. In modern Lithuanian historiography the term 'civitas Ruthenica' acquired new life and became applicable to designate that part of the Old Town of Vilnius which from the late thirteenth century on was inhabited by Eastern Slav (and/or Orthodox) townspeople: Vaitkevičius, *Vilniaus įkūrimas*, 62. Cf. K. Katalynas, *Vilniaus plėtra XIV–XVII a.* (Vilnius, 2006), 53–4.

¹² The news based on the presentation by Rytis Jonaitis in a seminar held at the Lithuanian Institute of History on 23 May 2013.

workforce necessary to maintain their court at the required level of sophistication and support their military efforts in faraway lands with the necessary level of efficiency. This combination of pagan militancy and Christian craftsmanship and mercantilism was a solution that worked to some degree and at least for some time.¹³

In the course of the fourteenth century the 'Civitas Ruthenica' was sprawling in the southern direction. The original location of the 'German quarter' was too cramped to allow further expansion. The new German Catholic area began to take shape in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, most probably still in the last years of the rule of Algirdas.¹⁴ It was situated to the south-east of the grand-ducal castle close to the roads leading to Trakai. Here the church of St Nicholas was built. It is mentioned for the first time in the 1387 charter of Jogaila and must have already been built before the final conversion of the country. In its structure and exterior it preserves its essential late fourteenth-century features and may rightly be regarded as the oldest surviving church not just in Vilnius, but in all present-day Lithuania.¹⁵

Some attention must be also paid to Kernavė, now a small town even by Lithuanian standards, on the right bank of the Neris some thirty kilometres downstream from Vilnius. The town was abandoned in the wake of a 'crusade' of 1390 and natural conditions were favourable to the preservation of organic remains for centuries to come. Now it is a favourite site both for academic exploration and recreational activities related to 'living archaeology'. The hilltop castles of Kernavė, the living structures and spaces were all made entirely of wood. There is no trace of stone architecture, with the exception of one brick that was brought probably from Livonia as a souvenir. There is not a single trace of any Christian church and the question as to where the pagans used to gather for their celebrations remains a moot point. In a nutshell, there is no safe indicator to say what kind of people lived there. For these purposes the most important archaeological site is the nearby Kriveikiškės

¹³ Cf. Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 73–81.

¹⁴ Cf. Katalynas, *Vilniaus plėtra*, 54–5.

¹⁵ P. Reklaitis, 'Die St. Nicolaikirche in Wilna und ihre stadtgesehichtliche Bedeutung', *ZfO*, 8 (1959), 500–22.

burial ground. It displays inhumation burials and stands in contrast to the then prevailing custom of cremation. Some archaeologists assume that the Kriveikiškės burial ground serves as an indication of the presence of an Orthodox Christian population in Kernavė.¹⁶ Other archaeologists emphasize the similarity of grave goods found at Kriveikiškės to those characteristic of the Yatvingian tribes.¹⁷ On balance, it seems most plausible to suggest that the population of Kernavė was a mixed one. Its lower strata (artisans, traders, servants) were made up of subject pagan and Ruthenian (Orthodox Christian) populations, while the luxury finds on the site of the wooden castle on Aukuras Hill serves as an indication of the pagan ruling elite (the grand duke and his men).¹⁸ The most direct evidence for the existence of the Christian population in Kernavė comes from occasional finds of crosses from the Kriveikiškės burial ground. It turned out that all in all five crosses have been found to date and all of them were placed in the graves of children. This fact is viewed as evidence for Christianization.¹⁹

The Kriveikiškės burial ground revealed one more problem. Gintautas Zabiela, who is in favour of the 'Orthodox' interpretation of the finds in Kriveikiškės, upholds a view that inhumation was a characteristic *par excellence* of Christian burial customs. Aleksiejus Luchtanas and Gintautas Vėlius have proposed that inhumation in fourteenth-century Lithuania must not necessarily be associated with Christianity.²⁰ Consequently, pagans could bury their dead either way. This interpretation has not received universal acceptance.²¹ It is clear, however, that these problems necessitate further research and reinterpretation of available evidence. The fact that in neighbouring countries (e. g. Poland, Rus', Estonia) there was a period just before the conversion when the customs of cremation and inhumation existed side by side makes it plausible

¹⁶ G. Zabiela, 'Laidosena pagoniškoje Lietuvoje', 356–8.

¹⁷ G. Vėlius, *Kernavės miesto bendruomenė XIII–XIV amžiuje* (Vilnius, 2005), 53, 88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 88; Dubonis, *Traidenis*, 167–8.

¹⁹ Vėlius, *Kernavės miesto bendruomenė*, 62.

²⁰ A. Luchtanas, G. Vėlius, 'Valstybės gimimas ir mirusiųjų deginimo paprotys. Mirusiųjų deginimo tradicijos rytų Lietuvoje problematika dr. G. Zabielos straipsnyje 'Laidosena pagoniškoje Lietuvoje'', *Archaeologia Lituana*, 3 (2002), 159–60.

²¹ Dubonis, *Traidenis*, 167.

to suggest that something similar might well have been in the case of Lithuania, too.²² However this may be, the very circumstances of the Lithuanian conversion in 1387 reveal a religious situation which was far more complicated than it could be supposed from an abstract image of a pagan country. By this time some Lithuanians were Christian, mostly Orthodox believers. It is not surprising then that precautionary measures against the dissemination of Orthodoxy among them had to be worked out in 1387.²³ All in all these remarks show that the decay of pagan religion was well-advanced before the final conversion to Christianity. However, the triumph of the Christian faith should not be viewed as something inevitable. People like grand dukes Gediminas, Algirdas, and Kęstutis would probably have had something other to say on this count. So now we have to address the issue of how the final conversion took place, and what events and circumstances are to be viewed as the most important in this respect.

The penetration of Christianity, occasional martyrdoms and Franciscan activities extending from the shores of the Black Sea all the way to Vilnius helped the formation of grassroots Christianity in pagan Lithuania. The Christian option became close to hand, and it was only necessary to pick it up. Why was it not forthcoming for so long as to cause not a few historians to speak of the 'belated baptism' of Lithuanian people?

Attempting to address this issue, we must state that we have to deal with small numbers of people. Franciscans reaching pagan Lithuania must have been few in numbers: the five Franciscans residing in Vilnius in 1369 may be regarded as representative of how strong one or another community of a dwelling place (*locus*) might have been. Converts to Christianity, or those favourably disposed towards the new faith, could not have been numerous either. Chris-

²² H. Zoll-Adamikowa, 'Zum Beginn der Körperbestattung bei den Westslawen', *Rom und Byzanz: Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.–14. Jahrhunderts*, ed. M. Müller-Wille, 2 (Stuttgart, 1999), 227–38. V. Ia. Petrukhin, T. A. Pushkina, 'Old Russia: the earliest stages of Christianization', *ibid.*, 249–250. H. Valk, 'Christianization and changes in faith in the burial traditions of Estonia in the 11th–17th centuries AD', *ibid.*, 40ff.

²³ Cf. *KDKDW*, ed. J. Fijałek, W. Semkowicz, 1 (Cracow, 1948), no. 6, p. 13 (22 February 1387); 'Sofiiskaia pervaia letopis' starshego izvoda', 489–90.

ian Germans living in Vilnius during the reign of Gediminas occupied a quarter measuring only a little more than one acre (about 1.7 ha).²⁴ Rus'ian Orthodox believers living in the quarter known as *civitas Ruthenica* at the end of the fourteenth century could hardly have made a stronger presence of themselves in pagan Vilnius.²⁵ However, it was not so much the numbers that mattered as what kind of persons made up these numbers. The political reality of pagan Lithuania may most adequately be approached by relying on the theory of a patrimonial state and drawing on the notion of *Personenverbandsstaat*.²⁶ In Lithuania, as in other similarly constituted countries, the power of the ruler was based on his personal relations with the most prominent members of the nobility.²⁷ The ruling clan was relatively numerous and among them there was no shortage of aspiring men who had no choice but to nurture good relations with their followers or would-be supporters if they really meant to achieve something more than spending their life in a backwater somewhere deep in the Rus'ian lands. This political and constitutional reality of pagan Lithuania has long been given no sufficient consideration in trying to account for the so-called 'belated' conversion of Lithuania. The long-term reluctance on the part of

²⁴ G. Vaitkevičius, 'Vilniaus tapsmas', *Miestų Praeitis*, 2 (2010. CD).

²⁵ On *civitas Ruthenica*, see R. Jonaitis, 'Orthodox churches in the Civitas Ruthenica area of Vilnius: the question of location', *Archaeologia Baltica*, 16 (2011), 113–25. The Polish presence in Vilnius before 1387 is virtually unattested, but Polish prisoners of war or refugees may be taken into account. Their numbers were relatively small, they (mostly women) tended to be scattered across Lithuania, formed no closely-knit communities, and in effect were subsumed by local society. Consequently, their contribution to making pagan Lithuanians more susceptible to Christianity could hardly have accomplished more than what is known from the author of thirteenth-century *Descriptioes terrarum*. See p. 95. The story of the Poles in Lithuania starts from 1387, when the clergy arrived from the lands of the Polish Crown.

²⁶ Hellmann, 'Die polnisch-litauische Union', 23–7. Our approach to the structural features of the Lithuanian state in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries owes much to H. Łowmiański, *Studia nad początkami społeczeństwa i państwa litewskiego*, 1–2 (Vilnius, 1931–1932); K. Schmid, 'Programmatisches zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Personen und Personengruppen', *FS*, 8 (1974), 116–30; G. Althoff, *Verwandte, Freunde und Getreue: Zum politischen Stellenwert der Gruppenbindungen im früheren Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1990); Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*; R. Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė XIV a. pabaigoje – XV a.: Sudėtis–struktūra–valdžia* (Vilnius, 2003).

²⁷ Baronas, Dubonis, Petrauskas, *Lietuvos istorija*, 300ff.

the Lithuanian dukes to embrace Christianity was being explained (and not so infrequently excused) by reference to the aggression of the Teutonic Knights, who supposedly discouraged pagan Lithuanians from embracing the faith of their enemies.²⁸ It has been supposed that Lithuanian rulers maintained a general strategic line of balancing between the Latin Catholic and the Greek Orthodox worlds without rushing to commit themselves and their people to either side.²⁹ In our opinion, such approaches are predicated on the anachronistic assumptions about what the politics in the Middle Ages were. Trying to escape such cognitive snags and attempting to do more justice to the sources, we propose to use a group-oriented approach instead. We suppose that this approach can be helpful in trying to better explain what precipitated so radical and swift changes after the death of Algirdas. Had it been given to Algirdas or Kęstutis to live, say, fifty years longer, the same pattern of continual warfare and sham negotiations over baptism could well have been continued all along.

The international conditions for the introduction of the Roman Catholic faith into Lithuania were propitious enough in 1322–24. They did not lead up to the baptism of Grand Duke Gediminas and the conversion of the country simply because the preferences of the grand duke and his men lay somewhere else. The political constellations were perhaps even better in the time of his sons Algirdas and Kęstutis, when promises to procure a royal crown for a Lithuanian ruler were handed down by pope in 1349, by King Louis of Hungary in 1351, and by Emperor Charles IV in 1358. So why was there no breakthrough? We suppose that all this ‘stalemate’ had primarily to do with the accepted way of life. Such grand dukes as Vytenis, Gediminas, Algirdas, and Kęstutis enjoyed the military way of life to the full. Their life, we may assume, was replete with adventures, dangers, and festivities. It may be noted that in their rejection to accept the Christian faith, the pagan dukes of Lithuania represent rather a rule than an exception, if one takes into account continual failures of the popes and other leaders of the Latin Christendom

²⁸ Cf. Ivinskis, ‘A contribution’, 13, 19, 21; Boockmann, *Der Deutsche Orden*, 153.

²⁹ Giedroyc, ‘Lithuanian options’, 88.

to induce infidel rulers of Eastern Europe and Asia to accept the Christian faith. Why should they accept the one God of Germans, Poles, or Ruthenians when they seem to have believed that their gods were as strong as ever. It is known that Grand Duke Gediminas reportedly thanked his gods for saving him from the Teutonic Knights when he and his troops penetrated dangerously deep into Prussia in 1330.³⁰ As we have already seen, Gediminas was capable of going to extraordinary lengths when he deemed it necessary to punish by death those two Franciscans who spoke their mind too openly with regard to pagan customs. If the depiction of Kęstutis demonstrating his adroitness in killing the ox for sacrifice in 1351 bears any resemblance to what actually happened, then it would be possible to guess that the duke of Trakai must have had quite a lot of experience in this sort of sacrificial activities.³¹ As has been demonstrated, the father of Jogaila, Algirdas, was sensitive to the festive culture at his court to the point that he could put to death some Christian troublemakers. Such dukes certainly were not alone in their lifestyle preferences. The willing collaborators of Algirdas in beating up his stubborn Christian courtiers are hardly to be looked upon as a mere hagiographic topos. It is known for sure that the troops of both Algirdas and Kęstutis included men who could go as

³⁰ 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 471.

³¹ The 1351 oath taken by Kęstutis and acceded by his Lithuanians is the only instance that can be regarded as more or less a reliable one indicating that Lithuanian pagan dukes could take part in pagan rituals. However, there is no comparable or more abundant evidence to suggest that Lithuanian pagan dukes were beholden to the pagan public cult to such a degree as was the case, for example, with pagan rulers of Scandinavian countries participating in calendar festivals on a permanent basis. The relevant Scandinavian material has long been known and treated as a proof of the existence of 'sacral kingship' among the Norsemen. Cf. Å. V. Ström, 'The king god and his connection with sacrifice in Old Norse religion', *La Regalità Sacra: Contributi al Tema dell'VIII Congresso Internazionale di Storia delle Religioni (Roma, Aprile 1955)* = *The Sacral Kingship: Contributions to the Central Theme of the VIIIth International Congress for the History of Religions (Rome, April 1955)* (Leiden, 1959), 702. Modern scholarship tends to revise this idea that once had been taken for granted: cf. A. C. Murray, 'Post vocantur Merovingii: Fredegar, Merovech, and 'Sacral Kingship'', *After Rome's Fall, 121–52*; F.-R. Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter: Von den Anfängen bis zum Investiturstreit* (Stuttgart, 2006), 81–2.

far as to sacrifice their German enemies to their gods.³² However, to the credit of Kęstutis, it must be noted that on at least one occasion he saved the life of a captured Teutonic knight, Johannes Surbach, whom the pagans wanted to consign to their gods by fire, because they had suffered too much damage and nuisance from him.³³ However, on the other hand, Duke Kęstutis had in his service a *percussor Christianorum* named Pexte, who earned this and similar epithets owing to his brutal handling of Christian (German) prisoners of war.³⁴ This instance offers us a glimpse into the trade in slaves which, as one may assume, was a highly profitable business.³⁵ No doubt this amount of evidence is not big and far from what we would like to have at hand in order to characterize as much as we would like these pagan rulers during their long and eventful lifetimes. However meagre the above-mentioned instances are, they at least offer something instead of nothing, which would have been only a natural corollary to the fact that the oral culture of pagan Lithuania was almost totally unable to transmit living memory across more than two or three generations.³⁶ There is simply no Lithuanian counterpart to Scandinavian Sagas or Eddas.

³² Wigand of Marburg reports that in 1365 the troops of dukes Kęstutis and Algirdas included men who in the vicinity of the Ragnit castle sacrificed a wild ox and a certain Hensel Nuewensteyn: 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 549.

³³ *Ibid.*, 596. It may be noted that human sacrifices of Teutonic enemies were relatively rare. It has been estimated that during the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries there were some twenty attested cases: A. Damareckaitė, 'Karo belaisvių aukojimo paprotys baltų kraštuose XIII–XIV amžiuje', *Darbai ir Dienos*, 21 (2000), 24.

³⁴ 'Hermanni de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', 113: 'Captus eciam tunc fuit quidam satrapa, nomine Pexte, advocatus regis Keinstut in Trakken, nequam consputor, malefactor et percussor christianorum in captivitate existencium. This happened in March 1378 during a raid of Kęstutis, his sons, and his nephews into Kurland.

³⁵ The lack of evidence is a serious hurdle if one wants to make a well-informed judgement in this matter. For general orientation, see Paravicini, *Die Preussenreisen*, 2, 101–10. A useful, though by no means final, table illustrating slave-raiding activities on the part of the Lithuanian dukes was compiled by Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 74. On Lithuanian raids to Polish lands, see also Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, 1, 33–78. For slave trade in post-conversion Lithuania, see D. Quirini-Popławska, *Włoski handel czarnomorskimi niewolnikami w późnym średniowieczu* (Cracow 2002), 219–22.

³⁶ Perhaps the best example of the living memory reaching no further than three generations back is provided by the complaint of Vytautas directed at Jogaila and Skirgaila. Here the line of the rulers of Lithuania reached no further than Grand

Algirdas and Kęstutis were the last pagan rulers in Europe, and it was during their lifetime that paganism lost much of its appeal even among their children. The paganism of the old dukes was expressed first of all in their lifestyle, unencumbered as it was by Christian demands with regard to the observance of liturgical time with its feast and fasts. Naturally enough, they had no spiritual experts (clergy) to tell them right from wrong as was the rule in other ruling houses across Europe. If a monk was occasionally called on to come to the grand-ducal court, it was purely to carry out a task of composing a letter to be sent abroad, or to act as an interpreter. There is no telling how seriously Algirdas took the ancient pagan gods, but it is symptomatic that there is no any evidence left of his invoking gods or taking an active part in the pagan cultic practices. This silence is, of course, a result of the source coverage, but not everything must be ascribed to a general disinterest of the Christian authors to describe pagan practices. The same sort of coverage managed to transmit evidence that in the time of Gediminas Lithuanians still used to confirm their oaths by their 'holy rites'.³⁷ The occasions for such customs to be applied in the time of Algirdas and Kęstutis were multiple, but no evidence, with one notable exception, survives. This single exception pertains to the oath of Kęstutis and his followers given at the carcass of the sacrificed ox in 1351. Significantly, it was given to corroborate their intention of abandoning the old gods and accepting faith in One Christian God. The oath and the promise were broken in a matter of a few days. May one assume that this pagan spectacle was taken more seriously by Christian observers from the entourage of King Louis I of Hungary than by the pagans themselves? In any event, this flouting of the oath stands in sharp

Duke Gediminas: 'Vytauto skundas', ed. K. Alminauskis, *Archivum Philologicum*, 8 (Kaunas, 1939), 204–5. The earlier edition and the more accessible one is that of 'Dis ist Witoldes sache wedir Jagaln und Skargaln', ed. T. Hirsch, *SRP*, II, 712. It must be borne in mind that owing to the patterns of cognatic kinship then prominent in Lithuania only the actual constellation within one generation was functional. Cf. Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė*, 46.

³⁷ *Chartularium*, no. 69, p. 260 (1 November 1338. A Vilnius peace and trade treaty concluded between Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania and the landmaster Eberhard von Munheim of Livonia). For more on the Lithuanian diplomatic practice, see Rowell, 'A pagan's word', 148–58.

contrast to what was taken for granted in the thirteenth century. Then it was enough for the Teutonic Knights simply to shake hands with pagan Žemaitijans to be sure that they would keep their word.³⁸ Now, some hundred years later, even a most elaborate ritual could not impart much certainty as regards the true intentions of the pagans.

The lifestyle preferences seem to have been so strong for Algirdas and Kešutis that no amount of bright promises on the part of Christian rulers could induce them to change their pagan identity and lifestyle. Even defeats suffered at the hands of the Teutonic Knights in the battles of Strėva (1348) and Rudau (1370) did not prompt reconsideration. Love of war was stronger than wounds inflicted to good feelings by occasional failures. Even when the army of the Teutonic Knights reached the capital town of Vilnius in the last months of the life of Algirdas, the leaders from the hostile camp were received with all due hospitality in the hope that some parts of Vilnius would be spared from fire.³⁹ It is hard to imagine what stronger pressure could be applied in order to urge the recalcitrant pagan rulers to think twice on the relative power of gods and the One God. These examples and considerations are intended to exemplify how important the personal attitudes and lifestyle preferences of the ruler and his closest milieu could be for the general tenor of life in the country and international relations at large. Of course, this was not the only possible way of reaction even within a pagan society. As we have seen, pagans living along the Nemunas River admired the military deeds of the commander of the Ragnit castle at the end of the thirteenth century.⁴⁰ Another instructive example indicating how military exploits could lead to different reactions among the pagans could be taken from the description of the siege of the castle of Kaunas in April 1362. It was located at a strategically important point at the confluence of the Nemunas and the Neris rivers, was built of stone (still a cutting-edge innovation in Lithuania at the time), and was manned by a belligerent garrison. All this

³⁸ *LR*, lines 4615–44.

³⁹ 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 587.

⁴⁰ 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 159.

proved insufficient as the Teutonic Order laid a well-prepared and excellently executed siege in April 1362. The dukes of Lithuania, Algirdas and Kęstutis, watching the collapse of the castle did not risk coming to the rescue of the doomed garrison, which, incidentally, was headed by Kęstutis' son, Duke Vaidotas.⁴¹ The defeat of such dimension makes it likely to believe that the chronicler Wigand of Marburg somehow managed to grasp and transmit the mood on the pagan side when he reported that the inmates of the strongholds along the Nemunas River did indeed express their amazement at how big a victory was conferred on Christians by their God.⁴² A different reaction was also possible. Just after the collapse of the castle of Kaunas, a certain pagan man brought twelve fat pigs and one lean cow and presented them to the Grand Master, the Marshal, and the Bishop of Sambia in order to honour them 'in good faith'.⁴³ The meaning of this gesture was perhaps a moot point even for Wigand of Marburg at the end of the fourteenth century. Whatever it might have been intended to express, it can hardly be taken as denoting some deeply ingrained hostility between pagan and Christian.

But as pagans in general were able to draw different lessons from the failure of their gods to provide them with adequate support, the same holds true with regard to the families of the Lithuanian pagan dukes. The instances discussed with regard to Gediminas, Algirdas, and Kęstutis have been intended to serve not only as a means enabling us to approach them as pagans; they were also necessary as a backdrop against which dukes Jogaila and Vytautas may be brought for comparison. We note that nothing in terms of more or less pronounced paganism could be placed at the door of Jogaila. The milieu in which Jogaila grew up was conducive to his pro-Christian inclinations from an early date. It has been asked pertinently whether Jogaila's paganism was pronounced at all (*ausgeprägt*).⁴⁴ There is virtually no contemporary evidence

⁴¹ 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 531–8. See also 'Hermann de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', 81–2.

⁴² 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 538.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 537.

⁴⁴ M. Hellmann, 'Die polnisch-litauische Union von 1385/1386', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 34 (1986), 28.

indicating him as a man actively engaged in pagan practices. He must have been participating in the burial rituals of his father, Algirdas, and uncle, Kęstutis, when their dead bodies were consigned to flames with all their paraphernalia in 1377 and 1382, respectively. Certainly Jogaila was not a man made of a totally different sort of clay. Like his predecessors, he must have been a passionate hunter from his young days and remained so until his old age, in this regard surpassing his cousin Vytautas, who also knew quite well how to play the role of a prince on the hunt. This sort of an open-air exercise provided a common ground for a pagan or Christian warrior alike and could evoke reproaches only from holier-than-thou pundits like Jan Długosz, who chided Jogaila for his excessive love of hunting which must have distracted him from the incomparably better business of ruling his kingdom.⁴⁵ However, even Długosz could not qualify Jogaila's love for hunting as some sort of heathen atavism. Like his predecessors Algirdas and Kęstutis, Jogaila too could provide occasional hospitality to some Christian lords who happened to arrive to his court.⁴⁶ This is an illustration that knightly manners, or just a general warrior ethos, were something that facilitated communication across the Christian/pagan divide. Contrary to his predecessors, there is no evidence that Jogaila had ever had people in his immediate milieu ready to sacrifice animals or men, if need be. His still nominally pagan court might well have included some Lithuanian Christian boyars to judge from the names of *Jorge Kasusna* and *Iwan Augmenten son* in 1379.⁴⁷ We have already seen that in his youth Jogaila managed to establish friendly relations

⁴⁵ Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI–XII*, 124–5; Biedrowska-Ochmańska, Ochmański. *Władysław Jagiełło w opiniach*, 40, 58–9. In general: R. Jaworski, 'Łowy Władysława Jagiełły', *Fasciculi Historici Novi*, 4 (2001), 7–86.

⁴⁶ There are several instances showing that the Teutonic Knights dissatisfied with their life in the ranks of the Order might have reconsidered their path of life by making use of opportunities open for them in Lithuania: ASV, Registra Vaticana 289, fo 696r–v. *BP*, II, no. 2335, p. 383 (concerning Knight Otto, son of Count Otto of Everstein, who had been brownbeaten by his father to join the Teutonic Order and later left the Order during his captivity in Lithuania; 1 June 1376). See also 'Hermann de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', 104–5, 116; 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 541–2.

⁴⁷ *Codex Diplomaticus Prussicus [CDP]*, ed. J. Voigt, III (Königsberg, 1848), no. 134. pp. 180–2 (29 September 1379).

with the Franciscan friar Peter Philargis when the latter happened to reach the far eastern ends of potentially Latin Christian Europe. It goes without saying that there is a far cry between a pagan ready to kill a preacher like St Adalbert or St Bruno of Querfurt, and a pagan ready to converse with a Greyfriar coming from some only dimly known ends of the earth. The distance between Gediminas ready to condemn unfortunate Franciscan zealots to death, and Jogaila befriending a friar is no less telling. It tells us volumes about the qualitative changes within a pagan society (and the ruling clan) which took place within a lifespan of one or two generations. There is no comparable direct evidence with regard to what experiences were formative to Vytautas in his younger years. However, here it may be recalled that some of his close relatives were Christians. His brother Butautas defected to the Order, received baptism and, after a failure to take Vilnius in 1365, betook himself to Emperor Charles IV in whose presence he was known as 'Henricus dux Lithuaniae' to his death some time around 1380.⁴⁸ The motives of his defection to the Christian side are not clear. Some historians have been quick to see in him an opportunistic adventurer greedy for power and ready to collaborate with the enemies of his own country.⁴⁹ Some have been inclined to underline internal problems within the family of Kęstutis and to qualify Butautas' subsequent conversion to Christianity either as a sincere change of heart, or just as political expediency.⁵⁰ As we know from the admission of Gediminas, it is impossible to know what was in the ruler's heart, so it is impossible to measure the sincerity of the conversion. Anyway, to contemporary German chroniclers Duke Henry (Butautas) remained a good Christian.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 204. S. C. Rowell, 'Unexpected contacts: Lithuanian at Western courts, c. 1316–c. 1400', *English Historical Review*, 111 (1996), 567–71.

⁴⁹ Cf. Kučinskas, *Kęstutis*, 76–78; Ivinskis, *Lietuvos istorija*, 252.

⁵⁰ Cf. P. Šležas, 'Ko bėgo Kęstučio sūnus iš Lietuvos?', *Židinys*, 12 (1932), 449–57; Gudavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, 138; Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 204.

⁵¹ Johann von Posilge, 'Chronik', ed. E. Strehlke, *SRP*, III (Leipzig, 1866), 84: 'under wart eyn gutter cristin'. Prince Butautas was not the only man from Lithuania in the milieu of Charles IV. It is known that in 1360 the Emperor requested Pope Innocent VI to confirm a certain prebend at the Breslau chapter to Theoderic of Lithuania who acted as his cleric and notary: *Analecta Vaticana 1202–1366*, no. 409, p. 388 (19 November 1360).

From other instances it may be inferred more clearly that there were persistent internal problems in the family of Kęstutis, which could not be solved for years. The son of Butautas, Vaidutis, followed in his father's step by escaping from his grandfather Kęstutis in 1381. Vaidutis seems to have taken his conversion seriously enough to become eventually a clergyman at Cracow, where, just before his death in 1402, he served as a second rector at the University of Cracow.⁵² That such escapes and conversions should not be viewed in the light of modern patriotic feelings becomes clear from somewhat later behaviour on the part of Vytautas. When the latter was already grand duke of Lithuania, he took care to donate a gift to the high altar in the Prague church of the Austin friars, where his brother Butautas lay buried.⁵³ Prince Vytautas, who seems to have been regarded as an heir to Kęstutis from an early date, did not ever go to such loggerheads with his father as was the case with Butautas or the latter's son Vaidutis. He collaborated with his father, but when animosities between Kęstutis and Jogaila broke out, Vytautas was far from being an unconditional supporter of his father. Reaching their teenage years back in time, his friendship with Jogaila shows that they were more similar to each other than to their respective fathers. It must also be borne in mind, that both Vytautas and Jogaila had Christian siblings in the time when they were still (nominally) pagans. The practice of the Lithuanian pagan dukes of allowing their children, destined either to rule in Ruthenian lands or to be married out to princes of Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox countries or lands, to convert to the faith of their spouses brought about a religious plurality in the Lithuanian *stirps regia*. This plurality was most conducive to the final switch to the Christian faith.

The influence of Christianity among the members of the Gedimnid clan was far from being an affair of personal conviction alone. It brought about new patterns of behaviour and was capable of fomenting alternative visions of how public and international affairs should be conducted. Scions of the ruling house thus became

⁵² Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 205–6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 204, with reference to J. Kadlec, *Das Augustinerkloster Sankt Thomas in Prag vom Gründungsjahr 1285 bis zu den Hussitenkriegen, mit Edition seiner Urkundenbuches* (Würzburg, 1985), 358, 366.

foci of power who began to attract those members of the nobility who were either dissatisfied with the style of politics as conducted by Algirdas or Kęstutis, or were simply looking for qualitatively new ways of interaction with the outside world. Such groupings have decidedly contributed to putting aside those who were happy to follow Algirdas and Kęstutis. A cascade of internal changes erupted suddenly and forcefully, but it was long in the making.

As early as 1357, King Casimir III of Poland told the pope that it was necessary to guarantee safety and support to those neophytes who may be threatened by their pagan compatriots.⁵⁴ Such a conversion to Roman Catholicism, which implied a switch of political allegiance, was unwelcome to the supreme rulers of pagan Lithuania, engrossed as they were in their rivalry with the Polish king over the dominance over the Red Ruthenia. That such a rivalry was not tantamount to a pagan/Christian opposition is clear from the example of Duke Liubartas of Volyn', who, being an Orthodox Christian himself, remained throughout much of his lifetime in opposition to the attempts of the Polish and Hungarian kings to gain the upper hand in western Rus'. Also, he occasionally received support from Algirdas and Kęstutis. However, another segment of the Gediminid clan went the other way. After the sons of Karijotas, Gediminas' grandsons, were disinherited by Kęstutis from their appanage centred on Novgorodok some time in 1358–1363, they managed to carve out a new dominion for themselves in faraway Podolia. Here it was harder to bring them under control of the supreme rulers of Lithuania, but, on the other hand, here they were much more exposed to the Polish and Hungarian kings. The geographical, political and social conditions in Podolia were quite unlike those in other Rus'ian lands, let alone Lithuania.⁵⁵ All these factors contributed to developments that, in hindsight, look like a precursor of what was bound to take place in Lithuania just within a few decades on a much larger scale. Therefore the topic of Podolia cannot be omitted in the study of the conversion of Lithuania.

⁵⁴ See p. 141 n. 81.

⁵⁵ *On the Frontier of Latin Europe: Integration and Segregation in Red Ruthenia, 1350–1600*, ed. T. Wünsch, A. Janeczek (Warsaw, 2004).

The time and circumstances in which the sons of Karijotas settled in Podolia are not clear. Historians trying to solve this problem have advanced a number of hypotheses placing their arrival in Podolia from the 1340s to the 1360s.⁵⁶ The most authoritative assessment yet of these historiographical controversies has to be ascribed to Janusz Kurtyka, who supported the view that the sons of Karijotas must have been gradually extending their rule in Podolia from some time after 1345 and before 1351.⁵⁷ The expansion of their domain ran in parallel with the advances made by King Casimir III of Poland in Red Ruthenia. After the Lithuanians suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Teutonic Order in the battle of Strėva in 1348, they were unable to put up effective resistance when in 1349 King Casimir III of Poland captured Galich (with the town of Lviv) and most of Volyn'. It is likely that in the wake of this campaign one of the sons of Karijotas (most probably Alexander) paid homage for Podolia to Casimir III.⁵⁸ Such developments prompted collaboration between the Lithuanians and the Tatars: in the wake of military incursions of 1350–1352 the Lithuanian dukes managed to reclaim most of Volyn', though no headway was possible in Galich. After a while Algirdas and Kęstutis resumed their efforts at marginalizing their brothers and their offspring. This led to the eviction of the sons of Karijotas from their patrimony in Novgorodok some time between 1358 and 1363, when their father had died. Such developments compelled them to concentrate their efforts on securing their positions in distant Podolia, to break away from their none-too-friendly kin, and to become more involved in Polish and Hungarian spheres of influence. So it is almost natural that both ruling sons of Karijotas, George and Alexander, acted as signatories on the Polish side when a peace treaty was concluded in 1366 between Casimir III and the Lithuanian dukes.⁵⁹ Deeper involvement with Poland, and

⁵⁶ The review of relevant literature in Czamańska, *Mołdawia*, 42–50.

⁵⁷ J. Kurtyka, 'Podole pomiędzy Polską i Litwą w XIV i I. połowie XV wieku', *Kamieniec Podolski: Studia z Dziejów Miasta i Regionu*, ed. F. Kiryk, 1 (Cracow, 2000), 13–18.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵⁹ More on this, see H. Paszkiewicz, *Polityka ruska Kazimierza Wielkiego* (Warsaw, 1925), 230–2; Kučinskas, *Kęstutis*, 110–12; O. Halecki, *Jadwiga of Anjou and the Rise of East-Central Europe*, ed. T. V. Gromada (Boulder, 1991), 43–50. The

in time, after the death of Casimir in 1370, with Hungary, led the Karijotids to organise their domains along the lines of the policy of *melioratio terrae*, which expressed itself in promoting economic life and welcoming Polish and German colonists. From about 1370 their policy of promoting the Roman Catholic Church became more pronounced. It was these two brothers who in about 1370 founded a Dominican convent in Kamenets-Podilskii and, some time later, another one in Smotrych.⁶⁰ It was also they who in 1374 granted municipal Magdeburg rights to Kamenets-Podilskii and on account of this may be regarded as the founders of the capital city of Podolia.⁶¹ In this regard they acted much in the same vein as other entrepreneurial potentates of the region close to the Black Sea, be they incoming Roman Catholic or local Orthodox nobles showing a favourable predisposition towards Roman Catholicism.

In time, the cumulative effect of this pro-Catholic policy came to bear on the political landscape. This is evident from those scratches of evidence that have come down to us and are related to the Karijotid brothers. When Duke Alexander confirmed the foundation of the Dominican monastery in Smotrych in 1375, he stressed that people living on the donated lands would have to pay dues to the Tatars along with other inhabitants in Podolia.⁶² Some time later his position vis-à-vis the Tatars underwent a change and at the turn of 1377–78 he requested Pope Gregory XI to grant him full remission

Karijotids adhered to a particular form of rulership of two brothers who happened then to be senior. It may be qualified as diarchy. Cf. Kurtyka, 'Podole pomiędzy Polską i Litwą', 21; Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 167–9, 171–5. This form of rulership may be compared with that form of collaboration which was practiced by Algirdas and Kešutis. In this case, however, the supreme position of Algirdas was more pronounced, as has been noticed by Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 67–9. The supreme position of Algirdas was clear enough in Lithuania, perhaps in the Teutonic *Ordensstaat* and North-Eastern Rus'. The true power relations must have remained a moot point for Western potentates as is evident from unspecified references to Lithuanian rulers in the letters issued by Emperor Charles IV, or King Louis of Hungary, and, occasionally, by the popes.

⁶⁰ Trajdos, *Kościół Katolicki*, 129–31.

⁶¹ A. Jureczko, 'Dokument lokacyjny Kamieńca Podolskiego', *Kamieniec Podolski*, 61–6.

⁶² *Ukrains'ki gramoti*, vol. 1: *XIV v. i persha polovina XV v.*, ed. V. Rozov (Kiev, 1928), no. 10, p. 20 (17 March 1375).

of sins as he was about to launch a campaign against the Tatars.⁶³ Duke Alexander treated the fight against the Tatars as the defence of the Roman Catholic Church and therefore we may treat him as the first prince of Lithuanian extraction who proved receptive to the idea of the crusade. It is significant to note that he was not alone in this undertaking. He must have been acting together with some part of the Romanian nobility as may be extrapolated from the fact that on the very day he received an indult from the pope. A similar indult – and for the same reason – was granted to Margaret of Siret, Duchess of Valachia.⁶⁴ Alexander remained true to his word and died some time fighting against the Tatars in about 1380.⁶⁵ His death did not reverse the process aimed at consolidating the positions of the Roman Catholic Church in Podolia. His brother Constantine took care to have a see established in Kamenets-Podilskii (1379–1386).⁶⁶ It is certainly no accident that another two of the Karijotid brothers, Constantine and Boris, took an active part in diplomatic negotiations between the representatives of Poland and Lithuania, which ultimately led to the marriage of Jogaila and Jadwiga and the conversion of Lithuania to Roman Catholicism in 1387.⁶⁷ Jogaila certainly had a blueprint to follow. The Karijotid brothers were riding on the wave of developments which proved attractive to those members of the Gediminas family who were destined to rule the country in the wake of old boys, Algirdas and Keštutis. There is an obscure tradition that Constantine Karijotid may have been envisaged as a possible son-in-law to Casimir III and an heir prospective to his Kingdom.⁶⁸ Whatever the case may be, it is clear that it was

⁶³ *VMPL*, I, no. 1015, pp. 748–9 (30 January 1378).

⁶⁴ ASV, Registra Vaticana 287, fo 215v (30 January 1378). She was the mother of the Moldavian ruler Peter I Muşat. See F. Solomon, 'Das moldauische Fürstentum und das Problem der christlichen Einheit (Ende 14./Anfang 15. Jh.)', *Christianity in East Central Europe. Late Middle Ages*, ed. J. Kłoczowski, P. Kras, W. Polak (Lublin, 1999), 297.

⁶⁵ Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 171–5.

⁶⁶ Abraham, 'Założenie', 13–14. See also Trajdos, *Kościół Katolicki*, 135–7.

⁶⁷ 'Kalendarz katedry krakowskiej', ed. Z. Kozłowska-Budkowa, *MPH*, V, n. 5 (Warsaw, 1978), dry krakowskiej, 115, 124; Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia*, 239; S. Szczur, 'Negocjatorzy unii Polski z Litwą i ich kariery', *AC*, 19 (1987), 184–5; Kurtyka, 'Podole', 22.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

Jogaila who ascended the Polish throne. Could Jogaila in his dream of becoming King in Poland have been at least partly inspired by the experiences of the Karijotid brothers?

Jogaila was not a *deus ex machina*. He followed the same path (away from paganism) along which many other Gediminids had already been going for a good while. His exceptionalism lies first of all in his position as the heir of Algirdas. It is noteworthy that his supreme position was not contested by his brothers born of Grand Duchess Yuliana. They were Jogaila's supporters who really had thrown in their lot with him. The relations with the old duke of Trakai, Kęstutis, were correct at first, and those with Vytautas were even friendly. Only his Orthodox half-brothers from Algirdas' first marriage were quick to show their dissatisfaction with the new Lithuanian grand duke. After Duke Andrew of Polotsk could not make any headway against Jogaila, he defected to Moscow, where a notorious adversary of Algirdas, Duke Dmitry, was still alive and well. Another Orthodox son of Algirdas, Dmitry of Novgorod Sevskiy, followed his suit by going over to Moscow in 1379.⁶⁹ Andrew and Dmitry rendered valuable service to Dmitry in his engagement with the Tatars on the Kulikovo Field in September 1380. This battle, in which Muscovites and their allies managed for the first time to inflict a significant defeat against the Tatars, earned Dmitry his epithet 'Donskoï' and facilitated his Lithuanian allies to become highly positive figures in the Muscovite literary world in subsequent centuries.⁷⁰ Opposed to them as well as to their new overlord in Moscow was Jogaila, who in September 1380 acted as an ally of the Tatar warlord Mamay. It will always remain a mystery why Jogaila and his troops did not come on time to help the Tatars against the Muscovites. This could hardly have happened due to alleged reluctance on the part of Jogaila to alienate his Orthodox subjects from

⁶⁹ L. Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego za Jagiellonów*, vol. 1: 1377–1499 (Warsaw, 1930), 15–19.

⁷⁰ It is to be noted that the earliest version of the tale of the Battle of Kulikovo contains no mention of these sons of Algirdas at all. Here the theme of bad Jogaila is still not developed. Cf. 'Rogozhskii letopisets', 139–42. This reticence stands in line with limited claims and justifications characteristic of this work composed in the 1380s. J. Pelenski, 'The origins of the official Muscovite claims to the 'Kievan inheritance'', *HUS*, 1 (1977), 34.

himself, as some historians would claim relying on a theory of some supposedly pan-Russian or just Orthodox solidarity extending across political boundaries that must have discouraged Jogaila from joining Mamay.⁷¹ The deeds show something else: Jogaila did engage in some confrontation with Muscovite troops on their return journey, in the course of which some of the booty was captured from those who had celebrated their victory on the Kulikovo Pole.⁷² It is clear that the Lithuanian-Muscovite stand-off was on the order of the day. Some of Jogaila's Orthodox kin continued their support for Moscow. When in 1382 Khan Tokhtamysh was able to retaliate for the disgrace inflicted on the Tatars, his troops went all the way to Moscow, from which Duke Dmitry and Metropolitan Cyprian had managed to flee just in time. The defence devolved to the Lithuanian duke Ostey, who allowed himself to be taken in by the Tatars and proved of little use in saving Moscow from destruction.⁷³ Such vicissitudes of Moscow had no tangible bearing on Jogaila and his Lithuanian supporters. The Grand Duchy of Moscow remained a hostile, albeit faraway country incapable of doing much harm after the débâcle of 1382. 'Cold peace' set in for a period of time which underwent a change with the passing away of Dmitry Donskoi in 1389.

Much more promising were developments on the western front of the Lithuanian polity. Jogaila and his milieu were reluctant to wage war on the Teutonic Order at whatever the cost. Even Kęstutis seems to have become a little bit tired of continual fighting and devastation. That is why he did not object to Jogaila's concluding a ten year truce which on his behalf which applied to his Rus'ian domains along the Nemunas.⁷⁴ The general reorientation of the

⁷¹ This view has been criticized succinctly by Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, 55. Cf. Shabul'do, *Zemli Iugo-Zapadnoi Rusi*, 129. Digressions put forward by John Meyendorff that Metropolitan Cyprian may have advised Jogaila not to join Mamay are interesting but they lack foundation in sources and fly in the face of the evidence supplied by the Teutonic chroniclers. Cf. Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 222–4.

⁷² Johann von Posilge, 'Chronik', 114–15. The returning Muscovites were also ambushed by troops from Riazan', who, like Lithuanians, did not take part in the battle on the side of the Tatars: Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, 54–6.

⁷³ For Ostey, see Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 71.

⁷⁴ CDP, III, no. 134, pp. 180–2 (29 September 1379). See also H. Gersdorf, *Der Deutsche Orden im Zeitalter der polnisch-litauischen Union. Die Amtszeit des Hochmeisters Konrad Zölner von Rotenstein (1382–1390)* (Marburg, 1957), 54–5.

Lithuanian rulership perhaps is most evident from the diplomatic trip undertaken in 1379 by Skirgaila, a brother of Jogaila and his closest collaborator. He went to Marienburg, where he was received as befitted a duke by Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode, and was given a welcome opportunity to carry on his trip through the lands of the Order to visit Mazovia and even the Hungarian court.⁷⁵ Skirgaila's intention to go as far as the Curia was not fulfilled. The details of the talks undertaken by Skirgaila at the court of the Mazovian duke, Siemowit III, or with the Hungarian Queen Mother Elisabeth will for ever remain shrouded in mystery. It was, after all, an exploratory trip aimed at getting in touch with what was then going afoot at the royal courts of East-Central Europe. This trip may also be seen as a sign of the new openness towards the Roman Catholic neighbours which had not been seen from the time of Gediminas. In contrast to the negotiations of 1322–24, now there was no flamboyant talk about how fine the life in Lithuania would be for hard-working and impeccably moral western newcomers. To be sure, no mention was made about the readiness of the pagan ruler to 'receive the faith'. Something more serious was on the agenda, because the young Lithuanian ruler was still a single man.

It is important to note that Jogaila started his rule as a relatively young man. He was far from being an inexperienced ruler who still needed the guiding hand of Kęstutis as was claimed by a highly partial account of Vytautas, which some time later found its way into Lithuanian chronicles and thus gained a long-term currency.⁷⁶ The absolute majority of the rulers of pagan Lithuania, and certainly Gediminas, Algirdas, and Kęstutis, were men in relatively advanced age when they came to the throne. They already had their wives and children and settled modes of thought and behaviour. Jogaila

⁷⁵ 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 592–3; Ivinskis, 'A contribution', 20; Halecki, *Jadwiga of Anjou*, 71–2. It is also known that upon ascending the grand-ducal throne Jogaila made himself acquainted with letters of popes and kings whereby his predecessors were being invited to accept the Christian faith. 'Klageartikel, welche König Jagal während der Verhandlungen zwischen Thorn und Raczens 11.–21. April 1388 gegen den Hm. vortragen lässt', ed. T. Hirsch, *SRP*, II, 714.

⁷⁶ 'Vytauto skundas', 204–15. 'Dis ist Witoldes sache wedir Jagaln und Skargaln', 712–14. Cf. 'Suprasl'skii spisok', *PSRL*, XVII (St Petersburg, 1907), 71–6; 'Akademicheskii spisok', *ibid.*, 142–8; 'Spisok grafa Krasinskogo', *ibid.*, 153–60.

as a pagan was different from them and, still more to it, at the time of his ascension to the throne he did not have a wife. In our opinion, Skirgaila's trip was not propelled by vain curiosity or mere love for adventure, it had something to do with looking for a match for the new ruler. The first reconnaissance must have given scant encouragement to the grand-ducal court at Vilnius, because the daughters of the Hungarian king Louis the Great were already betrothed to their prospective husbands from most illustrious families: the older Maria to Sigismund of Luxembourg, the younger Jadwiga to William of Habsburg. These engagements, however, were still open-ended and were to remain so for some period of time. Meanwhile, Jogaila had much more urgent issues to address. When in 1380 he secretly concluded separate treaties with the Livonian and Prussian branches of the Teutonic Order, which left Kęstutis alone vis-à-vis the Knights, in time the news leaked out and Kęstutis engineered a second coup d'état.⁷⁷ As in 1345, so in 1381 he was successful in taking the lord of Vilnius unawares.⁷⁸ Jogaila and his closest relatives were arrested and he himself relegated to his faraway patrimony in Vitebsk. Thus Kęstutis became grand duke of Lithuania. However, he failed to consolidate his position. Jogaila and his brothers did not stay idle. When in the summer of 1382 a mutiny against the rule of Kęstutis broke out in remote Novgorod Severskii ruled by Kaributas, the old grand duke rushed east only to be defeated there. Meanwhile, the supporters of Jogaila, the inhabitants of Vilnius led by a leader of the local German merchant community, Hanul, suc-

⁷⁷ *LU*, ed. F. G. von Bunge, III (Reval, 1857), no. 1152, coll. 361–2 (26 February 1380); *ibid.*, no. 1153, coll. 362–3 (31 May 1380). This news was leaked to Kęstutis by Günther von Hohenstein, the godfather of his daughter Anna/Danutė. Such a move on the part of the Teutonic officer must rather be ascribed to their friendly relations than to the supposed intrigues of the Teutonic Order aimed at exacerbating the mutual discord between the dukes of Lithuania, as was usually explained in the nineteenth–twentieth century historiography. The reassessment of this tradition, and of Lithuano-Teutonic relations of the time has been carried out R. Petrauskas, 'Der Frieden im Zeitalter des Krieges. Formen friedlicher Kommunikation zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und dem Großfürstentum Litauen zu Beginn des 15. Jahrhunderts', *Annaberger Annalen über Litauen und deutsch-litauischen Beziehungen*, 12 (2004), 28–42. See also R. Petrauskas, 'Litauen und der Deutsche Orden: Vom Feind zum Verbündeten', *Tannenberg–Grunwald–Žalgiris 1410*, 237–51.

⁷⁸ Gersdorf, *Der Deutsche Orden*, 55–8.

ceeded in retaking the castles of Vilnius, and handed them over to Jogaila.⁷⁹ Duke Vytautas, who had been placed in charge of Vilnius by his father, was then spending time in Trakai. Upon hearing the news, he rushed to Vilnius, to no avail. The situation of Kęstutis and his son Vytautas went from bad to worse. Jogaila was supported not only by his brothers, but also by the majority of Lithuanian boyars. The Teutonic Knights from Livonia were also ready to come to his aid. Kęstutis could rely only on the forces of his duchy of Trakai and on some of the volunteers from Žemaitija. The Žemaitijans were reluctant to fall headlong into the civil war raging among the dukes of Lithuania. They supposedly wanted to know whether Jogaila was going to remain faithful to his ancestral faith.⁸⁰ As Jogaila did not give them such guarantees, some Žemaitijan troops went in aid of Kęstutis. The armies of Kęstutis and his adversaries met somewhere in the vicinity of Trakai in August 1382. The old duke of Trakai could see quite clearly that he was placed against heavy odds. Upon receiving an invitation from Skirgaila to come to negotiate, Kęstutis and Vytautas went over to the enemy camp where they were put under arrest. The news was given out that the dukes of both sides decided to discuss the matters in Vilnius. Then the army of Kęstutis simply dissolved. Soon afterwards Kęstutis died in the dungeon of the castle of Krėva. His dead body was transported to Vilnius, where he was buried with his beloved horses and hunting falcons. Thus his belief in his ability to carry on his usual way of life in the afterlife was given final confirmation.⁸¹

⁷⁹ 'Annalista Thorunensis', 122; 'Die ältere Hochmeisterchronik', 602; 'Suprasl'skii spisok', 74. On the person of Hanul and his subsequent career, see W. Semkowicz, 'Hanul, namiestnik wileński (1382–1387) i jego ród', *AW*, 7 (1930), 1–20. According to Polish chronicler Jan z Czarnkowa, it was the Lithuanian boyars who helped Jogaila recapture Vilnius: 'Joannis de Czarnkow chronicon Polonorum', ed. J. Szlachtowski', *MPH*, II (Lviv, 1872), 719.

⁸⁰ 'Chronik Wigands von Marburg', Gersdorf, *Der Deutsche Orden*, 57–8.

⁸¹ The causes of his death were certainly unnatural, but the true reasons will remain elusive for ever. In the past, the version that Kęstutis was assassinated on the orders of Jogaila reigned supreme in scholarly and popular works of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This view was indebted hugely to the Polish chronicler Jan Długosz who on this, as on many other occasions, did not fail to express his personal dislike for Jogaila and the Jagiellonian dynasty: Ioannes Długosz, *Annales. Liber X*, 99. On his assumptions and views of Jogaila and the Jagiellonian dynasty, see M. Koczerska, *L'amour de la patrie et l'aversion pour*

Every episode noted above has already been discussed time and again. For our purposes it is important to stress the necessity to evade victimization of either side. Jogaila, of course, cannot be credited with good faith when he concluded a separate treaty with the Teutonic Order behind Kęstutis' back. What else could he have done if he, as a young grand duke, was intent on going his own ways to end the war with the Teutonic Order, and the old duke of Trakai, on the other hand, was still sitting quite well in his saddle? Duke Kęstutis would perhaps have found much appreciation in Viking-Age Scandinavia or in the world of the Niebelungs, but even in the pagan Lithuania of his time he was a man from another age. It may be exemplified by reference to Vytautas who in 1380 was present at the same hunt at which Jogaila and the envoys of the Teutonic Order concluded the separate treaty. Vytautas certainly could not have been unaware of what was going on around him.⁸² We have already indicated that there were internal problems within the family of Kęstutis. In time his overbearing behaviour spilled over beyond his most intimate circle. When Jogaila gave his sister Maria in marriage to his close collaborator Vaidila, Kęstutis took this as a personal insult: he was convinced that his niece had been given to a man born into too low a status for a spouse of princely blood.⁸³ To be sure Jogaila overstepped a family tradition, but it would be awkward to suggest that it was uncle Kęstutis, rather than a brother, who had the 'right' to decide as to whom Jogaila's sister had to be given in marriage. The fury of Duke Kęstutis against Vaidila was deep enough to have this man killed as soon as he got the upper hand in Lithuania.⁸⁴ When the boot was soon on the other foot, the

la dynastie: exemple de Jan Długosz, historiographe des Jagellon', *Les Princes et l'Histoire du XIV^e au XVIII^e siècle*, ed. C. Grell, W. Paravicini, J. Voss [*Pariser Historische Studien*, 47] (Bonn, 1998), 171–80. According to Wigand of Marburg. Kęstutis was strangled: 'Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 614. On the other hand, some other contemporary sources speak of a suicide. Cf. 'Joannis de Czarnkow Chronicon Polonorum', 179; 'Annalista Thorunensis', ed. E. Strehlke. *SRP*, III, 122; Johann von Posilge, 'Chronik', 123.

⁸² Gudavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, 152.

⁸³ For the personality of Vaidila that was remade into a *bête-noire* by fifteenth-century Lithuanian chroniclers, see Rowell, 'Pious princesses', 19–24.

⁸⁴ Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, 22; Rowell, 'Pious princesses', 23.

winning side reciprocated accordingly by causing Kęstutis' wife and her relatives to perish.⁸⁵

These traits of Kęstutis and his differing views as to how public affairs and familial relations had to be conducted did not serve him well when he stood behind the ultimate challenge in the vicinity of Trakai in August 1382. The pagans from Žemaitija did not show off their fighting spirit in support of Kęstutis despite his apparent readiness to observe the ancestral faith to the end. His troops from Trakai must also have shown no strong inclination to fight against other still nominally pagan Lithuanian troops supported by their Teutonic allies. The pagan war cries went unheard. The circumstances of the last days of Kęstutis resemble a sad picture of an abandoned old man.

Jogaila managed to regain his grand-ducal throne within less than a year. Now he had free hands to try to come to terms with the Teutonic Order. The Order knew quite well what price to ask for peace. There had to be a deal. As in the time of Mindaugas, so now the Order wanted to get the western part of Lithuania, Žemaitija, which separated Prussia from Livonia and had proved too hard a nut to crack by usual military means. Jogaila conceded Žemaitija to the Order as far east as the river of Dubysa.⁸⁶ It looked like a remuneration of the Order for its support in the recently ended civil war. Jogaila also promised to receive the Roman Catholic faith through the mediation of the Teutonic Order and within four years.

It is impossible to tell how seriously Jogaila took these promises. They were not intended to come into force immediately; they were to be ratified the next year. Just before the conclusion of the treaty something happened that boded ill for future ratification. Duke Vytautas managed to break free from his internment at the castle of Krėva and already in October 1382 he arrived in the lands of the Teutonic Order seeking asylum, which was granted. Subsequently the Order declined the request of Jogaila to extradite the runaway.

⁸⁵ See n. ...

⁸⁶ *CDL*, nos. 3–5, pp. 56–60. *LU*, III, no. 1184, coll. 393–4; no. 1185, coll. 394–395; no. 1186, coll. 395–6 (31 October 1382). See also O. Litskevich, 'Ordenskii ekzempliar dogovora o chetyrekhletnem peremirii i voennoi pomoshchi mezhdou Velikim Kniazhestvom Litovskim i Tevtonskim Ordenom (31 Oktjabria 1382 g.)', *IŠT*, 5 (2014), 215–32.

This fact alone could well have served as an excuse for Jogaila to find a way out of his engagement with the Order, but his detachment was made all the easier due to unforeseeable tricks of nature. When the time was approaching for the treaty of Dubysa to be ratified, Grand Master Konrad Zöllner von Rotenstein in the company of high-ranking officials, Bishops Henry of Warmia and John of Pomesania were slowly moving upstream the Nemunas River. Jogaila and his entourage arrived at the meeting place on time. The unusually hot, July of 1383, made the Nemunas so shallow that the heavily-loaded Teutonic vessels were no longer able to advance. The grand master sent messengers asking Jogaila to come a little downstream. Jogaila obstinately refused to move. The grand master had to turn back and when his patience was finally exhausted he declared war on Jogaila.⁸⁷ One more round of military confrontation followed, and now Vytautas proved his value. As early as 1383 he received baptism, was gathering his supporters in Prussia, and was only too happy to participate in the fight against ‘the enemy of the faith’, Jogaila.⁸⁸ This fight subsided only when Jogaila invited Vytautas to come back to Lithuania in the summer of 1384 and gave him part of his patrimony as a hopeful sign that further restitution of the patrimony would be possible in the near future. For Vytautas, Jogaila was, presumably, ‘the enemy of the faith’ no more. As the regained part of his patrimony comprised Rus’ian lands, Vytautas underwent Orthodox baptism in 1384. The Teutonic Order continued its own war without being able to bring Jogaila back to negotiations or force concessions. Its branch in Livonia colluded with Jogaila’s brother Duke Andrew trying to cause more damage to Jogaila on every side. The usual *Realpolitik* was order of the day again.

In contrast to Algirdas and Kęstutis, Jogaila did not try to counteract solely by military measures. His promise to accept baptism given in 1382 was not a fleeting word. He wanted to use it as an occasion for gaining a passport granting him admission to the neighbouring Christian (Latin Catholic) world. The events leading up to the treaty

⁸⁷ Gersdorf, *Der Deutsche Orden*, 59–65.

⁸⁸ On the baptism of Vytautas *CEV*, no. 15, p. 5. See also Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, 26–7.

of Krėva in 1385, to the marriage of Queen Jadwiga of Poland and Grand Duke Jogaila of Lithuania, and to the wholesale conversion of Lithuanians in 1387 have been analysed a number of times, most recently by R. Frost.⁸⁹ These events make up the real and narrative backbone of much of East European history and there is no need to discuss them in detail here. As far as our topic is concerned we have to note that there are widespread views that it was primarily the Teutonic Order and the Greek Orthodox believers that discouraged or hampered the conversion of pagan Lithuanians. In the light of these theories Lithuanian pagan rulers appear as if placed on the horns of dilemma which way, East or West, to choose.⁹⁰ Apart from more particular instances, there is one more special issue which has served as a case in point to illustrate the ‘choosing of faith’ on the part of Lithuanian leadership just a few years before the final turn to Roman Catholicism.

A made-in-Russia theory about Jogaila’s turn to Moscow

There is a rather widespread and seemingly robust historiographical claim suggesting that serious negotiations over the baptism of Jogaila into the Orthodox Church were conducted between the rulers of Lithuania and Muscovy in about 1384. The first scholar to advance information suggesting the reality of such negotiations was a prominent Soviet historian, Lev Cherepnin.⁹¹ Having conducted a comprehensive investigation into the grand-ducal archives

⁸⁹ O. Halecki, *Dzieje Unji jagiellońskiej*, vol. 1: *W wiekach średnich*; vol. 2: *W XVI wieku* (Cracow, 1919–20); J. Bardach, *Studia z ustroju i prawa Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV–XVII w.* (Warsaw, 1970), 11–67; J. Wyrozumski, *Królowa Jadwiga. Między epoką piastowską i jagiellońską* (Cracow, 2006), 183ff. R. Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania*, vol. 1: *The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, 1385–1569* (Oxford, 2015), 3ff.

⁹⁰ These views are presented in a nutshell by J. Ochmański, ‘Przyczyny opóźnionej Chrystianizacji Litwy’, *KH*, 78 (1971), 870–1.

⁹¹ L. V. Cherepnin, ‘Dogovornye i dukhovnye gramoty Dmitriia Donskogo kak istochnik dlia izucheniiia politicheskoi istorii Velikogo Kniazhestva Moskovskogo’, *Istoricheskie Zapiski*, 24 (1947), 248–9. L. V. Cherepnin, *Russkie feodal’nye arkhivy XIV–XV v.*, 1 (Moscow–Leningrad, 1948), 51, 207.

of Muscovy, Cherepnin came across a residue of some tradition preserved, as he supposed, in a copy-book made during the reign of Ivan III (1462–1505), whose very existence was only deduced from the 1626 register of the grand-ducal archives in Moscow.⁹² From the very beginning of the discussion, all the transcribed texts contained therein were treated as documents and thus were accorded an unquestionable degree of reliability and authenticity. It must also be noted in passing that no investigation into the issue of the authenticity of the documents was ever undertaken by Cherepnin with regard to any documents contained in the grand-ducal archives in Moscow. Such a procedure, which would have been self-evident in Western scholarship, was a virtual impossibility in Stalinist Russia. Such a flaw has not been given due consideration by scholars who worked in the so-called free world. Already in 1950 in London, Henryk Paszkiewicz produced a special paper prompted by Cherepnin's discovery of the new sources. The most thrilling piece of information intimated that Grand Duke Jogaila of Lithuania was considering an Orthodox option just before his final turn to Roman Catholicism – a conversion heavy in consequences for centuries to come. Paszkiewicz stated that there was no reason to cast doubt on the truthfulness of this text and subsequently showed how well this newly discovered information was compatible with his own research done prior to World War II, when familiarity with those new facts was impossible.⁹³ Ever since, this theory of Lithuania's possible conversion to Orthodoxy on the eve of her union with Poland has usually been taken aboard in virtually every textbook dealing with the conversion of Lithuania, a topic that can

⁹² This book ('kopiinaia kniga') may be nothing more than an invention of Cherepnin, 'Dogovornye' 247. The conjecture of such a book might well invoke in any medievalist's mind a parallel image of a *chartularium*, a kind of copy-book on which so much of medieval studies rely. However, what we see in the 1626 register with regard to Lithuania-related documents of the fourteenth century are three separate fascicles. The editors of the 1626 register gave no notice of this putative copy-book at all. It is true that copy-books containing copies of charters and other documents reflecting Lithuanian–Muscovite relations did exist, but they relate to the sixteenth century. Cf. *Opis' arkhiva Posol'skogo prikaza 1626 goda*, ed. V. I. Gal'tsov, S. O. Shmidt (Moscow, 1977), 6–26, 34–35, 228–239.

⁹³ Cf. H. Paszkiewicz, 'Jagiello w przededniu unii polsko-litewskiej w oświetleniu nowych źródeł', *Teki Historyczne*, 4 (1950), 188 ff.

hardly be passed over in silence in any more general treatment of Lithuanian or Muscovite history in the late Middle Ages.⁹⁴ Taking this wide currency into account, it is a bit surprising to find out that this theory and its documentary evidence has not received critical treatment until now. Within decent limits we will try to share some observations and give some remarks.

So the most interesting ‘document’ provides information that Grand Duke Dmitry Ivanovich of Moscow concluded a treaty with the Grand Duchess Yuliana, wife of Algirdas, according to which her son, Grand Duke Jogaila, should marry a daughter of Dmitry, acknowledge Muscovite suzerainty over himself, be baptized into the Orthodox faith and, finally, proclaim publicly his new Orthodox identity.⁹⁵ If you are not surprised at this retelling, you are still in the line of a long-term historiographical tradition which has been accepting this information at face value for so long. Our own suspicion with regard to the received wisdom cropped up only gradually, and initially has been based only on the consideration and reconsideration of a most bizarre feature of a ‘document’: a mother (widow) brokering a marriage for her son, who by then was a fully-fledged ruler conscious of his sovereign powers. Such a document would have been a most unique one in the context of pagan Lithuania, where women, even if they were grand-ducal spouses, did not enjoy much authority, and therefore most of them remained nameless to posterity. Such a ‘document’ would have been no less strange in all

⁹⁴ Cf. Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia*, 236–8; F. Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization* (New Brunswick NJ, 1962), 221–2; Z. Wdowiszewski, *Genealogia Jagiellonów* (Warsaw, 1968), 33–4; Kosman, *Drogi zaniku*, 18; Ivinskis, *Lietuvos istorija*, 280–1; Hellmann, ‘Die polnisch-litauische Union’, 31–2; Obolensky, ‘A Philorhomaïos anthropos’, 94; Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 242; Ochmański, *Historia Litwy*, 74; Halecki, *Jadwiga of Anjou*, 119–21; P. Rabikauskas, ‘La Lituanie tra Oriente e Occidente nel Medioevo’, *The Common Christian Roots*, 76; T. Wasilewski, ‘Prawosławne imiona Jagiełły i Witolda’, *AC*, 19 (1987), 105, 112–13; S. Szczur, ‘Negocjatorzy unii Polski z Litwą i ich kariery’, *AC*, 19 (1987), 184; Shabul’do, *Zemli Iugo-Zapadnoi Rusi*, 134; M. Giedroyć, ‘Lithuanian options’, 97–9; Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 84; Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa*, 327; Błaszczuk, *Dzieje*, 1, 211–12; Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 125–6; Gudavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, 161; Khoroshkevich, ‘Das Moskauer Fürstentum’, 103; V. Almonaitis, *Žemaitijos politinė padėtis 1380–1410* (Kaunas, 1998), 99; Baronas, Dubonis, Petrauskas, *Lietuvos istorija*, 532.

⁹⁵ Cherepnin, ‘Dogovornye’, 247–50; Cherepnin, *Russkie Feodal’nye Arkhivy*, 1, 51, 207.

the history of medieval Europe where rulers kept decision-making in such matters as conversion to one faith or another in their own hands. If this supposed 'document' were genuine, Jogaila would appear to be a very special ruler indeed: he came of age but remained so powerless that his mother and his prospective father-in-law Dmitry Ivanovich of Moscow could decide on his bride and his future. From other and strictly contemporary sources we do know that it was Jogaila who arranged a marriage for his sister Maria, so why should he have committed his own fate to the hands of his mother?⁹⁶

It should be noted once again that what has been called 'a document' is only a copy preserved in some non-extant fascicle containing a miscellany of other copies of documents related to Lithuanian-Muscovite relations during the reign of Algirdas and that of Dmitry Ivanovich. Only one document (a truce treaty of 1371) is mentioned in a number of the registers of the Muscovite archive, and only this one has come down to us.⁹⁷ All other copies of the documents contained in the three separate fascicles appeared only in the 1626 register and disappeared after a while without leaving any trace anywhere. It must also be said that no contemporary fourteenth-century sources produce any evidence of any Lithuanian-Muscovite

⁹⁶ The idea, that duchess Yuliana was politically influential in Lithuania after the death of her husband Algirdas, lacks sound foundations. Cf. Paszkiewicz, 'Jagiello w przededniu unii', 188. Hellmann, *Grundzüge*, 33. In essence this notion is based on the fact that Yuliana was indicated as witness to several treaties made between the Teutonic Order and Jogaila. However, it must be stressed that it was the Teutonic Order that supplied *materia scribendi* and that is why inferences concerning power relations in pagan grand-ducal court should be made with utmost caution. It may also be noted that in her alleged capacity as marriage-broker for her son Jogaila Yuliana would have stood in stark opposition to virtually everything what is known about widows whose status even in Christian societies was precarious and in need of protection from their male relatives or Church institutions. Cf. J. Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge, 1983), 60–8; F. Pellaton, 'La veuve et ses droits de la Basse Antiquité au haut Moyen Age', *Veuves et Veuvage dans le Haut Moyen Age*, ed. M. Parisse (Paris, 1993), 62–7; J. L. Nelson, 'The wary widow', *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. W. Davies, P. Fouracre (Cambridge, 1995), 84–9.

⁹⁷ This document is mentioned in the 1614, 1626 and 1673 registers of the archives: *Opisi Tsarskogo arkhiva XVI veka i arkhiva Posol'skogo prikaza 1614 goda*, ed. S. O. Shmidt (Moscow, 1960), 61. *Opis' 1626 goda*, 34. *Opis' arkhiva posol'skogo prikaza 1673 goda*, ed. V. I. Gal'tsov, S. O. Shmidt, I (Moscow, 1990), 40. Published in *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh u udel'nykh kniazei XIV–XVI vv.*, ed. L. V. Cherepnin (Moscow, 1950), no. 6, pp. 21–2.

negotiations undertaken by Jogaila and Dmitry Ivanovich in the early 1380s. Neither does the general political situation that evolved in the wake of the sack of Moscow by Tokhtamysh in 1382 provide any safe ground for locating such overtures in the proper context.⁹⁸ At best, relations between Jogaila and Dmitry Ivanovich remained cool at the time. Nor is there any independent sign of Yuliana's pro-Muscovite inclination, which is only natural to expect taking into account the long-term tribulations suffered by her Tverite kin at the hands of the same Dmitry of Moscow.⁹⁹ On the other hand, it should be noted that all the known authentic documents produced by Jogaila and affecting him and his relations with his relatives or foreign powers were made in his name. This consideration alone suffices to cast a doubt over this 'marriage agreement' (and probably all others related to Jogaila and at least to those of his brothers who acted consistently in support of him). This 'document' seems to have been nothing else but a later Muscovite forgery produced some time before 1626. Some other contextual considerations only reinforce our suspicion in this direction. When we read the contents of the fascicles as they are reflected in the 1626 register, we come across a rather unusual characteristic of Algirdas as a matchmaker (Rus. *svat*) in relation to both Dmitry Ivanovich and Vladimir Andreevich. The word *svat* applies primarily to the parents of a bridegroom and a bride in their mutual relation.¹⁰⁰ Although Algirdas is not explicitly mentioned as a sponsor of marriage for Jogaila, the immediate context of the 'marriage agreement' in the 1626 register leaves one with the impression that the father and the mother of Jogaila 'must have been' acting in unison. The problem is that by then Algirdas had been dead long enough not to be able to act as a *svat* for either Dmitry or his cousin Vladimir.¹⁰¹ It is true that

⁹⁸ See p. 241f.

⁹⁹ Cherepnin, *Obrazovanie*, 557–75.

¹⁰⁰ I. I. Sreznevskii, *Slovar' drevnerusskogo iazyka*, 3/1 (Moscow, 1989), 267–8. V. Dal', *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikoruskogo iazyka*, 4 (Moscow, 1991), 145.

¹⁰¹ This issue becomes even more complicated if one pays attention to the fact that the term *svat* applies in these registers equally well to Algirdas' brother Kęstutis. This term *svat* was already noticed by Cherepnin but received no comment from either him or other scholars known to us. It was enough for Cherepnin to note that Duke Vladimir Andreevich was son-in-law to Algirdas (Rus. *ziat'*), which is

it is only we, historians, who now know this for certain. It is an open question whether a sixteenth-century compiler, or a seventeenth-century transcriber knew who was whose *svat* and when all this must have taken place. A more probable answer would be – no. One of the related ‘documents’ informs us that Jogaila and his brothers Skirgaila and Kaributas concluded a treaty by ‘kissing cross’ to Dmitry Ivanovich in the year 6902 (1394), but this is impossible as the latter died in 1389. Cherepnin found a way out of this awkward situation by proposing an emendation to this date – 69[9]2, so as to arrive at the ‘necessary’ date of the year 1384, which, in his opinion, also applied to the ‘marriage agreement’.¹⁰² However, it must be emphasized that in reality the emendated date of 69[9]2 refers not to 1384, but to 1484!¹⁰³ In a somewhat later publication he mended this slip of the pen [?] by introducing a ‘necessary’ correction: the year 6902 was recast into 6892. Although the latter date was provided with a question mark, he continues: ‘And so, an agreement between Dmitry Donskoi and Jogaila was concluded in 1384’.¹⁰⁴ With one possible exception, no one paid attention to these rather voluntaristic and far from consequent ‘emendations’, because the date 1384 ‘fitted’ perfectly well into a period just before *annus memorabilis* of 1385.¹⁰⁵ Thus the scholarly rationalization got the upper hand over the ‘incongruent’ date.

Furthermore, the internal contents of the agreement are starkly improbable: Jogaila had to agree to be, literally, ‘in their will’, in essence to be subservient to the Muscovite rulers (Dmitry and his

correct, because he was married to Algirdas’ daughter Helen. Cf. L. Cherepnin. ‘Dogovornye’, 248. Duke Vladimir was married to her in 1372. See Tęgowski. *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 124. However, no *svat* connection can be established between Algirdas and Dmitry or Vladimir, let alone these Muscovite dukes and Kęstutis. The above cited dictionaries of the Russian language bring forth one more secondary meaning of this term as a form of polite address between two rulers. In view of hostile relations between Algirdas of Lithuania and Dmitry of Moscow it would be rather difficult to expect the application of this rare meaning of the word. It is also significant that there is no contemporary source (Rus’ian chronicles including) which would have used this term for the characterisation of relations between Algirdas and Dmitry.

¹⁰² Cherepnin, ‘Dogovornye’, 249.

¹⁰³ The editors of the 1626 register did not emendate and reproduced the date in question as it stands – 6902. *Opis’ 1626 goda*, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Cherepnin, *Russkie*, 51.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Wasilewski, ‘Prawosławne imiona’, 112–13.

cousin Vladimir) as his Orthodox brothers, Andrew and Dmitry, had already been for some time. There is no trace in contemporary historical record there that Jogaila had ever produced such inclinations. Therefore, in sum, this ‘marriage agreement’ has to be regarded as a concoction of later Muscovite anti-Jagiellonian propaganda. It was made so clumsily that, as far as we know, it was never put to practical use. It emerged in some dark recesses of the Kremlin of Moscow and then disappeared, leaving a faint trace in the 1626 register from the Russian foreign affairs bureau, ‘Posol’skii prikaz’. This ‘agreement’ can, and should be, collated with Russian apocryphal stories of Jogaila as an Orthodox Christian believer, who prior to his submission to the ‘Latin heresy’ (*Latynskaia prelest’*) apparently underwent Orthodox baptism and received the name of James (*Iakov*).¹⁰⁶ Its further investigation may be helpful in trying to understand better the processes of political myth-making in early modern Muscovy, but it has nothing to do with fourteenth-century history.¹⁰⁷

Therefore this ‘newly discovered’ source is not genuine and cannot be put to meaningful use in the study of fourteenth-century Lithuanian

¹⁰⁶ This tale has made its first (certain) appearance in the *Poslanie Spiridona Savvy*, which cannot be taken as a reliable source even though some parts of it may be based on a fifteenth-century Tverite chronicle. This text falls in line with the *Skazanie o kniaziaxh vladimirskikh*, in which Lithuanian dukes are portrayed as originally subservient to the Riurikovichi ancestors of the Muscovite rulers: *Skazanie o kniaziaxh vladimirskikh*, ed. R. P. Dmitrieva (Moscow–Leningrad, 1955), 82ff. The need to emphasize the Orthodox character of Lithuania so as to display her Orthodox credentials prior to her conversion to the Roman Catholic faith was a politically expedient device used as a means of ideological justification for laying claims on the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This was what was in great demand for the rulers of Moscow and their subjects from the late fifteenth century onwards. The ideological roots of such texts masquerading as ‘history’ were not recognized fully by Tadeusz Wasilewski and that is why his theories about the Orthodox names of Algirdas (Alexander) and Jogaila (Iakov) are deeply flawed. Cf. Wasilewski, ‘Prawosławne imiona’, 108–11. They resemble echoes from Russian imperial propaganda dressed in historical textbooks: cf. M. P. Smirnov, *Iagello-Iakov-Vladislav i pervoe soedinenie Litvy s Pol’sheiu* (Odessa, 1868), 158ff.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. B. N. Floria, ‘Rodoslovie litovskikh kniaziei v russkoi politicheskoi mysli XVI v.’, *Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekove*: *Sbornik statei*, ed. L. V. Cherepnin (Moscow, 1978), 322. We may note, that there is a very strange discrepancy between many a study devoted to political myth-making in late medieval and early modern Muscovy and very few investigations into the topic of forgeries in the same country. The ‘marriage agreement’ between Yuliana and Dmitry Donskoi provides one more instance showing that Russian clerks were far from always being mere copy-makers.

history in general, and the process of her conversion to Christianity in particular. Its uncritical reception and avid use have been caused by an acute hunger felt so strongly for new sources by anyone who is seriously engaged in the study of medieval Lithuania. It is opportune here to recall that a fourteenth-century English county may boast of many more primary sources than the entire Grand Duchy of Lithuania extending, almost literally, from sea to sea.¹⁰⁸

It follows that the story of how Jogaila came from Vilnius to Cracow does not need a mental detour to Moscow. His way to Jadwiga was straighter and shorter. As long as she did not come of age, she could not decide for herself whom she was going to marry. Like her sister Maria, who was betrothed to Sigismund of Luxembourg in 1374, so Jadwiga was envisaged as the future wife of William Habsburg back in 1378. Within a few days of the death of Louis the Great on 11 September, 1382, Maria was declared Queen of Hungary. Despite relatively strong support for an offspring of the Angevin dynasty on the Polish throne, there was little enthusiasm about either Sigismund or William as king of Poland in the near future.¹⁰⁹ Despite a tumultuous interregnum in Poland, by the end of 1382 the representatives of the Polish Crown emphasized that they would recognize that daughter of Louis as their Queen who would be ready to reside permanently in Poland. This was a statement in favour of Jadwiga, because her elder sister Maria was unlikely to exchange her life in Hungary for one in Poland. However, it was not before October 1384 that Jadwiga at long last arrived in Cracow and was crowned as Queen of Poland. This took place on 16 October 1384.¹¹⁰ To find a man for Jadwiga was too serious a business to be let go without the good offices of seasoned statesmen of the Polish Crown. Their dislike for William ran in parallel to similar feelings nurtured by Jadwiga's mother, Elisabeth, with regard to

¹⁰⁸ Rowell, 'Lithuania and the West', 303.

¹⁰⁹ For more detail see J. Tęgowski, 'Bezkrólewie po śmierci Ludwika Węgierskiego a geneza unii Polski z Litwą', *Studia Historyczne z XIII–XV wieku. Wydanie jubileuszowe z okazji 75-lecia urodzin i 45-lecia pracy naukowej Profesora doktora Kazimierza Jasirskiego*, ed. J. Śliwiński (Olsztyn, 1995), 92–8, 101–8. J. Nikodem. *Jadwiga król Polski* (Wrocław, 2009), 149ff.

¹¹⁰ Tęgowski, 'Bezkrólewie', 105, 107–8.

her prospective son-in-law.¹¹¹ This common ground helped to find a common solution between the lords of Little Poland and Queen Elisabeth. In such conditions it was absolutely legal and easy for the Polish statesmen to engage themselves in search for another husband for Jadwiga. Oscar Halecki was sure that initial negotiations between the representatives of Poland and Grand Duke Jogaila must be dated to the first half of 1383, if not earlier.¹¹² Jan Tęgowski has proven quite convincingly that it was impossible then, and suggested that they may have started only with the arrival of the official delegation of Jogaila in Cracow on 18 January 1385.¹¹³ Even if there are no extant relevant sources, it is difficult to subscribe to so rigoristic an interpretation, because high-ranking delegations used to be sent in the wake of initial negotiations after the finer points to be discussed over had already been settled. Therefore, in our opinion, the coronation of Jadwiga should simply be assumed as a *terminus post quem* for initial negotiations which entered the official phase with the arrival of the Lithuanian delegation in January 1385.¹¹⁴ The main negotiator must be seen in the person of Jogaila's brother Skirgaila.¹¹⁵ For further negotiations in the matter of the marriage of Jadwiga and Jogaila part of the Lithuanian delegation went to Buda to discuss the issue with Queen Elisabeth. It was headed by Boris Karijotaitis, who enjoyed long-term relations with the Hungarian royal court, and by the the Vilnius merchant Hanul, a proven supporter of Jogaila. Initial steps were propitious enough and finally the Polish delegation went to Lithuania, where in the castle of Krėva a marriage agreement, now a real one, was concluded on 14 August 1385.¹¹⁶ For the hand of Jadwiga, Jogaila

¹¹¹ Halecki, *Jadwiga of Anjou*, 97–8, 100.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 104–5.

¹¹³ Tęgowski, 'Bezkrólewie', 108–10.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, 1, 205–6.

¹¹⁵ 'Kalendarz katedry krakowskiej', ed. Z. Kozłowska-Budkowa, *MPH*, V, n. s. (Warsaw, 1978), 115.

¹¹⁶ *Akta Unji Polski z Litwą*, ed. S. Kutrzeba, W. Semkowicz (Cracow, 1932), no. 1, pp. 1–3; M. Koczerska, 'Autentyczność dokumentu unii krewskiej', *KH*, 99 (1992), 59–80; *1385 m. rugpjūčio 14 d. Krėvos aktas*, R. Čapaitė, J. Kiaupienė, S. C. Rowell, E. Rimša, E. Ulčinaitė (Vilnius, 2002); R. Petrauskas, 'Der litauische Blick auf den polnisch-litauischen Staatsverband – "Verlust der Staatlichkeit" oder Bewahrung der Parität', *ZfO*, 53 (2004), 363–72.

promised many things, among which the most important for our topic is his promise to attach Lithuanian and Ruthenian lands to Poland for ever, and to accept baptism in the Latin rite himself and make it be accepted by the still pagan population of Lithuania. Such promises and engagements were reciprocated by the Polish side, whose representatives issued a declaration in January 1386 that they would elect Grand Duke Jogaila of Lithuania as King of Poland.¹¹⁷ Further events unfolded in rapid succession: within a few days of his arrival in Cracow, Jogaila was baptised on 15 February, was married to Jadwiga on 18 February, and, after some pause in festivities, crowned King of Poland on 4 March.¹¹⁸ Some Polish historians have tended to describe Jadwiga's role in her own marriage as a very generous sacrifice on her part: so young and not afraid to marry a relatively old man from a wild pagan country.¹¹⁹ More recent research shows that Jogaila may have been not as old as it had appeared to modern historians,¹²⁰ his character was certainly not spoiled and his qualities as ruler must have been known to young Jadwiga. She was certainly receptive to what had been told her by older men as regards the conversion of pagans and the increase of the Church to which she was sincerely devoted. The marriage was beneficial to both sides and there is no sign that either Jadwiga or Jogaila ever regretted their choice.¹²¹ So, in 1386, what Jogaila

¹¹⁷ *Akta Unji*, no. 2, pp. 3–4 (11 January 1386).

¹¹⁸ 'Kalendarz katedry krakowskiej', 125, 129; *Rozbiór krytyczny Annalium Poloniae Jana Długosza*, ed. S. Gawęda K. Pieradzka, K. Stachowska, J. Dąbrowski, vol. 1: *Z lat 1385–1444* (Wrocław, 1961), 10–11. Halecki, *Jadwiga of Anjou*, 152–4. There is an old tradition harking back to the nineteenth century (J. Caro) according to which Prince Władysław Opolczyk may have been a godfather of Jogaila. It is highly unlikely, because he was then absent from Cracow. S. Sroka, 'Czy Władysław Opolczyk był ojcem chrzestnym Władysława Jagiełły?', *NP*, 74 (1990), 299–300. For the circumstances surrounding the marriage of Jadwiga and Jogaila and for the finer points in 'close reading' of the Act of Kréva see J. Mańkowski, 'Dzień urodzin królowej Jadwigi Andegaweńskiej i dzień jej ślubu z Władysławem Jagiełłą w kontekście aktu krewskiego. Uwagi filologa do interpretacji źródeł', *Rocznik Lubelskiego Towarzystwa Genealogicznego*, 5 (2013), 27–64.

¹¹⁹ This historiographical tradition and other related issues have recently been discussed by G. Błaszczuk, *Dzieje stosunków polsko-litewskich*, vol. 2/1: *Od Krewa do Lublina* (Poznań, 2007), 238–43.

¹²⁰ Jogaila may have been born in c. 1362: Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 125.

¹²¹ Different views on this issue are discussed by G. Błaszczuk, *Dzieje stosunków*, 2/1, 238ff.

had promised to the master of the Teutonic Order in 1382 – that he would accept the Christian faith within four years – came to be. That this period of four years has received no (good) explanation so far, is perhaps only a fortuitously happy coincidence. Finally, it may be noted after all that Jogaila's marriage to Jadwiga seems to be a rather straightforward affair. No other candidature appears to have been taken under consideration by Jogaila and his counsellors. By recalling the exploratory trip of 1379 undertaken by Skirgaila, we stress the necessity to bear it in mind that Jogaila may have had his own sources of information about what was going on in neighbouring Poland. An interest in some sort of rapprochement may have been shared by Jogaila and his supporters on the one hand, and at least by some of the Polish statesmen on the other. This very interface of mutual interests begs the question of who was the first to start negotiations largely irrelevant.¹²² When necessary conditions were in place all went ahead quite swiftly. Aside from the personal characteristics of Jadwiga, such course of action may partly be explained by the proximity of Poland to Lithuania marked not only by military confrontation, but also by marriage relations between the members of the Houses of Piast and Gediminas. It looks more than likely that the old notion of a marriage of an infidel ruler to a Christian spouse resulting in a wholesale conversion of the country proves once again to be true. In that, Lithuania certainly proves the rule, which, of course, has its own particular features.

At the end of this chapter one may ask once again, how such sharp changes could be accomplished so swiftly. It took less than four years to depart from the world encapsulated in the the funeral pyre of Kęstutis with all its pagan paraphernalia to arrive at the baptism of the Lithuanian grand duke and his coronation as King Władysław II of Poland in 1386. Did he have to overcome pagan opposition, for

¹²² In the past, there was much discussion as to which side was first to initiate such negotiations. It was imagined that if Poland was first to open them, it was an indication that this country was in a position of a supplicant vis-à-vis Lithuania, and *vice versa*. Even those historians who were far from being inspired by this nationalistic struggle over the 'honour' of one's respective nation were of the opinion that this issue was an important one. Cf. Paszkiewicz, *The Origin of Russia*, 238–41; Halecki, *Jadwiga of Anjou*, 104. Nowadays this issue has largely lost its appeal. Cf. Nikodem, *Jadwiga*, 159.

the redoubtable pagan Žemaitijans must still have been strong in their woods? Did he have to rally all his forces available to go ahead irrespective of the opposition of the Orthodox believers that had once been so strong as to discourage Gediminas, the grandfather of Jogaila, from his overture towards Latin Christianity in 1324? How much violence must have been applied to eradicate centuries-old customs and ancestral traditions is the topic of the next chapter.

The Demonstration of Christian Power in Vilnius in 1387 and Its Aftermath

King Jogaila on the look-out for pagan priests and temples

After spending most of 1386 in his kingdom making himself familiar to his new subjects, Jogaila finally returned to Lithuania intent on bringing to fruition his promise to convert his still pagan subjects to the Roman Catholic faith.¹ According to Jan Długosz, he came back in the company of high-ranking Polish clergymen and lay potentates. Even Queen Jadwiga must have travelled, Długosz imagined so, all the way to Vilnius eager to see the new country and her husband's people (*gentem*).² Once in Lithuania, King Jogaila reportedly called on Lithuanian princes, boyars and the rank-and-file population to come to Vilnius. There they duly met their ruler who now had to spend much effort in persuading them to turn away from their false gods and to adhere to the one true God. As was

1. A. Gašiorowski, *Itinerarium króla Władysława Jagiełły 1386–1434* (Warsaw, 1972), 28–9.

2. Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 159. This image of Queen Jadwiga as participating directly in the conversion of the last pagans of Europe has been regarded for quite a long time as a truthful reflection of historical reality. As late as the second half of the twentieth century there were attempts to find a time span for Jadwiga's arrival in Lithuania at the turn on 1386/87: G. Rutkowska, 'Itinerarium królowej Jadwigi 1384–1399', *Dzieło Jadwigi i Jagiełły: W sześćsetlecie Chrztu Litwy i jej związków z Polską*, ed. W. Biliński (Warsaw, 1989), 212–13. This image has been found to be too pathetic as it turned out that at the time when Jogaila was introducing the new Christian order in Vilnius in February 1387, Queen Jadwiga was far away in Red Ruthenia taking it from the hands of the Hungarian authorities and placing it under Polish rule: *Rozbiór krytyczny*, 15. There is now a general consensus in Polish historiography that Queen Jadwiga never visited Lithuania: cf. J. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 8. Queen Jadwiga found other ways to contribute to the Christianization of Lithuania: Błaszczuk, *Dzieje*, 2/1, 243–7.

only to be expected, the barbarians were reluctant to do so. Consequently Jogaila saw no other way but to order his (Polish) men to extinguish the eternal sacred fire that was uninterruptedly tended by a pagan priest in Vilnius, in the very heart of the nation. Then Christian zealots went over to destroy the temple and overturn the altar inside it, to fell the holy groves and kill snakes and vipers that were believed to have served as the familiars of false gods.³ Such a spectacle caused the barbarians to weep bitterly, but no one dared to murmur against the order of the king.⁴ However, the change of heart was approaching. This sort of exorcism proved fruitful after all. When the weepers saw with their own eyes that the destruction of the idols and other sacred objects caused no harm to the destroyers, they acknowledged the falsity of their gods and then 'the whole Lithuanian tribe and nation decided to embrace the Catholic faith and to renounce the ancient error'.⁵

It is manifestly clear that, according to Jan Długosz, the pagan religion in Lithuania was fully operative until the very conversion of the country, which took place in 1387. Even after it received so spectacular a débâcle in Vilnius in 1387, the old pagan religion must have remained as strong as ever in Žemaitija, where the Polish king had good chances of arrival only in 1413. Here the picture of Christian violence with regard to pagan holy sites and shrines is very similar. Having reached central parts of Žemaitija, Jogaila summoned the Žemaitijans who were told that it was deeply shameful to remain

³ In our opinion, the omnipresence of the snakes (or vipers) held at homes of pagans in Lithuania is to be seen as a learned deduction on the part of Jan Długosz. It is rather improbable that he had access to such evidence. Nonetheless, as a well-read and theologically trained person he must have had a clear understanding that paganism was a devilish delusion that could not go without the cult of snakes and other reptiles. It is known, for example, that the cult of the viper was a later Christian invention attached to earlier unspecified descriptions of the Langobardian cult centred around a holy tree: S. Gasparri, *La Cultura Tradizionale dei Langobardi: Struttura Tribale e Resistenze Paganhe* (Spoleto, 1983), 71–2.

⁴ The personal engagement of King Jogaila in advocating conversion to Christianity directly has been given its due weight in historiographical works since the time of Jan Długosz. The idea of the latter chronicler that the king was most instrumental in translating the basic prayers into Lithuanian may have been based on yet another piece of information supplied by Mikołaj Kozłowski in his Basle sermon of 1434, according to which the vernacular into which Jogaila would translate was Tatar!: *CE XV*, II, no. 221, p. 327 (July 1434).

⁵ Długosz, *Annales, Liber X*, 160.

engulfed in pagan superstition when all the rest of the Lithuanian people, from dukes to ordinary people, confessed and adored the one true God.⁶ As putting them to shame was not enough, Jogaila had to order Polish warriors to destroy pagan altars and to fell holy groves. During his trip of conversion Jogaila finally arrived in the region of the upper reaches of the Nevėžis River (modern central Lithuania). It was here, on the top of the highest hill there was a tower in which the eternal sacred fire was stoked by pagan priests engaged in continual supply of necessary firewood. The tower was demolished, the fire extinguished. The way for the conversion was thus opened up.

The pictures of the Lithuanian conversion in 1387 and 1413 provided by Jan Długosz have long commanded recognition as a true description of events that really took place. As a rule, historians were not so straightforward as to admit that every detail was a truthful reflection of reality. However, broadly outlined events such as the destruction of the pagan temple in Vilnius or the putting out of the sacred fire in Žemaitija were regarded as real events. This historiographical tradition has a connection to the idea that the pagan religion in Lithuania was still alive and well until its very last days. Some scholars have supposed that Lithuanians remained ‘fiercely pagan’ up to the time of their conversion in 1387.⁷ Their ancestral faith is regarded as a major social and political force because it was ‘a vigorous reavowal of their traditional religion’ that contributed heavily to the making of the Lithuanian state as dynamic and expansionary political structure: ‘Its gods were old, but its guns were new’.⁸ In a word, Lithuanian paganism is supposed to have been as well-organised as that of the Slavic Wends in the twelfth century.⁹ How well are such views based?

⁶ *Ibid.*, *Liber XI*, 21–6. This story has been analyzed in detail by V. Ališauskas, ‘Žemaičių krikšto pasakojimas: nuo Dluogošo iki Kojalavičiaus’, *Žemaičių krikštas ir krikščionybė Žemaitijoje: Šešių šimtmečių istorija [BIS, 7]* (Vilnius, 2014), 154–62.

⁷ Mažeika, ‘Bargaining for baptism’, 131. Cf. also Deveikė, ‘The legal aspect’, 117; Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades*, 139; W. P. Hyland, ‘John-Jerome of Prague (1368–1440): a Norbertine missionary in Lithuania’, *Analecta Praemonstratensia*, 78 (2002), 242.

⁸ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 312.

⁹ Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 5034.

The pagan religion of Lithuanians has long attracted much attention of students of religion, ethnology, philology, mythology, and history. Not so long ago a reader-friendly collection containing relevant material was prepared and published in a four-volume edition entitled *Sources of Baltic Religion and Mythology*.¹⁰ Valuable contributions on Lithuanian (and Baltic) mythology devoted to specific topics continue to appear. However, what is most important to note in relation to historical scholarship is that no in-depth critical investigation into sources aimed at covering a broad span of time has been undertaken so far. Mere similarities between most diverse evidence are viewed by ethnologists as mutually supportive and reflecting the great mosaic called the ancient religion of the Balts (or the Lithuanians).

What pitfalls may await a researcher bent on such a holistic approach may perhaps best be exemplified by the fate of the myth of Sovius, a cultural hero whose adventures in the hereafter are said to have provided a rationale for the introduction of the custom of cremation in the lands of the Balts (presumably in the early Middle Ages). The best experts in the Baltic mythology such as Vladimir Toporov, Norbertas Vėlius, Algirdas J. Greimas, Gintaras Beresnevičius and many others were quite assured that in dealing with this myth they were approaching the spiritual world of ancient Balts, and Lithuanians of course.¹¹ In their headlong rush to catch glimpses of a lost mythical world, they largely disregarded the literary setting of this myth which proves to be crucially important. It is preserved in the Chronograph of 1262 as a (supposed) insertion into the text of the Slavonic translation of the Byzantine chronicle of John Malalas.¹² Despite recent attempts to see it as

¹⁰ *BRMS*, ed. N. Vėlius, I–IV (Vilnius, 1996–2005).

¹¹ Cf. V. N. Toporov, 'Zametki po baltiiskoi mifologii', *Balto-Slavianskii Sbornik* (Moscow, 1972), 289–314; N. Vėlius, 'Senovės lietuvių religija ir mitologija'. *Krikščionybė ir jos socialinis vaidmuo Lietuvoje* (Vilnius, 1986), 12–20; A. J. Greimas, *Tautos atminties beieškant* (Vilnius–Chicago, 1990), 357; G. Beresnevičius. *Dausos: Pomirtinio gyvenimo samprata senojoje lietuvių pasaulėžiūroje* (Klaipėda, 1990), 72–84; idem, 'Sovijaus mitas kaip senosios baltiškos kultūros šifras'. *Ikikrikščioniškos Lietuvos kultūra: Istoriniai ir teoriniai aspektai* (Vilnius, 1992), 88–107.

¹² A critical edition and collation of various versions and the enumeration of different places in which Sovius is mentioned in the relevant texts is provided

closely related to Lithuania's sliding back into paganism during the last years of the rule of Mindaugas,¹³ some other avenues look more promising. It has only recently been asserted in more forceful terms that this myth has almost nothing to do with the Balts: its structural elements are likely to have been taken over from those biblical passages and early Byzantine texts that dealt with the rise of idolatry in general.¹⁴ Another attempt at explaining the origin of this myth seems to hit the mark even closer. Sergey Temchin has adduced evidence and additional arguments that the basis for the myth of Sovius might have been provided by ninth-twelfth-century Arabic sources containing tales about the inhabitants of the city of Harran in northern Mesopotamia, who called themselves Sabians. Their legendary ancestor known by the name of Sabius was regarded as a progenitor of all pagans in general.¹⁵ So the origins of this myth may be Semitic and have nothing to do with the mythology of the Balts. The throbbing mythological tradition of the pagans still living next door to his monastic abode was of little concern for the Rus'ian scribe who simply recycled a myth available in his literary sources. He was sure that all pagans from all times and places were essentially of the same ilk and therefore the ready-made descriptions could fit any of them equally well. It was after all the *Hellenes* who diffused their erroneous beliefs

by I. Lemeškin, *Sovijaus sakmė ir 1262 metų chronografas (pagal Archyvinį, Varšuvos, Vilniaus ir I. J. Zabelino nuorašus)* (Vilnius, 2009). The myth of Sovius is generally considered the insertion into the Slavonic translation of the chronicle of Malalas. However, one must note, that the text of the Malalas chronicle has not come down to us in full, so the possibility of this myth as an integral part of the chronicle cannot be ruled out (we owe this remark to Sergey Temchin). For the chronicle of Malalas, see W. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke, 2010), 241ff. For its Slavonic versions, see S. Franklin, 'Malalas in Slavonic', *Studies in John Malalas*, ed. E. Jeffreys, B. Croke, R. Scott [*Byzantina Australiensia*, 6] (Sydney, 1990), 276–87.

¹³ Lemeškin, *Sovijaus sakmė*, 15.

¹⁴ T. Vilkul, 'Sozdanie Soviia: rabota sostavitelia Iudeiskogo khronografa (XIII v.)', *IŠT*, 2 (2010), 13–27.

¹⁵ S. I. Temchin, 'O vozmozhnom vostochnom proiskhozhdenii mifa o Sovii, izlozhenogo v Iudeiskom khronografe 1262 goda', *Senoji Lietuvos Literatūra*, 24 (Vilnius, 2010), 19–30. The Arabic origin of the name of Sovius was known in the nineteenth century (*Źródła do mytologii litewskiej*, ed. A. Mierzyński, I (Warsaw, 1892), 132–3. It was put aside by twentieth-century scholars engaged in the study of Baltic mythology.

far to the north to ensnare in them the Baltic and Finno-Ugrian tribes.¹⁶ Such learned endeavours tell us almost nothing about the situation on the ground which found only very dim reflection in an accompanying reference to the gods and goddesses venerated by Lithuanian pagans.¹⁷

This digression shows that what is taken to be representative of the Baltic mythology, if subjected to source-critical analysis as in modern historical scholarship, turns out to be a patchwork of very diverse texts. Here and there the relics of the Baltic mythology may have been preserved but arguably in a much more diluted state than is generally assumed. How much paganism *per se* may be an invention of later Christian centuries has been demonstrated by Michael Brauer, who has recently dealt with late medieval Prussian material. He succeeded in showing that much of what may have been regarded as religiously neutral phenomena of the festive culture of Old Prussians in the fourteenth century could be turned into a paganism in the age of anxiety and crisis as was the case with the Teutonic *Ordensstaat* in the first half of the fifteenth century.¹⁸ As long as similar work with regard to the Lithuanian material has not been undertaken, it is problematic to tell how much of 'genuine' information about Lithuanian pagan religion would have remained if the above-mentioned four volumes of mythological material were subjected to similar procedure of revision and re-evaluation. For our topic the most relevant author is Jan Długosz and that is why it is necessary to devote some special attention to him.

Jan Długosz was the writer who produced the first comprehensive account on how Lithuanian pagans were converted to the Roman Catholic faith. The conversion was accomplished through the good offices of King Władysław Jogaila of Poland and his Polish collaborators, spiritual and lay alike. In an attempt to show what glorious deeds were then carried out Długosz depicted

¹⁶ Cf. Lemeškin, *Sovijaus sakmė*, 170. It is supposed that this insertion was made in some time around 1262.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 169–70.

¹⁸ M. Brauer, *Die Entdeckung des 'Heidentums' in Preußen: Die Preußen in den Reformdiskursen des Spätmittelalters und der Reformation* (Berlin, 2011), 84ff.

pre-conversion Lithuania as an absolutely pagan land.¹⁹ This was a time-proven hagiographical cliché to show how the darkness of unbelief was superseded by the light of the faith.²⁰ That is why it is impossible to find in his *Annals* any meaningful traces of Christian presence, let alone activity of Christian missionaries, in Lithuania prior to the year 1387. This would only have disturbed a streamlined description of the conversion. As we have seen already, this was not the case. However, what about the pagan temple in Vilnius and the pagan priests tending sacred fire? If Jan Długosz's account of them is based on good sources and therefore could be regarded as reliable, then the pagan religion of Lithuanians could be viewed as having been cast in organisationally sound structures.

There are few places in Lithuania that have attracted so much attention from scholarly and non-scholarly public alike as the cathedral church in Vilnius. We have already shown that the theory about the cathedral church allegedly built by Mindaugas in Vilnius can no longer be considered tenable. Now we have to approach another claim – that a pagan temple had been standing there and then through the agency of Jogaila was replaced by the cathedral church of Vilnius.²¹ This issue may be approached from a more general perspective: did pagan Lithuanians have their temples like Slavonic Wends in the eleventh-twelfth centuries, or did they dispense with them much like Germanic tribes in the Early Middle Ages? It must be stated that each and every community had to have certain places in which people could meet for communal festivities and celebrations. Drinking and eating and sacrificing in honour of the gods are to be assumed as a general religious phenomenon encountered worldwide. There can be no doubt that in pagan Lithuania, as in the rest of pre-Christian northern Europe, there were numerous open-air sites in which people could meet for celebrations or for other communal occasions.²² It is hard, however, to establish how

¹⁹ Borkowska, *Treści ideowe*, 132.

²⁰ Cf. Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 12.

²¹ Cf. L. P. Słupecki, *Slavonic Pagan Sanctuaries* (Warsaw, 1994), 20; M. Jučas, *Krikščionybės kelias į Lietuvą: Etapai ir problemos* (Vilnius, 2000), 63.

²² V. Vaitkevičius, 'Ancient sacred places in Lithuania: Crossroads of geography, archaeology and folklore', *Archaeologia Baltica*, 15 (2011), 45–55.

often they were frequented and in what (pre)historical period, but it is absolutely certain that in the period under consideration pagan Lithuanians must have lived in an environment where sites with numinous characteristics were close at hand. Teutonic chronicles and route-guides (*Wegeberichte*) mention holy groves, holy rivers and holy lakes. There are sporadic references to holy villages.²³ However, it is interesting to note that during all their raids deep into Žemaitija and Lithuania armed pilgrims and their scouts alike failed to come across pagan temples. There is only one known likely exception to this general rule. It was in the summer of 1384 when the Teutonic troops, still acting in support of Duke Vytautas, happened to march past Vandžiogala (north of Kaunas in Central Lithuania) and sighted the Lithuanians standing in front of ‘holy buildings’ (*ante edes sacras*).²⁴ The people turned around and ran away seeking asylum there. The knights approached, with flags flying in the air, and simply captured people: men, women and children. No fighting ensued. The surrounding countryside was devastated, but these ‘holy buildings’ seem to have been left intact – there is no mention of their destruction. The most widespread assumption is that these buildings must have been pagan shrines,²⁵ but the whole situation involving the behaviour of the refugees and their persecutors, the knights, points in the direction of a Christian sanctuary. Such circumspection as just described on the part of ‘the fighters for the faith’ can hardly be expected if we see them coming up to a real pagan shrine, the one found at long last in the wake of their crusade-like military peregrinations! Even if we make allowance for the fact that the chronicle of Wigand of Marburg is no longer extant in its original German form, calling such houses *edes sacrae* by a Christian man of letters is strikingly surprising. The contextual reference to Lithuanians as pagans cannot be viewed here as tipping the balance in favour of ‘pagan’ interpretation of these houses, because here it could be loosely used

²³ ‘Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie’, 159.

²⁴ ‘Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg’, 623–4.

²⁵ Cf. The translation into Lithuanian of the chronicle of Wigand of Marburg: Vygandas Marburgietis, *Naujoji Prūsijos kronika*, tr. R. Jاسas (Vilnius, 1998), 186. Endre Bojtár mistook Vandžiogala for Vilnius: Bojtár, *Foreword to the Past*, 321.

to refer simply to people living in a still nominally pagan country. The enemy was pagan, and that was enough to make them a justified target of aggression. Nobody asked them what kind of people they were in their own opinion. So the case of the 'holy buildings' at Vandžiogala shows that even this unique piece of information cannot be relied upon with safety when we are trying to find textual evidence in contemporary sources for the existence of pagan temples in heathen Lithuania.

The Lithuanian pagan priests are like will-o'-the-wisp. Some historical sources mention them, but when you try to establish their position and function in society they prove to be a ghostly presence. Perhaps the most eloquent testimony about the existence of the pagan priests in strictly contemporary sources is that provided by the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle. Here we come across a pagan priest (*blūtekirl*) who offered sacrifices and prophesied for Žemaitijans a great victory over the Curonians and the Teutonic Knights, and was claiming a third part of the spoils for gods (in 1259).²⁶ There is no doubt that this description is rather picturesque, but when you notice that much of it is conveyed in direct speech, the next step is to ask whence the author of the chronicle could procure this sort of information. It is one thing to note that the Lithuanian pagans venerated their god Perkūnas, it is quite another to pretend one

²⁶ *LR*, lines 4680–700. Besides the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, such a 'custom' is mentioned by Peter of Dusburg. Peter of Dusburg mentions it in an 'ethnographic' description of Old Prussians where a highly problematic evidence on the central pagan temple of Romowe and the pagan high-priest Criwe is adduced: 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 53–4. Although it is impossible to deny in principle that some time a certain pagan priest of note might have been living in a holy place somewhere in Prussia, the wording and the sense of the description favours rather an opinion that this description represents an inversion of the Christian order of things (Rome, the pope) to make the pagan world more comprehensible to the intended audience of the chronicle, and to give it a moral lesson of the need to honour and obey the clergy the way the pagans did this with regard to their Criwe and his messengers, see Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 125–7. As regards 'the third part' (*terciam partem*), this motif is so universally widespread that it could be taken from anywhere without bothering about its relevance to the situation on the ground and then reproduced time and again. The claim put forward by the same Peter of Dusburg that the Žemaitijans increased their power in the wake of the victory at the Battle of Durbė and partly because of the use of seized weapons seems more realistic and much more plausible, because such was the general practice: 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 97.

is eavesdropping at a military gathering of Žemaitijans.²⁷ As with the temples, so with pagan priests in Lithuania the situation is very similar. During their razzias into Lithuania, the Teutonic troops failed to capture a pagan priest as such. There is one notable exception and, again, it is in the chronicle of Wigand of Marburg.

The winter of 1364 saw a Teutonic raid into Lithuanian lands, this time launched simultaneously from both Prussia and Livonia.²⁸ This pattern of invasion was not as unusual as was the capture of a certain holy man (*quendam sanctum virum*).²⁹ The man promised to conduct his captors to hideouts where they would be able to capture pagans from three villages. The said holy man (*dictus sanctus*) did what he promised, and capture, slaughter and fire marked the track of invaders. Who was this 'holy man'? According to nineteenth-century editors, he was 'ein heidnischer Priester'.³⁰ According to a twentieth-century translator of the chronicle into the Lithuanian, the man was a pagan priest, a wizard, compelled under duress to act the way he acted.³¹ The raiders we are talking about were on a foray to central parts of Lithuania (north of Kaunas) and the landscape of their activities as described by Wigand of Marburg seems to be heathen through and through. That this was far from the case transpires only at the very end of the description by dint of a casual remark that 'the number of those killed was not known, and the captive Lithuanians and Ruthenians were abducted'.³² The title *vir sanctus* was certainly not a self-appellation: it was bestowed on its bearer by Wigand of Marburg and/or his informants. As there was no lack in German or Latin technical terms to label a pagan priest accordingly (*blūtekirl, flamen, augur, haruspex, sacerdos idolorum* and the like), it is doubtful that so respectful an epithet (*sanctus*) would have been given by a Teutonic chronicler to a person who was a specialist in pagan cultic practices and divinations. On the other hand, the presence of Lithuanians and Rus'ians among the

²⁷ Cf. *LR*, lines 1436 and 4685–726.

²⁸ Urban, *Livonian Crusade*, 137–8.

²⁹ 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 542.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 682.

³¹ Vygandas Marburgietis, *Naujoji Prūsijos kronika*, 54.

³² 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 543.

captives betrays the landscape inhabited by a mixed pagan/Orthodox Christian population. So the man captured in such an environment and accordingly called is more likely to have been a Christian solitary man rather than a pagan wizard so respectfully entitled for no apparent reason. Anyway, the man must have been well connected to the local, preponderantly pagan and to some degree already Orthodox Christian population because he was well aware of the whereabouts of their hiding places. This 'holy man', however, did not feel to be associated with them so strongly as to put his limbs or life, or just his freedom at risk for the sake of pagans, or just for his beliefs of whatever sort they might have been. By the way, the region devastated in 1364 was much the same as that in which some twenty years later another Teutonic raiding party would chance to come across the 'holy buildings' just described. The pagan character of both the 'holy man' and 'holy buildings' in question seems to be exposed to grave doubts, to say the least.

The captivated 'holy man', no doubt, was a rare bird in pagan Lithuania, but he happened to be captured nonetheless. What then about his other, indisputably pagan counterparts? Were they so adept at escaping the small eyes of the nets cast far and wide by Teutonic slave-hunters that no other 'pagan priest' happened to be taken prisoner during their numerous raids into Lithuania throughout much of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries? Or perhaps, rather, such absentees can be explained by their virtual absence in pagan Lithuania. This way seems to us to be more promising.

Jan Długosz was certainly right when he claimed that pagan Lithuanians did practice magic arts and divinations. There are numerous instances to support this view. The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle devotes quite a lot of space to a nephew of Mindaugas, Duke Lengvenis. When the latter was in captivity of the Livonian knights and dined in their company, he cast his glance at a ham of pork under his nose and foresaw a débâcle in which his brother was just killed.³³ Some Lithuanian warriors were in the habit of casting lots in order to establish the place in which the enemy was

³³ *LR*, lines 3018–24.

lurking in ambush for them.³⁴ The people who divined from the intestines of the German merchant captured in 1345 were also warriors. Those who wanted to sacrifice the Teutonic knight Johannes Surbach were warriors too. It is not difficult to imagine that such a sacrifice of a human being did not necessitate profound theological thinking which would have required a special class of expert 'pagan priests'.³⁵ The actions just described do show that any more daring 'lay' pagan person being in possession of necessary skills at sacrificing or divination could accomplish acts which, if looked upon from the Christian or Greco-Roman point of view, should have been carried out by 'priests'. Magic arts in pagan Lithuania were not confined to some group of experts and that is why it is impossible to talk of 'pagan priests' as a self-conscious estate.³⁶

The absence of pagan temples elsewhere in Lithuania and the lack of pagan priests as a recognizable estate makes the description of events in pagan Vilnius, so eloquently presented by Jan Długosz, all the more problematic. There is no compelling reason to believe that he could rely on some oral reminiscences: Długosz was writing some eighty years after the events and he made no allusion to any of his informants. His case, however, may be supported by a reference

³⁴ Lithuanian warfare was imbued with pagan practices. This is especially evident from thirteenth-century sources. The next century saw a reduction of these practices. Perhaps the most graphic illustration of the more general process of rationalization may be seen in the virtual disappearance of the practice of establishing the location of the enemy by casting lots. It must have been practical lessons that made Lithuanian grand dukes rely on scouts instead. For the connections between warfare and pagan customs in the case of Lithuania, see A. Nikžentaitis, 'XIII–XV a. lietuvių kariuomenės bruožai (organizacija, taktika, papročiai)', *Karo Archyvas*, 13 (1992), 10–14; D. Baronas, 'Lietuvių karybos bruožai XIII a. pradžioje', *Lietuvos valstybė XII–XVIII a.*, ed. Z. Kiaupa, A. Mickevičius, J. Sarcevičienė (Vilnius, 1997), 490–9.

³⁵ Cf. Damareckaitė, 'Karo belaisvių aukojimo paprotys', 28–9.

³⁶ In the light of our engagement with sources, the idea that 'pagan priests' formed a 'Priesterschaft' in the lands of the Balts seems to be lacking sound foundations. In contrast, earlier scholars were sure of their existence and the significant role they played in the pagan society of Lithuania and other Baltic people [čia geriau būtų: 'Lithuanians and other Baltic people']. Cf. W. Gaerte, 'Sakrale Herrschaftsform: bei den heidnischen Preussen, Litauern und Letten', *La Regalità Sacra: Contributo al Tema dell'VIII Congresso Internazionale di Storia delle Religioni (Roma, Aprile 1955)* (Leiden, 1959), 644, 650. The closest the pagan magicians of the Balts are to be meaningfully compared with are shamans.

to the bull issued by Pope Urban VI on 12 March 1388.³⁷ It contains information on the destruction of pagan cult objects, which is generally regarded as reliable.³⁸ This bull is directly connected to the issue of the conversion of Lithuania and provides legal ground for the establishment of the cathedral church in Vilnius. As far as we are concerned, it contains a memorable passage in which the pope congratulated King Jogaila for his zeal in the newly accepted faith, a zeal that was manifested by the destruction of the pagan shrine in Vilnius and the erection of a cathedral church in its place. This information has been regarded as documentarily reliable, leaving no doubt that the pagan temple was replaced by the chief Catholic church in the country, and it is generally assumed that this replacement occurred on one and the same spot.³⁹ Upon closer reading, however, the picture becomes less unequivocal. For one thing, the bull uses the word designating place (*locus*) rather loosely. It refers primarily to the whole area of Vilnius in which the king, Lithuanians and 'other infidels' had superstitiously venerated the vain idols of gods in some shrine. After his conversion, the king subverted the shrine, tore the idols to pieces and in the same place (*locus*, again) set up a church.⁴⁰ In our opinion, the text of the bull reads that all that the bull purports to describe must be taken to mean Vilnius in general: *locus* as the area of the town, not a particular site. It is our contention that it was Jan Długosz who was the first to draw a conclusion that the drama of switching from one religion to the other must have taken place on exactly the same spot. His view was later upheld by virtually all subsequent early modern writers who in this way produced a historiographical tradition that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came to be regarded as factually accurate.⁴¹

³⁷ *KDKDW*, no. 10, pp. 20–1 (12 March, 1388).

³⁸ Hyland, 'John-Jerome of Prague', 242–3.

³⁹ *BRMŠ*, I, 446.

⁴⁰ *KDKDW*, no. 10, pp. 20–1 (12 March 1388).

⁴¹ The information supplied by Jan Długosz was reiterated by sixteenth-century Polish historians: Maciej Miechovita (1457–1523), Martin Bielski (1495–1575), Martin Kromer (1512–1589). The most elaborate and influential version was worked out by Maciej Strykowski (c. 1547 – c. 1593). See M. Strykowski, *Kronika polska, litewska, żmódzka i wszystkich Rusi*, II (Warsaw, 1846), 78–81. It is interesting to note that sixteenth-century Lithuanian chronicles do not mention a pagan temple in Vilnius. They locate here the sacred valley of mythical duke

In our view, it is essentially nothing else but a literary *topos* fleshing out the notion of how the false religion was replaced by the true one. It must also be noticed that the wording of the bull echoes those passages from Deuteronomy which contain advice on what actions should be taken against pagan cult objects in the Promised Land (Dt. 12.2–3). This is one more illustration that the contents of the bull should not be taken at face value. One thing, however, is unmistakable – it is the triumphant tone pervading the bull of Pope Urban VI as well as the respective passages of the *Annals* of Jan Długosz.

Because the bull of Urban VI and the account of Jan Długosz cannot be regarded as providing secure ground for our attempt at coming closer to understanding what actions were carried out on the orders of King Jogaila in Vilnius in 1387, it is time to turn to archaeology. In contrast to earlier studies which proved to have been romantically inspired (still so in the second half of the twentieth century!), recent research based on impartial analysis of the available evidence has revealed with quite a high degree of probability that the first sacral structure (church) on the site of the present cathedral church in Vilnius was set up in about 1320.⁴² As has already been told in the chapter dealing with Grand Duke Gediminas in 1322–24, this Franciscan church was the one which primarily served the local Christian community of German settlers.

Šventaragis in which pagan dukes of Lithuania and their boyars used to be cremated. *PSRL*, XXXV (Moscow, 1980), 92, 96, 131, 149, 177, 197, 201, 218. This seems to be a Christian projection establishing a notional continuity between the (imagined) pagan and the (real) Christian necropolis, which the cathedral church of Vilnius certainly was. One more idea that it was Grand Duke Gediminas who erected a pagan temple in Vilnius also lacks substance.

⁴² The first defensive walls made of brickwork and stone appeared on the present-day Vilnius cathedral square in the first two decades of the fourteenth century. The oldest stone structure under the floor of the present-day cathedral church is dated in the first quarter of the same century. Vaitkevičius, *Vilniaus įkūrimas*. 60–1. This dating may be supported by the written evidence pertaining to the Franciscan church mentioned in the letters of Grand Duke Gediminas. *Chartularium*, no. 16, p. 46 (25 January 1325), no. 21, p. 62 (26 May 1323), no. 21 64 (26 May 1323). Numismatist Eduardas Remecas dated the remains of the church in question to c. 1320; his suggestion to identify them with the so-called building M2 is interesting, though not very convincing: cf. E. Remecas, 'Vilniaus gaisro datavimo problematika: ar tikrai Vilniaus pilis sunaikino 1419 m. gaisras?'. *Lietuvos pilys*, 6 (2010), 85. Cf. Katalynas, *Vilniaus plėtra*, 33.

It must be frankly admitted that there is no evidence allowing us to pass any well-informed judgement as to what was being done there or who lived in this quarter of Vilnius in the second half of the fourteenth century. It may only be guessed that in time this small area became too cramped for the Catholic community, which resettled to the new area at some distance and along the major route leading to Trakai. What happened to the first Franciscan church when most of the German settlers moved to the new area is unknown. It may be surmised that this old German quarter was gradually being absorbed into what became the Lower Castle of Vilnius by the end of the fourteenth century. It is clear that part of the real estate there was in the gift of the grand duke of Lithuania. It was Jogaila who provided the first bishop of Vilnius with a ready-made residence of stone, situated close to the newly-constructed cathedral church.⁴³ There is no certainty as to when Jogaila came into possession of this area. A discontinuity in the line of possessors, however, may be assumed: grand duke (Vytenis, Gediminas), then Franciscans and, probably, German settlers, then the grand duke again (Algirdas, Jogaila) came into possession of this area only to be passed over, in 1387, to the Bishop of Vilnius for centuries to come. How this transition affected the old Franciscan church and its functioning remains unknown. It must have stood, albeit in need of repair or at least renovation,⁴⁴ which had to be undertaken by Jogaila some time in advance of his move to convert the people and to found the diocese of Vilnius. There was apparently no need to demolish the old structure to build a totally new cathedral church. The calm and business-like tone of the foundation charter of the diocese of Vilnius, where no smashing of idols or the destruction of the pagan temple are to be found, conveys, in our view, more faithfully the process of the introduction of the new faith in Vilnius and the coun-

⁴³ *KDKDW*, no. 1, p. 5: 'eidem episcopo domum nostram lapideam intra muros castri Vilnensis' (17 February 1387).

⁴⁴ As there are only the remains of the foundations available, it is rather difficult to guess in what state of preservation this church was on the eve of the conversion of Lithuania undertaken in 1387. It is appropriate here to recall the Franciscan martyrdom of 1369 – an event which had negative consequences for the survival of the Franciscan community in Vilnius for a while, and for its church and other buildings within its precincts.

try at large. There was no (organized) paganism left against which it would have been necessary to launch all-out attack and thus to express one's profound spiritual transformation. On the other hand, the very absence of a pagan cult with its central temple, idols, and priests could not have served well for propaganda purposes. In order to convey the joy at the conversion and in order to express the triumph of the new and true faith, the pope had to be duly informed in terms that he could appreciate most. Exactly this was done by the Polish scribes in the service of King Jogaila. Although the text of the original missive is missing, its contents were reflected in the pope's bull in which he (his chancery clerks) reported back what had been told him by the Polish side. The information thus supplied was far from being the only cause, but it certainly played its part in encouraging him to lavish praise on King Jogaila as the most Christian king (*rex christianissimus*), although he, as a neophyte ruler, was then quite a young man.

In sum, the picture of the Christian violence against the pagan cult objects as depicted by Jan Długosz and inferred from the bull of Pope Urban VI is too exaggerated to warrant a safe approach to what was taking place at the introduction of the Christian faith in Vilnius. Now the idea that the imminent destruction of the pagan cult and the resulting distress on pagan people may have served as an excuse for keeping young and delicate Queen Jadwiga away from travelling to Vilnius seems rather pathetic.⁴⁵ There could certainly be some symbolic gestures performed. After all, the pagans of Vilnius had to have some place for coming together. The descriptions of the martyrdoms of the Franciscans do indicate that people 'venerating trees' lived in Vilnius.⁴⁶ However generic and stereotypical such characteristic may be, it can be borne out by many references to pagan cult sites situated in uncultivated, uninhabited areas some distance away from usual places of dwelling. In this context it seems to be no accident that so zealous Franciscan missionaries as Ulrich or Martin found no pagan temple in Vilnius and only decried the 'ugly customs' of the pagans on the street. Friar Ulrich was taken to

⁴⁵ A. Strzelecka, 'Z biografii królowej Jadwigi', *AC*, 7 (1975), 97.

⁴⁶ 'De Conformitate Vitae Beati Francisci ad Vitam Domini Iesu', 335.

be killed in some grove (*nemus*) by the river of Vilnia and this may serve as a possible indication that a place for communal gatherings of the pagans may have been located somewhere on its left bank where there was plenty of free space in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁴⁷ Such a grove may have included some special trees and perhaps even some objects made of durable material. The possible, though not definitively proven, relic from the pagan sanctuary of Vilnius may have been preserved at the Franciscan convent in Vilnius. In 1768, the Franciscans of Vilnius brought out a tradition that their predecessors had taken an idol of Jupiter (that is, Perkūnas) from the temple and had it installed in the corner of their old dormitory. It was only negligence of a bygone age that made this curious thing disappear.⁴⁸ If this relic was not an early modern fake, it may really have been taken in the wake of some deliberate action of removal from its original place.

The absence of temples as well-developed structures and the lack of pagan priests as a separate estate make it difficult to subscribe to the view that the pagan religion must have played a significant role in terms of political ideology cementing the Lithuanian ruling class. Lithuanian paganism must first of all be understood as a way of life.⁴⁹ The way of life of warriors was unlike that of peasants, the life of peasants was unlike that of artisans or traders – so what we call ‘paganism’ were different things for different groups of people formed on the basis of blood relations and ties of personal subjection, tribal origins and professional occupations. This variety must still have been compounded by regional differences. There was, in short, no such a thing as a unitary faith of Old Lithuanians. Therefore the conversion undertaken by Jogaila did not provoke reactions based on the perceived need to defend the faith of the ancestors.

⁴⁷ ‘Chronica XXIV Generalium’, 536.

⁴⁸ ‘Provinciae Lituaniae exordia’, ed. Baronas, *Vilniaus pranciškonų kankiniai*, 628: ‘Vilnam adveniēns Vladislaus totus ad conversionem gentilium et in opera pietatis effunditur, comitia coegit, in quibus de tollenda idololatria lex statuta est, simulacrum Jovis fulminantis sustulit, quod nostri fratres e loco altaris dejicientes ad perpetuam rei memoriam in angulo veteris dormitorii locaverunt, superioris tamen saeculi perdidit incuria.’

⁴⁹ Cf. Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending*, 118ff.

That is why the conversion of Lithuania in 1387 was much more about introducing something new than about destroying a pagan order of things sanctified by age-old traditions. This positive side of the conversion must now occupy the central stage.

King Jogaila as a founding father of Roman Catholic Lithuania

Jogaila arrived in Vilnius in autumn 1386. He was accompanied by high-ranking Polish lords.⁵⁰ The most important churchman to arrive was Bishop Andrew Jastrzębiec, who was envisaged as the first bishop of Vilnius. He must have brought in his train some staff members, a number of (Polish) priests. Local Franciscans were already close at hand. Although there is no direct evidence, common sense suggests that some preparatory catechising of the population must have started already in 1386.⁵¹ The (former Franciscan) church in the Lower Castle of Vilnius must have been made fit to serve as the new cathedral church.

Jan Długosz explained to his audience that the most pious King Jogaila, eager to see the newly planted faith take root and prosper in Lithuania, set up a cathedral church dedicated to the Holy Trinity and St Stanisław. This saintly bishop of Cracow and martyr was chosen so that both Poles and Lithuanians could enjoy the protection of the same patron-saint of Poland. There was something more to it: Długosz wanted to emphasize that the dedication to St Stanisław was to serve Lithuanians as a perennial reminder that it was due to Polish efforts that the light of the true faith reached them and their progeny.⁵² This message was the most important one for Długosz. It is unsurprising then that due to his concentration on this aspect of historical reality, Długosz forgot to mention that the cathedral in Vilnius had another patron-saint, St Władysław. The full patrocinium

⁵⁰ This issue has amply been discussed by Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, 2/1, 195–9.

⁵¹ T. Krahel, 'Zarys dziejów (Archi)diecezji wileńskiej', *Studia Teologiczne*, 5 (1987–1988), 11.

⁵² Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 163.

of the cathedral of Vilnius included: The Holy Trinity, St Stanisław, the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Władysław. This is attested in the document of the consecration of the cathedral church in Vilnius.⁵³ St Stanisław was not only the patron-saint of Cracow and its cathedral church: he was also a saint receiving much veneration from the Polish Piasts. St Władysław was the preeminent saint of the Hungarian Arpads, embodying the ideal Hungarian knight, whose cult was actively upheld by the Angevin dynasty.⁵⁴ So the couple of those two prominent saints as patrons of the cathedral church of Vilnius is to be viewed not only in purely devotional terms, but also as a conscious attempt on the part of Jogaila to bring himself closer to the legacy and traditions of the Piasts and the Angevins, which became his too thanks to his marriage to Queen Jadwiga. His baptismal name was a declaration of this sort. And it seems that it was precisely Jogaila who took care that his celestial patron became also patron-saint of the cathedral of Vilnius. It must be noticed that the bull of pope Urban VI, which authorized Bishop Dobrogost of Poznań to install the first bishop in Vilnius and to consecrate his cathedral church, does not mention St Władysław as one of the saints to whom the church should be dedicated. That he was included along with St Stanisław in this capacity becomes evident only later, from the document of the same Dobrogost confirming the consecration of the new cathedral.⁵⁵ So in the period between the reception of the bull and the subsequent consecration there were some local adjustments made with a view to strengthening dynastic aspirations of Jogaila.

The most important decisions were made in February-March 1387. Jogaila issued four charters that, in sum, amounted to the constitution of a new Christian society in Lithuania. On 17 February 1387 Jogaila issued a foundation charter for the bishopric of Vilnius. The cathedral church in Vilnius and its bishop were provided with landed estates and a considerable part of the town of Vilnius, thus

⁵³ *KDKDW*, 1, no. 13, p. 26 (second half of 1388).

⁵⁴ More on the cult of St Władysław (Ladislás) see G. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, tr. É. Pálmai (Cambridge, 2007), 173–94. Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, 32–4.

⁵⁵ Plg. *KDKDW*, no. 10, p. 21 (12 March 1388); *ibid.*, no. 13, p. 26 (second half of 1388).

creating the material basis for the existence of church organization in Lithuania. The bishop of Vilnius was granted full rights over revenues and people living there.⁵⁶

On 20 February Jogaila issued a charter whereby proprietary rights of the newly-converted Lithuanian boyars to their patrimonial landed estates were confirmed with some other prerogatives granted and the obligatory military service stated.⁵⁷ These things were far from innovatory, but they received written confirmation, which, in comparison to the unpredictable nature of oral custom, was not a negligible improvement in the legal position of the Lithuanian boyars. Much more innovative by nature must have been the rights affecting the position of women: the boyars were granted the right to marry off their daughters or other female relatives freely (without the need to consult the grand duke), and widows were free to enjoy life on their landed estates as long as they remained in widowhood. It may be tempting to say that baptism gave women more in terms of gaining legal personality than was the case with their male counterparts whose rights in pagan society reigned undividedly supreme. Of course, Jogaila did not omit to mention that if anybody recanted the faith or refused to accept it, she or he would be unable to enjoy any of the above-mentioned rights.

The charter issued on 22 February was the widest, ranging as it was intended to affect all people *nacione Lithvanos utriusque sexus, cuiuscunque status, condicionis aut eminencie extiterint*.⁵⁸ In agreement with his princely brothers and all the nobles, Jogaila decided and most solemnly promised that it was his business to induce and, if need be, even compel all Lithuanian people to accept the Catholic faith and to recognize obedience to the Roman Catholic Church no matter what 'sect' they might belong to. The notion of 'sect' most readily applied to Greek Orthodox believers, whom Lithuanians were prohibited to marry, unless the non-Catholic side acknowledged obedience to the Roman Church. The prohibition of mixed mar-

⁵⁶ *KDKDW*, 1, no. 1, pp. 4–6. The establishment of the diocese of Vilnius is relatively well explored. See Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*.

⁵⁷ *Zbiór praw litewskich od roku 1389 do roku 1529*, ed. A. T. Działyński (Poznań, 1841), no. 1, pp. 1–2.

⁵⁸ *KDKDW*, 1, no. 6, pp. 13–15.

riages is quite often interpreted in national categories: Lithuanians were prohibited from marrying Rus'ians and thus could survive as a nation in conditions of life in the state in which Orthodox believers were numerically far superior.⁵⁹ However, some qualifications must be made. The tenor and the language of this charter are permeated with principles and phrases taken over from textbooks of canonic law. It was an age-old tradition of the Church which religiously regarded mixed marriages with apprehension or at least with suspicion.⁶⁰ The very idea that there was once a time when the bad had the power to compel the good to do bad things, but now it was much more necessary to make and invite the bad to abide by good things, was taken over most probably from the *Decretum Gratiani*, which abounds in discussing how much the bad must be tolerated and urged on to good things.⁶¹ Such dispositions and more general enunciations do underline a most basic fact: it was concern for the purity of the Catholic faith among the neophytes that informed the choices of those who had to decide which tenets had to be included in the foundation charters of the new Roman Catholic society in Lithuania.⁶² The benefits to Lithuanian national consciousness became apparent only in retrospect from a distance of many centuries. They were certainly not intended at the outset. The scholastic character of these privileges bears a testimony to their indebtedness to the ecclesiastical and intellectual culture of Poland. The written record more than compensated for the relative weakness in representation of the Polish high-ranking ecclesiastics in Vilnius in 1387.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 11; J. Bardach, *Studia z ustroju i prawa Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV–XVII w.* (Warsaw, 1970), 20; Błaszczczyk, *Dzieje*, 2/1, 212.

⁶⁰ Cf. e.g. G. Delling, 'Ehehindernisse', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 4 (Stuttgart, 1959), col. 689; C. Nolte, *Conversio und Christianitas: Frauen in der Christianisierung vom 5. bis 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995), 24–8; R. Chazan, *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1980), 23–5.

⁶¹ *KDKDW*, no. 6, pp. 13–14: '...si enim in primitivis temporibus, permittente divina potentia, mali habebant potestatem bonos ad mallum compellere, multo magis nunc de beneplacito Dei boni possunt et debent malos ad bonum astringere et invitare'. See, for example, *Decretum Gratiani* C. 23, q. 4, c. 1–16. Cf. also Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches towards the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984), 74.

⁶² *Krikščionybė Lietuvoje: Praeitis, dabartis, ateitis* (Kaunas, 1938), 41–2; Halecki, *Jadwiga of Anjou*, 162–3; Drabina, *Wierzenia*, 155–6. For antecedents, see Abraham, *Powstanie organizacji*, 79, 172.

The town of Vilnius received municipal rights of self-government (Magdeburg Law) in the charter of 22 March 1387.⁶³ It was the first of its kind in Lithuania, marking the beginning of a corporative identity for townspeople.⁶⁴ The town of Vilnius was specifically declared to be a city (*civitas*) in a bull of pope Urban VI.⁶⁵ This was one more importation from the Mediterranean world to the distant parts of northern Europe: where there was a bishop, there must be a city. A fresh start in the growth of the Roman Catholic quarter is evident from archaeological evidence.⁶⁶ A growing number of churches may serve as an indicator, too. Besides the cathedral church, there was the church of St Anne in the Lower Castle of Vilnius, known from 1398.⁶⁷ This church was in charge of the Franciscan friars. There was the chapel of St Martin in the Upper Castle, founded by King Jogaila.⁶⁸ The latter is also credited with the foundation of the parish church of St John the Baptist.⁶⁹ It was probably Grand Duke Vytautas who in c. 1418 founded the church of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁰ So in the time of Vytautas the capital city of Lithuania boasted at least

⁶³ *Zbiór praw y przywilejów miastu stołecznemu W. X. L. Wilnowi nadanych*, ed. P. Dubiński (Vilnius, 1788), 1–2.

⁶⁴ The charter of 22 March 1387 is void of any specific references to the conversion or events related to it; it simply acknowledges fidelity and good services to Jogaila rendered by townspeople of Vilnius. On Magdeburg Law and its specifics in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, see J. Bardach, 'Ustrój miast na prawie magdeburkim w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim do połowy XVII wieku', idem, *O dawnej i niedawnej Litwie* (Poznań, 1988), 72–119.

⁶⁵ *KDKDW*, no. 10, p. 21 (12 March 1388).

⁶⁶ I. Kaplūnaitė, *Vilniaus miesto katalikiškoji dalis XIV–XVI amžiaus pradžioje* (Klaipėda, 2015. Diss.), 49ff.

⁶⁷ *KDKDW*, no. 33, p. 59 (27 October 1398); P. Śledziewski, 'Kościół św. Anny – św. Barbary intra muros castris Vilmensis', *AW*, 9 (1933–1934), 1–32; M. Jučas, *Lietuvos parapijos XV–XVIII a.* (Vilnius, 2007), 12–13.

⁶⁸ Długosz, *Annales. Liber X*, 163. Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 55. *LKD*, nos. 5760, 2252.

⁶⁹ It is assumed that the first and for a long time the only parish church in Vilnius was founded by King Jogaila: Ochmański, 'Powstanie', 26–7. Its first extant mention comes down from 1410. It was in the house of Vilnius parish priest of St John's church that formalities regarding the gift of Vytautas for the wife (*Checche*) of the papal envoy James Viviani were transacted; the gift concerned two Chercassian female slaves: Quirini-Popławska, *Włoski handel*, 220.

⁷⁰ *BP*, IV, no. 327, p. 60 (27 August 1418). It was presumably the same church which in 1501 was given over to the newly-arrived Dominican friars: *KDKDW*, no. 485, pp. 571–3 (10 May 1501); no. 491, pp. 582–5 (20 May 1501); no. 499, pp. 602–3 (23 June 1501).

six Roman Catholic churches. The rapid expansion of the Catholic quarter in Vilnius in the wake of the conversion is also evident from archaeological material.⁷¹

The new order of things introduced to Lithuania during the years 1386–1387 was bound to receive its due symbolic expression. Upon becoming king of Poland, Jogaila adopted new symbols of state expressed most originally on his grand seal in use from 1388 to 1433.⁷² He introduced the Knight (*Pogonia*, *Vytis*) and the Double-Cross as his personal sign. The latter once placed on the shield of the Knight came subsequently to fulfil the role of the coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and is used as state emblem of modern Lithuania (*Vytis*). The most interesting and the least telling to scholars and general public alike is the symbol of the Double-Cross depicted on the shield of the ruler (the Knight). It may refer to Hungarian antecedents; it may have something to do with the cult of the Holy Cross (practiced by Jogaila and his progeny) and may bear connections to the notion of defence of the faith.⁷³ The wide range of possible interpretations discourages serious scholars from giving preference to any of them and perhaps the best way to go around this issue is simply to acknowledge that the Double-Cross appeared in connection with the baptism of Jogaila, his marriage to Queen Jadwiga, and his becoming king of Poland.⁷⁴ The Double-Cross placed on the shield of the Knight had to underline the new Christian character of the ruler and his rule.

The news of the introduction of Christianity in Lithuania had to be given tangible and transportable form – the coin. It has long been

⁷¹ Kaplūnaitė, *Vilniaus miesto katalikiškoji dalis*, 59–61, 83.

⁷² Z. Piech, *Monety, pieczęcie i herby w systemie symboli władzy Jagiellonów* (Warsaw, 2003), 44–9.

⁷³ On Jogaila and the Holy Cross cult, see T. M. Trajdos, 'Benedyktini na Łyścu za panowania Władysława II Jagiełły (1386–1434)', *Roczniki Historyczne* 48 (1982), 1–46; M. Derwich, 'Jeszcze o klasztorze łysogórskim w czasach Jagiełły', *RH*, 50 (1984), 165–80; T. M. Trajdos, 'O klasztorze Świętokrzyskim', *RH*, 52 (1986), 205–12. M. Derwich, 'Pacyfikał koronacyjny królów polskich', *KH*, 98 (1991), 7–13; K. Bracha, 'Kult relikwii Krzyża Świętego i pielgrzymka Władysława Jagiełły do opactwa łysogórskiego w czerwcu 1410 r.', *Bitwa Grunwaldzka w historii, tradycji i kulturze 1410–2010*, ed. T. Ossowski (Kielce, 2010), 7–20; U. Borkowska, *Dynastia Jagiellonów w Polsce* (Warsaw, 2011), 404–7.

⁷⁴ Piech, *Monety, pieczęcie i herby*, 261–2.

unclear when the first coins began to be minted in Lithuania: did they appear under dukes Algirdas and Kęstutis, that is, still in pagan times, or did they start with Jogaila and Vytautas? An extraordinary hoard discovered in the territory of the Lower Castle of Vilnius in 2002 helped to solve this riddle definitively. The hoard contained all the five types of the earliest Lithuanian silver coins (63 in all, weight from less than 0.5 g to more than 1 g) in one place and thus it was possible to draw a conclusion that the earliest Lithuanian coins were produced under Jogaila in 1386/87, and that their appearance was related to the conversion of the country.⁷⁵ They are of poor quality in terms of craftsmanship, but it was the first time in Lithuania that an image of the crowned head could be separated from his actual personality and made present on a permanent basis. The reverse of this type of coin bears the image of a lion and the Tatar token (*tamga*). Other types of coins bear images of fish and the double cross, of the knight and the double cross, of a spearhead and the double-cross, and of a beast (lion) and an eagle. If this were not enough to drive home the message, there was a legend to be read in Slavic and Cyrillic – *Kniaz' Iaga*, to wit Duke Jogaila.⁷⁶

As in other European countries so in Lithuania, too, the Christian character of the country was to be strengthened by the importation of relics.⁷⁷ It looks likely that some of them were brought to Lithuania as early as 1386–87: it was by touching relics that Jogaila took oath to convert all Lithuanian people to the Christian faith.⁷⁸ The most intriguing issue, however, is the question when the relics of the patron saint of the cathedral church of Vilnius – St Stanisław – were brought to Vilnius. The idea that they may have been presented by the Cracow cathedral chapter to the newly established cathedral church of Vilnius in 1387 or 1388, when it was consecrated by

⁷⁵ E. Remecas, *Vilniaus Žemutinės pilies pinigų lobis* (Vilnius, 2003), 24–53 (with summary in English on pp. 58–71). This conclusion fits in a general pattern that the minting of coins in Europe followed shortly after conversion to Christianity: Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 281.

⁷⁶ Some coins also bear inscriptions 'pechat' (stamp) in Cyrillic, some display traces of legend in Gothic characters too fragmentary to enable a safe reconstruction of a word: Remecas, *Vilniaus Žemutinės pilies*, 27–8.

⁷⁷ Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 35ff; Brown, *The Rise*, 163–4; Starnawska, *Życie*, 34ff.

⁷⁸ *KDKDW*, 1, no. 6, p. 13: 'spondimus et tactis sacramentis iuravimus'.

bishop Dobrogost of Poznań,⁷⁹ looks plausible, though there is no direct documentary evidence to substantiate it. On the other hand it may be noted that at the time such a gift would not have been something extraordinary because the dissemination of the relics of the saintly bishop of Cracow was not unusual or particularly complicated.⁸⁰ It also true that the present reliquary of St Stanisław, forming part of the Vilnius cathedral church treasure, is dated to 1501–1503.⁸¹ However it may be with the relics of the patron-saint of the cathedral of Vilnius, it was in 1390 that certain relics were carried during a procession in the Lower Castle of Vilnius undertaken in conditions of a siege by the troops of the Teutonic Order and its allies, Duke Vytautas included. The procession came under fire and one Franciscan friar, Vaclav of Hradec Králové (Bohemia), died.⁸² This incident resulted, as it were, in the earliest extant piece of information regarding the presence of the relics in the cathedral of Vilnius. Of course, it was the duty of a bishop and the cathedral chapter to take care of their principal church in general and of its collections of relics in particular. That the churchmen in charge were not negligent in this respect may be inferred from the presence of the relic of the Holy Cross. It is mentioned in the last will of the first bishop of Vilnius.⁸³ The cathedral church of Vilnius was certainly not the only one that needed to be supplied with relics.

The year 1387 also marked the establishment of the first parish churches in Lithuania. It has been assumed that in this year Jogaila built the first seven churches in Lithuania. It was Długosz who reported so.⁸⁴ We would like to say that in this instance scholars have

⁷⁹ Cf. L. Jovaiša, 'Relikwie katedry wileńskiej, 1387–1655', *Skarbiec katedry wileńskiej*, ed. D. Nowacki, A. Saratowicz-Dudyńska (Warsaw, 2008), 52.

⁸⁰ M. Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu: Relikwie w kulturze religijnej na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu* (Warsaw, 2008), 63. The memory of St Stanisław as a patron of Catholic missionary enterprise in the East was then surely kept alive: Przybyszewski, *Święty Stanisław*, 520.

⁸¹ R. B. Vitkauskienė, *Złotnictwo wileńskie: Ludzie i dzieła. XV–XVIII wiek* (Warsaw, 2006), 209–10.

⁸² *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*, ed. I. Zakrzewski, II (Poznań, 1892, 2nd edition), 155–6; Kantak, *Franciszkanie*, 304.

⁸³ *KDKDW*, no. 33, p. 58 (27 October 1398).

⁸⁴ Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 163.

taken this statement too much at its face value.⁸⁵ It must be noted that the image of the seven churches is the old Christian topic imbued with a significant symbolic charge. The number seven stands for perfection and universality, and the image of the seven churches may be found starting from the Book of Revelation (Rev. 1.4–3.22) and in numerous legendary, historiographical and hagiographical works and even official documents of later centuries.⁸⁶ Jan Długosz used the same *topos* in the entry of the year 966 when he wrote that Mieszko I established two metropolitan sees at Gniezno and Cracow and seven bishops.⁸⁷ In our case it is not essential that this news was not precise, the essential thing is that Długosz made use of the already well-known tenet. By reiterating the same *topos* with regard to Lithuania, he left us a message that in this year the ecclesiastical structure was planted in the neophyte country. It must be admitted frankly that Długosz somehow managed to come into possession of information about the first parish churches in Lithuania since the early existence of some of them might be confirmed from other sources. For example, the church in Oboltsy was founded in 1387 – there is a passage in the foundation charter stating that this was one of the first Roman Catholic churches in Lithuania.⁸⁸ The process of

⁸⁵ Cf. J. Kurczewski, *Biskupstwo Wileńskie od jego założenia aż do dni obecnych. zawierające dzieje i prace biskupów i duchowieństwa diecezji Wileńskiej, oraz wykaz kościołów, klasztorów, szkół i zakładów dobroczynnych i społecznych* (Vilnius, 1912), 22, 176; *KDKDW*, no. 4, p. 10; *Rozbiór krytyczny*, 17; Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 55–9; Kosman, *Drogi zaniku*, 36, 39; J. Ochmański, 'Powstanie, rozwój i kryzys sieci parafialnej w diecezji wileńskiej od Chrystianizacji Litwy w roku 1387 do przełomu XVI/XVII wieku', *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 38 (1990), 23–7. Some scholars treated the account of Jan Długosz suspiciously and did not rely on it in reconstructing the network of parishes: H. F. Schmid, *Die rechtlicher Grundlagen der Pfarrorganisation auf westslavischem Boden und ihre Entwicklung während des Mittelalters* (Weimar, 1938), 704.

⁸⁶ D. Baronas, 'Jan Długosz and the first seven parish churches in Lithuania', *LHS*, 12 (2007), 10–16.

⁸⁷ Długosz, Jan, *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae. Liber I–II*, ed. D. Turkowska (Varsaviae, 1964), 179. The news of the two metropolitan churches in Poland was taken over by Długosz from the chronicle of Gallus Anonymus, to which countless interpretations and reinterpretations have been devoted.

⁸⁸ *KDKDW*, no. 9, pp. 18–19 (1 June 1387). For more on the foundation of parish churches in Lithuania, see Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 61ff; S. K. Olczak, 'Fundacje kościołów parafialnych w diecezji wileńskiej do końca XVII stulecia'. *Chrzest Litwy: Geneza, przebieg, konsekwencje*, ed. M. T. Zahajkiewicz (Lublin, 1990), 91–108; Jučas, *Lietuvos parapijos*, 41ff; *Dzieje Chrześcijaństwa na Litwie*, ed. V. Ališauskas (Warsaw, 2014), 53–8.

the foundation of parish churches seems to have been more like an on-going business than a single event.

The continual building-up of church organization is evident from a mandate passed by Jogaila in early 1389. The king informed his stewards that he had granted the right to the bishop to set up churches in all Lithuanian lands wherever the latter saw it fit. The stewards were instructed to treat the bishop with the same respect which was due to the king himself and be obedient to his orders as if they had been given by the king himself.⁸⁹ King Jogaila issued one more mandate in which he notified his stewards that he had already established a number of churches in his towns and villages (*po naszym hrodach y po szyolam*) and installed priests there. For their upkeep the stewards were ordered to give them grants in cash and in kind until a regular tithe, so usual in other Christian lands, could be introduced.⁹⁰ The same line of concern was continued by Vytautas, after he came to exercise effective power in Lithuania in the autumn of 1392.⁹¹ He ordered his palatines, lords lieutenant and stewards to assist the bishop on his missionary travels. They had to help gather non-baptized Lithuanians for baptism by the bishop. If any Rus'ians (that is, Orthodox believers) happened to be present among them and showed willingness to undergo baptism in the Latin rite, they were free to do so. If they preferred to remain in their faith, they were free to remain so.⁹² The grand-ducal officers were ordered to provide the bishop and his priests with meals and their horses with fodder. Their guides, who were indispensable on such missions, were not overlooked either, they also had to get their share. Officers were reminded to comply with grand-ducal orders. If Jogaila threatened the negligent with merciless punishment, Vytautas was even more outspoken: the disobedient would run the risk of being hanged (*swą szyyą zaplaczy*).⁹³ It may be noted that in the long run the grand-ducal support for clergymen and

⁸⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 15, p. 29 (10 January 1389).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 16, pp. 29–30 (10 January 1389).

⁹¹ J. Nikodem, *Witold wielki ksiązę litewski (1354 lub 1355 – 27 października 1430)* (Cracow, 2013), 147–61.

⁹² *KDKWD*, no. 23, p. 39 (after 5 September 1392).

⁹³ *Ibid.*

the promotion of the respect due to them resulted in a new sense given to the word *kunigas*. Hailing from Old Germanic, *kuningas* signified king.⁹⁴ In pagan Lithuania *kunigas* was the name for the ruler, grand duke himself. After the conversion it came to signify a priest in addition and this last sense is the only one that remains in modern Lithuanian.

The events of 1387 signified the official conversion of the country, while the just mentioned mandates illustrate the process of conversion and evangelization as a continual effort extending through years and even decades. Still in 1436 there is an admission that Bishop Matthias of Vilnius had to be engaged in administering baptism to various non-Christian infidels.⁹⁵ There is almost no description of experiences the missionaries have had in their encounters with non-Christian or nominally Christian populations in the newly converted Lithuania. However, it is certain that the first bishop Andrew was deeply involved in the evangelization of his newly-converted flock. In recognition of his apostolic labours, Jogaila and Vytautas issued a joint charter whereby they provided bishop Andrew with annual revenue of 200 silver marks from their treasury and 10 barrels of honey to be supplied from Vilnius castle.⁹⁶ Naturally enough the young Roman Catholic Church in Lithuania could not boast of sufficient numbers of diocesan clergymen, so it is not surprising to find Franciscan friars actively engaged in the evangelization.⁹⁷ The fact that Bishop Andrew himself was a Franciscan facilitated collaboration between secular and regular clergy.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Schlesinger, 'Das Heerkönigtum', 107–8.

⁹⁵ *KDKDW*, no. 142, p. 160 (18 January 1436).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 30, pp. 51–2 (20 May 1397).

⁹⁷ On the clergy in Lithuania in the late fourteenth to the late sixteenth century, see Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 12–51; R. Bruzaitė, 'Parish clergy in the dioceses of Vilnius and Samogitia from the 15th to the 3rd quarter of the 16th century', *Lituano-Slavica Posnaniensia. Studia Historica*, 16 (2013), 107–26. A prosopographical dictionary of the Roman Catholic clergy in Lithuania is an indispensable tool of research: V. Ališauskas, T. Jaszczolt, L. Jovaiša, M. Paknys. *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XIV–XVI a.* [*BIS*, 2], (Vilnius, 2009).

⁹⁸ The competition between secular and regular clergy is a well-known phenomenon in the European Middle Ages. The situation in Vilnius was not idyllic either and it is known that the canons of the cathedral chapter of Vilnius took care to have their rights and privileges confirmed immediately after a Franciscan friar, Jacob Plichta, was elected as the second Bishop of Vilnius: *KDKDW*, no. 35, pp. 62–64

The mother-church of Lithuanian Franciscans was in Vilnius and bore the title of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the Sands (*in Arena*). It is known from written record from 1392 onwards.⁹⁹ The Franciscans had in their care the nearby church of St Nicholas which was given over to them by the merchant Hanul in c. 1392.¹⁰⁰ Other establishments of Franciscan friaries followed in quite a rapid succession. In about 1397 they established their houses in Ashmiany and Lida (in modern Belarus).¹⁰¹ The former friary took root, while the latter for some obscure reason was abandoned at the beginning of the fifteenth century.¹⁰² The first half of this century saw Franciscan friaries founded in Kaunas (before 1439), Drohiczyn (before 1430) and Pinsk (c. 1432–1440).¹⁰³ These friaries and their churches served as focal points for local and foreign (merchants)

(4 December 1398). However, this competition in the diocese of Vilnius did not acquire such virulent forms as was the case, for example, in the early years of the archbishopric of Lviv. Cf. W. Abraham, *Jakób Strepa: arcybiskup halicki 1391–1409* (Cracow, 1908), 14–15; D. Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 277–8, 291–3.

⁹⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 22, p. 38 (before 5 August 1392); Gidžiūnas, *De Fratibus Minoribus*, 39–41.

¹⁰⁰ *KDKDW*, no. 22, p. 38. It was built in the area which began to be densely inhabited from the last quarter of the fourteenth century onwards. It was the German (Roman Catholic) quarter of the town. This church of St Nicholas was mentioned for the first time in the 1387 charter of Jogaila and must already have been built before the final conversion of the country. A claim by a German scholar that St Nicholas church in Vilnius ‘must have been built before 1150’ is absolutely misleading, see K. Blaschke, U. Jäschke, *Nikolaikirchen und Stadtentstehung in Europa: Von der Kaufmannssiedlung zur Stadt* (Berlin, 2013), 85. Still to commend is Reklaitis, ‘Die St. Nicolaikirche in Wilna’. Both these churches were erected in the so-called German quarter of Vilnius close to important routes. On this later aspect, see O. Valionienė, ‘Viduramžių Vilnius: planinės struktūros raida XIV–XV a.’, *Lietuvos Pilys*, 4 (2008), 57; Kaplūnaitė, *Vilniaus miesto katalikiškoji dalis*, 70.

¹⁰¹ The Franciscan friary in Lida was founded by Bishop Andrew: *KDKDW*, no. 31, pp. 52–3 (3 June 1397). The existence of the Franciscan house in Ashmiany may be inferred from the last will of the same bishop: *ibid.*, no. 33, p. 59 (27 October 1398); Kantak, *Franciszkanie*, 306; Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 369–73.

¹⁰² Gidžiūnas, *De Fratibus Minoribus*, 44–6. There is an opinion that this convent may have been destroyed by the then ally of the Teutonic Order and of prince Švitrigaila, prince Iurii Sviatoslavich of Smolensk, during his raid deep into Lithuania in 1402: Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 372–3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 373–8. Recently Rafał Kubicki claimed that the Franciscans had their convent in Kaunas already in the first half of the fourteenth century: Kubicki, ‘Działalność zakonów’, 180. This idea is too fantastic to deserve attention.

Catholics.¹⁰⁴ They also served as points of departure for friars with a missionary vocation. Of their engagement in missions we can have only a general idea, because the sources are in short supply and largely accidental. In 1410 the Franciscan vicar and friars active in Lithuanian lands requested Antipope John XXIII to issue anew the privileges conceded by his predecessors to the Franciscan order, because the copies they had in their hands were in a bad state of preservation but were very necessary for them nonetheless.¹⁰⁵ In the same year of 1410 Pope Gregory XII was requested by Friar John the Little of Poland to allow him to call on his confrères to carry on the mission in Lithuanian and Rus'ian lands with renewed effort. The issue was urgent. It was only recently that some twenty thousand Lithuanian, Rus'ian and Tatar people were converted to the Roman Catholic faith and now they began to imitate Greek Orthodox customs because the priests who had instructed them had to abandon their regions in face of rampant plague.¹⁰⁶ It was the Franciscans who were eager to step in. The pope graciously conceded making reference to John's already impressive record of missionary activities and his perfect command of local – Rus'ian and Lithuanian – languages. This request to the pope discloses quite well the vastness of the missionary effort extending through the domains of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Next to nothing is known about how Franciscans intermingled with local population. In coming to Tatars, did they have to rely on mobile convents as was usual in the thirteenth and fourteenth century? In approaching Greek Orthodox

¹⁰⁴ There is a telling testimony of the Franciscans in Kaunas ministering to the spiritual needs of the merchants arriving from Prussia and Livonia, and from other 'parts of the world', see *KDKDW*, no. 159, pp. 179–81; *BP*, vol. V: 1431–1449, ed. I. Sułkowska-Kuraś, S. Kuraś, M. Kowalczyk, A. Wajs, H. Wajs (Rome–Lublin, 1995), no. 1550, p. 291 (3 December 1439).

¹⁰⁵ *KDKDW*, no. 52, pp. 79–80 (5 July 1410). See also *ibid.*, no. 53, pp. 80–2.

¹⁰⁶ *BF*, VII, no. 544, p. 203; Abraham, 'Polska a chrzest Litwy', 26–7. This sort of activity on the part of the Franciscans active in Lithuanian and Rus'ian lands seems to have had its contemporary counterpart in Bosnia. Cf. Pandžić, 'I Franciscani di Bosnia', 18. The coincidence in time of these requests coming from Lithuania may have been due in part to the spike in Franciscan activities in the short pontificate of Pope Alexander V (Peter Philarges), himself a Franciscan friar: cf. Kantak, *Franciszkanie*, 316; F. Thiriet, 'Le zèle unioniste d'un franciscain Crétois et la riposte de Venise (1414)', *Polychronion. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Wirth, 1 (Heidelberg, 1966), 497–8.

believers, did they have to rely on the support of well-wishing Roman Catholic believers, be they merchants or officers who had been strictly ordered to welcome priests? In this respect, one more casual piece of evidence deserves special attention. It was again by pure accident that the news about the Franciscan friary, presumably in Vitebsk, was committed to writing. The ultimate cause of this was the now famous 'heretic' Jerome of Prague who during his visit to Poland and Lithuania in 1413 showed too deferential behaviour towards Greek Orthodox believers and their customs.¹⁰⁷ For this he had to explain at the Council of Constance, and only thanks to this investigation did it transpire that there was a Franciscan friary in Vitebsk.¹⁰⁸ Such casual evidence shows that Catholicism was most likely to take root where merchant activity was already active and where some Lithuanian people (settlers, for example) were to be found, as was the case with Oboltsy. The Franciscans active in Lithuania were organized into the vicariate (or custody) of Lithuania that in 1430 was integrated into the province of Poland-and-Bohemia.¹⁰⁹

The Franciscans were not alone in their missionary labours. Similar activities were carried out by the Austin Penitential Canons Regular (= *Ordo Canoniorum Regularium S. Mariae de Metro de Urbe de Poenitentia Beatorum Martyrum*). This order originated in Rome probably in the early thirteenth century and its major convents were established in Prague (1256) and Cracow (1257).¹¹⁰ This

¹⁰⁷ A. Šapoka, 'Jeronimas Pragiškis ir jo kelionė Lietuvon', *Praeitis*, 2 (1932), 283'–283'; A. F. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach Europy Zachodniej XIV–XV w.* (Warsaw, 1968), 315–18.

¹⁰⁸ *Corpus Actorum et Decretorum Magni Constantiensis Concilii de Ecclesiae Reformatione, Unione ac Fide*, ed. H. von der Hardt, IV (Frankfurt–Leipzig, 1699), 677. It must be admitted that this notice is a flawed one. Some manuscript variants indicate that this convent may have been that of *fratrum praedicatorum*. Vitebsk is mentioned explicitly (*Vytesco*), but the remark that there was a Rus'ian cathedral church applies rather to Polotsk. In view that activities of the Dominican friars in the northern parts of the Rus'ian lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are virtually unattested by other sources, we feel more compelled to uphold the view that this was a Franciscan house.

¹⁰⁹ Kantak, *Franciszkanie*, 277, 292–3, 315. The earliest extant notice concerning the Franciscan vicariate of Lithuania dates from 1398: *KDKDW*, no. 34, p. 61 (1 December 1398); no. 35, pp. 62–4 (4 December 1398). Karczewski, *Franciszkanie*, 354. For the privileges granted to Franciscan missionaries by Pope Martin V in 1421 see *BP*, IV, no. 857–861, pp. 159–161.

¹¹⁰ A. Bruździński, *Kanonicy regularni od pokuty na ziemiach polskich* (Cracow, 2003), 21–34.

order, one of the principal tasks of which was parochial ministry, was introduced to Lithuania a few years after the conversion: their first convents were established in Bystrytsa (1390) and Medininkai (1391).¹¹¹ The latter locality boasted a recently-built parish church and it was given over to this order – a clear sign of the shortage of parish priests in the newly-converted country. Their apostolic labours are poorly documented and, as in the case of the Franciscans, it may be assumed that they must have had some sort of contact with local rural population which provided them with revenues for their upkeep. In the case of the penitential canons, there is a rare reference that they were authorized to collect forest goods from a ‘holy forest’ near the Žeimena river (north-east of Vilnius).¹¹² This instance may serve as an indication that more ‘sacred groves’ could be put to ‘good use’ after last inhibitions on making profane use of them were put aside in the wake of the conversion.¹¹³

Benedictine monks were the third order to set foot in the newly-converted Lithuania. Theirs was a grand-ducal foundation of c. 1405.¹¹⁴ It was Vytautas who converted his (probably) native castle into a monastery in Senieji Trakai. This foundation remained

¹¹¹ *KDKDW*, no. 18, p. 32 (21 May 1390) and no. 19, pp. 32–3 (2 April 1391) represent fragmentary copies made in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Neither charter to convents in Bystrytsa and Medininkai survives. The last reference to the Medininkai donation was made in *Pergamentų katalogas*, ed. R. Jasas (Vilnius, 1980), no. 14, p. 23. For more on the history of these convents see T. M. Trajdos, ‘Najstarsze fundacje dla kanoników regularnych od pokuty w diecezji wileńskiej’, *NP*, 119 (2013), 21–66.

¹¹² *KDKDW*, no. 18, p. 32 (21 May 1390).

¹¹³ The cult of holy groves and sacred trees was quite widespread in the Baltic region and, of course, it had to be tackled by Christian missionaries: M. Tamm, ‘A new world into old words: the Eastern Baltic region and the cultural geography of medieval Europe’, *The Clash of Cultures in the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. A. V. Murray (Farnham, 2009), 29–30; K. V. Jensen, ‘Sacralization of the landscape: converting trees and measuring land in the Danish crusades against the Wends’, *ibid.*, 145–7. On a more general level, see *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300–1300*, ed. M. Carver (Woodbridge, 2003).

¹¹⁴ T. M. Trajdos, ‘Fundacja benedyktynów w Starych Trokach’, *AC*, 19 (1987), 245–54; *idem*, ‘Benedyktyni w Starych Trokach (XV – połowa XVII w.)’, *Lituanio-Slavica Posnaniensia. Studia Historica*, 12 (2007), 203–49; M. Kanior, ‘Dzieje opactwa benedyktyńskiego w Starych Trokach (1405–1844)’, *Benediktiniškoji tradicija Lietuvoje*, ed. L. Jovaiša (Vilnius, 2008), 24ff. On the abbots of the Old Trakai monastery, see T. M. Gronowski, *Zwyczajny klasztor, zwyczajni mnisi: Wspólnota tynecka w średniowieczu* (Cracow, 2007), 277–9.

subordinated to the mother house of Tyniec from which its first inmates arrived. One of their major tasks was to pray for the well-being of the founder, Grand Duke Vytautas, and his successors.¹¹⁵ The stated need to take care of the 'growth of Christianity' provides some concrete clue as to their activity extending beyond the walls of their monastery situated in a backwoods location appropriately called Old (Senieji) Trakai.¹¹⁶

Dominican friars were migratory birds in early Christian Lithuania. They must have been involved in the dissemination of the faith in Lithuania proper, as were the members of the orders discussed above, but the scope of this involvement is very difficult to describe even when an indispensable amount of historical imagination is called to help. There is only one reference to Dominican *contrata Litwanie*, whose vicar was a certain John of Bzovia, described as a monk of the Dominican convent in Lviv and a priest of the diocese of Vilnius.¹¹⁷ Pope Boniface IX granted him his request to enjoy the same privileges as other papal chaplains did. Obligations and posts held at Rome, Lviv and Vilnius befit a travelling mendicant monk, who could cover great distances, but from whom it would be hardly possible to expect a more settled pastoral ministry.

Religious life: approaching experiences of newly-converted people

The overview of the available material leaves the impression that the rudiments of the faith could be disseminated far and wide in early Christian Lithuania. The relative lack of churches does not reflect the lack of religious instruction or the very circumscribed nature of

¹¹⁵ *KDKDW*, no. 60, p. 93 (14 February 1415).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 89, p. 117 (13 October 1424). The influence of monasteries on the religious life in the countryside is taken for granted in Western Europe: R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven–London, 1977), 158–9. A similar situation may be assumed in Lithuania, too, despite the scarcity of the evidence.

¹¹⁷ *VMPL*, I, no. 1044, p. 773 (12 August 1400).

the contacts between the clergymen and lay persons.¹¹⁸ The possibly wide outreach of a convent can be demonstrated by the Franciscan convent in Vilnius. In the course of the fifteenth century it received a spate of donations from the members of the noble estate and the townspeople of Vilnius alike.¹¹⁹ In this case we have to deal with exceptionally well-preserved source material, which in part reflects the special role the Franciscans played in Lithuanian society at large before the arrival of the Jesuit fathers in the sixteenth century.¹²⁰ Interaction between the friar in Vilnius and lay society in the fairly distant province may be taken for granted.

So now we have to deal tentatively with the issue of what new was brought to Lithuanian society in the wake of the conversion. The biggest news in the early Christian Lithuania was that the Church was introduced as a new factor prescribing collective and individual behaviour.¹²¹ There can be no doubt that the newly converted people were expected to follow immediately the cyclical liturgical calendar with its feasts and fasts.¹²² It is especially true of Vilnius, which

¹¹⁸ The relatively wide outreach of religious practice may be inferred from the *vita* of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis (Michał Giedroyc, d. 4 May 1485). Well before his conversion to the life of a penitential Austin canon, he used to make wooden boxes for carrying the anointment for the sick – this is one of a few indications of the last rites practiced in the Lithuanian province in which the saintly man lived in the mid-fifteenth century: Ioannes Arundinensis, 'Vita Beati Michaelis', *Acta Sanctorum*, ed. G. Henschenius et D. Papebrochius, I (Maii), (Antwerp, 1680), 558–60. On the cult of blessed Mykolas Giedraitis in Poland, see A. G. Dyl, 'Michał Giedroyc, zwany błogosławionym', *Polscy święci*, 2, ed. J. R. Bar (Warsaw, 1983), 63–102; W. Świerżawski, 'Michał Giedroyc (1425–1485): życie i duchowość', *AC*, 17 (1985), 401–25; Brużdziński, *Kanonicy regularni*, 216–34. On his cult in Lithuania, see D. Baronas, 'Pal. Mykolo Giedraičio gyvenimas ir jo kultas Lietuvoje (XVI–XIX a. pr.)', *Šventieji vyrai, šventosios moterys: Šventųjų gerbimas LDK XV–XVII a.* ed. M. Paknys (Vilnius, 2005), 291–315.

¹¹⁹ S. C. Rowell, 'Winning the living by remembering the dead? Franciscan tactics and social change in fifteenth-century Vilnius', *Tarp istorijos ir būtovės: Studijos prof. Edvardo Gudavičiaus 70-mečiui*, ed. A. Bumblauskas, R. Petrauskas (Vilnius, 1999), 87–102.

¹²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 89–92.

¹²¹ The emphasis on behaviour and practice was of the paramount importance no matter if people were freshly converted or had already had a long tradition of Christian ways of life. Cf. Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 365; R. N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215–c. 1515* (Cambridge, 1995), 26.

¹²² To date, the closest idea to what devotional practices may have been like in fifteenth-century Lithuania may be gathered, besides work being done by S. C. Rowell, from studies dealing with religious life in Poland. For example, S. Bylina,

from 1387 onwards served as a showcase of Catholic piety and the place where the new Christian identity of the Lithuanians was to be displayed to the best effect. Manifestations of Roman Catholic piety were regarded as a touchstone for the quality of neophytes. When the papal envoy Giovanni Manco and the Neapolitan knight Ludovico visited Vilnius in 1390 for purposes of inspection and mediation between King Jogaila and the Teutonic Order, they gained a most positive impression as regards the Christian way of life of its inhabitants.¹²³ They also gained the most positive opinion of King Jogaila and his zeal in promoting the Christian faith among the neophyte population for whom he had already built a great number of parish churches and called in a great number of regular and secular priests.¹²⁴ Even if this picture provides a one-sided account, it is nevertheless clear that the prerequisites for the Roman Catholic piety were already in place. Devotion was not only designed to meet one's own religious needs. It had an outward direction too, which was all the more important because of the close presence of the 'other' – the Greek Orthodox believers, who remained in place and were doing well.¹²⁵

Some casual evidence allows us to speak of religious enthusiasm characteristic of neophytes. Of course it is much easier to find such

Chrystianizacja wsi polskiej u schyłku średniowiecza (Warsaw, 2002), and I. Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny w średniowiecznej Polsce* (Warsaw, 2003).

¹²³ CEV, no. 65, p. 22. See also J. Drabina, *Papiestwo–Polska w latach 1384–1434* (Cracow, 2003), 27–8.

¹²⁴ J. Tęgowski, 'Świadectwo postępów w Chrystianizacji Litwy. Misja legatów papieża Bonifacego IX na Litwę w 1390 roku', *Ecclesia–Cultura–Potestas: Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa. Księga ofiarowana Siostrze Profesor Urszuli Borkowskiej OSU*, ed. P. Kras, A. Januszek, A. Nalewajek, W. Polak (Cracow, 2006), 438.

¹²⁵ The image of the Roman Catholics living in the midst of 'schismatics' was cultivated and used to promote one's own devotion and, if possible, conversion of the Orthodox believers to the Roman Catholic rite not only in Vilnius but in Lithuania at large. This situation and corresponding attitude existed in Vilnius from 1387 onwards. The presence of Orthodox believers was a source of constant preoccupation for Church hierarchs. In his letter to Bishop Nicholas (Gorzkw) of Vilnius, Pope Gregory XII viewed the cathedral church of Vilnius as situated in the midst of 'scismaticorum et infidelium': *KDKDW*, no. 48, p. 74 (16 January 1408). In this respect the foundation charter of the fraternity at St John the Baptist's church in Vilnius with confirmations from a number of bishops deserves special attention: GStA PK, *Urkundensammlung Zasztowt, Schieblade no. 6* (11 February 1454).

traces among the members of the elite. Perhaps the most radical new departure was enacted by King Jogaila himself. The neophyte king not only committed himself to religious practices and activities incumbent on a Christian ruler, but he also seems to have carried out a spiritual battle so profound that he came to dislike his very Lithuanian name Jogaila.¹²⁶ The members of the Teutonic Order and their friends used this name in a pejorative sense, while in all charters issued by the Polish chancery only the name of Władysław is used as befitting the ruler of the Polish Crown. Another stark example of remaking one's own identity is furnished by Jogaila's brother Vyngantas who was baptized in Cracow in 1386 along with Jogaila and embraced the name of Alexander. According to Długosz, the young prince embraced the Roman Catholic faith and all the Polish cultural accessories so eagerly that he became much more than a freshman (*tiro*) and was credited to be a veteran in faith.¹²⁷ However, such radical casting away of virtually everything that went before was not a characteristic feature of the Lithuanian society as a whole. Therefore the double-naming as practiced by Grand Duke Vytautas (*Alexander alias Wytowdus*) and a number of high-ranking Lithuanian boyars may be viewed as reflecting more faithfully the process of acculturation, within which experimentation with the new and its pragmatic use was on the order of the day. There was a whole plethora of possibilities ranging from religious fervour to self-conscious manipulation of the 'system'.

In 1415 Grand Duchess Anne, wife of Vytautas, was granted exception from certain fasting practices to which she had committed herself when she was still a relatively young woman. Now she, upon reaching a more advanced age, acknowledged that she had vowed so because of her 'simplicity'.¹²⁸ What could appear as simplicity

¹²⁶ 'Klageartikel, welche König Jagal während der Verhandlungen zwischen Thorn und Raczans 11.–21. April 1388 gegen den Hm. vortragen lässt', 715. Cf. also 'Grzegorza z Sanoka – epitafium Jagiełły', 339.

¹²⁷ Długosz, *Annales, Liber X*, 195; Tęgowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 152–5.

¹²⁸ ASV, Registra Lateranensia 175, fo 206: 'Libenter annuimus hiis precipue per que sicut pie desideras consciencie pacem et salutem anime deo propicio consequaris. Hinc est quod nos tuis devotis supplicationibus inclinati tibi, que, ut asseris, olim in iuventute tua quedam vota ex simplicitate quadam emisisti, que nunc in annis senilibus constituta commode servare non potes, et ex quibus tua consciencia

in the old age was probably a sign of religious zeal in youth. We have to deal with more delicate cases when we approach requests of ostensibly devout Roman Catholics asking for a papal permission to divorce their Orthodox spouses. In 1418 Jonas Butrimas, grand-ducal marshal, told the pope that he had married a Rus'ian woman in the hope that she would eventually convert to the Roman Catholic faith. However, some time later it turned out that this was unlikely to happen, so the man asked for divorce.¹²⁹ Similar arguments were presented to the Roman Curia in 1420. Now it was the sister of Vytautas, Ringailė, who at long last found herself allegedly at discomfort with her Orthodox husband Alexander, the ruler of Moldavia. The wording in the request for divorce was unusually strong: her Greek Orthodox husband was beholden to pagan customs, *ritus gentilium* (!), and there was no hope to see him converted to the Roman Catholic faith as had been vainly hoped by 'his most devout' wife.¹³⁰ The Roman Catholic bishop of Moldavia, in whose name the request was presented, was given full power to proceed ahead. The point, however, is that it was Prince Alexander and Bishop John who collaborated in removing Ringailė from the court of the ruler of Moldavia. For doing so both Jogaila and Vytautas had to be placated somehow, which Alexander managed to do successfully.¹³¹ This instance indicates that even an Orthodox ruler was in the know on how to obtain a desired result from the Roman Curia. Unsurprisingly, the same pattern may be detected in case of Grand Duke Vytautas. In 1415, Antipope John XXIII granted him (and his wife) permission to ignore dietary restrictions during

aggravatur. Auctoritate apostolica tenore presentium indulgemus, ut confessor tuus religiosus vel secularis quem ad hoc duxeris eligendum huiusmodi vota per te, ut preferatur, emissa quecumque fuerint eadem auctoritate in aliis pietatis operibus valeat commutare prout secundum deum et anime tue saluti viderit expedire.' (13 February 1415).

¹²⁹ ASV, Registra Supplicum 116, fo 266r-v; *BP*, IV, no. 328, p. 61 (31 August 1418). On this person, see Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė*, 220.

¹³⁰ ASV, Registra Supplicum 144, fo 193r-194r; *BP*, IV, no. 690, p. 129-30 (1 July 1420). For the use of the 'pagan' for the purposes of diffamation, see Brauer, *Die Entdeckung des 'Heidentums'*, 108.

¹³¹ J. Tęgowski, 'Powiązania genealogiczne wojewodów mołdawskich Bogdanowiczów z domem Giedyminowiczów w XIV-XV wieku', *Genealogia: Studia i Materiały Historyczne*, 3 (1993), 64-5.

fast times so sweepingly that even those present at the grand-ducal table could be exempted from them.¹³² Conscience alone was to be their sole guide. The same request was submitted once again in 1418. There was, however, a difference – by now the papacy stood on its own two feet and the exemption was granted to the grand duke and his wife only.¹³³

As in other countries around the world, so in Lithuania, too, conversion to Christianity affected the patterns of marital relations as the observance of the permissible degrees of consanguinity had to be introduced. In general, the Roman Catholic Church regarded marriages contracted in pagan times and based on monogamous relations as valid. It behove local clergy to control this, though from time to time guidance from higher authorities seems to have been necessary. It looks likely that an occasion to regulate marriage-related issues in newly-converted Lithuania may have been provided by Bishop Giovanni Gabrielli of Massa Maritima, who was accordingly authorized in March 1392 before going on his mission to Poland, Prussia, Lithuania, and Livonia.¹³⁴ Much the same issues had to be addressed after the conversion of Žemaitija, when in 1428 both Jogaila and Vytautas requested the pope to allow the Žemaitijans to remain in their pre-conversion marriages notwithstanding prohibited degrees of consanguinity.¹³⁵

The church and the open air spaces were not the only places that offered interface between ecclesiastical authorities and lay people. In this regard a tavern must have been of paramount importance in terms of offering most congenial and almost unparalleled conditions

¹³² ASV, Registra Lateranensia 175, fo 205v (13 February 1415).

¹³³ ASV, Registra Supplicum 116, fo 212v. *BP*, IV, no. 327, p. 60 (27 August 1418).

¹³⁴ This embassy may have something to do with the planned mission of abbot John Carrara and canon Baylardinus of Verona. It is assumed that the latter mission was actually carried out in 1391. Cf. J. Drabina, *Papiestwo–Polska*, 28–9. However, a notice in the margin ‘Cancellata quia reformata prout inferius apparet’ makes one wonder if this embassy was ever dispatched. Cf. ASV, Registra Vaticana 313, fo 198v. The documents of authorization to bishop Giovanni begin at fo 251ff. The matters affecting marriage relations are presented in a letter of 1 March 1392 contained in the same manuscript on fo 265r–v. The issue of these missions certainly requires further investigation.

¹³⁵ *KDKDW*, no. 104, pp. 129–30 (27 June 1428).

for socializing.¹³⁶ It is difficult to tell what the effects on the festive culture in Lithuania were due to such innovations. Local beverages such as beer or mead were certainly served there, but perhaps wine also became more current as was the case in post-conversion Kievan Rus'.¹³⁷ As owners of inns, priests certainly obtained an additional means of controlling the behaviour of their parishioners. There is no telling how much the old pagan habits of drinking hard were curbed (fast times alone being a factor) or upheld. However, we must admit that this was not a one-way process. Polish people coming to serve in Lithuania had occasions to learn something. There is a casual letter written by some anonymous person to some 'Reverend Father'. A close friend (or relative) of the latter would send him certain Lithuanian knives that could somehow be used in dealing with a hangover. The package also contained gloves, though far from modish but very useful in conditions of bitter frost.¹³⁸

One of the most conspicuous innovations that followed in the wake of the conversion of Lithuania was the introduction of written culture as an integral part of political, legal and cultural life. The cliché that a message committed to writing preserves for ever what otherwise falls so easily from transient human memory may have sounded hackneyed in Latin Europe, but on its eastern fringes, in Lithuania, this was something still to be fully appreciated. The needs of the Church made it imperative to have primary schools where Latin grammar and church singing could be taught. The first school in Lithuania is known to have existed by 1397 at the cathedral of Vilnius.¹³⁹ The need to have native Lithuanian clergy was articulated in the foundation of the Lithuanian College by Queen

¹³⁶ Already in 1387 a parish priest in Oboltsy was given a right to set up a tavern there: *KDKDW*, no. 9, p. 19 (1 June 1387).

¹³⁷ Cf. T. S. Noonan, R. K. Kovalev, 'Wine and oil for All the Rus! The importation of Byzantine wine and olive oil to Kievan Rus', *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe*, 185–219.

¹³⁸ *CE XV*, II, no. 92, p. 114: 'Mitto ... cultellos scilicet littwanicos, quibus illic sevicia crapule expugnatur; habebitis postea sudarium pulcrum sed exile, quo in terra Littwanica, dum calix mero estuans usquequaque ebibitur, dulces lacrimae oculos irrigantes extinguuntur...' (1419).

¹³⁹ J. Ochmański, 'Najdawniejsze szkoły na Litwie od końca XIV do połowy XVI wieku', *Dawna Litwa: Studia historyczne* (Olsztyn, 1986), 122–4.

Jadwiga at the University or Prague in 1397.¹⁴⁰ The need to boost the Christianization of Lithuania was one of the driving reasons behind the establishment of the faculty of theology in 1397 and the reestablishment of the University of Cracow in 1400.¹⁴¹ The pious foundation in Prague proved abortive as there were not enough students from Lithuania to make much use of it. The University of Cracow exercised much stronger attraction and became a preferred place of destination for majority of students from Lithuania eager and able to get higher education at European universities.¹⁴² Vilnius cathedral school may be regarded as the main formal institution of learning in which Lithuanian youth could acquire basic skills necessary for admission to university. There was one more school in Vilnius, but its main task was to equip Franciscan friars theologically for facing 'infidels' and Orthodox believers as may be inferred from a papal letter issued on behalf of Friar Gregory de Guraw in 1426.¹⁴³

The introduction of Christianity in Lithuania helped greatly to establish 'working relations' with the beloved dead ones. With a possible exception of post-Christian parts of Europe, the belief in the afterlife was and is omnipresent in the world. Pagan Lithuania was no exception in this regard. However, what can be inferred from archaeological and historical investigations is that the relations between the living and the dead must have been felt as ominous and uneasy. Pagan Lithuanians were used to cremate their dead and bury them in sites at a fair distance from settlements. Especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when paganism in Lithuania was a distinctive mark of this country, pagans would dispose of

¹⁴⁰ M. Svatoš, 'Litevská kolej pražské univerzity (1397–1622)', *Praha–Vilnius: Sborník prací k 400. Výročí založení univerzity ve Vilniusu*, ed. J. Petr, L. Řeháček (Prague, 1981), 19–30; K. Ožóg, *The Role of Poland in the Intellectual Development of Europe in the Middle Ages* (Cracow, 2009), 88–9.

¹⁴¹ Cf. M. Markowski, 'Programowe założenia uniwersyteckiego nauczania w jagiellońskiej odnowie krakowskiego studium generale', *AC*, 19 (1987), 228–34. For the role of King Jogaila in the foundation of the Cracow University, see K. Stopka, 'The Jagiellonian foundation of Cracow University', *Quaestiones Mediaevi Novae*, 8 (2003), 54–65.

¹⁴² V. Biržiška, *Lietuvos studentai užsienio universitetuose XIV–XVIII amžiais: Redagavo ir papildė Mykolas Biržiška su Adolfo Šapokos įvadu* (Chicago, 1987); W. Urban, S. Lūžys, *Cracoviae Lithuanorum saeculis XIV–XVI = Lietuvių Krokva XIV–XVI amžiais* (Vilnius, 1999).

¹⁴³ *KDKDW*, no. 94, p. 122 (27 May 1426); Kantak, *Franciszkanie*, 319.

their dead so effectively that now it is very difficult or quite impossible to find their traces even when most advanced archaeological methods of research are applied.¹⁴⁴ It is perhaps no accident that no authentic tradition as to the possible places in which the grand dukes of Lithuania were buried survives. The only exception may be the rather problematic account of Jan Długosz, who wrote that Grand Duke Algirdas was buried near Maišiagala, some 30 kilometres north-west of Vilnius.¹⁴⁵ Even if this lonely reference might be regarded as credible, it might well serve as an indication of the habit of keeping the dead at arm's length. It is possible to surmise that there was some conscious *damnatio memoriae* at work, too. There is, for example, no reliable evidence that Grand Duke Vytautas ever cultivated the memory of his father, Grand Duke Kęstutis, or his mother Birutė, whose personal name emerged only in semi-legendary parts of sixteenth-century chronicles of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.¹⁴⁶ This was so because both of them were pagan. In contrast, the memory of Christian relatives was to be kept alive through liturgical commemorations as has already been indicated by the care of Vytautas with regard to his late brother Butautas. Even the Orthodox Christian relatives were to be remembered as

¹⁴⁴ Bitner-Wróblewska, *From Samland*, 25. Cf. also Kurila, 'Lietuvių etninė riba ... (1. Archeologiniai duomenys)', 60; Luchtanas, Vėlius, 'Valstybės gimimas', 160; G. Zabiela, 'Pietų Lietuvos vėlyvieji degintiniai kapynai', *Archeologia Litwana*, 4 (2003), 179–83. It looks likely that in fourteenth–early fifteenth century Lithuania there was a practice of underwater burial: R. Vengalis, 'Semeniškių kapynas', *Archeologiniai Tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje 2010 metais* (Vilnius, 2011), 124–7; V. Vaitkevičius, 'The excavations in Bajorai Cemetery during 2006–2009', *Archaeological Investigations in Independent Lithuania, 1990–2010*, ed. G. Zabiela, Z. Baubonis, E. Marcinkevičiūtė (Vilnius, 2012), 145–51.

¹⁴⁵ Długosz, *Annales. Liber X*, 166.

¹⁴⁶ The wife of Kęstutis and the mother of Vytautas is known by the name of Birutė. She was depicted as a Lithuanian counterpart to the vestals of the Romans by the sixteenth-century Lithuanian chronicles, and still in the same century was immortalized by Maciej Strykowski from whom writers of later centuries and historians alike drew their inspiration and knowledge: Strykowski, *Kronika*, II, 43–4. See also Rowell, 'Pious princesses', 13–8. Called Birutė, she appears always in a (quasi)mythological setting and therefore her name may be an 'invention' after the goddess of the same name: cf. V. Ališauskas, 'Kulto tradicija lokaliajo religinėje bendrijoje: Birutės atvejis', *Religinės bendrijos Lietuvos istorijoje: Gyvenimas ir tapatybė [BIS, 5]* (Vilnius, 2012), 13–19. Contrary to the opinion that she originally lived in Palanga by the Baltic Sea, her family roots should primarily be sought in central Žemaitija: Saviščevas, *Žemaitijos savivalda*, 28–33.

may be indicated by the same Grand Duke Vytautas, who granted certain revenues to the Kiev Caves monastery for prayers for the soul of his 'babka' (grandmother).¹⁴⁷

This sort of spiritual closeness had certainly had its expression in the physical closeness between the world of the living and the world of the dead. In this regard Christian approach to their dead was quite different from the pagan attitude. To date the earliest known burial ground in which the inhabitants of Vilnius buried their dead is the one in the area along the present-day Bokšto (Tower) street. Here Orthodox believers were buried from the late thirteenth century onwards.¹⁴⁸ The Roman Catholics had their cemetery close to the church of St Nicholas.¹⁴⁹ So we may state that in Lithuania it was Christians who brought the world of the living and the dead closer together. It is natural that it was churches and chapels that acted as focal points for burials as was the case in the Christian world from late antiquity.¹⁵⁰ The tradition of having one's own chapel in which to bury one's own kin began to take root among the higher Lithuanian elite quite soon after the conversion. The first to show the lead was the first bishop of Vilnius Andrew.¹⁵¹ The essential concern related to the dead was their weekly commemoration in Mass. This custom accounted for many a pious foundation and for absolute majority of donations to ecclesiastical institutions. The Franciscans

¹⁴⁷ *Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 20 (1536–1539). Užrašymų knyga 20*, ed. R. Ragauskienė, D. Antanavičius (Vilnius, 2009), no. 90, p. 151: 'И на то онъ ставиль сведецство люди добрых, землянь тамошньнихъ киевскихъ. Которыи жъ светчели, ижъ яко они памятають от давныхъ летъ ... тое мыго с тымъ именемъ Навозомъ княз великий Витолт к тому монастыру печерскому по души бабки своеи прыдаль' (25 January 1538). The term 'babka' may refer not necessarily to 'grandmother', so that is why it is impossible to tell with certainty who this 'babka' was. One possible candidate may be Grand Duke Gediminas' Orthodox sister, a nun who was mentioned in 'Chronica XXIV Generalium', 536.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. R. Jonaitis, *Civitas Rutenica Vilniuje XIII–XV a.* (Klaipėda, 2013. Diss.), 70–2.

¹⁴⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 1, p. 5 (17 February 1387).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. A. Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien: Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1997), 167–70.

¹⁵¹ *KDKDW*, no. 29, p. 48 (9 May 1397). Albertas Manvydas, palatine of Vilnius, was one of the first lay persons who built a chapel at the Vilnius cathedral. The chapel was dedicated to Ss Albert and George: *ibid.*, no. 86, pp. 744–5 (27 August 1423). He was one of the most influential men in the time of Vytautas. For his personality, see Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė*, 266–7.

of Vilnius were most actively engaged in this sort of activities.¹⁵² The associated rituals and the *liber vitae* with its inscriptions must have made a deep impression within a society that was only beginning to appreciate the power of the written word in daily transactions and otherworldly concerns.¹⁵³

The establishment of ecclesiastical structure is a sign that certain amounts of resources began to be allocated for charitable purposes irrespective of blood relations between a giver and a taker. How this practice was widespread in the first century or so of Christian Lithuania is impossible to say only due to the lack of relevant sources. It is known for example that certain amounts of cash (240 groats) must have been flowing from taverns of Vilnius to the local cathedral school.¹⁵⁴ The practice of granting indulgences for pious visits to a church and a contribution to its building or upkeep (*fabrica ecclesiae*) is also to be seen as one more sort of charitable activity predicated on exchange of material goods for spiritual rewards.¹⁵⁵ The practice of local, small-distance pilgrimage took root within the first post conversion decades. This can be inferred not only from the grants of indulgences, but also from archaeological finds of devotional articles (crosses) that began to be put to graves in larger numbers at the end of the fourteenth century.¹⁵⁶ It is known that Vytautas' wife, Grand Duchess Anne, undertook a pilgrimage to Prussia in 1400.¹⁵⁷ Still further afield went Jonas Nemira during

¹⁵² Rowell, 'Winning the living', 89ff.

¹⁵³ The remnants of the Vilnius Franciscan necrology (*liber vitae*), which survived to the early twentieth century are now lost: Z. Dunin-Kozicki, 'Szczątek kalendarza Franciszkanów wileńskich z XV wieku', *Kwartalnik Litewski*, 4 (1910), 3–12. On the interplay between oral and written culture, see Ališauskas, *Sakymas ir rašymas*.

¹⁵⁴ *KDKDW*, no. 209, p. 237 (25 April 1452).

¹⁵⁵ Indulgences granted to the newly established cathedral church in Medininkai, Žemaitija, and the Holy Ghost church in Vilnius. *KDKDW*, no. 76, pp. 106–7 (27 August 1418). Indulgences granted to the altar of the Holy Cross in the cathedral church in Vilnius. *Ibid.*, no. 96, pp. 123–4 (13 May 1427). See also below, p. 403ff.

¹⁵⁶ E. Svetikas, 'Livonijos įtaka Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės christianizacijai: kryželiai XIV a. II pusės – XV a. Lietuvos kapuose', *Lituanistica*, 1 (2007), 51–65.

¹⁵⁷ M. Radoch, *Walki Zakonu Krzyżackiego o Żmudź od połowy XIII wieku do 1411 roku* (Olsztyn, 2011), 161–3. See also *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch der Jahre 1399–1409*, ed. E. Joachim (Königsberg, 1896), 64, 64, 80–1, 103.

his pilgrimage to Bad Wilsnack in 1404.¹⁵⁸ Grand Duke Žygimantas Kęstutaitis vowed to undertake a pilgrimage some time about 1439, but failed to carry it out.¹⁵⁹ It looks likely that, in general, Lithuanian nobility seems to have dispensed with long-distance pilgrimages in the first decades of the fifteenth century, and only from mid-fifteenth century this situation began to change.¹⁶⁰ Pilgrimages reaching Rome, for example, became more usual only in the last decade of the fifteenth century.¹⁶¹ For the time being, ordinary people had to be satisfied only with their local churches in a country that still had a comparatively weakly developed network of parishes. Covering fairly long distances thus might well appear as a kind of pilgrimage undertaken at least during high holidays.

The parish churches built in Lithuania became conducive to the formation of a new sense of belonging to territorial community of believers – the parish.¹⁶² Sometimes this sense of belonging expressed itself in the imposition (adoption?) of a new place name.

¹⁵⁸ M. Starnawska, 'Die Beziehungen des Königreichs Polen und des Herzogtums Litauen zu Wilsnack und die Christus-Reliquienverehrung im Spätmittelalter', *Die Wilsnackfahrt. Ein Wallfahrts- und Kommunikationszentrum Nord- und Mitteleuropas*, ed. F. Escher, H. Kühne [*Europäische Wallfahrtsstudien*, 2] (Frankfurt/M, 2006), 85–6.

¹⁵⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 155, p. 174 (7 September 1439).

¹⁶⁰ Ruthenian Alexander Soltan seeking union with the Roman Catholic Church may be regarded as the most celebrated fifteenth-century pilgrim from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On his pilgrimage in 1467–69 see R. Trimonienė, 'Vakarų Europos valdovų rekomendaciniai raštai Lietuvos didžiojo kunigaikščio Kazimiero dvariškiui: Aleksandro Soltano politinės veiklos štrichai', *Lietuvos Istorijos Studijos*, 3 (1996), 101–19. A. Paravicini, W. Paravicini, 'Alexander Soltan ex Lithuania ritum grecorum sectans': Eine ruthenisch-polnische Reise zu den Höfen Europas und zum Heiligen Land 1467–1469', *Zwischen Christianisierung und Europäisierung*, 367–401.

¹⁶¹ D. Baronas, 'Piligrimai iš Lietuvos – Romos Šv. Dvasios brolijos nariai 1492–1503', *LKMA Metraštis*, 38 (2014), 15–25.

¹⁶² It has recently been noted that from the archaeological point of view the majority of the earliest parish churches tended to be constructed on the outskirts of densely populated areas. This unexpected result prompted some archaeologists to advance an opinion that this might be a reflection of a conscious policy on the part of the rulers of Lithuania in creating new centres of power by advancing the cause of Christianity: cf. A. Kuncevičius, R. Jankauskas, R. Laužikas, R. Augustinavičius, R. Šmigelskas, 'Rytų Lietuvos teritorinis modelis I–XV a.', *Lietuvos Archeologija*, 39 (2013), 32–3. Of course, it is a topic for further discussion and reconsideration as to how much such a state of affairs was due to secular and ecclesiastical authorities.

People once belonging to the manour of Doynischky, by 1397 came to be called Biskupicze (to wit bishop's people).¹⁶³ This was part of the Christianization of territory, a process which is not explored but may be grasped from casual evidence. In the same document concerning Biskupicze, the variant name of the river Neris, Vilija, was reproduced as *Vigilia*.¹⁶⁴ There are quite a few hydronyms in Lithuania that derive from the root denoting 'holy, sacred' – Šventas, Šventežeris, Šventoji and so on. Flowing across Aukštaitija, the river Šventoji is one of major tributaries to the Neris. It was this river that in later (Franciscan) tradition came to be associated with mass baptism of the population on its banks – a notional event which must have given the name to the river, the Holy.¹⁶⁵ In the cases of both *Vigilia* and the *Šventoji* we have instances of how a Christian message could be imparted to the place names that were susceptible to Christian interpretation irrespective of whether they had any links to a pre-Christian sphere of the sacred or not. Place names could also be imported from abroad. A case in point is the Franciscan church in Vilnius described as being located *in Arena*.¹⁶⁶ It was no other place but the royal city of Cracow, which had a suburb called *Piaski*. It was in Cracow that Jogaila (and Queen Jadwiga) founded a Carmelite church in honour of the Mother of God *in Arena*.¹⁶⁷

The newly-established churches soon became the places in which the sacred power was most concentrated and where imploring God and his saints for beneficial rewards seemed most appropriate. Proper reverence for sacred things became a matter taken for granted by devout members of neophyte communities, a phenomenon which is most frequently to be inferred from pious foundations and

¹⁶³ *KDKDW*, no. 29, p. 49: 'eciam decimam in nostra nova curia, videlicet olim Doyniszky nunc vero Biskupicze' (9 May 1397).

¹⁶⁴ The etymology of the name *Vilija* is a complicated problem, as it may be of either of Balt or Slavic origin: A. Vanagas, *Lietuvių hidronimų etimologinis žodynas* (Vilnius, 1981), 382–4.

¹⁶⁵ 'Provinciae Lituaniae exordia', 630: 'amnis Flumen Sanctum dictus, quia plurimi ejus aquis ad baptismum adhibitis sanctificabantur.'

¹⁶⁶ This topographical specification is known from at least 1432, see *KDKDW*, no. 124, p. 144: '... in harena' (24 September 1432).

¹⁶⁷ Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI–XII*, 125; *Lietuvos Metraštis*, 230; A. Widacka-Bisaga, *Między pobożnością a przesądem: Matka Boska Piaskowa a fenomen cudownych wizerunków maryjnych w Polsce* (Cracow, 2013).

donations. However, in its starkest expressions this phenomenon comes to surface in the cases that had to do with violent or criminal events. For example, Fr Theodoric Ticha from Oboltsy ordered, as was customary in the land, to have his slave Alexius whipped for his wife Thomka's recurring thefts in the priest's house. Another lesson was given to Alexius when the priest took a rod and struck Thomka between her shoulders and then went out. Now it was Alexius's turn to show what he had learned. He proved a good disciple and in no time outperformed the priest by flogging and kicking his wife so that people from around had to call back the priest to stop Alexius. However, it proved too late and in two weeks Thomka miscarried and died. Scruples of conscience discouraged Fr Theodoric from celebrating Mass and finally led him to apply to the Roman Curia for absolution from this incident.¹⁶⁸ Another priest, named John from Ashmiany, had also to turn to the Curia because of the death of a notorious thief. The latter, named Pantheleon, had already been mutilated by having his nose, ears and toes cut off, but this did not discourage him from breaking into a church and committing a sacrilege by taking away some sacred objects. Consequently, Fr John took care to detain him and asked for restitution of the stolen items. However, infuriated parishioners were more impatient, they were calling for capital punishment. The priest took it into account that in the land of the neophytes the death penalty was not a traditional punishment to be meted out to thieves, so he ordered the thief to be flogged. Some ten days later the man was found dead. The priest asked for absolution from this accident, though he did not consider himself guilty of the man's death.¹⁶⁹ In this episode perhaps the most telling thing is a vocal reaction of the neophytes, who considered the sacrilege to be punishable by death and not by simple mutilation, as would have been according to ancient custom. This sensitivity of the parishioners confirms the admission that Fr John was a capable priest who excelled as a good preacher and as a suc-

¹⁶⁸ *KDKDW*, no. 92, pp. 120–1 (21 July 1425). For Theodoric Ticha, see *LKD*, no. 2435.

¹⁶⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 145, pp. 161–2 (3 February 1436); *BP*, V, no. 616, pp. 106–7; no. 617, p. 107.

cessful missionary among the pagans, Valachians and Rus'ians.¹⁷⁰ This was so in 1436.

The life of Roman Catholic priests coming to serve in Lithuania was far from easy. In the post-conversion period there are relatively quite a lot of complaints about harm or injustices done to the property of the Church. It was not only habitual thieves that caused concern. Such cases, in our opinion, had something to do with structural changes initiated by the introduction of ecclesiastical organisation into a neophyte country. One of such changes was the more pronounced sense of private property. It had been an ancient custom allowing people from afar to make use of communal goods (forests, meadows and so on), but once the vast tracts of land were given over to the Church, a new player with its own distinctive style of administration and management came in. The grand-ducal writ was certainly not enough to dislodge old habits of tapping communal resources. The help coming from secular hand was far from being always readily available. That is why sometimes special provisions for guards of church property were made explicitly.¹⁷¹ Such measures were insufficient to discourage trouble-makers. That is why spiritual arms of excommunication were also used.¹⁷² This must have been a bitter experience that willy-nilly had to make its contribution to awakening and stimulating the conscience among the population that only recently began to be used to confession and atoning for sins.

It must be admitted that we have no Lithuanian counterparts to sources like *Responsa Nicolai Papae ad consulta Bulgarorum* or the *Lives* of St Otto, Bishop of Bamberg – sources that would allow scholars to see what concerns were of paramount importance and what immediate effects of the conversion were on Bulgarian and Pomeranian societies, respectively.¹⁷³ It is readily to be assumed that new behavioural requirements and soul-searching introduced

¹⁷⁰ *KDKDW*, no. 145, p. 162 (3 February 1436).

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, no. 242, p. 275 (8–13 March 1462).

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 36, 64.

¹⁷³ I. Dujčev, 'I 'Responsa' di papa Nicolò I ai Bulgari neoconvertiti', *Aevum*, 5/6 (1968), 403–28; Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 364–8; R. Bartlett, 'The conversion of a pagan society in the middle ages', *History*, 70 (1985), 185–201.

to Lithuanian people by the Roman Catholic Church must have caused anxiety in some more or less delicate situations of daily life. Sometimes it seems to have been misplaced even from the then Roman Catholic point of view. In this respect we would like to draw attention to the issue of bathing. There are at least two known cases in which Lithuanian dukes (Vytautas in 1418, and Švitrigaila in 1431) asked the pope for the permission to bathe on feast days. It was necessary to them because of health considerations, but their consciences were not easy enough. Vytautas received the relevant permission along with other concessions.¹⁷⁴ More revealing is the second case. In his response on behalf of the pope, Jordan, a titular bishop of Sabina, told Švitrigaila that such a trifle did not require papal authorization and the matter was left to his own conscience.¹⁷⁵ It is known that Lithuanians, even King Jogaila, used baths, but this tradition can hardly be regarded as some pagan custom, when even the experts at the Roman Curia were inclined to treat it as a morally neutral phenomenon.¹⁷⁶ Where did such scruples on the part of Švitrigaila come from, then? In our opinion, the most likely answer is the Greek Orthodox sensitivities to which Lithuanian dukes did not prove immune. Probably they felt scruples, much as the Bulgarians did in 866 when they asked Pope Nicholas I about the use of bathhouses.¹⁷⁷ They informed the pope that the Greeks told them not to use them on Wednesdays and Fridays. The pope made recourse to no less an authority than Pope Gregory the Great, who once had responded to the English people on the same issue stating that even on Sundays it was permissible to take care of one's body – all depended on the right intention.¹⁷⁸ Western peoples seem

¹⁷⁴ ASV, Registra Supplicum 116, fo 212v; *BP*, IV, no. 327, p. 60 (27 August 1418).

¹⁷⁵ *CE XV*, II, no. 193, p. 264 (31 July 1431).

¹⁷⁶ *CEV*, p. 1030: 'ea gens a iuventute sua balneis est assueta' (an excerpt from the Teutonic Order's self-defence speech at the Council of Constance, February 1416). On Jogaila, see Biedrowska-Ochmańska, Ochmański, *Władysław Jagiełło w opiniach*, 40ff.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Dujčev, 'I Responsa', 414–26.

¹⁷⁸ 'Responsa Nicolai Papae ad consulta Bulgarorum = Nicolai I Papae epistola 99', ed. E. Perels, *MGH Epist.*, IV (Berlin, 1925), 572. Jacek Banaskiewicz postulated rather than explored the attempts on the part of the Church to proscribe bathing during festive times. In his opinion, such an approach was predicated on the need to curb the parallel and uncontrolled experience of the sacred: cf.

to have been largely freed from such scruples by the late Middle Ages. Roman Catholic Lithuanians still had to be weaned away from some of their directly ancestral habits and set free from at least some of their habits they had in common with Greek Orthodox Rus'ians.

John-Jerome in the countryside of early Christian Lithuania

It is assumed that the latest and probably the best eyewitness account of the pagan religion in late medieval Lithuania is furnished by the Camaldolese monk John-Jerome of Prague, who happened to be interviewed during the Council of Basle in 1433 by no less a figure than Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, the future pope Pius II.¹⁷⁹ A visit to the monk spending his last days in the monastic tranquillity on the Rhine, undertaken by so prominent a man and his friends, was occasioned by their curiosity and disbelief in what the others said about John-Jerome's missionary exploits in Lithuania under Vytautas. John-Jerome shared his reminiscences with his guests who faithfully committed his account to writing. Upon his arrival in the countryside John-Jerome happened to meet people keeping and taking care of grass-snakes in their houses. These reptiles had to be annihilated and burnt in public. After this first encounter, Jerome came across a certain tribe who venerated the sacred fire burning in a temple and looked after by priests (*sacerdotes*). They seem to have specialized in foretelling the future during night séances in which they could tell whether a sick person would die or survive. Travelling further he met another tribe who venerated the sun and the unusually big iron hammer which had been put to good

J. Banaszkiwicz, 'Król i łaźnia. Bog i łaźnia (Gall Anonim o Bolesławie Chrobrym. "Povest' vremennykh let" o stworzeniu Pierwszego Człowieka)', *Wyobrażenia średniowieczna*, ed. T. Michałowska (Warsaw, 1996), 216. On the bathing from a cultural point of view in the High Middle Ages, see G. Vercamer, 'Das Bad des Königs – beschreibt Gallus Anonymus ein genuin piastisches/polnisches Ritual?', *FS*, 43 (2009), 349–72.

¹⁷⁹ At the time of his service as a chaplain at the Polish court and his missionary trip to Lithuania John-Jerome was a member of the Praemonstratensian Order, in 1413 he joined the Camaldolese Order. See Hyland, 'John-Jerome of Prague', 228ff.

use by the Zodiac signs in their rescue action to liberate the sun from imprisonment by some powerful king. The 'priests' around explained that it was only natural to show veneration to the tool which was so instrumental in restoring light to mortals. On both counts Jerome remained unimpressed. He persuaded the first tribe of the trickery, demolished the temple and put out the fire.¹⁸⁰ The worshippers of the sun were done away by making mockery of their 'stupid tale' and telling them that the sun, the moon and the stars had been created by God who ordered them to shine to humankind for ever. Apparently, John-Jerome had to sweat more over the task of felling holy groves which were plentiful in the region he was travelling across. In this he was joined by some locals who, after a few days of being exposed to preaching, became bold enough to approach the holy trees, axe in hand. Eventually his zeal was cut short by Vytautas, who had been approached by a host of angry women complaining of Jerome about his destruction of the abode of God (sic!). Now they were left in the dark as to where they should look for God whom they used to implore for fair weather. The women were supported by the men who, according to Jerome, said that they could not bear 'the new cult' either and were much more ready to relinquish their land and ancestral homes than to renounce their paternal faith. Being afraid, as it were, of the popular revolt, Vytautas revoked the missionary and ordered him to leave the province. The morale: Vytautas was much readier to allow the people to turn away from Jesus Christ than from himself.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ This laconic and moot reference to a 'temple' represents a paradox if one considers a difference between the fact that virtually no pagan temple was attested in pagan Lithuania in the serial sources emanating from the Teutonic Order and this recollection of the eye-witness John-Jerome once active in early Christian Lithuania. In our opinion, if we assume that John-Jerome was essentially right, this 'temple' may have represented some sort of a shed for keeping fire from the fury of elements. It was presumably a wooden structure that could serve as a backdrop against which fortune-tellers could see spirits of ailing persons during their night-time apparitions. It is doubtful that such a structure must necessarily be viewed as a 'survival' from pagan times. Rather, if set in its proper chronological setting, it might be viewed as a recent departure for magicians who had somehow to compete (and imitate?) Christian priests.

¹⁸¹ The account of John-Jerome written down by Piccolomini as part of his tract 'De Europa' is published in the latter's *Opera quae extant omnia* (Basle, 1571), 417–19. It has been republished in *BRMŠ*, I, 590–2.

This account by John-Jerome is generally viewed as a truthful reflection of pagan customs and practices. Many historians believe that the missionary must have acted in Žemaitija, some time at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century (1395–98 or 1401–04).¹⁸² As regards the location of his activities in Žemaitija, there is no compelling reason to believe so.¹⁸³ This idea is essentially based on the assumptions about Žemaitija as the pagan land *par excellence*. It is to be noted, however, that the account of Jerome throws a sidelight showing that he travelled not just through the domains subjected to the rule of Vytautas, he was in the area where the protection of local administration could be guaranteed and where the writ of the grand duke carried weight. This could not have been the case in Žemaitija either side of the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Some consideration must also be given to the fact that up until the 1420s the status of Žemaitija in terms of ecclesiastical jurisdiction remained unsettled, so that is why it is highly improbable that a missionary could have arrived there without a proper authorization (of which, quite naturally, there is no trace). The natural and formal difficulties were absent in those parts of (eastern) Lithuania that were subject to the direct rule of Vytautas and formed part of the diocese of Vilnius. It is known that the first bishop of Vilnius had to travel and evangelize his neophyte flock for years after the formal conversion of the country in 1387.¹⁸⁴ Naturally, he was not alone in this. Many other secular and regular clergy were involved in this task. Therefore it is most natural to suppose that Jerome was one of them. What makes a difference is

¹⁸² M. Andziulytė-Ruginienė, *Žemaičių christianizacijos pradžia* (Kaunas, 1937), 27; Rabikauskas, 'La Cristianizzazione della Samogizia', *La Cristianizzazione della Lituania*, 227.

¹⁸³ William P. Hyland is commendably circumspect in this regard talking about John-Jerome's mission in Lithuania. He is also right in emphasizing that the dating of the duration of his mission in Lithuania remains unknown. Cf. Hyland, 'John-Jerome of Prague', 247. However, his attempt to try to see this John-Jerome in the canon of Vilnius known as *Joannes Boemus* is less convincing, cf. *ibid.*, 245–6. The authors of the prosopographical study devoted to the Catholic clergy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the fourteenth–sixteenth century saw no reason to establish this link: *LKD*, no. 669. See also A. Janulaitis, *Enėjas Silvius Piccolomini bei Jeronimas Pragiškis ir jų žinios apie Lietuvą XIV/XV amž.* (Kaunas, 1928), 37, 46; Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, 2/1, 198.

¹⁸⁴ See p. 288.

this simple yet crucial circumstance: he alone had the good luck of being able to welcome such curious interviewers as future Pope Pius II and his intellectual friends.

The absence of parallel testimonies from other missionaries makes it rather difficult to interpret the account of Jerome. It is trivial to say that this text is open to various interpretations, but this remark is necessary here for a simple reason: we are not going to exhaust all possible interpretations and engage ourselves in the debate about the cult of holy trees, fire and snakes. Rather we would like to expose idiosyncratic features of this account. Scholars generally view the landscape as it is reflected in the account of John-Jerome as heavily imbued with hallmarks of pristine heathen religion. This perspective has been formed due to particular scholarly interests that focus on the reconstruction of the pre-Christian religion. However, the standpoint of John-Jerome offers a slightly wider vista. For one, if he was travelling through a pagan landscape, why is there no talk of at least the need of bringing heathen people to the baptismal font? It is clear that Jerome felt obliged to preach to the people, to annihilate snakes, to fight against superstitions, to mock 'priests' on account of their 'simplicity'. However, was there no need to baptize and thus to set them free from the power of the devil? In our opinion, this absence of the need of baptism stands in correlation to the absence of pagans – a standard phrase to describe non-baptized people, and not only them.¹⁸⁵ Had they already been baptized? If so, there was really no need to reiterate the rite.¹⁸⁶ Did they cling to superstitious practices? If so, they could be bad Christians, but certainly not unalloyed pagans. The account of John-Jerome gives no sure guide in this respect. That so ardent a missionary as John-Jerome certainly was not quick to label the people he met as pagans gives food for thought. His statement (as conveyed by Piccolomini) that the women were missing God driven out of his home may more readily refer to the Christian God than to some pagan deity. It looks likely that these women had already had

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Brauer, *Die Entdeckung des 'Heidentums'*, 85.

¹⁸⁶ The absence of the need to baptize the people John-Jerome met in Lithuania in the course of his mission work has been noticed by Hyland, though, in our opinion, not given due consideration: Hyland, 'John-Jerome of Prague', 247.

some tenets of the Christian faith – the Christian God was also the dispenser of good or bad weather.¹⁸⁷ Next it must be emphasized that after the destruction of the temple (whatever this could be) Jerome did not introduce Christian faith as such – he just introduced Christian customs. However, it was only his own opinion that the customs before his arrival were bad (non-Christian?) – there is no telling whether they were pagan. Local people were quite satisfied with them anyway. So the reaction of the people was quite natural: they turned angry over Jerome because he wanted to introduce a ‘new cult’ and tried to force it upon them. The dissatisfaction of this Christian zealot is almost heard in his concluding remark about Vytautas as being ready to let people turn away from Jesus Christ for the sake of social order and stability. Nevertheless, it was only his version of what the Christian way of life should be, but it was hardly possible in the world of the peasants living far away from churches and close ecclesiastical supervision. As if by default they were left to their own devices for much of the time.

So we tend to view the account of Jerome of Prague not so much as a description of the last pagan survivals but rather as one of the earliest experiences the missionaries had in rural areas in a newly-converted country.¹⁸⁸ We tend to view the ‘pagan priests’ John-Jerome met in the course of his missionary trip not as atavistic relics of bygone days, but as magicians and healers who were also easy to meet in the old Christian countries of Europe.¹⁸⁹ Such people (*sortilegi*) were, for example, of concern to the synod of the province of Gniezno in 1420.¹⁹⁰ The experiences of Jerome of Prague were not

¹⁸⁷ At least some magic practices could be continued in Lithuania as they did, for example, in pre-conversion and post-conversion Britain. Cf. B. Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain, 600–800* (Harlow, 2006), 250–3.

¹⁸⁸ Typologically, the experiences of John-Jerome in Lithuania may be compared with the situation in Anglo-Saxon England in the early Middle Ages where churchmen were in the habit of calling people pagan if they engaged in practices churchmen regarded as incompatible with Christianity, but this must not be the way people looked at their own relation with the Christian faith. Cf. Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain*, 99. Such usage and concomitant polemical heat aimed at folkloric traditions did not disappear in the later Middle Ages. The interesting thing to note is the tendency to equate the ‘pagan’ with ‘errors’ and ‘superstitions’: S. Bylina, *Religijność późnego średniowiecza*, 91–4.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. R. Kieckheffer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990), 56–64.

¹⁹⁰ *Starodawne Prawa Polskiego Pomniki*, ed. U. Heyzmann, IV (Cracow, 1875), 248.

a trip back in time, it was a trip into a fresh syncretism which came about in the wake of the conversion of Lithuania and was strong where churches and clergymen were at quite a distance and relatively few in numbers.¹⁹¹ It is then not surprising that it is possible to find some parallels to the experiences of Jerome in later centuries. The originally Polish (Mazovian) historian of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Maciej Strykowski, left a vivid description from about 1582 of how a Žemaitijan peasant in Kaunas reacted to the scene in which a priest (Bernardine friar) demonstrated, on Good Friday, how Jesus Christ was being flogged. It was a real lesson, given not just by word of mouth. The priest used the rod and flogged the Crucifix. On seeing this, the peasant exclaimed, 'Who are you striking at?' The priest responded, 'The Lord God'. The peasant, again: 'Him, who gave us bad harvest last year?' A man next to him was quick to overtake the priest: 'That One'. 'Good, dear priest, go ahead; why this God gave us bad harvest!'¹⁹² There can be no doubt that this peasant was a Christian. Despite the fact that he lived more than a hundred years later than the interlocutors of John-Jerome, his religious knowledge was hardly any more superior to that of the angry women missing their God in the wake of the heavy-handed performance by the missionary from Bohemia. As regards the John-Jerome's experiences with the snakes, he was one of the first to do battle to them, but far from the last. In remote backwood locations Jesuit missionaries and other foreigners happened to come across strange snake-like crea-

¹⁹¹ The paradoxical nature of the account of John-Jerome may be 'overcome' when, for instance, a scholar supplants the reference to 'God' with that to 'gods' as has been done by Hyland in his recapitulation of the story: Hyland, 'John-Jerome of Prague', 248–51. John-Jerome seems to have 'known' that the holy groves were consecrated to 'demons', but, strangely enough, people seemed to be indignant about injury done to (Christian?) God. A curious reference to the Zodiac signs has been omitted by Hyland and therefore did not receive comment. In our opinion, the reference to the Zodiac signs may be treated as a recent importation rather than a survival from time out of mind. It is easy to imagine that when Lithuania became much more open to influences coming from Latin Europe, not only the Orthodox tenets of the Roman Catholic faith but also astrological lore with a Greco-Roman pedigree could reach her curious people living in the conditions of real spiritual upheaval and innovation. Thus the 'pagan priests' would seem to have been quite up-to-date to what was long part and parcel of Europe replete with the legacy of Antiquity.

¹⁹² Strykowski, *Kronika*, II, 150. *BRMS*, vol. II: *XVI amžius*, ed. N. Vėlius (Vilnius, 2001), 534.

tures with black fur and four legs living in the vicinity of peasants as late as the eighteenth century¹⁹³. To give them battle required much the same exorcistical powers. And this had to be undertaken in the time of the Catholic Reformation, when the churches and clergymen were much more plentiful than in the days of Vytautas. The Jesuits managed to reach the fringes of society where demonic powers were still very close to people. John-Jerome did not need to go that far in order to come across a variety of religious phenomena from pagan-like cult of the snake to Christian-like devotion to God.

Orthodox believers in new conditions: a search for accommodation

The introduction of the Roman Catholic faith into Lithuania, which began in earnest in 1387, could not but affect the position of Orthodox believers. Usually their changing situation is cast in negative colours as if they were exposed to discriminatory measures and had to suffer marginalization in public life and disadvantages in private life.¹⁹⁴ Opinions like these and the holistic evaluation of the position of Orthodox believers under Roman Catholic rulers of Poland and Lithuania have been hugely indebted to the nineteenth-century Russian historiography acting in service of Russian imperial claims. Imperial Russia has always paid much attention to the whitewashing of its aggression against its neighbours and has accumulated much experience in doing so.¹⁹⁵ One of the means to justify its claims to the

¹⁹³ A masterful analysis of this extraordinary phenomenon has been produced by Ališauskas, *Sakymas ir rašymas*, 43–61.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Makarii (Bulgakov), *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi*, 3, 344; Jablonowski, *Westrussland*, 23–4; J. Drabina, *Wierzenia, religie, wspólnoty wyznaniowe w średniowiecznej Polsce in na Litwie i ich koegzystencja* (Cracow, 1994), 109–10, 155; J. Drabina, 'Die Religionspolitik von König Władysław Jagiello im polnisch-litauischen Reich in den Jahren 1385–1434', *ZfO*, 43 (1994), 170; A. Mironowicz, *Kościół Prawosławny w dziejach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Białystok, 2001), 23–4 (with references to earlier literature).

¹⁹⁵ Cf. J. Pelenski, 'Muscovite imperial claims to the Kazan khanate', *Slavic Review*, 26 (1967), 559–76; idem, 'The origins', 29–52; idem, 'The emergence of the Muscovite claims to the Byzantine-Kievan 'imperial inheritance'', *HUS*, 7 (1983), 520–31; E. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism* (Westport, 2000).

lands annexed in the wake of the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the eighteenth century was to project an image of the originally Orthodox lands reclaimed from nepharious Polish Catholic rule.¹⁹⁶ It was then necessary to depict medieval Lithuania as a country in which the Orthodox influence was all-pervasive and of paramount importance from the very beginning. Therefore the conversion to Roman Catholicism effected by Jogaila was seen as an aberration from the 'natural course' which was finally, at the end of the eighteenth century, rectified. Although nowadays this sort of political teleology carries no conviction whatsoever, its (subconscious) legacy has not been totally overcome by detached analysis as practiced in modern medieval studies.

In earlier chapters we have presented evidence showing that the influence of the Orthodox faith in pagan Lithuania was exaggerated in modern historiography. Both Christian branches, Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox alike, were represented in pagan Lithuania. To try to tell which of them was the more important is to get involved in futile teleological speculations. In pagan times the Grand Duchy of Lithuania represented a conglomerate of lands that, except for the ruling dynasty, had very little in common. The need to pay contributions and take part in occasional military expeditions against the Teutonic Order could hardly serve as a stimulus for Rus'ian elites to seek involvement in the political life of Lithuania, a country which was still largely pagan. In essence, pagan Lithuania had few, if any, attractions to offer for the elites of the Rus'ian lands. The leading positions in pagan Lithuania were occupied by the noble elite of Lithuanian extraction – preponderantly pagan in the pagan era, and preponderantly Roman Catholic in Christian times.¹⁹⁷ As before so after the conversion of Lithuania to the Roman Catholic faith the

¹⁹⁶ Cf. E. Aleksandravičius, A. Kulakauskas, *Carų valdžioje. XIX amžiaus Lietuva* (Vilnius, 1996), 26; Zejmis, 'Belarusian national historiography', 384–6.

¹⁹⁷ For the composition of the elite of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania under Vytautas, see Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė*, 74ff. See also J. Suchocki, 'Formowanie się i skład narodu politycznego w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim późnego średniowiecza', *Zapiski Historyczne*, 48 (1983), 31–78. On participation of Rus'ian nobility in the political life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the time of Švitrigaila, see L. Korczak, *Litewska rada wielkksiążęca w XV wieku* (Cracow, 1998), 49–50.

Rus'ians did not occupy key positions. This continuum is important to stress for several reasons: you cannot lose what you did not have; you cannot be pushed aside from where you were absent.¹⁹⁸

It is important to stress that the conversion of Lithuania to Roman Catholicism produced several factors affecting the situation of the local Orthodox believers. For one, it was a new approach by newly-converted rulers. Upon turning Catholic, such rulers as Jogaila and Vytautas had to embrace the general lines of conduct and thinking as that were then current in the rest of Latin Europe. This means that their approach to Orthodox Rus'ians became proactive. The general interconfessional climate between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox believers was tense and far from easy-going on both sides. Relations between Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox believers were marked by mutual mistrust and alienation. Lithuania certainly could not stay aloof from these general phenomena. Already in 1390 in his complaint against Jogaila and Skirgaila, Vytautas accused them that it was they who forced him to embrace the Orthodoxy because they wanted him to be 'hated' by people.¹⁹⁹ What people did Vytautas have in mind? Certainly not Orthodox believers. Pagans? Hardly, for there is no reason to believe that pagans cared much about this as there is no indication of their hostility to any of Lithuanian princes turned Orthodox believer. Catholics? How could they be expected to be angry with Vytautas if the conversion of Lithuania had not taken place yet? As a political factor, Roman Catholic attitudes towards Orthodox believers could be imported only after 1387, so that is why this 'grievance' in the 1390 complaint of Vytautas represents a projection back in time of more recent views. That such a sentiment was far from a universal phenomenon may be illustrated by reference to Skirgaila, who had been baptized

¹⁹⁸ Horst Jablonowski remarked aptly that the changes of 1386–87 affected Lithuanian Catholic boyars, while the Orthodox nobles were simply denied access to these innovations: Jablonowski, *Westrussland*, 39.

¹⁹⁹ 'Vytauto skundas', 211: 'vnd hisen mich selbir dennoch, das ich den russchen glowben solde czu mir nemen, das ich allen luten mich derleite, und ich ane mynen willen jren willen czutunde, hab ich gesprochen: ich habe czu myr genomen den russchen glowben vnd habe geoffenbart den luten; vnd gliche wol hemelich habe ich gehalden myn glowben, als ich vor czu mir hatte genomenden cristen glowben.'

in the Orthodox rite some time before Vytautas.²⁰⁰ His conversion to Orthodoxy did not affect his attachment to Jogaila, nor did Jogaila's subsequent conversion to the Roman Catholic faith result in his alienation. With the departure of Jogaila to Poland, Skirgaila was made his lieutenant in Lithuania. Thus newly-converted Lithuania was placed in charge of an Orthodox duke. Skirgaila certainly did not feel handicapped by his Orthodoxy or 'hated' because of it by 'people'. Only in the wake of a typical power struggle was he replaced in 1392 by Vytautas, who by then had turned Roman Catholic again. These vicissitudes show that it is always necessary to draw distinctions between propaganda of whatever sort and the realities on the ground that tends to be more heterogeneous than black-and-white statements. This incongruity between theory and actual reality is apparent in virtually every segment of interconfessional relations. The issue of the prohibition on building Orthodox churches in Lithuania proper may be taken as a case in point.

It is assumed that this prohibition was promulgated by Jogaila or Vytautas.²⁰¹ Despite the fact that this issue has long received considerable attention from scholars, there is still not much clarity as to when this prohibition was passed, how it was enacted, and how strictly it was observed.²⁰² In our opinion, in discussing this matter insufficient attention has been paid to canon law. It is true that already Jan Fijałek and Kazimierz Chodynicki drew attention to the decisions of the 1420 synod of Wieluń and Kalisz as a source for this type of prohibition, but this thread has not been picked up by later scholars.²⁰³ It is to be recalled that the 'law' prohibiting the building of new Orthodox churches surfaced in Lithuania only in 1494 and this happened under rather extraordinary circumstances.

²⁰⁰ Discussion regarding the possible date and circumstances of the baptism of Skirgaila (c. 1379) was presented by Tegowski, *Pierwsze pokolenia*, 99–101.

²⁰¹ *KDKDW*, no. 120, p. 142 (supposedly before 27 October 1430).

²⁰² Cf. Drabina, 'Die Religionspolitik', 169. L. Ćwikła, *Polityka władz państwowych wobec Kościoła Prawosławnego i ludności prawosławnej w Królestwie Polskim. Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim oraz Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w latach 1344–1795* (Lublin, 2006), 31.

²⁰³ *Starodawne Prawa Polskiego Pomniki*, IV, 242; J. Fijałek, 'Pierwszy synod diecezji wileńskiej w katedrze św. Stanisława 1520–1521', *Kwartalnik Teologiczny Wileński*, 1 (1923), 81–8; Chodynicki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 78–9.

Then negotiations were being conducted over the planned marriage of Grand Duke Alexander of Lithuania and Princess Elena, daughter of Grand Duke Ivan III of Moscow. The father of the bride wanted to have an Orthodox church built for her inside the residence of the grand duke.²⁰⁴ In order to counteract this infiltration of political Muscovite Orthodoxy, recourse was made to a decision taken allegedly by predecessors of the grand duke and his father Grand Duke and King Casimir.²⁰⁵ The same prohibition was from time to time recalled in the first half of the sixteenth century and was ascribed to Grand Duke Vytautas.²⁰⁶ In the light of the fact that there is no any trace of such 'law' ever promulgated by any of the grand dukes of Lithuania and that there are a number of references to it nonetheless, it must rather be assumed that here we have to do with pragmatic usages of 'old and venerable' tradition than with straightforward memories about actually decrees passed. The reference to Vytautas is to be viewed as particularly revealing in this context. From the late fifteenth century onwards the times of Vytautas were regarded as the 'golden age' of Lithuania and that is why his authority could be freely invoked for the sake of keeping 'ancient custom' intact, when and if necessary.²⁰⁷ This is not to say that this connection was totally fictive, because in his time canon law did indeed apply in Lithuania. The prohibition to build new Orthodox churches and permission only to restore old ones derive from the decretals of Pope Gregory IX²⁰⁸ and may have their ultimate source in those parts of the Theodosian Code that deal with restrictions on

²⁰⁴ AZR, I, no. 116, p. 141.

²⁰⁵ Cf. *ibid.* K. Chodynicki, 'Geneza równouprawnienia schyzmatyków w Wielkim Ks. Litewskim. Stosunek Zygmunta Augusta do wyznania grecko-wschodniego', *PH*, 22 (1919–1920), 109–10; J. Fijałek, 'Opisy Wilna aż do połowy wieku XVII-go', *AW*, 2 (1924), 139–40; Jablonowski, *Westrusland*, 51–3.

²⁰⁶ Chodynicki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 79. It may be noted that such references are usually connected with reformist activities when intermingling between Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox believers would become a topic to be discussed and addressed in more urgent terms as was the case during a 1520/21 synod of Vilnius, in which the papal legate Zacharias Ferreri was present. See Fijałek, 'Pierwszy synod', 83–4; Fijałek, 'Opisy Wilna', *AW*, 2 (1924), 146–7.

²⁰⁷ On the image of Vytautas, see Mickūnaitė, *Making a Great Ruler*, 117ff.

²⁰⁸ Fijałek, 'Opisy Wilna', *AW*, 2 (1924), 152. Cf. 'Decretales Gregorii IX' V. 6. 7.

building and repairing Jewish synagogues.²⁰⁹ Canon law applied in Roman Catholic countries without formal promulgation and that is why there was no necessity for a formal decree on the part of a Polish or Lithuanian ruler to make its provisions binding. The question as to how strictly it was observed or enforced need not occupy us here; suffice it to say that there were certain limits to building of Orthodox churches in Vilnius (in particular), but these could be negotiated quite successfully as may be inferred from a number of Greek Orthodox churches built in those parts of Vilnius in which Orthodox believers were settled most densely (*civitas Ruthenica*).²¹⁰ Of course, prohibitions or restrictions like these were absolutely out of question in those lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in which Greek Orthodox believers constituted the majority of population. The prosperity of their own Church was largely in their own hands.

Circumspection is also advised when we have to deal with other supposedly strict ordinances. In 1387 Jogaila promised to bring all people of 'the Lithuanian nation' to Roman Catholic Church, no matter which 'sect' they might have belonged. This is no indication that all Lithuanian Orthodox believers were subsequently exposed to this kind of state-sponsored pressure. It is true that Rus'ian chronicles mention two Orthodox Lithuanians who were executed for refusing to switch to the Catholic side, but such an event, if true, defies

²⁰⁹ For example, CTh.16.8.25.2. With regard to prohibitions affecting the building of synagogues, see Chazan, *Church, State, and Jew*, 30.

²¹⁰ There are obvious problems with this issue, because the lack of historical sources does not allow scholars to state precisely when most of Vilnius Orthodox churches were built. The most famous case of successful foundation of two Orthodox churches, of the Holy Trinity and of the Translation of the Relics of St Nicholas, occurred in 1514 when the grand hetman of Lithuania Constantine Ostrogski was given permission by King Sigismund to fulfil his votive promise in the wake of the grand victory over the Muscovites in the battle of Orsha (8 September 1514). The erection of these rather imposing stone churches caused a certain anxiety among the Polish and Lithuanian Roman Catholic leaders, see Fijałek, 'Opisy Wilna', *AW*, 2 (1924), 137–44. However, it is methodologically unsound to use this case as a proof that until then the prohibition on building new Greek Orthodox churches was observed strictly and thence to infer that the majority of Orthodox churches must originally have been founded in pre-conversion time as was supposed by many a nineteenth-century Russian historian. The present state of knowledge is such that we still have to wait for in-depth archaeological explorations as regards the most probable time of such foundations. Some hope may also be placed on further archival research. Cf. also Cwika, *Polityka władz państwowych*, 31.

straightforward explanation for lack of any other evidence on this exceptional piece of information.²¹¹ The death penalty for refusing to be (re)baptized in the Latin rite would have flown in the face of even the most harsh ecclesiastical censures, so that is why this unique and isolated piece of information, standing in sharp contrast to the attested presence of Lithuanian Orthodox believers in a post-conversion Lithuania, seems to be a product of overinterpretation by Muscovite chroniclers with regard to some event whose actual circumstances are not known. On the other hand, it must be recalled that Jogaila's vicegerent in Lithuania, his brother Skirgaila, was a Greek Orthodox believer. Some Lithuanian noble families managed to retain their Orthodoxy and their status. The Alšėniškiai family is most prominent in this respect. Their relatively high status was ensured by their marital relations to the ruling dynasty, which made their Orthodox faith of no consequence for their place within the ruling elite.²¹² However, the Alšėniškiai family represents an exception, as the clear majority of politically most influential Lithuanian nobles were Roman Catholics. This is one of many instances demonstrating that it was always easier to commit a decision to writing than to enact it in real life. Thus we can hardly consider the admonition of Pope Nicholas IV to Bishop Matthias of Vilnius to take measures to prevent mixed marriages in his diocese as being out of place.²¹³ Such an admonition is unlikely to have achieved any tangible effects. At the very beginning of the sixteenth century, Grand Duke Alexander had to promise to the population of Vitebsk that those people of Lithuanian or Polish origin who had been baptized in the Orthodox rite would suffer no harm to their 'Christian right' to remain what they were.²¹⁴ In the same century mixed marriages came to be quite an ordinary thing.²¹⁵ The attraction of Orthodoxy to non-Orthodox

²¹¹ 'Novgorodskaia Karamzinskaia letopis', ed. A. G. Bobrov, Z. V. Dmitrieva, *PSRL*, XLII (St Petersburg, 2002), 150.

²¹² On the Alšėniškiai family, see Rowell, 'Pious princesses', 24–8, 63–4; Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė*, 47.

²¹³ *KDKDW*, no. 210, pp. 237–9 (26 May 1452).

²¹⁴ *AZR*, I, no. 204, p. 353 (16 July 1503); Jablonowski, *Westrussland*, 51.

²¹⁵ Chodyncki, *Kościół prawosławny*, 78; M. Liedke, 'Mieszane związki małżeńskie a polonizacja możnych Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVI wieku', *Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne*, 7 (1997), 128–32.

people was not a phenomenon limited to Poland and Lithuania. The same problems were faced by Venetian authorities in Mediterranean colonies in which Catholic believers came in close touch with Orthodox priests and lay believers.²¹⁶ It goes without saying that just like Roman Catholic believers could be exposed to the allure of Orthodoxy, the same held true with regard to Orthodox believers who could evince an interest in Roman Catholicism and sometimes even to convert to it. It was, for example, Prince George Lengvenis who in 1447 intended to go on a pilgrimage to Wilsnack, thus providing us with a remarkable instance of a Greek Orthodox believer showing an interest in a Roman Catholic shrine.²¹⁷

It was the ruler who attracted the most different people for whatever reason to get access to his itinerant court. Some non-Catholics seem to have showed a genuine interest in the Catholic faith and rituals. In 1404, King Jogaila informed Pope Innocent VII that there were numerous 'schismatics' in his domains who would attentively listen to sermons and be present in Catholic churches during services. Despite the fact that some of them converted to Roman Catholicism as a result, the presence of still remaining 'schismatics' caused pangs of conscience to King Jogaila and his queen, Anna. So the king requested the pope to grant him a special right to participate at Mass even if schismatics were present, which, unsurprisingly, was granted.²¹⁸ Grand Duke Vytautas looks likely not to have had this

²¹⁶ Thiriet, 'Le zèle unioniste', 497.

²¹⁷ Starnawska, 'Die Beziehungen', 86–8. See also A. Paravicini, W. Paravicini, 'Alexander Soltan ex Lithuania ritum grecorum sectans'. Fifteenth-century translations of Latin liturgical texts into Rus'ian and their transliteration in Cyrillic may be regarded as one more instance of Rusian believers' interest in Roman Catholicism: Iu. Verkholtantseva, 'Cheshskie i khorvatskie glagoliashibeneditintsy sredi pravoslavnykh Litvy i Pol'shy i latinskie teksty, zapisannye kirillitsej', *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės kalbos, kultūros ir raštijos tradicijos*, ed. S. Temčinas, G. Miškinienė, M. Čistiakova, N. Morozova [*Bibliotheca Archivi Lithuanici*, 7] (Vilnius, 2009), 92–3. However, it may be noted that such texts could be used for the evangelization of Roman Catholic Lithuanians. For the case of the application of the Slavic by Henry of Livonia in his contacts with local population of early-thirteenth-century Livonia, see Murray, 'Henry of Livonia and the Wends', 830–32. See also p. 468, n. 24.

²¹⁸ ASV, Registra Lateranensia, 122A, fo 50v (6 November 1404). Further copies of this interesting supplication have been preserved in Registra Lateranensia 119, fos 178v, 183v, 189v.

kind of scruples. For him, Mass in the presence of 'schismatics' and other infidels was a welcome opportunity to display his credentials as a Catholic ruler. In 1418, Vytautas requested the pope to grant him permission to have Mass celebrated publicly in the presence of 'gentiles, schismatics and infidels'. It was argued that the stronger display of devotion on the part of the grand duke and his milieu, the easier it would be to convert them 'to the Christian faith'.²¹⁹ In both cases the presence of Orthodox believers in close proximity to Roman Catholic rulers of Poland and Lithuania must have served as one more proof that attempts in the direction of Church Union were worthwhile to be attempted. All the more so as such efforts could increase the prestige of Polish-Lithuanian rulers.

The need for the Church Unity between Latin and Greek Christians was the order of the day and you had to subscribe to it if you did not want to find yourself out of step with the spirit of the time. As newcomers to Latin Christendom, both Jogaila and Vytautas were keen on proving that they were Catholic rulers as good as the rest of their counterparts from other countries with a much longer Latin Christian pedigree. As Catholic rulers, they certainly did everything they deemed possible or necessary to provide for a dominant position of the Roman Catholic Church in the Grand Duchy. However, as rulers of a large Orthodox population, they could not disregard their interests too. This delicate position is perhaps best captured in a letter issued by Vytautas in 1415, in which he explained to his Orthodox subjects why it was necessary to remove Metropolitan Photius of Moscow and install a new one, Gregory Tsamblak.²²⁰ Vytautas admitted that he was not of their faith and that was why he could feel free to see the decline of their church, which could be even profitable to his own treasury. Instead, he chose to take care of their Church of his own will.²²¹ The authoritarian character

²¹⁹ ASV, Registra Supplicum 116, fo 212v. Published in part in *BP*, IV, no. 327, p. 60 (27 August 1418).

²²⁰ On the significance of the establishment of the Orthodox metropolitanate in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania see Chodyncki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 34–41. See also Thomson, *Gregory Tsamblak*, 64–73.

²²¹ *Akty odnosiaszchiesia k istorii Zapadnoi Rossii*, vol. 1: 1340–1506 (St Petersburg, 1846), no. 25, p. 37 (some time after 15 November 1415).

of grand-ducal power is obvious in these statements, but the rule of law and respect for customs are underlined by continual references to decisions made after discussions had been conducted with spiritual and secular leaders of the Rus'ian lands. This is the usual picture of medieval politics, where effective rule in distant lands was impossible without taking counsel and advice of local elites.

The conversion of Lithuania to Roman Catholicism was accompanied by the introduction of written law in the form of charters of privileges that were intended to serve first of all the interests of the Lithuanian Catholic nobility. The privileges taken over (selectively) from those already enjoyed by the Polish nobility were to exert their force of attraction on Rus'ian nobles as well. This phenomenon is rather well documented in the charters that granted to Rus'ian nobles essentially the same rights as those enjoyed by their Roman Catholic brethren. This process was accelerated in the final years of the rule of Jogaila in Poland and was formally initiated in Lithuania under Grand Duke Žygimantas Kęstutaitis in 1434, when he recognized certain privileges to Lithuanian and Rus'ian boyars alike. However, the latter were not granted access to the highest offices in Lithuania proper: these restrictions stipulated in Horodło in 1413 remained in force until they were abolished formally in 1563 and 1568.²²² It was part and parcel of the more general process of the integration of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania extending throughout the fifteenth century and beyond. The details of this process need not occupy us here; suffice it to say that it was a multi-faceted one. It led to closer integration of the

²²² *CE XV*, vol. III: 1392–1501, ed. A. Lewicki [*Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia*, XIV] (Cracow, 1894) no. 22, pp. 529–31 (6 May 1434); K. Chodynicki, 'Geneza równouprawnienia schyzmatyków w Wielkim Ks. Litewskim. Stosunek Zygmunta Augusta do wyznania grecko-wschodniego'. *PH*, 22 (1919–1920), 110ff; Chodynicki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 85–8. See also W. Czermak, 'Sprawa równouprawnienia schyzmatyków i katolików na Litwie (1432–1563)', *Rozprawy Wydziału Historyczno-Filozoficznego Akademii Uniejętności w Krakowie*, 44 (1903), 348–405; Jabłonowski, *Westrusland*, 40–5. For the developments in Red Ruthenia, see J. Kurtyka, 'Z dziejów walki szlachty ruskiej o równouprawnienie: represje z lat 1426–1427 i sejmiki roku 1439'; idem, *Podole w czasach jagiellońskich: Studia i materiały*, ed. M. Wilamowski (Cracow, 2011), 25–57.

peripheral lands with the core area of the grand-duchy, and at the same time it was marked by the increased regionalization as may be exemplified by reference to the lands of Smolensk, Kiev, Volyn', and Žemaitija.²²³ Some Orthodox princes and their followers left Lithuania for Moscow, but the absolute majority of the Orthodox nobles remained attached to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.²²⁴ So, on balance, the introduction of the Roman Catholicism into Lithuania proved far from provoking an 'anti-Catholic' reaction and stimulating pro-Muscovite feelings far and wide; rather it proved to have caused a process of the integration of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania that would not have been feasible without the participation of the Rus'ian Orthodox nobility.

If in some quarters of historical scholarship relations between Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox believers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are characterized as set on the course towards 'a full-blown confrontation',²²⁵ the somewhat later case of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania indicates that the confrontation was far from inevitable and that the search for accommodation was of the paramount importance. Apart from instances adduced so far, we may refer to the issue of the rebaptism of Orthodox believers upon their turning to the unity with the Roman Catholic Church.²²⁶ It is known that Roman Catholic hierarchs in Poland and Lithuania insisted on the need to repeat baptism, much like their Greek Orthodox counterparts did with regard to Roman Catholics whose prior baptism was considered invalid.²²⁷ It was

²²³ Ibid., 106–13.

²²⁴ O. P. Backus, *Motives of West Russian Nobles in Deserting Lithuania for Moscow, 1377–1514* (Lawrence, 1957), 31–3, 58–9; M. M. Kromm, *Mezh Rus'iu i Litvoi* (Moscow, 1995), 86–7, 99–101, 219–27; Jakubowski, *Studja nad stosunkami*, 62.

²²⁵ B. N. Floria, *Issledovanija po istorii Tserkvi. Drevnerusskoe i slavianskoe srednevekov'e* (Moscow, 2007), 209–24.

²²⁶ Cf. K. Chodynicki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 82–3; Y. Zazuliak, 'Rebaptism, name-giving and identity among nobles of Ruthenian orogin in late medieval Galicia', *On the Frontier of Latin Europe*, 52–5.

²²⁷ T. E. Modelski, 'Z dziejów rebaptyzacji w Polsce', *Kwartalnik Teologiczny Wileński*, 3 (1925), 44–59; J. Sawicki, 'Rebaptisatio Ruthenorum' in the light of 15th and 16th century Polish synodal legislation', *The Christian Community of Medieval Poland: Antologies*, ed. J. Kłoczowski, tr. K. Cenkańska (Wrocław, 1981), 61–72; Drabina, 'Die Religionspolitik', 167.

King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas who, supported by their learned advisers, asked the Council of Constance to instruct them on how the unity of Church should be effected on the grounds when concrete individuals had to be made sure of their embarking on the right path to salvation.²²⁸ This request was not too humble to be devoid of any prop of its own – the king and the grand duke represented the view that the baptism in the Greek Orthodox rite should be considered valid.

²²⁸ *Copiale prioratus Sancti Andree: The Letter-Book of James Haldenstone, Prior of St. Andrews (1418–1443)*, ed. J. H. Baxter (Oxford, 1930), no. 20, pp. 38–41; A. F. Grabski, 'List Władysława Jagiełły i Witolda', 283. *CM*, I, no. 11, pp. 36–7 (25 August 1417).

How to be Big in Europe: Convert the Pagans, Reduce the Schismatics

The last pagans in Europe convert

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the conversion of Žemaitija, which gained momentum in the years after the Battle of Tannenberg (1410) and was finalised by establishing the diocese of Medininkai (Varniai) in 1417, virtually the only bishopric to be established by the Church Council (*sede vacante*). This topic has been covered a number of times mostly by Polish and Lithuanian scholars, but very little of it is available in Western European languages – a fact that goes a long way to explain why the conversion of Žemaitija is still *terra incognita* in much of modern Western European historiography.¹ There are some remarks that need to be made at the outset. In contrast to earlier studies, we are going to present the conversion of Žemaitija in a broader context of the developments taking place within a period of time when the Coun-

¹ J. Fijałek, 'Uchrześcianienie Litwy przez Polskę i zachowanie w niej języka ludu', *Polska i Litwa w dziejowym stosunku* (Warsaw, 1914), 70–118; Andziulytė-Ruginienė, *Žemaičių christianizacijos pradžia*; J. Jakštas, 'Šis tas dėl atskiro Žemaičių krikšto', *LKMA Metraštis*, 3 (1967), 1–9; V. Gidžiūnas, 'Pirmieji bandymai krikštyti žemaičius. (Žemaičių krikšto 550 m. sukakties proga)', *Karys*, 8 (1967), 225–32; Z. Ivinskis, 'Žemaičių (Medininkų) vyskupijos įkūrimas (1417) ir jos reikšmė lietuvių tautai (1417–1967)', *LKMA Suvažiavimo Darbai*, 7 (1972), 55–132; P. Rabikauskas, 'La Cristianizzazione della Samogizia', *La Cristianizzazione della Lituania*, 219–233; G. Błaszczuk, *Diecezja żmudzka od XV do początku XVII wieku: Uposażenie* (Poznań, 1992); idem, *Diecezja żmudzka od XV wieku do początku XVII wieku: Ustrój* (Poznań, 1993); Jučas, *Krikščionybės kelias*, 70–83; idem, *Lietuvos parapijos*, 31–8. Richard Fletcher ended his narrative on the conversion of Lithuania with the events of 1386/87: Fletcher, *The Conversion*, 507.

cil of Constance was convened. That is why we suppose that it is necessary to pay much more attention to the issue of unity between the Latin and Greek Churches when we talk about the conversion of Žemaitija. To say this is obviously not a revelation, but it is our contention that the issue of Church Unity was much more important for King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas than the conversion of mere Žemaitija. The conversion of Žemaitija tended to be viewed by the protagonists on the Polish-Lithuanian side as a stepping stone to something much bigger and much more important – the bringing of the so-called schismatics to the unity with the Roman Catholic Church. This high-pitched dimension of Polish-Lithuanian aspirations allowed their rulers to feel themselves big on a pan-European stage provided by the Council of Constance. Closely related to this is our second contention that during this council Poland and Lithuania played out their best part on the late medieval European international stage, and it was the time when the influence of Poland and Lithuania was felt as strong as never before or after. It was so because Polish-Lithuanian influence extended simultaneously from Moscow to Constantinople and from Constantinople to Constance. So propitious a constellation of the general political situation was unique for Poland and Lithuania, and it never repeated itself. That is why the conversion of Žemaitija and attempts at Church Union are discussed in one chapter and only for the sake of convenience are brought under separate headings. It must be stressed once again that these segments of political reality were running in parallel. And they show something of a political virtuosity on the part of Jogaila and Vytautas that would have been absolutely impossible just a generation before, when the reins of power were in the hands of their fathers, dukes Algirdas and Kęstutis respectively.

We have already noted that pagan Lithuanians did enjoy a reputation of fierce pagans. The Old Žemaitijans are supposed to have been even more pronouncedly pagan. This image is far from being relegated to romantically inspired fiction, it forms part and parcel of historiographical tradition. A hundred years ago the prominent Polish Church historian Jan Fijałek stressed that the attachment of Žemaitijans to their old gods, beliefs and shrines was 'limitless'

and in this regard they surpassed any other pagan people.² The prominent German scholar Manfred Hellmann wondered whether the Žemaitijan resistance to Christianity could be compared with that of the Lutician Slavs.³ These prominent scholars represent the general rule. It is high time to look how pagan the old Žemaitijans were and how ‘the most pagan’ people were converted.

Žemaitija began to assume its peculiar character of the ‘other’ from at least the time of Jan Długosz, who depicted them as more pagan and more primitive than the rest of pagan, savage and mean Lithuanians living in a northern and very cold region. The aura of some never-never land was further increased by sixteenth-century Lithuanian chronicles that depicted Žemaitija as the land of wondrous and unusual things.⁴ However, this otherness of Žemaitija reached no more than two centuries back. Its peculiar features were not a reflection of some mysterious *Volksgeist*, but the product of historical developments that cannot be described in detail here but should be presented in outline. Due to its closeness to the domains of the Teutonic Order and relative distance from eastern Lithuania (the core area of the Lithuanian state), the westernmost part of Lithuanian lands, Žemaitija, was able to maintain its peripheral position and archaic social structure for quite a long time. As we have seen, there were slight differences between Žemaitija and the rest of Lithuania already in the thirteenth century, because the strongest dukes were entrenched in eastern Lithuania which served as the major catchment area for their retainers bent on adventures in foreign lands. In this capacity eastern Lithuania served Mindaugas and it became the power base of the Gediminid dynasty as they came to be the indisputably dominant family in Lithuania from the late thirteenth century onwards. During the following century or so, the society of eastern Lithuania underwent profound changes. The strong rule of the Gediminid dynasty rested on close collaboration with nobility and exploitation of subject peasantry. If the latter

² Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcianienie’, 75; S. Hain, ‘Chrystianizacja Żmudzi’, *Annales Missiologicae–Roczniki Misjologiczne*, 5 (1932–1933), 114. Cf. also Górski, ‘Probleme der Christianisierung’, 31–3.

³ Hellmann, ‘Die polnisch-litauische Union’, 28.

⁴ Saviščevas, *Žemaitijos savivalda*, 27–8.

were largely free during the reign of Mindaugas, their progeny living under Gediminas had to toil at building grand-ducal castles and be engaged in providing various services to him and his warrior elite.⁵ Pagan Lithuania may bear a resemblance to a military camp, and therefore her society must have already been pretty well disciplined. All this was lacking in Žemaitija. During the internecine wars of the thirteenth century the dukes of Žemaitija perished and disappeared as a social class.⁶ The tribal aristocracy (boyars) and the free peasantry, all organized in more or less extensive clans and territorial communities, provided building blocks for this rather egalitarian society. This resulted in hierarchically organised eastern Lithuania on the one hand, and loosely organised Žemaitija on the other. Žemaitija had no established centre(s) of power: it was a land in which authority was dispersed and at the same time vested in the most prominent clans of tribal aristocracy. These networks of power were bound to undergo changes with every generation. A united and coordinated response of the land to pressures put forward by either the Teutonic Knights or the grand dukes of Lithuania was difficult to expect and hard to achieve. If any agreement was made, it remained precarious. Such a society was difficult to rule over and difficult to conquer if one takes into account not only the shortage of strongholds in Žemaitija proper, but also a highly primitive cultural landscape at large: no good roads (even by medieval standards), no large settlements, no towns, and no stone architecture. The omnipresent pristine forest, cleared up only here and there to let the rays of the sun fall on the plots of land emerging from slash-and-burn agricultural activities, was the major feature of the land. The insularity of Žemaitija was more pronounced due to the defensive barrier running dozens of kilometres all along the approaches from Prussia. It was made of felled trees. This was not a remote miniature of the Great Wall of China or the Roman *limes*: the tree wall of Žemaitija was all about impeding the progress of an hostile army or silent penetration of brigands from abroad. If an enemy was spotted

⁵ E. Gudavičius, 'Lietuvių pašauktinės kariuomenės organizacijos bruožai', *Karo Archyvas*, 13 (1992), 50–62.

⁶ A. Butrimas, V. Žulkus, A. Nikžentaitis, V. Vaivada, E. Aleksandravičius, *Žemaitijos istorija* (Vilnius, 1997), 56–60.

at the right time, people would be given a sign (by smoke or by making noise from one hill to another) to run away to their clandestine refuges amidst impassable woods and marshlands.⁷ It was not so simple to ferret them out: risks of falling into ambush were also relatively high. Despite its isolation and archaic social structure, Žemaitija was far from a poverty-stricken land. People made their ends meet by making ample use of forests replete with wild bees and game of all sorts. Time and again the scouts of the Teutonic Order would indicate localities in which there were enough resources for plunder, and where it was plenty of forage for the horses.⁸

Like all tribal societies, Žemaitians too were suspicious of foreigners. The failed attempts on the part of the Teutonic Order to subdue Žemaitija in the 1250s had certainly exacerbated intertribal, now German/Christian and Žemaitian, opposition. Žemaitija therefore was not a safe haven for Christian missionaries to try out their luck among them. The author of *Descriptiones terrarum* noted that in contrast to Yatvingians and Lithuanians, there was still no attempt to evangelize the Žemaitians by any other means but the sword.⁹ Sometimes the Dominicans and/or Greyfriars did risk setting their feet there, but only in the train of the Teutonic Knights. On one occasion at least they seem to have given a signal for the troops to start plundering by setting fire to some of the structures of the locals.¹⁰ The Žemaitians were prone to celebrate their military victories on a grand scale. Peter of Dusburg, composing

⁷ A. Nikžentaitis, 'Rašytiniai šaltiniai apie lietuvių pilių gynybinę sistemą XIII a. pabaigoje–XIV a. pradžioje', *Lietuvos TRS Mokslų akademijos darbai*, series A, 3(96) (1986), 51–62.

⁸ 'Die litauischen Wegeberichte', ed. T. Hirsch, *SRP*, II, 668–72.

⁹ Colker, 'America rediscovered', 722: 'Huic numquam fuit absque gladio predicatum'. This sentence is regarded as a muted critique of the methods of conversion applied by the Teutonic Order to the pagans of the Baltic region: Górski, 'Descriptiones terrarum', 14; Stopka, 'Misja wewnętrzna', 250. See also J. Miethke, 'Die Kritik des Franziskaners Roger Bacon an der Schwertmission des Deutschen Ordens', *Prusy–Polska–Europa: Studia z dziejów średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych. Prace ofiarowane Zenonowi Hubertowi Nowakowi w sześćdziesiątą piątą rocznicę urodzin i czterdziestolecie pracy naukowej*, ed. A. Radzimiński, J. Tandecki (Toruń, 1999), 52–5. For idiosyncretic origins of this criticism on the part of Roger Bacon, see W. Urban, 'Roger Bacon and the Teutonic Knights', *JBS*, 19 (1988), 369–70.

¹⁰ *LR*, lines 4235–9.

his chronicle in c. 1326, noted that the Žemaitijans were still proud of their victory achieved at the Battle of Durbė in 1260.¹¹ Such a climate of public opinion and the general tune of life was hardly conducive to the reception of the Good News with its message of peace and neighbourly love, all the more so when the military confrontation with the Christians was the order of the day. On the other hand, more constructive relations and some sort of mutual esteem between pagan and Christian could be built if the opposing party could present its valid credentials of military prowess. For example, the commander of Ragnit castle Ludwig von Liebenzell was so successful in his military undertakings that he induced a considerable part of the Žemaitijan nobles to cooperate with him.¹² There could be no talk of amicable relations, but some sort of *modus vivendi* could be achieved. For example, sometime around 1359, the pagans from the land of Saulė (environs of present-day Šiaulai) bought peace from the Livonian Order by agreeing to pay some amount of tribute in return for being left out of harm's way.¹³ In doing so they went too far and it became incumbent on the duke of Lithuania (most probably Kęstutis) to apply his pressure in order to call them back from this kind of accommodation. There were occasional instances when the Žemaitijans preferred to surrender to the Teutonic Order and to find their new life somewhere deep in Prussia, away from their war-afflicted land.¹⁴ These instances show that for pagan people, as for most others, the art of survival was what most frequently mattered the most. There were no pagan martyrs dying for their faith. These observations are intended to provide ground for the statement

¹¹ 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 97.

¹² *Ibid.*, 159. On the person of Ludwig von Liebenzell, see M. Dorna, *Bracia zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach w latach 1228–1309: Studium prozopograficzne* (Poznań, 2004), 281.

¹³ *Die jüngere livländische Reimchronik des Bartholomäus Hoeneke 1315–1348*, ed. K. Höhlbaum (Leipzig, 1872), 36, and 'Hermann de Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae', 75. See also E. Gudavičius, 'Baltramiejaus Hionekės kronikos duomenys apie Šiaulių žemę', *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų akademijos darbai*, series A, 2(103) (1988), 56–7. For critical reassessment of the chronicle of Bartholomäus Hoeneke, see A. Mentzel-Reuters, 'Bartholomaeus Hoeneke. Ein Historiograph zwischen Überlieferung und Fiktion', *Geschichtsschreibung im mittelalterlichen Livland*, ed. M. Thumser (Berlin, 2011), 11–56.

¹⁴ Baronas, Mačiulis, *Pilėnai*, 64–7.

already advanced with regard to pagans in Lithuania proper: the reactions of the pagans to challenges presented by Christians were divergent and non-monolithic, and each must be analysed in their particular circumstances. A whole plethora of choices is available: a desertion to the enemies and becoming a Christian in the hope of coming back for revenge at home; surrender and emigration to a neighbouring Christian land; paying tribute in order to be left in peace, or just paying a simple fee to the Teutonic commanders to get permission to hunt in the woods of the frontier region; active military confrontation and/or participation in raids of booty. The extreme mode of handling the German/Christian enemies was to sacrifice some of them to gods. Such cases were, however, far from being numerous.¹⁵ The two perhaps most conspicuous human sacrifices took place in 1320 and 1389. Both happened after significant military victories achieved by Žemaitijans in the land of Medininkai: Gerhard Rude, vogt of Sambia, was burnt on horseback in full armour; Marquard von Raschau, commander of Memel (Klaipėda), suffered the same fate after a casting of lots indicated him as a suitable victim for gods.¹⁶ The individual character of such human sacrifices does show that this gruesome course of action was far from being obligatory or could be taken for granted in each case. Such things could simply happen. If the victors were overwhelmed with enthusiasm to the point of getting eager to sacrifice some of their enemies to their gods, there was nobody to stand in their way. And why? This was a tribal society where there was no central authority to claim the exclusive right to administer justice or offer a sacrifice, even human. For modern people, human sacrifice may be interesting in a comparative perspective: the case of 1389 was probably the last public sacrifice of a human being in medieval Europe.

What emerges from these observations is the conclusion that in pagan Žemaitija there was no united pro-pagan/anti-Christian front. We have mainly to deal with the war that was certainly ex-

¹⁵ See p. 230 n. 33.

¹⁶ 'Petri de Dusburg cronica terre Prussie', 185 (27 July 1320); 'Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg', 637–8 (28 February 1389). This and other human sacrifices came to stick in the collective memory of the Teutonic Order and were recalled at the Council of Constance in 1416: GStA PK, OBA 2457, fo 26r.

acerbated by pagan/Christian divide which, however, would find most repercussion in the Christian camp. Such a divide could hardly have been as telling to the Žemaitijans as it was for the German and Prussian Christians. Most Žemaitijans simply did not know that they were ‘pagans’ and therefore it is more appropriate to assume that the raids carried out by the Teutonic Order were regarded by Žemaitijans as undertaken by foreigners (Germans and their Prussian subjects) who differed from them much more by incomprehensible language than by their behaviour on the battlefield or during the raids of booty.

It is important to stress that pagan, or ancestral, religion had never served as a watchword to rally tribesmen for some political action, or as a means to construct an ideological opposition to Christianity in general, or to any Christian potentate in particular. Wigand of Marburg had the Žemaitijans saying in 1382: ‘We acknowledge Jogaila as our ruler and we are not going to break away from him on condition that he adheres to pagan customs and his people (‘origin’); if he becomes a Christian we will not obey him’.¹⁷ It was Wigand of Marburg who cast this imaginary episode into the form of the ultimatum. The artificial character of this episode is belied not only by the (invented) direct speech of the Žemaitijans, but also by ‘their’ claim to be ready to make Kęstutis their king, which went against the grain of their social constitution, but which was taken for granted among the knightly audience of Wigand of Marburg. This invention can serve quite well in a discussion on how the Teutonic chronicler imagined pagan Žemaitijans. However, not infrequently this episode was taken for granted as if reflecting how strongly pagan Žemaitijans were.¹⁸ The low degree of reliability of this episode may also be disclosed by drawing our attention from a speculative level to that of actual deeds. When, for example, the author of the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle depicted Žemaitijans as deadly-serious on having

¹⁷ ‘Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg’, 619: ‘dicentes: “Jagel confitemur dominum nostrum, a quo non discedemus sub tali condicione, si Jagel voluerit manere in ritu paganorum et origine sua; si vero velit christianus fieri, non obediemus ei”. Et mittunt legatos querentes: si velit ritum originis retinere, in omnibus velint ei obedire; sin vero christianus fieri, velint Kynstut in regem suum sublimare.’

¹⁸ Gersdorf, *Der Deutsche Orden*, 57. J. Krzyżaniakowa, J. Ochmański, *Władysław II Jagiełło* (Wrocław, 2006, 2nd edition), 80.

King Mindaugas brought back to paganism, the same Žemaitijans had no qualms of conscience about supporting his nephew Tautvilas, who was a Catholic and seems to have remained so until his violent death as the duke of Polotsk late in 1263.¹⁹ While the Žemaitijans in Wigand's account are ready to disobey Jogaila and have Kęstutis as their king (!), many of them wholeheartedly supported the latter's son Vytautas, who embraced baptism soon after he had escaped from Lithuania and arrived in Prussia in 1383. So when Vytautas washed away his ancestral faith and denied his 'origin', pagan Žemaitijans supported him against Jogaila, who was still a pagan! Had Lithuanian paganism been so important a factor as to be decisive on issues pertaining to political allegiance, Vytautas would have been exposed to awkward soul searching when placed between the need to get the help from the Teutonic Order and the need not to alienate 'his' people. The course of events does not show that there was any fear of this kind of alienation. Princely blood and patrimonial rights were what really counted. It follows that all this stark opposition of Christian *versus* pagan is a concoction of Teutonic (and other Christian medieval) chroniclers, an opposition which, prior to being critically evaluated, found its way into modern historiography thus giving rise to the image of the most obdurate Lithuanian pagans, among whom Žemaitijans had no match.

The action of Christianization undertaken by Jogaila in 1387 and continued in the following years in eastern Lithuania did not reach Žemaitija. This issue has not received satisfactory explanation so far.²⁰ In general it is assumed that Žemaitija was not converted in 1387 because (1) Žemaitijans were strongly attached to the pagan religion, (2) grand-ducal power was weak in this region, and (3) the Teutonic Order made obstacles.²¹ The first factor is predicated on a wrong assumption. As we have just demonstrated, there is no basis

¹⁹ For the circumstances of Tautvilas' coming to power in Polotsk c. 1255 see Dubonis, 'Dve modeli', 66.

²⁰ Z. Ivinskis, 'Žemaičių (Medininkų) vyskupijos įkūrimas', 99; Almonaitis, *Žemaitijos politinė padėtis*, 8.

²¹ Cf. *Vytautas Didysis, 1350–1430*, ed. P. Šležas (Kaunas, 1930, n. e. Vilnius, 1988), 101–2; B. Dundulis, *Lietuvių kova dėl Žemaitijos ir Užnemunės* (Vilnius, 1960), 81–3; J. Ochmański, *Historia Litwy*, 77–8; Almonaitis, *Žemaitijos politinė padėtis*, 72, 110–11.

to assume that Žemaitijans were any more attached to their pagan customs than the rest of Lithuanians. This is the image the roots of which lie in the chronicles and fifteenth-century propaganda works produced by the Teutonic Order and later maintained and developed by late-medieval (Jan Długosz) or early-modern (Maciej Strykowski) Polish-Lithuanian historiography. The use of this image was different for the Teutonic Order and the Polish-Lithuanian side. Pagan Žemaitijans were useful for the Teutonic Order to justify its crusading ideology and to bolster its territorial claims. Pagan Žemaitijans were useful for Jan Długosz as the target of Polish missionary exploits. For later sixteenth-century historiography, the image of pagan Žemaitijans was meant to satisfy a general thirst for paganism and exoticism so acutely felt by Renaissance authors and their readers. However interesting and revealing the analysis of such images may be, their usefulness in addressing the issues on the ground is close to nil. The second factor deserves much more attention. It is true that grand-ducal power in Žemaitija was not so strong as to initiate sweeping reforms at the end of the fourteenth century. We are inclined to think that this was due not so much to the restiveness of the Žemaitijans regarding anything new or unusual as to soft, formal obstacles. And that is why it is necessary to turn our eyes to the Teutonic Order.

The Teutonic Order was highly interested in gaining the territory of Žemaitija. This is evident from the stipulations in its treaties concluded with Lithuanian rulers in 1382 and 1398, and from subsequent Teutonic and Polish-Lithuanian wrangles over Žemaitija at the Council of Constance and later. It is true that after the treaty of Dubysa had not been ratified, Jogaila could not feel obliged to respect his territorial concessions to the Teutonic Order. However, it was not his own perceived freedom from the treaty of Dubysa that prevented him from converting Žemaitija in 1387. It was rather the grants King Mindaugas made in favour of the Teutonic Order. Jogaila might well have thought them to be null and void, but this would have been only his personal opinion. It must be stressed that the conversion of the country was far from being a secular affair: in the case of Lithuania the actual conversion ran in parallel with

the establishment of the diocese of Vilnius. The establishment of the diocese of Vilnius, as of any other, had to proceed in accordance with canonical rules. One of the main principles informing the procedures of the Roman Curia was to take care not to infringe the valid rights of someone else – *sine praeiudicio aliorum*. As long as the rulers of Lithuania remained pagan they were free to see the donations of King Mindaugas as empty and non-binding promises, even if they had been aware of them. Once they entered the legalistic world of late-medieval Christendom, they had to abide by the new rules of the game. It is known that the Teutonic Order took care to have transsumpts of the charters of King Mindaugas made in 1386.²² It goes without saying that they were made with purpose. The losses in the papal archives affecting the coverage of the pontificate of Urban VI do not allow us to see what use was made of them at the Curia; it is clear nevertheless that these instruments must have played a role in deliberations from 1386 to the early months of 1388.²³ The legal claims of the Teutonic Order to Žemaitija seem to have been found valid, because the subsequent foundations of parish churches were carried out in those territories of the diocese of Vilnius that were free from claims to spiritual (and temporal) jurisdiction by other ecclesiastical institutions. In our opinion, the same lack of authorization goes a long way to explain why the Polish and Lithuanian rulers, King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas, did not venture to set up churches in Žemaitija when the Teutonic Order's rule there was actually absent (to 1398, and from 1401 to 1404).

The Teutonic Order received the fully legal claim to Žemaitija

²² These transsumpts were made on the orders of the Livonian landmaster Robin von Eltz: *Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie*, vol. I: *Die Geschichte der generalprokuratoren von den Anfängen bis 1403*, ed. K. Forstreuter (Göttingen, 1961), no. 169 and no. 170, pp. 287–8. The territorial claims of the Teutonic Order to Lithuanian lands were presented to Polish negotiators for peace in 1389: H. Boockmann, *Johannes Falkenberg, der Deutsche Orden und die polnische Politik* (Göttingen, 1975), 56–7.

²³ Pope Urban VI excused himself to King Jogaila for not congratulating him on his conversion sooner than he did, because the King did not send his own envoys on time and because of other 'rational causes': see *KDKDW*, no. 12, p. 24 (17 April 1388). This is certainly an oversimplification, because the Roman Curia was in touch with events already at the time of the baptism of Jogaila in Cracow in February 1386. More on this, see Drabina, *Papiestwo–Polska*, 15–16.

in 1398, when the Treaty of Salinwerder was concluded with Vytautas in 1398.²⁴ As long as Vytautas remained actively engaged in the affairs of the Golden Horde, the Žemaitijans had to fend for themselves against their new masters in the making.²⁵ After the débâcle at the Battle of Vorskla Vytautas was intent on maintaining peaceful and cooperative relations with the Knights, to the point of coming to help them to subdue the Žemaitijans early in 1400.²⁶ For this Vytautas received sincere thanks from the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Konrad von Jungingen.²⁷ However, the joy of the Knights at receiving the long-desired Žemaitija proved precocious. Vytautas was most instrumental in stoking up the resentment of the Žemaitijans to the boiling point. The explosion occurred in March 1401, when Žemaitijan refugees, armed and led by Vytautas' men, were sent back to fight for their freedom from the Order. By the end of May they succeeded in removing the last traces of the rule the Order had managed to put in place in their land.²⁸ The Teutonic prisoners of war discouraged the Order to proceed with too harsh measures against the Žemaitijan hostages held in custody in Prussia.

Vytautas' support for the Žemaitijans was clear for everybody able to see. The usual round of military confrontation followed. It ended in 1404, when the peace of Raciąż was concluded between the Teutonic Order and the Polish-Lithuanian side.²⁹ The Order again received substantial help from Vytautas enabling it to set its foot on the fringes of the Žemaitijan soil, where the castles of Königsberg (1405) and Dubysa (1406–07) were constructed.³⁰

²⁴ *Die Staatsverträge des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen im 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. E. Weise, 1: 1398–1437 (Königsberg, 1939), no. 2, pp. 10–11 (12 October 1398). See also Boockmann, *Johannes Falkenberg*, 72–6.

²⁵ Almonaitis, *Žemaitijos politinė padėtis*, 117ff; Radoch, *Walki*, 147ff.

²⁶ For the Battle of Vorskla (12 August 1399), in which the army of Vytautas supported by auxiliary Polish and Teutonic contingents suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Tatars under Emir Ediga (a man of Tamerlane), see Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, 139–40; Pelenski, 'The contest', 312–316. For the relations between the Teutonic Order and Grand Duke Vytautas, see Radoch, *Walki*, 147–59.

²⁷ CEV, no. 220, p. 67 (18 February 1400); GStA PK, OBA 609 (27 May 1400).

²⁸ Radoch, *Walki*, 172–6.

²⁹ P. Nowak, 'Dokumenty pokoju w Raciążku z 1404 roku', *SŻ*, 40 (2002), 57–77.

³⁰ On the construction and subsequent destruction of the castle of Dubysa (*Thobis*) see V. Almonaitis, 'Vokiečių ordino Dubysos pilis: jos vieta, statyba, kasdienybė ir

Access to the interior of Žemaitija remained as hard as ever. Pacification and submission of the population were being maintained by the method of carrot and stick: the overtures of the *vogt* of *Samaiten* Michael Küchmeister with regard to the leading men of Žemaitija were accompanied by hostage-taking and remaining wide-awake to goings-on in and around Žemaitija.³¹ Despite its attempts, the Teutonic Order again failed to impose its rule on a permanent basis. It was finally removed in the revolt of 1409, the pattern of which was similar to that of 1401. However, this time the active engagement of King Jogaila in favour of Grand Duke Vytautas led to a full-blown war which culminated in the Battle of Tannenberg in 1410. The Order, so tenaciously clinging to Žemaitija, ended up running dangerously close to losing everything it possessed in Prussia. The extraordinary resourcefulness of Heinrich Plauen saved the Order from losing ground in the wake of the unprecedented defeat.³² The war died down with the Peace of Toruń concluded in February 1411.³³ It was not commensurate with the lowest point the Order reached in July–August 1410, to the chagrin of Jan Długosz. It was a compromise on both sides. The Teutonic Order agreed to suspend its title to Žemaitija only temporarily, until the death of Jogaila and Vytautas.³⁴ Afterwards Žemaitija was to return to the

žlugimas', idem, *Vakarų Lietuva XIII–XV a.: Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys* (Kaunas, 2013), 206–43.

³¹ W. Nöbel, *Michael Küchmeister: Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens, 1414–1422* [*Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens*, 5] (Bad Godesberg, 1969), 18–33. Radoch, *Walki*, 221ff. Taking hostages was not an easy going matter. During one such attempt the servicemen of the Order lost their horses: GStA PK, OBA 862 (4 April 1406). The sally of Žemaitijans in 1406 disturbed construction works at the castle of Ragnit: GStA PK, OBA 863 (4 April 1406). It was also dangerous to send the messengers of the Order into the interior of Žemaitija: cf. GStA PK, OBA 1199 (1406–09).

³² Scholarly literature on the Battle of Tannenberg is too numerous to attempt even a most cursory overview here: cf. S. Józwiak, K. Kwiatkowski, A. Szwed, S. Szybkowski, *Wojna Polski i Litwy z Zakonem Krzyżackim* (Malbork, 2010), 773–813. See also S. Ekdahl, *Die Schlacht bei Tannenberg 1410. Quellenkritische Untersuchungen*, Bd. 1: *Einführung und Quellenlage* (Berlin, 1982); W. Urban, *Tannenberg and After: Lithuania, Poland and the Teutonic Order in Search of Immortality* (Chicago, 2002); *Tannenberg–Grunwald–Žalgiris 1410: Krieg und Frieden im späten Mittelalter*, ed. W. Paravicini, R. Petrauskas, G. Vercamer [*Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau. Quellen und Studien*, 26] (Wiesbaden, 2012).

³³ *Staatsverträge*, no. 83, pp. 83–9 (11 February 1411).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

Order. Such a gain on the Polish-Lithuania side, as far as Žemaitija is concerned, is viewed as very modest. However, we would like to stress that the Order did acknowledge the right of Polish and Lithuanian rulers to promote the Christian faith among the pagans under their rule, which certainly applied to Žemaitija. The Order could not claim exceptional right in this regard any longer and thus opened up a crack in its wall of papal and imperial charters. This crack was exploited to the full by the Polish-Lithuanian side. Allegations that the Teutonic Order failed to introduce the Christian faith in Žemaitija during the period of its rule there proved a useful stratagem in undermining its claims to territorial rule in general. The best forum where this battle of wits could be carried on was certainly the Council of Constance.

The record of the Teutonic Order in promoting the Christian faith was unimpressive, but far from blank. The Teutonic Order used some material incitements to curry favour with Žemaitijans. Some of them had certainly collaborated with the Order: about eighty Žemaitijan nobles were baptized in Marienburg at Christmas 1400.³⁵ This happened on their visit to see their children who had been taken to Prussia as hostages. The neophytes were treated with some more exquisite meals (which included radish in winter time), were given gifts from the grand master, and were provided with priests and monks to accompany them back into Žemaitija: the clerics were to instruct their kin in the articles of the faith.³⁶ This is almost a unique piece of information indicating that the Teutonic Order was not so aloof as totally to ignore the spiritual needs of the Žemaitijans once they had been subjected to the rule of the Knights.³⁷ What is most striking is perhaps the contrast between how much attention the Order paid to the construction of castles and to the setting up of mills on the one hand, and the total lack of comparable efforts with regard to building churches on the other.

³⁵ *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch*, 97. The Teutonic Order recalled the sponsorship of the baptism of these Žemaitijans at the Council of Constance in February 1416: *CEV*, 1034.

³⁶ Almonaitis, *Žemaitijos politinė padėtis*, 127–8; Radoch, *Walki*, 170; Kubicki, 'Działalność zakonów', 183–4.

³⁷ Nöbel, *Michael Kuchmeister*, 26.

No church was built and no parish established in Žemaitija under the rule of the Teutonic Order. One may ask if the leading men of the Order were so short-sighted or so self-confident as not to see that such a negligence might make them liable to reproach from their Polish and Lithuanian neighbours, who were bent on showing themselves off as good Christians whenever they could, and were far from giving up a hope of taking Žemaitija back from them.³⁸ Such a question is not based solely on hindsight. When the Order concluded the Treaty of Christburg in 1249, the Prussian tribes had to promise to build an agreed-upon number of churches in their territorial units and provide upkeep for priests.³⁹ The slogans of expansion of the faith were heard then and now, but nothing similar came about in the case of Žemaitija in the early fifteenth century. The absence of the churches built by the Teutonic Order in Žemaitija may stand for a symbol of two communities standing apart. Before the Battle of Tannenberg the Teutonic Order put most of its hopes in its capability of making its temporal possession of Žemaitija safe by building castles. There were certain numbers of the clergy coming to minister to the spiritual needs of the garrison troops. There is no mention that any of such clergy were ever gripped by the desire to bring the Good News to the Žemaitijans. The readiness to run a risk of being martyred for the faith was certainly not among the preferences for Fr Martin (*Martyn*) who escaped from the castle of Dubysa to safer places in Prussia at the first sign of the Žemaitijan revolt in May 1409.⁴⁰

³⁸ The Polish-Lithuanian side was quite resourceful in this regard. For example, it tried to use to its own advantage even the 1337 imperial donation of Lithuanian lands to the Teutonic Order by claiming that if in this instrument Žemaitija was treated as a constitutive part of Lithuania, Žemaitija had to remain under Lithuanian rule: GStA PK, OF 11c, fo 300.

³⁹ *PU*, I/1, no. 218, pp. 158–65 (7 February 1249); H. Patze, 'Der Frieden von Christburg vom Jahre', *Heidenmission*, 457–8.

⁴⁰ *CEV*, no. 397, p. 175.

Jan Długosz and Žemaitija in 1413

The Treaty of Toruń contained an injunction on both sides to propagate the faith among the pagans whenever they might be encountered.⁴¹ The same concern found its expression in the Treaty of Horodło whereby the union between Poland and Lithuania was concluded in most unequivocal terms and made public once again in October 1413.⁴² The realization of this concern had to be initiated without delay. Immediately after the deliberations at Horodło, Jan Długosz inserted a colourful description of a missionary trip undertaken by King Jogaila and Polish clergy in the course of which they penetrated deep into Žemaitija subverting pagan cult sites and introducing the new faith by means of truly apostolic labours. It was King Jogaila who preached in vernacular for the local population or acted as an interpreter for the Polish priests who were unable to address their audience in the native language. The critical approach to the story presented by Jan Długosz has tended thus far to express itself in the refusal to take it at face value, but in general his depiction has been viewed as a reflection of events that actually took place in November 1413.⁴³ It is to be noted, however, that Jan Długosz was writing some fifty years after the events he purported to describe.

⁴¹ *Staatsverträge*, no. 83, p. 88 (11 February 1411). The topic of the propagation of the Christian faith was not new in treaties concluded between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania. The new thing consisted in the specification of the need to build churches and install priests in them, and in the promise of mutual help if pagans refused to accept the faith.

⁴² *1413 m. Horodlės aktai (dokumentai ir tyrinėjimai) = Akty horodelskie z 1413 roku (dokumenty i studia)*, ed. J. Kiaupienė, L. Korczak, P. Rabiej, E. Rimša, J. Wroniszewski (Vilnius–Cracow, 2013), 38–9: ‘... ad laudem et honorem sui nominis et eiusdem fidei catholicae augmentum... pro christianae religionis incremento et bono statu et comodo terrarum nostrarum Lyttwanie predictarum... Ceterum omnes ecclesias terrarum Lyttwanie predictarum, tam cathedrales, quam collegiatas, parochiales et conventuales, videlicet Wynnensem et ceteras in eis erectas, erigendas, fundatas et fundandas, in omnibus ipsarum libertatibus, immunitatibus, privilegiis, exemptionibus et consuetudinibus universis conservamus...’ (excerpts from a charter jointly issued by King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas on 2 October 1413).

⁴³ Cf., for example, Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcjanienie’, 71; Hain, ‘Chryścianizacja Żmudzi’, 114–17; Andziulytė-Ruginienė, *Žemaičių christianizacijos pradžia*, 45; Ivinskis, ‘Žemaičių (Medininkų) vyskupijos įkūrimas’, 72–3; Gidžiūnas, ‘Pirmieji bandymai’, 230–1; Dundulis, *Lietuvių kova dėl Žemaitijos*, 83–4; Gašiorowski, *Itinerarium*, 62; Jurginis, *Lietuvos krikštas*, 170–2; Rabikauskas, ‘La Cristianizzazione’, 228; M. Banaszak, ‘Chrzest Żmudzi i jego reperkursje w Konstancji’, *Chrzest Litwy*, 64–5; Gudavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, 225; Błaszczuk, *Dzieje*, 2/1, 217.

It is far from clear on what kind of sources could he draw while developing a breath-taking picture of the conversion of Žemaitija in 1413. Even more telling is the fact that no contemporary (extant) source speaks of the mission undertaken by Jogaila and his entourage in November 1413.⁴⁴ The absence of any relevant reference in the archives of the Teutonic Order makes one wonder if such a trip did really take place at all. It is to be recalled that the Teutonic Order boasted quite an effective network of spies and other informants for gathering information about what was going on in Lithuania (and in Poland).⁴⁵ It is hard to believe that no mention would have survived if so wide-ranging activities had then really been undertaken by Jogaila. In contrast to the 'silent' events of 1413, the grand master of the Teutonic Order was duly informed of what was going in Žemaitija in the autumn of 1417, when the conversion and the setting up of church organization in Žemaitija was in full swing.⁴⁶ Such a discrepancy provides yet another incentive to wonder whether the description of the events in Žemaitija in 1413 is anything else but a pious fiction (*pia fraus*) composed by Jan Długosz?

⁴⁴ Cf. R. Krumbholtz, 'Samaiten und der Deutsche Orden bis zum Frieden am Melno-See', *Altpreussische Monatsschrift*, 27 (1890), 209; Gidžiūnas, 'Pirmieji bandymai', 231, n. 60. My thanks go to Rimvydas Petrauskas for his sceptical remarks as regards the historicity of the missionary travel in Žemaitija in 1413.

⁴⁵ S. Józwiak, *Wywiad i kontrwywiad w państwie zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach: Studium nad sposobami pozyskiwania i wykorzystywaniem poufnych informacji w późnym średniowieczu* (Malbork, 2004), 59ff.

⁴⁶ With regard to November 1413, special attention must be paid to the letter of the commander of Balga, Ulrich Zenger, who was then travelling across Lithuania following the track of Jogaila and Vytautas until he finally met them in Trakai on 19 November. The commander mentioned bad roads and described in detail his subsequent talks with the rulers of Poland and Lithuania, in which there is only a casual reference to the 'augmentation of the faith' which was adduced by Vytautas as a topic for further negotiations aimed at establishing a long-term peace between parties involved: GStA PK, OBA 2012, fo 1r. (23 November 1413). When compared with a flurry of Teutonic correspondence regarding the conversion-related events in Žemaitija in 1417, there is a stark difference between the year 1413 and 1417. Then the commander of the frontier castle of Ragnit, Luke von Lichtenstein, informed the grand master of the Teutonic Order, Michael Küchmeister, about mass baptism of people and the installation by Vytautas of a bishop in Žemaitija. The commander received this information from a merchant resident in Kaunas: GStA PK, OBA 2589 (15 October 1417), published in *CM*, I, no. 12, pp. 37–8 (15 October 1417). Much the same information was supplied to the grand master by the Livonian landmaster some time later: *ibid.*, no. 22, pp. 54–5; *LU*, ed. F. G. von Bunge, V (Riga, 1867), no. 2177, col. 289 (17 December 1417).

There is only indirect and rather meagre evidence providing some ground for a possibility that in the autumn of 1413 Jogaila and Vytautas could have accomplished anything on behalf of the Christian faith in Žemaitija. Jan Fijałek noticed long ago that the description of Jan Długosz can be vindicated by the itinerary of Jogaila: it is known that on 25 October he was in Merkinė (on the Nemunas, south of Kaunas) and on 19 November both rulers, Jogaila and Vytautas, were present in Trakai.⁴⁷ In the first instance, Jogaila informed his Teutonic correspondents that he and Duke Vytautas were then staying ‘in our lands of Lithuania’, which is certainly too loose an indication to prove that in the course of the following weeks they came to Žemaitija.⁴⁸ However, precisely this interval between late October and 19 November is supposed to have been the time when Jogaila might have undertaken his missionary trip. It is to be noted that the very description of the mode of travelling by Jogaila and his entourage has received no critical engagement so far. According to Jan Długosz, the travel deep into Žemaitija must have been accomplished by boat upstream the Dubysa river. In this regard it must be said that there is virtually no evidence about river transport in this rather small river meandering through a region with no infrastructure represented by towns, castles, or manours in which the rulers of Poland and Lithuania were used to accommodate themselves in the course of their continual travels across Lithuania and Rus’. All this was lacking in Žemaitija. This is why travelling across Žemaitija would represent a challenge even if it were undertaken in the conditions of summer and early autumn. In 1417, Vytautas found it necessary to stress that it was something close to an exploit that he personally went into Žemaitija. He was then informing a bishop of a most important event – mass baptism and the establishment of church organisation in the newly-converted land.⁴⁹ Had journeying to Žemaitija been trivial, Vytautas

⁴⁷ Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcianienie’, 71. In his time only a summarized version of the relevant letter (GStA PK, OBA 2012) was published by A. Prochaska in his *CEV*, no. 567, p. 271 (23 November 1413).

⁴⁸ *CEV*, no. 563, p. 269 (25 November 1413).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 744, p. 394: ‘ad dictam terram Samagithie personaliter non pigritavimus nos transferre, ubi cooperante spiritu sancto, predicta terra Samagitarum verbum domini et sacrum baptisma suscepit...’ (after 28 October 1417).

would probably not have presented this as an indication of his zeal in propagating the faith. The news of the labours one had to undergo while travelling across Žemaitija was worthy enough to be told to the fathers of the Council of Constance: Archbishop John Rzeszowski of Lviv and Bishop Peter of Vilnius shared their road experiences in a report on their apostolic work in Žemaitija.⁵⁰ They made their way in August-September – a time when travelling conditions were most favourable. In the light of these considerations it seems very likely that it was nothing else but a fruitful imagination of Jan Długosz that sent Jogaila by boat so deep into Žemaitija in the late autumn of 1413. The date provided by Długosz for the Martin mass departure (11 November) may be viewed as an allusion to the missionary exploits of this prominent Gallic saint rather than a chronological ‘fact’. In our view, the historicity of this missionary trip should enjoy the same relation to actual events as the travels of St Brendan do: they represent the monastic life with its meals and fasts rather than voyages across the islands of the northern seas in the early Middle Ages.⁵¹

It is possible to surmise that Długosz somehow got to know that after the Treaty of Horodło Jogaila was present in Lithuania and this circumstance alone could have served as a hook on which to hang a full-blown description of the conversion of Žemaitija. However, a desire to draw parallels might have been the driving reason for Jan Długosz to compose it: as the coronation of Jogaila and the subsequent ‘incorporation’ of Lithuania and Rus’ was followed by the conversion in 1387, so a similar conversion ‘must have’ followed after the union of Horodło, resulting, as it were, in one more ‘incorporation’ of Lithuania into the Crown of Poland.⁵² So the description of the conversion of Žemaitija in 1413 was constructed by Długosz as an ‘unfolding’ of the incorporation of one more neophyte land to the Polish Crown.⁵³ It is then unsurprising that the description in question is far from being

⁵⁰ *CM*, I, no. 18, p. 47 (before 30 November, 1417; first draft); no. 19, p. 49 (before 30 November 1417; second draft of the report); J. Kurtyka, ‘“Senex ambulans”. Arcybiskup lwowski Jan Rzeszowski (1345/46–1436)’, *NP*, 77 (1992), 57–101.

⁵¹ Cf. J. M. Wooding, ‘Fasting, flesh and the body in the St Brendan dossier’, *Celtic Hagiography and Saints’ Cults*, ed. J. Cartwright (Cardiff, 2003), 162.

⁵² I owe this observation to S. C. Rowell.

⁵³ Ališauskas, ‘Žemaičių krikšto pasakojimas’, 156–7.

a homogeneous and consistent text. The ‘fact’ of setting up a cathedral church in Medininkai is particularly informative in this respect. The real event of 1417 was taken over to the entry of 1413 and was thus retold twice under the years 1413 and 1417.⁵⁴

So if anything approaching the conversion of some individual pagan Žemaitijans really did take place in 1413, this should have been of very modest proportions indeed. The only clue that can be adduced in favour of this hypothesis is a remark contained in the so-called complaint of Žemaitijans in which accusations were levelled against the Teutonic Order and requests for baptism at the hands of Polish-Lithuanian churchmen were made at the Council of Constance in February 1416. The relevant excerpt reads: ‘there is no one person whom they [that is, the Teutonic Knights] would have baptised, with the exception of those who received baptism through the good offices of most famous lords, Władysław, King of Poland, and Alexander, *alias* Vytautas, Grand Duke of Lithuania’.⁵⁵ This remark may serve as the indication that some Žemaitijans might have received baptism prior to 1416, maybe in 1413, when Jogaila and Vytautas were living ‘in our lands of Lithuania’. It is certainly a weak argument as it contains no indication of place or time, but it is essentially all that can be brought in defence of the historicity of Długosz’s story other than his own writings. What the Žemaitijans were claiming to have happened should not necessarily have taken place only in 1413. The presence of Žemaitijans with Christian names in the meeting with Benedict Macra, the envoy and sub-arbiter of King Sigismund of Luxembourg, in Trakai in January 1413, may also serve as a case in point.⁵⁶ It is legitimate to think that some Žemaitijan supporters of Vytautas and Jogaila might have received baptism in anticipation of the royal envoy who was then involved in adjudicating the dispute between the Teutonic Order and the Polish-Lithuanian side. In our

⁵⁴ Cf. Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 24 and 83–4.

⁵⁵ *CEV*, 1022.

⁵⁶ GStA PK, OF 7, pp. 64–65: ‘Petrus dictus Nicael, Petrus dictus Vissabor de Scoconanow, Nicolaus dictus Cusz, Petrus dictus Thithaco de Corszow, Johannes dictus Louxtined, Petrus dictus Myszeiico de Crozow, Johannes dictus Minimmich, Bernhardus dictus Buthouch, Stanislaus dictus Nadobe de Widucla, Stanislaus dictus Golmin, Andreas dictus Golykunth, Gregorius dictus Cytund, Gothardus dictus Gotard de Raygel, et Bernhardus dictus Clausgel de Rosseyne’ (17 January 1413). For the 1413 mission of Benedict Macra, see Boockmann, *Johannes Falkenberg*, 102–11.

view, such instances are to be treated as individual cases relating to personal choices. By welcoming Christian Žemaitijans, Vytautas (and to some degree Jogaila) was strengthening the ranks of his supporters in Žemaitija. The time for the wholesale conversion of the land and its population did not come yet. In our opinion, this was largely due to the lack of the wide-ranging authorization from the highest circles of the Roman Catholic Church. Such an authorization came to pass only at the Council of Constance.

Žemaitijans at the Council of Constance

It is widely believed that the appeal of the Žemaitijans (*Proposicio Samaytarum*) was read at the session of the Council on 13 February 1416.⁵⁷ Despite assurances by authorities in the field this matter is not so simple.⁵⁸ The works produced by contemporaries are far from

⁵⁷ Fijałek, 'Uchrześcianienie', 84 (6 February); Banaszek, 'Chrzest Żmudzi', 66 (6 February); Wiesiołowski, 'Prace i projekty Pawła Włodkowica – Konstanca zimą 1415 i 1416 roku', *RH*, 35 (1969), 108 (9 February); Boockmann, *Johannes Falkenberg*, 206 (13 February); Rabikauskas, 'La Cristianizzazione', 229 (13 February); Świeboda, *Innowiercy w opiniach prawnych*, 171 (13 February; with references to earlier literature indicating still other dates). Cf. also Cf. Janulaitis, 'Žemaičiai ir bažnytinis seimas', 109; Jučas, *Kriščionybės kelias*, 73.

⁵⁸ W. Brandmüller, *Das Konzil von Konstanz 1414–1418*, vol. 2: *Bis zum Konzilsende* (Paderborn, 1997), 157–8. Brandmüller's references to earlier research are not particularly rewarding. Hans Koeppen and Walther Holtzmann were not so sure about the date on which the complaint was made public at the Council: cf. *Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie*, vol. II: *Peter von Wormditt (1403–1419)*, ed. H. Koeppen (Göttingen, 1960), 302, n. 302; W. Holtzmann, 'Die Gründung des Bistums Samaiten: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Konstanzer Konzils', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, n. s. 32 (1917), p. 72, n. 2. In the earlier study of Bernhard Bess there is a mention that the complaints of the Poles were presented twice in February 1416, but he paid special attention only to what was discussed on 13 February: cf. B. Bess, 'Johannes Falkenberg O.P. und der preussisch-polnische Streit vor dem Konstanzer Konzil (mit archivalischen Beilagen)', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 16 (1896), 400–1. P. Nieborowski seems to have conflated an earlier complaint of the Poles with the somewhat later complaint of the Žemaitijans and ascribed them one and the same date: cf. P. Nieborowski, *Die preussische Botschaft beim Konstanzer Konzil bis Ende Februar 1416* (Breslau, 1910), 43, 46; idem, *Peter von Wormditt: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens. Mit Regesten und ungedruckten Archivalien* (Breslau, 1916), 169–73. That complaints were submitted in two rounds was noticed once again in 1966, but, as far as we can judge, this approach was not followed either in German or Polish historiography. See Grabski, 'List Władysława Jagiełły i Witolda', 278–9.

providing exhaustive and precise data on this point. For example, Ulrich Richental referred to the session of 13 February, at which the complaints of the Poles were presented and received a reply from the representatives of the Teutonic Order.⁵⁹ He spoke about the Žemaitijan case after a while and provided garbled evidence with regard to the date of the presentation.⁶⁰ It is hard to believe that he had a precise knowledge of when this took place, but he certainly treated the complaints presented by the Poles and Žemaitijans as two different events. In our opinion, another source has not received due attention in this debate so far – Guillaume Fillastre. It was known long ago that this French cardinal provided quite a different date, but this date, 17 February, has been neglected for no good reason.⁶¹ It was also Fillastre who provided some unique information shedding more light on how the complaint of the Žemaitijans was delivered and received.⁶² So all in all his account deserves much more attention in the general reconstruction of the events leading up to the delivery of the complaint and its aftermath.

The Polish embassy of Jogaila made up of high-ranking churchmen and well-versed university men reached the city on Lake Bodensee on 29 January 1415.⁶³ Bishop-elect Andrew Łaskarz of Poznań delivered a speech addressed to the Roman king, Sigismund, in which he

⁵⁹ *Chronik des Konstanzer Konzils 1414–1418 von Ulrich Richental*, ed. T. M. Buck [*Konstanzer Geschichts- und Rechtsquellen*, XLI] (Ostfildern, 2011), 73. As Holtzmann noticed, here Richental did not touch on the complaint of Žemaitijans: Holtzmann, 'Die Gründung des Bistums Samaiten', p. 72, n. 2. The same date of the Polish complaint is provided by *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, vol. XXVII: 1409–1418, ed. J. D. Mansi, XXVII (Venice, 1784), col. 832.

⁶⁰ *Chronik des Konstanzer Konzils 1414–1418*, 74.

⁶¹ Brandmüller did not consider this date correct: one of the reasons for this was the idea that 17 February (1416), was not a Monday, as had been indicated by Cardinal Guillaume Fillastre: Brandmüller, *Das Konzil von Konstanz*, 2, 158, n. 378. By contrast, chronological instruments at our disposal do indicate that 17 February 1416 fell on Monday.

⁶² 'Fillastres Gesta concilii Constanciensis', ACC, ed. H. Finke, II (Leipzig, 1923), 58. The Vatican Library holds two copies of this diary. The relevant places are: BAV, Vat. Lat. 4173, fo 85; Vat. Lat. 4175, fo 155v.

⁶³ Janulaitis, 'Žemaičiai ir bažnytinis seimas', 81–2; Grabski, *Polska w opiniach*, 307–9. For the personal composition of the Polish embassy, see T. Wunsch, *Konziliarismus und Polen. Personen, Politik und Programme aus Polen zur Verfassungsfrage der Kirche in der Zeit der mittelalterlichen Reformkonzilien* (Paderborn, 1998), 53ff.

did not pass over in silence the deplorable situation of Lithuanians who were exposed to constant depredations from their (Teutonic) neighbours, despite their being exemplary Christians.⁶⁴ In his speech to Antipope John XXIII bishop Łaskarz stressed the need to restore the unity of the Church which would have its beneficial impact in restoring peace and concord in other realms – that is why Polish and Lithuanian rulers postponed their defensive actions in anticipation of a fair judgement.⁶⁵ Some time afterwards the pope granted both King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas the dignity of vicars general in matters temporal for Rus'ian lands (Pskov and Novgorod).⁶⁶ It was they, not the Teutonic Order, who were entrusted with so honourable a task as to represent the interests and advance the cause of the Roman Catholic Church in the Orthodox lands of the eastern Slavs. Further experiences of the Polish delegation made them aware how useful it would have been to have representatives from Žemaitija sent to Constance. Supported by Vytautas, they reached this city on 28 November, and on 4 December were introduced to the Council.⁶⁷ It was again Bishop Andrew Łaskarz who delivered an introductory speech in front of the Council. He extolled the achievements of Jogaila and Vytautas in bringing the true faith to the most warlike and invincible people, who had been able to resist

⁶⁴ *Magnum Oecumenicum Constantiense Concilium*, ed. H. von der Hardt, II (Frankfurt–Leipzig, 1697), 173.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 181–2.

⁶⁶ *CE XV*, II, no. 58, pp. 69–71 (26 February 1416). The text of the document issued to Vytautas has not come down to us, it is mentioned in the document to Jogaila. Both rulers were confirmed in their vicarial capacity once more by Pope Martin V in 1418: *VMPL*, ed. A. Theiner, II (Vatican City, 1861), no. 25, pp. 20–1 (5 May 1418) and no. 26, pp. 21–2 (13 May 1418).

⁶⁷ 'Theodorici de Niem, De Vita ac Fatis Constantiensibus Johannis Papae XXIII', *Magnum Oecumenicum Constantiense Concilium*, 422: 'Die 28 dicti mensis Novembris intraverunt ambasiatores Samoytarum de novo conversorum ad fidem catholicam, sexaginta vel circiter numero viri, satis procerae staturae, qui habitant inter Livoniam et Lituaniam, prope Prussiam. Et terra eorum, quam inhabitant, vocatur Semigallia, omnibus bonis referta, excepto, quod non crescit ibi vinum. ... Et recesserunt die prima mensis Martii.' It is not entirely clear when Bishop Andrew Łaskarz delivered his speech. Some scholars assume that it took place on 4 December 1415: Fijałek, 'Uchrześcianienie', 79, 82; Andziulytė-Ruginienė, *Žemaičių christianizacijos pradžia*, 54; Wiesiołowski, 'Prace i projekty', 106. This date is viewed as uncertain by Grabski, *Polska w opiniach*, 321. The date of 3 December indicated in *ACC*, II, 423 and reiterated in *Die Berichte*, II, 284 seems to be flawed. Cf. Świeboda, *Innowiercy w opiniach prawnych*, 170.

the military pressure of almost entire Christendom.⁶⁸ 'Who rendered more service to Christianity since the times of the Apostles than these two rulers united in one heart and one spirit?' the Bishop asked his audience. Here the Žemaitijans were valuable enough to provide a palpable testimony on behalf of the willingness of their own people to accept the Christian faith without the unwelcome mediation of the Teutonic Order. Their presence proved to be one more victory in public relations in a battle of wits conducted at the Council.⁶⁹ It was a demonstration that conversion by peaceful persuasion rather than military pressure was much more effective and desirable.⁷⁰ However, the Žemaitijans *per se* were of little use: neophytes present at the Council could not boast of their knowledge of the Latin language, so that is way the Polish-Lithuanian collaboration was not only natural, it was indispensable. It was Paul Vladimiri and Peter Wolfram, both men well-versed in canon law, who took most care in conducting the diplomatic struggle against the Teutonic Order.⁷¹ The experience and knowledge of Bishop Andrew Łaskarz were also put to use.⁷² There was a certain delay (two months!) in the frontal attack on the

⁶⁸ 'Der liber gestorum des Cerretanus', ed. H. Finke, *ACC*, II, 267 (4 December 1415).

⁶⁹ It was Paul Vladimiri who in a letter of 8 December 1415, told King Jogaila of the most positive effect of the presence of Žemaitijans at the Council: Wiesiołowski, 'Prace i projekty', 107.

⁷⁰ It is worth noting that in the polemics with the Teutonic Order over the validity of the Lithuanian conversion, which the Order denied from 1386–87 onwards, Polish men of letters used to describe the erstwhile pagan Lithuanians as having been essentially peaceful ones who had allegedly been attacked unlawfully by the Teutonic Order. In our view, such a climate of public opinion on the Polish-Lithuanian side was one of the reasons why the cult of the Vilnius Franciscan martyrs did not take off. Its tangible inception dates back to the first half of the sixteenth century: Baronas, *Vilniaus pranciškonų kankiniai*, 220–1. Another reason for the lack of official promotion of the cult may be seen in that at the time the Roman Catholic Church treated the cult of the martyrs with much scepticism in general. Cf. Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 416–18. See also J. D. Ryan, 'Missionary saints of the High Middle Ages: Martyrdom, popular veneration and canonization', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 90 (2004), 2ff.

⁷¹ Wiesiołowski, 'Prace i projekty', 103. On Paul Vladimiri, see S. Kwiatkowski, *Der Deutsche Orden im Streit mit Polen-Litauen: Eine theologische Kontroverse über Krieg und Frieden auf dem Konzil von Konstanz (1414–1418)* (Stuttgart, 2000), 23–5; T. Wunsch, 'Paulus Wladimiri und die Genese des "realistischen Denkens" in der Lehre von den internationalen Beziehungen: Der Krieg zwischen Polen und dem Deutschen Orden als Stimulus für ein neues politiktheoretisches Paradigma', *Tannenberg–Grunwald–Žalgiris 1410*, 31–42.

⁷² M. Frontczyk, 'Andrzej Łaskarz z Gosławic herbu Godziemba, biskup poznański', *NP*, 30 (1969), 151–7; Ożóg, 'Udział Andrzeja Łaskarzyca', 183.

positions of the Teutonic Order. This delay was caused by the tactics adopted by the leaders of the Polish embassy and the Polish royal court that remained in touch with current events.⁷³ The fathers of the Council and humbler men were then still waiting for the return of King Sigismund of Luxembourg from France.⁷⁴ He was a very important person, in whom big hopes were placed for the general success of the Council.⁷⁵ As hopes to see him back in Constance in the near future were dwindling, the Polish side moved into action. The first round of complaints was presented on 13 February. The representatives of the Teutonic Order responded in kind.⁷⁶ The second round took place on 17 February. Then the Žemaitijan case was presented. Now the representatives of the Teutonic Order asked for a pause to be able to prepare a reply in written form. It is known that on 19 February the procurator of the Teutonic Order, Peter Wormditt, was busily engaged in this task.⁷⁷ On 24 February, a reply was presented, but proved of little use. It was too long for the fathers of the Council and it was simply interrupted.⁷⁸ In this case the German ability to work hard proved unable to undo the

⁷³ On the phenomenon of communication by letter and word of mouth, see Wiesiołowski, 'Prace i projekty', 104–5. The procurator of the Teutonic Order, Peter von Wormditt, informed his masters plainly that the envoys of Vytautas were waiting for the king of the Romans. They did not spend this time in vain and presented fur coats and Rus'ian caps to 'the entire world' – a move which in winter-time Constance was not a bad one to curry favour from prospective well-wishers: GStA PK, OBA 2291; *Berichte*, II, no. 139, p. 290 (4 January 1416).

⁷⁴ King Sigismund left Constance on 19 July 1415 and returned only on 27 January 1417, see J. K. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund: Herrscher an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit, 1368–1437* (Munich, 1996), 201–2.

⁷⁵ A. Frenken, 'Der König und sein Konzil – Sigmund auf der Konstanzer Kirchenversammlung. Macht und Einfluß des römischen Königs im Spiegel institutioneller Rahmenbedingungen und personeller Konstellationen', *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum*, 36 (2004), 181–90.

⁷⁶ GStA PK, OBA 2457 (German and Latin versions). A major part of the Latin version is published in *Lites*, ed. A. T. Dziąłyński, III (Poznań, 1856), 162–73 and in *CEV*, 1024–33.

⁷⁷ *Berichte*, II, no. 145, pp. 302–3.

⁷⁸ 'Fillastres Gesta concilii Constanciensis', 54. The reply of the Teutonic Order is published in *CEV*, 1033–8. Cf. *Die Berichte* II, no. 150, p. 303 where the editor Koeppen writes about 'voller Erfolg des Ordens'. See also Boockmann, *Johannes Falkenberg*, 207. The idea that the Teutonic Order presented its responses to a 'Propositio Polonorum contra Ordinem' twice on 23 and 24 February, looks somewhat suspicious: cf. *ibid.* 206 and Ekdahl, *Die Schlacht bei Tannenberg*, 216. For the information supplied on this occasion by procurator Peter von Wormditt to the Teutonic grandmaster, see GStA PK, OBA 2309; *Die Berichte*, II, no. 150, pp. 308–11 (24/25 February 1416).

rhetorical achievements of the Poles in advocating the cause of the Žemaitijans.⁷⁹ The text of the Žemaitijan appeal was subsequently included in the chronicle of Dietrich of Nieheim in which it served as an example suitable to illustrate ‘bad times’ in which subjects could be exploited so mercilessly by their lords.⁸⁰ This instance is also a reminder that the Polish-Lithuanian and Teutonic conflict was more about what sort of Christianity was better and not which of the nations was ‘right’.

The complaint, or rather appeal, of the Žemaitijans is a remarkable text.⁸¹ Its authorship is unknown and, in the modern sense, cannot be established because a number of hands must have been at work before the final draft was made ready for use.⁸² The text includes a list of complaints levelled against the Teutonic Order in 1407.⁸³ It includes references to more recent events, but its essence is to be seen in a general appeal of the Žemaitijans to enjoy what today would be called human rights: freedom and right to property. It was the Teutonic Knights who attacked the Žemaitijans in order to subdue and exterminate them. It was they who were eager to enjoy material goods to the full and who neglected taking care of people’s souls altogether. The Teutonic Order was portrayed as an institution driven by mean secular desires, avarice, disregarding totally, as it were, the injunction to love one’s neighbour. The appeal opens and

⁷⁹ Cf. Nöbel, *Michael Küchmeister*, 92.

⁸⁰ ‘Dietrich von Nieheim, Cronica’, ed. K. Colberg, J. Leuschner, *MGH SPM*, V/2 (Stuttgart, 1980), 284–7.

⁸¹ It has been published a number of times: *Lites*, III, 184–90. *CEV*, 1018–24. *CM*, I, no. 1, pp. 2–13. A version in German (‘Dys ist dy clage der Samayten’) was published by F. A. Doubek, ‘Skarga Żmudzinów i odpowiedź Zakonu Niemieckiego z roku 1416’, *AW*, 7 (1930), 874–81. For comments see Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcjanienie’, 84–7. Jučas, *Krikščionybės kelias*, 75–8.

⁸² The idea that the final redaction of this appeal was the work of Paul Vladimiri (cf. Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcjanienie’, 84), is not tenable. The staff of the grand-ducal chancery may be regarded as the most likely *locus* in which this text was composed: Wiesiołowski, ‘Prace i projekty’, 109.

⁸³ The date of the earlier complaint is indicated in the appeal of 1416: *CEV*, 1021; Doubek, ‘Skarga Żmudzinów’, 877. There is an opinion that this earlier complaint may have been composed in 1402 when relations between Grand Duke Vytautas, the Žemaitijans and the Teutonic Order were hostile, in contrast to the situation of 1407 when Vytautas and the Order were on good terms: Radoch, *Walki*, 187. Why the date of 1407 is in the manuscripts and whether it is really incorrect are the issues which have received no special attention so far.

closes with the stated desire of the Žemaitijans to be admitted to the bosom of the Mother Church. The initial successes ascribed to the benign influence emanating from already Christian Lithuania had to serve as a pledge of future successes. The final conversion had to be carried out under the auspices of Jogaila and Vytautas and through the good offices of Archbishop John Rzeszowski of Lviv and Bishop Peter of Vilnius. The appeal ends with a militant statement: ‘as long as we have God propitious to us and Jesus Christ protecting us, we will not be afraid of any weapons of our adversaries, rather we are sure that with the help of God our Maker we will trample over all adversities of those who may impugn us against justice.’⁸⁴ In their defence, the representatives of the Order admitted that even if Žemaitijans had been ruled in harsher fashion than was the case in Prussia, it was their own fault for they did not learn to appreciate the benefits of strict rule and discipline.⁸⁵

The final conversion – 1417

The appeal of the Žemaitijans proved a success. Cardinal John Dominici, Archbishop of Ragusa, expressed his wish to go in person to these distant parts. Some scholars assume that he wanted to go to Žemaitija.⁸⁶ It seems more likely, however, that he was going to go to Rus’ian lands and work for Church Union there.⁸⁷ However

⁸⁴ CEV, 1024.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1037. The high-handed approach of the Order even to its own much more docile subjects in Prussia was a feature of its rule that was out of step with the ‘spirit of time’ when it became usual for the subjects to assess outspokenly the behaviour of their lords in the light of religious duties and moral values: cf. S. Kwiatkowski, ‘Der Deutsche Orden und die Gestaltung des Volkschristentums in Preußen um die Wende vom 14. zum 15. Jahrhundert’, *Die Spiritualität der Ritterorden im Mittelalter*, ed. Z. H. Nowak [*Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica*, 7] (Toruń, 1993), 103–4.

⁸⁶ Andziulytė-Ruginienė, *Žemaičių christianizacijos pradžia*, 58–61; Ivinskis, *Lietuvos istorija*, 350. See also Boockmann, *Johannes Falkenberg*, 208.

⁸⁷ Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcianienie’, 88. Hain, ‘Chrystianizacja Żmudzi’, 120. The idea that the Teutonic Order must have been opposed to this mission (Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcianienie’, 88) is hardly tenable. It must be borne in mind that the Order was convinced that the law was on its side, so its approval for the Conciliar mission to be sent should not be treated as an exercise in hypocrisy: cf. CEV, 1038; GStA PK, OBA 2457, fo 37v (1416).

this maybe, he was dissuaded from this rash decision by drawing his attention to his ignorance of the local – Lithuanian and Rus’ian – languages. The decision of the Council was made in August 1416.⁸⁸ Archbishop John of Lviv and Bishop Peter of Vilnius were authorized to accomplish whatever might be necessary for the conversion of the people and the establishment of Church organization in Žemaitija; they were empowered to undertake actions even in Rus’ian lands.⁸⁹ The mission to Žemaitija was thus made independent of the claims of the archdiocese of Riga.⁹⁰ The first attempts at converting the Žemaitijans *en masse* took place in October 1416. It was Bishop Peter of Vilnius who dispensed baptism to reportedly some 2000 Žemaitijan nobles in Kaunas on 20 October in the presence of King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas.⁹¹ A similar letter, informing about the baptism of ‘two thousand nobles’, was dispatched to the king of the Romans, Sigismund of Luxembourg.⁹² The decisive action was envisaged for the late summer. Both bishops were accompanied by Grand Duke Vytautas, were provided with everything necessary for the travel across Žemaitija. Their mission began in late August and continued for nearly three months. The best sources for what was then going on in Žemaitija are the joint letter of Jogaila and Vytautas and the report produced by both bishops and addressed to the fathers of the Council of Constance. In view of the historiographical

⁸⁸ Boockmann, *Johannes Falkenberg*, 208, 214.

⁸⁹ *CM*, I, no. 7, pp. 29–31 (11 August 1416).

⁹⁰ Weise, ‘Der Heidenkampf (II)’, 671–2. Formally, Žemaitija (and part of Lithuania north of the Neris river) lay within the sphere of the jurisdictional claims of the archdiocese of Riga and the diocese of Kurland from the time of the papal legate William of Modena: *LU*, I, no. 153, coll. 196–8 (1237); G. A. Donner, *Kardinal Wilhelm von Sabina: Bischof von Modena 1222–1234. Päpstlicher Legat in den nordischen Ländern (†1251)* (Helsinki, 1929), 203–5.

⁹¹ A joint letter of Jogaila and Vytautas of 2 January 1417 addressed to the Council of Constance was published by Nieborowski, *Peter von Wormdith*, 286–7. This or a very similar text was used by Jan Długosz in his somewhat garbled account of more than 3000 Žemaitijans (*utriusque sexus*) being baptized in October 1416: Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 63. See also Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcianienie’, 91–3; Błaszczuk, *Diecezja żmudzka... Ustrój*, 15; M. Bumblauskas, *Žemaitijos christianizacija ir pagonybės veiksnys (XV–XVI a.)* (Vilnius, 2014. Diss.), 116–17.

⁹² This letter is known only from a response of Sigismundus of Luxembourg: J. Caro, ‘Aus der Kanzlei Kaiser Sigismundus. Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte des Constanzer Concils’, *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte*, 59 (1880), no. 57, p. 155; *CM*, I, no. 9, pp. 32–4 (28 May 1417).

image of the Žemaitijans as most obdurate pagans, this report strikes its reader with its serene character. No smashing of idols, no putting out of sacred flames, no mopping up of snakes, no traces of pagan temples. King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas informed the fathers of the Council that only insignificant numbers of common people still remained to be baptised whereas an ‘almost innumerable’ multitude of the nobility had already embraced the faith *divina vocati gracia*.⁹³ The report of the bishops states that in the wake of their missionary journey more than two thirds of the population received baptism.⁹⁴ Wherever the bishops made their way they were met by crowds of people wishing to be in the right place at the right time for baptism (*catervatim nos in viis expectabant*).⁹⁵ In our opinion, this picture may be regarded as substantially true. Such casual observations that people had to cover long distances in order to be baptized did not need to be figured out as some sort of propaganda, to use a modern term. This news underscores the voluntary character of the conversion. That people were afraid to be left without baptism may rather be seen in the light of tribal solidarity than a trumped up ‘invention’ for purposes of self-praise. In sum, the rulers’ letter and bishops’ report convey the voluntary character of the conversion. Once spurred on by their rulers, most Žemaitijans were in no need to be compelled by more drastic measures. This state of affairs may account for the lack of any contemporary evidence that pagan cult objects or sacred sites had to be destroyed. This is the image that was concocted by Jan Długosz. However fictitious his account of the Žemaitijan conversion (dated by him to 1413) might have been, in some other respect Długosz may have been right. Długosz wrote that upon seeing that their gods were unable to avenge the harm done to them by Polish soldiers, the Žemaitijans, decided simply to abandon them. In our opinion, this very motif of the abandonment of old gods must be viewed as essentially true. If sacred groves were abandoned and no longer commanded awesome reverence, why should there be a spree of tree-felling?

⁹³ *CM*, I, no. 11, pp. 35–6 (25 August 1417).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 19, p. 49 (before 30 November 1417).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 19, p. 50 (before 30 November 1417).

The case of simple abandonment may be borne out by one more example. This is the case of the sacred forest (*Ventus*) that stretched along the Nemunas River west of Veliuona. In a deposition presented to Benedict Macra this forest was described as having been called sacred in (bygone) pagan times.⁹⁶ This was said in early 1413, that is, before the putative coming of Jogaila and his like-minded Polish zealots into Žemaitija to stamp out the last European retreat of primordial paganism, as Jan Długosz would have us believe. The same forest (*Wentis*) was mentioned one more time in 1416, in a letter of Vytautas. The grand duke invited the grand master of the Teutonic Order and the landmaster of Livonia to meet in the forest that was once held sacred in pagan times.⁹⁷ It is clear that long before the official conversion of Žemaitija was set in motion this forest had generally lost its sacred character – how long before is impossible to tell. The situation deeper inland must be somewhat different and the desacralization of sacred forests may have been a piecemeal process. For our purposes it is necessary to stress that they could simply be abandoned without making recourse to spectacular violent measures as described so vividly by Długosz. The felling of sacred trees was certainly not outside the limits of the possible and it might have taken place, as the adventures of John-Jerome indicate, but this was far from being always the case. In our opinion, the absence of this scenery relating to the events in 1417 indicates the simple absence of such drastic measures.

It is clear that the administration of baptism could not have taken place without some previous instruction in the articles of faith and perhaps some persuasion. There may have been even some differences of opinion. For the lack of anything better, we have to make recourse to Jan Długosz again. The Polish chronicler left a description of how

⁹⁶ *Lites*, II (2nd edition), no. 32, p. 137: ‘et silva dicta Vent, que Sancta tempore paganorum vocabatur ... silva dicta Ventus, que alias Sancta in paganismo vocabatur’.

⁹⁷ *CEV*, no. 639, p. 357: ‘das wir nedvenig der Weluna wol eine halbe meil, do etwenne Samaytischer heiliger walt gewest ist, Wentis genant.’ It may be noted that this physical abandonment of the forest called *Wentis* was not tantamount to absolute oblivion of the sacred related to it. It was the families of the Šemeta and the Kešgaila who reportedly in the sixteenth century paid their regards to a god called *Ventis*, see Ališauskas, *Jono Lasickio pasakojimas*, 110.

a Dominican friar, Andrew Wężyk of Cracow, talked to a Žemaitijan audience about the creation of the world. A certain Žemaitijan simoleon refused to believe the story because no local person, even over a hundred years of age, could corroborate the veracity of what this relatively young monk was talking about so vividly that it looked like a product of his personal reminiscences. On hearing this ridiculous objection King Jogaila ordered the man to shut up and explained that all the monk was talking about happened 6600 years ago.⁹⁸ If this anecdote has any substance in fact, the most likely time when Friar Andrew Wężyk could come to Žemaitija to preach and to discuss was the year 1417 and not 1413, into which Jan Długosz placed his grand narrative of the conversion of Žemaitija.⁹⁹ King Jogaila was not in Žemaitija at the time and if Friar Andrew had to engage Žemaitijans in a conversation, he had to make his stand without royal assistance. Now it is time to say that, *pace* Jan Długosz, King Jogaila did not have the occasion to climb the ‘mountain’ in order to destroy the tower and extinguish the eternal fire. In his description of the conversion of Žemaitija in 1413, Długosz simply made use of his lecture of the Bible in the light of which it had to be absolutely clear that the evil forces had their (final) retreat on the high mountain in the north.¹⁰⁰ This imaginary world was simply transferred and applied to Žemaitija.¹⁰¹ In reality, however, there was nothing and nobody against which a full-scale violent attack could be unleashed.

⁹⁸ Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 25.

⁹⁹ According to Grzegorz Błaszczyk, this may have taken place before 1417, the year in which he was nominated bishop of Chełm: Błaszczyk, *Dzieje*, 2/1, 223.

¹⁰⁰ For the biblical and patristic associations related to the North, see Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*, 40–3, 121–2. For the image of the North in Early Antiquity which was largely free from negative connotations, see L. Käppel, ‘Bilder des Nordens im frühen antiken Griechenland’, *Ultima Thule: Bilder des Nordens von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. A. Engel-Braunschmidt, G. Fouquet, W. von Hinden, I. Schmidt (Frankfurt/M, 2001), 11–27.

¹⁰¹ There can be no doubt that in depicting the pagan religion of the Lithuanians (and Žemaitijans) Jan Długosz relied on the stock of images of Greco-Roman classical paganism: *Rozbiór krytyczny*, 18–19; D. Baronas, ‘Žemaičių Krikštas Jono Dluogošo kronikos šviesoje’, *IŠT*, 3 (2011), 26–7. For the influence of Roman historians on the *opus maius* of Jan Długosz, see J. Schnaydar, ‘Salustiuszowe echa w “Historii Polski” Długosza’, *Eos*, 46 (1952–1953), 141–60; W. Madyda, ‘Wzory klasyczne w “Historii Polski” Długosza’, *Eos*, 49 (1957–1958), 177–201; M. Kowalczykówna, ‘Jagiellońskie rękopisy Liwiusza z marginaliami Jana Długosza’, *Eos*, 58 (1969–1970), 219–230.

Another instance indicating a largely voluntary acceptance of Christianity among the Žemaitijans may be viewed in the case of the first churches in Žemaitija. The issue of when and, especially, where the first parish churches were constructed presents one of the most intractable problems in the study of the early stages in the conversion of Žemaitija.¹⁰² It must be emphasized that the first parish churches in Žemaitija were built during the missionary travel of bishops John and Peter in the summer and autumn of 1417.¹⁰³ The strictly contemporary evidence for their establishment is sparse and too general to allow us to pinpoint any concrete localities. In their report to the Council of Constance the bishops related that during their visit they saw as many churches as was necessary and possible to have them erected.¹⁰⁴ It was reportedly King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas who saw to it and had the newly-established parish churches provided with revenues to be allocated directly from their treasuries. The most crucial foundation was that of the new cathedral church.¹⁰⁵ Vytautas selected a place in the district of Medininkai, then north-western area of the core area of Žemaitija. Here the cathedral church was built and consecrated in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, the Glorious Virgin Mary, Apostles Peter and Paul, and, last but not least, St Alexander the patron saint of Grand Duke Vytautas.¹⁰⁶ The locality in which this cathedral church was set up was called Varniai (deriving from personal family name of the people living there). It did not even remotely resemble a town or township. Žemaitijans in general were not used to living in the compact and cramped spaces we call towns. Probably due to his desire to promote the new place Vytautas strove to rename it Medininkai, the name of the district in general. This new appellation proved unable to supplant the old one.¹⁰⁷ The name of Medininkai was, however,

¹⁰² Błaszczuk, *Diecezja żmudzka... Ustrój*, 139.

¹⁰³ D. Baronas, 'Žemaičių krikštas ir pirmosios parapiinės bažnyčios: 1413–1417 m.', *Žemaičių krikštas*, 22–31.

¹⁰⁴ *CM*, I, no. 18, p. 48 (by 30 November 1417, the first draft of the report).

¹⁰⁵ Holtzmann, 'Die Gründung des Bistums Samaiten', 79–83. *CM*, I, no. 14, pp. 40–2 (24 October, 1417, in Trakai).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 14, p. 41 (24 October 1417). Błaszczuk, *Diecezja żmudzka... Ustrój*, 17–19.

¹⁰⁷ *CM*, I, no. 12, p. 38: 'und beseen auch wor das hus sine wonunge und sin wesen wirt haben...' (15 October 1417, a letter of the commander of Ragnit, Luke von Lichtenstein, to the Grand Master Michael Küchmeister).

retained in the title of the bishop and the diocese. From what was called *civitas Mednicensis* in 1417 Varniai grew to become the first township in Žemaitija proper. Thus the conversion of Žemaitija proved much more path-breaking than in eastern Lithuania. The beginning of living in towns and the conversion coincided. A similar role must have been played by parish churches that were to become focal points of more compact settlements.

Parish churches were built in locations that must have had the densest population. It is again Jan Długosz who handed down the tradition that the first parish churches Žemaitija were established in central districts of Žemaitija: Ariogala, Raseiniai, Medininkai, Kražiai, Viduklė, Veliuona, and Kaltinėnai. These districts largely coincide with the central districts of Žemaitija known from the peace treaty between the Teutonic Order and the Žemaitijans concluded in 1390.¹⁰⁸ The only exception is Knituva, which is replaced by Veliuona in Długosz's account. It was, however, Maciej Strykowski who was first to bring somewhat disparate pieces of information supplied by Jan Długosz together and to tell that these seven localities boasted the first seven parish churches in Žemaitija.¹⁰⁹ In our opinion, the number of the churches originally built in 1417 or soon afterwards may have been larger than seven.¹¹⁰ The report of the bishops to the Council of Constance mentions many churches in necessary places. It is hard to imagine that such a qualification

¹⁰⁸ *CEV*, no. 67, pp. 23–4 (26 May 1390).

¹⁰⁹ Strykowski, *Kronika*, II, 150. In some other place still relating the events of 1417, Długosz wrote that Jogaila founded twelve churches: Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 83–4: 'Wladislaus insuper Polonie rex fundat et dotat pro ea vice duodecim parochiales ecclesias in Samagicia iuxta numerum districtuum... Duodecim insuper sacerdotibus, omnibus nacione Polonis, zelum pro amplitudine fidei habentibus duodecim parochiales ecclesiae Samagitice commisse...'. Here the number twelve serves as a symbolic reference to the 'apostolic' number: cf. Fijałek, 'Uchrześcianienie', 102–3. It is one of the indications that in describing the establishment of the first parish churches in Žemaitija Długosz had no access to documentary material, but he was simply right in guessing that the first churches must have been established in central districts.

¹¹⁰ Some consideration must be given to the second church in Varniai, St Alexander's. It is probable that this church was one more foundation of Grand Duke Vytautas as was supposed by Bishop Motiejus Valančius (1801–1875), the historian of the diocese of Medininkai (Žemaitija). See Motiejus Valančius, *Raštai*, ed. B. Vanagienė, V. Merkys, 2 (Vilnius, 1972), 54. The exact date of its foundation is, however, unknown, but it certainly belongs to the fifteenth century: Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka... Ustrój*, 144.

would have been passed if only seven churches had been seen in the course of the mission journey that lasted almost three months. In his letter of 1417 to a certain prelate Vytautas mentioned that in addition to the bishop and the canons he set up priests all over the land and the churches were built in many places (*undique*).¹¹¹ It must be noted that the churches in the central districts (known from Jan Długosz) may have been those in which the care of souls was commissioned to the canons, whose original number at the cathedral chapter of Medininkai was set at six.¹¹² A number of sources also indicated that the clergymen settled in Žemaitija were of three ranks: bishop, canons, and priests.¹¹³ The latter were settled in the newly-converted land, so at least a few extra churches should be added to the seven ones already mentioned. For the lack of evidence on how many priests took up residence in Žemaitija in the first years and even decades after the final conversion in 1417, it would be pure speculation to guess about possible numbers. However, this issue may be revealing from a different point of view. If we admit that the number of the first churches in Žemaitija was rather considerable (seven or more?), we may ask if all this could have been possible to accomplish in a relatively short spell of time only owing to the orders and munificence of Jogaila and Vytautas? Their part is attested in written sources. However, we must bear in mind that the effective rule of the grand duke of Lithuania in Žemaitija was still rather weak. As it would have been impossible even for Vytautas to make Žemaitijans appear to meet their baptisers in great numbers if they had not been inclined to do so, it would have been impossible to build this number of churches if some sort of local cooperation had not been forthcoming from local population. The churches not only needed to be erected, they had to be looked after and provided with at least a minimum of necessary things. Their establishment and continued existence do show that they became focal points of neophyte Christian communities. The relatively high numbers

¹¹¹ *CM*, I, no. 17, p. 46 (after 24 October 1417).

¹¹² Cf. Fijałek, 'Uchrześcianienie', 102–3, n. 2.

¹¹³ *CM*, I, no. 17, p. 46 (after 24 October 1417). *Ibid.*, no. 22, p. 54 (17 December, 1417, the letter of Landmaster Lander von Spanheim of Livonia to Grand Master Michael Kūchmeister).

of those wishing to be baptised and the relatively high number of the first churches in a land where previously there were none of them speak in favour of a largely free conversion from paganism to Christianity. Both Jogaila and Vytautas were far from defying this reality when, after the establishment of the diocese of Medininkai in 1417, they came to consider the conversion of the Žemaitijans as a mission accomplished and were ready to set their eyes on a much more arduous task – the bringing of the Greek East to the obedience of Rome. It was ostensibly for this purpose that both Jogaila and Vytautas asked the pope to confirm all the privileges granted to them by his predecessors no matter what was their obedience in the time of the Great Schism.¹¹⁴ They wanted to be seen as rulers placed on the eastern fringes of Christendom and therefore having to advance the cause of the Roman Catholic Church in face of recalcitrant Greek Orthodox believers. In some respects they were too rash, because not everything went as smoothly in Žemaitija as they have hoped.

Revolt in Žemaitija in 1418

Now we have to approach the issue of an alleged pagan reaction that broke out in 1418.¹¹⁵ Late spring and early summer of 1418 saw an unusually intense exchange of letters between the grand master of the Teutonic Order and Vytautas, in which a most urgent matter was discussed. The grand master was disturbed that a mob of Žemaitijans broke into the environs of Klaipėda, stole eighteen horses, three oxen, and killed three people on the shore. Vytautas had to respond to enquiries and he did this a third time when he explained in detail what happened in Žemaitija in May 1418. ‘It was common people (*gemeine lute und gebuwer*) from the district of Raseiniai whom we had given over to “good people” (that is, bo-

¹¹⁴ ASV, Registra Vaticana 352, fo 120v (both letters to Jogaila and Vytautas dated 4 May 1418).

¹¹⁵ Cf. Krumbholtz, ‘Samaiten’, 212; Fijałek, ‘Uchrześćjanie’, 107; Halecki, *Litwa, Ruś i Żmudź*, 29, 33; Andziulytė-Ruginienė, *Žemaičių christianizacijos pradžia*, 75–8; Górski, ‘Probleme der Christianisierung’, 10.

yars) for service' and it was they who conspired against the boyars and attacked the homesteads of a number of them'.¹¹⁶ More people from other districts (Medininkai, Knituva) joined them. However, within a matter of a few days Keşgaila, Vytautas' lieutenant, and many local boyars moved to Raseiniai to punish the wrongdoers. Many of them were either killed or captured. Their leader Vaitenis and his gang (*gesellschaft*) were caught and brought to Trakai. Vytautas assured the grand master that whatever had been taken away from the territory of the Order would be restituted.¹¹⁷ Some of those who had made an incursion into the territory of the Order wished to leave Žemaitija for the domains of the Teutonic Order.¹¹⁸ Probably it was they who did this, as we have seen, rather ineptly by coming to blows with the subjects of the Order. Be that as it may, this correspondence is rich in detail, but contains not even a slightest trace of what might be conceived as signs of a pagan reaction. This topic appears in a different type of source. The tumult under consideration provided the author of the continuation of the chronicle of Johann von Possilge with a welcome excuse to talk about Žemaitijans, of whom he kept silence for a good while.¹¹⁹ He reported that the Žemaitijans drove away their bishop and priests, burnt down churches, and became what they had always been, 'old bad wolves'.¹²⁰ Even more contemporary and more gruesome is the information contained in a letter to the grand master of the Teutonic Order written by Hannus von Stangberg. He informed the grand master that the Žemaitijans killed their bishop, the canons, and priests.¹²¹ According to the author of this letter, such information was supplied by Vytautas himself, who was then in a hurry to

¹¹⁶ CEV, no. 781, p. 411 (11 June 1418).

¹¹⁷ GStA PK, OBA no. 2752; CEV, no. 781, pp. 411–12.

¹¹⁸ CEV, no. 781, p. 411 (11 June 1418).

¹¹⁹ Johann von Possilge, 'Chronik' [Fortsetzung], 376: 'Man hat lange nicht gesayt von den Sameythin, do muset ir was von horin'.

¹²⁰ Ibid.: 'Dy bewisetin ir alde tocke in desym somir, wend eyn alt wolff ist bose bendig zcu machin'.

¹²¹ GStA PK, OBA 2758: 'herczog Wytawd by kortz hat mynem herren geschrebin das Samayten den Byschow unde och dy thumheren und zust andir phaffin alsamth dirslagin unde irmordit haben unde dorumme so begerit herczog Wytawd das ym here by korcz welde komen ken Littawen unde das daz gerochin worde an den Samaytin' (24 June 1418).

come back to Lithuania to punish the Žemaitijans for what they had done. This letter contains fact and fiction alike. It is patently wrong as regards the first bishop of Medininkai, Matthias, who lived long enough to become bishop of Vilnius from 1422 to 1453.¹²² As for the other churchmen, the same news cannot be regarded as truthful either – no such victims are attested in any other source of information that could be said to be based on an eye-witness account. The combined information of these two sources leaves the impression that there was a demand in some quarters in Prussia for stories like these. They had to give more substance to the already widespread belief that Žemaitijans were deeply pagan and their ‘wolfish’ character must erupt to surface whenever one heard of major disturbances. These considerations are aimed to support the opinion of some earlier scholars who regarded the 1418 revolt in Žemaitija as caused by factors of social nature – the giving over of peasants to the boyars for service.¹²³ Some of those affected by these measures of social transformation wanted to emigrate to the lands of the Order – such people could hardly be motivated by the perceived need to preserve their ancestral pagan faith. It must also be recalled that Grand Duke Vytautas was far from being popular in every segment of Lithuanian society. Many were ready to show their preference for Švitrigaila, the brother of Jogaila and the long-term troublemaker for Vytautas.¹²⁴ It was precisely in the spring of 1418 that he was freed from a dungeon in Kremenets castle by his Rus’ian friends and initially caused much anxiety to Vytautas. Fijałek was certainly right when he saw a connection between Švitrigaila’s being set free and the upheaval in Žemaitija, but he went too far when he admitted that it was the Teutonic Order that incited the pagan revolt among the Žemaitijans.¹²⁵ There were more mundane reasons why a number of people in Žemaitija should have expressed their dissatisfaction with the new power structures being superimposed on them. They were too free to be cowed even by Vytautas

¹²² LKD, no. 1657.

¹²³ Holtzmann, ‘Die Gründung des Bistums Samaiten’, 78; Hain, ‘Chrystianizacija Žmudzī’, 125; cf. also Dundulis, *Lietuvių kova dėl Žemaitijos*, 85.

¹²⁴ CEV, no. 766, pp. 404–5 (10 April 1418); no. 768, pp. 406–7 (22 April 1418).

¹²⁵ Fijałek, ‘Uchrześcianienie’, 109; Kosman, *Drogi zaniku*, 46.

and his men. Even after the peasants and some marginalized boyars were crushed in the summer of 1418, there remained people who were eager to further collaborate with the Teutonic Order and, if possible, to leave their native land for the *Ordensstaat*.¹²⁶ Of their pagan predilections there can be no meaningful discussion.

It must be stressed that the newly-established Church in Žemaitija was not, as far as can reasonably be guessed, affected by the tumultuous events of 1418. This was the year in which Vytautas reconstructed the church in Veliuona in more durable brickwork.¹²⁷ The cathedral church in Medininkai continued to be constructed. In contrast with assurances made before the Council of Constance in 1417, to the effect that the newly-established cathedral church was adequately provided for, in 1418 Vytautas told the pope that this church had meagre incomes. That is why he requested the pope to grant indulgences to those who would devoutly visit the church in the octave of Ss Peter and Paul and make their contribution to its construction. The pope acceded generously and extended this indulgence to be valid for twenty years, 'because of the recent conversion'.¹²⁸ Such sorts of income as the royal or grand-ducal treasury, let alone offerings of the faithful, were far from stable in Lithuanian/Žemaitijan conditions of the time, so practical needs necessitated new solutions quite soon. In 1421 Grand Duke Vytaut-

¹²⁶ The Žemaitijan support for Švitrigaila was well known to the authorities of the Teutonic Order: *LU*, V, no. 2291, col. 448 (12 January 1419); *GStA PK*, OBA 2909; (5 February 1419); OBA 2911 (7 February 1419); OBA 2914 (9 February 1409) = *CEV*, no. 824, pp. 440–1. These three last letters also contain information about a positive disposition of (some) Žemaitijans with regard to the Order. For the involvement of some Žemaitijan boyars in the 1418 uprising and their pro-Teutonic inclinations see Saviščevas, *Žemaitijos savivalda*, 80–2, 116.

¹²⁷ Johann von Posilge, 'Chronik'[Fortsetzung], 376: 'In desim jare lys herczog Wythaud weder buwin eyne kirche zcu Welunen ...'. The foundation charter of the church in Veliuona was issued on 9 August 1421: *CM*, I, no. 30, pp. 68–9.

¹²⁸ Cf. *CM*, I, no. 18, p. 48 (before 30 November 1417) and *ASV*, Registra Supplicum 116, fo 213: 'Item cum ecclesia Medinensis in terra Samagitarum de novo fundata et exiliter dotata existat et pro ipsius edificiorum et eciam conservacionem christifidelium suffragiis plurimum indiget noscatur, ut igitur christifideles eo devocius ad ipsam ecclesiam confluent et manus porrigant adiutrices quo ex hoc uberiora dona celestia confluere conspexerint ... Fiat de quinque annis ad viginti annos propter novam conversionem. O.' An excerpt published in *Bullarium Poloniae*, ed. I. Sułkowska-Kuraś, S. Kuraś, H. Wajs, vol. IV: 1417–1431 (Rome–Lublin, 1992), no. 327, p. 60 (27 August 1418).

tas provided Bishop Matthias and canons with landed estates and a certain number of peasant farms.¹²⁹ This donation, and similar others that followed subsequently, placed the ecclesiastical structure in Žemaitija on a more stable footing.¹³⁰ The year 1421 saw papal protection extended over the Žemaitijans. There was a certain delay in the appointment of the next bishop to Žemaitija, after their first shepherd was transferred to Vilnius. As soon as the Peace of Melno was concluded in 1422, whereby the Teutonic Order dropped its claims to Žemaitija for ever, the new appointment was carried out. The final delineation of the new border between Žemaitija and the domains of the Teutonic Order took some time, but once established it proved of outstanding durability.¹³¹ By and large it remained intact for almost five hundred years until after the First World War.

Discussing the notional problem of the pagan reaction in Žemaitija in 1418, one is confronted with extremely modest dimensions of disturbances as compared with what had happened in the lands of the Polabian Slavs following the uprising of 983, or what took place in Poland during the crisis of 1025–39, when the very foundations of the state of the Piasts seemed to collapse.¹³² In either case it required extraordinary measures to restore the previous *status quo*. Nothing of comparable proportions could be admitted in the case of Žemaitija in 1418. The causes of social unrest may to some degree have been similar, as peasants everywhere and always

¹²⁹ *CM*, I, no. 29, pp. 66–7 (22 June 1421); Baronas, ‘Žemaičių Krikštas ir pirmosios parapiinės bažnyčios’, 9–31.

¹³⁰ Of course such donations did not make life much easier at a stroke. In 1428, the pope was informed about insufficient funds allocated to the see of Medininkai. Its regular revenues did not exceed ten silver marks a year: *KDKDW*, no. 103, pp. 128–9 (27 June 1428).

¹³¹ *Staatsverträge*, no. 154, pp. 160–1 (27 September 1422). For the documents issued by the Polish-Lithuanian side, see *Dokumenty strony polsko-litewskiej pokoju mełneńskiego z 1422 roku*, ed. P. Nowak, P. Pokora (Poznań, 2004), 5. On the Treaty of Melno, see C. A. Lückcrath, *Paul Rusdorf Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1422–1441 [Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 15]* (Bad Godesberg, 1969), 43–7; Biskup, Labuda, *Dzieje zakonu krzyżackiego*, 372–4. On the war of 1422, see S. Ekdahl, ‘Der Krieg zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und Polen-Litauen im Jahre 1422’, *ZfO*, 13 (1964), 614–51. On border-related problems, see T. Čelkis, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės teritorija: Sienų samprata ir delimitaciniai procesai XIV–XVI amžiuje* (Vilnius, 2014), 156–66.

¹³² Lübke, ‘Das “junge” Europa’, 478–95.

tend to be suspicious of their lords and recalcitrant if only they can put up effective resistance, as the case of peasant communities of Dithmarschen amply shows.¹³³ In this latter instance, as well as in that of the Žemaitijan peasants, there seems to be no specifically 'anti-Christian' or 'pro-pagan' disposition. It would be more opportune to talk of the love of freedom from external interference.

Constance–Constantinople–Moscow: the triangle of Polish-Lithuanian activity in 1411–1418

Attempts at converting Žemaitija were constantly accompanied by the refrain of promoting the cause of Church unity far and wide. Polish diplomats did not fail to miss opportunities to report that the rulers of Poland and Lithuania were working hard to this end, which was always a tantalizing objective for Rome. If the importance of the Žemaitijan conversion was aided by conjuring up an image of this land as being as big as half of Italy,¹³⁴ no such flights of fantasy were needed with regard to vast and populous Rus'. The image of Rus' simply had to be exploited. The fathers of the Council of Constance had to be reminded that Jogaila and Vytautas exercised their rule over so vast territories of Orthodox believers that it was impossible to traverse them in one month's journey. 'And who would now be able,' asked Bishop Andrew Łaskarz, 'to enumerate all exquisite churches, monasteries and other holy buildings constructed there at huge expense?'¹³⁵ Now we have to address the issue of what use was made of these vast expanses in promoting Polish-Lithuanian interests on the international forum represented by the Council of Constance. This will serve as an illustration of how adept the newly converted rulers Jogaila and Vytautas were in adopting the ways European politics were conducted at the time. This digression is

¹³³ J. F. Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe during the Middle Ages: From the Eighth Century to 1340*, tr. S. Willard and R. W. Southern (Woodbridge, 1997, 2nd edition), 115–17; W. Urban, *Dithmarschen: A Medieval Peasant Republic* (Lewiston–New York, 1991).

¹³⁴ 'Fillastres Gesta concilii Constanciensis', 58.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 268 (4 December 1415).

also intended as a backdrop against which it would be possible to better evaluate the idiosyncratic policies of their predecessors, the pagan grand dukes of Lithuania.

In the years after the Battle of Tannenberg and during the Council of Constance, Polish-Lithuanian diplomacy entered into relatively close contacts with Byzantium. It must be noted, however, that they did not receive due attention so far and this was caused not so much by the lack of pertinent source material as by a specific perspective of research traditions. It happens that Western-oriented and Moscow-centred scholarship of history does not allow Central Europe to appear adequately in its own right. The case in point is the marriage of Anna, daughter of Basil I of Moscow, to John, son and heir-apparent to the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaiologos. It is commonly assumed that this marriage was occasioned by contacts between Moscow and Constantinople.¹³⁶ Because such statements were advanced without paying attention to the Polish-Lithuanian side, they ought to be revised and supplemented where necessary.¹³⁷

After the Battle of Tannenberg, the rulers of Poland and Lithuania came to enjoy an unprecedented level of international renown. It was precisely the next year, in 1411, that they made a wide-ranging visitation of their Rus'ian domains which may rightly be called a military parade.¹³⁸ It was designed to impress their Rus'ian subjects with the might of their Roman Catholic rulers. The fame of the victory at Tannenberg could not escape the radar of Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos and his diplomats, who had been engaged in continual search for Western help against the tide of the Ottoman conquests. The emperor visited France and England in person in 1400.¹³⁹ He was welcomed there most heartily, but no effective aid was forthcoming from any quarter in Western Europe. Even after 1402, when the formidable war leader Tamerlane inflicted a devastating defeat

¹³⁶ Cf. J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick, 1969), 345; D. Obolensky, 'Some notes concerning a Byzantine portrait of John VIII Palaeologus', *Eastern Churches Review*, 4 (1972), 141–2; I. P. Medvedev, 'Russkaia kniazna na vizantiiskom trone', *Voprosy Istorii*, 2 (1995), 144–7; Thomson, *Gregory Tsamblak*, 69.

¹³⁷ The point of departure in this direction was offered as early as 1932 by O. Halecki, 'La Pologne et l'Empire Byzantine', *Byzantion*, 7 (1932), 51–2.

¹³⁸ Mickūnaitė, *Making a Great Ruler*, 31–3.

¹³⁹ Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus*, 175–95; Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 308–12.

on the Ottomans at Ankara and thus relieved the beleaguered Constantinople for a while, the need for Byzantines to get rid of the Ottoman encirclement was still a job to be done. It was even worth the try to approach the Teutonic Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen, who in 1407 received a visitor to Marienburg, an archbishop John of Sultania, and issued a polite letter to Emperor Manuel II in which he congratulated the latter on his positive predisposition towards Church Union, but did not fail to recall injustices suffered by Latin Christians at the hands of his subjects.¹⁴⁰ This exchange of letters indicates how desperate Manuel II was in trying to find any help from any Latin Christians who might be likely to be beholden to the crusading spirit.¹⁴¹ The rulers of Poland and Lithuania shared in this pan-European sentiment and their occasional raids against neighbouring Tatars were couched in colours of fight against the 'infidels'.¹⁴² In the post-Tannenberg conditions it was Poland and Lithuania that must have held much promise to Byzantines as potential allies in countering the Ottoman threat. And precisely in the year of 1411, the Russian chronicles noticed that Anna, daughter of Basil of Moscow and his Lithuanian wife Sofia, daughter of Vytautas, was betrothed to John Palaiologos.¹⁴³ For all successes on the

¹⁴⁰ OF 3, pp. 288–9. Published by K. Forstreuter, 'Der Deutsche Orden und Südosteuropa', *Kyrios*, 1 (1936), 271. On Archbishop John of Sultania see Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicains*, 164–73. The archbishop did not turn empty-handed, the grand master granted him 15 silver marks. See *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch*, 417.

¹⁴¹ For contacts between Lithuania and Byzantium at the turn of the fifteenth century, see S. C. Rowell, 'Naujieji kryžiaus žygiuotojai: LDK ir Bizantijos santykiai XIV–XV a. sandūroje. Ar Vytautas Didysis buvo Lietuvos kryžiaus žygių prieš turkus bei totorius pradininkas?', *Kryžiaus karų epocha Baltijos regiono tautų istorinėje sąmonėje*, ed. R. R. Trimonienė, R. Jurgaitis (Šiauliai, 2007), 197–9. On the hopes the Byzantines had with regard to Lithuanians as potential crusaders see D. Baronas, 'Byzantium and Lithuania: North and South look at each other', *Byzantium, New Peoples, New Powers: the Byzantino-Slav Contact Zone, from the Ninth to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. M. Kaimakamova, M. Salamon, M. Smorağ-Różycka [*Byzantina et Slavica Cracoviensia*, 5] (Cracow, 2007), 309–13. Grand Duke Vytautas was intent on following in the footsteps of the Teutonic Order in organising his own crusades for Western nobility: GStA PK, OBA 962 (1406–07). The launching of parallel crusading enterprise would cause some concern among the Teutonic authorities: GStA PK, OBA 861 (29 May 1406?).

¹⁴² Rowell, 'Naujieji kryžiaus žygiuotojai', 182–95.

¹⁴³ 'Sofiiskaia pervaia letopis', *PSRL*, V (St Petersburg, 1851), 258. 'Simeonovskaia letopis', 160. 'Novgorodskiaia 4-ia letopis', *PSRL*, IV/1 (Leningrad, 1925, 2nd edition), 411. 'Ermolinskaia letopis', *PSRL*, XXIII (St Petersburg, 1910), 143–4.

military field neither Jogaila (for the moment) nor Vytautas (for life) were blessed enough with progeny to enable them to conduct an active matrimonial policy. However, it was Sofia's daughter Anna who was the perfect match. She was a granddaughter of Vytautas and a daughter of Basil of Moscow. She reached Constantinople only in the spring or summer of 1414 and was married to John Palaiologos. She was then only ten or eleven years old. Sometimes this delay between betrothal and the actual marriage is tentatively explained as caused by disturbances affecting the situation around Constantinople during a war of succession among the Ottomans in 1413.¹⁴⁴ In our opinion, this sort of explanation relies too heavily on the Byzantine historian Michael Doukas, who wrote many years after the event and did not know anything about the engagement in 1411.¹⁴⁵ It is rather to be assumed that Anna simply had to reach marriageable age in accordance with canonical requirements. The dates of engagement and actual marriage, like the itinerary itself, show that her guardians and sponsors were in no hurry to dispatch her to Constantinople as quickly as possible. The Burgundian knight and diplomat Gilbert de Lannoy saw her in Lithuania, in the hunting castle of Punia at the beginning of 1414, accompanied by her mother Sofia and enjoying the company of her grandfather Vytautas and her grandmother Anne.¹⁴⁶ The whole family was there together.

¹⁴⁴ Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus*, 345.

¹⁴⁵ *Ducae Historia Byzantina*, ed. I. Bekker [CSHB, XX] (Bonn, 1834), 98. See also Medvedev, 'Russkaia kniazna', 145.

¹⁴⁶ *Voyages et ambassades de Messire Guillebert de Lannoy: Chevalier de Toison d'or, seigneur de Santes, Willerval, Tronchiennes, Beaumont et Wahégnies, 1399–1450*, ed. C. P. Serrure (Mons, 1840), 26: 'Et là, en ce dit chastel, trouvoy le duc Witholt, prince de Létau, sa femme et sa fille, femme au grant roy de Musco, et la fille de sa fille...'. Like other women, the granddaughter is not mentioned by name. We are in full agreement with Oscar Halecki that it was Princess Anna: O. Halecki, 'Gilbert de Lannoy and his discovery of East Central Europe', *Bulletin of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America*, 2 (1944), 320. Cf. also P. Klimas, *Ghillebert de Lannoy: Dvi jo kelionės Lietuvon Vytauto Didžiojo laikais (1413–14 ir 1421 metais)* (Kaunas, 1931), 34. The location of the castle *Posur* at present-day Punia is likely, though by no means safe. Gilbert de Lannoy mentions *Posur* as located on the bank of the Nemunas River, and the knight errant was there on his way from Trakai to Kaunas. More on this, see P. Klimas, *Ghillebert de Lannoy in Medieval Lithuania*, tr. C. Jurgėla (New York, 1945), 49–51. The exact route of Princess Anna to Constantinople is not known. It is known that she was accompanied by monk Zosima, who in 1419 made one more journey to Constantinople by way

This evidence alone suffice to warrant a statement that Vytautas had his hand in arranging this marriage and in deliberating what uses could be drawn from it.¹⁴⁷ It is to be recalled that despite the fact that his only daughter Sofia was married out to Moscow, she took part in Lithuanian political life. For example, in the early days of 1413 she authorized her representatives to submit on her behalf the protest to the imperial sub-arbiter Benedict Macra to the effect that she disagreed with her father who years before had given Žemaitija over to the Teutonic Order without consulting her and thus violating her patrimonial rights.¹⁴⁸ It is clear that Sofia acted in collusion with Vytautas and Jogaila who were then spending their energies in trying to reclaim Žemaitija in a legal way. Once Anna had been married to John Palaiologos, Polish diplomacy knew how to exploit this matter at the Council of Constance. It was Bishop Andrew Łaskarz of Poznań, again, who told the fathers of the Council that the heir-apparent of Byzantium had married the grand-ducal daughter [sic!], who already gave birth to a child [sic]!¹⁴⁹ This news was certainly flawed and exaggerated, but it must have served well to all-important purpose of promoting the union between Latin and Greek Churches. It was, according to the same bishop, because of blood relations and geographical proximity that his king embarked on this glorious task.¹⁵⁰ Thus the marriage between Princess Anna and Prince John Palaiologos must be presented and understood as a

of Lithuania (via Kiev): cf. G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* [Dumbarton Oaks Studies 19] (Washington DC, 1984), 166–95. As regards the date of the earlier travel of Zosima in the train of Princess Anna, it should be placed in the spring – early summer of 1414, not in the time span between 1411 and 1413: cf. *ibid.*, 311.

¹⁴⁷ Some support to this thesis might be added by taking into consideration another somewhat later instance of the involvement of Vytautas in the marriage of his another granddaughter. In August 1417, Vilnius witnessed an impressive wedding party given on the occasion of the marriage of Prince Orlenko of Kiev to Anastasia, daughter of Basil I of Moscow: *LU*, V, no. 2158, col. 256 (28 August 1417).

¹⁴⁸ *GStA PK*, OF 7, pp. 64, 200–1. See also *Lites*, II (2nd edition), no. 29, p. 83 (28 January 1413). For more detail of these negotiations see W. Sieradzian, *Misja Benedykta Makraia w latach 1412–1413: Z dziejów pokojowych metod rozwiązywania konfliktów międzypaństwowych w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej* (Malbork, 2009), 55–78.

¹⁴⁹ 'Der liber gestorum des Cerretanus', ed. H. Finke, *ACC*, II, 268 (4 December 1415).

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* See also Halecki, 'La Pologne', 53–4.

great event allowing the Polish-Lithuanian rulers to feel important players on this pan-European stage. It was in 1415 that the fathers of the Council urged Vytautas and Jogaila and the Polish estates to support the Kingdom of Hungary against the aggression of the Turks.¹⁵¹ It was in 1415 that Jogaila took care to dispatch a shipload of grain to Constantinople, thus supplying its afflicted population with what had by then become goods of strategic importance.¹⁵² In the autumn of 1415 King Jogaila informed his bishops present at the Council of Constance that he was striving to bring the Greeks back to the obedience of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁵³ Both Jogaila and Vytautas created an atmosphere of urgency by expressing to the fathers of the Council an apprehension that their successors might lose religious fervour and that was why they were in much need to be counselled by the ‘the most prudent men’ on how to reduce the schismatics to the unity in faith with the Roman Catholics. A testimony of their own resolve was presented by Theodore of Constantinople, a vicar of the Dominican Friars Pilgrims whose Greek background made him an especially suitable person for the promotion of Church unity.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, back in Lithuania, Vytautas took care to convene a synod of Orthodox bishops who elected Gregory Tsamblak in place of Metropolitan Photius and thus

¹⁵¹ *CEXV*, II, no. 62, pp. 75–6 (17 August 1415); no. 63, pp. 76–7 (17 August, 1415). The Teutonic Order was also addressed with an invitation to join the king of Poland and other rulers in their defensive actions against the Turks. *Ibid.*, no. 64, pp. 77–8. The news of the invasion of Hungary reached the Council on 25 July 1415. *BV*, *Vat. Lat.* 4179, fo 74r.

¹⁵² Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 55. O. Halecki, *From Florence to Brest (1439–1596)* (Rome, 1958), 28. On the situation around Constantinople in 1415 see K. P. Matschke, *Die Schlacht bei Ankara und das Schicksal von Byzanz: Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Geschichte zwischen 1402 und 1422* (Weimar, 1981), 135–6. Besides this study see also N. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge, 2009), 149ff.

¹⁵³ *Die Berichte*, II, no. 130, pp. 276–7 (25 October 1415).

¹⁵⁴ *BAV*, *Vat. Lat.* 4178 I, fos 264v–267v (17 October 1415); *CEV*, no. 651, p. 332 (18 October 1415). It is one and the same joint letter of Jogaila and Vytautas issued in Lviv in October 1415. The copies present some slight variations. On the activities of Theodore Chrysoberges of Constantinople and the Dominican Friars Pilgrims’ see R. J. Loenertz, ‘Les Dominicains byzantins Théodore et André Chrysoberges et les négociations pour l’Union de 1415 à 1430’, *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 9 (1939), 5–61; C. Delacroix-Besnier, *Les Dominicains*, 173–9.

de facto revived a separate Lithuanian Orthodox metropolitanate.¹⁵⁵ In December 1415 the public at the Council of Constance was given to know that through the good offices of Vytautas the Byzantine emperor would be brought to obedience to the Roman Catholic Church – the news that was duly reported to the Teutonic grand master.¹⁵⁶ One more proof of striving for Church Union was given at the Council of Constance, when on 25 February 1418 Tsamblak delivered a speech in front of the fathers of the Council and the newly-elected Pope Martin V.¹⁵⁷ By this time, however, Princess Anna was dead and lay buried in the Constantinopolitan monastery *tou Libos*.¹⁵⁸ She died of plague in August 1417. The sad news reached the court of Vilnius within a matter of a few months.¹⁵⁹ Most probably it was a mute reference to her memory that when Jogaila wrote a letter to the old Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, he addressed him as ‘our illustrious and beloved relative’ (*illustris consanguinee noster carissime!*).¹⁶⁰ In 1420, Jogaila congratulated

¹⁵⁵ AZR, 1, no. 23, p. 33; no. 24, pp. 33–5; no. 25, pp. 35–7 (all dated 15 November 1415). It is usually assumed that the initiative of Vytautas to have Gregory Tsamblak consecrated metropolitan was an expression of his desire to set his Greek Orthodox subjects free from the interference of Moscow-based metropolitan: cf. Makarii (Bulgakov), *Istoriia Russkoi Tserkvi*, 3, 345; Chodyncki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 34–7; Trajdos, ‘Metropolici kijowscy’, 224–5. It is very doubtful, that grand-ducal policy was motivated by the desire to have a separate (Lithuanian) metropolitanate established for his Greek Orthodox subjects, because the idea of a single metropolitanate was strong enough with Vytautas himself, as Horst Jablonowski aptly observed: *Westrusland*. 80–1. However, in contrast to Jablonowski, we do not think that this initiative of Vytautas was based on his aspirations to gain a political supremacy over ‘All Rus’’: cf. *ibid.*, 81. In our opinion, his promotion of Gregory Tsamblak had primarily to do with Church Union – a highly attractive and much useful idea at the Council of Constance. The fleeting nature of such aspirations is evident: from what followed after the Council of Constance. By this time metropolitan Tsamblak had disappeared from the scene, and Grand Duke Vytautas and Metropolitan Photius came to good terms in 1420: cf. *ibid.*, 85–6; Trajdos, ‘Metropolici kijowscy’, 231–2.

¹⁵⁶ *Berichte*, II, no. 136, pp. 284–5 (15 December 1415).

¹⁵⁷ ‘Fillastres Gesta concilii Constanciensis’, 164–7. On his role played at the Council of Constance, see Halecki, *From Florence to Brest*, 30–1; Jablonowski, *Westrusland*, 86–8; Thomson, *Gregory Tsamblak*, 76–103.

¹⁵⁸ On this monastery, see V. Marinis, ‘Tombs and burials in the monastery *tou Libos* in Constantinople’, *DOP*, 63 (2009), 147–66.

¹⁵⁹ *CEV*, no. 754, pp. 397–8 (14 December 1417).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 895, p. 493 (late August 1420).

the emperor on his reported readiness to bring his people back to unity with the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁶¹

The adduced evidence favours the conclusion that in given circumstances it was Lithuanian-Polish and Byzantine sides that were most interested in the conclusion of the marriage between princess Anna and John Palaiologos. Vytautas and, by extension, Jogaila were eager to show themselves big in Europe by pretending to be effective in the cause of promoting Church Union. For their part, the Byzantines must have anticipated Polish-Lithuanian succour in beating back the Turks. It was time and circumstances that made this course of action seem more likely than any other alternative related to the counties in East-Central and Eastern Europe. It is true that Muscovy, too, was of interest to the Byzantines for much the same reasons. However, Byzantine embassies arriving in Moscow in 1397 and 1400 achieved little as compared to what they might have been expected to achieve.¹⁶² The only tangible consolation seems to have been only some funds raised in Muscovite and Lithuanian lands in 1397–98.¹⁶³ And this was so when the primate of the Rus'ian Church was Metropolitan Cyprian, man known for his love for Byzantines – a *Philorhomaïos anthropos*.¹⁶⁴ After his death in 1406 the prospects of receiving aid from Moscow could not be higher, especially after 1408, when her lands suffered devastation at the hands of the Tatars.¹⁶⁵ It

¹⁶¹ Halecki, *From Florence to Brest*, 35–6. See also *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches*, vol. V: *Regesten von 1341–1453*, ed. F. Dölger (Munich-Berlin, 1965), nos. 3381, 3382, p. 107.

¹⁶² D. Obolensky, 'A late fourteenth-century Byzantine diplomat: Michael, Archbishop of Betlehem', *Byzance et les Slaves. Mélanges Ivan Dujčev*, ed. S. Dufrenne (Paris, 1979), 310–15.

¹⁶³ D. Obolensky, 'A Byzantine grand embassy to Russia in 1400', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 4 (1978), 125. Idem, 'A late fourteenth-century Byzantine diplomat', 314.

¹⁶⁴ On the person of Metropolitan Cyprian, see Obolensky, 'A Philorhomaïos anthropos', 77–98. The alms and donations from Muscovite rulers and pilgrims to Constantinople did occur in the course of the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, but they arguably represented small fix when compared to what was taking place in the next century when Moscow became a favourite point of destination for Eastern Christians begging for alms. See *Rossija i grecheskii mir v XVI veke*, ed. S. M. Kashtanov, L. V. Stoliarova, B. L. Fonkich, I (Moscow, 2004).

¹⁶⁵ Gorskii, *Moskva*, 127ff.

was a far cry from Poland and Lithuania, especially in the post-Tannenberg time.

This is obviously not to say that Grand Duke Basil of Moscow could be totally unconcerned about what was going to happen to his daughter Anna. He certainly had no reason to object to this marriage and of course gave his consent to it. Why not? However, in contrast to the Polish-Lithuanian side, there is no evidence that he had any political calculations related to this marriage. It must be recalled that Basil I was rather indifferent to Byzantium as became clear in about 1393, when he opposed the initiative of Metropolitan Cyprian to include the imperial name in diptychs for commemoration during a liturgy.¹⁶⁶ This caused a scandal at Constantinople and prompted Patriarch Antony IV to give the Muscovite ruler one of the best ever lessons in Byzantine political theology: 'It is not possible for Christians to have a Church and no Emperor, for the Empire and the Church have great unity and fellowship, and they cannot be separated one from the other'.¹⁶⁷ The name of the emperor seems to have been restored,¹⁶⁸ but it could hardly be supposed that this must have caused a profound reassessment of Byzantium in Basil's eyes. Admittedly, the marriage between John Palaiologos and Anna must have carried more symbolic weight with the metropolitan Photius, himself a Greek.¹⁶⁹ The best proof of this is the great *sakkos* of Photius, a masterpiece of Byzantine embroidery, where, among many other things, the images of John Palaiologos, his wife Anna and her parents, Basil and Sofia were displayed. It was commissioned and made some time between 1414 and 1417.¹⁷⁰ Dimitri Obolensky supposed that this liturgical garment was probably a personal gift of John Palaiologos to the Metropolitan Photius made on the occasion

¹⁶⁶ D. Obolensky, 'A late fourteenth-century Byzantine diplomat', 305–10; Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 254–6.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted after J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1990), 293. See also Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 264–7; Ševčenko, *Ukraine*, 70.

¹⁶⁸ Obolensky, 'A Philorhomaïos anthropos', 95–6.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Halecki, *From Florence to Brest*, 27.

¹⁷⁰ E. Piltz, *Trois sakkoi byzantins: analyse iconographique* [*Acta Universitatis Upsalensis*, n. s. *Figura* 17] (Uppsala, 1976), 31; Meyendorff, 'The three Lithuanian martyrs', 39.

of the celebration of his marriage to Princess Anna.¹⁷¹ We would like to draw attention to the fact that the image of the Byzantine imperial couple and the image of the Russian grand-ducal couple not only stand side by side – they stand as if in conjunction that is provided by the image of the three martyrs or Vilnius. It is as if to say that Byzantium, Muscovy, and Lithuania (her Orthodox part, obviously) have something in common that in local conditions can best be represented by the metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus' translating faithfully the universal message of the Byzantine empire. The great *sakkos* of Photius was destined to sensitize the Muscovites to this Christian cosmopolitan outlook as opposed to their particular interests in using the Church to promote their nationalistic agenda.¹⁷²

We have tried to do justice to all parties involved. The most important thing for us was to emphasize the Lithuanian involvement in bringing about the marriage of Princess Anna of Moscow and John Palaiologos of Constantinople. It is our contention that the common interests of the Polish-Lithuanian side on the one hand, and of the Byzantine Empire on the other, were most decisive on this occasion. The grand duke of Moscow and the metropolitan of the Rus'ian Orthodox Church did not have anything against this marriage and, in sum, were supportive of it. We do not think that it was possible for them to remain unaware that this marriage could be used as a means to promote Church Union. So that is why their non-taking of a partisan position to preclude cooperation with their Roman Catholic neighbours, Vytautas and Jogaila, shows that neither Grand Duke Basil nor Metropolitan Photius were actively opposed to Latin and Greek Churches coming closer together.¹⁷³ In contrast with his father Dmitri, Basil I seems to have been largely

¹⁷¹ Obolensky, 'Some notes', 141–2.

¹⁷² Cf. Meyendorff, *Byzantium*, 257–8; Obolensky, 'A Philorhomaïos anthropos', 91; A. Papadakis, J. Meyendorff, *The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy: The Church 1071–1453 A. D.* (Crestwood, 1994), 347–8.

¹⁷³ It may be noted that the ecclesiology of Tsamblak and Photius was Orthodox in both cases. Cf. Thomson, *Gregory Tsamblak*, 94, 108, 111. The idea that Metropolitan Photius was decidedly anti-Catholic and pro-Muscovite (Trajdos, 'Metropolici kijowscy', 223) is too far-fetched. This image is greatly indebted to the late medieval and early modern polemical literature.

free of anti-Lithuanian sentiment.¹⁷⁴ Nor was he doggedly opposed to Catholicism as would be the case with his son Basil II in the aftermath of the Union of Florence (1439).¹⁷⁵ When Duke Švitrigaila sought asylum with Basil I in 1408, the latter gave him the city of Vladimir to rule.¹⁷⁶ It was not to the liking of every Muscovite, and such a move could have been next to impossible in the second half of the same century, let alone the next, when Muscovy's self-definition in stark opposition to the Roman Catholic world became a *fait accompli*. By contrast, prospects for coexistence were still not totally discredited in the first two decades of the fifteenth century. So that is why we suppose that the enthusiasm of certain Roman Catholic leaders in Poland and Lithuania, let alone others further west, with regard to Church Union was not totally misplaced and did not serve merely as a cover to achieve only too mundane objectives of *Realpolitik*.¹⁷⁷ Only later events showed that such hopes were too high-pitched, and the issue of Church unity remained a problem for centuries to come.¹⁷⁸ However, all this advocacy for Church Union had one real result. This kind of engagement on the part of Jogaila and Vytautas allowed them to increase their prestige in the eyes of

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy*, 60.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. I. Ševčenko, 'Intellectual repercussions of the Council of Florence', *Church History*, 24 (1955), 291–323; D. Geanakoplos, 'The Council of Florence (1438–1439)', *ibid.*, 24 (1955), 324–46; M. Cherniavsky, 'The reception of the Council of Florence in Moscow', *ibid.*, 24 (1955), 347–8; Halecki, *From Florence to Brest*, 61–3; Obolensky, 'Byzantium and Russia', 266–9.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. 'Rogozhskii letopisets', 180–1; 'Sofiiskaia pervaiia letopis' po spisku I. N. Tsarskogo', *PSRL*, XXXIX (Moscow, 1994), 140; 'Letopisnyi sbornik, imenuemyi Patriarsheiu ili Nikonovskoiu letopis'iu', *PSRL*, XI (St Petersburg, 1897), 204. On this episode, see A. L. Khoroshkevich, 'Katoliki v predstavleniakh russkikh letopistsev XIV–XV vv.', *Katolicizm w Rosji i Prawosławie w Polsce (XI–XX w.) = Katolicizm w Rosji i Pravosławie v Pol'she (XI–XIV vv.)* (Warsaw, 1997), 43.

¹⁷⁷ Anti-Latin polemics were alive in Kievan Rus' from the eleventh century onwards, with some of its own contributions to the same sort of Greek Byzantine tracts that served as blueprints for the former. Cf. J. L. I. Fennell, *A History of the Russian Church to 1448* (London, 1995), 96–104; I. S. Chichurov, 'Skhizma 1054 g. i antilatinskaia polemika v Kieve (seredina XI – nachalo XII v.)', *Russia Mediaevalis*, 9 (1997), 43–53. See also Floria, *Issledovaniia*, 123–232.

¹⁷⁸ With regard to East-Central and Eastern Europe one may be advised to consult: O. Halecki, *From Florence to Brest*; B. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge Mass., 2001); Floria, *Issledovaniia*.

spiritual and secular leaders of the Latin Christendom thus gaining them the upper hand in their contention with the Teutonic Order as to whom the right to bring pagan Žemaitijans to the baptismal font should belong. It was Jogaila and Vytautas who received this right and made their claim to Žemaitija good. So Christian Žemaitija may, in a sense, be viewed as a by-product of diplomatic activity that stretched from Moscow and Constantinople to Constance. It was a small game as compared with the Russian or Greek Orthodox world, but a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

The conversion of Žemaitija brought much glory to the rulers of Poland and Lithuania, especially to Jogaila. He received congratulations from Pope Martin V and the king of the Romans, Sigismund of Luxembourg, who urged him to follow in the footsteps of Constantine the Great.¹⁷⁹ In the funeral sermon delivered at the Council of Basle by Mikołaj Kozłowski Jogaila was presented as dwarfing King Solomon himself, and his service to the Church was extolled as having no match from the times of the apostles.¹⁸⁰ The labours of Vytautas did not go unnoticed either. When he reached the pinnacle of his power in Rus' and among the Tatars, in 1428 the Greek Orthodox bishop Gerasim of Smolensk commissioned a Praise of Vytautas, in which the grand duke of Lithuania was depicted as reigning supreme not only among the grand dukes of All Rus' and Tatar khans, but also receiving service and gifts and tribute on a permanent basis from the great rulers of the Germans, Moldavians, Valachians and Bohemians.¹⁸¹ The unprecedented glory enjoyed by Vytautas and his ability to ensure the great affluence of his lands may be viewed as a corollary to the image of triumphal rulership, the ultimate source of which is to be seen in Byzantine imperial pageantry.¹⁸² Here again we see Christianity at work. It provided neophyte rulers and their subjects with new means to articulate

¹⁷⁹ Caro, 'Aus der Kanzlei Kaiser Sigismundus', no. 64, pp. 163–4 (December 1417); no. 65, pp. 166–7 (December 1417).

¹⁸⁰ *CE XV*, II, no. 221, p. 327 (July 1434).

¹⁸¹ 'Pokhvala Vitovtu', *PSRL*, XVII (St Petersburg, 1907), 417–20; cf. also 'Suprasl'skii spisok', *ibid.*, 64–67.

¹⁸² Cf. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986).

their personal and collective experience. It proved much more lasting as compared to oral culture whose epic traces all but evaporated.¹⁸³ More settled ways of thought and life came to form social reality which is more easily recognizable. The overcoming of the barbarian way of life was set in motion. How the Christian way of life came to stay in Lithuania is the subject matter of the following chapters.

¹⁸³ Cf. S. Valentas, 'Rekonstruktsiia eposa Baltov: neudachi i perspektivy', *Balty v drevnosti i srednevekov'e: Iazyki, istoriia, kul'tura. Tezisy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii pamiati Egidiуса Banionisa* (Moscow, 2000), 13–14.

Bulwark of Latin and Greek Christendom?

Official conversion in the Roman rite (1387) and the gradual Christianization of the country brought Lithuania inside a new but long-familiar geo-political world. From being on the outside of a border looking into Latin and Byzantine Christendom Lithuanian rulers now stood within that same border looking out. From having been the stereotyped 'infidel' and friend of schismatics and Tatars, Lithuania was to portray itself as the bulwark of Christendom and promotor of Church Union, and thus worthy of support from other Christian nations.¹ We have seen that in 1387 only the pagan Lithuanian (Balt) subjects of the grand duke were required to undergo Catholic baptism; the vast majority of the monarch's subjects were Orthodox Rus'ians, who were not submitted to any forced conversion. To have compelled a change of religion among the Orthodox was impossible practically: the grand duke's writ did not go that far and there were insufficient clergy to carry out such a mission. Instead King Jogaila-Władysław II and Grand Duke Vytautas saw the solution to this possible dilemma in global terms; rather than convert Orthodox Christians in Polish and Lithuanian Rus' to the Roman rite, they sought to unite the Latin and Greek Churches themselves. In this chapter we shall examine how Lithuanian rulers on select occasions used international factors (Church union and the crusade movement) to advance their own domestic and foreign ambitions.

¹ 'Regnum Polonie est situatum in finibus cristianorum ... Ex parte infidelium confinat cum magna Tartaria, partim cum Turkia, cum magno imperatore videlicet Thurcorum, ... nec aliter christianitas ab illis infidelibus posset esse secura, donec ipsi infideles ultra mare propellantur': *Mendacium magnum*, a sermon delivered before the fathers of the Council of Basel in honour of the late King Władysław-Jogaila of Poland by Mikołaj Lasocki, published in full in S. C. Rowell, 'Du Europos pakraščiai: Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės ir ispanų karalysčių ryšiai 1411–1412 ir 1434 m. tekstuose', *Lietuvos Istorijos Metraštis 2003/1* (2004), 173–4.

In autumn 1396 around the time of the Battle of Nikopolis (amongst the combatants in which some western sources listed the *roy de Letou* on the Ottoman side!) Jogaila and Vytautas, in collusion with Metropolitan Cyprian, then resident in Kiev, approached the authorities in Constantinople with a plan to summon an oecumenical council in the Grand Duchy to discuss the union of the Churches. In January 1397 Patriarch Antony sent his downbeat reply:

You write concerning the union of churches and we ourselves also wish for and agree to this. But this cannot be done at the present time, for there is war with the unbelievers and the routes are closed off... we strongly urge that Your Nobility should join with the most noble king of Hungary in the spring season and that you should come forth on behalf of the Christians both with your army and your resources, for the destruction of the unbelievers. And then... with ease will there be the union of the Churches.²

A Hungarian alliance was already under consideration as part of Lithuanian policy. In July 1397 by the treaty of Igló (Spišská Nová) Jogaila and Vytautas came to a rapprochement with King Sigismund of Hungary over control of Galich, Moldavia and Podolia, while the Gediminids promised to help Sigismund conquer the Turk. That autumn Vytautas with Jogaila's support began his first southern campaign against Tatars, who opposed Vytautas' ally, Tokhtamysh, khan of the Golden Horde. No source from central Europe claims that the Lithuanian campaigns of 1397–99 were intended to assure conquest of the whole of Rus'. Such a claim is made only by highly ideologised Muscovite chronicles from the later fifteenth and early-sixteenth century. He found it hard enough to regain control of Rus'ian lands which had been part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for decades if not longer (Polotsk, Kiev, Smolensk).³ Długosz, who was hardly Vytautas' greatest

² APC, II, no. 515, pp. 280–1; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus*, 150–1.

³ In 1398 Khan Tokhtamysh issued Vytautas with a patent (*yarlyk*) to govern Smolensk and Kiev (not All Rus'). I. B. Grekov, *Vostochnaia Evropa i upadok Zolotoi Ordyy (na rubezhe XIV–XV vv.)* (Moscow, 1975), 227, claims that 'obviously' the original text included a much wider list of Rus'ian territories in order to

admirer, says that the campaign was undertaken *katholicum se demonstrans principem*.⁴ On 8 September 1397 Vytautas conquered Kaffa. Tatar and Karaite prisoners taken in this battle were settled in Lithuania to serve the grand duke and over time form thriving Muslim and Judaic communities within the Grand Duchy.⁵ The following summer he led an international force against the Tatars. Marching through Podolia he headed for the Black Sea and built the fort of St John or Tavan on the Dnepr Delta. When Vytautas met his daughter Sofia and a Muscovite embassy at Smolensk in autumn 1398 in an effort to win support for his campaigns against Tatar forces under Timur Kotluk (an ally of Tamerlane), he gave the Muscovites a relic of the Cross (among other gifts) as though to underline his religious devotion and motivation.⁶ The Muscovite response was non-committal.

In 1399 Lithuania sought to strengthen its position in Rus' and resolve its Orthodox Question; the metropolitan of Lithuania, Kiev and All Rus' Cyprian was resident in the Grand Duchy and hoped to govern Orthodox Christians not only in Rus', Lithuania and Poland but also Bulgaria and Valachia, and a Byzantine envoy, the patriarchal vicar Archbishop Michael of Bethlehem visited Lithuania and its ally Tver'.⁷ In spring 1399 Khan Timur Kotluk demanded that Vytautas hand over Tokhtamysh and his Tatar renegades. The grand duke refused and prepared for war.⁸ While the campaigns

support a pan-Rus'ian interpretation of events that is unsupported otherwise by pre-sixteenth-century sources.

- ⁴ Długosz, *Annales. Liber X*, 221. For an analysis of the Vytautas 'crusades' of 1397–99 and their sources, see Rowell, 'Naujieji kryžėiviai', 180–205; idem, 'Ne visai primintinos kautynės: ką byloja šaltiniai apie 1399 m. mūšį ties Vorsklos upe?', *Istorijos Šaltinių Tyrimai 1* (2008), 67–90. In his 1501 address to Pope Alexander VI the Lithuanian envoy, Erasmus Ciołek, referred to Vytautas as 'in defendendo ab hostibus dominio strenuus erat, et invictissimus propugnator', *VMPL*, II, no. 299, p. 279.
- ⁵ Długosz, *Annales. Liber X*, 221; Dietmar of Lübeck also mentions the campaign: 'Chronik Detmars von Lübeck', ed. E. Strehlke, *SRP*, III, 216. Tatar and Karaite (or perhaps Rabbinic) scholars were involved in theological discussions at the court of Casimir Jagiellończyk: S. C. Rowell, 'Christian understanding of the Faith through contacts with non-Christians in the late mediaeval Grand Duchy of Lithuania', *Christians and the Non-Christian Other [BIS]*, 6] (Vilnius, 2013), 9–22.
- ⁶ Shabul'do, *Zemli iugo-zapadnoi Rusi*, 142.
- ⁷ Obolensky, 'A Byzantine grand embassy', 127–8.
- ⁸ Shabul'do, *Zemli iugo-zapadnoi Rusi*, 149.

of 1397–98 were an example of Lithuano-Polish action against the Tatars, the Vorskla campaign of 1399 was a reaction against a specific threat to Kiev, the spiritual heart of Orthodox Rus'. Around the same time as Timur Kotluk threatened Vytautas, Jogaila sent Queen Jadwiga's secretary Wojciech Jastrzębiec to Rome to petition for a crusade bull. Jastrzębiec was in the holy city by 22 April and on 5 May Pope Boniface IX issued an indulgence for those fighting the Tatars, Turks and other barbarians in Poland, Lithuania, Podolia, Rus' and Valachia. Even so, this document cannot be regarded as having had any great power to recruit participants in Vytautas' 1399 campaign, since it could not have reached Lithuania or Poland before Vytautas led his armies off towards Kiev at Whitsun (18 May).⁹ June was spent in Kiev. In July he was joined by allies from Little and Great Poland, Podolia, Mazovia, Moldavia and Prussia before marching out against the Tatars. Camp was set up on 5 August not far from the Vorskla River and battle joined probably on 13 August.¹⁰ The battle went badly for the Christian side, which was routed with perhaps as many as fifty dukes from the Grand Duchy slain, not to mention the flower of Polish and Prussian chivalry. Vytautas fled for his life.

The impact of the Vorskla débâcle has been overestimated by historians from the fifteenth century onwards. It has many contexts – the Church Union via crusade policy of Vytautas and Jogaila, the Treaty of Salinwerder of 1398 which saw the Teutonic Knights and Lithuanians promise mutual military aid, the ambitions of Metropolitan Cyprian to govern the Orthodox Church throughout Rus' and even beyond. It took place after the death of Queen Jadwiga (and used as evidence of her alleged prescient condemnation of the campaign) and has been connected with the Union of Vilnius-Radom (1401) by *post hoc, propter hoc* arguments. Vorskla was a

⁹ VMPL, I, no. 1041, p. 769.

¹⁰ The traditional date of the battle is given as August 12, based on a misunderstanding of Długosz's account, which gives 'the third day (*feria videlicet tertia*) after St Laurence's Day' (in 1399 this feast fell on a Sunday and so the third day is Wednesday 13 August). Traditionally the Latin has been understood as *feria tertia* (Tuesday – 12 August). This mistake was noted in J. Mańkowski. 'Dzień urodzin królowej Jadwigi Andegaweńskiej', 67.

disaster but it was not the end of Vytautas' world.¹¹ In November 1399 plans were already being made by grand duke and the grand master in Prussia to attack the Tatars again the following summer. The Union of Vilnius-Radom gave Vytautas and the Lithuanian gentry the right for the first time to intervene in the internal government of Poland when Jogaila died and recognised Vytautas as ruler of Lithuania for life.

The international image of the Jagiellonian monarchy began to change after the defeat of the Teutonic Order at Grunwald (Tannenberg) in 1410 and the Union agreement confirmed at Horodło in 1413.¹² The subsequent public relations exercise carried out by Poles and Lithuanians against the Teutonic Order during the Council of Constance established the Jagiellonian realms as important players in Catholic Christendom's relations with the Orthodox and its defence against the Tatar and Ottoman threat. Vytautas was lauded towards the end of his life for his valour and piety and his ability to defeat the Turk and deliver Jerusalem from the hands of the infidel:

non solum celebris fama sempiterni et immortalis nominis tui, ... posse Theucros superare, sed Jerusalem sanctam, diu exigentibus nostris demeritis et peccatis in infidelium manibus devolutam, recuperari posse.¹³

One of the reasons put forward by Vytautas' supporters in 1429–30 as to why the grand duke should be crowned king was that he had made Lithuania a defence of Christendom *contra barbaras nationes*. After his death both Žygimantas Kęstutaitis and his rival for the grand-ducal throne, Švitrigaila, approached

¹¹ O. Halecki, *Dzieje Unji jagiellońskiej*, vol. 1: *W wiekach średnich* (Cracow, 1919), 157; J. Pfcineris, *Didysis Lietuvos kunigaikštis Vytautas kaip politikas* (Kaunas, 1930; 2nd edition Vilnius, 1989), 200; Rowell, 'Naujieji kryžiaus žygiuotojai', 191–4. The traditional view of Vytautas as the great Lithuanian separatist halted in his tracks only by the Vorskla defeat and subsequent clarification of Polish-Lithuanians relations in 1401 is re-stated in the latest comprehensive Polish study of Vytautas: J. Nikodem, *Witold wielki książę litewski (1354 lub 1355 – 27 października 1430)* (Cracow, 2013), 193–4.

¹² See above, pp. 366ff.

¹³ 1429 embassy of Franciscus de Aqua Viva: *CEV*, no. 1394, pp. 879–85, here p. 881.

the Oecumenical Council, reminding the Church Fathers that they were involved in wars against the Tatars and other enemies of the Faith.¹⁴ Although Vytautas, Jogaila and later monarchs continued to portray themselves as defenders of the faith and exploited international instruments to support their own foreign-policy interests (against Muscovy and the Tatars in the east, and the Ottomans in the south), they did not launch crusades. They did however support the Franciscan and Dominican missions in their oriental missions.¹⁵

When Grand Duke Casimir of Lithuania was crowned king of Poland Archbishop Kot of Gniezno delivered a sermon before him in Gniezno on 13 August 1447 reminding the young king of his kin and other rulers who had defended the Faith, encouraging him to be like them:

ut imitetur David regem in humilitate, Salomonem in sapientia, Jonathan in bellorum... Constantinum in ecclesie sublimacione, Valentinum in ecclesie defensione, Wladislaum patrem tuum in infidelium conversione, fratrem tuum filium eius in infidelium teucrorum deliberatione.¹⁶

The crusade activities of Casimir's brother, Władysław III ('of Varna'), were not forgotten by the dynasty. There seems to be evidence of the tentative beginning of a cult of the battle-slain Jagiellonian during the second half of the fifteenth century.¹⁷ The role of Jagiellonian pious youth and warrior saint would fall to Władysław's nephew, St Casimir.

During Holy Year 1450 Pope Nicholas V was prevailed upon to issue an indulgence for those taking part in the fight against the Tatars. In lieu of pilgrimage to Rome those, who for three days visited Vilnius Cathedral and offered half the sum of money they

¹⁴ *BP*, V, no 1532, p. 285

¹⁵ See above, pp. 288–91; 293.

¹⁶ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska [BJ], Ms. 173, fos 195–200, here fo 200: 'ix dominica post Trinitatis in ecclesia Gneznensi in presencia domini Regis Casimiri in vulgari.'

¹⁷ S. C. Rowell, 'Procesy rozwoju i zaniku kultu świętych na Litwie i w Polsce w drugiej połowie XV wieku', *Zapiski Historyczne*, 70 (2005), 457–62; idem, 'Pomirtinis Vladislovo Varniečio gyvenimas – vidurio Europos karalius Artūras iš Lietuvos', *LIM 2006/2* (2007), 5–30.

would have spent on a journey to Rome, could obtain the Holy Year indulgence. In Poland and Lithuania four cathedrals were designated indulgenced pilgrimage sites; the chest containing offerings was locked with four keys – one was held by the monarch or his lieutenant, another by a member of the cathedral clergy, a third by a member of the city council and the fourth was held by the papal collector general Mikołaj Spyczemir. The money collected was to be divided three ways: one half was designated for war against the Tatars, one quarter was to be given to the dowager queen-grand duchess Sofia Holszańska to form dowries for young women converts to Catholicism, and the final quarter was to be sent to Rome.¹⁸ The document is worthy of note because it represents the manipulation of universal practice (holy year indulgences were not issued for Lithuania and Poland alone) for local needs (fighting the Tatars and converting Orthodox Christians to the Roman rite), involving local people as organisers – here we have in mind the city councils of Vilnius, Cracow, Gniezno and Lviv.

In 1455 Callixtus III renewed Nicholas V's jubilee indulgence for Poland and Lithuania to support preparations for war against the Turk, requiring those unable to fight or provide one soldier to offer as much as they spent on food for a week.¹⁹ Given the war raging between Poland and the Teutonic Order in Prussia (1454–66) such support for an anti-Turkish campaign was not realistic. Two years later the pope informed King Casimir of the necessity to join the crusade to save Constantinople. On 4 April 1457 Callixtus informed Bishop Nicholas of Vilnius that he had appointed Marino de Fregano to proclaim the crusade in Lithuania and the archdiocese of Lviv.²⁰

During the Council of Mantua (1459) which Pius II summoned to discuss the need for a crusade to liberate Constantinople the Polish-Lithuanian delegation took advantage of the opportunity to support

¹⁸ VMPL II, no. 119, pp. 80–1.

¹⁹ ASV, Registra Vaticana 440, fo 89–90, cited in BP, VI, no. 988, p. 205.

²⁰ *Skarbiec dyplomatów papieskich, cesarskich, królewskich, książęcych, uchwał narodowych, postanowień różnych władz i urzędów posługujących do krytycznego wyjaśnienia dziejów Litwy, Rusi Litewskiej i ościennych im krajów*, ed. I. Daniłowicz, II (Vilnius, 1862), no. 1947, p. 206; VMPL II, no. 156, p. 113; KDKDW, no. 226a, p. 752.

a crusade and propose relocating the Teutonic Order to Tenedos to help effect this.²¹

The future St Casimir, regarded as a potential king of Hungary, was a strong supporter of war against the Turk. When Cardinal Mark was received at court in Cracow in 1473 the prince reminded the prelate whither he had come: *in haec regna barbaris confrontata scutumque suum et contra tartarorum et turcorum rabiem iugiter opponentia*.²² There was no shortage of crusade bulls issued for the Grand Duchy and its neighbours throughout the fifteenth century.²³

A century after the approaches made by Jogaila and Vytautas to the Byzantines concerning a council to discuss Church Union to be held on the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, one hundred years which had seen the Union proclaimed by the Council of Ferrara-Florence and the fall of Constantinople the carrot of union and stick of crusade still involved the Jagiellonian realms. Between 1492 and 1497 King Constantine II Bagration of Georgia (1478–1505) sent out envoys to the Middle East and Western Europe to enlist support for his attempts to reunite his kingdom and defend it from the unwelcome attentions of the Ottoman and Persian empires. Constantine even sought help from the Mamluk sultan of Egypt, Qa'it Bay (1468–96) in Cairo. The latter had made war on Sultan Bayezit II of Constantinople for six years (1485–91) and been an ally of Ferdinand of Aragon in this endeavour (1488–91). Georgian envoys apparently heard about the glories of Queen Isabella of Castile during their stay in Jerusalem and as a result a monk named Cornelius was despatched to Isabella and Ferdinand and Pope Alexander VI asking for a crusade to be launched against the Turks: *pode na Tsargrad, a ne vzlenisia, vozmi krest' chas nashogo Isusa Khrista, iako shchit*.²⁴ For centuries endangered Orthodox princes had made approaches to the Holy See

²¹ O. Halecki, *Od unii Florenckiej do unii Brzeskiej*, tr. A. Niklewicz, 1 (Lublin–Rome, 1997), 126.

²² *CE XV*, vol. I/2: 1444–1492, ed. J. Szujski (Cracow, 1876), 342.

²³ S. C. Rowell, 'Lietuva, – krikščionybės pylimas?: vienos XV amžiaus ideologijos pasisavinimas', *Europos idėja Lietuvoje: istorija ir dabartis*, ed. D. Staliūnas (Vilnius, 2002), 17–32.

²⁴ Letter of King Constantine to Queen Isabella, 10 March 1495 as recorded in a Ruthenian translation in *Lietuvos Metrika (1427–1506). Knyga Nr. 5 Užrašymų knyga 5 [LM5]*, ed. E. Banionis (Vilnius, 1993), no. 182, pp. 293–5.

for military support from Catholic princes. This embassy to Pope Alexander VI too clearly sought to enlist the support of a broad range of Catholic powers to distract the Turk from any campaigns further east. However, for the time being Alexander VI himself was at peace with the Turk, and was more worried by the presence of French troops in Italy than any Ottoman threat.²⁵ In June 1496 the pope played down the likelihood of a crusade but issued Cornelius with a safe conduct to return home. For the king he issued a copy of the decree of the Council of Ferrara Florence referring to Church Union.²⁶

Given the policy of the Jagiellonian rulers John Albert of Poland and Władysław of Hungary towards the Turk and the plans communicated to the Lithuanian Council of Lords by their Polish counterparts in 1496 to arrange a common defence against Mengli Girej's Crimean Tatars and the Turk after their truce expired in 1497, it is not surprising that Cornelius made his way home via the Lithuanian land route in January 1497 (the same month that the Poles rejected an Ottoman offer to mediate between the Tatars and Lithuania). It is no surprise that a Ruthenian translation of the Georgian letter to Queen Isabella is also included in the fifth book of the Lithuanian *Metrica*, which contains correspondence dealing with Lithuanian and Polish policy towards the Crimean Tatars at this time. Probably in January 1497 the Georgian was received by the Lithuanian ruler in Novgorodok.²⁷ Grand Duke Alexander and his brothers were ready to oppose the Turks and Tatars. Even so, Jagiellonian eyes were fixed for the time being on Moldavia and the recapture of Kilia and Moncastro rather than sending troops closer to Georgia. In 1498–1500 the Jagiellonian princes and Pope Alexander began to agitate for a Europe-wide crusade against the Turks.²⁸

²⁵ M. Jačov, *Europa i Osmanie w okresie lig świętych: Polska między Wschodem a Zachodem* (Cracow, 2003), 10–11.

²⁶ *VMPL* II, nos. 297–9, pp. 258–61.

²⁷ On the reception in Novgorodok, see A. Theiner's comment: *VMPL* II, 261. On 29 January 1497 a letter was sent by Grand Duke Alexander from Novgorodok to khan of the Volga Tatars: *LM5*, no. 66.1, 66.2, pp. 118–19.

²⁸ J. Smołuca, *Papiestwo a Polska w latach 1484–1526: Kontakty dyplomatyczne na tle zagrożenia tureckiego* (Cracow, 1999), 91–100. For the crusade policy of Alexander VI see F. Cardini, 'Alessandro VI e la crociata', *Roma di fronte all'Europa al tempo di Alessandro VI: Atti del convegno Città del Vaticano–Roma, 1–4 dicembre 1999*, ed. M. Chiabò, S. Maddalo, M. Miglio, A. M. Oliva, 3 (Rome, 2001), 917–60.

Union and disunity

Plans were made in Lithuania to implement the Union agreed at the Oecumenical Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439, involving the Ruthenian cardinal, Metropolitan Isidore of Kiev. This reconciliation of the Latin and Greek Churches would seem on the surface to be an answer to the prayers of Jogaila and Vytautas. The Latinisation of the Orthodox Church in the Grand Duchy would have extended the network of parish churches across the Grand Duchy with more speed than reliance on founding new separate Catholic churches alone could afford. The Franciscans Conventual and the Dominicans worked to this end especially in the more southern territories; in Vilnius and Kiev this mission was entrusted to the Bernardines and extended at the end of the fifteenth century to more far-flung parts of the realm (Polotsk in the north east, Tykocin in the south west). However, the union had little effect in Poland and Lithuania, and none in eastern Rus' (Muscovy). Why? No Polish or Lithuanian bishop took part in the Council and the Bishop of Vilnius, Matthias, regarded Eugenius IV as an antipope.²⁹ Metropolitan Isidore of Kiev and All Rus', in theory the head of the Orthodox Church in Rus' and Lithuania, was not of local descent but a Greek monk, appointed metropolitan by the patriarch in Constantinople in 1436. He had no solid entourage in either Lithuania or Muscovy. The Poland and Lithuania to which he returned from Florence in early 1440 were ruled by a boy king, Władysław Jagiellończyk, who would soon leave Cracow to take charge of Hungary and a psychologically unstable grand duke, Vytautas' brother Žygimantas, who would be murdered before a papal bull proclaiming the union would reach Vilnius. He was succeeded by another boy ruler, Casimir Jagiellończyk. The dowager queen-grand duchess, Sofia, herself a convert from Orthodoxy does not appear to have become involved in this matter. Neither

²⁹ The basic account of the Union of Ferrara-Florence remains Halecki, *Od unii Florenckiej*, 1, 47–192. For the reactions of Lithuanian bishops to the Council and the Union, see T. Graff, *Episkopat monarchii jagiellońskiej w dobie soborów powszechnych XV wieku* (Cracow, 2008), 287–92, 307–308. The most recent general account of Latin-Orthodox relations in the late-medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania is A. Gil, I. Skoczylas, *Kościół wschodnie w państwie polsko-litewskim w procesie przemian i adaptacji: Metropolia kijowska w latach 1458–1795* (Lublin-Lviv, 2014), 47–135.

the secular nor the spiritual elite in Poland and Lithuania favoured Church Union or indeed the pope who proclaimed it. Although Bishop Oleśnicki of Cracow did allow Cardinal Archbishop Isidore of Kiev to proclaim the union in his city and celebrate a Greek Mass in its Nowy Sącz church, Matthias of Vilnius refused to countenance such a move from a man who was now the most senior churchman in communion with Rome in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After Isidore left his province for Rome in 1442, never to return, the Orthodox fell under the control of his vicar in Novgorodok. In 1440 Muscovy was in the grip of a power struggle between Vassily Vasilievich the Blind and the boyar Shemiaka and wherever he appeared in his cardinal's robes preceded by a Latin crucifix, Isidore created scandal. He caused uproar in Novgorod when he called himself papal legate, ordained the mention of the pope's name in Orthodox prayers and ordered Orthodox priests to celebrate the liturgy in Polish churches and Catholic ones to officiate in Rus'ian ones. Before long he was imprisoned in Rus' and the pope was obliged by circumstances to ask Jonas Goštautas, *de facto* Lithuanian regent, to intervene to effect the churchman's release from Muscovite captivity. After Bishop Iona of Ryazan' took over *de facto* rule of the Church in Muscovy, it was only a matter of time before Casimir of Lithuania found it politic to accept Iona as superior to Lithuanian Orthodox bishops in 1451. The acknowledgement of Iona's supremacy was issued by the grand duke, his uncle, Švitrigaila (who governed a large swathe of southern Lithuanian Rus'), the Catholic bishop of Vilnius, Matthias, and Catholic and Orthodox members of the Council of Lords. Sometime between 1466 and 1468 Casimir's Ruthenian secretary Iakov wrote to Muscovy asking for liturgical books (the *Osmoglasnik* chant book) and devotional literature (the *Prolog*, a collection of saints' lives ordered according to the liturgical calendar, and the lives of the twelve apostles).³⁰ Even before the union the Catholic and Orthodox burghers of Vilnius enjoyed equal rights and the city council

³⁰ *Russkii feodal'nyi arkhiv XIV – pervoi treti XVI veka*, ed. A. I. Pliguzov (Moscow, 2008), no. 14, p. 108–10; no. 24, p. 137–40; no. 29, pp. 151–2; no. 51, pp. 193–6; no. 56, pp. 203–4. For eastern Rus'ian accounts of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, see 'Khozhenie na Florentiiskii sobor neizvestnogo Suzdal'tsa' and 'Khozhenie Avraamiia Suzdal'skogo na Vos'moi Sobor s mitropolitom Isidorom', in

had two mayors, one Catholic, the other Orthodox. Orthodox nobles acted as grand-ducal lieutenants in Lithuanian Rus' and held posts at court (Aleksander Soltan was Casimir's court marshal) but secure advancement in central government was achieved by Catholics and converted Orthodox boyars (possibly as unionists, most often as Catholics of the Latin rite – families did well, or rather, better when at least one member became a Catholic, as in (infamous) the case of Mikhail Glinsky and his schismatic brothers). The presence of a non-resident Unionist patriarch of Constantinople and a metropolitan of Kiev in the west was a cause for scandal in Muscovy and an impractical solution to the problem of who was to preside over the functioning of the Orthodox hierarchy in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The robust competition between Unionists and the conservative Orthodox over who should be metropolitan in Lithuanian Kiev is illustrated well by the career of Metropolitan Spiridon (also known as Savva). V. I. Ul'ianovskii has used hitherto incompletely understood Graecisms in texts by this monk from Tver' to re-date Spiridon's appointment and consecration as metropolitan to December 1474 (by Patriarch Simeon I of Trabizond, rather than Raphael) in succession to Metropolitan Grigorii Bolgarinovich, who died late in 1473. Casimir Jagiellończyk and the Lithuanian Unionists did not push for the appointment of their own candidate, Archimandrite Misael of Kiev, by the Pope (Sixtus IV) until 1476, by which time the graecophile anti-Unionist Spiridon had earned the displeasure of the Jagiellonian monarch. In captivity in Punia Spiridon actively stressed his own Byzantine credentials (as vestitor of the Patriarch's Great Church in Constantinople, for example) and superior, almost Catholic titlature (he styled himself Ruthenian archbishop – *arkhiepiskop riseiskii*), preaching to the local Orthodox population on such controversial topics as the Procession of the Holy Ghost. In 1477 Bishop Vassian of Tver' warned Rus'ians not to deal with Spiridon or any other metropolitan of Kiev who had been appointed

Kniga Khozhenii. Zapiski russkikh puteshestvennikov XI–XV vv., ed. N. I. Prokof'ev (Moscow, 1984), 316–32, 333–42.

by the godless Turk or the Latins.³¹ After his escape to Muscovy Spiridon would compose an epistle on the alleged Roman origins of the Riurikid dynasty, traced from Augustus via a fictitious kinsman of Rurik, named Prus. It is a transformation of the myth of the Roman origins of the Lithuanian ruling class into an instrument of Muscovite propaganda.³²

Orthodox culture thrived in Lithuanian-ruled Kiev. The Olelkovich princes employed Jewish scholars to produce Ruthenian (rather than Church-Slavonic or eastern Slavonic) vernacular translations of Holy Scripture and western and Arabic philosophical and scientific texts.³³ It was in the midst of these arguments (in 1475) over what kind of Lithuanian metropolitanate should be maintained and how it should relate to the Roman Church that the Bernardines of Vilnius obtained papal permission to admit Schismatics to their friary church since Ruthenian citizens of Vilnius came to Divine Office and Mass and ejecting them from the premises would give rise to scandal. The prohibition on admitting non-Catholics to Catholic churches was retained with regard to the secular churches,

³¹ A. I. Alekseev, “‘Spiridon rekomyi, Savva glagolemyi’” (zametki o sochineniakh kievskogo mitropolita Spiridona), *Drevniaia Rus'. Voprosy medievistiki*, 41 (2010), 5–15; V. I. Ul'ianovskii, *Mitropolit kievskii Spiridon* (Kiev, 2004); idem, ‘Mitropolit kievskii Spiridon: iavnye i skrytye povestvovaniia o sebe v sochineniakh 1475–1503 gg.’, *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoi Literatury*, 57 (2006), 209–233, esp. pp. 214–23. See also A. A. Turilov, ‘Zabytoe sochinenie mitropolita Savvy-Spiridona litovskogo perioda ego tvorchestva’, *Slaviane i ikh sosedi* 7 (1999), 121–37. His name as metropolitan reminds us (as was intended) of St Spyridon of Trimithous, who defended the doctrine of the Holy Trinity at the Council of Nicaea in 325.

³² The texts are published in *Skazanie o kniaz'iax vladimirskikh*, ed. R. P. Dmitrieva (Moscow–Leningrad, 1955). There is a good deal of scholarship devoted to this text and its derivatives, see above n. 31.

³³ S. Iu. Temchin [S. Temčinas], ‘Skharia i Skorina: ob istochnikakh vilenskogo vetkhozavetnogo svoda (F 19–262)’, *Senoji Lietuvos Literatūra* 21 (2006), 289–314; idem, ‘Bažnytinės knygos rusėnų kalba ir religiniai identitetai slaviškose Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos žemėse XIV–XVIII a. Stačiatikių tradicija’, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos tradicija ir paveldo ‘dalybos’*, ed. A. Bumblauskas et al. (Vilnius 2008), 149–155; idem, ‘Kirillicheskii rukopisnyi uchebnik drevneevreiskogo iazyka (XVI v.) i vilenskii vetkhozavetnyi svod’, *Knygotyra* 57 (2011), 86–99. M. Taube, ‘The fifteenth-century Ruthenian translations from Hebrew and the Heresy of the Judaizers. Is there a connection?’, *Speculum Slavicae Orientalis: Muscovy, Ruthenia and Lithuania in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. V. V. Ivanov, J. Verkholantsev (Moscow, 2005), 185–208.

especially the cathedral.³⁴ The fifteenth century saw the building of perhaps a dozen or more Orthodox monasteries across the Grand Duchy, mostly in Rus' but also including one in Trakai. Monastic life thrived albeit not without controversy.³⁵

Relations between Catholic, Orthodox and Unionist Christians

There may be conflicting views of relations between Catholic and Orthodox subjects of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the first century or so after the baptism of pagan Lithuanians in the Roman rite. These views of apartheid, opposition and mutual imitation are confused further by the existence of the Unionists, whom neither Orthodox nor Latin-rite Catholics much loved. It may be helpful to examine the question at the levels of macro- and micro-history where mutual antagonism and apartheid are softened somewhat by the importance of kinship ties, cultural imitation and what we might term, to adapt a phrase from literary criticism, a suspension of disbelief, whereby a person might accept that following a different confession be unconscionable but still favour a particular sectary for private reasons (usually associated with kinship or property, or both).

In 1501 a Lithuanian embassy to Pope Alexander VI sought, among other things, advice on how to deal with Orthodox Christians wishing to unite with the Roman Church. The mission was sent by the reformer bishop of Vilnius, Albert Tabor, and it was just one part of his attempts to clarify episcopal control over and enrich

³⁴ *KDKDW*, no. 292, pp. 340–1. In 1428 the Conventual Franciscans were granted permission by Martin V to maintain a lector to work with infidels and schismatics: *ibid.*, no. 94, pp. 122–3. For Lithuanian language studies of the Bernardine missions. see V. Gidžiūnas, 'Pranciškonų observantų-bernardinų gyvenimas ir veikla Lietuvoje XV ir XVI a.', *LKMA Suvažiovimo Darbai* 9 (1982), 35–134; reprised in R. R. Trimonienė, 'Katalikų Bažnyčios politika bažnytinės unijos klausimu Kazimiero ir Aleksandro valdymo metais', *LKMA Suvažiovimo Darbai* 12 (1998), 327–40. Cf. eadem, 'Bernardinai Lietuvoje XV–XVII a. pradžioje: misijos ir ryšiai su valdančiuoju elitu', *Šviesa ir šešėliai*, 197–219.

³⁵ P. Chomik, *Życie monastyczne w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XVI wieku* (Cracow, 2013), 21–195 (table of foundations before the end of the fifteenth century: *ibid.*, 194–5).

the ecclesiastical province of Vilnius. It was also relevant to political life within the Grand Duchy, whose ruler, also Alexander, was married to a Russian Orthodox duchess, Elena, daughter of Ivan III of Moscow. That same year a delegation was sent to Vilnius by Grand Duke Alexander's brother, King John Albert of Poland. The embassy orator was a Cracow university divine, Jan 'Sakran' of Oświęcim, who had been an intellectual idol of the young student Albert Tabor some three decades earlier. He had made a name for himself in disputations with the Bernardine friars of Cracow, who, like their Vilnius brethren, were involved closely in missions to the Orthodox and whose stance on the issue of whether Orthodox converts should be forced to undergo a second baptism (that they should not) was approved by Rome and resisted vehemently by Polish and Lithuanian bishops. Tabor asked Sakran to compose a treatise elucidating the errors of the Ruthenian rite: *Elucidarius errorum ritus Ruthenici*. This would be published in Cracow in 1501 and undergo several reprints in an abbreviated version, on the errors of the most atrocious Ruthenians, in Cologne during the first decade of the sixteenth century.³⁶ Sakran accepted the commission, while complaining that he was unable to consult his books and that any errors he made himself would be acknowledged as such and subject to papal correction.³⁷ He knew he was writing a tendentious tract dedicated to the bishop 'presiding most vigilantly in the Lithuanian see of Vilnius, surrounded, like a lamb among rapacious wolves, by a tumultuous band of Ruthenians, most dangerous foes of your

³⁶ Jan Sakran of Oświęcim (1443–1527), *Elucidarius errorum ritus Ruthenici* (Cracow, 1501). The treatise was summarised in forty brief chapters in an edition published by Martin von Werden in Cologne in 1508, *Errores atrocissimorum Ruthenorum. Ex tractatu domini Joannis Sacrani sacre Theologie magistri et Cracoviensis ecclesie quondam canonici, quem intitulavit Elucidarium errorum ritus Ruthenici et inscripsit Reverendo in Christo patri domino Alberto episcopo Vilmensi*. For bibliographical details see XV–XVI a. *Lietuvos lotyniškų knygų sąrašas = Index librorum latinorum Lituaniae saeculi quinti decimi et sexti decimi*, ed. S. Narbutas, D. Narbutienė (Vilnius, 2002), nos. 275–80, pp. 170–2. The latest study of Sakran and his work is M. M. Niechwiej, *O błędach rusińskiego obrządku, to jest Elucidarius errorum ritus ruthenici [1501] czyli Jan z Oświęcimia wobec idei kościelnej z prawosławnymi Rusinami* (Cracow, 2012).

³⁷ 'Hec itaque, dive pontifex Alberte, pro te utcunq[ue] corrogata bona et amica mente suscipe quædam me in externo solo versatum absque librorum suppellectili necessaria in hac materia resolute dicere nil potuisse...': *Elucidarius*, fo xxxiii.

Church and that of Rome'.³⁸ Sakran tells the story of an Orthodox Lithuanian courtier, Alexander Soltan, who with his brother Iwaszko sought to confirm their social standing in the Vilnius hierarchy by becoming Catholics. Alexander travelled to the curia and was received into the Roman rite by Pope Paul II in 1471 who gave him Communion albeit without renewed baptism and without, it is stated, documents to confirm Soltan's repudiation of his Greek errors. On his return to Vilnius Soltan attempted to receive communion in Vilnius cathedral, where he was denounced 'unadvisedly' as a dog.³⁹ Orthodox Christians were not permitted to enter the cathedral normally let alone take Communion there. This treatment of the marshal strengthened the resolve of other Orthodox *not* to accept Roman jurisdiction. On his deathbed Soltan asked to be taken to the Bernardine church, but apparently his wish was thwarted by some of his Orthodox servants. According to Sakran's version of events, Soltan was received by Sixtus IV (who succeeded Paul II in 1471) as a Unionist and given bulls to that effect but returned to Lithuania as an enemy of the Church and a blasphemer. In effect the courtier acknowledged the supremacy of the pope and received Communion in Rome but his conversion was not accepted by leading members of Vilnius Catholic society.

Sakran presents Lithuanian history through a particular sectarian prism – Lithuania was brought to Catholicism by Vytautas and that same Vytautas oversaw the baptism of many pagans in a single day by aspersion or affusion (the Roman way) rather than immersion (the Greek way), thereby implicitly legitimising the Latin rite as theologically correct and historically Lithuanian. Sakran fails to mention that Vytautas opposed the rebaptism of his Orthodox subjects, an act which he (or at least his advisers) regarded as an

³⁸ Ibid., fo ii: 'Celebri ac reverendo in Christo patri et domino, domino Alberto Dei gratia episcopo Vlnensi, patri summa veneratione digne colendo Joannes Sacranus indignus sacre Theologie magister Cracoviensis ecclesie canonice debitam obedientiam. Presul inclite et Deo dicite antistes, qui in Lithuania Vlnensi sedi vigilantissime presidens tumultuante turba Ruthenorum tue Romaneque Ecclesie infensissimorum hostium circumseptus, velud agnus inter rapaces lupos, a viris doctis salutare semper subsequeris et expectas...'

³⁹ According to Ciołek's annotation to the mission documents: S. Kutrzeba, J. Fijałek, 'Kopiarz rzymski Erazma Ciołka z początku wieku XVI', *Archiwum Komisji Historycznej*, 1 (13) (1923), 77.

insult to the Sacrament itself.⁴⁰ The stories of Soltan and Sapiega are told from a clearly recognisable but misleading point of view. He also depicts Ruthenian practices in a distorted (and sometimes deliberately false) way.

By the final decade of the fifteenth century the question of how to deal with the Orthodox took on even greater significance in the Grand Duchy. In 1494 Grand Duke Alexander married the Orthodox duchess of Muscovy, Elena Ivanovna.⁴¹ Catholic noblemen built more and more parishes churches across the dioceses of Vilnius and Lutsk and the bishop of Vilnius, Albert Tabor became increasingly aware of the weakness of his control over religious life in his diocese.⁴² R. Černius is correct to note that the Union Question was taken up by inter-related noblemen with an interest in both Churches.⁴³ He notes that Jonas Sapiega was a kinsman of Metropolitan Iosif and both had connections with Smolensk. Sapiega was also an affine of the lord lieutenant of Polotsk, Stanislovas Hlebavičius.

The loyalty of Vilnius Orthodox to the Lithuanian state and the shared political values of both Catholic and Orthodox subjects of the grand duke under unavoidable conditions of confessional apartheid (not to be confused with religious toleration in the more modern sense) was stamped on the city's socio-topography. The victory of Lithuanian forces over the Muscovites at Orsha in 1514 was commemorated by both the Catholic king, Sigismund the Old and his

⁴⁰ In 1417 Vytautas and Jogaila appealed to the Fathers of the Council of Constance not to require the Orthodox to undergo a second baptism: 'hoc modo iniuria fieret sacramento... grande eisdem Ruthenis... reducentis prestatur ostaculum', *Copiale prioratus Sancti-Andree*, no. 20, pp. 38–41 (25 August 1417).

⁴¹ For most recent work, see M. E. Bychkova, 'Velikaia kniazhna Elena Ivanovna v Moskve i v Vil'no'; R. Ragauskienė, 'Lietuvos didžiosios kunigaikštienės Elenos (1476–1513) patronatas', *Lietuvos didysis kunigaikštis Aleksandras ir jo epocha: Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys*, ed. R. Petrauskas et al. (Vilnius, 2007), 86–98, 99–110, respectively.

⁴² Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 63–71; T. Jaszczolt, 'Fundacje kościelne', 14–52; S. C. Rowell, 'Kaip šaukė, taip ir atsiliepė: XV a. lietuvių katalikų gyvenimas ir pagonybės liekanų mitas', *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės istorijos kraštovaizdis*, 295–320.

⁴³ R. Černius, 'Konfesinis ir politinis XV a. pabaigos Bažnytinės Unijos aspektas Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje', *Tarp istorijos ir būtovės*, 215–62; G. Kirkienė, 'Stačiatikių integracija į Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos visuomenę XV–XVI a.', *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos tradicija ir paveldo 'dalybos'*, ed. A. Bumblauskas et al. (Vilnius, 2008), 157–68.

commander in chief, the Orthodox nobleman Konstantin Ostrogsky. Crossing the border of the Grand Duchy on his return from battle in September 1514 Sigismund gave orders for the endowment of a monthly mass in the first Catholic church he encountered (at Hajna) in honour of the Nativity of Our Lady, the feast on which the battle was fought. In return for a gift of land the parish priest was to sing in perpetuity these masses for the souls of the fallen.⁴⁴ The churches of the Grand Duchy are said to have rung their bells in celebration of the victory.⁴⁵

The victory would be commemorated in the capital of the Grand Duchy itself by Prince Konstantin Ostrogsky,⁴⁶ who made use of the occasion to ask permission of the grand-duke king to build (or officially, to rebuild) two Orthodox churches, dedicated to the Holy Trinity and St Nicholas, in accordance with a promise he had made during the battle to present a thanks-offering for divine aid on the battlefield.⁴⁷ The *Volynskaia Kratkaia Letopis'* redaction of the Lithu-

⁴⁴ *Acta Tomiciana*, vol. III: A. D. MDXIV–MDXV, ed. A. T. Działyński (Poznań, 1853), no. 238, p. 188: 'Redeuntibus nobis ex prelio, quo hostem nostrum magnum ducem Moscovie contra fedus et iurisiurandum terras nostras occupantem fudimus, cum ad primam nostri ritus Romani ecclesiam in Hayna applicuimus, volentes immortalī Deo ac eius intemerate matri, in cuius natali tanta nobis victoria cessit, quantam presens seculum non vidit, primordia laudis et gratitudinis nostre exhibere, ... quod dictus plebanus ac successores ipsius debebunt ex nunc et in perpetuum singulis mensibus cantare aut cantari facere Missam unam de nativitate gloriose Virginis Marie cum memoria occisorum, qui ex prelio adducti ibidem tumulati sunt, pro animarum eorum salute et tante victoriae memoria sempiterna', (Gaina, 17 September 1514).

⁴⁵ M. Čiurinskas, 'Karas ir kultūra Lietuvos didžiojoje kunigaikštystėje', *Istoriniai mūšiai senojoje Lietuvos raštijoje: Žalgiris ir Orša* [*Senoji Lietuvos literatūra*, 31] (Vilnius, 2011), 145–6.

⁴⁶ For a brief biography of Ostrogsky, see G. M. Saganovich, *Ajchynu svaiū baroniachy: Kanstantin Astrozhski* (Minsk, 1992); O. Dziarnovich et al., *Kniazi Ostroz'ki* (Kiev, 2014). On his church-building activities, see Chodyncki, *Kościół Prawosławny*, 80–1.

⁴⁷ *Sobranie drevnikh gramot i aktov gorodov Vil'ny, Kovna, Trok, pravoslavnykh monastyrei, tserkvei i po raznym predmetam*, II (Vilnius, 1843), no. 6, pp. 13–15: '... solemniter vovisset dum templa seu oracula in civitate nostra Vilnensi unum in honorem Sancte et individue Trinitatis, aliud vero in honorem Sancti Nicolai lapide seu latere cocto et ab ipsis fundamentis erigenda et muro consumanda sub beneplacito tamen et ratihabitatione nostra in quantum Deus Optimus Maximus nobis de dicto nephario hoste victoriam contulisset gentesque ipsius non minus efferatas quam numerosissimas in manibus nostris dedisset. Qua ... re, quod felix faustumque sit, secuta hoc est dicti hoste per nos ad intervectionem profugato tam sepe dictus Constantinus qua etiam dicti consiliarii humiliter cum ... nobis

anian Chronicle contains an extended account of the battle which notes how the god-fearing hetman prayed in the Church of the Holy Trinity and St Nicholas at Orsha before combat began.⁴⁸ A few years earlier Ostrogsky had used his good favour with the monarch to rebuild the Church of the Most Pure Virgin which still stands by the River Vilnia (Vilnelė) at the entrance to the suburb of Užupis.⁴⁹

The tradition of building or endowing churches in memorial of those fallen in battle began in Lithuanian Catholic circles in the early fifteenth century. We might cite the hanging of battle standards captured from the Teutonic Order at Grunwald in Vilnius Cathedral or the mausoleum church of St George at Pabaiskas, which later obtained a chantry altar dedicated to the 10,000 Martyred Knights.⁵⁰ Probably the first public memorial to victory over the Tatars is the Church of Our Lady of the Snows in the Carmelite Monastery of St George in Vilnius, which according to tradition was founded by Mikalojus Mikalojaitis Radvila who fought alongside Mikhail Glin-ski in battle against the Tatars at Kletsk in 1506: *ob memorabilem victoriam in ejus die festo nivium temporis felicitis memoriae regis Alexandri germani nostri apud klecko de tartaris reportatam*.⁵¹ In 1525 St George's Church became the destination for a procession

supplicarunt, quatenis ipsis predicti noti liberam exequucionem permitteremus. Et quia lege sancta et evangelica erudiri videmur ut et voveamus et reddamus vota nostra Deo predictis illorum de consilio consiliariorum nostrorum supplicationibus ... iustis et rationabilibus benigniter annuen supradictas ecclesias Sancte Trinitatis in colle vici quo itur ad portam vie versus Miednyky in ubi antiquus ... cum monasterio eiusdem tituli ritus ... erat ex ligno effectum. Sancti vero Nicolai quam magnum appellant ... muro consumanda. In ipsisque omnia divina officia ritu ipsorum greco pagi ... duximus permittenda presentibusque permittimus'.

⁴⁸ *PSRL*, XXXV, 125–7. The manuscript came from the Suprasl' Monastery and dates from the first half of the sixteenth century: *ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁹ On 4 July 1525 Ostrogsky and his wife Tatiana Holszańska donated their estate at Šešuoliai to this church in return for a *panakhida* (memorial prayers) for their souls on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings at two altars near the doors: *Sobranie drevnikh gramot*, II, no. 171, pp. 89–93. For an account of the architectural style of the building, *Lietuvos architektūros istorija*, vol. 1: *Nuo seniausią laikų iki XVII a. vidurio*, ed. J. Minkevičius (Vilnius, 1987), 153.

⁵⁰ See *Acta primae visitationis Diocesis Vilnensis Anno Domini 1522 exactae. Vilniaus Kapitulos Archyvo Liber IIb atkūrimas*, ed. S. C. Rowell (Vilnius, 2015).

⁵¹ Sigismund III Vasa confirmed Sigismund the Old's 1514 charter for the Carmelite Monastery of St George in Vilnius: LMAVB RS, F43–21015 (31 July 1600).

from the cathedral annually on St Mark's Day (April 25)⁵². The monastery thus became fixed in the public awareness of the sacred topography of the city (like the parish church, the Franciscan friary of the Assumption of Our Lady or the Hospice of Ss Job and Mary Magdalene). In 1505 the pope had allowed Grand Duke Alexander to divert Peter's Pence for ten years to rebuild churches and castles destroyed by the Tatars, giving precedence in this matter to the rebuilding of the fortress at Kamieniec Podolski.⁵³

Public memory of Tatar depredations may have been strongest in Orthodox tradition whereby the monastery at Kupiatycze in the Duchy of Pinsk claimed to have an icon of Our Lady which had suffered during the Tatar incursions into Rus' in the 1240s and was found by a young pilgrim named Joachim. The cult of the icon began to gain popularity at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and in 1511 the local duke, Fedor Yaroslavovich donated a plot of woodland to the monastery which held this treasure. It is difficult to say whether this cult was connected with increasing threats of Tatar aggression.⁵⁴

Micro-historical contacts

While at a high level of society the idea of Church Unity was attractive politically and even alleged official prohibitions on the building of Orthodox churches could be overlooked for reasons of patriotism and personal favour, the thought that such a union would open the doors not only of the cathedral but also of the high offices of state to a wider section of gentry and clergy was intimidating for Catholic lords be they spiritual or temporal. However, in the lives of more ordinary people contacts between the two (three) communities were unavoidable. Most of our evidence of such relations comes unsur-

⁵² 'Acta Capituli Vilnensis, I, LMAVB RS, F43-210/1, 101; Polish summary in J. Kurczewski, *Kościół Zamkowy czyli Katedra Wileńska w jej dziejowym, liturgicznym, architektonicznym i ekonomicznym rozwoju*, vol. 3: *Streszczenie aktów kapituły wileńskiej* (Vilnius, 1912), 27.

⁵³ *VMPL*, II, no. 350, pp. 325-6; no. 327, pp. 303-4.

⁵⁴ P. Chomiak, *Kupiatycka ikona Matki Bożej: Historia i literatura* (Białystok, 2008), 15-29.

prisingly from a family milieu and it involves property. The records of church foundations and consistory courts (in Lutsk and Gniezno) help shed light on such matters. In 1457 three Ruthenian brothers Jan, Stanisław-Hryńko and Haczko of Wirowo joined Stanisław of Nieczęcy, a village 7 km to the north-east of Sokołów Podlaski, in the foundation of a chapel to the Immaculate Conception and St Dorothy. The first two brothers were called neophytes (indeed Hryńko may have been rebaptised as Stanisław), while the third was described as *scismaticus* or Orthodox.⁵⁵ This is a good example both of the Latinisation of Orthodox territory (Podlasie) and of family solidarity in ecclesiastical foundations despite confessional differences.

From the diocese of Vilnius we learn that in 1514 a patron of the royal foundation of the Catholic Church of the Nativity of the Virgin in Kholkhlo, Marina Vladyczanka, realising that she had no kinsman in communion with the Roman Church into the hands of which she would entrust her soul after death, who would take care of her soul, decided to grant a tithe to the parish priest which her heirs even if they be Orthodox would be obliged to pay on pain of damnation.⁵⁶ It is clear that family ties were not broken by confessional division and that although schismatics be regarded as ideological aliens they were still susceptible to the same ultimate threat, fear of which could ensure their cooperation with the conditions of a Catholic emolument, namely eternal damnation. Indeed we cannot take patronage of a religious institution alone as evidence of denominational affiliation. Duchess Marina of Traby, grandmother or mother of Chancellor Albertas Goštautas has long been known for her gift to the Orthodox Church of the Most Blessed Mother of God in Vilnius in 1486. It has been suspected that some of the Orthodox books in Albertas' library

⁵⁵ Jaszczółt, 'Fundacje kościelne', 34.

⁵⁶ LMAVB RS, F43, b. 204, fo 109v–110: 'quod nullum consanguineum habeo in Fide Catholica, qui esset sub obedientia Romane Ecclesie, cui deberem in manus commendare animam meam post mortem meam, in quibus confidere debeam, aut qui pro anima mea curam haberet, volens certitudinem indubiam habere, do et proprio ac incorporo decimam de omni grano de seminibus camporum et hortorum meorum, nihil excipiendo, in curia mea Cierniewo nuncupata, mei veri et legitimi patrimonij ecclesie tituli Virginis Gloriose Marie Nativitatis in Chochlo lego et inscribo honorabili Stanislao plebano moderno inibidem suisque posteris curatis eviterneque et in evum inscribo et quicumque consanguinei Catholici et schismatici ritus dictam curiam possidebunt iure hereditario successione propinquitatis dictas decimas de eadem curia dent, tradant realiter et cum effectu sub damnatione eorum dare'.

were inherited from her. However, we know that in 1500 along with Albertas she sought graces relating to confession and dietary obligations from the Sacred Penitentiary in Rome, a petition which makes absolutely no sense if the lady was not a Catholic.⁵⁷

The case of the parish of Polonka in the Vilnius diocese is an interesting case of Catholic-Orthodox *convivencia* far from the capital. This town to the south east of Novgorodok was home to both communities. The Orthodox had their own *sinagoga rutenica*, while a Catholic Church of the Visitation, Ss Peter and Paul and St George was founded in 1437 by a nobleman Petras Račkus Strocevičius (Raczko Strocewicz).⁵⁸ By the end of the century the main patron of the living was the lord lieutenant of Smolensk, Stanislovas Hlebavičius, while members of the local gentry set up a fraternity for male and female parishioners of all classes. Donations to the fraternity were witnessed by the local Orthodox priest (*Pop Many*) and Orthodox neighbours such as Olekhno, who is described as *schismaticus, qui morabatur in Hyrikowczyzna*.⁵⁹ The Catholic priest was given land to build an inn on the square in front of the Orthodox Church.⁶⁰ It is interesting that after the 1596 Union of Brest which established the Uniate Church in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Crown Rus' the Catholic (Latin-Rite) parish church was taken over by the Uniates; the Orthodox parish also continued to exist in the town where antagonism between the two communi-

⁵⁷ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers., 49, fo 814; K. Gudmantas, 'Alberto Goštauto biblioteka ir Lietuvos metraščiai', *Knygotyra* 41 (2003), 9.

⁵⁸ *KDKDW*, no. 152, pp. 170–1.

⁵⁹ 'Pop Many': *ibid.*, no. 506, p. 616; no. 516, p. 622; no. 534, p. 634; Olekhno: *ibid.*, no. 573, pp. 691–2.

⁶⁰ LMAVB RS, F43, b. 204, fo 71: 'In nomine Domini amen. Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo vigesimo nono, Ego Joannes Hlebowicz palatinides Polocensis haeresque in Polonka recognosco per has literas nostras sub sigillo meo, quia pro stagno, quem legavit pater meus dominus Stanislaus Hlebowicz palatinus Polocensis ecclesiae in Polonka, do et ascribo terram, quae vocatur Latunowczyzna medii semitii, ubi manet Klimowicz Czyniechwiej cum omnibus et singulis proventibus, agris, pratis, gais ut in se terra habetur et omnibus utilitatibus, nihil pro se remanendo neque usurpando et aream in eadem Polonka pro taberna libera edificanda inter Kusmam et Matyey in circulo penes ecclesiam scismaticam; quam tabernam solus plebans debet construere et hoc perpetue et in aevum honorabili domino Alberto plebano pro tunc existenti in eadem Polonka'. For a separate study of the parish of Polonka in the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries, see S. C. Rowell, 'Parapijos dangaus ir žemės globėjų vaidmuo bendruomenės identiteto formavimesi – Polonkos pavyzdys' (forthcoming).

ties (in the eighteenth century) led to the destruction of St Peter's, and the desecration of graves of its Hlebavičius Catholic patrons. In 1502 one Catholic parishioner revealed in his will how relevant the issue of Church Union was, as he stressed that he would leave this world in union with the Roman Church – 'in unitate fidei sancte romane ecclesie de hac vita decedo'.⁶¹ In the broader context of the Latinisation of Ruthenian lands in the Grand Duchy (modern Belarus and Podlasie) the Polonka case is of particular interest. The Hlebavičiai established their status as servants of the grand duke. Stanislovas Hlebavičius was a Ruthenian specialist. He served as envoy to Muscovy and took part in negotiations over the marriage of Grand Duke Alexander and Elena Ivanovna of Moscow. He later served in the grand duchess' court and became lord lieutenant of Polotsk. His wife, Zofia Korczewska, was the daughter of a Podlasie gentleman and through her he gained land and ecclesiastical advowson in Mordy. Their daughter Elzbieta married the grand duke's Ruthenian scribe, Jonas Sapiega, of whom we have already heard and who subsequently became lord lieutenant of Podlasie, where marriage had made him an ecclesiastical patron.⁶²

In conclusion we may say that the negative image imposed by fourteenth-century crusaders on Lithuania as a nest of pagans, schismatics and Tatars was exploited by the Grand Duchy's new Catholic rulers to serve the needs of domestic and foreign policy (especially in relations with Orthodox Christians, and the Muslim Tatars of the East). Vytautas used talk of organising crusades throughout his reign as art of his aim to take control of the Orthodox Church in the Grand Duchy. In this policy of support for Church Union (as an aim) and foreign military alliance ('crusade', as the instrument to achieve this end) he worked constantly with his cousin King Jogaila. It is argued that the Tatar campaigns of 1397–98 arose from two contexts: the collapse of Tokhtamysh's rule in the southern steppes and the agreement with Sigismund of Hungary to work closely in the fight against the enemies of Christendom (as suggested to Jogaila and by

⁶¹ *KDKDW*, no. 538, pp. 635–6.

⁶² T. Jaszczółt, 'Osadnictwo lewobrzeżnej części ziemi drohickiej w XV i na początku XVI w. – okolice Sokołowa, Węgrowa i Mord', *Sokołów Podlaski: Dzieje miasta i okolic*, ed. G. Ryzewski (Białystok–Sokołów Podlaski, 2006), 216.

extension to Vytautas by Patriarch Antony in January 1397). The Tatar Campaigns proved Vytautas to be a defender of Christians, moving south towards occupied Byzantium. The Battle of Vorskla was not a crusade. It was an *ad hoc* reaction to a direct threat to Vytautas's dominion in Kiev (centre of the Rus'ian Orthodox Church) and made use of a system of alliances and mutual interests, which developed more strongly in the period 1395–1398 (with Poland, Moldavia, Podolia, Mazovia and the Teutonic Order). Throughout his reign Vytautas continued this policy of seeking Church union and playing the role of defender of Christians. On a more eirenic level, both Jogaila and Vytautas sponsored union and mission via the Society of Friars Pilgrim, an off-shoot of the Dominican Order, which was especially active in Lithuanian and Polish Rus' and Asia Minor. The Tatar and Muscovite threat to Lithuania did not abate.

The position of the Orthodox Church in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was at the same time both solid and ambiguous. While political moves were made from the fourteenth century to subject the Metropolitanate of Kiev and All Rus' to the will of the monarch either by supporting an Orthodox ('schismatic') ecclesiastical hierarchy separate from candidates supported by the Orthodox of the Grand Duchy of Muscovy, or by engineering a Unionist Church in communion with Rome, both policies caused as many problems as potentially they might solve. Neither the Catholic palatines nor the Latin prelates of Lithuania welcomed Orthodox or even Unionist competitors. However, on a micro-political level both in Vilnius and in the country at large the Orthodox Church in Lithuania was clearly well-integrated into public life and in tune with Catholic devotional traditions (such as the building of hospices and chantry altars and the formation of parish fraternities). The crude nineteenth-century imperial equivalence of Orthodoxy with Russia and Russia with Muscovy is virtually irrelevant to the history of the early-modern Grand Duchy (where Orthodoxy was associated primarily with Schism). Catholics also came to venerate icons (at Aušros Vartai or Our Lady of Trakai); schismatic kin were expected to protect the ecclesiastical foundations of childless Catholic benefactors and Catholic landowners could build or endow both Catholic and Orthodox churches side by side in Lithuanian towns (such as Anykščiai or Drohiczyn).

Supplications and Indulgences

The extent to which Lithuanians became Catholic over the course of the long fifteenth century from 1387 to 1525 cannot be measured satisfactorily in the edicts of princes, the physical infrastructure of the Church, or even the acceptance of ecclesiastical jurisdiction alone. We need material which might allow us to peek, however darkly, into the minds of ordinary Christians. We have no diaries, no private letters, no identifiable personal affects to help us in this task. There are of course last wills and testaments and also parish emoluments, which may reveal some aspects of personal piety (the choice of Masses requested, the variety of bequests made and the number of foundations which benefited from such munificence) but the formulation of these documents derives from quite a narrow collection of doctrinal clichés. It is unclear how far a deliberate choice of arenga text was made or by whom (some wills were drafted by the testator himself/herself, but many were drafted by priests or notaries). What is significant is that such documents appear to have enjoyed wide public confidence by the later decades of the fifteenth century.¹

While the thoughts of the dead may be beyond our ken, we can measure how far fifteenth-century Lithuanians were involved in Catholic activity. We have important formulaic texts, spiritual shopping lists as it were, that should not be despised for their terse witness to the spiritual needs or desires of real people. It is important

¹ M. Klovas, 'Privataus dokumento juridinė galia XV–XVI a. pradžioje', *IŠT*, 5 (2014), 43–55, esp. pp. 52–3. Frequently cited commonplaces include the contrast between the transitory riches of earth and the eternal wealth of heaven: *KDKDW*, nos. 135, 139, 146, 149; earthly works slip from human memory (nos. 170, 171, 172); nothing is certain but death, nor anything more uncertain than the hour of death (nos. 242, 324, 331); anticipate the Last Judgment by doing good works (nos. 278, 349, 434) and so on.

to examine this material which reflects compliance with canon law (such as restrictions on marriage within certain degrees of physical and spiritual kinship) and, more significantly voluntary application for spiritual privileges (choosing a confessor other than one's parish priest, making use of a portable altar) which required considerable effort and expense in the obtaining. Supplications and indulgences both belong to this category of extra-curricular devotion.

Supplications to Rome

A supplication is a request for spiritual favours which could be bestowed only by the pope usually by a special institution of the Roman Curia, the so-called Apostolic Penitentiary. These favours cover obligatory and voluntary issues which fall into four main categories and affect both clerics and lay folk: unlawful marriages usually between cousins, second- and third cousins (those related within the third and fourth degrees of kinship), but also unions involving affines and spiritual kin; a priest's holding of more than one ecclesiastical benefice or his alleged involvement in the spilling of blood; confessional privileges, the right to own a portable altar and so on.²

During the fifteenth century Lithuanians increasingly sent private supplications to Rome requesting spiritual favours. Monika Saczyńska-Kaliszuk calculated that in the fifteenth century private recipients of papal indults in Poland increased in number and that of the almost 700 cases she investigated (involving 510 individuals) approximately seven per cent (23) came from dioceses within

² K. Salonen, L. Schmugge, *A Sip from the 'Well of Grace': Medieval Texts from the Apostolic Penitentiary* (Washington DC, 2009), 18–47; *La penitenza tra I e II Millennio. Per una comprensione delle origini dalla Penitenzieria Apostolica* (Vatican City, 2012); *Penitenza e Penitenzieria tra Umanesimo e Rinascimento. Dottrine e prassi dal Trecento agli inizi dell'età moderna (1300–1517)*, ed. A. Manfredi, R. Rusconi, M. Sodi (Vatican City, 2014); *Supplications from England and Wales in the registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary, 1410–1503*, ed. P. D. Clarke, P. N. R. Zutshi, 3 vols. (Woodbridge, 2012–15); for general introduction and wider literature, see *Volume One: 1410–1464*, xiii–lviii.

the Grand Duchy.³ She defines the indults as being religious and/or social, stressing that many recipients were arrivistes in need of extra prestige.⁴ According to our calculation from published sources and an examination of the registers of the Sacred Penitentiary, the number of known supplications between 1394 and 1471 is 65 and a further 90 were made between 1473 and 1500.⁵ Some supplications are recorded among various kinds of papal documents in other parts of the Vatican Archive (the Vatican and Lateran registers) and thus we have no complete list of data. The absence of Lithuanian entries in the Penitentiary registers between 1501 and 1525 and other years hints that the records lie elsewhere, rather than that no such documents were issued.⁶ In the Lithuanian cases we can see an intersection of private and public religious expression, which seems to be a means for many recipients of privilege to increase their prestige not only by holding such indults, but also by using them to execute their own religious programmes – promoting their foundations as pilgrim sites, arranging for specific devotions (especially to the Blessed Sacrament) and even having public sermons delivered without direct supervision by or permission from the local ordinary. The trend for more supplications to be issued from the second half of the fifteenth century for Lithuanians is mirrored in England and Denmark.⁷ It is also notable that while the first supplications were issued to members of the royal family and the high nobility over time the social spread of these privileges widened to include the gentry, townsfolk and in countries with a free peasantry,

³ M. Saczyńska-Kaliszuk, 'Sacrum na co dzień – funkcje papieskich przywilejów dla polskich odbiorców indywidualnych w XIV i XV wieku', *Sacrum. Obraz i funkcja w społeczeństwie średniowiecznym*, ed. A. Pieniądz-Skrzypczak, J. Pysiak (Warsaw, 2005), 356–7. On the use of supplications for Polish social history, see S. Kuraś 'Supliki papieskie jako źródło do historii społecznej Polski średniowiecznej', *Ojczyzna bliższa i dalsza*, ed. J. Chrobaczyński, A. Jureczko, M. Śliwa (Cracow, 1993), 47–57.

⁴ Saczyńska-Kaliszuk, 'Sacrum na co dzień', 362–5.

⁵ Rowell, 'Supplications'.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ P. Ingesman, 'Danish marriage dispensations. Evidence of an increasing lay use of papal letters in the Late Middle Ages', *The Roman Curia, the Apostolic Penitentiary and the Partes in the later Middle Ages*, ed. K. Salonen, C. Krötzel [*Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae*, 28] (Rome, 2003), 130–7; Clarke, Zutshi, *Supplications from England and Wales*, I, p. xxiii.

even wealthy peasants who needed to control the dilution of their property through marriage contracts. Women as well as men approached the well of grace. Widows and unmarried women feature in the record as well as wives who apply for matrimonial graces along with their husbands.

The first Lithuanian supplicants were members of the ruling dynasty, and the very first pre-date the conversion of 1386. Alexander Karijotaitis of Kamenets (Podolia) obtained the right to choose his own confessor in an indult issued by Gregory IX in 1378.⁸ Supplication was made to Rome later by his Gediminid cousins such as Grand Duke Vytautas and his wife Anne, who asked among other things to be allowed to eat flesh and dairy products during periods of abstinence because she was allergic to fish and the flesh of other non-lactating animals, and to take baths on Sundays for the sake of his health, when such frivolous labours are banned (indirectly) by the Third Commandment (and in western Europe bath-houses were associated with immoral behaviour).⁹ The royal couple also requested accession to full remission of sins whenever they were in fear of death (an insight perhaps into Vytautas' affrighted psychology) but received permission to obtain plenary absolution 'only' once a year and on their deathbed (*in articulo mortis*), permission to have Mass celebrated in the presence of infidels and schismatics (of whom there was no shortage at the grand-ducal court or in the larger part of the Grand Duchy), to hear Mass and other services in forbidden places and between midnight and daybreak. The right to have a portable altar was also granted to the grand-ducal pair.¹⁰

This fashion was followed by Vytautas' brother and successor Grand Duke Žygimantas, who requested a portable altar in 1420. By 1439 he enjoyed the right to select his own confessor and receive plenary remission of sins in life and on his deathbed. He was granted the right to hear Mass when and where he wished (he was too busy to fit in with parish timetables. He could be absolved from

⁸ VMPL, no. 1015, pp. 748–9.

⁹ These are the so-called *Butterbriefe* condemned by Martin Luther. These documents, like most supplications, with the possible exception of *de declaratoriis* are rigidly formulaic and do not necessarily reflect cases of actual ill health.

¹⁰ CM, I, no. 25, pp. 58–9 (27 August 1418).

vows of pilgrimage and abstinence). It is well known that he was murdered as he heard Mass in his bedroom in Trakai castle on Palm Sunday 1440, while most of his courtiers were attending Mass in the parish church.¹¹ We know of the grand duke's daughter, Jadvyga, solely from the record of her being granted full remission *in articulo mortis*.¹² His son Mykolas and daughter-in-law Catherine received similar favours in 1439.¹³ Grand Duke Casimir did likewise in 1447 and had obtained a plenary remission in 1444.¹⁴

Confessional privileges, both terminated and perpetual, including the right to select a confessor of their own were sought out by Lithuanian Catholics of various classes, mostly the nobility and clergy but also in at least one case, artisans (the tailor Peter and his wife). Unlike in Poland (as depicted by Dr Saczyńska-Kaliszuk), the right to choose a confessor was more popular among the laity than the clergy.¹⁵ Twenty six per cent of Lithuanian recipients were canons or parish priests and 57 per cent of all supplications were related to confession letters. Where the clergy is concerned, it is surprising that no privileges *de defectu natalium* are known (so far) from Lithuanian sees for bastards seeking to enter holy orders (although one famous example is Bishop John of Vilnius).

Portable altars are a practical necessity for people on the move, wishing to be able to hear Mass during the long trek from one court or parliamentary venue to another. They can be prestigious for those wishing to keep a priest among their retinue. They also represent freedom from stricter ecclesiastical control – clergy obtained permission to receive holy orders from any bishop within Poland-Lithuania. They can be kept in a private house or chapel. They are both private and potentially public instruments for administering sacraments or devotions (not simply Mass but also Exposition of the

¹¹ *BP*, IV, no. 735; *BP*, V, nos. 1533, 1537. On the murder of Žygimantas, see S. C. Rowell, 'Of bears and traitors, or: Political tensions in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania ca. 1440–1481', *LHS*, 2 (1997), 28–55. More recently J. Nikodem, 'Przyczyny zamordowania Zygmunta Kiejstutowicza', *Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne*, 17 (2002), 5–33.

¹² Saczyńska-Kaliszuk, 'Sacrum na co dzień', p. 356, n. 16.

¹³ *BP*, V, no. 1533, p. 286.

¹⁴ *BP*, vol. VI: 1447–1464, ed. M. Kowalczyk, S. Kuraś, I. Sułkowska-Kuraś, P. Szczaniecki (Rome–Lublin, 1998), no. 116, p. 30; *BP*, V, no. 1179, p. 209.

¹⁵ Saczyńska-Kaliszuk, 'Sacrum na co dzień', 359.

Blessed Sacrament and so on). In effect they are a portable church and we know from the Žemaitijan visitation records of 1579 that many parish churches retained such altars.¹⁶ Altar privileges account for 30 per cent of Lithuanian supplications and the number increases markedly after 1472. More lay folk received them than clergy, who account for only 18 per cent of the total. Altars were requested often alongside confession letters and the right to be buried within a church building.¹⁷ It was not uncommon for supplicants to collect several letters of grace – combining the legitimisation of a marriage with a portable altar and confessional letter and perhaps even membership of a Roman confraternity.¹⁸

Lithuanians also sought to obtain validation for marriages they had entered within forbidden degrees of consanguinity, affinity and spiritual kinship, as was noted above. In Žemaitija dispensation was sought in 1428 and granted (for two years) for those who had married according to pagan rites within forbidden degrees or had divorced to have their status validated.¹⁹ Perhaps the most bizarre and certainly one of the most titillating surviving supplications with regard to marriage concerns the palatine of Trakai, Jonas-Jaunius Valmantaitis. In June 1428 Grand Duke Vytautas went over the head of Bishop Matthias of Vilnius, sending his chaplain, the bishop-elect of Kamenets to appeal directly to Pope Martin V on behalf of the second most senior non-Gediminid lord temporal. During the lifetime of Bishop Peter of Vilnius (1415–1421) Valmantaitis' first wife was convicted of using poison and witchcraft in an unsuccessful attempt to murder her husband. A court attended by the grand duke, the bishop and the Lithuanian nobility granted Valmantaitis a divorce. Bishop Peter's successor, Bishop Matthias excommunicated Valmantaitis in an attempt to force him to take his wife back. However, now (in 1428) the palatine wanted to marry another and be re-admitted to the sacraments. While the case is lurid enough of itself, what surprises us most is that a man holding such an important office in effect may have been excommunicate (with all that implies for the

¹⁶ *CM*, I, no. 289, pp. 415–526. *Žemaičių vyskupijos vizitacija (1579)*, *passim*.

¹⁷ Rowell, 'Supplications'.

¹⁸ Baronas 'Piligrimai iš Lietuvos', 15–28.

¹⁹ *CM*, I, no. 38, pp. 76–7 (27 June 1428).

man's private and *public* life) for at least nearly seven years, since Bishop Peter died on 20 December 1421.²⁰ We have no example from later in the century of any Catholic nobleman or grand-ducal official remaining for so long out of communion with the Church.

Matrimonial cases from Lithuania were presented to the Curia as a *fait accompli* with a request to legitimise the union and its offspring, rather than in advance of the wedding. Most known extant cases come from the period 1473–1500 and in total these account for 15.5 per cent of all supplications. They reveal (unsurprisingly) the way in which marriages might be arranged cunningly by an orphan ward's guardian, as in the case of Mikalojus Astikaitis' otherwise unknown daughter Agnė and her marriage to the proprietor of Węgrów (Podlasie), Wawrzyniec.²¹ According to the first supplication submitted in July 1479 Agnė was introduced as a girl to a boy named Mikalojus (Dargaitis) in the presence of a priest and they were asked whether they liked one another. This happened without witnesses and without the knowledge of the girl's parents. The children innocently said they did like one another and there the matter ended. Three and a half years later Agnė met a youth and fell in love; by this time Mikalojus had also met a young woman he wished to marry. After Agnė had become betrothed to her lover and confirmed this carnally she sought to have the union legalised for the sake of their children. The regent of the Penitentiary agreed that the first childhood betrothal between Agnė and Mikalojus was invalid and that the consummated marriage could stand. Agnė of the diocese of Lutsk was instructed to present the verdict to her bishop. It seems that someone in Janów Podlaski or Vilnius did not approve of the outcome and two years later the case was reformulated and sent to Rome for investigation once more. This time Agnes Nicolai Hostikowicz is recorded as being of the Vilnius diocese (as she was before her marriage) along with Nicholas Dorgiewicz. This time responsibility for arranging the childhood 'betrothal' is

²⁰ *KDKDW*, no. 105, pp. 130–1.

²¹ Wawrzyniec of Węgrów (fl. 1468–1503) was probably the son of Stanisław of Olomouc: Jaszczolt, 'Fundacje kościelne', 29; A. Boniecki, *Poczet rodów w Wielkiem Księstwie Litewskiem w XV i XVI wieku* (Warsaw, 1883), 360. They were the parents of Maryna, who married the Lithuanian magnate Janusz Kotewicz.

placed on the shoulders of the orphan girl's paternal uncle, almost certainly Radvila Astikaitis. It is stressed that Nicholas seemed to like the girl's wealth more than wanting her as a wife. In any case they were ignorant of the significance of the priest's question. They parted without banns, the usual ceremonies or consummation of the match. Three years pass and Agnė falls in love with Wawrzyniec of Węgrów (diocese of Lutsk) whom she meets in the company of friends and the pair exchange vows, banns are published, the usual ceremonies are carried out and the union consummated. A child is born and Wawrzyniec seeks an indult to prove the legitimacy of the marriage which is doubted by some people. Mikalojus also marries another. Agnė is granted her supplication and instructed to inform her bishop that no betrothal had been contracted by the children. Nicholas Dorgievicz's dealings with the Penitentiary were not over. In January 1483 he obtained a declaratory letter confirming the legitimacy of his marriage to Anna²². It should be borne in mind too that the Astikai and Radvilos [Radziwiłłs] may have been close kinsmen of the Dargaičiai – and unifying ancestral property may have been the cause of this failed attempt at arranged marriage.²³

The spiritual deliberations of a Lithuanian, who out of fear of death from a debilitating illness proposed mentally to take holy orders, if he should recover, appear to reflect genuine, albeit fearful devotion. After recovering he sought a dispensation from his vow so that he might remain in the world and marry. What he did not do was to forget about his promise and follow his own desires.²⁴

Unsurprisingly many of those requesting spiritual favours from the Curia also exhibited other forms of piety, most notably dona-

²² Rowell, 'Supplications'.

²³ M. Antoniewicz, *Protopleści książąt Radziwiłłów: Dzieje mitu i meandry historiografii* (Warsaw, 2011), 124–136.

²⁴ The 1481 case of Nicholas Kyberth (Mikalojus Kybartas): APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers., 30, fo 197r.: '[de matrimonialibus], iii kal. jun., Rome. Nicolaus Kyberth laicus Wilnensis diocesis, quod homine alias quadam gravi infirmitate deteritus, dubitans exinde sibi mortis periculum obvenire, huiusmodi mortis timore ductus in mente sua proposuit, quod si a mortis periculo huiusmodi evaderet, aliquem ex ordinibus approbatis intraret. Deinde cum ab infirmitate huiusmodi, Deo favente, reconvaluisset, dictum eius propositum commutavit et in eo ulterius non processit, cupiatque in seculo ut secularis perpetuo remanere ac cum aliqua muliere nullo sibi iure prohibita matrimonium contrahere et in eo, postquam contractum fuerit, licite remanere posse, a nonnullis tamen etc. ...'.

tions to the Vilnius Franciscans and requests for inclusion in the friary's book of life – Aleksandras Mantautas asked for permission to choose his own confessor in 1439; the following year he and his wife donated land to the Franciscans. Another recipient that year of the right to choose a confessor and obtain plenary remission was Clemens Clawco, a name, which appears in surviving fragments from the Franciscan *liber memoriae*.²⁵ For those who were not endowed with such privileges the Franciscans in both Vilnius and Kaunas sought permission from Rome allowing them to compete legally with the local secular clergy in hearing confessions, granting Holy Communion and other sacraments and burying the dead.²⁶ A papal nuncio granted members of the Franciscan confraternity in Vilnius the right to choose their own confessor, secular or regular, with the power to grant full remission of sins in 1456. The indult even gives the text of the absolution.²⁷

Some time earlier, in the Holy Year of 1450, when Pope Nicholas V allowed pilgrims to Vilnius cathedral to obtain the same indulgences as pilgrims to Rome, a group of Lithuanian nobles, all from the Lida area and some of them interrelated applied successfully (and without curial fees) for privileges of owning a portable altar and gaining full absolution from a confessor of their choice. These supplicants were Petras Leliušas (whose patrimony was at Shchuchin), one time lord lieutenant of Trakai and Andriejus Goliginaitis (with an inherited estate at Vaverka), master of the kitchens of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and their wives.²⁸

²⁵ *BP*, V, no. 1533, p. 286; *KDKDW*, no. 167, p. 190 (Aleksandras Mantautas, 21 October 1440); Clawco: Rowell, 'Winning the living', 119. From the same date come confessional privileges for the widow of another nobleman, Jonas Nemira, grand-ducal constable 1412–13 and later lieutenant of Polotsk, Anna: Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė*, 276.

²⁶ The Vilnius friars received such permission on 11 July 1439, while their Kaunas brethren were so enabled on 3 December that year: *BP*, V, no. 1534, p. 287, and *KDKDW*, no. 159, pp. 179–81, respectively.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 225, pp. 250–1 (11 September 1456).

²⁸ *BP*, VI, nos. 394, 395, p. 92. It is tempting to regard the Simon Leluschowycz who appears in the Penitentiary record with his wife [A]polonia of Nemenčinė as having legitimised their marriage (within three and four degrees of consanguinity) and received confessional letters (*perpetua*) in February 1478: APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers., 26, fos 37r, 263r, as Peter's son.

In Trakeliai, 17 km north east of Lida in 1452 Magdalena, widow of Jagintas granted land in return for Franciscan prayers, and inscription in the Vilnius friars' *liber memoriae*. Her donation was witnessed by, among others, her sons Jonas Sačkus and Jonas Rimvydas.²⁹ All three of these people obtained papal privileges for an altar and *confessionalia* in June of the Holy Year 1450.³⁰ We may surmise that the Franciscan connection and the wish to have a confessor other than their lawful parish priest were connected. Only two recipients of indulgences at this time, the nobleman Jonas Mažeika and his wife Milokhna, seem not to fit as group members, but it should be noted that the position of their estates remains unknown so far. It may well be that they too hailed from the Lida area. Clearly people took advantages of occasions to apply to Rome, a costly and potentially dangerous voyage and that their piety was underscored by family and community ties. Some indulgences were granted gratis, but not all, and inscription in the papal registers was not without charge.

In August 1461 the provost of Vilnius, Simon and his fellow canon, Michael were granted *confessionalia perpetua*, as a few days later were Peter, a Vilnius tailor and his wife.³¹ A decade later the Unionist gentleman, brother of Aleksander Soltan, courtier and official of Casimir Jagiellończyk, Ivaška of Poczapów was granted the right to select his own confessor and obtain plenary remission for his sins.³² In 1451 Mikalojus Radvila successfully petitioned to be allowed to choose his confessor and keep a portable altar.³³ This gentleman founded the parish church on his patrimonial estates at Upninkai (east of Vilnius).³⁴

The case of Stanislovas, son of the Vilnius castellan Sudivojus Valmantaitis, perhaps expresses best the wider gamut of upper class

²⁹ In 1460 Rimvydas founded the church of the Nativity of Our Lady, Ss Peter and Paul, Albert and George in Porozov: *ibid.*, no. 234, pp. 263–5; *KDKDW*, no. 212. pp. 240–1.

³⁰ *BP*, V, nos. 392–3, 398–9 and 411, p. 92. The Vatican register misrecorded the toponym Trokiele as Strokyene.

³¹ Simon and Michael: *BP*, VI, no. 1643, p. 352, not mentioned on Ochmański's list: *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 33–5; Petrus sartor: *BP*, VI, no. 1645, p. 352.

³² *KDKDW*, no. 278, p. 321 (19 November 1471).

³³ *BP*, VI, nos. 511–14, pp. 112–13.

³⁴ *KDKDW*, no. 324, pp. 381–2 (15 October 1482).

piety in Lithuania. In 1458 he founded the Kaunas Bernardine house and continued to endow it.³⁵ At the time he had been lord lieutenant of the town for over a decade. In March 1469 he was granted an indulgence of seven years and as many Lents for visitors to the Church of the Holy Trinity, which he had re-founded at Deltuva. He portrays himself as a recent neophyte (unlikely – his father was a high state official) and stresses the presence of Tatars and pagans in the locality (itself also improbable); he *pro fide christiana continue fortiter debellat*.³⁶ As today, western knowledge of Eastern Europe realities is such that any strange or louche assertion could be accepted as accurate. Such stereotypes may have been encouraged by the bureaucratic requirements of the Penitentiary itself. Supplications had to fit established categories and be drafted according to official models – a document could be rejected outright if it was not drawn up correctly. They were penned by professional procurators to effect the best result of the supplicant's request. Five days after the indulgence was issued Sudvojus and his wife Catherine were granted a plenary remission of their sins³⁷. The gentleman was devoted to the Bernardines and took pains to obtain spiritual privileges. He endowed the Holy Trinity chapel of Vilnius Cathedral (the same dedication as that of his parish foundation) and his family also maintained a chantry priest, referred to in various sources as 'altarista domini Sandivogii'.³⁸ His piety matches the offices he

³⁵ Jan Komorowski, 'Memoriale Ordinis Fratrum Minorum', *MPH*, V (Lviv, 1888), 202; *KDKDW*, no. 269, pp. 310–11 (1471).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 261, p. 301. Being a neophyte was also an advantage in applications to the Penitentiary. In December 1474 Fr Nicolaus Mosutionis de Augmontiski [Zhygmunt-sishki?] was permitted to continue his ministry after excommunication for his misdemeanours after explaining 'quod olim parentes sui, qui pagani et infideles fuerunt, postquam fuissent ad fidem converti, ipsius germanum eumque nulla facta mentione de neophitate huiusmodi in presbyterum ... ordinare fecerunt': *APA*, Reg. Matrim. et Divers., 23, fo 202v. He also obtained 'confessionalia ad vitam': *ibid.*, fo 281v.

³⁷ *BP*, vol. VII: 1464–1471, ed. S. Kuraś, J. Smołuca, P. Stanko, I. Sułkowska-Kuraś (Rome–Lublin, 2006), no. 676, p. 205: 'Nobili Stanisłao Sandivogii laico Wilnensis diocesis et Catherine uxori eius: Remissio'. A *confessionale perpetuum* was issued for his brother-in-law Jonas Veževičius, a noble of Vilnius diocese and Smolensk lieutenant 1460–72; ditto for Jacobus Antiquus: *BP*, VI, no. 1956, p. 420 (25 July 1464); see Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė*, 306–7.

³⁸ Cathedral chapel: *KDKDW*, no. 322, pp. 379–81 (30 May 1482); his father's chantry priest, Matthias: *ibid.*, no. 227, p. 255 (1459 donation at Lyntupy); no. 271, p. 317 (1471).

held (senior marshal of the royal court, 1464–75, land marshal of the Grand Duchy 1476 and palatine of Trakai [1478]).³⁹ In sum, he was a true Jogaila reincarnate. We come across chantry priests of other nobles so designated – James, the priest of Jurgis Gotautaitis, who witnessed an endowment made for the Vilnius Franciscans by a Svyriškis [Świrski] duke.⁴⁰ Jurgis himself had made an annual endowment for the friars of ten barrels of rye, a pig and a barrel of peas.⁴¹ These chantry priests are a slightly poorer man's equivalent of a personal chaplain. Not only Gediminids such as Mykolas Žygimantaitis but also nobles of the ilk of Martynas Goštautas retained chaplains.⁴²

Obtaining a document from Rome cost money (even if the issuing itself was made gratis). While papal nuncios often enjoyed the right to issue a restricted number of supplications during their missions to Lithuania, on the whole they were not easy or cheap to obtain – the supplicant had to travel or arrange for another to travel to the Curia and present his or her petition in the correct written form to the correct official and, when successful, pay for engrossing the letter of grace and its usual enrolment in the papal registers. According to a surviving list of penitentiary fees from 1431, a perpetual confession licence cost one person 16 groats (6 for the scribe, 6 for the register, 2 for sealing the document and 2 for the proctor), a man and wife could obtain such a letter of grace for 18 groats (for an extra groat for the scribe and registry). A *Cupientes* confession letter which permitted the local parish priest to absolve a penitent of reserved sins for five years cost 28 groats, while an indulgent permitting the consumption of flesh meat and dairy products during times of fast cost a person 6 groats (4 for the scribe, 2 for the

³⁹ Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė*, 299–300. Pace comments made on p. 300 there is no evidence that Stanislovas presented his petition in person to the curia. It probably went along with royal and other courtier requests of the time: *BP*, VII, nos. 678, 679, p. 206.

⁴⁰ 'Jacobus altaris Juskonis Gotholthowycz': *KDKDW*, no. 273, p. 320 (30 September 1471); no. 176, p. 202 (13 July 1443).

⁴¹ LMAVB RS, Ms F6–258; *Pergamentų katalogas*, no. 748, p. 300.

⁴² *KDKDW*, no. 151, p. 169; no. 158, p. 179; Goštautas (these documents are of dubious authenticity): *ibid.*, no. 272, p. 318; no. 284, pp. 331–2; for other chantry priests: *ibid.*, no. 361, pp. 420–2; no. 366, pp. 429–30; no. 390, p. 449; no. 428, p. 496.

proctor), 7 groats for a married couple. An indulgence for a parish church for ten years or in perpetuity cost 10 florins.⁴³ It appears that supplications cluster around Holy Years (1450, 1475, 1500), and the dates of official embassies to the ecumenical councils of Basel or Mantua or to the Roman Curia.⁴⁴

Confession privileges were by far the most popular, followed by supplications for portable altars. Other indults concerning Mass were also relatively frequent. Supplications also concern the lifting of fasting requirements, marriage validations, the lifting of vows, and permission to bathe. What is noticeable is the absence of supplications from Lithuania regarding priestly illegitimate birth. The supplications of priests involved unintentionally in acts of violence or the spilling of blood describe incidents from everyday life which not only reveal the tendencies for clergy to pass evenings in taverns or manors with members of the nobility but also the detail of clerical involvement in court cases and the prosecution of criminals via the services of a notary public and grand-ducal officials and the granting of sanctuary to culprits who fled to a Bernardine friary.⁴⁵ There is only one case of a layman accused of laying violent hand on a priest, namely Dobrogostas (Bonifacijus) Narbutaitis, who had wounded the parish priest of Labanoras, Fr Laurence. The latter was not crippled and later intervened on his attacker's behalf.⁴⁶

A tradition for seeking supplications can be detected among grand-ducal and magnate families. Thus the Alšėniškiai, Goštautai, Kešgailos, Leliušai, Mantautai and Radvilos (and their kin, the Astikiai and Dargaičiai) appear several times in the record. Several parish priest at Maišiagala requested confession graces or other indults (in 1431, 1471, 1476). Those who sought this type of grace also feature among patrons of parish churches (Stanislovas Daukšaitis and his wife Barbora, patrons of Volma; Mikalojus Iliničius). In addition to magnates and the middling and lesser gentry we even find at least

⁴³ W. P. Müller, 'The price of papal pardon', *Päpste, Pilger, Pönitentiarie. Festschrift für Ludwig Schmugge zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. A. Meyer (Tübingen, 2004), 478.

⁴⁴ 1450–51: 8 supplications; 1475–76: 8 supplications; 1499–1501: 37 supplications; cf. Clarke, Zutshi, *Supplications from England and Wales*, xxiii.

⁴⁵ The case of Andreas de Kyna (Kaunas, Kena?), deacon: see also above, p. 16–17, n. 38.

⁴⁶ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers., 41, fo 213r–v (dated 7 May 1492).

one Vilnius artisan and his wife. A similar spread of social classes and geographical locations appears among appeal cases heard at the consistorial court in Gniezno (Punia, Šalčininkai, Iwye, Zhygmunt-sishki, Eišiškės, Daugai, Geraniony, Maišiagala, Nemenčinė, Kaunas, Vilnius, Antakalnis). In both cases the number of people from Žemaitija is considerably smaller than from the diocese of Vilnius.

Indulgences and Lithuanian devotion

Indulgence is a term adapted by the Roman Church from Roman law where *indulgentia* signified remission from a tax or debt. Theologically speaking, it represents remission from the temporal punishment due on earth or in Purgatory for a sin which has been forgiven after the sinner has sincerely confessed his offence. The Church grants such an indulgence from the treasury of the merits of Christ and the suffering of His saints.⁴⁷ Canon lawyers defined it as remission from the temporal punishment due to Divine Justice. An indulgence is not a licence to sin (a get-out-of-hell-free card); it does not save the soul from damnation (eternal punishment) for sin, for that is the work of the Sacrament of Penance and no indulgence can be obtained without contrite confession. In effect it is an encouragement to repent, pray, carry out good works and have recourse to the sacraments. The early Church used indulgences to relieve the very strict penances imposed by confessors. In 1215 Pope Innocent

⁴⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church, §1471, §1478. In general, see H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus Fidei et morum*, ed. J. B. Umberg, edition 21–23 (Freiburg, 1937), index systematicus XII I, p. [47]–[48]; R. N. Swanson, *Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passports to Paradise* (Cambridge, 2007); *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. R. N. Swanson [*Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition*, 5] (Leiden, 2006); A. Ehlers, *Die Ablasspraxis des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter* [*Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens*, 64] (Marburg, 2007); N. Paulus, *Geschichte des Ablasses im Mittelalter*, I–III (Paderborn, 1922–1923). On indulgences in Lithuania, see remarks in Paknys, 'Ankstyvasis', 118–19. See also P. Chojnacki, 'Dokument odpustowy kardynała Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego dla katedry płockiej z 1455 roku', *SŻ*, 40 (2002), 79–88. A thorough study of indulgences in medieval Poland (and Lithuania) is given in W. Szymborski, *Odpusty w Polsce średniowiecznej* (Cracow, 2011), esp. pp. 353, 429–32, 455, 485, 512, 522, 562.

III gave bishops and archbishops the right to issue indulgences of forty days (*quadragena*) in imitation of the forty penitential days of Lent. Thus western European languages use Lent (English), *karene* (German) as a term for the period covered by an indulgence.⁴⁸

Indulgences were issued for shorter periods (such as twenty days) or for several Lents or years. A year's indulgence might be offered during the consecration of a new church. Cardinals enjoyed the right to issue indulgences of one hundred days. The faithful could receive an indulgence only after confessing their sins contritely (*confessis et contritis*) and performing the relevant penance and fulfilling certain other specified conditions such as visiting certain churches on specified holy days, assisting in the burial of the dead, helping build, repair or furnish a church or taking part in pilgrimages to holy sites (in Rome, Jerusalem or elsewhere). After the official baptism of Lithuania indulgences were offered on various occasions. In 1399 Jogaila requested an indulgence for those who fought the Tatars, which has been associated albeit mistakenly with the Battle of Vorskla, and in 1417 St Peter's parish church in Kaunas was granted an indulgence by Bishop Peter of Vilnius and Archbishop John of Lviv on the eve of their mission to convert the pagan Žemaitijans.⁴⁹ In 1425 Pope Martin V granted Grand Duke Vytautas and fifteen of his counsellors an indulgence.⁵⁰ In October 1499 Pope Alexander VI noted a complaint from Bishop Albert Tabor of Vilnius that certain unnamed Lithuanian magnates and nobles were exploiting indulgences and other papal indults for their own intentions.⁵¹ It should be noted that the years 1499-1500

⁴⁸ Swanson, *Indulgences*, 24–53; Ehlers, *Ablässpraxis*, 92–95; Paulus, *Geschichte*, II, 58–65.

⁴⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 57a, p. 733.

⁵⁰ *Liber cancellariae Stanislai Ciolek: Ein Formelbuch der polnischen Königskanzlei aus der Zeit der husitischen Bewegung*, ed. J. Caro, II [*Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, 52] (Vienna, 1874), no. 128, p. 204. For the indulgence of 1399, see *VMPL*, I, no. 1041, pp. 769–71; the 1417 indulgences were recorded on the parchment of Bishop Matthias of Vilnius' indulgence to the Kaunas parish (22 April 1413): *KDKDW*, no. 57a, p. 733.

⁵¹ M. Kowalczyk, 'Bulla papieża Aleksandra VI dla biskupa wileńskiego Wojciecha Tabora', *Ludzie, Kościół, Wierzenia: Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa Europy Środkowej (Średniowiecze–wczesna epoka nowożytna)*, ed. W. Iwańczak, S. K. Kuczyński (Warsaw, 2001), 281–2.

record the highest number of known Lithuanian supplications to the Sacred Penitentiary. General indulgences issued in Rome could be used to support local political aims. In the case of the Grand Duchy we might note that the income generated from the 1450–51 Holy Year indulgence for pilgrims visiting Vilnius Cathedral (in lieu of the Roman shrines) were to be shared between the Holy See (which was to receive half of the offertory income) and the Lithuanian authorities. Casimir Jagiellończyk could use a half of the remainder of the income to aid his wars against the Tatars, while one quarter was set aside to provide dowries for Orthodox maidens converted to the Roman Rite, as encouraged by Queen Sofia, and the other quarter to finance repair work to Vilnius Cathedral.⁵² So far no indulgences have been found from Lithuania devoted solely to secular activities such as the building of roads or bridges.⁵³ Some indulgences had specific periods of validity (for example the Holy Cross Chapel of Vilnius Cathedral obtained a papal indulgence on 13 May 1427 which was valid for ten years – see below), while others might be valid forever. As R. N. Swanson has noted, thousands of such privileges might be used in churches for many years or even centuries.⁵⁴ Many manuscripts bear later inscriptions noting that the indulgence was no longer applicable. Here we shall concentrate on fifteenth-century texts from the Grand Duchy, especially those which are connected with the cult of Corpus Christi.

The earliest extant indulgences for Vilnius Cathedral are three issued on 13 May 1427 by Pope Martin V to encourage the faithful to visit Holy Cross Chapel in Vilnius cathedral on Good Friday, contribute to building and repair work; another was offered to those who attend Mass on the feast day of the patron of the Jagiellonian dynasty and the cathedral, St Stanisław (8 May) and all the high feasts of Our Lord and Our Lady and their octaves, St John the Baptist and Ss Peter and Paul and hear the sermon.⁵⁵ The tariffs for each

⁵² *KDKDW*, no. 201, pp. 227–8 (7 December 1450); no. 206, pp. 233–4 (12 July 1451).

⁵³ Cf. Bishop Olaf of Reval's 26 December 1336 indulgence to those aiding construction of the port: *LU*, ed. F. G. von Bunge, II (Reval, 1855) no. 779, col. 307 (the bishop ruled Reval).

⁵⁴ Swanson, *Indulgences*, 24

⁵⁵ *KDKDW*, no. 111, p. 139.

indulgence varied – the Holy Cross altar indulgence offered one year and St Stanisław's feast – three years and three lents. The main indulgences were to last for ten years. A few years later in 1436 Eugenius IV issued an indulgence for the feast of the cathedral's other royal patron, St Władysław, to last twenty years, while on 20 January that same year the Apostolic Chancery registered a plea from the faithful of the diocese of Vilnius to issue an indulgence of seven years and seven lents.⁵⁶ When the Council of Basle proclaimed a general feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1439 the council fathers offered the cathedral an indulgence of 100 days for those attending Mass on that feast (8 December) or its eve, with an additional fifty days for those who heard the sermon.⁵⁷ Other universal indulgences were adapted specifically for local needs in Lithuania (and Poland) as in 1451 when the opportunity to obtain the 1450 Holy Year indulgence was extended by six months and the main condition, namely visiting the holy basilicas in Rome changed to apply to pilgrims to Vilnius Cathedral. The offering to be made in Vilnius Cathedral was reduced from half the Roman pilgrimage costs to one quarter. In 1455 this indulgence was reissued for English pilgrims who had been unable to benefit from it five years earlier.⁵⁸ It is not relevant to judge such documents cynically as a good source of extra revenue for the Church; what is important for us is that they encouraged extra devotion within the Grand Duchy.

Throughout the period under review parish fraternities in Lithuania most commonly received indulgences of one lent (for St John's church in Vilnius or the parishes around Šalčininkai), while the

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 141, pp. 159–60; no. 143, pp. 160–1: 'ipsa cathedralis reparacionibus multum indigeat et aliis ornamentis, verum eciam propter tenuitatem fructuum et reddituum dicte ecclesie, que vix ad sustentacionem presbiterorum et aliorum ibidem famulancium (sufficere) possint, propter quod elemosine christifidelium pro huiusmodi reparacionibus complendis quam plurimum sunt necessarie'.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 156, pp. 174–6 (17 September 1439).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 200, p. 225 (7 December 1450); no. 206, pp. 233–4 (12 July 1451). Recipients were to spend a fortnight in Rome or visit the cathedral in Gniezno, Lviv, Cracow or Vilnius. The money offered there was to be kept in a chest with four locks and the keys held by the king or his palatine, a cathedral prelate, a town councillor and the papal collector in Poland. On the English extension of the jubilee bull, see Swanson, *Indulgences*, 54–5; on the Prussian case, see S. Kwiatkowski, 'Odpust jubileuszowy roku 1450 w państwie zakonnym w Prusach', *KMW*, 3/4 (1987), 407–29.

norm for parish churches was usually seven years and seven lents (as at Deltuva in 1469); the practice in Poland was similar.⁵⁹ Sometimes the indulgence granted differed from the one sought. Thus in 1418 Vytautas asked for seven years and seven lents for those visiting and aiding building work on the new cathedral of St Peter and Paul in Medininkai during the octave of its patronal feast, but Pope Martin V granted a five years' indulgence valid for twenty years.⁶⁰

Individual churches sought indulgences as did monastic houses such as those of the Franciscans, both Conventual and Observant in Vilnius to attract visitors and patrons. In 1474 the palatine of Kiev, Martynas Goštautas asked the papal legate Cardinal Louis of Antioch to grant the Vilnius Franciscans an indult similar to that issued for the Church of Corpus Christi in Lviv.⁶¹ Five years earlier the noble patron of Holy Trinity, Deltuva, Stanislovas Sudivojaitis asked the pope to issue an indulgence to those visiting and supporting his newly rebuilt parish church. The pope issued an indult of seven years and seven lents valid in perpetuity for those who visited the church on the feasts of the Holy Trinity and the Assumption of Our Lady.⁶²

Indulgences were issued on various occasions, usually to propagate feast days, or particular doctrines (such as Corpus Christi or the Immaculate Conception, as we have noted).⁶³ Just as the Holy Year indulgence of 1450 was adapted to the needs of the local Church and state, so in 1501 was the 1500 Holy Year indulgence extended by six months with monies collected being directed towards financing Grand Duke Alexander's wars against the Turks and the Tatars.⁶⁴ An indulgence might be obtained from a visiting prelate – another bishop from the archdioceses of Gniezno or Lviv – taking

⁵⁹ *CM*, I, nos. 40, 54, 56, 60, 64; LMAVB RS, F6–97 (6 July 1510), Bp Albert Radvila's indulgence for the parish priests in Šalčininkai, Geraniony, Traby, Survilishki, Graūzhyski; *KDKDW*, no. 428, pp. 495–7; no. 261–2, pp. 301–3; *VMPL*, II, no. 102, pp. 70–1; no. 114, pp. 77–78; no. 135, p. 71; no. 174, pp. 136–7.

⁶⁰ *KDKDW*, no. 76, p. 107 (27 August 1418); *CM*, I, no. 25, p. 59. At the same time the pope issued a three years' indulgence for Holy Spirit Church, Vilnius: *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *KDKDW*, no. 288, pp. 336–8 (4 October 1474); T. M. Trajdos, 'Kult Męki Pańskiej w średniowiecznym Lwowie', *Kościół, kultura, społeczeństwo: Studia z dziejów średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych*, ed. W. Brojer (Warsaw, 2000), 110–11.

⁶² *KDKDW*, nos. 261–2, pp. 301–3 (4 March 1469 and 11 March 1469).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, no. 156, pp. 174–6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 201, pp. 225–8 (7 December 1450); no. 206, pp. 232–4 (12 July 1451); no. 493, pp. 586–91 (8 June 1501).

part in a consecration, a parliamentary session or an embassy to the royal court, or a papal nuncio. It was not uncommon for visiting bishops to issue an indulgence along with the local ordinary, whose permission and confirmation were required for the provision and implementation of such documents to be lawful.⁶⁵ An archbishop who needed support during a crisis in his career such as Stephen Grube of Riga might use them to enlist support or emphasise his favourable powers. In 1483 Grube, whose election to Riga was disputed, visited several east-central European cities to drum up support. He issued handsome indulgences to fraternities in Gdańsk (3 Jan. 1483) and Elbląg (3 February 1483); that same year he issued a 100 days' indulgence to the Vilnius Franciscans (30 June 1483).⁶⁶ In March 1495, a few weeks after the wedding of Grand Duke Alexander and the Muscovite duchess Elena Ivanovna, the grand duke's brother cardinal Frederick issued indulgences for churches in Vilnius, Kaunas and Maišiagala.⁶⁷

Most extant indulgence manuscripts issued to churches within the Grand Duchy were issued on site or at least on Lithuanian territory. This reflects not only the activities of the bishops who issued them and the persons or institutions who received them, but also more practical considerations. While the spiritual graces were granted free of charge (for to do otherwise would be simony), the manuscript and seal, and the services of the scribe (and registrar, where relevant) did not come cheaply. In 1331 Pope John XXII decreed that an indulgence issued in the Curia for those who visit a given church or chapel should not cost more than 16 solidi, while the 1479 *Taxe cancellarie apostolice* charged according to the size of the indulgence: one year was supposed to cost no more than 16 groats; two years'; indulgence no more than 20 groats and a seven years' indulgence was to cost no more than 50 groats. An indulgence issued in Rome in the middle of the fifteenth century would cost the recipient at least 200 groats, taking into account

⁶⁵ 1454, see Rowell, 'XV a. vyskuptų', app. 3; 1430, see *CM*, I, no. 40, also 'de licencia et voluntate reverendi patris domini Mathie': *ibid.*, p. 79; 'de licentia speciali...': *ibid.*, no. 64, p. 108 (1471).

⁶⁶ *KDKDW*, no. 327, pp. 383–5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 404, 424–9.

travel expenses to the Curia, the raw materials (parchment) and the composition, writing, sealing and enrolment of the document.⁶⁸ If the indulgence granted the right to collect money on behalf of the welfare of the Church Universal (such as a crusade or a Holy Year) any income derived had to be shared with the Roman Curia (usually one quarter of total receipts).

It is not surprising that a fraternity or a parish such as St John's in Vilnius, preferred to seek collective indulgences (*sammelindulgenz*, *indulgencia collectiva*) issued by several bishops on the same occasion and set down on a single parchment, thereby reducing the production costs. Such manuscripts are no rarity throughout Europe but it is notable that the fraternity of St John's in Vilnius or the parish church in Polonka collected indulgences and emoluments on particularly large parchments over a period of several decades, the original texts being supplemented by documents from several sources. The St John's manuscripts held in the Zasztowt Collection in Dahlem (Berlin) contain documents issued over a period of 41–65 years.⁶⁹ Even the form of the indulgences reflects careful economy. The indulgences often lack opening phrases and mention simply the reason for the indulgence and its conditions.

An indulgence is an open text to be demonstrated publicly in churches to advertise its conditions and attract attention. It adds to the prestige of the recipient and the donor.⁷⁰ We have no surviving example from Lithuania like the one issued by the new Polish cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki in 1449 which bears a portrait of the cardinal in his finery, but Vilnius indulgences are not always plain.

⁶⁸ Paulus, *Geschichte*, III, 450–52; Ehlers, *Ablässpraxis*, 460–2 (1400). In Prussia the grand master's chaplain paid half a vierdung (an eighth of a mark or 8 groats) for the writing of an indulgence: *ibid.*, 361.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95; *LU*, II, no. 1018, coll. 731–2; S. A. Gomes, 'Uma "littera indulgentiarum" avinionense de 1356 na Colegiada de Santa Maria de Alcáçova de Santarém (Portugal)', *Faventia* 25/2 (2003), 75–84. Long use of parchment: GStA PK, *Urkundensammlung Zasztowt*, no. 6 (1454–1495), no. 1 (1430–1495); *CM*, I, nos. 54, 40.

⁷⁰ Ehlers, *Ablässpraxis*, 106; P-F. Fournier, 'Affiches d'indulgence manuscrites et imprimées des XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, 84 (1923), 116–60; H. Boockmann, 'Über Abläss-"Medien"', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 34 (1983), 709–21; M. Koczarska, 'Miniatura na dokumencie odpustowym kardynała Oleśnickiego z 1449 roku', *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 45 (1983), 163–74.

Stephen Grube issued a finely executed manuscript for the Franciscans in 1483. In 1493–95 Cardinal Frederick issued indulgences with fine initials.⁷¹ Such a manuscript might be hung in a frame above the door or fixed an altar or a special table (with wax or by cord). It is not surprising that such manuscripts often survive in a damaged condition. The indulgences which survive in the Vilnius Chapter Archive are often stained (as in the case of the St John's documents of 1427 and 1454), torn or disrupted with holes (the 1451 indulgence of Nicholas V or Cardinal Louis' 1474 text). A similar fate has struck documents issued to the Teutonic Order.⁷²

We have sixteen or seventeen indulgences issued to the Fraternity of St John's parish church over several years which survive on two large parchments (five from 1430, one from 1432, four from 1454; one is dated 1460, one or two – 1463, two or three – 1469; one comes from 1471 and a further two from 1495. These illustrate conveniently the occasions on which such a document might be obtained. On 4 and 9 October 1430 several ecclesiastical dignitaries gathered in Vilnius, namely Matthias of Vilnius, Zbigniew Oleśnicki of Cracow, Andrew of Lutsk, Paul of Kamieniec and Nicholas of Medininkai. They were asked by the wojt and citizens of Vilnius to provide the parish fraternity with an indulgence of one Lent. Most probably the occasion for the bishops' presence and the concomitant indulgence was the planned coronation of Grand Duke Vytautas as king. At this time King Jogaila was present in the city.⁷³

⁷¹ Ibid., and also M. Walczak, 'Ikonografia miniatury na dokumencie odpustowym Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego z roku 1449 w świetle papieskiej i soborowej propagandy w średniowieczu', *Magistro et amico – amici discipulique. Lechowi Kalinowskiemu w osiemdziesięciolecie urodzin*, ed. J. Gadowski (Cracow, 2002), 481–504. Grube's manuscripts: *KDKDW*, no. 327, pp. 383–5 (Vilnius, 30 June 1483); 3 January 1483, Gdańsk; 3 February 1483, Elbląg, W. Rozynekowski, 'Brackie dokumenty odpustowe w wielkich miastach pruskich w średniowieczu', *Ecclesia et civitas: Kościół i życie religijne w mieście średniowiecznym*, ed. H. Manikowska, H. Zaremska [*Colloquia Mediaevalia Varsoviensia*, 3] (Warsaw, 2002), 229–30. In 1482–83 the pope expressed his support for Grube: *VMPL*, II, nos. 236–7, pp. 216–18; nos. 248–9, pp. 222–3; Cardinal Frederick: *KDKDW*, no. 426, pp. 492–4; no. 427, pp. 494–5.

⁷² Ehlers, *Ablässpraxis*, 315–17.

⁷³ *CM*, I, no. 40, p. 79. For the date, see G. Błaszczyk, *Burza koronacyjna: Dramatyczny fragment stosunków polsko-litewskich w XV wieku* (Poznań, 1998), 152. Another Polish bishop, the chancellor John of Włocławek, was in Lithuania at that time: Długosz, *Annales. Liber XI*, 295.

The same indulgence was confirmed by Jogaila's supporter Bishop Conrad of Wrocław on 7 August 1432. The prelate was probably in Vilnius to gather intelligence about the conflict brewing between Švitrigaila and Žygimantas Kęstutaitis over who should rule Lithuania. Conrad reported on this to Grand Master Paul von Rüssdorf.⁷⁴ Similar occasions may be associated with the indulgences on the second parchment which were issued between 1454 and 1495.⁷⁵ On 11 February 1454 four recently elected Lithuanian and Ruthenian bishops (Nicholas of Vilnius, Jan Tarnowski of Chełm, Nicholas Labunski of Kamieniec and George of Medininkai) were in Vilnius, where they each issued an indulgence of one lent for St John's parish fraternity.⁷⁶ The following day the bishops of Vilnius, Chełm and Kiev granted similar graces to the parish church. Shortly after their consecration as bishop of Lutsk the former Vilnius canons Vaclovas Korčakas and Jonas Losovičius granted the parish fraternity an indulgence. We might suspect that one of the reasons for Bishop Losovičius' presence in Vilnius may have been the wedding of Eudokia, the daughter of Prince Semen Olelkovich to the ruler of Moldavia, Stephen the Great in summer 1463.⁷⁷ The fact that the issuing of indulgences corresponds with events in the personal lives of bishops or affairs of state is to be expected. As Swanson remarks, in England collective indulgences would be granted as bishops were 'caught' during visits to certain churches or place such as meetings of parliament or the royal council.⁷⁸

The aim of requesting and of issuing such indulgences was to strengthen the faith and wellbeing of members of the burghers' fraternity and encourage their devotion to Catholic doctrine and

⁷⁴ CM, I, no. 40, p. 80 (7 August 1432); *Index actorum saeculi XV ad res publicas Poloniae spectantium*, ed. A. Lewicki [*Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia*, XI] (Cracow, 1888), no. 1833, p. 213.

⁷⁵ GStA PK, Urkundensammlung Zasztowt, no. 6; CM, I, nos. 54, 56, 60, pp. 97–8, 100–1, 108. This parchment contains twelve indulgences.

⁷⁶ CM, I, no. 54, p. 97.

⁷⁷ Vaclovas became bishop on 28 September 1459, and issued the indulgence on 6 February 1460; Jonas succeeded him on 24 January 1463, and issued the indulgence on 30 September that year; for the Moldavian wedding of 5 June (July?) 1463, see *Slaviano-moldavskie letopisi XV–XVI vv.*, ed. F. A. Grekul (Moscow, 1976), 26, 63, 69, 106, 118; see also Czamańska, *Moldawia*, 128–9.

⁷⁸ Swanson, *Indulgences*, 124–5.

practice. The requirement to pray ten Our Fathers and Hail Marys for the intention of members of the fraternity living and dead, offer up a penny or help bury the fraternity's dead in the cemetery beside the church strengthened its members' faith and fellowship. In Poland and Prussia too such indulgences were used to strengthen the parish community and its Christian behaviour.⁷⁹

Indulged Corpus Christi processions in Lithuania

The feast of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) was established in 1246 by Bishop Robert of Liège and in less than two decades it was celebrated by the Church Universal when Urban IV issued his Bull *Transiturus*, along with an indulgence of 40 days for those taking part in the feast. John XXII confirmed the feast day and in 1320 Bishop Nanker of Cracow introduced it into his diocese, as a result of which Corpus Christi processions became especially popular in Poland during the fourteenth and later centuries. From 1384 it was common for such processions to extend beyond the churches and churchyards into the streets.⁸⁰ The Jagiellonians showed special devotion to the feast, as can be seen from the Chronicle of Długosz and royal account books. At Corpus Christi Mass Casimir

⁷⁹ Rozykowski, 'Brackie dokumenty, 227–32. Cf. the practices in Teutonic Order parishes: Ehlers, *Ablatpraxis*, 167–71.

⁸⁰ H. Zaremska, 'Procesje Bożego ciała w Krakowie w XIV–XVI wieku', *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. B. Geremek (Wrocław etc., 1978), 26–7; eadem, *Bractwa w średniowiecznym Krakowie: Studium form społecznych życia religijnego* (Wrocław etc., 1977), 150–3; a general account of this cult is provided in Z. Zalewski, 'Święto Bożego Ciała w Polsce do wydania Rytułu Piotrkowskiego (1631)', *Studia z dziejów liturgii w Polsce: Praca zbiorowa*, ed. M. Rachowicz, W. Schenk [Rozprawy Wydziału Teologiczno-Kanonicznego. Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 33] (Lublin, 1973), 95–161; *Kolektarz wawelski sprzed 1526 roku: Świadek liturgii Kościoła krakowskiego w XV, XVI i XVII wieku*, ed. S. Fedorowicz [Monumenta Sacra Polonorum, III] (Cracow, 2007), 198–205; the cult in Lithuania: H. Hołodok, 'Zarys dziejów kultu N. Sakramentu w diecezji wileńskiej', *Wiadomości Kościelne Archidiecezji w Białymstoku*, 3 (1983), 103–21. European background: M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991).

Jagiellończyk would offer two zloties.⁸¹ In 1451 Casimir entered into Cracow in great ceremony to be met by the bishop and city clergy. The following day, Thursday, he attended Mass and took part in the Corpus Christi procession. Długosz describes how the king and his mother with a host of noblemen followed after the Blessed Sacrament as trumpets blasted.⁸² As in other countries, so in Poland and Lithuania the solemn entry of the monarch into cities imitated Corpus Christi ceremonial.⁸³ At Corpus Christi in Vilnius or Minsk Casimir's son Alexander Jagiellończyk would offer a zloty during Mass.⁸⁴ In Lithuania the faithful would carry burning candles in procession around the church or its cemetery.⁸⁵

In 1427, most probably during discussions of how Stanisław Ciołek's election as bishop of Poznań might be advanced, Bishop Stanisław II (z Pawłowic) of Płock (1425–1439) and the Dominican bishop of Kiev, Michael Trestke (1407–1427)⁸⁶ issued an indulgence of one lent to St John's church. Their aim was to encourage the faithful to visit the church more often and contribute to the maintenance of its fabric and the equipping of its altars (with books, chalices, candles). The faithful were to kneel before the central (high) altar where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, saying one Our Father and one Hail Mary every Sunday and holy day. Both men and women were exhorted to take part in a Blessed Sacrament procession around the church and accompany the priest when he took the Sacrament to the sick, whom he would anoint with holy oil.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Długosz, (sub anno 1451), see below n. 82; T. Lalik, 'Kaplica królewska i publiczne praktyki religijne rodziny Kazimierza Jagiellończyka', *KH*, 88 (1981), 400; U. Borkowska, 'Codzienny i odświętny ceremonial religijny na dworze Jagiellonów', *Theatrum ceremoniale na dworze książąt i królów polskich*, ed. M. Markiewicz, R. Skowron (Cracow, 1999), 70–1, 80–1.

⁸² Długosz, Jan, *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae. Liber duodecimus (1445–1461)*, ed. D. Turkowska (Cracow, 2003), 102.

⁸³ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 258–67; cf. S. C. Rowell, 'The Joyous Entry of Casimir I and IV into Lithuanian and Polish Cities', *LHS*, 11 (2006), 89–106, and J. Maciejewski, *Adventus episcopi: Pozaliturgiczne aspekty inauguracji władzy biskupiej w Polsce średniowiecznej na tle europejskim* (Bydgoszcz, 2013).

⁸⁴ *Lietuvos didžiojo kunigaikščio Aleksandro Jogailaičio dvaro sąskaitų knygos (1494–1504)*, ed. D. Antanavičius, R. Petrauskas (Vilnius, 2007), 218 (18 June 1500), 276 (10, 17 June 1501), 310 (18 June 1503).

⁸⁵ See Rowell, 'XV a. vyskupų', app. 1–3; *KDKDW*, no. 288, pp. 336–8 (4 October 1474).

⁸⁶ Stanisław was elected in 1425; Trestke's death is dated traditionally to 'post 1426'. He worked closely with Jogaila: T. M. Trajdos, *Kościół Katolicki*, 58–63.

⁸⁷ Rowell, 'XV a. vyskupų', app. 1.

The aim of the 1454 indulgences was similar to that of the 1427 document and their conditions were slightly broader: the recipient was to kneel before the Sacrament and say five Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys every day; the indulgence also applied to those who helped the material fabric of the church and the wellbeing of its clergy. Mention is made also of processions and visitation of the sick. This time a liturgical novelty is introduced, namely the faithful are to sing or hear devoutly the opening verse of St Thomas Aquinas' Corpus Christi hymn *O salutaris hostia* during the Offertory before the priest consecrates the Gifts after the *Sanctus* (when the *Benedictus* is usually sung). Prayers must be offered for the peace and unity of the Church (three Our Fathers and Hail Marys). A similar requirement was made of those seeking an indulgence of one lent in the Teutonic Order's church of St James at Rotenburg, where the hymn *Ecce Panis angelorum* was to be sung.⁸⁸

Over three decades indulgence conditions remain similar: support for the physical and spiritual fabric of the church and certain devotional practices, especially devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, help to the sick and ritualised public peace. A parish body is formed to honour the Body of Christ. This indulgence is associated first and foremost with the cult of the Blessed Sacrament rather than the parish patron saint. It should be noted that in 1474 at the behest of Martynas Goštautas Cardinal Louis issued an indulgence for the Vilnius Franciscans (seven years and seven lents) enabling the friars to hold a Blessed Sacrament procession on all feasts of Our Lady and those of Ss Nicholas, Antony, Louis, and Clare.⁸⁹ During these feasts the faithful should follow behind the Blessed Sacrament bearing lit candles, and recite five Our Fathers and Hail Mary in remembrance of the Passion of Our Lord, recite seven such prayers in honour of Our Lady and three for the maintenance of the Faith and the wellbeing of the Church of Rome.⁹⁰

The Jagiellonian Library holds a fifteenth-century codex, the *Formularz Wilanowski* (BJ 7759 II), compiled by a scribe named Maciej

⁸⁸ Ehlers, *Ablaxspraxis*, 115–16, from 1412.

⁸⁹ Similar to the 1469 papal indulgence for Deltuva, see above p. ...and n. 35.

⁹⁰ *KDKDW*, no. 288, pp. 336–8.

of Prawków. It contains several documents issued by the bishop of Cracow and later cardinal, Zbigniew Oleśnicki, including an incomplete version of an indulgence for Vilnius Cathedral and city which requires participation in Blessed Sacrament processions. In order to promote devotion to the Sacrament one Thursday procession is to be held a month).⁹¹ This is a commemoration of Maundy Thursday and the first Mass. Judging from the documents which appear in the manuscript around this indulgence we might date it to the winter of 1454–55, when the bishop visited the grand-ducal court in Vilnius ('hac hieme in Lithuaniam').⁹² One procession a month does not seem excessive (some Prussian fraternities such as the Corpus Christi Fraternity in Toruń held one such ceremony every Thursday⁹³). However, it fits in with the Lithuanian norm, as far as we can tell. Thus Martynas Goštautas appears to have inaugurated a procession on one Thursday a month. The same privilege is granted to other Lithuanian parishes by the Sacred Penitentiary in 1493. In March of that year Stanislovas, the parish priest of St Peter's, Kaunas, obtained permission for a procession once a month, as did the starosta of Žemaitija Stanislovas Jonaitis Kęsgaila for his foundation in Kražiai; in April 1493 the palatine of Vilnius Mikalojus Mikalojaitis Radvila received a grace allowing him to organise a procession on a Thursday every other month.⁹⁴

Such processions and other forms of devotion in honour of the Blessed Sacrament were popular in fifteenth-century Lithuania, as indeed they were throughout Catholic Christendom. In 1397 Bishop Andrew of Vilnius founded an altar near the cathedral sacristy dedicated 'ad laudem Dei Omnipotentis et honorem Eius alme Genitricis Virginis Marie et specialiter in laudem et honorem

⁹¹ *Liber Mathiae de Prawków* [a fifteenth-century parchment codex], BJ, Ms. 7759 II, fo 175v–176: 'ut eiusdem sacramenti in civitate et in ecclesia cathedrali Vilmensi celebritas in dies excresceret, statuimus duximusque indulgentium et indulgencias, proponentes quod prelati et canonici ceterique presbyteri et clerici eiusdem ecclesie Vilmensis duodecim processus ferys quintis per annum'.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ I. Czarciński, *Bractwa w wielkich miastach państwa krzyżackiego w średniowieczu* (Toruń, 1993), 89.

⁹⁴ Gernaniony: *KDKDW*, no. 284, pp. 331–2; Kaunas, Kražiai and the unspecified Radvila church: APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers., 43, fos 21v, 226v.

Corporis Christi...' Each week a cathedral cleric was to offer up four Masses for Andrew's soul, of which the first was devoted to the Blessed Sacrament.⁹⁵ He intended to be buried in this chapel, which was also set aside for meetings of the Chapter.⁹⁶ In this way the personal piety of the first bishop of Vilnius informed the official life of the cathedral. The feast of Corpus Christi was one of the great feasts during which visitors to the cathedral might obtain a papal indulgence.⁹⁷

One can imagine such ceremonies from various indulgence and emolument texts. In his charter for the parish church in Grodno in 1494 Grand Duke Alexander made provision for 'two large twisted wax candles to be fixed to long torches to be lit as the priest elevates the most holy Body of Christ at Mass on Easter morning'.⁹⁸ In his 1483 indulgence for the Vilnius Franciscans Archbishop Grube of Riga ordained that during Our Lady's feasts and on St Francis' Day the Blessed Sacrament should be placed in a monstrance and carried in procession from the tabernacle around the church with lit candles to the singing of hymns. It should be kept on the altar until the end of Mass for adoration until the priest finally replaced it in the tabernacle. During the candle-lit procession incense was to be burned and participants were to recite five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys in honour of the Passion of our Lord in order to obtain (after contrite confession) the 100 days' remission from temporal punishment for their sins.⁹⁹

The fragmentary record of the 1522 Visitation of parish churches within the diocese of Vilnius with its inventory of parish treasures reveals how much liturgical paraphernalia connected with the

⁹⁵ *KDKDW*, no. 29, pp. 48–50 (9 May 1397).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 33, p. 56; no. 34, p. 60.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, no., 97, pp. 124–5; no. 141, pp. 159–60 (visit the church during the feast and its octave and listen to the sermon).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 410, p. 475: 'alias duas magnas circumvolutas super longas phalanges ro accenssione circa elevationem sanctissimi Corporis Christi'.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, no., 327, p. 385: '... quod hiis singulis diebus festivitatum predictarum venerabile sacramentum Eukaristie corporis et sanguinis Domini nostri Ihesu Christi ... in quadam monstrancia, accensis candelis, cum processione, cantu ac debita reverencia et honore de ciborio per circuitum ecclesie predictae honorifice portatur, exince in altari usque ad finem misse ab omnibus christifidelibus adorandum ... post finem misse ad ciborium seu sanctuarium reportatur...'

Corpus Christi cult was held in local places of worship.¹⁰⁰ Vilnius diocesan parish churches were endowed with monstrances, paxes or pax breves and pyxes. A monstrance, usually in the form of a cross or tower is a vessel designed to expose the Blessed Sacrament or holy relics held in its glass receptacle for the adoration of the faithful. It can be placed on an altar or carried in procession. They are known in Lithuania from the time of the official baptism. Długosz says that Queen Jadwiga gave such vessels to Vilnius cathedral and Grand Duke Alexander paid for the repair of at least one such item.¹⁰¹ Twelve appear in the Inventory of Vilnius diocesan parish church treasures in 1522 (0.17 per parish, compared with a figure of 30 [0.85] in Wieluń, according to the inventory of churches in that ancient archdeanery of the Diocese of Gniezno, recorded in autumn 1522)¹⁰². Most are made of silver or silver gilt, and three are in the form of a cross. The silver gilt monstrance in Punia was worth 33 bags of groats, while the large silver gilt one in Kaunas was inscribed with images of the church's patrons, Ss Peter and Paul. The most famous and extravagant surviving monstrance in Lithuania is the one bequeathed to St Nicholas' Collegiate Church in Geraniony by Albertas Goštautas in 1539. It weighs 56 marks of silver and has been kept in the Vilnius Cathedral treasury since 1698.¹⁰³ The Goštautas Chapel in Vilnius Cathedral alone had three large silver monstrances with relics of St John the Baptist; St Adalbert; and the teeth of Ss Margaret, Dorothy and Apollonia.

¹⁰⁰ *Acta primae visitationis*.

¹⁰¹ Długosz, *Annales. Liber X*, 163 (sub anno 1387); on 22 June 1498 during the Octave of Corpus Christi Alexander gave a zloty to a goldsmith to repair a monstrance: *Lietuvos didžiojo kunigaikščio Aleksandro*, 14.

¹⁰² In general on monstrances see A. J. Nowowiejski, *Wykład liturgii Kościoła Katolickiego*, 2 (Warsaw, 1902, 2nd edition Ząbki, 2007), 593–611. The Wieluń inventory is published in 'Inventarium omnium et singulorum proventuum et beneficiorum ecclesiasticorum in et sub archidiaconatu et districtu Wielunensis territorii', *Joannis de Lasco... Liber beneficiorum archidioecesis Gnesnensis*, vol. II: *Continens archidiaconatus: Calissensem, Wielunensem, Lovicensem et Lanciensem*, ed. J. Łukowski (Gniezno, 1881), 92–157. The material is tabulated conveniently and analysed concisely in Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce*, 260–65 and tables 82 and 83.

¹⁰³ J. Kurczewski, *Kościół Zamkowy czyli Katedra Wileńska w jej dziejowym, liturgicznym, architektonicznym i ekonomicznym rozwoju*, vol. 2: *Źródła historyczne* (Vilnius, 1910), 103, 105. See also E. Laucevičius, B. R. Vitkauskienė, *Lietuvos auksakalystė XV–XIX amžiais* (Vilnius, 2001), 54–5; D. Vasiūnienė, *Bažnytinio paveldo muziejus: Muziejaus gidas* (Vilnius, 2010), 22–3.

The pax or pax brede (*pacificalis*) was a disc of silver or silver gilt with a handle; often bears an image of Christ's Face, the Agnus Dei, a Cross, the Passion or a Holy Pelican, as we see from the inventory of the Blessed Casimir Chapel in Vilnius cathedral; sometimes the pax itself was a cross¹⁰⁴; from the thirteenth century the kissing of this sacramental replaced the Kiss of Peace between the Pater Noster and Agnus Dei. The fifteenth-century Polish liturgical specialist Mikołaj of Błonie, whose popular handbook for priests, *Tractatus sacerdotalis de sacramentis* was in circulation in printed form in Lithuania, states that laymen should communicate three times a year at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, while receiving the Pax at other Masses.¹⁰⁵ Between the end of the Consecration and Holy Communion, after the Lord's Prayer came the kiss of peace. The faithful would kiss one another's cheek, men with men, women with women or pax brede would be passed to the faithful to kiss.¹⁰⁶ It provided for public expression of charity between members of the parish community and a chance for exhibition of social hierarchy, as the leading members of the community, men before women, would be presented with the pax first.¹⁰⁷ The Inventory notes fourteen such items, which compares with sixteen from the archdeanery of Wieluń (0.21 as opposed to 0.46 per parish).

The number of pyxes, or small boxes of precious metal for holding the reserved Blessed Sacrament (five, as opposed to nine) is similar

¹⁰⁴ As in the surviving fifteenth-sixteenth-century example from the Church of the Visitation, Trakai: *Vilniaus sakralinė auksakalystė: Katalogas*, ed. R. Pauliukevičiūtė (Vilnius, 2012), 19.

¹⁰⁵ T. M. Zahajkiewicz, 'Liturgia Mszy świętej w świetle *Tractatus Sacerdotalis de sacramentis* Mikołaja z Błonia', *Studia z dziejów liturgii*, pp. 62–3 and n. 158, n. 159; p. 74, n. 216. On the pax rite in medieval Poland, see P. Sczaniecki, 'Ritus pacis w liturgii mszalnej na terenie Polski', *ibid.*, 243–97.

¹⁰⁶ 'et populus ulterius unus alteri per ordinem quilibet in suo sexu [osculum] dent et prebeant ita videlicet, quod masculi inter se et femine inter se tantum huiusmodi osculum pacis prebeant et accipiant, ita quod ipse minister ipsis feminis libro vel ymagine Christi osculatis ipsa librum vel ymaginem osculanda prebeat et quod ipse femine ulterius inter se una aliam osculetur dicendo sic: "mijr stoła", et recipiens respondeat: Amen', the Kiss of Peace according to the Statutes of Bishop Jakub z Korzkwi of Płock (1396–1425): P. Sczaniecki, *Służba Boża w dawnej Polsce: Studium o Msze św.* (Poznań etc., 1962), 170.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 168–71, 174–6, ill. 49–51 between pp. 192 and 193, commentary p. 254.

to that in Wieluń (averages of 0.21 and 0.25).¹⁰⁸ These were made of silver (*pixis* in Maišiagala and Kernavė, a *vasculum* in Goniądz and Anykščiai) and silver gilt (the large example at Kobylnik).

Among parish vestments we come across a remarkable number of an item which is associated often, albeit not exclusively with the cult of the Blessed Sacrament. The ceremonial cloak worn by a priest when he visits the sick, leads a procession, buries the dead or conducts Divine Office is known as a cope.¹⁰⁹ We come across 77 of them (1.13 per parish) made of damask (2), brocade (27), cloth of gold (1), with the silk of 47 not being specified. The Wieluń inventory mentions only twelve copes (an average of 0.34 per parish).

The propagation of the cult on a larger scale is witnessed by the building and endowing of chantry altars and churches devoted to Corpus Christi. By 1506 there were seven churches and one chantry with this dedication in the diocese of Vilnius, but none, it seems, in Žemaitija.¹¹⁰

The indulgences granted to Vilnius parish church and the Franciscan friary, grand-ducal account books and parish emoluments are not the only written sources to record devotion to the Blessed

¹⁰⁸ The word is also a synonym for ciborium, a closed vessel, often in the form of a chalice, used for the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. See Nowowiejski, *Wykład liturgii*, 571–93.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 304–21. For surviving early Lithuanian examples see *Šilkas ir auksas: XV–XVIII a. šilkiniai audiniai Bažnytinio paveldo muziejaus liturginių drabužių rinkinyje*, ed. R. Pauliukevičiūtė (Vilnius, 2014), 18–19.

¹¹⁰ M. Paknys, 'Šventųjų kultai LDK XV–XVII a. pradžioje', *Švenieji vyrai*, 78 (Kroshin, Garadzilava, Varniany, Losk, Semeliškės, Karkažiškės, Eišiškės; Vilniaus cathedral), 89 (*deest*). From the texts published in *KDKDW* we see how on 2 February 1443 Jokūbas Ralovičius (Jakub Ralowicz) donated property to the Church of Corpus Christi, the Purification of Our Lady, and All Saints which he had built and endowed at Garadzilava (no. 174, pp. 197–9, see also the 1498 emolument, no. 456, pp. 534–5); in 1493 Duchess Ona Kaributaitytė-Jonušienė endowed her Losk foundation 'ad laudem et honorem Omnipotentis Dei et Beatissime Virginis Mariae specialiter tamen 'Corporis Jesu Christi et gloriosorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum necnon sanctae Annae matris Mariae Virginis item et s. Georgii martyris': no. *ibid.*, no. 402, pp. 463–4). In 1501 Grand Duke Alexander founded the Semeliškės Church of Corpus Christi, St Laurence and St Catharine: *ibid.*, no. 519, p. 623. It is uncertain how far the only known copy of a 1499 indulgence issued apparently by Bp Martynas III of Žemaitija for Luokė parish church is accurate. It refers to the church as dedicated to Corpus Christi and All Saints; a 1496 document gives the dedication as All Saints: BJ, Ms 6321, fos 80r–v, 87–8.

Sacrament. The Lutheran apologist Martynas Mažvydas notes with dissatisfaction how the Corpus Christi feast was popular in Tauragė and drew even Protestant pilgrims from Prussia.¹¹¹ The Trakai Karaite divine Isaac ben Abraham described Christians as ‘pagans who from ancient custom worship and adore natural creatures, wooden idols and especially a crust of bread’.¹¹²

The statutes of the 1528 Synod of Vilnius speak of excessive Blessed Sacrament processions that are held too often and encourage superstition and abuses of devotion. Bishop John the Bastard feared lest the frequent processions held in St John’s Church and certain monasteries (he means the Franciscan Conventual and Observant priories) undermine respect for the Sacrament. He, like his predecessor Albert Tabor, sought to inspect papal and legatine indults to check their authenticity and whether they were being misused.¹¹³ John sought to enforce his control over what was clearly vibrant religious life in his diocese.¹¹⁴ He also sought to inspect the conditions under which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved and exposed, stressing that monstrances and pyxes should be made of precious metal rather than wood.¹¹⁵ Attempts to control the number of processions and safeguard the privileges and income of a smaller number of churches were made in Germany, Italy, the

¹¹¹ ‘Briefe V [1551]’, M. Mažvydas, *Katekizmas ir kiti raštai*, ed. G. Subačius et al. (Vilnius, 1993), 674.

¹¹² ‘praecipue vero ex veteri consuetudine panis crustula etiamnum colunt et adorant’: *Tela ignaea sathanae: Liber munimen fidei, autore R. Isaaco filio Abrahami ex manuscripto africano* (Frankfurt, 1681) 57.

¹¹³ ‘Hac in civitate vilnensi in ecclesia parochiali sancti Joannis ac in nonnullis monasteriis regularis observantiae, quinimmo in universa diocesi nostras publicas processiones, et has innumeras, cum Eucharistiae sacramento circumcirca ecclesias tam diebus festis quam noviluniis celebrari adeo, quod haec res gloriosissima ob tam frequentes et supervacaneas tales supplicaciones et cerimonias superstitiosas in abusum venit ... in hibemus omnibus tam in hac civitate vilnensi, quam in tota diocesi nostra huiusmodi processiones frequentantibus (festo Corporis Christi cum sua octava excepto), ne eas tam publicas et tam iuges celebrare et peragere praesumant, quousque litterarum apostolicarum aut legatorum super huiusmodi reformatione concessi nobis dispensationes et indulgentias fuerint ostensae. Illis enim visis, lectis et pensitatis quid quodcuque loco congruum fore ... Interea tamen nemo audeat publicare aut praedicare indulgentias qualescunque, nisi prius a nobis fuerint revisae diligenter...’: *Concilia Poloniae*, II, 124–5.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 118–21.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

Low Countries and Bohemia during the fifteenth century such as at Mainz in 1451 and Cologne in 1452.¹¹⁶

Bishop John the Bastard was shocked by the news that in his diocese Blessed Sacrament processions were organised during new moons (*novilunia*). It is worth noting that Polish peasants would also kneel before the new moon as before the Sacrament and sing hymns usually addressed to Christ such as: 'Illumina vultum tuum super nos'.¹¹⁷ In eastern Lithuanian folklore too the new moon is associated with the Son of God and although the history of this phenomenon remains unclear, it could date back as far as the late Middle Ages.¹¹⁸ It is interesting to consider that perhaps the Corpus Christi devotions may have provided a useful counterweight to folk cults of the moon.

The faithful in at least three of the four Lithuanian dioceses (we know very little of Catholic life in the see of Kiev) received Communion at least once a year. The Consistory court records of the diocese of Lutsk which cover mainly cases from Podlaskan parishes usually record that witnesses, including Lithuanian peasant colonists, had carried out their Easter obligations. It is from a dispute between a gentleman and a parish priest, who refused to give him Communion at Easter because he did not know him, that we learn that the basic prayers or *necessaria* (the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Creed, and the Ten Commandments) were taught in the Lithuanian language – as common sense and the evidence of the fly leaf of a priest's handbook once owned by the Vilnius Bernardines dictate.¹¹⁹ Parishioners accused a priest who gave Communion

¹¹⁶ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 291–2, n. 26: '... ne populi fidelis devotio ex frequenti ejus visione repescat ... ipsum sacramentum visibiliter in monstrantiis preterquam in festo Corporis Christi per ejus octavas deferri, et tunc non nisi sub divino officio octave ejusdem ostendi debeat...'

¹¹⁷ M. Olszewski, *Świat zabobonów w średniowieczu: Studium kazania o zabobonach Stanisława ze Skarbmierza* (Warsaw, 2002), 151–3, 184: '[24] Audiant simplices, qui ad novilunium genua flectunt et orant ... non enim adorari debet luna'.

¹¹⁸ See S. Jasiūnaitė, 'Maldelės į jauną mėnulį rytų Lietuvos folklore: etnolingvistinis aspektas', *Baltistica*, 41 (2006), 473–88, esp. pp. 475–6, 482.

¹¹⁹ The *necessaria* in Lithuanian and theft of the Sacrament are referred to in Lutsk cases of 1475, ADS D1, fos 37, 42 (publ. Rowell, 'Was fifteenth-century', 105): the fly-leaf prayers are published conveniently in Z. Zinkevičius, *Lietuvių potertai: Kalbos mokslo studija* (Vilnius, 2000), 71–3.

to one person but not another was a 'thief of the Sacrament' in so far as he had deprived someone of their right to receive the Host. Excommunication was a feared punishment which litigants sought to have repealed at local (Lutsk or Vilnius), provincial (Gniezno) and central level (Rome). Reforming bishops such as Albert Tabor complained of the abuse of portable altars which were used to serve a wider circle than solely the recipient of the grace and his or her immediate family and household.

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is only one part of late-medieval Catholic practice to have left its mark in Lithuanian folklore and art. It is part of the broader subject of the Passion of Our Lord, as exemplified concretely by the image of piety, the Man of Sorrows, the *Rupintojėlis* common throughout Catholic Europe¹²⁰. Cardinal Louis' 1474 indulgence for the Vilnius Franciscans which illustrates clearly the position of Corpus Christi within the general context of Our Lord's Passion should be compared with the same prelate's indulgence for the Corpus Christi Church in Lviv¹²¹.

By way of conclusion we may say that over the course of the fifteenth century Catholic practices trickled down gradually among a wider cross-section of society. This can be seen particularly clearly in applications to Rome and provincial bishops for personal graves and spiritual favours, which cost much time, effort and money to obtain and except under certain circumstances (legitimising marriage, permitting clerics to continue their careers) were not compulsory and could easily be avoided, viz. supplications and indulgences. In this respect Lithuanian Catholicism is marked perhaps more by an *imitatio regis* than an inner *imitatio Christi*, although the latter cannot be ruled out. Members of the Lithuanian and Polish ruling house were the first to send supplications to Rome, followed by the higher nobility. By mid-century we have one example at least which

¹²⁰ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 95–130, especially pp. 106–109 ('imago pietatis' or 'rūpintojėlis'), 238–48; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 308–10; R. Janonienė, 'Vilniaus šv. Pranciškaus ir Bernardino Bažnyčios dekoro ikonografinės programos: Kristaus kančios tema', *Ženklas ir simbolis senojoje Lietuvos dailėje* [AAAV, 7] (Vilnius, 1996), 176; eadem, 'XVI a. pradžios sienų tapyba Vilniaus bernardinų bažnyčioje', *Menotyra*, 23/2 (2001), 3–10, esp. p. 5.

¹²¹ Trajdos, 'Kult Męki Pańskie', 110–11.

involves a skilled artisan (Peter the Tailor). While most years between 1472 and 1492 see on average between one and five supplications from Lithuania, in 1493–94 twelve graces were granted and in 1499–1501 – 37. Seeking such spiritual graces became a tradition for many a noble family which continued over several generations – the Goštautai, Kešgailos, Leliušai, Radvilos are but four examples. Those who made such supplications were also active as members of parish fraternities, patrons of parish churches and chantry chapels, such as the Norkučiai of Maišiagala, the Kešgailos of Deltuva and Žemaitija, and the Ivaškovičiai, who supported eleven ecclesiastical foundations across the Grand Duchy (not to mention the Radvilos). A similar spread of social classes and geographical locations appears among appeal cases heard at the consistorial court in Gniezno (Punia, Šalčininkai, Iwye, Zhygmuntsishki, Eišiškės, Daugai, Geraniony, Maišiagala, Nemenčinė, Kaunas, Vilnius, Antakalnis). In both cases the number of people from Žemaitija is considerably smaller than from the diocese of Vilnius. While confessional graces and *butterbriefe* (permission to eat meat and dairy products during times of fast) for laymen were strictly personal, the right to possess a portable altar allowed priests to celebrate Mass outside church buildings and laymen to employ priests to serve households on manor premises (a privilege which was abused: for parish priests and the bishop a diminution of their rights, for missionary clergy – a *felix culpa*).

Indulgences increased the prestige of those institutions which obtained them and those who were encouraged to fulfil indulgence conditions to carry out their duty (without confession and Holy Communion the special remissions could not be received). Visiting and supporting church buildings and participation in certain devotions (especially those connected with Corpus Christi and the major feasts of the Church) was propagated more energetically. The 1499 supplication of Albert Tabor and the attempt to restrict the number of Blessed Sacrament processions in the diocese of Vilnius reflect overenthusiasm among laymen for such devotion and fear on the part of bishops that they cannot control their flock as they wish rather than a failure of the Catholic mission.

Lithuanian Catholics go to Court

While the Statute or Canons may tell us something is wrong, it is resort to legal procedures that indicates what plaintiffs regard as criminal and the court in which they choose to prosecute those who trespass against them indicates their acceptance of that institution's social relevance. For this reason the evidence of church courts provides us indirectly with examples of how Christian manners and ecclesiastical institutions become embedded in a given society. A century or so after conversion from above Lithuanian society of various ranks, not only the monarch and his noble servants but also burghers and peasants had recourse to church courts even in cases where the matter in hand would have been served more commonly and properly in the secular courts. Consistory courts had a right to hear cases brought to them voluntarily by laymen who acknowledged the Church's authority, even when the issues to be judged were not strictly spiritual. Needless to say, this irked the secular authorities.¹

That may be all well and good. Unfortunately we must concede from the outset that Consistory court records from the sees of

¹ Church courts in medieval Poland: A. Vetulani, 'Początki oficjalatu biskupiego w Polsce', *Nova Polonia Sacra*, 3 (1934), 1–56. The newest research in this area comes from A. Gąsiorowski and I. Skierska, 'Średniowieczni oficjałowie gnieźnieńscy', *RH* 61 (1995), 37–85, and *idem*, 'Oficjalaty okręgowe w późnośredniowiecznej archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej', *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne* 48 (1995), 92–124; I. Skierska, 'Źródła do badania praktyk religijnych w średniowiecznej Polsce: Akta sądów kościelnych i kapituł', *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne*, 87 (2007), 174–94. See also P. Hemperek, *Oficjalat okręgowy w Lublinie XV–XVIII wieku: Studium z dziejów organizacji i kompetencji sądownictwa kościelnego* (Lublin, 1974). On the Vilnius consistory, see Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 18–21. On the competing jurisdictions of ecclesiastical and secular courts, see B. Wojciechowska, *Ekskomunika w Polsce średniowiecznej: Normy i funkcjonowanie* (Kielce, 2010), 185–207. The variety of cases heard in church courts is analysed there: *ibid.*, 217–67.

Vilnius and Medininkai are no longer extant. The records were destroyed centuries ago and only very rare extracts survive in other manuscript records. However, there is no need to lose heart completely. We have a reasonably full record from the Diocese of Lutsk, politically Lithuanian until 1569, from 1469 onwards, and cases involving priests and laymen from the Grand Duchy were heard in the church court of the Mazovian see of Płock for specific reasons (usually because the litigants were from Mazovia originally and/or the bishop had connections in Vilnius). The Consistory judges of Gniezno heard appeals from cases which had already passed before the bishop and his official in Vilnius. This material and evidence of Lithuanian lawyers working in the Diocese of Cracow illustrate how by the end of the fifteenth century Lithuanians were well integrated as litigants and court officials into ecclesiastical judicial institutions in the Kingdom of Poland as well as the Grand Duchy itself.²

By his charter of 30 August 1391 the first bishop of Vilnius, Andrew, granted his cathedral Chapter the right to prosecute laymen accused of theft, non-payment of tithes and other damage to the Church.³ On 26 July 1533 Sigismund the Old confirmed Bishop Matthias' charter empowering the canons to judge deviant laymen.⁴ The post of bishop's official in Vilnius, charged with hearing consistory court cases is known in sources from 1439, when Canon Jonas Gomulka held the position.⁵ The next known officials were Mikalajus (1456–1460) and Jonas of Pyzdry (1471–1484).⁶

Due to a general paucity of surviving records the first known official of the diocese of Medininkai is Canon Paulius of Przasnysz

² E. Knappek, 'Przybysze z Litwy i Rusi w konsystorzu krakowskim w XV i XVI w.', *NP*, 111 (2009), 269–78.

³ 'Omnes iniuratores et occupatores violentos decimarum vestrarum ... rerum quarumlibet raptores ac bonorum vestrorum et ecclesiae molestatores in diocesi nostra existentes citare, iudicare necnon sententiis excommunicationis praemissa canonica monitione excommunicare, aggravare, reaggravare et caetera alia, quae sunt iuris ad haec pertinencia': *KDKDW*, no. 21, pp. 36–7.

⁴ Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy czyli katedra wileńska*, 2 (Vilnius, 1910), 41–3.

⁵ *KDKDW*, nos. 158, 172, 174, 175, Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 18–19; *LKD* no. 676.

⁶ *KDKDW*, nos. 224, 226, 237, 271, 281, 340; Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 19; *LKD*, nos. 1391, 704.

(Mazovia) (1503–1512/15), who was succeeded by his fellow canon, Fr Benediktas.⁷ Even so the consistory court was active much earlier. In December 1476 the Sacred Penitentiary heard a supplication from a priest who had been condemned by the bishop of Medininkai for the murder of a church servant.⁸

By the mid-fifteenth century preferment to bishoprics within the Grand Duchy was offered to men of gentle or burgher birth who were learned in canon law and skilled in its practical application, having served as archdeacon or bishop's official. We might cite the cases of Bishop George of Medininkai (1453–1464) and his successor Matthias of Topola (1464–1470).⁹ Bishop Andrew (Goskowicz) of Vilnius (1481–91) was a doctor of law and former professor of the University of Cracow; he appears in the record as archdeacon of Vilnius for a dozen or so years (1469–1481).¹⁰ In 1492 there were three major ecclesiastical appointments in the Grand Duchy: Martinus Johannis Lituanus, who had learned the law at the Roman Curia became bishop of Medininkai and archdeacon of Vilnius; the previous archdeacon, John Andriuševičius was appointed bishop of Lutsk; and a former consistory procurator,

⁷ Paulius [LKD, no. 187] was one of the canon executors of Bishop Martin III's will, dated 16 May 1512: *CM*, I, no. 114, pp. 177–80; when the will was registered in Gniezno on 4 May 1515 the procurator, Andreas de Rimanow, represented the executors, including Paulius the official: S. C. Rowell, 'Martin III, bishop of Medininkai, archdeacon and canon of Vilnius: The lawyer bishop', *Krikščioniškosios tradicijos raiška viduramžių–naujųjų laikų kasdienybės kultūroje: Europietiški ir lietuviški puslapiai [Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, 27]* (Klaipėda, 2013), 57. Benediktas [LKD, no. 375], who was a canon of Medininkai between 1509 and 1522 is recorded in a document of 6 June 1513 as official: *CM*, I, no. 115, pp. 180–3, here p. 183. See also G. Błaszczuk, *Diecezja żmudzka... Ustrój*, 92–5, 110, 122.

⁸ *KDKDW*, no. 300, pp. 355–6: 'ad episcopum Mednicensem detulerunt... quidem episcopus aliunde dicto oratore, eo nec citato nec vocato... ipsum oratorem officio et divinis suspendit'.

⁹ George had been archdeacon of Vilnius (1447–1453), as had Matthias (1460–1464): *LKD*, nos. 1033, 1664.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 182. See also S. C. Rowell, 'Archival interface: the Goschowicz in Gdańsk and Vilnius, 1442–1483', *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės istorijos šaltiniai*, 383–93; idem, 'Anekdotinė emporika: Kaip XV a. Lietuvos pirkliai įveikė Dievo ir valdovų sukurtas kliūtis prekybai', *LIM 2008/2* (2009), 85–100.

Canon Albert Tabor became bishop of Vilnius.¹¹ More such examples may be cited.¹²

From the records of the Consistory Court in Gniezno we have appeal cases. This means that considerable time, effort and money had already been invested in these disputes at local level. They come from across the Grand Duchy – albeit mostly from Vilnius but also from Deltuva, Giedraičiai, Grodno, Kaunas, Lyntupy, Medininkai (involving separately the bishop, Martin III, and a canon, Solomon¹³), Merkinė, Salakas, Semeliškės, Švenčionys, Trakai, Varniany, Verkiai, and Volkovysk.¹⁴ Litigants come from across the social spectrum – matrimonial disputes involve the gentry as well as burghers from Kaunas and Vilnius.¹⁵ What little we know of musical life in Vilnius cathedral is expanded by consistory material from Cracow and Gniezno. Thus, in 1510 the organ-maker Stanisław Harnazelyg of Cracow was prosecuted by Jonas Filipavičius, canon warden of Vilnius, for taking 12 florins to build an organ and failing to do so. An appeal in this case came before a judge in Gniezno in 1513.¹⁶ A married couple in Vilnius sued another married couple

¹¹ *LKD*, no. 1257; Rowell, 'Martin III', 36–40. Jonas is recorded as a canon of Vilnius from 1486: *LKD*, no. 737; he is referred to as archdeacon and official in the Gniezno appeal case of the Vilnius burghers Martinus Janczelewicz, Nicolaus Talstikovicz on 27 March 1491 and must have acted in this capacity during the original trial in Vilnius (Jonas was accused of abuse of power by judging a case in which he was involved personally): AAG, Acta Cons. A59, see below p. 447 and n. 39. On 5 October 1491 Albertus Taborowicz [*LKD*, no. 58, bp of Vilnius 1492–1507] was referred to as procurator in the case.

¹² Bishop Paul Alšėniškis of Lutsk (1507–36), and subsequently archdeacon (1519–1536) and bishop of Vilnius (1536–1555) [*LKD*, no. 1877]; Nicholas Radvila of Medininkai (1515–1529/30) who studied law in Paris, Orleans and Italy [*ibid.*, no. 1457]; John Filipavičius, doctor of canon law, bp of Kiev (1519–1524) [*ibid.*, no. 754]; Nicholas Viežgaila, vicar general and official of Vilnius (1521–1523), bp of Kiev (1526–1531) [*ibid.*, no. 1451].

¹³ Solomon canon of Medninkai vs Gregorius of Kaunas (18 April 1520): AAG, Acta Cons. A82, fos 31, 33r–v, 37, 38, 38v, 40.

¹⁴ Anna Pyotrasczewna de Wolkowyska vs Stanislaus Wawa, citizen of Vilnius (4 September 1506–): AAG, Acta Cons. A73, fos 94v, 97v, 105, 116r–v (interlocutory sentence in favour of Stanislaus), 118.

¹⁵ The appeal of Kotryna Kybartaitė-Sirtautaitienė against Pacas Sirtautaitis: AAG, Acta Cons. A 60 fos 74v–75, 76v, 78r–v, 79, 81, 82, 109v, 112v, 137v–138, 141v, 143; Acta Con. A61 [1493] fos 16v, 51v, 54, 55, 64v–65; Acta Cons. A 62 [1494] fos 17r–v, 43, 46, 49v, 78v.

¹⁶ On Stanisław, his 12 florins and the missing *positiwum*: Cracow, Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Krakowie, Acta Officialia Generalia 26, p. 504, calendared in

(for reasons which remain unclear),¹⁷ the pipe-welder Paul sued the Vilnius apothecary Bernard for slander, which was so serious that the craftsman had been unable to attract customers in the town.¹⁸ Slander (*diffamia*) appears quite often in records from the Grand Duchy. According to the statutes of the parish confraternity in Polonka insulting another member brought a fine of half a stone of wax, whilst physical assault was to be punished with payment of a stone of wax and 180 groats.¹⁹ Members of the Długa Dąbrowa parish confraternity invited their priest, Fr Martin, to take a drink with them, but a local gentleman, Stanisław Dworek spoke *verba mala et nephanda* to the clergyman, recorded as ‘churl, Hussite, worst of thieves and robber’. When attempts at reconciliation by the woman Tymcza failed, the case went to court.²⁰ Defamation cases brought

Cracovia Lithuanorum, II, no. 49, pp. 100–1. Philipowicz (*LKD*, no. 754) appeal in Gniezno (14 October 1513): AAG, Acta Cons. A79, fo 62v. This canon had witnessed Bishop Tabor’s gift of a house opposite the Consistory in Vilnius to the cathedral organist, Master John, on 1 October 1504, see Vilnius universiteto bibliotekos Rankraščių skyrius [VUB RS], Perg. F80–52.

¹⁷ Stanislaus Boris furrier of Vilnius and wife (Elizabeth) against Gregorius Hryn de Antocolia (Antakalnis) and wife Agnes; documents of Stanislaus Komorowski produced in evidence (19 January 1523): AAG, Acta Cons. A83, fos 81v, 82, 83v, 84, 85v, 88v, 91, 124, 145, 146v.

¹⁸ ‘Paulus cantrifusor de Vylna’ vs Bernardus apothecary of Vilnius on a charge of infamy which has prevented him from obtaining work (14 October 1521–): AAG, Acta Cons. A82 fos 196v, 199v, 201, 203, 205 (27 November, *sententia locutoria*), 206v (Paul’s counsel Andreas de Rimanow produces records from first trial), 208, 215; Acta Cons. A83 fos 3 (15 January 1522), 5v, 6v (29 January) ‘Andreas ... allegavit transactionem et concordiam factam, que impediret litis contestacionis et si fuit facta concordia super principalis negotio, videlicet super iniuriis verbalibus, ergo super accessione super qua produxit articulum additionalem’; fo 7 r–v, 41 (3 July) courier (Poznań dioc. cleric Paulus de Czarnkow) sent off to bring evidence roll from Vilnius); fo 68 (14 November), 68v, 94 (9 March 1523). The Gniezno court found the sentence imposed by the Vilnius official wrong and accuses Bernard of molesting Paul, obtaining his excommunication unjustly and causing him considerable expense: Acta Cons. C 3, fo 311v–312. In the final sentence issued on 24 December 1523 the judge was severe, accusing Bernard of using infamy to ‘ipsum Paulum in laboribus sui artificii et laboris usuque et commoditatibus et lucris exinde interesse proventibusque privasse et in summa non modicum pecuniarum dampnificasse’ and prevented him from earning a living for weeks: *ibid.*, fo 335.

¹⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 521, pp. 624–5 (1502).

²⁰ ADS, D1, fo 50: ‘canem, Hus, pessime fur, latro’. The name of Jan Hus was used in Polish as gross insult: M. Karpluk, *Słownik staropolskiej terminologii chrześcijańskiej* (Cracow, 2001), 46.

before consistory courts were no rarity in late-medieval Europe.²¹ One wonders how far the *de declaratoriis* supplications to Rome were also intended as a safeguard against possible future attacks on the applicant's reputation.

In the Gniezno appeals we read of misdemeanours involving a tailor, goldsmith, apothecary, furriers, clergy of various ranks from those in minor orders to canons of Vilnius and the bishop of Medininkai. Cases involve matrimonial disputes (broken troth), a patron's destruction of taverns belonging to his parish priest (the famous Giedraičiai dispute), a very considerable amount of money missing from the Holy Trinity Chapel of Vilnius cathedral,²² disputes over advowson (Deltuva),²³ between noblemen and

²¹ Cf. S. Bardsley, 'Sin, speech and scolding in Late Medieval England', *Fama. The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, ed. T. Fenster, D. L. Smail (Ithaca-London, 2003), 158–9.

²² 'Stephanus Kiovita mansionarius de Vilna' vs Grodno lord lieutenant Stanislaus Kiska of Ciechanowiec (25 VII 1511–1513, with sentence in 1514): AAG, Acta Cons. A78, fos 52v, 56, 65, 81v, 83v, 84v, 86v, 87, 108 (sententia interlocutoria), 110v, 112, 114, 115v, 123v, 125v, 128, 131v, 132, 139v, 141v, 171v (the lieutenant's counsel 'Jeremias de Czarnkow produxit instrumentum confessionis de manu et signo legalis Pauli de Cziechonowicz pro cuius manus et legalitatis recognitione induxit in testem discretum Joannem de Cziechonowicz'), 172–172v (10 September 1512 Stephanus' counsel Albertus de Gorzkowice compelled to acknowledge a concord document sealed by the Official of the Vilnius Chapter), 175 (17 September 1512 'litterae remissionis' from canons Adam (of Katra [LKD, no. 12]) and Casper (of Warsaw [LKD, no 1089]) of Vilnius), 186v (scribe mistakes capitaneus Szamogitiensis for Grodnensis, both of whom named Stanislaus), 187v, 188. Acta Cons. A79, fo 5v (21 January 1513), 25, 32 (18 May 1513): refers to the Grodno lieutenant as Žemaitijan and to mansionary as *Stanislaus*: *ibid.*, fo 33v, 35, 47v–48. It is only from the final sentence recorded in Acta Cons C 3, fo 220 that we learn that after the death of the mansionary priest Jacobus Leshdynka was the key to the money chest of the Holy Trinity Chapel in Vilnius cathedral handed over voluntary by Stephanus Kiovitha to reveal a loss of 200 sexagenae.

²³ The case of the Grodno lord lieutenant Stanislaus Kiška vs Žemaitija starosta Stanislaus Jonaitis Kęsgaila concerning the advowson of Deltuva (24 November 1511–): AAG, Acta Cons. A78, fos 79v, 80, 81, 82, 82v, 85, 86v–87, 99v (28 January 1512), 103, 105, 108, 110v (evidence of Joannis de Ciechanowiec), 116, 139, 140v, 142, 146r–v, 147 (11 June 1512) 'Nobilis Stephanus Bethigola de Lithwania portitor rotuli remissionis flexis genibus et tacta imagine Crucifixi iuravit fideliter portare rotulum domino commissario in persona cuius est decreta remissio', 153v–154: 'duas investituras, unam sub titulo et sigillo olim Alberti [Tabor] episcopi Vilnensis de persona Gregorii Miedza plebani et secundam sub sigillo moderni domini Alberti [Radvila] episcopi de persona Stanislai moderni instituti, necnon literas credentie debite exequutas et duas presentationes utramque sub sigillo olim generosi Nicolai Kiesgal', fos 155, 158, 165, 169, 169v,

clergy,²⁴ or between clergy of different sees,²⁵ miscarriages of justice (where the Vilnius official acted as judge in his own case), debts, the execution of wills,²⁶ slander (*diffamia*), conflicts with tradesmen (such as Paul the apothecary of Grodno and Jadwiga Okyssykowa of Merkinė)²⁷ and so on. In 1513 an appeal began over the will of the Vilnius wojt Nicholas and the guardianship of his heir, also named Nicholas between two Vilnius burghers. The outline of the case appears only in the final sentence which refers the case back

171, 172, 173, 174. Acta Cons. A79 fo 3 (14 January 1513) 'Fredericus de Betigola' swears oath 'de fideli portitura rotuli remissionis actorum prime instantie' and the roll is presented to the court. Frederick presents documents regarding tithes paid to Deltuva Church: 'quasdam literas donacionis et dotationis decimarum et certorum proventuum per olim magnificos Michaellem pallatinum Vilmensem et Joannem capitaneum Schamagiensem germanos dictos Kiesgalovic, heredes et patronos predictae ville in Dziewioltowo'. These were opposed by counsel acting for Kiška, other patron of the living. It is claimed that the documents are invalid: 'illa omnia non valent neque illis fidem adhiberi quia idem Fredericus mentitta fide vel *pelcota* existens Rutenus et propter hoc excommunicatus'. Kęsgaila's counsel retorts that 'generaliter nec obstat, quod allegat procurator ex adverso, quam Rutenus vel alter paganus sit portitor literarum, cum ipse rotulus sit sigillatus et clausus, quos habuit pro recognita': fos 4v, 5v, 8, 12, 38.

²⁴ Such as the 1512 appeal involving Jokūbas Davainaitis (Jakub Dowoynowicz) and the parish priest of Kruopa, Stanislaus: AAG, Acta Cons. A78, fos 165 (25 August 1512), 167; Acta Cons. A79, fo 5v–6, (21 January 1513), 6v: Stanislaus' counsel asserts that Jokūbas cannot sue since he is excommunicate: *ipse nobilis non habet locum standi in iudicio ex eo quod ipse dudum a canona fuit excommunicatus*; 7v (31 January) court imposes *sententiam interloquutoriam*, 8v, 9 (11 February) Stanislaus' counsel produces request for costs and was awarded '*ad quatuor sexagenas*'. Our Lady's Church in Kruopa, 9 km north-west of Lida (Belarus) was founded before 1454 by Iwaschko, Andrew and Olekhno Dowoynowicz; a muniment exists from 1460: *KDKDW*, no. 233, pp. 260–3.

²⁵ 'Mansionarius Vilmensis Paulus de Schudek' (Zadek) (palatinate of Sieradz) 'contra Petrum Strzeszewski in Lubcza plebanum' (9 April 1492): AAG, Acta Cons. A60, fo 49r, 113 (12 September), 123v, 125v.

²⁶ The will of the bishop of Medininkai Martin III was enrolled in Gniezno after his death but it was still undermined by his avaritious Radvila successor: Rowell, 'Martin III', 47–9, 57–60. Leonardus, parish priest of Vilnius vs Nicolaus Banczka de Varsavia (28 January 1513), concerning the last will and testament of Petrus Banczka, case later rubricked as the appeal of the executors of Petrus Banczka (as of 7 September 1513): AAG, Acta Cons. A79, fo 25, 40 (13 May) Leonardus' counsel Jeremias de Czarnkow seeks to call Joannes de Prasznycz, cleric of the Plock diocese as witness, perhaps the same Joannes as was Kiska's candidate for Deltuva [*LKD*, no. 798?], 53v, 54, 55, 55v, 56v, 57, 75r–v, 88v, 90v.

²⁷ Paul apothecary in Grodno vs 'Hedwigis' Ovyssymowa of Merkinė (Merecz) (18 March 1523–): AAG, Acta Cons. A83, fos 97v, 113v–114 (*Elizabeth Ovyssywowna*), 115, 148v (14 December) sentence in case contra *Helenam Ovyssymowna*. It is not only modern bureaucrats who misunderstand 'foreign' names.

to Vilnius. Unsurprisingly it involves valuable property, including a gold ring.²⁸ In some cases appellants asked for unlawful sentences of excommunication imposed by the lower court to be repealed.

Some litigants appear in more than one case simultaneously: John Kozielkowicz of Vilnius was sued (successfully) by his jilted lover Anastasia of Kaunas and subsequently by Nicholas Wolborz, procurator of the case against him, when John accused the episcopal representative and future canon of Vilnius of falsifying court records.²⁹ He also attempted to prosecute his wife's barrister Grzegorz of Kamieniec for revealing private information relevant to the case in open court. Kozielkowicz was so stubborn in his litigation, causing the case to be *aggravasse, reaggravasse et super-reaggravasse*

²⁸ Christopherus Syenyak vs Grelich/Hirbel de Wylna (6 March 1514): AAG, Acta Cons. A79, fos 87v, 88–88v: case impeded by 'difficultates propter bella et multitudinem latronum vias obsidentium'; 90v, 91v: application for fourth adjournment; 116 (14 June, *sententia interloquutoria*); 119r–v. The case, originally judged by Jan Albinus and Bp Albert Radvila, was sent back to Vilnius to be heard again (4 July 1516): 'honestus Cristoferus Syeniak et Gregorium Grebel' exequutor testamenti olim Nicolai advocati Vlnensis et tutoris Nicolai filii eiusdem advocati ... pro, de et super ciclo auri rebusque aliis': AAG, Acta Cons. C3, fo 246. The wojt Mikolai Ostotskii appears in a payment note issued by the Fraternity of St John's parish church in Vilnius dated 20 May 1506: LMAVB RS, F4–33; *Pergamentų katalogas*, no. 162, p. 71. The same document also mentions *Shinki*, which may be a form of 'Syeniak'.

²⁹ Johannes Kozyelkowycz vs Anastasia: AAG, Acta Cons. C3, fo 107; Acta Cons. A70 (1501–), fos 52, 54, 57v, 66v, 77r–v, 84v–85, 86, 88, 92v, 111v, 113r–v, 116–117v, 118r–v, 123, 131, 190; Acta Cons., A71 (20 February 1503) fos 18, 125v (19 January 1504), 126, 130, 131, 131v, 132. The case was sent back to Vilnius for resolution on 20 October 1501: Acta Cons. C3, fo 107. 'Johannes Kozyelkowicz vs Nicolaus Wolborz canonicus opataviensis super certis iniuriis verbalibus ac aliis iniuriis': Acta Cons. C3, fos 116, 119r–v; Acta Con A70 (1501–), fos 184r–v, 185, 188, 191v, 193v, 195v, 198v–199 (13 May 1502), 205r–v, 207, 213v, 214, 216v, 220v, 221v, 231, 234v, 236, 238r–v, 239v, 241r–v, 242v, 243r–v ('Stanislaus de Wilna nuncupatus Iwan tanquam portitor rotuli'), 250v; Acta Cons. A71 (1530–), fos 93 (18 September 1503), 94v, 99, 194 (8 August 1504). The appeal judge released Kozielkowicz from excommunication *ad cautelam* and ordered compensation be paid to him by Wolborz in October 1503 but upheld the 1000 florins' fine in July 1504 for insulting the bishop during a public court session: 'declaramus prefatum Joannem Cozielkovicz civem Vlnensem prenominato reverendo patre domino Alberto episcopo pro tribunali sedenti et in audientia publica palam notorie infamasse et proditorem ac falsorem actorum eiusdem domini episcopi appellatione et per hoc sibi atrociter immoriassse illicite, indebite et iniuste ipsumque reverendissimum dominum episcopum Albertum super huiusmodi infamiis et iniuriis verbalibus sancte et iuste sentenciassse.' This case of excommunication is singled out for discussion in Wojciechowska, *Ekskomunika*, 261.

to the amazement of the court which saw him imprisoned and fined 1,000 gold florins. A Vilnius burgher Jonas Gralochas appealed against a case involving his fellow townsman Jonas Jurginek, while at the same time joining forces with his wife Ona against the burgher Jurgis Mek. Jurgis Taliatas, parish priest of Eišiškės, canon of Medininkai was sued by Petras Kondratavičius of Vilnius for violence against the plaintiff and his colonists in the 1520s, reflecting the involvement of clergy in the formation of landed estates in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Lithuania.³⁰ He also appears in a 1518 case brought by Stanisław of Verkiiai, a cleric in minor orders against him and Gregorius of Lwówek for unjust and violent imprisonment.³¹ The hearing was postponed because Jurgis was away in the Roman Curia. A case for verbal and actual injuries was brought some years later by Francis, mansionary priest of Vilnius cathedral against Jurgis but without success.³² It appears that the noble canon had an inclination towards aggressive behaviour. As for Gregorius of Lwówek, he too was no stranger to the appeal court. In 1505 he summoned two canons of Vilnius, Warden Jakub Kuczyński and Kaspar of Warsaw, to bear witness in his appeal against the Vilnius

³⁰ 'Nobilis Petrus Condratowicz' vs 'Georgius de Eyxchyski, canonicus mednycensis et in Solok plebanus Petrus Condrathowicz' vs 'Georgius de Solok' (4 December 1523-): AAG, Acta Cons. A83, fo 145v; sentence on 9 March 1524: Acta Cons. C3, fo 33v: 'super quibusdam iniuriis actualibus et dampnis per prefatum Georgium et ipsius complices, ut assertur, ipsi domino Petro et suis colonis seu subditis'. This does not seem to have ended the matter, as we see from a session in 1526: Acta Cons. A148, fo 289v (15 February 1526). The two men probably disputed territory in the Maišiagalà area. Peter was one of the patrons of the Holy Trinity altar in Maišiagalà and owner of land at Paberžė: S. C. Rowell, 'Peter de Carwynisky and the foundation of St Peter's (Paberžė) and Holy Trinity (Maišiagalà). Ruminations of an archive rodent on parish formation in Lithuania ca 1495-1533', *Ministri historiae*, 141-52.

³¹ 'Stanislaus de Verki' clerk in minor orders vs 'nobiles Gregorium de Lwówek et Georgium plebanum de Solok occasione iniuste excommunicationis et violente captivacionis'. Defence counsel Andrzej of Rimanow 'allegavit Georgium plebanum de Solok non fuisse cittatum et executionem fuisse falsam' because Jurgis Taliatas [LKD, no. 1045] has been in the Roman Curia for a long time (11 October 1518): AAG, Acta Cons. A81, fos 83, 84, 99v (29 November): 'instrumentum de manu et signo legis Pauli de Troki, clerici Vilmensis diocesis'; fo 101v, 133v (23 March 1519).

³² AAG, Acta Cons. C3, fo 266 [Solok]: 'Franciscus de Hynszko mansionarius Vilmensis ... pro, de et super quibusdam iniuriis verbalibus et actualibus ac rebus mobilibus'; Francis lost his appeal and was ordered to pay costs to George.

burgher Matthias Olekhnowicz.³³ Leonard Alemanus, notary of the king of Poland, interloper into the parish church of Vilnius (by 1504) was challenged by Nicholas parish priest of Varniany, one-time rector of Vilnius, and a Lutsk priest, Laurence Zeleznicki was summoned as witness. The court found in Nicholas' favour.³⁴ However Leonard did not repress his ambitions to gain the Vilnius living. In 1513 Leonard himself was appealing to Gniezno in a dispute with the executors of the will of a Vilnius burgher, Nicholas Banczko and five years later his appeal against the bishop of Vilnius was forwarded to Rome for judgment. In 1514 we find appeals by the Vilnius priest Stanisław Słanczanka against his fellow cleric, the notary Stanisław Drozdowski, who would eventually become a chantry priest in Svir.³⁵ Drozdowski was being sued separately by the Vilnius barber Hans, while Słanczanka was also embroiled in a dispute with the burghers Gregory and Sebastian.³⁶

Some lawyers in Gniezno appear to have specialised in Lithuanian cases and maintained their connection with litigants who

³³ 'Gregorius de Lwówek's 'Mathias Olekhnowicz (civis) de Wilna' (27 October 1505-): AAG, Acta Cons. A72, fos 155, 158, 159, 165, 168, 174, 177.

³⁴ A Nicholas of Varniany appears in cases against Luke, parish priest of Švenčionys (on borders and other matters) and Stanislaw, parish priest of Lyntupy ('de iniuriis actualibus') in March 1523; he sold a house to Warden Paul of Vilnius in 1535. The Vilnius case: 'In causa appellacionis ecclesie Sancti Johannis in Wilna, honorabilis Nicolaus quondam plebanus in Wilna contra Leonardum cantorem et notarium Regis Polonie et plebanum in Wilna' (26 August 1504 – 2 April 1505): AAG, Acta Cons., A71, fos 202, 210, 223v, 233v–234, 237, 271 (22 November 1504). 'In causa appellacionis attemptatorum honorabilis domini Nicolai plebani ecclesie parrochialis sancti Johannis in Wilno contra Leonardum Almanum ad eandem ecclesiam intrusum Andreas de Rymanow procurator plebani citato magistro Gregorio ex adverso procuratore et in presentia eiusdem induxit in testem honorabilem Laurencium de Zalesnyki [Lutsk priest: *LKD*, no. 1147?] similiter per cursorem citatum, qui iuravit ad sancta Dei evangelia dicere veritatem': *ibid.*, 293r–v; A72 fos 56 (2 April 1505), 66v. Sentence: Acta Cons. C3, fo 127v–128, in favour of Nicholas.

³⁵ Stanislaum Drosdowski: *LKD*, no. 2218. Slanczanka case (16 January 1514-): AAG, Acta Cons. A79, fos 78v–79v; sentence: Acta Cons. C3, fo 243v–244r (23 January 1514-) finds in favour of 'Slanczanka de Vilna actu presbyter'.

³⁶ Hans the barber, 'contra eundem Stanislaum Drosdowski' (16 January 1514): AAG, Acta Cons. A79, fo 79r–v; sentence (23 January 1514): Acta Cons. C3, fo 226v–227, the case had been heard in Vilnius by Adam de Kotra and the appeal was declared 'frivolam et desertam', the case was sent back to Vilnius with the original punishment upheld in Drozdowski's favour. 'Slanczanka contra honestos Gregorium et Sebastianum cives vilnenses' (16 January 1514-): Acta Cons. A79, fo 79r–v; the sentence (23 January 1514) in the priest's favour: Acta Cons. C3, fo 226v refers to 'Georgium Zadorzycz et Sebastianum'.

appear in several appeals. The same names appear in appeals cases over several years, such as Albert of Bydgoszcz (1491–1494), Andrew of Rimanowo (1505–1523), Andreas de Pakost, Jacobus de Podskarbice, Martin Swianiczski, Nicholas of Chandzin, Stanislaw de Gambicze, Jeremias de Czarnow, Gregory de Kamieniec, Simon. One, Mikołaj of Wolborz, later became adviser to Bishop Albert Tabor and subsequently canon of Vilnius and bishop's chancellor.³⁷ It should be remembered that Tabor himself had acted as counsel in the appeal court before he became bishop.³⁸

The social range of Lithuanians involved in court business was extended by the use of laymen as *portitores*, or court postmen, who were sworn to carry legal documents between the appeal court and earlier instances. They hailed from various parts of Lithuania: Stanko Voyczehowicz, burgher of Vilnius,³⁹ 'honestus Stanislaus

³⁷ *LKD*, no. 1440 and here p. 444, n. 29; p. 447, n. 39.

³⁸ See above, p. 440, n. 29 and n. 11.

³⁹ 'Martinus Janczelewicz, Nicholaus Talstikowicz opidani de Vylna contra dominum Johannem episcopum Luceorensem' (27 March 1491 – 15 February 1493): AAG, Acta Cons. A59: 'Feria quarta ante Dominicam, Domine ne longe' (27 March) 'in causa appellacionis famatorum dominorum Nicolai Tolsthi et Martini Jangelewicz civium de Vilna contra venerabilem dominum Johannem archidecanum et officialem Vylnensem Nicolaus Wolborz procurator civium'; 'feria quarta ante festum Tiburtii et Valeriani' (13 April): the archdeacon had no right to judge a case involving himself; 'feria sexta post festum Tiburtii et Valeriani' (15 April) – 'ipse officialis in propria causa sub nomine proprio ipsos cives vocavit ad presenciam domini episcopi Vylnensem, quod de iure facere non debuit; feria quarta ante Adalberti' (20 April); 'feria sexta ante Philippi et Jacobi' (29 April); 'feria secunda post Trinitatis' (30 May); 'feria sexta post Exaltacionis' (16 September); 'feria secunda post Jeronimi' (3 October); delay because 'ipse dominus archidiaconus Vlnensis et electus Luceorensis propter ratas causas versus Curiam iter accepit signanter propter receptionem consecrationis ad ecclesiam Luceorensem, usque ad felicem suum reditum de Urbe... suspendit; feria quarta ante Gereonis' (5 October). The next court session fell on 19 March 1492. AAG, Acta Cons. A60, fo 36v (19 March 1492), '*portitor* – Stanislaus Voyczehowicz civis Vylnensis', 44r, 87, A61 fo 16v (15 February 1493). Martin is known to us from his witnessing of a 1499 burgher donation to the Vilnius Franciscans (*KDKDW*, no. 463, p. 543) while the co-appellant Tolstikowicz and his wife Martha are recorded as selling land in Antakalnis to Jacobus Sobolowicz (15 May 1495): Vilnius, Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas [LVIA], F5a, no. 5333, fo 8v (fo 3 mentions a Petrus Tolszickowicz who sold land *inter montes* to Nicholaus Desczko in August 1496). The archdeacon himself was the son of Vilnius burghers and his brothers lived in the city. This source is the earliest record of him as archdeacon and official and indicates more exactly when he became bishop of Lutsk.

de Wilna nuncupatus Iwan',⁴⁰ 'nobilis Joannes Wolski', who swore on a crucifix to carry the document faithfully, as did Stephanus and Fredericus of Betygala (one went from Gniezno to Vilnius, the second made the return journey only to be denounced as a Ruthenian and 'therefore excommunicate' in a failed attempt to throw doubt on the validity of the sealed document he had carried from Vilnius); one Johannes Lituanus a tailor of Gniezno was called to give evidence involving a Gniezno mansionary priest.⁴¹

Cases might drag on for years, often deliberate prevarication with litigants claiming that the roads between Vilnius and Gniezno, an alleged distance of some '140 miles' (980 km!), were dangerous, subject to inclement weather and depredations by bandits and soldiers. There might be absence due to military service with the grand duke (against Muscovy), although the court noted that the case could have been finished before the war, had the defendant not procrastinated so⁴². Several cases were declared abandoned (*deserta*) because litigants took too long to bring evidence forward on time. In 1494 the official complained that the betrothal dispute between Ona Kybartaitė and Pacas Sirtautaitis had lain dormant for over a year⁴³. Interlocutory (intermediary) and definitive sentences might be passed and still cases revived or were sent forward to

⁴⁰ From his two names it would appear that this man was once Orthodox (Ivan, not Johannes) and converted to Catholicism (St Stanislaw is not a saint in the Orthodox Church for he died and was canonised after the Schism of 1054).

⁴¹ Laurence mansionary of Gniezno calls 'Johannes Lithwanus de Gnezna as witness': AAG, Acta Cons. A69, fo 6v (1500).

⁴² See the Syenyak case, above p. 444 and n. 28 and that of 'Stanislaus Dobkowicz de Wilna contra nobilem Anastasiam Talwoyschewna': AAG, Acta Cons. A60, fo 143 (16 November 1492); A61, fo 52v-53 (20 May 1493). Delays in presenting evidence blamed on geographical conditions, 'cum ad civitatem Vilmensem a civitate Gneznensi fuit centum et quadraginta milliaria et iter periculosissimum et magis propter perhorreseranciam appellantis et non habere accessum ad iudicium a quo ad extrahenda acta instancie prime'; *ibid.*, fo 54v-55; delay on Stanislaus' part, 'ipsum Stanislaum in expeditione bellica cum duce Lithwanie esse, propter quod literas compulsoriales remittere non potuit...' to which the reply 'in casum et eventum in quo constaret Stanislaum cum domino duce Lithwanie in bello esse, dicens causam huiusmodi potuisse frui ante bellum noviter institutum'; *ibid.*, fo 57v, 58v-59; case declared void (3 June): *ibid.*, fo 76 (10 July), costs of 3.5 marks awarded to Anastasia.

⁴³ The appeal of Kotryna Kybartaitė-Sirtautaitienė against Pac Sirtautaitis: AAG, Acta Cons. A 60, fos 74v-75, 76v, 78r-v, 79, 81, 82, 109v, 112v, 137v-138, 141v, 143; A61, fos 16v, 51v, 54, 55, 64v-65 (1493); A 62, fos 17r-v, 43, 46, 49v, 78v (1494).

Rome or backwards to Vilnius. Of cases that reached Rome very little material has survived, except for cases submitted to the Penitentiary. Evidence from the Rota Romana seems to be very rare, if the account provided by Christina Bukowska-Gorgoni is completely accurate.⁴⁴ In 1504 the case of Jokūbas Kučinskis (Jakub Kuczyński), parish priest of Maišiagala and dean of Vilnius, concerning those benefices represented by Stephen of Vilnius was judged in the Rota. The verdict was not sent out because the case remained unsettled.⁴⁵

Excommunication was a severe punishment which was taken very seriously in neophyte Lithuania. It cut people off not only from the Church and her sacraments but also from the community at large and its public life. It also could be a very expensive burden to overcome, especially if recourse was required to the Appeals' Court in Gniezno or the Roman Curia. The sentence could be imposed unjustly, as in the cases of the clerk in minor orders, Stanisław of Verkiai, and Paul the pipe-welder of Vilnius.⁴⁶

Evidence from the Lutsk Consistory Court

While the Gniezno appeals reflect a wide range of cases which were heard originally before the Vilnius Consistory court, the richest and more vibrant survive from the diocese of Lutsk and reveal the Latinisation of a land which in the fourteenth century was largely

⁴⁴ C. Bukowska-Gorgoni, *Causae Polonae coram Sacra Romana Rota XV–XVII saec.* (Rome, 1995) notes only three cases from early-sixteenth-century Lithuania; these involve Fr Stephen of Vilnius [*LKD*, no. 2407], Jokūbas Kučinskis, one time parish priest of Maišiagala and Dean of Vilnius [*ibid.*, no. 583] and Nicholas Merdzinski (12 September 1504) no. 5, p. 145; and Venceslaus Slucki, parish priest of Grodno, who won costs against Martinus de Sachorzyn (3 January 1519), no. 20, p. 151.

⁴⁵ 'Stephanus clericus Vilmensis diocesis obtinuit commissionem causae super decanatu ecclesiae cathedralis Vilmensis et parochiali ecclesia de Mejszagola vacante, quam Jacobus Kuczynski occupabat, iudicibus de partibus, sed litterae desuper expeditae non fuerunt, pendente in Rota lite super eadem re inter Nicholaum Merdzinski et Jacobum process suum eidem auditori committi voluit': Bukowska-Gorgoni, *Causae Polonae*, no. 5, p. 145. In 1503 a dispute over tithes and income from Mass, funeral and other offerings between Jokūbas and Fr Peter, the parish priest of Paberžė, was settled only by intervention from Gniezno clergy: *KDKDW*, no. 566, pp. 684–8.

⁴⁶ Stanisław, 'occasione iniuste excommunicationis et violente captivationis', see above p. 445 and n. 31; for Paul's case, see p. 441 and n. 18.

Rus'ian Orthodox with 'pagan relics' and in the fifteenth century would become largely Roman Catholic as a result of missionary work and colonisation from more eastern parts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Mazovia.

Court cases reveal that a part of the population knew the *necessaria*, the basic prayers (*Pater noster*, *Ave Maria*), the Creed and the Ten Commandments in Lithuanian.⁴⁷ Lithuanian peasants appear as witnesses in court cases. Thus in 1474 when Piotr of Tczoboszewo was sued by the parish priest of Mordy, the sixth witness to be called in the case (and the second in support of Fr John was a certain Jaczko *litwanus de Mordi*).⁴⁸

A case heard on 17 May 1479 involving the rector of Topiczewo James (Jakub) and a local gentleman Peter of Turośń tells the story of how three Lithuanian peasant colonists, Macz, Rymek and Peter, were tricked by the landlord who sponsored them. After St Michael's Day 1477 Jan of Kocmiery visited the rector and saw Peter of Turośń and his men buying 40 sacks of grain for 100 groats, namely 30 bags from Stanisław Broda, the rector's brother at Falki and a further ten from another Falki landowner. Rymek said that the three Lithuanians borrowed grain from the priest worth 100 groats and that Peter of Turośń gave 100 groats in support of this loan and they agreed to fell the woodland for 30 groats to be taken from the 100 groats they owed. Later they paid Peter 45 groats.⁴⁹ This case

⁴⁷ The case is from 1475: ADS, D1, fo 37, published in Rowell, 'Was fifteenth-century', 105. It is published with a different selection of texts in idem, *Anekdota ekklesiastika: 1. LDK krikščioniška kasdienybė pagal seniausią išlikusią XV a. LDK katalikų Bažnyčios teismo knyga'*, *LIM 2010/1* (2011), 93–114.

⁴⁸ ADS, D1, fos 32r–v, 33v. Peter was fined and ordered to pay ten groats in damages to the Mordy curate Nicholas, among other damages.

⁴⁹ ADS, D1, fos 50r–v (Monday, 17 May 1479): '... **Testes inducti** ex arte nobilis Petri de Thurosną ex una ad instanciam honorabilis Jacobi, plebani de Thopczewo partibus ex altera. ... **Secundus testis** llaboriosus Stanislaus thabernator de Dyathkovicze citatus, iuramento sibi promisso deposuit. Veni ad plebanum Thopczewski cum plebano Martino Dolobawski, non recordor quo tempore yemali et iam est elapsus annus, venerunt tres llittwani, Maczo, Rinko sed tercius mortuus est de Thurosną ad plebanum Thopczyziensem et ceperunt forisare cum plebano ad erradicandum sibi pratum ibique forisaverunt pro media sexagena pro qua capere debebunt siliginem una cum expavis. Demumque petyt idem Jacobus plebanus ut secum equitarem cum dictis llittwanis eis ostendere silvam ad erradicandam alias *zavodzycz* pratum. Cum quo equitarem et ibi eis demonstrat et alias *zawyothk* silvam pro exlaborando prato. Ibi tunc apud dictum

reflects not only links between local clergy and gentry (where often the patrons of a parish would appoint a kinsman to the living) but also the relationship of landlords and peasants (where the former could guarantee loans taken out by the latter from a third party) and the colonisation of Ruthenian land by Lithuanian peasants.

Stanisław the parish priest at Rokitnica (now Kulesze Kościelne) became involved in a dispute with the patrons of his parish, Mikołaj, Maciej and Jan Kuleszowie, after the latter closed the church before going away from the village and thus denied burial to a woman from Moszczysz and baptism for a child.⁵⁰ In early summer 1481 the court made peace in a dispute over how Anna, the wife of Thomas slandered Anna wife of Matthias by claiming the latter had committed adultery with the parish priest of Węgrów, Laurence. In the presence of Andriejus Songaila, Jonas Katras of Lithuania and other witnesses all parties were bound over to keep the peace with

plebanum Thopyczewski mansimus pro duos dies et dicti liltwani laboraverunt in prato, sed nescio utrum finirent dictum laborem an non, nec eiam scio utrum solutum est eis vel non. Et dum interrogatus est, utrum pro siligine prius per eos forisata et empta deberent laborare, respondit: ignoro ego de prima forisacione eorum, sed quod audivi, hoc testificor. Aliud ignorat. Confessus, communicat etc. **Tercius testis** llaboriosus Rimko de Thurosną cittatus, iuratus etc deposuit dum forisavit Petrus de Thurosną siliginis xxxx cassulas super me et Maczko et Petrum, tercium qui mortuus est, pro centum grossorum et pro nobis dictam pecuniam fideiussit. Demum nos tres venimus ex eius plebani Thopiczensis postulacione et forisavimus cum eo pratum erradicare et facere pro triginta grossis super debitum videlicet siliginis quam apud dictum plebanum eundem et forisavimus super dictum debitum pro triginta grossis et erradicavimus et fecimus pro certo dictum pratum et demum pro dicta siligine dedimus nostro fideiussori /Petro de Thurosną\ quadraginta et quinque grossos. Aliud ignorat. Confessus. || **Quartus testis** llaboriosus Maczko de Thurosną cittatus, iuratus etc deposuit recte ut tercium videlicet Rimko, quare cum eo pro dicto prato laboravit et cum eo dictam siliginem emit et voluit etc. Confessus etc. **Plebanus Petrus Thopyczew sententia** contra Petrum Thuroszczanky'. Ibid., fo 51v: 'Die mercurii xxi mensis Iunii, ex decreto Reverendissimi in Christo patris domini et domini Martini episcopi Luceorensis, honorabilis plebanus Jacobus de Thopiczew debet homines inducere super pratum si esset paratum vel si esset factum, ut decet, solvere eis pro labore et nobilis Petrus de Thurosną eiam solvet domino Jacobo plebano quod fideiussit pro hominibus siliginem' (21 June 1479). The dispute between the priest and landlord continued: *ibid.*, fo 71r.

⁵⁰ Stanisław was active between 1476 and 1485: *LKD*, no. 2153. This case refers to an incident of 1482 on the Saturday before reminiscere (second Sunday in Lent, 2 March 1482): *ADS*, D1, fo 73v. A 1493 muniment for this parish survives in the Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych in Warsaw [AGAD], as cited in J. Maroszek, *Dzieje województwa podlaskiego do 1795 roku* (Białystok, 2013), 442.

any who violated it being liable to pay a fine of 10 florins to the bishop, 10 to the arbitrators and a further 10 to the party who kept the agreement.⁵¹ John of Mordy hands over 271 groats from the Skolimov tithe to the parish purser (*vitricus*) to cover building and repair works in 1485.⁵²

The influence of the parish patron is made clearer still from a case of 1480. This case which reads like an incident of grievous bodily harm stemming from a tavern brawl and involving a school master, a parish priest, the latter's cousin and aunt, recounted with the liveliness of a modern Polish television serial may stand as an exemplar of parish life run wild. The court session is typical. It takes place on a Monday (2 October 1480). We are told that the witnesses have been summoned and sworn in. It is noted that they have been to confession and received Holy Communion this year and that they are impartial (they favour the party with Justice on its side) and have not conferred among themselves. Of a priest it might be said that he celebrates Mass with proper devotion (one must presume *a priori* that he has communicated!).⁵³ At the time of the incident Andreas was school master in Skibniew and when the case came to court he was working in Sterdyn. In Skibniew he had a deputy (*surrector*), Martin of Ostrolęka. He was asked to record money collections made by the parish fraternity in the manor belonging to a parish patron, Kostka, sub-judge of Drohiczyn. He was paid a fee of 2 groats for this service (and his failure to pass the money on to the parish priest, Stanisław, caused the latter to chase him around the church with a drawn sword). Stanisław was a local man – or had brought his aunt and cousin with him to his living. The patron was expected to be able to control the priest and resolve problems arising among his employees (the priest and the master).

In May 1486 Adam of Kotra (the future canon of Vilnius, still a student in Cracow) and Seraphin *presbiter de Lythphania* were present when Bishop Stanisław Stawski of Lutsk expelled the thieving priest John of Ciechanowice from his diocese. A few years before

⁵¹ ADS, D1, fo 65.

⁵² *Ibid.*, fo 87.

⁵³ As in a case from September 1480 where Fr Stanisław was a sworn witness for his curate Peter: *Ibid.*, fo 55v.

in 1480 a Lithuanian bachelor of arts, John of Geraniony, was at Litewniki, when a tithe dispute involving Sokoli was settled.⁵⁴

Despite the fact that officially the bishop could not try criminals beyond the borders of his see,⁵⁵ Stanisław of Lutsk made use of personal service connections to achieve his judicial aims. Thus when the engagement between Martin of Brańsk and Barbara, daughter of Anna Mikołajowna of Brańsk was broken after the pair had enjoyed intercourse, the bishop fined Martin three marks despite the fact that he had flown beyond the borders of the see. In this Stanisław was abetted by the parish priest of Goniądz in the Vilnius diocese, who had been the bishop's official in Janów Podlaski.⁵⁶

The problems which might arise when a Lithuanian grandee (in this case Martynas Goštautas) with his personal chaplain returned

⁵⁴ John of Ciechanowice: ADS, D1, fo 87v: 'Recognicio pro furticinio: Die martis xviii may constitutus personaliter Johannes de Czyochonowyecz pro tunc moram trahens in Janow coram Reverendo in Christo patre et domino, domino Stanislao episcopo luceoriensi pro tunc sedente pro tribunali sede in orto in medio curie in Janow, confessus est, quod subtraxit duo manutergia in ecclesia parrochiali Sancti Johannis Baptiste, unum manutergium consutum serico et aliud eciam consutum filis flaxis laboris Sinoden, et propter hoc furticinium manutergiorum fuit detentus et captivatus prout pertinet ad quemlibet furem. Sed dominus Stanislaus episcopus luceoriensis motus dimisit illum libere propter Deum et expulit de sua diocesi tamquam infamem et furem. Et hoc ibidem presentibus testibus me Johanne presbitero pro tunc causarum scriba et domino Ade arcium literarum baccalareo nacione ex Lythphania et domino Lluca Almano et domino Stanislao pro tunc vicario in Janow et domino Seraphin presbitero de Lythphania, Mathia prothoconsule Llozucensi et Andrea Pakaryka consule avvocato de Janovo et Llaurencio famulo domini episcopi ceterisque fidedignis.' Litewniki case – Sokoli tithe decided, fo 55: 'Johanne baccalareo de Goranoyny'. It is known that a John of Geraniony became a bachelor of arts in Cracow in 1479: *Cracovia Lithuanorum*, I, nos. 115, 121, 122, p. 56, 58.

⁵⁵ Plock court records state that the bishop has no right to judge Vilnius or Lutsk cases, if those sees possess a suitable judge of their own: *Acta capitulorum nec non iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum*, vol. III/1: *Acta iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum dioecesis Plocensis, Wladislaviensis et Gneznensis (1422–1533)*, ed. B. Ulanowski [*Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia*, XVIII] (Cracow, 1908), no. 157, pp. 59–60 (26 January 1489).

⁵⁶ ADS, D1, fo 78v: 'Sed quia extra diocesim suam in diocesi aliena vileni per plebanum Goniadzkiy penavit ipsum cum iure de se /Barbare/ in tribus marcis pro festo sancti Petri proxime affuturo sub pena excommunicationis exolvendis, presentibus honorabilibus Boguslao de Paprothna, Johanne de Myelnyk plebanis, Ade presbytero curie, Johanne vicaro pro tempore Myedzirezec et me Nicolao auctoritatibus apostolica et imperiali notario publico circa premissa verba aliisque multis.'

to one of his estates after having served as a high official elsewhere in the Grand Duchy (as palatine of Kiev) could be serious for a parish priest. On 3 October 1480 Mikołaj Zadzyan, a boyar from Drogvyn invited Goštautas' chaplain Stanisław and the parish priest of Tykocin, Andrew, to stay at his house. During the hours of darkness, according to Stanisław, Andrew grabbed him by the throat and attempted to suffocate him but he saved himself by biting his assailant's fingers until the host separated the two priests. Andrew claimed that it was Stanisław who sought to kill him.⁵⁷ In short both men had the same patron, who was replaced in Kiev as palatine by Jonas Chodkevičius in summer 1480.⁵⁸ We know that in 1479 Goštautas had founded a new Bernardine friary in Tykocin and it was his tradition to keep a friar as his chaplain.⁵⁹ We do not know how the case ended. On 29 May 1481 Andrew presented the court with his indult, a *littera confessionalis* from Pius II (1458–1464) which granted him powers to absolve his

⁵⁷ ADS D1, fo 60v–61: 'Anno domini millesimo quadragesimo octuagesimo primo acta. Stanislaus cum plebano de Thykoczyno propositio. Die veneris nona marcy constitutus personaliter discretus Stanislaus capellanus magnifici domini Martini Gostholth causa nomine proprio contra et adversus honorabilem Andream plebanum in Thykoczyno vero in presencia ipsius Andree plebani proposuit coram reverendo domino domino Martino Dei gracia episcopo Luceoriense sit, dicens quod de anno domini 1480 in domo nobilis domini Nicolay Zadzyan et in villa Drogywn in collacione ad quam \ego/ una cum prefato domino Andree plebano de Thykoczyno fuimus petiti per dominum Nicolaum Zadzyan de Drogywn, dicens: idem Andreas plebanus in \Thykoczyn/ veniens ad me Stanislaum in nocte, me per gutur meum arripuit, iugulavit, strangulavit et me interimere voluit || In qua iugulacione et suffocacione digittum suum in eo rumpsit omnis quem ego dantibus meis constrinxi et tam diu pugnavimus quousque hospes activus nos ab invicem separavit. Hec facta sunt feria tertia proxima post festum Sancti Michaelis; quam insaniam, percussionem, iugulacionem mihi per ipsum Andream factam remoto et existimo ad mille florenos ungaricalis auri boni et iusti ponderis. Et hec si negare voluit efficio me probatorem. Ex adverso dominus Andreas plebanus reus de Thykoczyno excipiens et excipiendo dixit, quod ego hanc quam ipse proposuit proponere dubio propositionem contra et adversus ... Presentibus ibidem conspectis Mathia de Vasosze canonico et plebano in Luzsko, Stiborio de Janovo et alys quampluribus in eodem iudicio presentibus.'

⁵⁸ Cracow, Biblioteka XX. Czartoryskich [BiblCzart], Ms 2954 no. 82; G. Kirkiene, *LDK politikos elito galingieji: Chodkevičiai XV–XVI amžiuje* (Vilnius, 2008), 82.

⁵⁹ Jan Komorowski, 'Memoriale Ordinis Fratrum Minorum', 224–5; M. Maciszewska, *Klasztor bernardyński w społeczeństwie polskim 1453–1530* (Warsaw, 2001), 41.

parishioners from all their sins, including those reserved to the Holy See (except murder).⁶⁰

Laymen were willing to have recourse to church courts rather than the grand duke's judges even in cases which officially should have been heard before a secular court – the judge in Gniezno noted that the case involving the Vilnius burghers Grolokh and Jurginek was a matter for secular jurisdiction.⁶¹ In the case of the confraternity in Drohiczyn we read how disputes between members should be resolved within the brotherhood and not before the secular authorities. In the end the case was brought before the bishop: 'nobilis Andreas de Naszylowo citatus iuratus deposuit: Nos cum ereximus fraternitatem, talem pactum habuimus, quod nullus debuit quemquam citare ad ius terrestre, sed hic in confraternitate debuerit iudicare de omnibus rebus'.⁶²

Almost all aspects of community life appear in the record. The parish priest of Mordy underwrote a loan of 10 sexagenae and 10 groats taken out by the rector of Hadniowo from the 'perfidious Jew Moses of Brest'.⁶³ There are manifold accusations of broken troth, false claims of betrothal, adultery, cohabitation. Stanisław parish priest of Robytnycze sues the noble parish *collatores* because in 1482 they refused burial in their cemetery to a woman from Mszczyc and closed the church against her. The parish priest of Staw and a local cleric beat one another with sticks and pots. A Drohiczyn

⁶⁰ ADS, D1, fo 69: 'Die martis xxix may honorabilis Andreas plebanus in Thykoczyczo manumentum prestitit ... quod habet auctoritatem apstolicam a sanctissimo domino Pyo pape pro persona et parrochia in omnibus casibus preter homicidium usque ad extremum vite, super quod eciam quoddam instrumentum produxit de manu Alexandri Bogusłai de Ponyathi Plocensis diocesis et per manus Bernardi de mandato absolutus.' Alexander Bogusłai is known from a supplication of young clerics to the Apostolic Penitentiary (6 November 1459): *BP*, VI, no. 1462, pp. 305–6.

⁶¹ 'Johannes Groloch civis Vilmensis' and wife Anna 'contra Johannem Jurgunek Mek civem Vilmensem produxit mandatum de manu et signo legalis Talmanni Schaffini clerici Hildeschemensis civitatis ... frustrarie appellasse cum dominus electus Vilmensis iuste sic personas seculares ipsos appellantem et appellatum ad iudicium seculare remisit. Item quod ipse electus ipsum appellantem in statum pristinum restituit post gravamen, ut pretendit, illatum': AAG, Acta Cons. A60, fo 105v (7 September 1492); fos 110v–111r, 112v, 114r–v.

⁶² ADS, D1, fo 50v (1479).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, fo 25 (27 October 1472).

notary public accuses the rector of a parish school of attempting to take over his legal business while he was away from town and causing 40 florins' worth of missed revenue.⁶⁴ The beneficiaries of a nobleman's will refuse to hand over what was bequeathed to parish church.⁶⁵ In 1469–70 during a period of plague a donation was made to the hospice in Drohiczyn; in another parish a man made his confession and dictated his will to the priest.⁶⁶ We learn of a priest who was seen riding out to administer the sacraments.⁶⁷ Most disputes over tithes involve priests of different parishes claiming the right to a tithe which a layman has paid according to his own choice, having fallen out with his first parish's priest or fellow collator. Among many cases of defamation one involves the wojt of Ruda, Stanisław, who accused Fr Laurence of Drohiczyn before Christmas 1473 of being 'a shameless thief and not a priest, unworthy of the tonsure because he was a player of dice'.⁶⁸ A layman understands that a priest who refuses his wife Holy Communion at Easter for no good reason, while giving it to another parish wife is a thief and is ready to sue the cleric. A schismatic might demand burial in his Catholic family's church; an Orthodox believer might go to confession to a Catholic priest.⁶⁹ An Orthodox factor might work for a Catholic landlord but that of course would not save him from prosecution in a Catholic consistory court.⁷⁰

In conclusion we may say that the dynamics of church court evidence coincide with those of other aspects of Catholic life in the

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fo78v–79.

⁶⁵ In his will Jacobus Skubyela de Oszwola bequested funds to Fr Jacobus of Dziadkowice [*LKD*, no. 561], but Mathias, Wargyel and Petrus Ostrosky refused to hand the money over; bishop elect Stanisław Stawski [*LKD*, no. 2144] ordered that they do so: ADS, D1, fo 78.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, D1 fos 8, 8v

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fo 94: 'equitabat pro ministrandis sacramentis'.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fo 31: 'nequam latro es, non plebanus nec es dignus corona sacerdotali, quare es thesserei stator alias kostyra'.

⁶⁹ Rowell, 'Was fifteenth-century', 105.

⁷⁰ AAG, Acta Cons. C3, fo 316: 'Sententia providi Olekhno factoris in Trokyelye appellantis et honorabilis Leonardi mansionarii ecclesie cathedralis vilnensis appellati' (1 February 1524). Olekhno to pay costs. Trokele or Novy Dvor, Lida district, 10 km north-east of Zhirmuny, belonged to the Jagintaičiai-Rimvydaičiai family, cf. *KDKDW*, no. 212, pp. 240–1 (1452). Two cathedral mansionaries named Leonard are known from 1537 and 1539: *LKD*, nos. 1188, 1189. It is not clear whether one of these men is meant here, or indeed a third Leonard.

Grand Duchy (ecclesiastical foundations, indulgences, Blessed Sacrament processions, supplications, and so forth), which all become much more common in the later decades of the fifteenth century. Cases before the consistory courts in Płock, Gniezno, Vilnius and Lutsk involve a wider social group and deal with a broader range of issues (not just matrimonial disputes or the renting out of parish churches between priests). What we do not find is any obsession with paganism, no use of pagan as an insult, no account of ‘pagan’ practices (or even folk customs, which later become tarred with an ideological brush). Lithuanian dioceses are clearly integrated into the Polish metropolitan sees (Gniezno and also to a lesser degree, Lviv). Even the Cracow records reflect this trend. In Cracow, Jan Pellifex de Lithuania who sued Canon Andriejus Svyriškis of Vilnius in 1488, brought a case of *geludium* to the Gniezno Consistory two years later.⁷¹ Lithuanian court officials also served in Cracow, as we see from the examples of Vaclovas Čirka in 1510s-20s, and others from mid-century onwards. One of the first Lithuanian members of the Confraternity of the Holy Ghost in Rome was the Raseiniai cleric Alexius, who was registered as a notary public in Cracow.⁷²

⁷¹ *Cracovia Lithuanorum*, II, no. 143. p. 64 and ‘Johannis Lythwanus pellifex de Cracovia’ vs ‘Magister Andreas canonicus vilnensis’ (19 April – 26 November 1490): AAG, Acta Cons. A58, fos 247, 253v, 266r–v.

⁷² On Czirka, see Knapiek, ‘Przybysze z Litwy’; for Alexius, see Baronas, ‘Piligrimai iš Lietuvos’, 20–1.

Diocesan Structures and Reform

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania converted 'officially' to Christianity in the Latin rite at the end of the fourteenth century. The Catholic world had advanced considerably in her structures and organisation since the Anglo-Saxons adopted Christianity at the end of the sixth century, or the Poles, who did so in the middle of the tenth. Institutions and instruments were available for transplantation into the neophyte Grand Duchy – such ecclesiastical 'wheels' as parish organisation, consistory courts, diocesan visitations, the mendicant orders, fraternities, indulgences and so forth did not require reinvention and in many cases could be adapted swiftly to Lithuanian use.

The Four Lithuanian Dioceses

The territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the fifteenth century contained four geographically large dioceses belonging to two metropolitan provinces. Vilnius (1387) and Medininkai (Žemaitija, 1417), which contained formerly pagan subjects of the grand dukes as well as Orthodox Rus'ian inhabitants, were subject to the archdiocese of Gniezno, while the Rus'ian sees of Lutsk (1425) and Kiev were subject to the archdiocese of Lviv.¹

In 1387 Jogaila endowed the bishop of Vilnius with landed estates covering an area of 900 km² including Tauragnai, Bakshty,

¹ P. Rabikauskas, 'Lietuvos vyskupijos', idem, *Krikščioniškoji Lietuva*, 79, 82. A titular bishop of Kiev, Borzysław is named in sources in 1405. That the title was to all effects and purposes titular is shown by the fact that this bishop was also the Benedictine abbot of Old Trakai: *KDKDW*, no. 43, pp. 69–70 (27 July 1405). For short undocumented accounts of the lives of the Catholic bishops of Kiev, see K. R. Prokop, *Biskupi kijowscy obrządku łacińskiego XIV–XVIII w.: Szkice biograficzne* (Biały Dunajec–Ostróg, 2003).

Verkiai, Molėtai, Labanoras and Vilnius. The foundation of the see was confirmed by Pope Urban VI in March 1388. By the time of the death of Vytautas in 1430 the bishop owned some 100 villages and 1,300 hearths. Donations from the monarch continued throughout the fifteenth century, by the middle of which gifts were made increasingly by magnates and gentry, while bishops themselves such as Matthias, John and Andrew purchased land to supplement their holdings. By 1539 the bishop owned 4,717 hearths, the overwhelming majority of which (3,838) were in rural areas. The bishop's income in 1539 amounted to 3,600 sexagenae (216,000 groats) a year, the equivalent of 9,000 zloties. By means of comparison we should note that the archbishop of Gniezno received 17,600 zl. annually – the Vilnius estates were one third larger than the Gniezno ones and produced just under half as much income. The cathedral chapter and prebendaries were supported generously by separate endowments.² During the time when Bishop Andrew (Groskowicz, Gaškavičius) governed the diocese (if not before) surplus grain from the episcopal estates was being sold in Gdańsk by the bishop's factors, as a result of the ordinary's family business connections.³

The diocese of Medininkai (1417) covered an area of 23,000 km². Its bishop and chapter were endowed first with money, grain and honey rather than land, as was the case in Vilnius.⁴ The diocese of Lutsk was confirmed by Pope Martin V in 1425 and extended over 109,000 km² in the Rus'ian lands of Volyn', Bratslav and Brest. Although much of this area was inhabited by Orthodox Christians, the Catholic diocese developed mostly in the north-western part of the see in Podlasie. By 1500 this area between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Mazovia and the Kingdom of Poland contained 60 parish churches. A further five Podlasie parishes belonged to the Diocese of Vilnius.⁵

² Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 95–6, 108; for chapter and prebendaries, see 96–9; for more detail idem, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium*, especially pp. 16–98.

³ Rowell, 'Anekdota emporika', 85–90, 95–6.

⁴ G. Błaszczuk, *Diecezja żmudzka... Ustrój*, 19–22. At first the bishop received 50 grivnas of Prague groats, 50 barrels of grain and 10 of honey, while the six canons were given a dole of 10 grivnas, 60 barrels of grain and 10 of honey. In 1421 the emoluments were complemented with land at Varniai, Kaltinėnai, Kražiai, Viduklė, Raseiniai, Medininkai along with two lakes, Alsėdžiai and Biržulis.

⁵ Jaszczółt, 'Fundacje kościelne', 52.

The diocese of Vilnius was administered by a bishop from his cathedral church of Ss Stanisław and Władysław in Vilnius. The post of suffragan bishop was established in 1512, when the Cistercian monk, Jakub of Mnichów, formerly abbot of Jędrzejów (Cracow diocese) took up the office.⁶ It would appear to be no coincidence that the office of suffragan was deemed necessary after the number of churches in the diocese began to increase and the episcopal throne was occupied by its first magnate bishop, Albertas Radvila. The fact that the first suffragan bishops of Vilnius took the title of bishop of Kaffa may reflect earlier, still not forgotten Lithuanian pretensions to land close to the Black Sea.

Vilnius cathedral was served by its chapter clergy. The foundation of the chapter was confirmed by Pope Urban VI in 1388 and received its first emoluments from Jogaila in 1390. At first the chapter comprised twelve members – a provost, a dean and ten canons. The post of archdeacon was established in 1435 and in 1444 the office of *custos* (treasurer) was introduced to supervise the fabric and fittings of the cathedral. The number of canons at any one time could vary as by the end of the fifteenth century supernumerary canons were appointed who waited until a canon's stall fell vacant – Bishop Martin III of Medininkai was archdeacon of Vilnius and between 1492 and 1508 (when Canon Andriejus Svyriškis died) he was supernumerary canon. The supernumerary canons were maintained from the bishop's table (property) and did not share in the income provided by chapter estates. In 1522 the prelacies of chancellor (*scholasticus*) and precentor (*cantor*) were established. In 1524 the cathedral chapter comprised six dignitaries and twelve canons.⁷ By contrast, the cathedral church of St Peter in Medininkai (Varniai) had six canons from 24 October 1417 and the first dignitary, the archdeacon, was created in 1527.⁸ From 1428 the chapter of the diocese of Lutsk comprised two dignitaries (the provost and dean) and twelve

⁶ LKD, no. 571; Prokop, *Biskupi-pomocnicy w diecezjach polskich w dobie przedtrydenckiej (2 poł. XIII – 1 poł. XVI w.)* (Cracow, 2002), 223–6.

⁷ Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 24–30; a list of 123 early canons is provided on pp. 30–48.

⁸ Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka...Ustrój*, 95–109; a catalogue of canons is given on pp. 109–129.

canons. Following the devastation of the city of Lutsk by the Tatars in 1452 the central residence of the bishop and his curia was the small town of Janów in Podlasie. The Catholic bishopric centred in Kiev had a bishop and very little else, despite being the seat of high-ranking princes and later a grand-ducal lord lieutenant.⁹

Parish Network and Clergy

In Holy Year 1500, some 113 years after its foundation, the diocese of Vilnius had approximately 139 churches, the majority of which were gentry foundations. The first parish churches had been built by the monarch. During the first Catholic generation or so (up to the death of Grand Duke Vytautas), approximately 27 churches were founded. D. Baronas has shown that Długosz's account of the first seven Jagiellonian parish foundations in 1387 is a theological construct and that early written evidence for some of these churches is lacking.¹⁰ It may very well be that the churches were founded in the early years of Catholic Lithuania, although the founder was not in fact Jogaila but Vytautas. The foundations, which date to the period 1387–1430 radiate out from Vilnius to the north, north-east, south-east and south-west of the city, with an outpost in the western mercantile centre of Kaunas. Over the following century new royal and gentry foundations clustered around these centres.¹¹ The diocese of Medininkai comprised 19 parishes in 1500, whilst that of

⁹ J. Chachaj, 'Rozwój sieci świątyń katolickich obrządku łacińskiego na terenie diecezji kijowskiej do połowy XVII wieku', *Ecclesia–Cultura–Potestas*, 85–104. This author mentions Catholic churches at Kiev, Zhitomir and Tsudnov, stressing the importance of the Dominican Mission to this part of the Grand Duchy.

¹⁰ Baronas, 'Jan Długosz and the first seven'. Even so, we should not be too hypercritical of Długosz's account. Although Gaina is mentioned first in extant source in 1489, a document of 1522 mentions a donation (the Kocielewicz estate) made by Vytautas to the parish, and this is recorded in a second, lost emolument which Ochmański dated to 1413: *Vitoldiana: Codex Privilegiorum Vitoldi Magni Ducis Lithuaniae, 1386–1430*, ed. J. Ochmański (Warsaw–Poznań, 1986), no. 25, p. 33; *Acta primae Visitationis*.

¹¹ Convenient maps of parish distribution are provided in Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, between pp. 72–3, and in J. Kiaupienė, R. Petrauskas, *Nauji horizontai: Dinastija, visuomenė, valstybė. Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė 1386–1529 m. [Lietuvos istorija, 4]* (Vilnius, 2009), 198–9.

Lutsk had 60, mainly boyar foundations focussed in the northern and western parts of the see.¹²

The first parishes founded by the monarch (in conjunction with the bishop) who was guarantor of the new social order, just as once he had been defender of the old (pagan) *ritus* and *mos*. Within five years at least of the official change in religion members of the gentry, the implementers of grand-ducal rule, can be seen making their own donations to ecclesiastical institutions. It seems that at first this was done with the acknowledged consent of the ruler. Thus in 1392 when he gave land at Kena to St Nicholas' Church in Vilnius (and handed both over to the city's Franciscan friars) the merchant Hanul did so 'consensu serenissimi principis Skyrgallo, supremi ducis Lithuanie ... et reverendi patris domini Andree episcopi Vilnensis'.¹³ In 1437 Račkus Strocevičius, lord of Polonka founded a church on his estate 'ex consensu serenissimi principis et domini Sigismundi Dei gracia magni ducis Lithphanie, Russie etc.'¹⁴

Noblemen and women founded churches on their main patrimonial estate, focusing attention on their social position and the family connection with any alienated landholdings was maintained through advowson rights by which the founding family reserved the right to present candidates to the bishop for appointment to the living. During a later period (the early sixteenth century) in some cases a donor might give land to a church and receive monetary reimbursement, or as in the case of Jurgis Taliatas, who sold part of his patrimonial land which was then given to a Šalčininkai chantry to which Jurgis himself was appointed priest.¹⁵ In 1522 one of the

¹² Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka*, 164–80; these foundations have been checked in V. Vaivada, *Katalikų Bažnyčia ir Reformacija Žemaitijoje XVI a.: Esminiai raidos bruožai* (Klaipėda, 2004), 33–77, 154–64.

¹³ *KDKDW*, no. 22, p. 38.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 152, pp. 170–1.

¹⁵ In 1508 Petronela Kondrataitė and her children Apolonia, Jadvyga and Mikalojus donated part of the estate Petronela received by marriage in Paberžė to the Holy Trinity Chantry in Maišiagala (which lay in her family's gift) and in light of Petronela's donation Fr Peter benevolently 'redonavit' to the lady 'sex sexagenas communis pecunie currentis', marking a sale in all but name: LMAVB RS F3–77; *Pergamentų katalogas*, no 180, p. 78 (Maišiagala, 25 May 1508), witnessed by among others the Maišiagala priest Thomas, the Giedraičiai priest Nicolas and Petronela's husband Stanisław Pyetraszkwicz Thalwyszosz. Jurgis Taliatas of parish priest of Salakas, Canon of Medininkai, who sold his third of his patrimony,

patrons of St Peter's Church at Salakas. Helena, gave the church and its fraternity land on condition that she be allowed to have use of a part of the property in the future.¹⁶ Founding churches had several important significances for the gentry. It was a monarch-like act which helped to ensure the future salvation of the donor and his kin. A church was a public monument to the power of the living donor and a memorial to his dead kin; for the founders it could also be a burial site. Through the memorial Masses celebrated in the parish church the Christian community in this life and the after-life (in Purgatory and in heaven) was consolidated. Fifteenth-century Catholics were concerned particularly by the new religion's death and memorial services, as we see too in the popularity of fraternities (see below). Church building was also a means of spreading the new order among the living, especially manor serfs and peasantry. By 1499 the bishop of Vilnius was able to complain that members of the gentry organised public Masses and sermons on their estates (*in villis*) through misuse of private devotional privileges. Over time chantry altars and chapels were added to these foundations, thereby

Taliačškės to Jonas Glebaitis, marshal of the Grand Duchy for 60 sexagenas along with his brother Jonas Thaliat's part for 15 sexagenas. Glebaitis and his wife then endowed the Šalčininkai Chantry of Our Lady, Ss Stanislaw, John the Baptist, Erasmus and Dorothy with the land and offered the post of chantry priest to Jurgis on 20 February 1523: BiblCzart, Ms 1777 IV, fos 136–8. The business is recorded in *Lietuvos Metrika. Kryga Nr. 12 (1522–1529). Užrašymų knyga 12*, ed. D. Antanavičius, A. Baliulis (Vilnius, 2001), no. 492, pp. 390–1; see *LKD*, no. 1045.

¹⁶ On 23 April 1522 Paulius Salakietis' widow Helena endowed the church with land and St Peter's parish fraternity with her house on condition that she be allowed to build herself and her heirs a house in the grounds near the bridge for her to live in when she visited town for holy days and family affairs: LMAVB RS, F43–202, fo. 112v: 'Item donacio domus fraternitatis pro ecclesia Solocensi... Ego Helena olim Pauli factoris in Solok relicta una cum filio meo Joanne presente notum facimus universis et singulis quibus expedit, quod dedimus, donavimus et presentibus damus atque donamus perpetuo et in evum in remedium et salutem animarum nostrorum predecessorum et successorum nostrorum Ecclesie Sancti Petri in Solok aream nostram domi plebanali adiacentem. Itaque quod area principaliter [?] eligitur ex parte fraternitatis morari debet et pro eadem fraternitate damus, donamus, presentibus ascribimus domum magnam super eadem area edificatam una cum cellario cuius etc celarii usu habebit presbyter fraternitatis capelle pro tempore existens. Solum modo excipimus nobis stubam nigram et spatium totum horti, quod est ex parte pontis situm et quemadmodum circumseptus est idem hortus a stuba nigra usque ad balneam; item hoc pro nobis construenda domo pro adventu in festivitatum et quandocunque veniendum erit pro libera nostra et successorum nostrorum habitacione'.

extending further the opportunities for parishioners to hear Mass (celebrated for the intention of dead kin, benefactors and masters).¹⁷

Some families founded many churches on their various estates. Between 1510 and 1553 the Radvilos founded 14 churches, the figure rises to 18, if we count those founded by their Astikai cousins. During the first half of the sixteenth century the Goštautai founded four. The Pacevičius, Kločka and Zenovievičius families founded three each.¹⁸ This is to speak only of new foundations rather than those they inherited from at least three generations of Catholic ancestors.

Overlapping networks of lay sponsorship strengthened the parish network of Lithuania from the second half of the fifteenth century to provide a vibrant Catholic life in the diocese of Vilnius before the appearance of Protestantism. When the leading lay patron of Paberžė, Albert Iwaszkowicz, died in 1505 he made benefactions to many churches apart from the Chantry of Ss Anne and Stephen in Vilnius cathedral and the four Vilnius churches (of St John, and the Franciscans' St Mary, the Dominicans' Holy Ghost and the Bernardines): a tithe for Veliuona, four serfs for Paberžė, two serfs for Švenčionys, two serfs for Pabaiskas, two serfs for Nemenčinė, three serfs and land for Pierszaja (Losakin) and money for the parish priests of Veliuona and Giedraičiai. We should note this not to reflect the expanse of Iwaszkowicz's territorial holdings but his power as a support for parish foundations across the Grand Duchy from Žemaitija to Belarus.¹⁹ As families grew, so did the number of their ancestors, both paternal and maternal, who had obliged them as yet unborn to support parishes far beyond their direct landholdings.

¹⁷ By 1553 of 259 known parish churches in the diocese of Vilnius 84 had chantries. Some had multiple altars (the total stands at at least 129): Ukmergė and Ashmiany had six, Maišiagala and Svyriai – 5, Giedraičiai – 4; Anykščiai, Smurgainiai, Shchuchin, Vasilishki, Greater Wawerka had 3 each. While 32 per cent of churches in the diocese had at least one chantry altar, the figure for the archdiocese of Gniezno was less than 10 per cent: Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 89–90. The chantry at Kietaviškės is not included on Ochmański's list. Between 1478 and 1536, 21 chantry altars were founded in the diocese of Medininkai: Błaszczuk, *Diecezja żmudzka...Ustrój*, 200–5.

¹⁸ Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 68–9.

¹⁹ For a survey of gentry foundations in the fifteenth century, see R. Petrauskas, 'Didikas ir patronas', 161–83.

The dedication of churches and chantries reflects not only general piety – devotion to Our Lord and Our Lady with their various feasts, the Holy Trinity and St John the Baptist; they also represent the patron saints of members of the families that founded them. Mindaugas Paknys' analysis of parish church dedications in the sees of Vilnius and Medininkai between the fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries shows that the most popular patron of churches and chantries was St Nicholas, the patron saint of merchants, who had a church in his honour in Vilnius from before 1387, until the second half of the sixteenth century, when St Michael was popular. St John the Baptist was popular amongst the faithful in the diocese of Vilnius, whilst his namesake St John the Evangelist was favoured more in Žemaitija. The cult of St George was more widespread in the Grand Duchy than in Poland and appears more often in the Vilnius see during the first century of its existence (with 32 per cent of such foundations appearing before 1463). Paknys associates this with Rus'ian influence. The cult of St Anne increased in popularity towards the end of the fifteenth century (89 per cent of such foundations are recorded between 1489 and 1545).²⁰

'Simply' founding a church or chantry was not enough. The foundation had to have sufficient emoluments for it to survive. Thus we read of Kotryna Jurgaitė Skilandzienė's foundation of a chantry in the parish church at Jašiūnai, probably built by her father, Martin the constable (*koniukh*) of Vilnius.²¹ Founders realised that their foundations might not survive – as we read in Anna Iliničienė's foundation for her ancestral Church of the Holy Trinity in Zelva and the almshouse she established there in 1508.²² Churches could and did disappear.

²⁰ M. Paknys, 'Šventųjų kultai LDK XV–XVII a. pradžioje', *Šventieji vyrai, šventosios moterys*, 15–92, especially table of patrocinia, 78–92.

²¹ LMAVB RS, F6–105; *Pergamentų katalogas*, no. 209, p. 88. For her refoundation of St Martin's chantry in the Vilnius Franciscan friary in *Arena*: Rowell, 'Winning the living', 116–17.

²² 'Ut autem ecclesia parrochialis in Zelwe per suos antecessores fundata et dotata in officiis divinis et orationibus defectum et detrimentum non patiat... ad hospitale de curia Swislec, quod est in Zelwya, si duraverit et non desertabitur de gratia spiritali duas tunnas siliginis, farine et quartam partem tunne pisi et unum porcum pro pauperibus singulis annis et temporibus perpetuis dedit': *BiblCzart.*, Ms 1777 IV, 236–8 [fos 78v–79v].

Lay foundations were made in a spirit of mutual benefit for both donor and recipient clergy. Donations by nobles for the support of church foundations in return for masses and prayers for the dead appear to have developed from the foundation of altars in Vilnius cathedral and benefactions to the Franciscan Friary Church of the Assumption of Our Lady in the Sands (*in Arena, na piaskach*) in Vilnius (which still stands on Trakai Street) during the first half of the fifteenth century. If surviving material from Vilnius chapter archive reflects accurately the pattern of emoluments made during the fifteenth century, it seems that the first parish church foundations to stress the saying of masses in return for the building and maintenance of churches by noble patrons date from the second half of the century. Earlier documents mentioning the commission of masses in recompense for economic support (in the form of land, tithes, serf families and agricultural goods) from the 1440s are forgeries. The earliest genuine such emolument is that made in 1460 for Ushakovo, which requires two masses to be said per week, one in atonement for the sins of the living (*pro peccatis*) and another for the dead (*pro defunctis*). In 1468 Jurgis Goštautas would specify three masses (one on Mondays for the dead, one on Wednesdays for the sins of the living and one on Saturdays in honour of Our Lady²³). Although not all emoluments after this time specify the saying or singing of masses as recompense for donations, such requirements do become more common and gradually more specific, reflecting the personal piety of the founders. The most common are those for sins, the dead, and the health of the patrons (*pro sanitate*). The next most common request is for a mass to our Lady, usually on a Saturday. Every quarter on the Ember Days (*Quattuor Tempora*) mass and vigils. Some masses were associated with the Office (*officium* or *cursus*) of Our Lady during the early sixteenth century. It may be that the Ruthenian translation of the Song of Songs, a Mass beginning with a reading from St Luke's Gospel (Chapter One, verses 28–36) frequently used in the Little Hours of Our Lady and a Cyrillic transcription of the *necessaria* in Latin with a Ruthenian translation found in Ms 558 of the Synodal Library in Moscow most probably formed part of a devotional

²³ Ushakovo, 1460: *KDKDW*, no. 232, p. 259; Ostrowiec, 1468: *ibid.*, no. 260, p. 300.

manual for laymen in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²⁴ This fashionable Mass of Our Lady stressing her role as Mother of God, known by its Introit (the antiphon chanted as the priest approaches the altar at the beginning of mass), *Salve Sancta Parens*, was specified by Andrew of Neverovo for his chapel at Trzciana in 1502.²⁵ A Ruthenian translation of this Mass together with a commentary on how it is offered is included in the Synodal manuscript 558.²⁶ Marian devotion became extended towards the end of the century by the cult of Her Mother, St Anne with masses and recitation of the Hours of St Anne. The Mass of the Five Wounds of Our Lord is requested on two occasions, as is a Mass of Our Lord's Passion – these relate to the cult of Our Lord as the Man of Sorrows; a Holyrood Mass is specified at the Church of Holy Cross in Kaunas (as one would expect, given its dedication).²⁷ On occasion a patron would require one mass but specify three collects (or prayers), one each for sins and the dead, as Alexander Jogailaitis stresses in his confirmation of the Trzciana foundation along with a Mass of the Immaculate Conception; in 1533 Ona Buivydaitė required collects to St Nicholas and for her sins from the chantry priest of Our Lady and St Nicholas' altar in Maišiagala. At Zelva in her altar foundation Anna Iliničienė is perhaps subtle in asking for a secret prayer (that is, one

²⁴ J. Verkhohantsev, *Ruthenica Bohemica*, 39–51; eadem, 'Obieg tekstów katolickich wśród prawosławnych Rusinów (XV–XVI)', *Przestrzeń religijna Europy środkowo-wschodniej w średniowieczu = Religious space of East-Central Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. K. Bracha, P. Kras (Warsaw, 2010), 357–71, which discusses the Latin *necessaria* in Cyrillic transcription. The very title of the essay betrays the fundamental flaw of modern Slavonic studies which presumes that Cyrillic letters must be directed at Orthodox Christians (even Russian Orthodox ones in the sense of Muscovites). The author presumes without evidence that these Ruthenian texts were meant for catechising the Orthodox rather than for Catholic private devotion or liturgical use: *ibid.*, 371.

²⁵ *KDKDW*, no., 522, p. 627: 'De beata Virgine officium cottidianum: Salve sancta parens, enixa puerpera Regem, qui celum terramque regit in secula seculorum', Jasna Góra Missal fo 293: *Mszal Jagiellonów z Jasnej Góry. Wydanie fototypiczne*, ed. R. Pośpiech (Opole–Częstochowa, 2013).

²⁶ F. V. Mares, 'Moskevská Mariánska mše (Kontakt charvátskohlaholské a rusko-církevněslovanské knižní kultury v středověkém Polsku)', *Slovo* 25/26 (1976), 295–349, here pp. 299–300. For an account of the medieval Mass in Poland and selected liturgical texts see Sczaniecki, *Ślužba Boża*.

²⁷ Holy Cross, Kaunas, 'oneribus suis, videlicet duabus missis, una pro defunctis, alia vero de Sancta Cruce de eisdem bonis singulis annis': VUB RS, F7 K. M. 1522–1545, no. 193, p. 231.

said by the priest *sotto voce*) for her intention at the end of the Offerory at every mass.²⁸ It would appear that patrons gradually became more liturgically literate. A similar fashion for specifying particular parts of the mass for the intentions of the parish patrons developed in older Catholic countries such as England.²⁹ By the end of the fifteenth century most emoluments contained a precise list of the priest's duties – he who feels the benefit should also feel the burden – *quis sentit commodum, sentire debet et onus*.³⁰ This in turn led to seeking means to ensure that the duty was carried out, often by referring the emolument to the bishop, thereby theoretically increasing his awareness of what was going on in his far-flung see. When the magnate Jan Zabrzeziński and his wife Zofija endowed the parish church of St John the Baptist, the Assumption and St Nicholas in Alytus in 1524, the new patrons even set tariffs for provision of para-liturgical services (baptising children, witnessing marriages, burying the dead with the tolling of bells, and so forth) by the parish priest.³¹

²⁸ Grand Duke Alexander required a Mass of the Office of the Immaculate Conception at Trciana: *KDKDW*, no. 504, p. 614. Buividaitė – for altar of Our Lady and St Nicholas in Maišiagala: LMAVB RS, F43, b. 204, fo 186v–187v; Zelva altar foundation 8 April 1508: *ibid.*, F1–50; *Pergamentų katalogas*, no. 179, p. 77; 'BUV Lib VI Liber sextus', VUBRS F.57, B–53, b. 44, fos 96v–97v; BiblCzart, Ms 1777, fos 77v–78v, 'Liber Magnus', LMAVB RS, F43–204, fo 67.

²⁹ Duffy, *Stripping the Altars*, 243–4.

³⁰ See *KDKDW*, no. 502, p. 611 (Paberžė, 1501); no. 526, p. 630 (Karkažiškės, 1502), no. 586, p. 698 (Ukmergė, 1505); no. 503, p. 707 (Iwaszkowicz will for several Vilnius and diocesan churches, 1505); LMAVB RS, F6–100 (Dory, 1511); BiblCzart., Ms 1777 IV, fos 101v–103v (El'nia 1516 and 1520); *ibid.*, fos 100v–101v (Traupis 1512). This viewpoint contrasts somewhat with the venal maxim added to the title page of the manuscript of 'Liber IIB' by an eighteenth-century scribe: he who gives to the Church, gives to God.

³¹ 'Item a nobili quocunque a sepultura funeris alias *pokladne* debetur dari media sexagena. Item ab unaquaque campana pro funere seu pro pulsi funerals debetur dari per unum grossum divisim. Item a copula matrimonii per unum grossum; item a pueri baptismatione seu baptisma per medium grossum. Item sacra confessio gratis examinari debetur. Item a vigiliis funebralibus duodecim grossi a quocunque impetrante utriusque generis et sexus. Item a funerals missa cantata alias a Requiem tres grossos. Item a processione funerals alias a Cruce unus grossus... Et plebanus debet providere omnia altaria candelis praeter crismatem alias *Chrzesma* et quinque supra candelabrum alias *Lychtarz* ante maius altare, quod utrumque debetur a nobis provideri. Plebanus rem et sui successores in post existentes tenebitur et tenebuntur servare vicarium lituanum et legere tres missas septimanatim: unam de Assumptione gloriosissime Virginis Marie et aliam pro defunctis, hoc est nostris propinquis, tertiam vero pro peccatis': BiblCzart, Ms 1777 IV, fos 141v–142v: LMAVB RS, F43, b. 204, fos 156–157v.

This reliance on gentry devotion to extend the parish network in all Lithuanian dioceses also concealed hidden dangers which would be revealed later in the sixteenth century. There are several cases from the Lutsk consistory court which deal with disputes between parish priests concerning payment of tithes. A parish patron might fall out with his priest and decide to pay his tithes to another church. During the Protestant Reformation a gentleman might be offended by Catholic clergy and decide to convert his church and his peasants to the new religion.

Accounts of the spread of parishes within the diocese of Vilnius are based often as not on a comparison of the area of land covered by a parish in the Lithuanian see with that of parishes in other dioceses within the archbishopric of Gniezno, usually Cracow. Using this method we must conclude that the results appear to favour the Polish see. According to Jerzy Ochmański, in the Lithuanian lands of the Grand Duchy (57,230 km², presumably a rough equivalent of the modern republic) the average size of a parish was 350 km², while the figure for Ruthenian districts was more like 950 km². In comparison the average Cracovian parish covered 60 km² the figure for Wrocław was 26 km², and this allows Ochmański to speak of the weakness of ecclesiastical organisation in the Lithuanian state. The figure for Žemaitija is even worse (one parish per 600 km²). If we add to this mathematical evidence statements from Lithuanian ecclesiastical charters to the effect that a new church was needed because the distance between existing ones was too great, and the claim made by the papal legate *a latere* Ferreri in 1521 to the effect that he had heard and also seen for himself that the distance between Lithuanian churches could be ten, fifteen and sometimes twenty miles (in Lithuanian miles 70, 105, 140 km, or in Italian measurements 20, 30, 40 km), the situation does appear dire indeed. Such calculations seem intended to inspire awe (at the size of Vilnius diocese and its parishes) or disgust and shame (at the obvious backwardness of the Lithuanian church).³² Lithuanian historians note differences in the calculation of parish density, but

³² Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 79–80.

accept the method more or less.³³ This mathematical approach certainly says something (as does the statistic that average parish density in Chelmno was 113.5 km², but its Lubawa district covered 971 km² and had *one* church³⁴) but in effect it means almost nothing. It means almost nothing because we have no accurate data for Lithuanian population density in particular, although figures have been extrapolated from sixteenth-century tax and service records to produce a general estimation of population. This is important because everywhere (and Lithuania is no exception) churches were built to meet the needs of the local population which was required to maintain the building. At the risk of creating a circular argument, we might assert that churches were built more or less where populations were concentrated and that by the mid-fifteenth century there were no heavily populated areas which lacked access to a holy site. A church can be consecrated but it cannot be unconsecrated; there is a special term for that, viz. desecration (using buildings as music halls, taverns, museums or storage facilities). From sixteenth-century records relevant to the parishes covered by the 1522 Inventory we can see that parishes might transfer when economic conditions were more favourable elsewhere (thus we read of Seniškės in the inventory and note its endowment in 1511 but when Goštautas obtained the nearby estate of Daugėliškės (four kilometres away) he transferred the parish to a new building on his land and turned the Seniškės church into a chapel of ease. When the local population expanded or had problems overcoming natural obstacles such as flooding rivers the borders of Suviekas, Zarasai and Dusetos parishes were redrawn by the episcopal visitor, Canon Andriejus Nadboras in March 1533.³⁵ In almost all cases churches were built

³³ Paknys, 'Ankstyvasis', 67–9. The low density of parish foundations apparently marks Lithuania out among other European countries. This is hardly surprising, given the low population density of the Grand Duchy (given its vast size) in the European context. The parish network was sufficient for local needs, albeit not for local convenience.

³⁴ *Kościół w Polsce. Średniowiecze*, 258.

³⁵ '...parochialis ecclesie nove fundacionis in Suwiek, ad limitationem circumscriptionemque ecclesie parochialis in Suwiek diocesis Vilmensis nove fundacionis et dotationis et ab aliis vicinis parochialibus ecclesiis dismembrationem' (primarily Zarasos and Dusėtos). It stretched eastwards to Juodupė, and westwards to the River Compola, southwards as far as the River Dobrota and to the north as far as

in estate centres (whether they belonged to the grand duke or a gentry family). Such places were not only important for the Church, they were centres where the local populations gathered for worldly business too. People were willing to travel long distances to attend Mass, sometimes gathering in a particular place between parishes as we read in the 1504 foundation of Panevėžys as a chapel of ease dependant on the mother church in Ramygala. Building chapels (*sacella*) or churches in between existing parishes to facilitate easier attendance at Mass was proposed by the papal legate in 1521 for dealing with the 'density' problem. It was already a practice common in Lithuania. Parish churches might grow out of chapels of ease (as in the case of Žiežmariai). This may have happened to Kupiškis, if this was the dependency of Anykščiai mentioned in the Inventory; the Chapel of St George dependant on Varniany parish church was subsumed in 1536 into the new parish at Gerviaty.³⁶

Let us look more closely at what 350 km² might mean in practical terms. Very roughly speaking it is an area 20 km by 20 km. If we look at Ochmański's map of Vilnius parishes we see that some were indeed very distant from one another, say Panevėžys from Pasvalys in the north-west, but these two churches had much closer neighbours locally. Parishes cluster to the west and northwest of Vilnius and in the south-east. The distance between churches in the area between Vilnius and Kaunas varies from 6 km (Deltuva–Ukmergė,

the Josta river. The reason for the change in boundaries was that people found it difficult to cross the local rivers to attend Mass: 'periculum hominum infra fluvios prescriptos consistentium et certis temporibus maxime autem tempore inundationis fluviorum discriminibus inde sequens quodque christifideles propter propinquitatem ecclesie eo ferventiores ad divinum cultum reddantur cadaveraque mortuorum ne in silvis, nemoribus campisque, ut consueverant, sepeliantur, vel inanimate, puta arbores, saxa, flumina, serpentes et id genus ne pro diis colantur idolatriaque a christicolis committantur, sed semen sathane eradicetur et fides sancta orthodoxa plantetur atque augeatur': BiblCzart., Ms 1777 IV, fos 272–273v (14 March 1533).

³⁶ In the nineteenth century there was a village called Rupisky (Rupiszki), according to *Słownik Geograficzny*, near Subačius, 70 km north of Ukmergė, and if this is meant by the Inventory text rather than Kupiškis, we must deduce that its chapel foundation disappeared without trace: *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, ed. B. Chlebowski, W. Walewski, X (Warsaw, 1889), 16. Gerviaty – on 7 February 1536 Bishop John of Vilnius founded the Church of Ss John the Baptist, George and Nicholas, endowing it with the Chapel of St George in *Campo Regis* which had previously been part of Varniany parish, 10 km north-west of the new foundation: LMAVB RS, F43 b 204, fos 194–195v.

Deltuva–Žeimiai) to 12 km (Deltuva–Siesikai). Darsūniškis is 21.5 km from Žiežmariai but that is an exception.³⁷

These distances are not insuperable and can be covered on foot in a couple of hours or less, given decent weather, without much discomfort. Where problems arise, as Ferreri noted, is when a priest is required in an emergency, when a newborn child might die without baptism, a sick person die without the Last Rites.

The administrative structure of the early diocese of Vilnius must be deduced from later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources. The formation of deaneries appears to be connected with the reforms of the Council of Trent; by 1654 the diocese comprised 26 deaneries. However, there is evidence for a much earlier division of parishes into smaller administrative units for the purpose of tax collection. The incomplete 1553 diocesan tax register lists 218 parishes in five *kliuchi*, *claves* or 'keys'. Such territorial organisation is known from secular practice in the Grand Duchy and also from Polish dioceses (the *klucz* of the diocese of Cracow still existed in the seventeenth century). These keys were centred on Maišiagala, Trakai, Antakalnis, Rudamina and Medininkai. The secular powiat administration does not coincide exactly with this distribution of parishes. Maišiagala comprised 30 parishes from Vilnius, Ukmergė powiat; Trakai – 80 from Trakai, Kaunas, Grodno, Podlasie, Volkovysk, Slonim, Lida powiat; Antakalnis – 33 from Ukmergė, Braslaw, Ashmiany powiat; Rudamina – 40 from Novgorodok, Slonim, Vilnius, Ashmiany; Medininkai – 35 from Ashmiany, Minsk, Vitebsk powiat. This key organisation unit was still in use in the diocese in the early seventeenth century. According to the 1595 Vilnius diocesan tax register *kliuch* administration was still being used.³⁸ In 1604-1605 the diocese comprised at least five *partes* centred on Vilnius [Antakalnis], Nemenčinė [Maišiagala], Rūdninkai [Trakai?],

³⁷ Kernarvė–Musninkai (7.5 km), Musninkai–Gegužinė (23 km), Gegužinė–Upninkai (9.5 km), Užuguostis–Aukštadvaris (11.5 km), Užuguostis–Semeliškės (19 km), Semeliškės–Kietaviškės (11.5 km), Kietaviškės–Žiežmariai (12.5 km), Žiežmariai–Žasliai (12 km), Žasliai–Paparčiai (10 km), Paparčiai–Musninkai (8.5 km), Pabaiskas–Deltuva (10 km).

³⁸ LMAVB RS, F43, b. 476, fos 1–7v (Troczi klucz), 8–9v (Antokolski klucz), 10–11v (Miedniczki klucz), 12–12v (Rudaminski klucz); F43 b. 477. The lists of parishes are not complete.

Rudamina, and Medininkai.³⁹ Judging by the organisation of the records of the Vilnius Visitation of 1522, this distribution of parishes existed already by that date. The word deanery appears in the Acts of the Vilnius Chapter in 1555 when a recommendation was made to appoint a rural official (judge) to every deanery.⁴⁰ It is difficult to tell whether the joint action we see among certain parish priests is evidence of a wider group-formation. Thus the formation of a parish fraternity in Polonka was witnessed by all the neighbouring clergy from the area south of Novgorodok and the Nemunas River (Ishkaldz', Lipa, Niasvizh, Kroshin, Kletsk, Miadzvedzichy, Greater and Lesser Gorodishche) along the Shchara; similarly in 1495–1510 the parish priests of 11 (Zhygmuntsishki, Geraniony, Subotniki, Graūzhyski, Survilishki, Iwye, Lotva, Dieveniškės, Usielub, Traby and Šalčininkėliai) churches north of Novgorodok and the Nemunas formed a single fraternity whose members would gather in a different church every major feast day in their calendar; the professed aim of the confraternity was to increase local piety.

Lithuania was not evangelised to any great extent by religious orders. While Anglo-Saxon England had many minster (monastery) churches, by the fifteenth-century parish networks, rather than enclosed monasteries were the main instrument for providing spiritual services. The Franciscans (at first Conventuals, later supplemented by the friars observant or Bernardines) resided in towns, where a parish church usually already existed (in Vilnius and Kaunas), although for a while Ashmiany was served only by the local friary.⁴¹ The friars were

³⁹ *Relationes status dioecesium in Magno Ducatu Lituaniae*, vol. I: *Dioecesis Vilnensis et Samagittiae*, ed. P. Rabikauskas (Rome, 1971), 28: 'Dioecesis hec in quinque distincta est partes, quibus aliquot proprii praesunt decani rurales ... Vilnensis, Nemensis, Rudnensis, Rudominensis et Mednensis' [*Relatio anni 1605*].

⁴⁰ Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 72.

⁴¹ On the Franciscans, see the articles collected in: *Pirmieji pranciškonų žingsniai Lietuvoje*, and the recent monograph by D. Karczewski, *Franciszkanie w monarchii* and cited literature; for their fraternity in Vilnius, see below, p. 501. On the Bernardines, see Maciszewska, *Klasztor bernardyriski*; for a history of the Vilnius friary, see R. Janonienė, *Bernardinų bažnyčia ir konventas Vilniuje: pranciškoniškojo dvasingumo atspindžiai ansamblio įrangoje ir puošyboje* (Vilnius, 2010). For their activities in Lithuania: Gidžiūnas, 'Pranciškonų observantų-bernardinų gyvenimas', 35–134; Trimonienė, 'Katalikų Bažnyčios politika bažnytinės unijos klausimu', and eadem, 'Bernardinai Lietuvoje XV–XVII a. pradžioje', *Šviesa ir šešėliai*, 197–219.

an important part of Lithuanian spiritual life – providing specialised spiritual services, fraternities, sermons and sanctuary – and reaping considerable benefits in terms of donations of land and agricultural produce. The Franciscans were to fifteenth-century Lithuania what the Benedictines were to early Catholic England, where the first known confraternities were associated with Benedictine houses.⁴² The Bernardines had houses in Vilnius (1469), Kaunas (1471), Tykocin (1469), Grodno (1494) and Polotsk (1498). The Austin penitential canons served Bystrytsa and the Benedictines had a house in Old Trakai.⁴³ The mendicants had missionary centres in the more distant parts of Orthodox southern Lithuanian Rus', where there was little or no diocesan organisation.⁴⁴

Schools

Schools were founded in local parishes. The first and premier establishment of the kind was the cathedral school in Vilnius, founded in 1397. A cathedral school in Medininkai is known in the surviving record from 1469. Parish schools were intended to teach basic tenets of the Faith and perhaps rudimentary Latin. The parish school was the starting place for training future priests, who might then move on to the cathedral school in Vilnius and a minority would attend the University of Cracow. Provision of an education for a donor's son might form part of an emolument. Thus in 1506 one of the sisters of the Bagdanavičiai patrons of Maišiagala parish, Elzbieta Mykolaitė, widow of Jurgis Kondrataitis [Georgius Condrowthowycz] donated a serf, Petrus Nyewyerowicz and his sons and land to her brothers' Trinity chantry along with one sexagena and a horse worth one and a half sexagena. Along with the property came her son Motiejus

⁴² Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church*, 119.

⁴³ On the Austin penitential canons in Lithuania, and the best known Lithuanian member of the Order, Bl. Mykolas Giedraitis, see Baronas, 'Pal. Mykolo Giedraičio gyvenimas', 249–63. For the Benedictines in Lithuania, see T. M. Trajdos, 'Benedyktyni w Starych Trokach', 203–49, and *Benediktiniškoji tradicija Lietuvoje*, ed. L. Jovaiša (Vilnius, 2008).

⁴⁴ S. C. Rowell, 'Keletas Pamokslininkų ordino veiklos aspektų lotynizuojant Bažnyčią LDK (iki 1501 m.)', *Šviesa ir šešėliai*, 184–96.

to be educated and sustained by the priest for three years.⁴⁵ The emolument of Anna Iliničienė for the school at Zelva in 1508 was almost twice what she gave for the parish almshouse.⁴⁶ Stanislovas Vaiškavičius was sent off to the parish priest in Zhaludok, when he was a small boy to learn how to serve Mass.⁴⁷ Some school masters could be very well-trained specialists. We learn for example that in 1484 the district notary of Drohiczyn Stanisław Wodyński sued the town school master, also named Stanisław, for 100 florins in damages for lost business after the latter took over his legal business, whilst he was away dealing with matters before the monarch.⁴⁸ The school master's actions were justified by the Drohiczyn judge Zawisza, who explained that the lawyer had been acting on his behalf.⁴⁹ Ochmański devised a new method for studying the spread of parish schools by taking reference to the presence of a minister in a parish to mean a cleric who might be involved in teaching. According to this method, the diocese of Vilnius is supposed to have had 84 schools for its 259 parish churches in the mid-sixteenth

⁴⁵ LMAVB RS, F3–75; *Pergamentų katalogas*, no. 65, p. 72; *KDKDW*, no. 604, p. 720 (document summary): 'filiumque meum nomine Mathiam dedi et commendavi ad eius [Fr Peter's] manus fovendum ac providendum tam in victu quam in amictu tam per trigennium et in scholasticis rebus imbuendis circa ecclesiam in Broszy.' Fr Peter, chantry priest of the Trinity altar in Maišiagalas was also parish priest of Paberžė.

⁴⁶ For the almshouse see below, pp. 513–14 and n. 18. 'Item ad eandem ecclesiam de curia Szydłowycze propter scolares et scolam, quos plebanus nutrire et providere propterea tenebitur et successores tres tunnas farine, siliginis, et unam tunnam pisi et duos porcos perpetuis temporibus dedit et ascripsit successoresque sui dare et solvere tenebuntur': *BiblCzart.*, Ms 1777 IV, p. 238 [fo 79v].

⁴⁷ *Lietuvos Metrika (1540–1541). 10-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabaigos kopija)*, ed. S. Lazutka, I. Valikonytė, S. Viskantaitė-Saviščenienė (Vilnius, 2003), no. 72, p. 47: 'мя дано было малого до плебана первого, князя Миколая учити ся мшы помогати' (20 December 1540).

⁴⁸ *ADS*, D1, fo 78v–79: 'nobilis Wodinsky notarius terrestris districtus Drohicziensis proposuit contra dominum generosum Stanislaum rectorem scole in Drohiczin propositione verbale ponendo et articulando et primo quod ipse intromisit se in officium notariatus, quod officium a serenissimo domino nostro Rege Polonie magno duce Lithfame habet collatum, quam intromissionem itaque tanquam in dedecus sibi factam ad centum florenorum ungaricalium extimavit.'

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, fo 79: Stanisław Wodyński, scribe of Drohiczyn, 1478–1501, Stanisław Zawisza, judge of Drohiczyn, 1481–1507: *Urządnicy podlascy XIV–XVIII wieku. Spisy*, ed. E. Dubas-Urwanowicz, W. Jarmolik, M. Kulecki, J. Urwanowicz (Kórnik, 1994), no. 432, p. 75; no. 564, p. 86. Mikołaj Wodyński acted as judge when Zawisza was ill: *ibid.*, no. 566.

century.⁵⁰ Although Błaszczyk is probably correct to regard this new methodology with suspicion, there is evidence in support of it.⁵¹ One example from the diocese of Lutsk is the case of Andreas *rector scholarium* of Skibniew. He had a deputy school master (*surrector*), Martinus de Ostrolęka (nunc morans in Czyzechonovyecz), whom Andreas sent to record fraternity money at the manor house of the Under-judge of Drohiczyn, Wojciech Kostka Skibniewski. The master is called both *rector scholarium* and *minister ecclesie* and we learn about his activities because the parish priest assaulted him.⁵² In his hour of distress he called on the patron of the parish (and its school) to save him.

The Lithuanian clergy

Almost a quarter of a century ago the Polish historian Jacek Wiesiołowski noted in an important article on the careers of Polish and Lithuanian bishops in the fifteenth century that the origins of bishops in Vilnius especially but also in the other Lithuanian dioceses of Žemaitija, Lutsk and Kiev differed from those of prelates who served Church and State in the sees of the Polish Crown at that time. For the most part the latter belonged to high-ranking noble families or held high office in the kingdom. Only two per cent were what Wiesiołowski terms 'plebean'. By contrast in the diocese of Vilnius the great majority (85 per cent) previously had been canons of Vilnius. 43 per cent were of burgher origin and there were no sons of state dignitaries or the higher aristocracy among their number.⁵³ With the natural exceptions of the first bishop, Andrew Jastrzębiec, the Franciscan former confessor of Jogaila's mother-in-law and titular ordinary of Seret, and Mikołaj of Gorzków, a former rector of the Jagiellonian University,

⁵⁰ Ochmański, 'Najdawniejsze szkoły na Litwie', 115–16.

⁵¹ Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka... Ustrój*, 205–6.

⁵² ADS D1, fo 56r–v, a case from October 1480. Martin says that 'discretus Andreas, cum fui apud eum surrector, mi mandavit ut irem ad advocatum ad villam subiudicis Kosthką in Skybnyevo conscribere fraternitatis pecuniam, quam tunc fratres componebant'. For Kostka, see *Urzędnicy podlascy*, no. 512, p. 81.

⁵³ J. Wiesiołowski, 'Episkopat Polski XV w. jako grupa społeczna', *Spółczesność Polski Średniowiecznej*, 4 (1990), 250–1.

no bishop was brought in to the see *directly* from outside the Grand Duchy. Those who were 'Polish' had served previously at least within the Grand Duchy (usually as canons of Vilnius or Žemaitija).⁵⁴

All Lithuanian bishops during the fifteenth century were of gentry or burgher origin. In 1491–92 all bishops were capable lawyers and, or chapter administrators, having served as archdeacon, dean, provost or canon in charge of diocesan property (*kustosz*). Perhaps an exception to prove this rule is Bishop Martin III of Žemaitija (1492–1515), probably the son of a 'German' merchant of Vilnius named John. Martin gained provision to his see by a papal *motu proprio*, perhaps in collusion with Casimir Jagiellończyk, while he (Martin) was resident in the papal Curia. He did not study in Cracow, like the middling gentleman Albert Tabor and the Vilnius burgher John Andriušaitis, who were elevated to the sees of Vilnius and Lutsk in 1491–92, but became an expert in law somewhere in Italy. He was elected archdeacon and installed as a supernumerary canon of Vilnius only *after* having been consecrated bishop of Medininkai a few months earlier.⁵⁵ While it may appear that Martin's contemporary, Albert Tabor (1492–1507) spent much of his time in court in Cracow as a defendant, he was also active as a procurator, representing Vilnius citizens Nicholas Mychno Tolstikowicz and Martinus Jancelowicz against Archdeacon Jonas Andriušaitis, the future bishop of Lutsk, as we learn from the records of the Gniezno Consistory Court. He was also the third judge to sit in the matrimonial case brought by Ona Kybartaitė-Sirtautaitienė against Pacas Sirtautaitis before it eventually passed on appeal to Gniezno⁵⁶

⁵⁴ This distinction qualifies the assertion of Tomasz Graff, that 70 per cent of bishops outside the Crown were Poles: T. Graff, *Episkopat monarchii jagiellońskiej*, 72–3,

⁵⁵ Rowell, 'Martin III', 39–40.

⁵⁶ Tabor as a defendant and even excommunicate in Cracow in 1472–76: *Cracovia Lituanorum*, I, nos. 84, 85, 93, 95–97, 100; as procurator in Gniezno Consistory Court: AAG, Acta Cons. A 59 [1491] and as judge of the third instance as Administrator of the Diocese of Vilnius after Bishop Andrew of Vilnius and Martin II of Medininkai: *ibid.* and Acta Cons. A 60, fos 74v–75, 76v, 78r–v, 79, 81, 82, 109v, 112v, 137v–138, 141v, 143; Acta Cons. A61 [1493] fos 16v, 51v, 54, 55, 64v–65. Martin is known to us from his witnessing of a 1499 burgher donation to the Vilnius Franciscans (*KDKDW*, no. 463, p. 543) and his management of the customs house in Minsk for three years after October 1504 (*LM5*, no. 176, p. 291) and while the co-appellant Tolstikowicz and his wife Martha are recorded as selling land in Antakalnis to Jacobus Sobolowicz: *LVIA*, F5a, no. 5333, fo 8v (15 May 1495).

Bishop Tabor appears to mark a turning point in the type of men selected to serve as bishop of Vilnius. He was a lawyer, a reformer of episcopal control over vibrant Catholic life in the Grand Duchy, an influential politician. He was a scion of a minor gentry family from south of Vilnius. Ten years into his episcopacy the first Lithuanian magnate was appointed bishop of Lutsk in 1502, Albertas Radvila, in succession to a series of petty noblemen and Vilnius burghers. In 1507 Albert would be translated to Vilnius. In March 1515 Albert's nephew Nicholas Radvila⁵⁷ was appointed *administrator in spiritualibus et temporalibus* to the see of Medininkai (Žemaitija) until he reached the canonical age of 27 to become fully-fledged bishop in 1521 and one of the largest landowners in the whole of the Grand Duchy.⁵⁸ Nicholas' father Chancellor Mikalojus II Mikalojaitis was a creditor of Archbishop Jan Łaski of Gniezno, his *compater*, to the tune of two thousand Hungarian florins in gold.⁵⁹ In Vilnius Albert Radvila would be succeeded by Sigismund the Old's under-age and thitherto unordained illegitimate son John of the Lithuanian Dukes, who in turn would give way to Paul Alšėniškis, magnate kinsman of the ruling dynasty. Alšėniškis had become bishop of Lutsk while under the canonical age in succession to Albertas Radvila. He was archdeacon of

⁵⁷ Bishop Albert was son of Mikalojus I Radvila, who was also father of Mikalojus II Mikalojaitis Radvila, father of Bishop Nicholas, see Antoniewicz, *Protoplaści Książąt Radziwiłłów*, 54–7.

⁵⁸ *LKD*, no. 1457. For the size of his landholdings, see Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka... Ustrój*, 49–51.

⁵⁹ 'Raptularz Jana Łaskiego', AGAD, Biblioteka Baworowskich, Ms 246, fos 24v (1512): 'Debita hoc anno sicut inferius in auro ... Domino Nicolao palatino wilnensi, cancellario Ducatus Lytuanie, carissimo a tempore mortis olim Alexandri regis tenore florenorum in auro et pondere bono duo millia hungaricalis' (with a marginal note: '2000 solutum'); 31v (1515): 'item debeo domino Nicolao Radywil palatino wilnensi, compatri nostro, florenorum 1000 in auro, quos assigno ex arenda solvendo (soluti)'; 34r (1517): 'Palatino wilnensi Radywil 1000 in auro absque 50 pro cambio'. This document was dubbed (erroneously) by the scholar who brought it into academic circulation the archbishop's 'testament': H. Zeissberg, *Johann Laski, Erzbischof von Gnesen (1510–1531) und sein Testament* (Vienna, 1874). The term *raptularz* is more accurate. The document contains financial accounts, travel diaries – to Rome, Mecklenburg, Vilnius, Prussia – and miscellaneous personal notes. Spiritual kinship between the two functionaries arose in all probability from the sons of the Duchess Anna (Radvilaitė) of Mazovia.

Vilnius from 1519 (just before the episcopacy of Bishop John) and would succeed John in 1536.⁶⁰

The first decade or so of the sixteenth century marks yet another watershed in the life of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. It is hardly likely that some great surfeit of devotion afflicted the magnate families of Lithuania around the year 1500 to explain the interest they would show henceforth in holding episcopal office. What we can say is that certain magnate families had established their economic and political pre-eminence, they had become great patrons of the Church, founding parishes, chantries, even almshouses. In the fifteenth century several magnate families were notable for their piety, not only in their patronage of ecclesiastical institutions but in their contribution to the ranks of the clergy. Prince Hermanas Giedraitis was an active canon of Cracow in the 1430s and apparently an acquaintance of St John Cantius; he appears to have sought to become a member of the chapter of Gniezno in 1427, if Fr Fijałek is not mistaken (he does not feature in Marta Czyżak's 2003 study of the cathedral chapter). In 1438 he was the formal holder of a *scholastriam in commendam* in the Włocławek Chapter⁶¹ Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis was an Austin Canon in St Mark's Convent in Cracow, where he died in 1485.⁶² Hermanas was one of several children, and Blessed Mykolas was disabled. In a sense both could be spared. In the 1470s Jurgis Goštautas, son of the Vilnius palatine Jonas Goštautas, was a canon of Vilnius (but not a bishop as the Venetian diplomat to Tartary Ambrogio Contarini mistook him⁶³), who acted as Casimir's

⁶⁰ LKD, no. 1877.

⁶¹ For Hermanas Giedraitis, see Fijałek, 'Uchrześcjanienie Litwy przez Polskę', 137–8; shortened second edition: 'Kościół rzymskokatolicki na Litwie', *Chryścianizacja Litwy*, ed. J. Kłoczowski (Cracow, 1987), 193–4; M. Czyżak, *Kapituła katedralna w Gnieźnie w świetle Metryki z lat 1408–1448* (Poznań, 2003); his Włocławek benefice is noted in A. Radzimiński, 'Problemy metodologiczne w badaniach duchowieństwa kapitułnego w Polsce średniowiecznej', *Duchowieństwo kapitułne w Polsce średniowiecznej i wczesnonowożytnej: Studia nad pochodzeniem i funkcjonowaniem elity kościelnej*, ed. A. Radzimiński (Toruń, 2000), 171.

⁶² Baronas, 'Pal. Mykolo Giedraičio gyvenimas', 269–70, 287–8.

⁶³ E. Ch. Skrzhinskaia, *Barbaro i Kontarini o Rossii k istorii italo-russkikh svyazei v XV v.* (Leningrad, 1971). It would be tempting to view this mistake as having arisen from the fact that Goštautas was provost of Geranony, whose rank allowed him to vest for Mass in episcopal splendour. However, the status of infulatus was gained for the parish priest of St Nicholas' by Albertas Goštautas around 1529, when

envoy to Venice and the Curia. He too had two brothers and three sisters, one of whom was a religious.⁶⁴ Andriejus Petkaitis Svyriškis was a canon of Vilnius between 1491 and 1508 and the parish priest and patron of the church in Varniany, which he endowed further in his will of 15 August 1508.⁶⁵ It was not uncommon for the patrons of a parish or chantry to appoint a kinsman as its priest. A good example of a priest buying up his family patrimony in the form of parish donations is Jurgis Taliatas of parish priest of Salakas, canon of Medininkai, who sold his third of his patrimony, Taliatiškės to Jonas Glebaitis, marshal of the Grand Duchy for 60 sexagenas along with his brother Jonas Taliatas' part for 15 sexagenas.

Some noble families had enough male members to be able to afford to sacrifice them to celibacy. Even so, some took high office without taking the requisite higher holy orders (Mikalojus Radvila and John of the Lithuanian dukes were not priested before they became bishop). Thus, should a better opportunity arise, such prelates could return to the world and marry without too much trouble. When the notary public and chapter servant Stanisław Komorowski, a clerk in minor orders, who helped carry out the 1522 Visitation of the Diocese of Vilnius was unsuccessful in his attempt to occupy the stall vacated by Canon Jonas Silvijus Sicilietis (Siculus) in 1537, he became personal secretary to Albertas Goštautas, starosta of Žiežmariai and husband of Dorota Tsybulska. The Church itself was wealthier and better organised and a prize worth taking.

Judging from the results of a recent unpublished study of parish clergy in the dioceses of Vilnius and Medininkai the origin of parish priests can now be assessed with some (albeit not complete)

Stefan Jalbrzykowski z Grabia is mentioned in sources as such. This date coincides with the rebuilding in brick of the church and the purchase of the title of count of Geranony by Albertas from the Holy Roman Emperor. For Stefan see *LKD*, no. 2415. The history of the Geraniony infulacy is given in a somewhat confused way in Kurczewski, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 102. Perhaps the luxury of Goštautas' apparel induced the Italian to deem him a bishop. Probably the Georgius Johannis who sent a supplication 'De promotis et promovendis' to Rome in 1476–77 to hold more than one benefice: *APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers.*, 25, fo 155v.

⁶⁴ The Goštautai (Jurgis): *LKD*, no. 1037; and the Giedraičiai: Baronas, 'Pal. Mykolo Giedraičio gyvenimas', 269–70, 287–8.

⁶⁵ *LKD*, no. 194; J. Tęgowski, *Rodowód kniaziów Świrskich do końca XVI wieku* (Wrocław, 2011), 61–4, 97.

accuracy. It seems that of those whose social origin is known the majority were of gentry descent, others were the sons of burghers. It is difficult to tell whether or how many peasants were admitted to the priesthood. Only the freeborn could aspire to priestly office. Here we face the same problem as everywhere with persons of this estate, whether we talk about devotion, church service, or attendance. It is all well and good to boast of the high number of gentlemen in Lithuanian society – while most inhabitants of the Grand Duchy were unfree serfs or subsistence-level peasants with no spare time or money to devote to spiritual endeavour. While it is obvious that the first generations at least of Catholic clergy in the sees of Vilnius and Medininkai were predominantly immigrants from the closest Catholic countries – the Duchy of Mazovia and the Kingdom of Poland, just as the Polish Church was built by German-speaking clergy, by the first half of the sixteenth century more than one third at least of all parish priests came from within the Grand Duchy itself, the figure being more than half, when we take into account those from Podlasie, an area subject to the Grand Duchy until 1569 and missionised seriously by Catholic clergy for the first time when under Lithuanian rule, *pace* ethnic prejudice.⁶⁶ As far as patronage of superfluous Mazovian clergy and opportunities for service in Lithuania are concerned, it may also be significant that a Radvila duchess, Anna, resided in the Mazovian ducal palace (as wife of Konrad III and mother and regent of Dukes Janusz and Stanisław between 1497 and 1522) and that a former secretary of Grand Duke Alexander, Erazm Ciołek, served as bishop of Płock (1504–1522).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ R. Bružaitė, *Vilniaus ir Žemaičių vyskupijų parapijų dvasininkija XV–XVI a. trečiajame ketvirtyje* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Vilnius, 2012), 162, 154–5. An English summary of this dissertation is published as eadem, 'Parish clergy in the dioceses of Vilnius and Samogitia from the 15th to the 3rd quarter of the 16th century', *Lituano-Slavica Posnaniensia. Studia Historica* 16 (2013), 107–26. This scholar's findings are based on a conservative analysis of difficult data collated in *LKD*. A more liberal selection of data results in similar results percentage-wise. Detecting the origin of clergy is complex because where a geographical origin is given, it may refer to a workplace rather than place of birth; thus Jurgis Taliatas is referred to as being from Salakas (where he was parish priest) rather than 'from Eišiškės' (where we know his family land to have been): *LKD*, no. 1045.

⁶⁷ J. Grabowski, *Dynastia Piastów mazowieckich: Studia nad dziejami politycznymi Mazowsza, intytucją i genealogią książąt* (Cracow, 2012), 193–6, 382–4, 481–7, 580–3.

Clergy mixed with the gentry as we see from numerous court cases which arose from evenings clergy spent in inns in the company of boyars. As more and more gentry became involved in church foundations their interest as consumers developed into potential as providers of spiritual favours. Being a parish priest was a useful occupation for superfluous offspring. Priests could monetarise family land (by accepting a gift and then reimbursing the donor, as one Maišiagala example shows neatly) or maintain the family interest in land alienated to the Church *pro piis causis*. We have evidence of gentry parents deliberately sending their sons off to be priests – as in the 1474 case of Nicholas of Zhygmuntsishki who claims that his neophyte parents packed him and his brother off for eventual ordination.⁶⁸

Structural Reform on the eve of the ‘Reformation’?

From the oldest surviving consistory court book from the diocese of Lutsk we know that the local ordinary took care to check up on the authenticity of papal indulgences used by local clergy (one priest alleged he had a confessional letter from Pius II which enabled him to absolve penitents of sins reserved usually for confession to the bishop or the pope). A dispute over who was rightfully parish priest of Jabłonna was resolved by Bishop Stanisław after an appeal to Rome.⁶⁹ The bishop of Lutsk also checked up on the payment

⁶⁸ APA, De promotis et promovendis, Reg. 23, fo 202v.

⁶⁹ ADS, D1, fo 69: ‘Die martis xxix may honorabilis Andreas plebanus in Thykoczyczno manumentum prestitit ... quod habet auctoritatem apostolicam a sanctissimo domino Pyo pape pro persona et parrochia in omnibus casibus preter homicidium usque ad extremum vite, super quod etiam quoddam instrumentum produxit de manu Alexandri Boguslai de Ponyathi Plocensis diocesis et per manus Bernardi de mandato absolutus.’ Alexander Boguslai of Poniaty is known as a presenter of supplications before the Sacred Penitentiary, see *BP*, VI, no. 1462, pp. 305–6 (6 November 1459). On 23 March 1484 Fr Stanisław, parish priest of Jablon, obtains a verdict from Pope Sixtus IV and in the presence of the bishop of Lutsk and assembled clergy is instructed to act upon it: ADS, D1, fo 78: ‘Causa Jablona pro plebanatu. Die eodem quo supra [23 March 1484] lune vicesimo tercio mensis Marcii constitutus personaliter honorabilis Stanislaus plebanus de Jablona obtulit quoddam scriptum commissionis sanctissimi domini

of tithes to parishes in his diocese. The most common disputes involved not the non-payment of tithes but cases where a parishioner changed his parish allegiance after falling out with his local priest⁷⁰. The curate-cum-chaplain of Wistycze, Fr Peter, was tried twice: once for hearing the confession of an Orthodox woman in the house of a nobleman, Jerzy Ostremieczowicz.⁷¹ Bishops sought to ensure that the sacraments (especially baptism, confession or marriage) were administered within a church building rather than a private house or the presbytery. The statutes of the second known Synod of Vilnius (1528) contained a separate paragraph on confession: *presbiteris et confessoribus... generaliter inhihemus, ne in suis domibus confessiones praesertim mulierum ac virginum, sed in sanctis ecclesiis.*⁷² The statutes in this case at least were connected clearly with real-life situations.

We can see attempts to restrict the sacraments and religious services to official buildings in controls over portable altars and requests to aid church building work. For example in 1503 Grand Duke Alexander received a plea to grant land for the building of a

nostri et Sixti moderni pape reverendo domino Stanislao Dei et Apostolice Sedis gratia episcopo et in personam ipsius scriptum, quod tunc cum ea, que decuit, reverentia suscipiens obtulit separatim per humillissimam subiectionem ad id exequendum et faciendum prout in eadem littera commissionis continetur, presentibus honorabilibus Ade plebano in Rosbiticamyen [LKD, no. 8], Johanne de Mordi [LKD, no. 692] et aliis plebanis.' This appears to pertain to the settlement of the take over of Jablonna by Stanisław B. A. of Michow (Płock diocese) from Mikołaj of Przesmyk [LKD 1405] in 1480. The court case over this was heard 'presentibus honorabilibus Johanne baccalaureo de Lythvanya et Mathia de Vaszosze presbytero (curiensis?)' [LKD, no. 1684]: ADS, D1, fo 58v. For the foundation of this parish, see Jaszczółt, 'Fundacje kościelne', 37.

⁷⁰ ADS, D1, fos 39v, 55, 87.

⁷¹ Ibid., fo 40: 'Testes inducti ex parte honorabilis Nicolai plebani de Visticz ad instanciam discreti Petri capellani de ibidem et hoc de confessione scismatice. Primus testis nobilis Andreas Ostromieczowicz citatus, iuratus etc. deposuit in medio quadragesime venit ad me \dominus Petrus/ equitando a Georgio fratre meo et dixit ancille mee Culincze ... iam tuam sororem Margaretham audivi scismaticam apud Georgium Ostromieczowicz... Secundus testis Johannes familiaris Andree Ostromieczowicz recte deposuit ut primus... De Palla. Tercius testis discretus Stanislaus minister ecclesie de Visticze citatus, iuratus etc deposuit in privi carnis dum venit plebanus domum de Bresth, intrat in domum vero Petrus Capellanus habuit lectum; ibidem vidit pallam in lecto eius et dixit mihi: Bene frater, vidi apud dominum Petrum pallam in lecto.'

⁷² *Concilia Poloniae*, II, 118–19.

chapel of ease for the church at Ramygala because ‘a considerable number of parishioners live so far from the said church that on account of the great distance they only attend for the sacraments or services but rarely or perhaps never and so they have the custom of traveling on holy days into the wilderness to an island or *ostrov* where parishioners who live far away gather for divine worship and the sacraments and for this they have the bishop’s permission. However they suffer great hardship and the danger of appearing to be pagans as they burn holy incense to God’.⁷³ Although this appeal for help is repeated in a 1531 document which stresses the existence of pagan customs as the reason to build a church, the main motive here is that people attend their distant parish church on rare occasions, even though on holy days they *do* gather, albeit in the wilds to take part in Christian services⁷⁴. Indeed, during debates in the 1520 Synod of Vilnius the papal legate Zaccharia Ferreri proposed an already applied policy of building chapels of ease with a resident altar priest in places where people dwelling far from their parish church might gather to obtain spiritual first aid when there was cause to baptise infants, anoint the sick and shrive the dying⁷⁵. Meanwhile the 1526 emolument for Joniškis justifies the building of the new church with a textbook account of pagan practices and stresses the need to draw people away from heathen ways⁷⁶. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation obsession with purity of Faith began.

⁷³ *KDKDW*, no. 564, pp. 678–9, here p. 677 (Vilnius, 7 September 1503): ‘propter longaquam ab ecclesia distantiam pars non mediocris parochianorum ad ecclesiam ipsam pro sacramentis et divinis raro vel nunquam veniret exindeque consuetudo esset ut pro diebus festis in quodam deserto seu insula alias *ostrow* parochiani ipsi remotiores convenerunt rei divinae et sacramentorum percipiendorum ratione, quae quidem sacramenta etsi indulgente eo ipso domino episcopo fiebant. Tamen quia difficultas quaedam esset ac periculum immo gentilitatis praeseferre videbatur ritum in nemore sacra thura libare Deo’. Distance from the local church is mentioned in several foundation charters such as that of Paberžė: ‘ecclesia in Brzozy ... in ecclesiam parochialem erigeretur ac ut ibi paraphiani per longaquam distantiam ab ecclesia parochiali in Moysogola’: *ibid.*, no. 548, p. 644 (20 May 1503). The distance between Paberžė and Maišiagala was 2 Lithuanian miles (14 km): *ibid.*, no. 502, p. 609 (30 July 1501). A similar argument is made over the parishes of Karkažiškės and Pasvalys in 1502 and 1498: *ibid.*, no. 528, p. 629; no. 455, p. 533, and Smargon’ church: *ibid.*, no. 567, p. 689 (2 October 1503).

⁷⁴ Paknys, ‘Ankstyvasis’, 110–11.

⁷⁵ Fijałek, ‘Pierwszy synod diecezji wileńskiej’, 85–6.

⁷⁶ *CM*, I, no. 133, p. 206.

From the time of Bishop Albert Tabor at least attempts were made by the ordinary to reassert central control over practices in his dioceses which he saw as being harmful to his office and the parishes of his dioceses. In 1499 he complained to Pope Alexander VI that noble recipients of papal (and even mere episcopal) graces had been abusing their spiritual privileges to evangelise country areas by having Mass said publicly on portable altars for a large number of people (rather than privately for themselves and members of the households) and arranging the preaching of sermons without the bishop's knowledge or permission. To scandalise the pontiff further he takes up the traditional topic of Lithuanian paganism by noting that gentlemen keep soothsayers and fortune-tellers on their estates.⁷⁷ If such people did abuse their confessional letters, the bishop must be implying that they allowed other people to confess to the nobles' private priests who enjoyed wider faculties of absolution rather than the local parish clergy. In one very important respect we may sympathise with such evasion of the services of the diocesan clergy: the number of supplications from the diocese of Vilnius to Rome seem to have reached a peak in the period around the Holy Year of 1500. The last decade of the fifteenth century saw at least 56 Lithuanian supplications granted in the Sacred Penitentiary. Less sympathy is due to complaints from the authors of the 1528 Diocesan Statutes that frequent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

⁷⁷ 'In civitate et diocesi Vilmensibus a pluribus annis elapsis fuerunt et adhuc sunt plures magnates et nobiles, qui nedum in divinationibus et incantationibus credant, verum aruspices, incantatores, divinatores, ariolos, sacrilegos et alii huiusmodi inanitis artibus intendentes in eorum curiis tenere et confoverre, alii vero confessionalibus, indultis et aliis facultatibus missas et alia divina officia super altari portatibili celebrando et celebrari facientes, eis etiam a nobis et a sede apostolica concessis abutentes missas et alia divina officia huiusmodi in villis et locis minus honestis et congruentibus non solum in familiarium quorum domesticorum sed magne populi multitudinis presentia et indebitis horis, nullis reverentia et honore adhibitibus, celebrari et publice predicari facere non formidant in animarum suarum perditionem, divine maiestatis opprobrium et parrochialium ecclesiarum civitatis et diocesis predictarum preiudicium et ordinarie iurisdictionis contemptum pernitiosissimum quoque exemplum et scandalum plurimorum': M. Kowalczyk, 'Bulla papieża Aleksandra VI dla biskupa wileńskiego Wojciecha Tabora', *Ludzie, Kościół, Wierzenia: Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa Europy Środkowej (średniowiecze-wczesna epoka nowożytna)*, ed. W. Iwańczak, S. K. Kuczyński (Warsaw, 2001), 281.

(especially in processions) led to a decline in respect for and devotion to the Body of Christ.⁷⁸

Other records surviving from the time of Bishop Tabor reveal how that prelate sought to obtain confirmation of church property held from the days of Jogaila.⁷⁹ In 1501 he succeeded in obtaining from Grand Duke Alexander the right to present priests to 28 royal foundations with the declared aim of appointing clergy who could speak Lithuanian.⁸⁰ On 5 January 1503 the bishop of Medininkai obtained a similar charter to present candidates to half the royal parishes in his diocese.⁸¹ We do not know whether the holders of these benefices spoke Lithuanian before or after the charters were issued. It is known that complaints over the linguistic abilities of parish priests were common enough even in Poland during the later Middle Ages, where clergy might speak German rather than Polish.⁸² On 5 October 1499, three weeks or so before he answered Tabor's complaint of the misuse of papal indulgences by Lithuanian laymen, Alexander VI granted the bishop his support in his efforts to defend diocesan clergy from secular courts and those who harmed or killed clergy.⁸³ Two years later Tabor obtained the right to sentence those found guilty of harming the Church to death, be they Christian, Armenian, Tatar or schismatic.⁸⁴ The grand duke had given this extension of the Church's judicial powers his blessing. Bearing in mind all the bishop's attempts to confirm the Church's internal and external order, it is no surprise that the first *Agenda* for the diocese of Vilnius was written and published in print during Tabor's time in office by a local canon⁸⁵. It was at that time that

⁷⁸ See above pp. 425–35.

⁷⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 469, pp. 550–3 (3 June 1500).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 507, pp. 616–17.

⁸¹ *CM*, I, no. 97, pp. 150–2.

⁸² Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce*, 159–61; the Gniezno Statutes of 1512 require a parish priest who does not know the local language to appoint a curate who does know that tongue: *Kościół w Polsce. Średniowiecze*, 282.

⁸³ *KDKDW*, no. 466, pp. 547–8.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 498 pp. 600–2.

⁸⁵ Martin of Radom, *Agenda seu exequiale divinatorum sacramentorum per venerabilem virum et dominum Martinum canonicum Vylnensis dyocesis* (Gdańsk, 1499). For a brief analysis see Z. Obertyński, 'Agenda wileńska z 1499 r.', *Przegląd Teologiczny*, 10 (1929), 7–11. See also above, p. 3.

the number of churches and chantries rose sharply throughout the diocese (the same might be said of the sees of Medininkai and Lutsk too). Even so, of the 68 churches from the Maišiagalā, Antakalnīs and Trakai *kliuchi* (proto-deaneries) listed in the 1522 Visitation's inventory of parish treasures, 23 were unconsecrated⁸⁶. During the time of bishops Albert (Tabor and Radvila, 1492–1519) 53 churches were founded, according to J. Ochmański⁸⁷. These were built mostly by noble and gentry patrons, sometimes without the permission or even knowledge of the bishop. A similar problem of keeping tabs on parish infrastructure faced Orthodox hierarchs too. In 1509 the Orthodox Synod (*Sobor*) of Vilnius was attended by Metropolitan Iosif (Bulgarinovich) of Kiev and All Rus', the bishops of Vladimir and Brest, Smolensk, Lutsk and Ostrorog, Polotsk and Vitebsk, Turov and Pinsk, Przemysl, and Chełm (the latter two sees being in Poland), the abbots of several monasteries from Kiev, Lavrashev (near Novgorodok), Slutsk, Minsk, Polotsk, Smolensk, Gal'shany, and Losk; and the archpriests (*protopopy*) of Vilnius, Novgorodok, Grodno, Slutsk, Markava, Slonim and Volkovysk, among other clergy.⁸⁸ Almost all these towns had a Catholic bishop and or monastery or church. The meeting attempted to enlist the aid of the secular authorities to control the building of Orthodox churches and monasteries without episcopal permission.⁸⁹ In 1522 Iona, the bishop of Turov Pinsk petitioned Sigismund the Old to confirm his brother Alexander's charter to this effect.⁹⁰ The synod fathers also sought to re-establish the hierarchy's control over the appointment of clergy, be they bishops or simple priests. Both of these issues were of pressing importance for the bishops of Vilnius too, especially Albert Tabor.

The need for diocesan administrative reform and the application of church courts to certain aspects of Catholic life in the Grand Duchy are reflected in the statutes issued by synods in the dioceses of Lutsk

⁸⁶ See the introduction to *Acta primae Visitationis*. Not all the unconsecrated foundations were new ones.

⁸⁷ Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 66–70.

⁸⁸ 'Sobor" v" bogospasaemom" grade Vil'ni byvshii', *RIB*, IV (St Petersburg, 1878), coll. 7–8.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, coll. 12–17.

⁹⁰ LMAVB RS, F1–385 (9 February 1522); *Pergamentų katalogas*, no. 252, p. 103. Cf. A. Mironowicz, *Biskupstwo turowsko-pińskie w XI–XVI wieku* (Białystok, 2011), 195.

and Vilnius, but these do not mention paganism. On occasion, albeit rarely rulers, bishops and nobles do speak about pagan error and sometimes refer to having been heathen themselves or claim that a wife to be divorced was a witch. Although Tabor complains that unnamed nobles keep soothsayers in their retinue, his text appears to have been culled from canon law decrees⁹¹. Real stress is laid on how clergy should dress appropriately, conduct ceremonies properly – sacraments should be administered in church and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament carefully restricted. Parish priests should refrain from living with concubines or committing adultery; priests should avoid taverns and refrain from drinking alcohol and gaming (the Lutsk consistory records and the supplications sent to Rome abound in examples of clergy becoming embroiled in brawls in the company of noblemen). They should not purchase benefices or arrange for kinsmen to make gifts to parish patrons to ensure their appointment to the local living. A case involving violence between Martynas Goštautas' personal chaplain and the rector of Goštautas' Tykocin parish reveals the level to which competition over a benefice might drop (namely a cat-fight). The bishops discouraged their clergy from accepting a tithe which had been paid on previous occasions to the priest of a different parish. The validity of papal indulgences presented by local clergy, especially confession letters, was examined by the local ordinary to weed out forgeries. Beneficed clergy were not to travel outside their diocese without the bishop's permission, while miscreant clergy might be exiled from the see for their crimes⁹².

A similar zeal for reform can be detected in the actions of Bishop Martin III of Žemaitija (1492–1515). In his career Martin was both a traditional and an innovatory figure. He was one of the last Lithu-

⁹¹ Yves de Chartes, *Decretum*, part 11: 'Hec pars continet de incantatoribus, de auguribus, de divinis, de sortilegis, de sortiariis, et variis illusionibus diaboli, et de singulorum penitentia: 1: *Decretum Gregorii iunioris* – Si quis hariolos, aruspices, vel incantatores observaverit, aut philacteriis usus fuerit, anathema sit.' All these professions (*arioli, aruspices, incantatores*) are mentioned in Tabor's supplication: see p. 486 and n. 76.

⁹² 'Statuta diocesana pro diocesi luceoriensi', in *Concilia Poloniae. Źródła i studia krytyczne*, vol. III: *Synody diecezji łuckiej i ich statuty*, ed. J. Sawicki (Warsaw, 1949), 85–99. Cf the consistory court cases discussed above, pp. 452–3.

anian burgher bishops, and one who studied not in Cracow but in Italy. The next generation of prelates had more men who studied law in Italy – Paul Alšėniškis (bishop of Lutsk and Vilnius), Albert Radvila (Bishop of Vilnius), Nicholas Radvila (bishop of Žemaitija). It was not uncommon for canons of Vilnius to gain a bishop's mitre in the Lithuanian dioceses; Martin was a bishop who received a supernumerary Vilnius canonry. While he owed his position to none but the pope and the grand duke, his lack of an established local gentry network to support him seems to have limited the range of his influence when his Jagiellonian master died (the leading boyars of Žemaitija were clients of the starosta rather than the bishop, and for some reason Sigismund the Old did not favour him). He seems to have understood his clergy and sought to strengthen the material circumstances of his cathedral clergy with confirmation of their rights and property. In this he seems to have been a 'reforming' bishop more effective than his contemporary Tabor of Vilnius. Martin kept in touch with developments in his diocese through them and maintained control over parish foundations. Unlike Tabor he did not lament to Rome the uncontrollable gentry zeal for independent parish formation, but there again his whole diocese had fewer churches than the 29 Vilnius parishes, the advowson to which Grand Duke Alexander surrendered to Albert in 1501. During his time new parishes were built on the south-western and north-eastern boundaries of his see and central foundations were consolidated with the endowment of chantries made with his consent or requesting his implementation of clerical duties. It seems that of 27 or 24 churches in the diocese in 1514, nine or ten were founded during Martin's time (1493–1514). This coincided with a period where gentry income had risen to such an extent that there was more free cash to allow donations for church-building and chantry foundations⁹³ His issuing of indulgences encouraged the faithful to aid parish churches materially and to visit them on high holidays (a basic type of pilgrimage). Martin was also active in public life at a national and international (*accuratius*, dynastic) level during the reign of Alexander and for this he was rewarded by the monarch.

⁹³ Vaivada, *Katalikų Bažnyčia ir Reformacija Žemaitijoje*, 78–119.

His attendance at sejms, court or on embassies also provided opportunity for spiritual service (again the issuing of indulgences, the witnessing of parish foundations). He appears to have understood the precariousness nature of royal favour and sought to gain papal acknowledgment of the gifts he had received (Surviliškis, the ad-vowsons to grand-ducal foundations) and indeed his last will and testament, which ordained that all his property go as a contribution to the rebuilding of St Peter's Basilica, if his local bequests were not respected, reflects his personal affection and (misplaced?) confidence in the Roman Curia, where his career began. Nevertheless, even though his executors registered the will with the Consistory Court in Gniezno, they were powerless to keep the predatory paws of the new Radvila bishop off their inheritance.⁹⁴

Syncretism exists in all belief systems in all places and at all times, despite periods of zealous attempts at 'purification'⁹⁵. Indo-European pagan religion was never an -ism but a way of life, tribal tradition which differs considerably from the ideological nature of prophetic religions such as Judaism and Christianity. In all Christian countries some old traditions survive alongside the new practices, just as some Christian practices survive in contemporary neo-pagan Europe. Tribes from the Roman Empire name days of the week after classical deities while Germanic peoples translated the Roman gods into members of their own pantheon. Medieval preachers such as the sixth-century Gallic bishop of Arles, Caesarius, denounced such respect for paganism.⁹⁶ The eleventh-century German bishop and canon lawyer Burchardt of Worms attacked tendencies to bury Christians in the 'pagan' way – *ubi christianorum corpora ritu paganorum custodiebantur*. This is an important reminder especially for archaeologists who often confuse practice with belief. *Mos, ritus, confessio fidei* may coincide but equally they well may not. In the words of John Blair no official pronouncement of the western Church prohibits grave goods and furnished burials during a conversion period rarely tells us that people were Christian and they

⁹⁴ For a re-assessment of the career of Bishop Martin III, see Rowell, 'Martin III'.

⁹⁵ A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford 1933, 2nd edition Baltimore–London 1998), 7; for the inter-war Lucanian case, see above, p. 1.

⁹⁶ Olszewski, *Świat zabobonów*, p. 26 and n. 41.

certainly do not tell us that they were pagan⁹⁷. Stanislaw of Skarbomierz, the fifteenth-century Polish preacher gave a long sermon against suspicious Polish practices that were contrary to proper belief. Usually such folk customs which were theologically harmless were tolerated.⁹⁸ In the Catholic world the boundary between damnable 'pagan' actions (such as feasting or drinking in cemeteries) and the promotion of 'Christian' behaviour (the drinking of beer and eating on fraternity premises after Mass in remembrance of the faithful departed) is small. Often it is not the action but where and how it is carried out that earns the disapproval of the clergy. Bishops condemned drinking for the dead in a cemetery but encouraged such piety in church. The protestant agitators condemned as pagan actions and objects, such as candles or prayers to the saints.

Lithuania's foes denounced Lithuanians and their Polish allies as pagans and the supporters of pagans. The clearest examples of this come from denunciations by the Teutonic Order and its allies to popes and Church councils, as when in 1403 the grand master spoke of the Lithuanians as *ficti catholicis et a demonio meridiano scismaticis et infidelibus*, or the account rendered by Aeneas Piccolomini (Pope Pius II) of the Jagiellonian realms in his *De Europa*⁹⁹. For western European commentators and the Curia's bureaucrats Lithuania remained associated with the Saracens and heretics even after 1387.¹⁰⁰ Even before their official conversion Lithuanians understood how to exploit this stereotype to their own advantage. After baptism Lithuanian Catholics realised that alluding to the need to root out paganism or schism might ease their petitions' way through the papal bureaucracy, as we have seen with the example of Stanislovas Sudivojaitis. However, it appears that paganism did

⁹⁷ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 59.

⁹⁸ Olszewski, *Świat zabobonów*, 180–90: 'Sermo iste tractat de diversis superstitionibus hominum, quae sunt contra fidem.' Cf. Bylina, *Religijność późnego średniowiecza*, 91–126. An example of the complex relationship between folklore-influenced Christianity and Christian-influenced folklore is discussed in P. Vildziūnas, 'Auxtheias vissagistis – supagonintas krikščionių Dievas', *Tai, kas lieka*, ed. E. Usačiovaitė (Vilnius 2009), 69–81.

⁹⁹ J. Smołucha, *Poltyka Kurii Rzymskiej za pontyfikatu Piusa II (1458–1464) wobec Czech i krajów sąsiednich. Z dziejów dyplomacji papieskiej w XV wieku* (cracow, 2008), p. 120–21.

¹⁰⁰ Murray, 'The saracens of the Baltic', 413–29; 1403 comment: *CDP*, ed. J. Voigt, V (Königsberg, 1857), no. 137, p. 187 (10 December 1403).

not figure high among the concerns of Lithuanian bishops inside the realm until the mid-sixteenth century, when Catholic and Protestant apologists sought to define True Religion. The first Lithuanian synodal statutes do not speak of pagan practices or beliefs. The 1519 Lutsk Statutes mention briefly heretical and scandalous teaching and denounce soothsaying, spells and fortune telling according to the traditional list of practices condemned by Canon Law, but the 1528 Vilnius statutes do not even mention soothsayers or belief in superstition. However, the Statutes of 12 February 1582 reserve for Bishop Jurgis Radvila the right to judge cases of heresy, devil worship and conscious resort to superstitious practice¹⁰¹. While we cannot say that at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Lithuanian clergy were not aware of the existence of superstitious practices among their flock (like the poor, they are with us always) but it seems justifiable to claim that they were not the obsession that such phenomena became in the annual reports of the Society of Jesus or the polemical tracts of Protestant preachers, who used the survival of 'paganism' (rather than the flourishing of folk customs) in villages as evidence of their missionary zeal and their respective rivals' missionary failure to establish True Religion.

While bishops such as Albert Tabor felt their own prerogatives were being encroached upon by lay enthusiasm for expressions of practical piety, they did not, as far as we know, make recourse to a well-established tool for examining and reordering the condition of his see which had been in use in the Roman Church for centuries and in the Polish archdiocese of Gniezno, of which the see of Vilnius was a part, since the thirteenth century, namely the episcopal visitation. To be fair to Tabor, the number of diocesan inspections carried out by bishops or their representatives, usually an archdeacon, was dwindling throughout the Polish ecclesiastical province in the early sixteenth century, if we are to believe the accounts given by modern historians.¹⁰² However, during the rule of Archbishop Jan Łaski (in

¹⁰¹ 'Statuty synodu wileńskiego z dnia 12 ii 1582', *Concilia Poloniae*, II, 138: 'Causa nobis reservati: Crimen haeresis ... sortilegorum seu invocantium daemones et scienter superstitionibus utentium'.

¹⁰² S. Litak, 'W sprawie publikowania i rejestracji akt wizytacyjnych kościołów i parafii', *ABMK*, 14 (1967), 133–49, here pp. 133–4.

1510, 1516, 1519, 1522) more attention was paid to inspecting the state of parish endowments in both charters and liturgical equipment. The bishop, or rather his appointed representative, usually an archdeacon or a prelate delegated by him would inspect all religious foundations (churches, chapels, nunneries) in his diocese with the exception of male monasteries.¹⁰³ According to tradition, a visitation would consist of four parts. First the ordinary would announce when and where a visitation would take place before publishing his questionnaire. Thirdly the Visitation would be carried out and finally a relevant decree would be issued subsequently.¹⁰⁴ Instructions for visiting Polish sees survive from the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁵

During the late summer of 1518 (27 July–28 September) Archbishop Jan Łaski made an official visitation of the diocese of Vilnius. In his Diary Jan notes that his reasons for going to Vilnius were threefold and had nothing to do with personal vanity, even if some might ascribe to him such a motive.¹⁰⁶ He travelled to Lithuania because (1) the pope had commanded him to examine the life and posthumous miracles of St Casimir, a question on which he had been in contact with the Holy See and Lithuanian notables for at least four years;¹⁰⁷ (2) because he wished to visit a suffragan see, Vilnius, which had never been visited officially by an archbishop of

¹⁰³ S. Librowski, 'Wizytacje diecezji wrocławskiej', part 1: 'Wizytacje diecezji kujawskiej i pomorskiej', vol. 1: 'Opracowania arhiwalno-źródłoznawcze', *ABMK* 8 (1964), 5–186; the first detailed inventory of the Wrocław cathedral treasury was drawn up in 1516 (p. 103) by Bp Maciej Dzewicki. On pastoral problems and the synods of 1510, 1532, see pp. 104–7. Bishops could be substituted by archdeacons or deans, see pp. 111, 114.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁰⁵ S. Librowski, 'Wizytacje diecezji wrocławskiej', part 1: 'Wizytacje diecezji kujawskiej i pomorskiej', vol. 1: 'Opracowania arhiwalno-źródłoznawcze', fasc. 2: 'Wizytacje w latach 1123–1421', *ABMK*, 10 (1965), 33–206, esp. p. 190.

¹⁰⁶ 'Raptularz Jana Łaskiego', AGAD Biblioteka Baworowskich, Ms 246, fo 38; after returning from Lithuania John travelled to Prussia (November 1518 – January 1519) to visit a shrine of St Adalbert and negotiate between the Grand Master and King Sigismund. Once again the archbishop stresses he is not acting out of vanity, as his rivals interpret him: *ibid.*, fo 39v. The only account of this visitation is the untypically chauvinistic one provided in P. Rabikauskas, 'Nesėkmingos Gniezno metropolito užmačios Lietuvoje', *idem*, *Krikščioniškoji Lietuva*, 265–72. The archbishop was plotting nothing; he was doing his duty as metropolitan.

¹⁰⁷ *Šv. Kazimiero gyvenimo ir kulto šaltiniai = Casimiriana: Fontes vitae et cultus S. Casimiri*, ed. M. Čiurinskas (Vilnius, 2003), 22–5; no. 57, pp. 178–82 and 'Listy Jana Łaskiego', AAG, nos. 1966 (published in *Šv. Kazimiero*, no. 48, p. 162) and 1972.

Gniezno, and also the Diocese of Medininkai; and (3) he wished to discover personally rather than via emissaries what the chances were for establishing better relations between the dominions of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He was impeded in his visitation of the Diocese of Vilnius by its bishop (Albert Radvila) who claimed disingenuously that it was unclear whether Vilnius was subordinate to the archbishop in Gniezno or in Riga.¹⁰⁸ The archbishop countered that in the past Vilnius had sent delegations to synods in the archdiocese and that court cases were referred from the Lithuanian capital to the Consistory Court in Gniezno. There is considerable evidence to show that the primate was telling the truth. While attendance at provincial synods by bishops of Vilnius is not described in detail in the surviving record, there is evidence that Lithuanian ordinaries sent envoys or legal representatives to such gatherings. The textbook case is provided by the synods in Piotrków in late 1510 and early 1511.¹⁰⁹ From the records of the Vilnius Chapter we know that provincial synod statutes were posted in the cathedral choir.¹¹⁰ The records of the Consistory Court in Gniezno heard appeals more regularly from the bishop's court in Vilnius from 1490 onwards, although there are whole years (1474–76, 1497–99), when Lithuanian cases appear not to have been heard.¹¹¹ Jan convened the Vilnius Chapter and discussed the life and morals of the bishop and his canons. He also claims to have interviewed many parish priests, curates, and man-sionary-, and chantry priests, examining them, excommunicating some and subsequently restoring them to grace. At the beginning of autumn (7 September) he left Vilnius and rather than risk the bad

¹⁰⁸ M. Kosman, 'Prymas Wielkiego Xięstwa Litewskiego. Z badań nad miejscem diecezji wileńskiej w metropolii gnieźnieńskiej', *1000 Lat Archidiecezji Gnieźnieńskiej*, ed. J. Strzelczyk, J. Górny (Gniezno, 2000), 283–92.

¹⁰⁹ The synod statutes note the presence of 'nunciis et procuratoribus reverendis-simorum dominorum Cracoviensis, Wratislaviensis, Plocensis, Wilnensis et Medicensis episcoporum', B. Ulanowski, *Materiały do historii ustawodawstwa synodalnego w Polsce w. XVI* (Cracow, 1895), 23 [347], 26 [350]. Unfortunately this remark comes from the title page of a much later sixteenth-century printed edition of the statutes and may thus be a later publisher's assumption of who ought to have attended earlier synods.

¹¹⁰ 'Acta Capituli Vlnensis, I', LMAVB RS, F43, b. 210/1, fo 74.

¹¹¹ See above pp. 440–9.

weather in Žemaitija he appointed Canon Jan Albinus of Vilnius as his representative to visit Medininkai.

He returned to Gniezno via the archiepiscopal residence at Skierniewice between Warsaw and Łódź on 28 September. At the following Chapter meeting set for Wednesday 20 October, but postponed until the morrow since that Wednesday was the patronal feast of the Translation of St Adalbert, the archbishop gave an account of his visitation, reporting that the condition of ecclesiastical and secular persons within the diocese was 'very deformed and disordered'. He proposed that the chapter provide letters of credence for envoys to visit the king in convention at Brest Litovsk to persuade him to reform the Lithuanian Church. Such letters were issued duly.¹¹² No further mention is made of this embassy in the surviving chapter records for 1508–21 (Acta book IV) and the volume which covered the years 1522–24 has been lost since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a summary of the Chapter acts was made and this lacuna noted. In effect Łaski's report reflects the notes he made on his visitation and what we know from other sources. The diocese of Vilnius was in disarray (*deforme*) but that does not mean it was moribund.

On April 19 1519 Bishop Albert Radvila died and was succeeded by John of the Lithuanian Dukes. The pope reminded Archbishop Jan of his duty to offer patronage to the young man and oversee the running of his subordinate see.¹¹³ Subsequently the bishops of Cracow and Poznań were appointed by Ferreri administrators of the diocese until Bishop John reached the age of 27 and accepted full priestly ordination in order to take official possession of his see. During the visit of an apostolic delegate to Poland-Lithuania, Zaccharia Ferreri in 1520–21 to Vilnius, the first known diocesan synod took place in St Stanislaw's Cathedral. It is not clear to what

¹¹² AAG, Acta Cap. B17 (1508–21), fos 175, 177v; see *Acta capitulorum nec non iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum selecta*, vol. I: *Acta capitulorum Gneznensis, Poznaniensis et Vladislaviensis (1408–1530)*, ed. B. Ulanowski [*Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica res gestas Poloniae illustrantia*, XIII] (Cracow, 1894), no. 2853, p. 627 (23 October 1518); no. 2863, p. 628 (26 October 1518), and *Acta primae Visitationis*, introduction.

¹¹³ 'Dyplomy 647', AAG, (Rome, 23 September 1519), published in *Acta primae Visitationis*.

extent the legate's presence and the holding of the synod were coincidental. We do know that Ferreri's mission was intended to investigate the case for canonising the Lithuanian prince, Casimir, and the state of the Grand Duchy of Muscovy and its relations with Poland-Lithuania. Personally Ferreri was committed to the reform of the Roman Church and its defence from Lutheran heresy. He was the author of tracts on the deliberations of Church councils and had taken part in the quasi-Council of Pisa in 1512.¹¹⁴

What we know of the Vilnius synod comes from a Decree for the Preservation and Expansion of the Christian Religion throughout the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its subject and annexed territories, issued by the papal nuncio on 2 February (Candlemass) 1521 in the Bernardine Church in Vilnius. In a section on pastoral duties the legate mentions that this subject was discussed in the recent synod: 'sicuti in synodo nuper apud divi Stanislai aedem celebrata inter sacrificandum, dum de officio boni pastoris concionaremur, recensuimus',¹¹⁵ Apart from warning of the dangers posed by Martin Luther and his heresy, and outlining how relations with members of the Orthodox Church should be carried out in the Grand Duchy, the papal legate noted in general terms the need to examine how the local clergy served the pastoral needs of their flock.

While it remains ever perilous to make presumptions of causation *post hoc propter hoc*, it seems plausible to trace a developing interest in the management of the Vilnius Diocese from the Metropolitan Visitation of Jan Łaski (1518) through the Brest Litovsk Sejm (1518–1519), where several ecclesiastical emoluments were copied and confirmed, and the appointment of John of the Lithuanian Dukes under the auspices of the archbishop of Gniezno, and the Synod of 1520–21 to the decision to carry out the first known ordinary visitation of the prime Lithuanian see. This action is in keeping with the papal legate's exhortations upon the clergy of the diocese and their hierarchy to check out the provisions for serving the pastoral needs of the laity.

¹¹⁴ B. Morsolin, *Un latinista del Cinquecento (Zaccaria Ferreri), imitatore di Dante* (Venice, 1894); on his 1523 treatise *De reformatione Ecclesie. Suasoria*, see idem, *Zaccaria Ferreri. Episodio biografico del secolo decimosesto* (Vicenza, 1877), 81–92.

¹¹⁵ Fijałek 'Pierwszy synod', 85. A complete edition is provided in *Acta Nunciaturae Polonae*, II, no. 37, pp. 86–93 and in the appendix to *Acta primae Visitationis*.

The following year, 1522, Bishop John (perhaps at the instigation of Archbishop Jan or the bishop administrators) gave special consent for the archdeacon of Vilnius, Paul Alšėniškis, bishop of Lutsk to organise the second Visitation of the Diocese of Vilnius led by the same canon and canon lawyer, whom Archbishop Jan had selected nearly four years earlier as his Visitor to Žemaitija, and who had been procurator general in spirituals in a case brought before the papal legate in 1520, Jan Albinus.¹¹⁶ Alšėniškis was too busy with his own arduous affairs to attend the chapter meeting in September 1522.¹¹⁷ Whatever this pressing business was, the archdeacon was also too occupied to carry out the visitation.

In September 1522 Canon Albinus set about his task with the assistance of a canon lawyer and notary public named Stanisław Komorowski, who had served him earlier as his legal representative during his own legal disputes in the Gniezno Consistory Court.¹¹⁸ It was Komorowski's job to make notarial copies of parish foundation documents, which he did. The results of his labours which made up the first 72 folios of the now lost *Liber IIb* of the Vilnius Chapter Archive, and which survive in notes made on the dorse of manuscript emolument from that repository offer evidence of his working methods with reference to select parishes from all five diocesan *kliuchi*.¹¹⁹ Meanwhile from 11 September 1522 Albinus set about drafting an inventory of parish church treasures in gold, silver, and silk vestments. There were no gold liturgical vessels, although some of the silver ones were gilt. The information from 68 parish churches and chapels of ease belonging to the Maišiagala (25), Antakalnis (19) and Trakai (24) *kliuchi* compares favourably with data from an inventory of parish property in the ancient archdeaconry of Wieluń (archdiocese of Gniezno) carried out that same autumn. The treasure record is incomplete – Dr Semkowicz deciphered more material than either of his two predecessors in the study of this manuscript (Canon Mamert Herburt and Fr Jan

¹¹⁶ Biogram: *LKD*, no. 792.

¹¹⁷ 'Acta Capituli Vilmensis, I', fo 51: 'propter impedimenta et negotia sua ardua'.

¹¹⁸ *LKD*, no. 2235 and *Acta primae Visitationis*.

¹¹⁹ See *Acta primae visitationis*. Most were recorded from the largest *kliuch*, that of Trakai (26) with half a dozen or so from those of Antakalnis, Medininkai and Rudamina, and four from Maišiagala.

Kurczewski), but could not read everything. The manuscript was destroyed during the German occupation of Warsaw. The vestments included amices, chasubles, dalmatics and copes made of expensive silks and brocades of various colours, some of them studded with pearls or embroidered with golden thread. A large number of altar silk and brocade frontals was also recorded. The parish silver comprised chalices, patens, cruets, altar crosses and pectoral crosses (the latter appear very rarely in Polish parish churches), monstrances (for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament), pax bredes (to be kissed by parishioners according to community status), thuribles and pyxes (for reservation of the Blessed Sacrament).¹²⁰ There can be no doubt as to the splendour in which the liturgy could be celebrated and para-liturgical ceremonies be carried out (especially processions and visits to the sick) in Lithuanian parish churches during the late Middle Ages and early-modern period. While we should not perhaps lay too much stress on lay (or even clerical) understanding of the subtlety of liturgical imagery, in recent years historians have begun to lay stress on the role played by the liturgy, especially its sensual aspects (sights, sounds, smells, movements and communality) in educating lay Catholics in their faith and how to act in a Christian way.¹²¹ The purchase and donation of liturgical equipment are recorded in Lithuanian wills.¹²² From these we learn of the presence of liturgical paraphernalia not recorded by Albinus in Lithuanian churches – Swiss missals, graduals, carpets, bells, holy pictures and statues, and books (although we know from 1522 that the

¹²⁰ For further details of liturgical vessels used in connection with the Blessed Sacrament, see above pp. 429–32.

¹²¹ See E. B. Vitz, 'Liturgy as education in the Middle Ages', *Medieval Education*, ed. R. B. Begley, J. W. Koterski (New York, 2005), 20–52; M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Tu ergo flecte genua tua: Sztuka a praktyka religijna świeckich w diecezjach pruskich Państwa Zakonu Krzyżackiego do połowy XV wieku* (Pelplin, 2014), 183–91. Stress on the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is discussed in I. Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny*. Added to their obligation to attend Mass in Prussia layfolk were required by local diocesan statutes to equip their parish churches suitably: A. Radziwiński, 'The contribution of the Teutonic Order to the Evangelization of Prussia. Some remarks based on Synod Legislation', *LHS*, 11 (2006), 67–88 [translated from the Polish original in *Zapiski Historyczne*, 70 (2005), 7–24].

¹²² *Acta primae visitationis*.

church in Ukmergė had been bequeathed 53 books of theology and canon law by one of its previous parish priests).

In 1522 a closer check was instigated on the Cathedral Treasury, to note the provision of chalices, patens, cruets, relics, chasubles, vestments of wool, silk and velvet, books and other such items. It appears that recently a pair of silver cruets had 'disappeared'. Canons Jan Albinus and Jonas Siculus were instructed by the bishop elect to make a register of all church treasures under lock and key in the cathedral Sacristy as had been collected together by Sacristan Matthias of Czyrsk before appointing Canon Jan of Vilnius as new sacristan. The following year the sacristy was checked according to this Inventory, which, unfortunately, no longer exists.¹²³

Quite how the Visitation of the diocese was organised we do not know. However, if the inspectors' actions are reflected in the way in which the documentary record was compiled, it seems that parishes were examined according to the proto-deanery or *kliuch* in which they were grouped. The inventurisation of church plate and vestments began with Maišiagala and its *kliuch*, followed by parishes in the Antakalnis and Trakai *kliuchi*. The apparent exceptions to this rule, namely the inclusion of Antakalnis parishes (Suviėkas and Molėtai) among the Maišiagala ones are explicable on account of their geographical proximity to churches in the latter *kliuch* which appear next to them in the inventory (Dusetos and Alanta respectively). The arrangement of the charters copied in the codex also fits the *kliuch* model. However, it should be noted that not all the parishes included in the emolument record appear in the list of parish treasures. The discrepancy between the number of parishes known to have existed at the time of the 1522 Visitation and those actually recorded should not surprise us. In 1633 Bishop Abraham Wojna (Abraomas Vaina) initiated a visitation of parishes within his diocese from which we have surviving records from only 64 parishes.¹²⁴

¹²³ 'Acta Capituli Vilmensis, I', fos 52, 62, 64r–v.

¹²⁴ VUB RS, Ms F57, 53–40; described in W. F. Wilczewski, 'Wizytacja diecezji wileńskiej z roku 1633 Biskupa Abrahama Woyny', *Mój Kościół w historię wpisany. Księga pamiątkowa dedykowana Księdzu Profesorowi Tadeuszowi Krahelowi*, ed. T. Kasabula, A. Szot (Białystok, 2007), 431–40.

Fraternities as a kernel of parish and diocesan communities

Religious confraternities were common throughout medieval Europe and were established in Lithuania during the first Catholic generation. We find them in Vilnius at the parish church of Ss John the Baptist and Evangelist (by the late 1420s) and especially at the Franciscan friary of Our Lady on the Sands.¹²⁵ A fraternity was established in the parish church of Ss Peter and Paul in Kaunas around 1475–76 with its own chantry altar¹²⁶. The practice of remembering the dead during services by recalling names inscribed in *libri memoriales* infiltrated Lithuania not only from Poland and the mercantile towns of Prussia but also from the Orthodox tradition of keeping *pamianniki* and *sinodiki* in Lithuanian Rus' as well as provinces further east. A few torn folios from one such book were still extant in the early twentieth century when they were retrieved from the binding of a book. They were published first with a photograph of the manuscript by Z. Dunin-Kozicki in 1910.¹²⁷ The Vilnius Franciscans attracted support from members of the nobility such as the Svyriškis dukes and the arriviste Radvilas as well as from lesser sections of the local gentry, merchants and tradesmen.

¹²⁵ *CM*, I, no. 40, pp. 78–80. In 1430 the fraternity asked for and received an indulgence. The parish church had been a centre for state business with visiting clergy since at least 1410, when its priest witnessed a donation of slaves by Grand Duke Vytautas to a Luccan prelate: Quirini-Popławska, *Włoski handel*, 219–21 and n. 60.

¹²⁶ Fr Paul, son of Mathias from Mazovia, who was chantry priest of the recently founded fraternity and parish lector, was involved in a tavern dispute between two burghers and requested a papal declaration of his innocence of any deliberate blood-letting in January 1477: Rowell, 'Lithuanian Supplications'.

¹²⁷ Dunin-Kozicki, 'Szczałki kalendarza Franciszkanów wileńskich', 3–12. The manuscript, from the Vilnius Public Library, disappeared during the World War One and may be in Russia or in unregistered holdings of Vilnius libraries (belonging to the Academy of Sciences or the University). Fortunately Dunin-Kozicki published a photograph facsimile which allows correction of some of his stranger readings of the text (he did not have the benefit of Fr Fijałek's industry), see S. C. Rowell, 'Winning the living', pp. 102–3, 117–19. The friars benefited materially from the popularity of their spiritual services and this in turn helped finance their mission: idem, 'Pranciškonų (konventualų) ordino įsitvirtinimas Lietuvoje XV a.: Vilniaus pavyzdys', *Pirmieji pranciškonų žingsniai Lietuvoje XIII–XVII a.* ed. D. Baronas (Vilnius, 2006), 32–53.

We also find Eastern Slavonic names (such as Yury, rather than Jerzy) among witness to donations, which may reflect the success of Franciscan missions among the Orthodox citizenry of Vilnius. The friars obtained a papal indult allowing them to celebrate Mass in the presence of schismatic (Rus'ian) Orthodox. The parish church also was home to a confraternity, whose members stretched beyond the bounds of the city. When Fr Matthias, a canon of the diocese of Žemaitija dictated his will in 1490 at Varniai he bequeathed three Hungarian florins 'in Vilnam ad Sanctum Ioannem, supplicans ut in librum fraternitatis mortuorum nomen ipsius inscriberetur et pro anima sua oretur' as well as providing for trentals to be celebrated for him by priests of the Žemaitijan Diocese¹²⁸.

At Polonka south of Vilnius a group of boyars combined with the parish priest, Fr Nicolaus Gnat to establish a confraternity in 1500 based at the local Church of Ss Peter and Paul with the purpose of celebrating together the feast of All Saints. Polonka lies sixty kilometres to the south of Novgorodok. Its Catholic church was founded by a kinsman of the influential Davaina family, Petras Račkus Strocevičius in 1437; a donation by the new owner in 1501, Stanislovas Hlebavičius, lord lieutenant of Polotsk and grandson of Vežas, kin to the Manvydai (an important court family), mentions that the church was near the town's *sinagoga scismatica rutinica*. Local boyars, who made donations to the parish in 1483, feature among the founder members of the new *fraternitas*.¹²⁹ This organisation was led by four elders (*capitanei*) and four other officers, three secular, the other the parish priest (as spiritual director). The members, both male and female, are pledged to lead a holy, sober and humble life. The officers are to keep a register of members and the contents of the fraternity's *cisticula* with them at all times. We have noted already the case of the Skibniew fraternity whose money was recorded in the local lord's manor and might cite the fraternity officer from Strzyszewo (diocese of Lutsk), who was not released from

¹²⁸ *CM*, I, no. 73, p. 125.

¹²⁹ *KDKDW*, no. 152, p.170; nos. 336–8, pp. 391–2 (1483 gifts of Piotr Khotko Zybort, Stanislaw Gutolt and Jan Nyecrasz Mychaylovycz); 1501 donation: *ibid.*, no. 481, pp. 565–6; Andrzej Michalowicz 1501 donation in memory of his wife Helena: *ibid.*, no. 483, p. 567.

his duties before he had given full account of the brethren's money, honey and other property.¹³⁰ The Polonka confraternity, like all the others of its kind, purchased candles for its members' funeral vigils; and celebrated an annual 'post potacionem cerevisie libacionem ad hanc diem'. The stated aim of this festive beer drinking (in French tradition, *buvée*) is 'ut sit memoria antecessoribus nostris et nobis successoribusque nostris'.¹³¹ The priest promises to hold such services, as will his successors in return for tithes from members. This organisation served to consolidate local gentry connections and encourage the Catholicisation of an Orthodox environment.

In 1502 the parish obtained an important new community structure when the lord of Skrobov Gutautas-Stanislovas Mikhailovich joined a group of laymen from seven local inter-related gentry families (the Mikhailovichii, Zhybortovichi, Tarashevichi, Tratsevichi, Vyshadovichi, Juryovichi, Nekrashevichi, headed by the slightly richer Olekhno Rymshych (of Pinchin) to form a confraternity.¹³² At least half of the surnames mentioned here appear in the 1528 Military Muster List.¹³³ These men and their wives and children, and in one case adopted daughters, offered the parish priest a tithe from their estates after (or perhaps slightly before) the confraternity was formed. A tithe, the normal donation in this case rather than a piece of land, and the emoluments were composed according to a fixed model (as was the case with the Vilnius Franciscan fraternity) of: 'I, name, surname, offer the church of Ss Peter and Paul in Polonka and its priest and his successors a tithe of all grain from my property'. Some texts still contain these formulae even though they may not be relevant (as when three barrels of grain are offered

¹³⁰ ADS, D1, fo 57v–58.

¹³¹ *KDKDW*, no. 521, pp. 624–6 (1502); episcopal injunctions in Prussia against drinking in honour of the dead: 1426, Sambia, *BRMS*, I (Vilnius, 1996), 482; 1428, Riga, *ibid.*, 614.

¹³² *KDKDW*, no. 539, p. 636. Mikhailovichi and Zhybort tithes: *ibid.*, nos. 336–8, pp. 391–2. In 1490 the Mikhailovichi (and others) witnessed Olekhno Rymshych's will whereby he gave the church a tithe on behalf of his parents, wife and children: *ibid.*, no. 367, p. 430.

¹³³ *Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 523 (1528). Viešųjų reikalų knyga 1*, ed. A. Baliulis, A. Dubonis (Vilnius, 2006), p. 37. The Novgorodok boyars: Martin Zhibor'tovich', Stanislav Zhibor'tovich', Voin' Nekrashevich', Mikhailo Nekrashevich', Olekhno Rymshich', Bogdan' Senkovich Stratsevich.

rather than a tithes).¹³⁴ The real novelty of these emoluments lies in the fact that unlike earlier donation texts they require the priest to carry out some function in return for the gift, usually the sacrifice of memorial masses. The disappearance of textual 'originality' in the face of formulaic phrases marks the establishment of a standard practice bordering on the bureaucratic.

The foundation charter stresses that the members have been inspired by spiritual discipline and are brethren *tam temporaliter quam spiritualiter*. The fraternity was founded in conjunction with the parish priest who every All Saints' day will hold a Mass in memory of the parish dead on the priest's property. The fraternity has four *seniores* or *capitanei* (elders) and four judges, three laymen and the priest. Both men and women may be members who are beholden to maintain Christian virtues – modesty, holiness, purity, righteousness, charity, benignity, obedience and spiritual discipline. This is a prescription of *devotio moderna*. We cannot tell whether this is a priestly blueprint or the result of his preaching. The main activities of the organisation are to bury the dead, remember deceased parishioners, and arrange feasts in memory of the dead. Fines are imposed on members who behave improperly in word or deed. A similar requirement for members to resolve disputes within the fraternity or before the consistory (as opposed to the grand-ducal) court is to be found in the statutes of fraternities in the diocese of Lutsk too.¹³⁵ Each man and wife gives the fraternity grain for their common needs, money to buy wax for candles. Monies are held in a fraternity chest (*cistula*) to which each elder holds a key. A fraternity gave additional, or perhaps the central structure to parish life and identity. It encouraged laymen to cooperate with each other and the priest in works of Christian charity which benefited individuals of various classes and their kin and members of the wider (parish)

¹³⁴ Vaidivilas Jatilaitis (Voydzyvyl Jathylovycz): *KDKDW*, no. 353, p. 414 (1486). Similarly, Miłosz: *ibid.*, no. 569, p. 690 (1503): 'Ego quidem vir nomine et cognomine Myloszlegavi et inscripsi decimam post me ad ecclesiam S. Petri ad Połonkadamino plebano Nicolao et eius successoribus, tantum duas casulas perpetualiter de Pynczyno'. Khvyetko Myczevycz of Romanovichi 'nobilis magni ducis atque regis ... legavi et inscripsi decimam dare perpetualiter ... duas casulas tantum de siligine et duos choros de feno bono': *ibid.*, no. 571, pp. 690–1 (1503).

¹³⁵ Rowell, 'Was fifteenth-century Lithuanian Catholicism', p. 90 and n. 17.

community, living and dead. Like the clerk of the parish works, the *vitricius*, lay brethren had a direct interest in, and responsibility for local ecclesiastical affairs. They had to answer to the community, the priest and the bishop. The priest also had to answer to the clerk of works, as we see from the instruction given in the Consistory Court by the bishop of Lutsk to Fr John of Mordy to hand over the 271 groats he had made from the sale of Skolimov tithe grain to his clerk of works *ad reparacionem et edificacionem eiusdem ecclesie*.¹³⁶ The foundation charter was witnessed by priests from surrounding parishes: Ishkaldz', Niasvizh, Lipa, Kroshin, Greater Gorodishche and Lesser Gorodishche. The formation of inter-parochial relations, perhaps the basis for what in time would become local deaneries can be seen in the formation of a confraternity whose members hailed from eleven parishes north of the River Nemunas, as we see from an indulgence granted by Cardinal Frederick in 1494 and reconfirmed in 1510 and 1521 by later prelates to the confraternity of Zhygmuntsishki, Geraniony, Subotniki, Graūzhyshki, Survilishki, Iwye, Lotva, Dieveniškės, Usieliub, Traby and Šalčininkėliai. Confirmation of this indulgence was granted by Bishop Albert Radvila in 1510 to increase local devotion and aid the burial and memory of the dead, with vespers and three Masses, one for Our Lady, one for the dead and one of the feast on which the day fell. These services were to be held in a different church within the confraternity's parish network every time. In 1521 the owner of Geraniony, Palatine Albertas Goštautas of Trakai took over leadership of the confraternity from the parish priests and obtained an indulgence from the papal nuncio then visiting Vilnius, Zaccharia Ferreri. This document was confirmed by the local ordinary, Bishop John the Bastard on 17 July 1527.¹³⁷ The fraternity which was founded by clergy who led the

¹³⁶ ADS, D1, fo 87.

¹³⁷ In this way he sought to increase the prestige of his Geraniony estate as a leader of local society: GStAPK, Urkundensammlung Zasztowt, no. 17: 'Zacharias Dei et Apostolice Sedis gratia episcopus Gardiensis, sanctissimi in Christo patris et domini domini Leonis divina providentia pape decimi Prelatus domesticus et referendarius secretus ac per universum Regnum Polonie et Magnum Ducatum Lithuanie omnesque et singulas terras mediate et immediate vel alias quolibet subiectas cum omnimoda legati de latere et maioris penitenciarum de Urbe potestate Nuncius et Orator universis Christifidelibus presentes literas inspecturis

laity was eventually 'taken over' by the leading local (and national) magnate, Albertas Goštautas. Cardinal Frederick gave the members an indulgence, Nuncio Ferreri gave them a penitential grace (in effect a *littera confessionalis*), as befitted his status as *legatus de latere et maior penitenciaris de Urbe*.

According to Catholic tradition until the Second Vatican Council every quarter, or ember tide, Masses with vigils were celebrated for the dead on the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday following the first Sunday in Lent, Whitsun, Holy Cross (14 September) and St

salutem. Licet Is de Cuius munere venit ut Sibi a Suis fidelibus digne et laudabiliter serviatur de habundancia sue potestatis, que merita supplicum excedit et vota bene servientibus sibi multo maiora retribuatur quam valeant promereri, desiderantes tamen reddere Domino populum acceptabilem et bonorum operum sectatorem, fideles ipsos ad complacendum Eidem et quasi quibusdam allectivis muneribus, indulgentiis videlicet et remissionibus invitamus ut exinde reddantur divine gratie acceptores. Cum itaque dilecti nobis in Christo magnifici et illustres domini Albertus Martini Gastolth de Murata Geranony, palatinus Trocensis et capitaneus Mozirensis una cum consorte sua Zophia ducissa Verestense atque eorum filio charissimo Stanislao ac totius universitatis plebanorum, virorum et mulierum nominibus velut principales patroni, tutores et conservatores Fraternitatis tituli Annunciationis Gloriosae Virginis Marie diocesis Vilmensis nobis supplicaverint, quatinus fraternitati predictae et ecclesiis in quibus alternatim confratres predicti solent spirituales congregationem singulis Quatuor Temporibus anni habere, ut in utrisque vespere vel summis missis in quatuor proximis dominicis post dicta quolibet Quatuor Tempora per anni circulum processionaliter cum Sacratissimo Corpore Christi accedere possint concedere dignemur. Nos itaque huiusmodi supplicationibus inclinati, prefatis magnificis heredibus de Geranony, plebanis, viris et mulieribus ut in eisdem dominicis processiones infra cimiterium predictarum ecclesiarum, ad quas eos ex ordine convenire contigerit in eisdem vespere vel summis missis cum omnibus confratribus presentibus et futuris ac tota Christifidelium multitudine ad eas recurrentium cum luminariis et aliis in similibus iuxta ritum et consuetudinem ipsarum ecclesiarum deferri solitis et consuetis cum Sacratissimo Corpore Domini Nostri Iesu Christi reverenter, ut decet, accedere possint et valeant. Eisdemque Christifidelibus plebanis, viris et mulieribus predictae Fraternitatis tam presentibus quam futuris vere penitentibus et confessis huiusmodi processioni devote assistentibus manusque adiutrices pro instauratione et augmento dicte fraternitatis porrigentibus in eisdem quatuor dominicis decem annos et totidem quadragenas de vero indulgentia perpetuis futuris temporibus necnon ut animarum dictorum heredum de Geranony et dicte fraternitatis saluti salubrius consulatur devotiarii eorum et cuiuslibet ipsorum concedimus quatenus liceat eis et cuilibet ipsorum eligere confessorem idoneum secularem vel cuiusvis ordinis regularem, qui eosdem illustres et magnificos de Murata Geranony atque plebanos, altaristas, mansionarios et alios presbiteros ac viros et mulieres dicte fraternitatis et quemlibet ipsorum absolvat ab omnibus peccatis, criminibus, excessibus et delictis gravibus et enormibus de quibus corde contriti et ore confessi fuerint.' (10 January 1521).

Lucy (13 December).¹³⁸ The popularity of these seasons in Lithuania undoubtedly reflects the establishment of the Catholic calendar in the country (the Orthodox Church does not mark these feasts) and may represent a Christianization of the pagan calendar as the ember days coincide roughly with the solstices and equinoxes. Church emoluments usually specify the offering of Mass on these days, as does the foundation charter of the Polonka fraternity.¹³⁹ Several more exactly dated Polonka charters coincide with these periods. For example, Bogdan Kusnierowicz of Zadwieja gave two tithes on the second Sunday in Advent 1501 (5 December), Sienka Wyszadowicz donated his Rysheikovich meadows on the Monday after the first Sunday in Lent 1502, and in 1504 Ivan Mikhailovich of Skoborov's son Hrydzys made an offering on Whit Monday.¹⁴⁰

The great emoluments' parchment from Polonka (measuring almost half a square metre and containing documents from almost a century) reveals the wide social range of parish benefactors. We meet magnates such as the Hlebovičiai and their gentry clientèle, petty local gentry and their servants – in 1501 the steward (*villicus*) of Olekhno Rymshych's manor, Owsej Peter gave the church an ox, begging parishioners' prayers for their 'friend' – *amicus huic ecclesie*.¹⁴¹ Mention is made of the barn keeper of Jurgis of Chernichovo, Lukian, who had helped the church greatly and

¹³⁸ Ember days (Polish: *Suche dni*, hence the Lithuanian *sausadieniai*) were a period for remembering the dead; it was also a time favoured for the ordination of clergy (acolytes, subdeacons, deacons and priests). It was during one such season that Bishop George of Medininkai ordained a junior cleric from the diocese of Płock, Matthias of Krasno: see above, p. 14, n. 34. On ordinations and ember days, see P. F. Bradshaw, *Rites of Ordination: Their History and Theology* (London, 2014), 108 and T. J. Talley, 'The origin of the ember days: an inconclusive postscript', *Rituels. Mélanges offerts à Pierre-Marie Gy OP*, ed. P. De Clerck, E. Palazzo (Paris, 1990), 465–72.

¹³⁹ Johannes Zemla (12 February 1516), 'praedictus Petrus plebanus obligavit se et successores suos octo missas legere et vigiliis cantare et hoc super quaelibet Quatuor Tempora per duas missas legere et vigiliis cantare': LMAVB RS, F6–82; F43, b. 204, fo 71; Gutold Mikhailovich: *KDKDW*, no. 539, p. 636 (1502).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 511, p. 620; no. 540, pp. 636–7. In effect this act confirms the conditions of Sienka's will: *ibid.*, no. 538, pp. 635–6. See also the Hrydzys emolument: *ibid.*, no. 577, p. 694.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 513, p. 621: 'dedit bovem ad ecclesiam S. Petri: oretur pro anima eius, quia eciam aliquomodo fuit amicus ecclesie dicte.'

bequeathed it his ox.¹⁴² Lukian's services probably involved overseeing the storage of tithed grain. Witnesses to such documents include the tavern-keeper, and the rector's carter. Žukas' son-in-law Steponas gave the rector a serving man, the Lithuanian, Baltramiejus to replace Petras Thorneyczysz, who had perished on the road outside Novgorodok, 'ut sit memoria semper pro anima'¹⁴³. Mutual relations among the gentry lasted for several generations, as is only to be expected.

We have some details of the characters of the parish priests, of whom five appear in the sources between 1473 and 1529: Peter I (1473–1490), who witnessed emoluments and left us his will, whereby he bequeathed his church five silver spoons and one sexagena to purchase a chalice; he also left a missal and gradual¹⁴⁴, and a chasuble worth two sexagenae. The spoons and the cash he entrusted to his executor and parishioner Olekhno Rymshych, who did not do as he was bidden. In 1530, probably not far from his deathbed Olekhno bought five sheets of parchment (value 1 sexagena) for the church in lieu of the rector's bequest.¹⁴⁵ Fr Peter wished to inscribe himself in the parish memory: 'ut sit memoria pro anima mea in dicta ecclesia... orate pro me et miseramini mei'. The witnesses to his will were the parish priest of Kroshin, Fr Nicholas, and parishioners: Zhibort Khotko and his sons, the Skrobovo gentlemen Andriejus and Jonas-Nekrašius, Stanislaus, parish priest of Ishkaldz' and the whole parish of Polonka. The parish priest clearly feels himself to be part of the local community, not a discrete functionary or observer. Fr Peter's successor, Thomas, was a zealous defender of the parish's rights, who in 1493 asked Bishop Tabor and Petras Mangirdaitis, palatine of Trakai, to intercede on his behalf to obtain the grand duke's confirmation and extension

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, no. 574, p. 692, 1503 text: 'obnoxius Lukyan gummyennyk domini Georgii de Czernyechowo, migrans in Domino: orate pro anima ipsius, quia adiutor fuit maximus huic ecclesie et tempore mortis dedit bovem ad ecclesiam Ss Petri et Pauli ad Polonką'.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, no. 537, p. 635 (1502).

¹⁴⁴ For the sake of comparison we might note that in the 1480s the rector of Drohiczyn purchased a gradual for 40 gr., 'pecuniam tamen in numero quadragesima grossorum pro qua emptus est Liber Gradualis': ADS, D1, fo 82.

¹⁴⁵ *KDKDW*, no. 368, p. 431.

of the parish charter.¹⁴⁶ The most active parish priest was probably the Podlasian, Mikalojus Gnat, who may have been kinsman to the rector of Kuczyn, Alexius.¹⁴⁷ He flourished between 1501 and 1504 and presided over the formation of the fraternity. He defended the rector's right to property donated to the parish and drew the bishop into his affairs.¹⁴⁸ The fraternity's documents also mention curates, assistant curates, ministers and a gracialist from Polonka. Both laymen and clergy from the town worked with clergy from neighbouring parishes.

One can speak of a recognised parish identity. The will of Fr Peter was written down in 1490 'coram testibus, coram domino Nicolao curato de Kroszyno, coram Zyborth Khotko... et coram tota parochia in dicta Polonka'¹⁴⁹; in 1502 the Polonka gentry gathered to offer tithes from their estates in return for 'quatuor missas quolibet anno in ecclesia dicta in nostra parochia in Polonca'.¹⁵⁰

During the first quarter of the sixteenth century we come across several organisations in Vilnius. In 1506 members of the Fraternity of St John (including men with such distinctly Eastern-Slavonic-sounding names Yury Surozhich, acting *za nashego seden'ia*) bore witness before the town *vogt*, Mikolai Ostotski, and others that the master of the grand-ducal kitchens, Petras Aleknaitis, lord lieutenant of Alytus and Nemenčinė, had handed over 50 *kopy* (three-score) of groats in accordance with the bequest of Vaitiekus Kučiukas for building work on the church of Ss John¹⁵¹. This was in fact repayment of a loan taken out within the fraternity.

Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century writers stress pagan Lithuanian devotion to the dead which was in part Christianised by 1500. In

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., no. 406, p. 468. He also asked parishioners to pray for him.

¹⁴⁷ In 1478 Alexius was rector of Kuczyn: ADS, D1 l. 47r. He is listed as a witness to the Wyszadowicz emolument of 1503: *KDKDW*, no. 573, p. 692 (1503). In a document from 1469 he is called *Gnatowski*: *LKD*, no. 150. A typographical error in K. Pietkiewicz, *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie pod rządami Aleksandra Jagiellończyka: Studia nad dziejami państwa i społeczeństwa na przełomie XV i XVI wieku* (Poznań, 1995), 157 gave birth yet to another Gnat brother, Fr Stephen of Polonka (*LKD*, no. 2405), an error for Nicholas: *LKD*, no. 1437.

¹⁴⁸ *KDKDW*, no. 518, p. 623.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., no. 368, p. 431.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., no. 539, p. 636.

¹⁵¹ LMAVB RS, Ms F4–33.

the sixteenth century protestant reformers the like of Mažvydas and Łasicki chose this aspect of so-called Catholic 'superstition' to attack with regard to popular practice. Mažvydas reveals a certain coolness towards reformed practice (which would not offer these practical essentials of all religion) among his flock.¹⁵² Feasting in memory of the dead outside church was attacked as a pagan abomination by religious instructors of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. The propagation of Christian forms of these practices appears to have been aimed deliberately at winning over souls – it is no coincidence perhaps that these memorials and fraternities founded to promote them have been traced back to early medieval pagan practice. The altars funded by lay patrons also offered a stable public place for remembering dead ancestors.¹⁵³

Apart from the obligations to pray for and, needs arising, bury the dead, provide candles and other requisites for Mass, and the benefits ensuing from social connections via the fraternity, such groups provided other tangible benefits. For example, the Lutsk diocesan court record from 1479 reveals how two noblemen Andreas of Nasiłowo and Johannes Drosth were involved in a sword fight when the former decided to leave their confraternity. Andreas states, that 'when we founded the fraternity we formed a pact by which all matters should be judged within the fraternity without recourse to the land court'.¹⁵⁴ Lithuanians also sought membership of foreign fraternities. We know, for example, that Astikas (ancestor of the Radvilas) and his wife Ona, along with Butrimas, son of the starosta of Žemaitija, Kešgaila, were enrolled in a fraternity at St Mary's parish church in Cracow.¹⁵⁵ There seems to have been an

¹⁵² Mažvydas' 1551 letter to the duke of Prussia: Mažvydas, *Katechizmas ir kiti raštai*, 673–7; Iohannis Lasicii Poloni, 'De diis Samagitarum caeterorumque Sarmatarum et falsorum Christianorum', ed. in: Ališauskas, *Jono Lasickio pasakojimas*, 151–2.

¹⁵³ J. Deschamps, *Les confréries au Moyen Age* (Bordeaux, 1958), 11–12, 59–60. On pagan memorial 'drynking', 'šermenys', in the seventeenth century, see W. Mannhardt, *Letto-Preussische Götterlehre* (Riga, 1936, 2nd edition Hanover–Döhren, 1971), 601–4.

¹⁵⁴ ADS, D 1 fo. 50v: 'Primus testis nobilis Andreas de Naszyłowo citatus iuratus deposuit: Nos cum ereximus fraternitatem, talem pactum habuimus, quod nullus debuit quemquam citare ad ius terrestre, sed hic in confraternitate debuerit iudicare de omnibus rebus...' (1479).

¹⁵⁵ Rowell, 'Winning the living', pp. 97–8 and n. 28.

attempt by visiting clergy to drum up Lithuanian support for the renowned Holy Ghost Fraternity in Rome.¹⁵⁶

The fraternities also solicited for indulgences from Rome and from local bishops who visited the capital on official business, offering spiritual rewards for attendance at Masses and processions and providing material support for their churches. When Lithuanian diplomats, supplicants and pilgrims travelled to Rome with increasing frequency towards the end of the fifteenth century they enrolled in the international Confraternity of the Holy Ghost (as their predecessors had enrolled in Cracow societies), paying an entry fee of three ducats followed by one groat a year (ten groats making one ducat) for the support of the poor and sick. D. Baronas has discovered thirteen pilgrims from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania who enrolled in the confraternity between 1492 and 1503 including both clergy (Nicholas parish priest of Shchuchin, Alexius of Raseiniai, Canon Stanislaw of Vilnius and Bishop Bartholomew of Kiev, who was probably making his *ad limina* visit to in May 1495 following his election to the Lithuanian Rus'ian see) and laymen (courtiers and officials such as Petras Aleknaitis, Jurgis Pacevičius and canon Stanislaw's servant woman Dorothea).¹⁵⁷ They provided an important social function as well as serving personal religious needs, especially the public memory of the dead, Christianising a need felt by communities. The mutual aid society of the fifteenth-century parish had become a charitable institution aimed at helping less fortunate outsiders.¹⁵⁸ This is to be connected with the foundation of the first almshouse in Vilnius.

¹⁵⁶ *KDKDW*, no. 225, pp. 250–1 (11 September 1456).

¹⁵⁷ Baronas, 'Pilgrimai iš Lietuvos', 21–7.

¹⁵⁸ Here we have in mind the indulgence issued by the papal legate Zaccharia Ferreri for a Confraternity of Mercy to be established in a chapel built by Canon Martin of Duszni: 'fraternitati misericordie in oraculo extra muros ab ipso Martino condendo ... pro sepeliendis pauperibus mortuis, qui... per civitatem Vilnensem moriuntur': LMAVB RS, F3–89 (25 January 1521); *Pergamentų katalogas*, no. 244, p. 100.

Almshouses

While membership of a fraternity is an expression of community interest, it is driven first and foremost by a more selfish aim – to ensure the memory of one’s family dead. Fraternities provided charity for their members. Now we shall consider the growth of charity towards those outside the chosen group – fraternities devoted to burying dead strangers and taking care of the sick and the poor.

Charitable foundations in Vilnius developed in the sixteenth century from a background of Catholic piety which grew in strength during the previous hundred years or so. The fraternities based in the parish church of Ss John and the Franciscan Church of the Assumption of Our Lady developed from a desire to remember and win spiritual and temporal benefits for their members, living and dead. For unknown specific reasons but in the hope of encouraging devotion to the poor of a growing city, girded by walls only since 1502, Canon Martin of Duszniki established the Hospice of St Job (later joined as patron by St Mary Magdalene) on waste ground by the river behind the bishop’s palace and beyond the walls of the castle in 1514–18 with the support of the monarch.¹⁵⁹ At least half of the grandees who witnessed the king-grand duke’s charter in Brest Litovsk in December 1518 also endowed the new institution with tithes, supplies of food and land. These people are also known for their support of other ecclesiastical foundations in both Vilnius and parishes of the diocese. The poor house was overseen closely by its neighbours, the canons of Vilnius, and its provost called to account for his shortcomings. In return for their upkeep inhabitants of the almshouse had to pray for the intention of the founders. The foundation developed as a typical benefice, consolidating its landholdings and tithe income. One main source of its income derived from property within the city and its inner suburbs. It sought

¹⁵⁹ The date 1514 is given (without documentary reference) in Kurczewski, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, 357; for brief notes on the biography of Canon Martin, see *LKD*, no. 1272, pp. 227–8. For an outline history of the Vilnius almshouses, see J. Maroszek, ‘Wileńskie przytulki-szpitala w XVI–XVIII w.’, *Cała historia to dzieje ludzi... Studia z historii społecznej ofiarowane prof. Andrzejowi Wyczanskiemu w 80-tą rocznicę urodzin i 55-lecie pracy naukowej*, ed. C. Kuklo, P. Guzowski (Białystok, 2004), 191–218, here pp. 194–5.

to increase its appeal for support by obtaining an indulgence from the papal legate Zaccharia Ferrari for its newly founded guild, the Confraternity of Mercy, whose primary duty was to bury the urban poor, a sign not only of traditional guild piety but also of the growth of the urban population. The model set by Canon Martin's foundation led to the foundation later in the century of more poor houses in the city (primarily the Holy Trinity Hospice founded by a citizen and endowed by members of the city council from 1536, the house founded by the Church of St Peter in the Antakalnis suburb, funded by tolls from the bridge across the Neris at Nemenčinė, or the Jesuit Archfraternity of Mercy, *Mons Pietatis* established by Piotr Skarga in 1589 to serve the starving poor unable to find shelter in the existing hospices).¹⁶⁰ The existence of Orthodox hospices in Vilnius bears witness, as does the functioning of Orthodox fraternities, of the influence of urban Catholic piety on non-Catholic citizens.¹⁶¹ The hospices became agents for integrating Vilnius society, providing relief for the poor and providing practical expression of piety which became landmarks in the sacral topography of the city and instruments for urban development (as in the improvement of apparently hitherto uninhabited marshland beneath the castle, a mark perhaps of the area's change of use from defence of the fortress to permanent settlement).¹⁶²

Outside the capital noble patrons were incorporating hospices into their parish foundations as early as 1508. It was in that year while resident at their house in Vilnius on the banks of the Vilnia that Anna and George Iliničius made endowments in Zelva for a chantry, a school and an almshouse, granting the latter, should it last and not be deserted, an annual donation for the paupers of two barrels each of rye and corn and a quarter of a barrel of beans, plus one pig. The scholars, by way of comparison, were to receive three

¹⁶⁰ Maroszek, 'Przytulki-szpitala', 208.

¹⁶¹ On Orthodox imitation of Catholic fraternities in the Grand Duchy and Poland, see L. Tymoshenko, 'Ustawy bractw kościelnych i cerkiewnych w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI w.: analiza porównawcza', *Bractwa religijne w średniowieczu i w okresie nowożytnym (do końca XVIII wieku)*, ed. D. Burdzy, B. Wojciechowska (Kielce, 2014), 283–93.

¹⁶² Rowell, 'The Role of charitable activity in the formation of Vilnius society in the 14- mid-16 centuries', *LHS*, 17 (2013), 39–69.

barrels of rye and corn, one of beans and two pigs. The hospice was to be governed and ruled by the parish priest¹⁶³. Another parish priest, Canon Stanisław Dambrovka of Vilnius, who was to become provost of St Mary Magdalene's almshouse in Vilnius (1536–1538), founded an almshouse and an almshouse chapel in his Dolistowo parish (Podlasie) in 1530.¹⁶⁴

In sum we may conclude that by the end of the fifteenth century Lithuanian ecclesiastical institutions thrived and were ready for stricter control by the hierarchy. The patronage which began with the monarch was imitated soon by the Lithuanian magnates and gentry, whose piety in many respects seems to have been an *imitatio regis* rather than a pure *imitatio Christi*. In literary terms this is reflected in the Goštautas legends in the Lithuanian Chronicle (where the first bishop of Vilnius is alleged to have been Petras Goštautas, and the family is closely connected with the Franciscan Order). In physical terms this imitation was embodied in the Geraniony collegiate Church of St Nicholas with its wealthy brick sacristy and provost infulatus. The structure of the diocese of Vilnius was solid and both the chapter and cathedral dignitaries had grown in a stable manner, increasing gradually in number. The office of bishop was taken over from the gentleman and burgher candidates of the fifteenth century by magnates and noblemen who recognised the value and prestige of the institution and were willing and able to sacrifice their sons to the demands of ecclesiastical office. The parish network was expanded predominantly by members of the nobility who saw church and chantry foundations as a means of amassing treasure in heaven in return for increasingly well-defined spiritual services on earth. The diocese of Vilnius had at least 139 churches in 1500, and around 259 by 1553. Of these 32 per cent had at least one chantry altar. The opportunity for people to hear Mass other than on a Sunday was increased by the foundation of such altars. Gradually the landscape of Lithuania was altered by the building of permanent places of worship (unheard of in pagan

¹⁶³ Ibid., 43–4.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 39–69.

practice) and wayside shrines. We read of a Calvary on a hill in the parish of Daugai – ‘collem ubi sita est imago Passionis Domini’.¹⁶⁵ Such institutions were monuments and instruments of aid for their departed kin and a tool for spreading the new social order among other social strata. The parish churches and chantries of medieval Lithuania were well-endowed and impressive structures (even though most were still built of wood – a construction material still common enough in the older Polish dioceses). The liturgy could be celebrated with considerable splendour. Cyrillic transcriptions of the Latin Mass may have been intended to aid participation in the liturgy. Parish schools provided a rudimentary education for those with the time (and money) to take advantage of it.

In the cathedral which represented a kind of mausoleum for members of the ruling dynasty and the aristocracy of church and state, the cult of a local saint developed in the royal chapel of Our Lady, St Andrew and St Stanisław built by Casimir Jagiellończyk. The miracle worker was the latter’s son, Prince Casimir, who was reported to Pope Alexander VI in 1501 by the grand-ducal ambassador Erazm Ciołek as being ‘adolecentem profecto doctrina et excellenti ingenio ac vite probitate ornatissimum... plurimis citra annos viginti claret miraculis’.¹⁶⁶ Two years later the pope issued an indulgence for those visiting and aiding the chapel, where Casimir was buried and performing miracles.¹⁶⁷ Prince Casimir was revered not only a worker of individual miracles (there is an impressive list of votive offerings, some including representations of body parts, recorded in the chapel inventory of 1552¹⁶⁸) but also a soldier and defender of the state. Thus in 1518 he is recorded as having come to the rescue of Lithuanian troops besieged by a Muscovite army at Polotsk.¹⁶⁹ His canonisation was discussed at the Fifth Lateran

¹⁶⁵ Grand Duke Alexander’s 14 August 1503 charter for Daugai: *KDKDW*, no. 562, p. 670.

¹⁶⁶ *Šv. Kazimiero gyvenimo ir kulto šaltiniai*, no. 43, p. 150.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 44, p. 152.

¹⁶⁸ LMAVB RS, F43–19857 (26 January 1552), published in appendix to *Acta primae visitationis*. Cathedral chapels could be very wealthy institutions. Around 1510 a dispute arose concerning the alleged disappearance of 200 sexagenae (12,000 groats) from the Kešgailos’ Holy Trinity Chapel, see above p. 442, n. 22.

¹⁶⁹ *Šv. Kazimiero gyvenimo ir kulto šaltiniai*, no. 6, pp. 70–2.

Council, attended by prelates from the Grand Duchy in 1514 and in February and May 1517 petitions were sent by Bishop Albert Radvila of Vilnius and his Chapter as well as the city's Franciscans. Part of the remit of the papal legate to Poland, Lithuania and Muscovy in 1519–21, Ferreri, was to investigate the prince's sanctity.¹⁷⁰

Parish and perhaps even diocesan structures were consolidated by the foundation of fraternities which drew laymen into organised Catholic rituals surrounding the community of the living and the dead to replace the pagan memorial practices of feasting in honour of the departed. The availability of institutionalised instruments for remembering the dead is surely one of the basic attractions the Catholic Church could offer her neophytes. It is no coincidence that one of the most popular devotions of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century religion in Lithuania involved adoration of relics, the mortal remains of the saints, the special dead. The Goštautas Chapel in Vilnius Cathedral alone had three large silver monstrances with relics of St John the Baptist; St Adalbert; and the teeth of Ss Margaret, Dorothy and Apollonia. Of reliquaries we have three examples from Širvintos (a silver pax) and Ukmergė (a silver gilt pectoral cross, and a bronze gilt hand with relics).¹⁷¹ In Geraniony there were two gilt wooden hands bearing relics of the 11 000 Virgin Martyrs of Britain.

Fraternities formed the kernel of relations between various estates, both lay and religious. By the end of the fifteenth century there is clear evidence of the formation of a parish identity (in Polonka and other churches, not just Vilnius). Personal interest developed into community interest and in time the establishment of structures to aid the living – almshouses, or schools – as well as the faithful dead. The foundation of parishes, chantries, fraternities and almshouses during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 12–15, 184–96 and above, p. 496–7.

¹⁷¹ The Goštautas and other parochial relics are noted in *Acta primae visitationis*. For relics in Poland-Lithuania, see M. Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, esp. pp. 420–2; for reliquaries in Lithuania: G. Drungilienė, 'Relikvijos ikitridentinėje Lietuvoje', *Šventųjų relikvijos Lietuvos kultūroje = Relics of the Saints in Lithuanian culture*, ed. T. Račiūnaitė [AAAV, 41] (Vilnius, 2006), 9–19. The cult of relics seems to have taken particular hold in Lithuania from the turn of the sixteenth century, when Ciołek went to Rome to collect holy remains.

centuries is part of a vibrant Catholic life which sometimes, but not always escaped from the direct control of the local ordinary. The bishops of Lutsk, Medininkai and Vilnius realised the danger of unsupervised foundation activity (as indeed did some patrons of new churches who sought to involve the bishop as guarantor that their wishes would be carried out) and this resulted in attempts at re-establishing control, culminating in the first known synods of the Diocese of Vilnius in 1520 and 1528.

From Pagan Europe to Christian Europe

This study has attempted to trace the relationship between the Baltic Lithuanians and their fellow Europeans from classical antiquity to the eve of the Reformation through the prism of religious diplomacy and devotion against the backdrop of wider continental developments – from peripheral traders with the Roman Empire and the so-called Period of Migrations, the confident expansionism of ‘new’ Christian central Europe around the Year 1000 (the Holy Roman Empire and missions to the western and eastern Slavs of Poland and Rus’) which led to the recording of the name *Litua* in Latin sources for the first time in the early eleventh century as a result of the failed mission and successful martyrdom of Bruno of Querfurt, also named Boniface for the Anglo-Saxon apostle of the Germans.

The twelfth-century expansion of Scandinavian and German merchants into the south-eastern Baltic brought local tribes into renewed contact with central and northern European Catholics. By the middle of the thirteenth century some of the rulers of the developing Lithuanian state were prepared to make a deal with their belligerent Christian neighbours, resulting in the baptism and coronation of the Lithuanian leader Mindaugas. However, the Catholic king was unable to sustain and develop his realm in the face of domestic and foreign opposition.

From the end of the thirteenth century as a new dynasty, the sons of Pukuveras, began to establish itself at the head of the Lithuanian polity, the prospect of converting to Catholicism was offered as part of Lithuanian diplomacy, reaching as far as Rome during the reign of Gediminas. Lithuanian conquest of Rus’ian duchies during the thirteenth and fourteenth century brought their leaders into closer contacts with the Greek Orthodox Church. However,

they did not lead to an Orthodox 'option' for Lithuania on the part of her grand dukes.

During the thirteenth and more so the fourteenth century Christians dwelt in Lithuanian society – captive wetnurses, merchants and their pastors, Franciscan missionaries. Lithuanians, especially members of the leading families and even courtiers accepted Christianity and were allowed to practice their religion so long as they accepted their duty to behave as the grand duke and native custom required. The latter institutions were not as rigid as to preclude any innovation and the pagans themselves did not constitute a monolithic block of 'heathendom'. That is why the penetration of Christianity within pagan society became a phenomenon long before the country's official conversion.

When the decision was taken by Jogaila in 1384–85 in consultation with his kin and leading members of Lithuanian society (as represented by the Vilnius merchant Hanul) to baptise pagan Lithuanians in order to ensure the Gediminid take over of the vacant Polish throne (one might agree that *Cracovie vaut bien une messe*), the move was taken at a time when the monarch was certain of broad support among the upper echelons of Lithuanian society and capable of imposing his will on his other subjects (something which cannot be said of Mindaugas (despite his actual conversion), Gediminas or Algirdas. Catholic Jogaila had his enemies, especially his cousin Vytautas, but these did not oppose him as proponents of the old religion. By the 1380s Lithuanians had a long acquaintance institutionally and in some cases personally with Christianity and Christians.

The second part of this study seeks to concentrate on the reception of Christianity by Lithuanian subjects during the long fifteenth century from 1387 to the eve of the Reformation, a period which Zenonas Ivinskis once described as 'a century of weak Christianization'. What do we mean by conversion? How can we study it? We have noted that 'official conversion' may have a specific date but that date merely marks a time when a decision was proclaimed to adopt Christianity. The Christianization of a country takes much longer and is never complete. As Roberto Tagliaferri remarks in his study of 'pagan' Christianity in modern popular religion, western

Roman religion in late Antiquity was a mixture of ‘active paganism and a reinvention of Judaic Christianity’¹

It is true that Lithuanian Catholicism was (and still is) syncretistic, combining adherence to the practices of the new religion with a continuation of older behaviour which does not contradict it, except in the eyes of purists. In his interesting study of the relationship between Christianity and paganism in the late-classical and early-medieval world Ramsay Macmullen notes how converts could find spiritual rewards which had a meaning to their previous concerns, especially in their relationship to death. Popular pagan celebrations were replaced gradually by Christian ones. Speaking of syncretism, he says that ‘one must acknowledge their religion to be what they thought and called it, Christianity – as much Christianity as anything Paulinus or Jerome preached at them’. He cites the practices of villagers in Cyprus, Italy and Northern France.²

A comparative geographical approach to Christianization (what constitutes a viable distance between parishes in Poland or England) has deficiencies as a methodology, especially in a country about whose demography so very little is known. A distance of ten kilometres between parishes might guarantee a degree of basic comfort but it is possible to live next door to a church and never darken its doorstep. By 1500–1522 the distance between Lithuanian parishes was still not small but it could be dealt with. Churches were not founded for their own good in the middle of nowhere – they were established in the centre of large estates and or nascent towns. There was more point in making the journey to church than attending Mass. If we can take the foundation charters for Veisiejai, Ramygala and Suviekas at face value, there is evidence that people did make a long and difficult journey to Mass (across sparsely populated land to gather nonetheless at an *ostrow*, or across difficult rivers). However, finding a priest in an emergency was very difficult.

In the later chapters of this book we have tried to show how Christian practices became more frequent and that by the end of

¹ R. Tagliaferri, *Il cristianesimo ‘pagano’ della religione popolare* (Padua, 2014), 271, citing A. Fraschetti, *La conversione da Roma pagana a Roma Cristiana* (Bari, 1999).

² R. Macmullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven–London, 1997), 154, 158–9.

the fifteenth century at least Lithuanians, primarily gentlesfolk and burghers but also wealthier peasants were aware of being members of a parish community, sought to be members of a local fraternity designed specifically to remember dead kin and help celebrate their memory; fraternity members helped settle community disputes and even provide loans for members. They sometimes had their own premises for meetings (as at Salakas), sometimes they met in the parish priest's house (as at Polonka). Lithuanians became members of fraternities not only in parish churches and monasteries in Lithuania but also in Poland (Cracow, or Poznań) and Rome. The increase in indulgences and indults connected with Blessed Sacrament processions towards the end of the fifteenth century bears witness to the popularity of the Corpus Christi cult. The Vilnius statutes of 1528 which seek to restrict the number of such celebrations, which in effect led to a loss of income for the cathedral by providing competition from friaries and parish churches. Supplications to the Sacred Penitentiary for permission to choose a confessor, rather than being bound to confess to the parish priest, or to use a portable altar (for use privately but open to abuse for public celebration of Mass and divine service on estates for a larger number of people) reflect acceptance of Catholic practice among the upper and middling gentry and also the burghers of Kaunas and Vilnius. Applications for the legitimisation of unlawful marriages reveal that it was important for lay people to have publicly recognised legitimate unions and legitimate offspring, even though most supplications of this type were made *after* a marriage was made and consummated rather than beforehand. Lithuanians of various classes were concerned to have sentences of excommunication lifted from them as we see in appeals to the Consistory Court in Gniezno and the Roman Curia.

The physical and administrative structure of Lithuanian dioceses (with the exception of Kiev) was settled by the first quarter of the sixteenth century as regards the number of canons and cathedral dignitaries. The organisation of proto-deaneries according to *kliuch* began before the Visitation of 1522. The diocese of Vilnius had at least 139 churches in 1500, and around 259 by 1553. Of these 32% had at least one chantry altar. the opportunity for people to hear Mass other than on a Sunday was increased by the foundation of

such altars. Gradually the landscape of Lithuania was altered by the building of permanent places of worship (unheard of in pagan practice) and wayside shrines. We read of a Calvary on a hill in the parish of Daugai – *collem ubi sita est imago Passionis Domini*.³ Judging by the records of the 1522 Visitation of the diocese of Vilnius local churches were well-equipped with liturgical vessels and vestments for suitable celebration of Mass and para-liturgical services.

People were catechised in Lithuanian, as we learn from a case before the Lutsk consistory court and Lithuanian translations of the necessaria have been known from the fly-leaf of a priest's manual dating to the beginning of the sixteenth century. The same basic prayers (the Our Father, Hail Mary, Confiteor and Creed) were available in Ruthenian translation. Lithuanian and Rus'ian Catholics may have had access to transcriptions of the Mass made in Cyrillic characters. For those who could read devotional literature was available in Ruthenian translation as well as Latin or Polish.

In the cathedral which represented a kind of mausoleum for members of the ruling dynasty and the aristocracy of church and state the cult of a local saint developed in the royal chapel of Our Lady, St Andrew and St Stanisław built by Casimir Jagiellończyk. The miracle worker was the latter's son, Prince Casimir, who was reported to Pope Alexander VI in 1501 by the grand-ducal ambassador Erazm Ciołek as being 'adolescentem profecto doctrina et excellenti ingenio ac vite probitate ornatissimum... plurimis citra annos viginti claret miraculis'. Two years later the pope issued an indulgence for those visiting and aiding the chapel, where Casimir was buried and performing miracles. Prince Casimir was revered not only a worker of individual miracles (there is an impressive list of votive offerings, some including representations of body parts, recorded in the chapel inventory of 1552) but also as a soldier and defender of the state.

Churches and chantries were not built completely altruistically. The donor required prayers for themselves and their families. By the end of the fifteenth century most emoluments contained a precise

³ Grand Duke Alexander's 14 August 1503 charter for Daugai: *KDKDW*, no. 562, p. 670.

list of the priest's duties – he who feels the benefit should also feel the burden – *quis sentit commodum, sentire debet et onus*. This in turn led to seeking means to ensure that the duty was carried out, often by referring the emolument to the bishop, thereby theoretically increasing the latter's awareness of what was going on in his far-flung see.

Lithuanian Catholics were zealous and fashionable practitioners of their 'new' religion. The Church became increasingly reliant for the expansion of its infrastructure on noble and gentry patronage. Those who formed fraternities, built chantries, sought indulgences and sent supplications to Rome were also those who built the overwhelming majority of new parish churches by the second half of the fifteenth century. This they did for calculated gain, to store up treasure in heaven and on earth. In return they expected clerical cooperation. Failure on the part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to meet the increasing spiritual demands of the faithful would result as elsewhere in revolt and reformation.



I. GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA, c. 1430



II. ROMAN CATHOLIC
 DIOCESES WITHIN
 THE GRAND DUCHY
 OF LITHUANIA, c. 1522.
 Parish network

DIOCESE OF MEDININKAI

† MEDININKAI 1417
(Varniai)

● Seda 1508

● Plateliai, a. 1523

● Alsedžiai, a. 1475

● Luokė, a. 1467

● Pašilė 1514

● Kaltinėnai, ca. 1417

● Sveikšna 1509

● Bataikiai 1509

● Tauragė, a. 1507

● Žagare 1499

● Saločiai 1514

● Biržai, a. 1510
● Pabiržiai 1515

● Linkuva 1503

● Pasvalys 1497

● Lygumai 1476

● Šiauliai, ca. 1450s

● Kurtuvėnai 1498

● Laukėnai 1497

● Šiaulėnai 1514

● Kelmė, a. 1512

● Lioliiai 1517

● Šiluva 1457

● Krekenava 1484

● Viduklė, ca. 1417

● Krakės, ca. 1455

● Raseiniai, ca. 1417

● Betygala, a. 1430

● Ariogala, ca. 1417

● Butkiškė 1506

● Kėdainiai, a. 1450

● Šėta 1499

● Žeimiai, a. 1499

● Siesikai 1441

● Ukmergė, a. 1425

● Deltuva, 1444

● Pabaiskas 1435

● Skirsnemunė, a. 1523

● Veliuona 1417

● Upninkai 1477

● Širvintos

● Skaruliai 1522

● Karmėlava, a. 1521

● Gegužinė, a. 1507

● Musninkai, a. 1522

● Kaunakiemis, ca. 1507

● Kaunas, a. 1413

● Paparčiai, a. 1518

● Kernavė, a. 1430

● Žasliai, a. 1455

● Žiežmariai 1508

● Kietaviškės 1504

● Darsūniškis, a. 1430 (?)

● Semeliškės, ca. 1501

● Užugostis 1495

● Trakai 1409, 1495

● Balbieriškis, a. 1520

● Aukštadvaris 1518

Venta

Liubysa

Nemunas

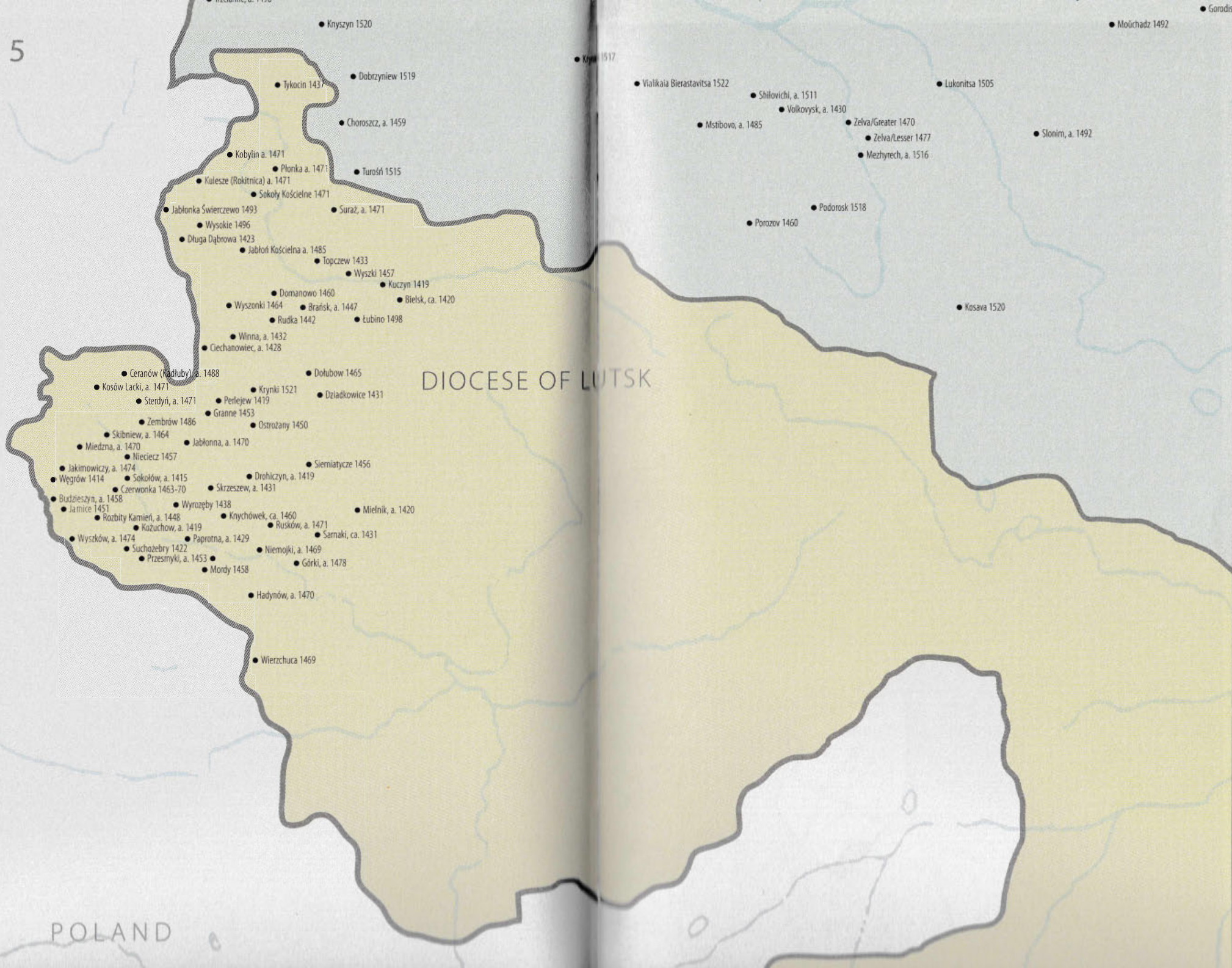
Sventoji

Neris



- Panna 1425
- Onuškis 1506
- Rūdninkai 1511
- Turgeliai 1500
- Medininkai, ca. 1391
- Simnas 1520
- Alytus 1522
- Dusmenys 1522
- Jašiūnai 1515
- Ashmiany, a. 1392
- Daugai, a. 1430
- Valkininkai, a. 1522
- Salčininkeliai, a. 1486
- Graūžhyški, a. 1495
- Salčininkai 1410
- Biūtishki 1478
- Perloja, a. 1506
- Eišiškės, a. 1492
- Survilishki 1495
- Gal'shany, early 1500s
- Dievenškės, a. 1471
- Traby, a. 1494.
- Geraniomy, a. 1450
- Subotniki, a. 1423
- Merklinė, ca. 1392
- Zhirmuny 1522
- Trokieli, a. 1468
- Germanishki, a. 1452
- Zhygmuntshiki 1411
- Dubichi, a. 1492
- Krupa, a. 1454
- Iwye, a. 1495
- Lipniskhi 1510
- Lida 1397
- Lotva, a. 1495
- Vasilshki 1473
- Novy Dvor 1504
- Vaverka/Greater, ca. 1450
- Vaverka/Lesser 1460
- Ozha, a. 1496
- Gorodno 1390s
- Ishchoina, a. 1515
- Liadsk, ca. 1424
- Belitsa, a. 1470
- Działowa, a. 1492
- Dolistowo, a. 1492
- Rajgród, a. 1485
- Goniądz, a. 1430
- Indura, a. 1397
- Odel'ska 1494
- Trzcianne, a. 1496
- Kalinówka 1511
- Kryszyn 1520
- Odelska 1494
- Polonka 1498
- Dąbrowa (Białostocka), a. 1468
- Nowy Dwór, 1496
- Shchuchin 1436
- Zhaludok, a. 1490
- Novgorodok, ca. 1393
- Dvoret's 1516
- Rogotna, a. 1466
- Gorodishche/Lesser, a. 1502
- Gorodishche/Greater, ca. 1494
- Modichadz 1492
- Krynk 1517
- Dobryniew 1519
- Choroszcz, a. 1459
- Turośń 1515
- Kroszin 1442
- Tjokcin 1437
- Kobylin a. 1471
- Płonka a. 1471
- Turośń 1515
- Darev 1510
- Kulesze (Rokitnica) a. 1471
- Sokoly Kościelne 1471
- Suraz, a. 1471
- Wola 1522
- Shilovichi, a. 1511
- Volkovysk, a. 1430
- Zelva/Greater 1470
- Zelva/Lesser 1477
- Mezhyrech, a. 1516
- Mstibovo, a. 1485
- Podorosk 1518
- Slonim, a. 1492
- Jablonka Świerczewo 1493
- Wysokie 1496
- Długa Dąbrowa 1423
- Jabloni Kościelna a. 1485
- Topczew 1433
- Wyszki 1457
- Kuczyn 1419
- Domanowo 1460
- Wyszonki 1464
- Brańsk, a. 1447
- Bielsk, ca. 1420
- Winna, a. 1432
- Ciechanowiec, a. 1428
- Lubino 1498
- Ceranów (Parłuby) 1488
- Dołubów 1465
- Podorozk 1460
- Kosava 1520





DIOCESE OF LUTSK

POLAND

- Knyszyn 1520
- Tycocin 1437
- Dobrzyniew 1519
- Choroszcz, a. 1459
- Kobylin a. 1471
- Płonka a. 1471
- Turoń 1515
- Kulesze (Rokitnica) a. 1471
- Sokoly Kościelne 1471
- Suraz, a. 1471
- Jablonka Świerczewo 1493
- Wysokie 1496
- Długa Dąbrowa 1423
- Jabłoni Kościelna a. 1485
- Topczew 1433
- Wyszki 1457
- Domanowo 1460
- Kuczyn 1419
- Wyszonki 1464
- Brańsk, a. 1447
- Bielsk, ca. 1420
- Rudka 1442
- Lubino 1498
- Winna, a. 1432
- Ciechanowiec, a. 1428
- Cerańów (Raduby), a. 1488
- Kosów Lacki, a. 1471
- Dołubow 1465
- Sterdyń, a. 1471
- Krynki 1521
- Perlejew 1419
- Dziadkowiec 1431
- Zembrów 1486
- Granne 1453
- Ostrozany 1450
- Miedzna, a. 1470
- Jabłonna, a. 1470
- Nieciecz 1457
- Siemiatycze 1456
- Skibniew, a. 1464
- Jakimowiczy, a. 1474
- Drohiczyn, a. 1419
- Węgrów 1414
- Sokółów, a. 1415
- Słkreszew, a. 1431
- Budzieszyn, a. 1458
- Czerwonka 1463-70
- Mielnik, a. 1420
- Jamice 1451
- Wyróżby 1438
- Knychówek, ca. 1460
- Rozbity Kamień, a. 1448
- Knychów, a. 1471
- Kożuchow, a. 1419
- Rusków, a. 1471
- Sarmaki, ca. 1431
- Wyszków, a. 1474
- Paprotna, a. 1429
- Suchozėbry 1422
- Niemojki, a. 1469
- Przesmyki, a. 1453
- Górk, a. 1478
- Mordy 1458
- Hadynów, a. 1470
- Wierzchura 1469

- Krynki 1517
- Vialikaia Bierastavitsa 1522
- Shilovich, a. 1511
- Lukonitsa 1505
- Volkovysk, a. 1430
- Mstibovo, a. 1485
- Zelva/Greater 1470
- Zelva/Lesser 1477
- Mezhyrech, a. 1516
- Slonim, a. 1492
- Podorosc 1518
- Porozor 1460
- Kosava 1520

• Moichadz 1492

• Gorodis



III. VILNIUS IN THE 1320s–1350s

1. Upper Castle
2. Small compound of Lower Castle (masonry)
3. Outer castle-ward in which the first (Franciscan?) church was built (masonry)
4. Fortified settlement on Curved Castle Hill
5. Plank road, c. 1326
6. Former 'industrial area', more regular settlement from c. 1323–29
7. Settlement on the northern slope of Castle Hill
8. Settlement on the northern slope of Curved Castle Hill
9. M2 – remains of a rectangular structure, function unknown; 1320s–1330s (masonry)
10. Unexplored area
11. Hillock between Castle-, and Curved Castle Hills (excavated in the second half of the 14th c. to make a new channel for the river Vilnia)
12. St Nicholas' Orthodox church

IV. VILNIUS, EARLY-16TH CENTURY

● Greek Orthodox churches

1. *Pokrov* (Intercession of the Mother of God)
2. St Michael the Archangel
3. St John (the Baptist?)
4. St Catherine of Alexandria
5. St Nicholas
6. Elijah
7. Nativity of Our Lord
8. *Prechistaia* (Most Pure Mother of God)
9. St Saviour
10. St Peter
11. St Parasceve (*Pyatnitsa*)
12. Translation of the Relics of St Nicholas
13. Resurrection
14. Ss Cosmas and Damian
15. Holy Trinity

● Roman Catholic churches

1. St George (Carmelites)
2. St Anne (Conventual Franciscans)
3. Ss Stanisław and Władysław (cathedral church)
4. St Mary Magdalene
5. St John the Baptist
6. St Anne
7. Ss Francis of Assisi and Bernardino of Siena (Bernardines)
8. Holy Trinity
9. Holy Ghost (Dominicans)
10. The Assumption of Our Lady (Conventual Franciscans)
11. St Nicholas (Conventual Franciscans)





1. Encolpion (pectoral cross), 13th–14th c., Vilnius Lower Castle



2. Cross from Kernavė, 14th c. Photo by Arūnas Baltėnas

3. Angel bearing a shield
with the coat of arms of the
Vilnius Chapter, late 14th c.
(silver)



4. Reliquary of St Stanislaw,
1501–1503. Vilnius
Cathedral



a)



b)



c)



d)





e)



f)



5 a-f. Silver pennies of Jogaila, c. 1386-1392. Scale 3:1



g)



5 g. Silver penny of Vytautas, 1392-1396. Scale 3:1



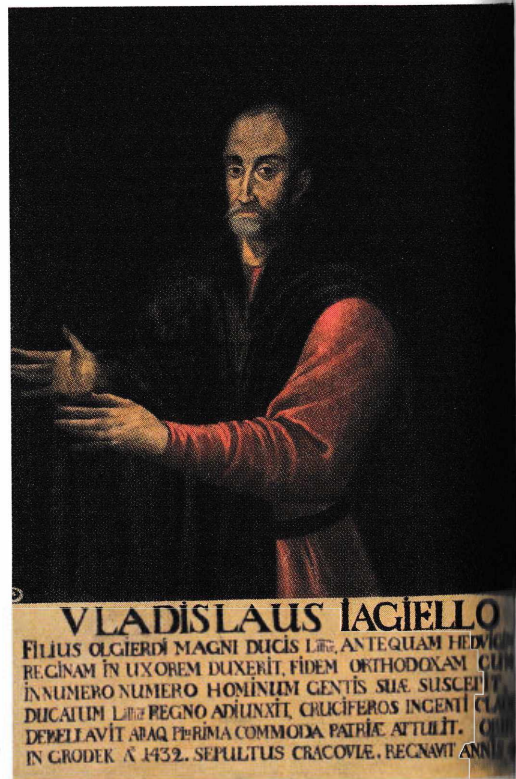
6. The earliest extant fresco in Vilnius Cathedral, early 15th c. (?)



7. Fragment of a fresco with Patriarch
Jacob, early 15th c. Trakai parish church.
Photo by Kęstutis Stoškus, 2008



8. King Władysław II (Jogaila) as defender of the faith, early-15th century. Holy Trinity Chapel, Lublin Castle



9. King Władysław II (Jogaila), by an unknown artist from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Oil on canvas, 18th c.
 Photo by Antanas Lukšėnas



10. Grand Duke Vytautas, by an unknown artist from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Oil on canvas, late 17th – early 18th c. Photo by Antanas Lukšėnas



11. Great seal of Grand Duke Vytautas, c. 1407



12 a. Great sakkos of Metropolitan Photius, 1414–1417



12 b. Royal couples of Byzantium and Muscovy (John Palaiologos and Anna, on the left, and Basil I and Sofia, on the right), with the three Lithuanian martyrs between them



13. St Casimir (†1484), by an unknown artist, c. 1520



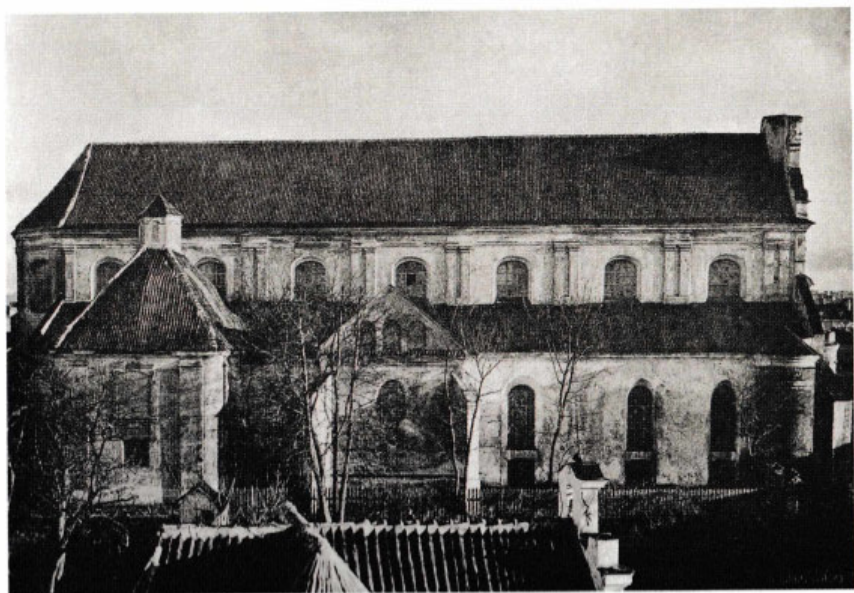
14. Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis (Michał Giedroyc, † 1485). Woodcut from Jan of Trzciana (Ioannes Arundinensis), *Vita Beati Michaelis Ordinis S. Mariae de Metro de Poenitentia Beatorum Martyrum Conventualis S. Marci Cracoviensis...* (Cracow, 1605)



15. Seal of Vilnius municipal council, with the figure of St Christopher carrying the Christ Child, 1444–1568



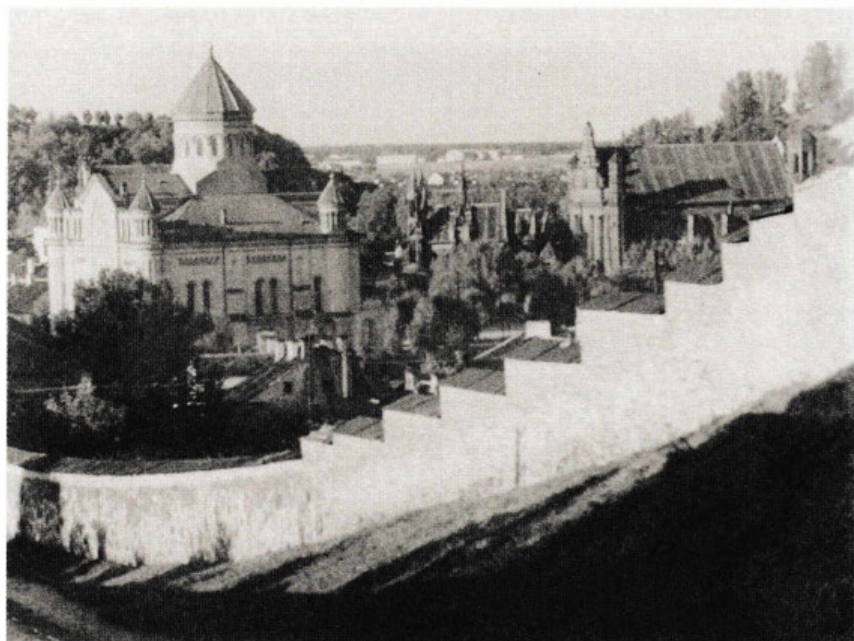
16. St Nicholas' Church, Vilnius; view from the south in 1913–1914.
Photo by Jan Buřhak



17. Vilnius Franciscan Church of the Assumption of Our Lady;
view from the north in 1915. Photo by Jan Buřhak



18. Churches of St Anne (in front) and Ss Francis of Assisi and Bernardino of Siena, Vilnius (late 15th – early 16th c.); view from 1912–1915. Photo by Jan Buřhak



19. Vilnius Orthodox Cathedral Church of the Most Pure Mother of God; view from 1913. Photo by Jan Buřhak

Abbreviations

AAAV	= <i>Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis</i> = <i>Vilniaus Dailės Akademijos Darbai. Dailė</i>
AAG	= Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Gnieźnie
AB	= <i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
ABMK	= <i>Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne</i>
AC	= <i>Analecta Cracoviensia</i>
ACC	= <i>Acta Concilii Constanciensis</i>
ADP	= Archiwum Diecezjalne w Płocku
ADS	= Archiwum Diecezjalne w Siedlcach
AF	= <i>Analecta Franciscana</i>
AFH	= <i>Archivum Franciscanum Historicum</i>
AHP	= <i>Archivum Historiae Pontificiae</i>
APA	= Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica
ASV	= Archivum Secretum Vaticanum
APC	= <i>Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani</i>
AW	= <i>Ateneum Wileńskie</i>
AZR	= <i>Akty, odnosiaszchiesia k istorii Zapadnoi Rossii</i>
BAV	= Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana
BiblCzart	= Biblioteka XX. Czartoryskich
BIS	= <i>Bažnyčios Istorijos Studijos</i>
BJ	= Biblioteka Jagiellońska
BP	= <i>Bullarium Poloniae</i>
BRMŠ	= <i>Baltų religijos ir mitologijos šaltiniai</i> = <i>Sources of Baltic Religion and Mythology</i>
CDERB	= <i>Codex Diplomaticus et Epistolaris Regni Bohemiae</i>
CDL	= <i>Codex Diplomaticus Lithuaniae</i>
CDP	= <i>Codex Diplomaticus Prussicus</i>
CE XV	= <i>Codex Epistolaris Saeculi Decimi Quinti</i>
CM	= <i>Codex Mednicensis seu Samogitiae Dioecesis</i>
CSHB	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae</i>
DOP	= <i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
FRB	= <i>Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum</i>
FS	= <i>Frühmittelalterliche Studien</i>
GSMH	= <i>Genealogia: Studia i Materiały Historyczne</i>
GStA PK	= <i>Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz</i>
HUS	= <i>Harvard Ukrainian Studies</i>
IŠT	= <i>Istorijos Šaltinių Tyrimai</i>
JBS	= <i>Journal of Baltic Studies</i>
JMH	= <i>Journal of Medieval History</i>

- KDKDW = *Kodeks dyplomatyczny katedry i diecezji wileńskiej* = *Codex diplomaticus ecclesiae cathedralis necnon dioeceseos Vilmensis*
- KMW = *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*
- LHS = *Lithuanian Historical Studies*
- LIM = *Lietuvos Istorijos Metraštinė*
- Lites = *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*
- LKD = *Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XIV–XVI a.* = *The Lithuanian Catholic Clergy (14th–16th c.)*
- LKMA = *Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akademija*
- LMAVB RS = *Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka. Rankraščių skyrius.* = *The Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Manuscript Department*
- LR = *Livländische Reimchronik mit Anmerkungen, Namenverzeichnis und Glossar*, ed. L. Meyer (Paderborn, 1876, 2nd edition Hildesheim, 1963).
- LU = *Liv- esth- und curländisches Urkundenbuch, nebst Regesten*
- LVIA = *Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas*
- MGH AA = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi*
- MGH Const. = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Constitutiones et Acta Publica Imperatorum et Regum*
- MGH Epist. = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolae*
- MGH SPM = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Staatsschriften des Späteren Mittelalters*
- MGH SS = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores*
- MGH SRGUS = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum*
- MPH = *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*
- NIL = *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis' starshago i mladshago izvodov*
- NP = *Nasza Przeszłość*
- OSP = *Oxford Slavonic Papers, new series*
- PH = *Przegląd Historyczny*
- PU = *Preußisches Urkundenbuch. Politische Abteilung*
- PVL = *Povest' vremennykh let*
- RH = *Roczniki Historyczne*
- RIB = *Russkaia Istoricheskaia Biblioteka*
- RPK = *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel*
- SEER = *The Slavonic and East European Review*
- SLVA = *Senās Latvijas Vēstures Avoti*
- SRP = *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*
- SŽ = *Studia Źródłoznawcze*
- Zfo = *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* [from 1995 *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*]

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List of maps and illustrations

MAPS

I. Grand Duchy of Lithuania, c. 1430

II. Roman Catholic dioceses within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, c. 1522. Parish network

III. Vilnius in the 1320s–1350s. (Courtesy Oksana Valionienė)

IV. Vilnius, early-16th century. (Courtesy Oksana Valionienė)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Encolpion (pectoral cross), 13th–14th c. (Research authors: E. Ožalas, E. Montvilaitė, A. Žvirblys. The territory of the grand-ducal palace in the Lower Castle of Vilnius. Archaeological excavations at the eastern approach to the southern part of the palace (trench no. 3), 2004–2006, inv. no. 1276). Photo by Vytautas Abramauskas. National Museum, Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania.

2. Cross from Kernavė, 14th c. Photo by Arūnas Baltėnas. State Cultural Reserve of Kernavė.

3. Angel bearing a shield with the coat of arms of the Vilnius Chapter, late 14th c. (silver). Church Heritage Museum.

4. Reliquary of St Stanisław, 1501–1503. Vilnius Cathedral. Church Heritage Museum.

5. The earliest known Lithuanian coins:

- a) Silver penny of Jogaila (Group I), c. 1386–1387 (no. 1.1–I). National Museum of Lithuania.
- b) Silver penny of Jogaila (Group II), c. 1386–1387 (no. 7.7-II).
- c) Silver penny of Jogaila (Group III), c. 1386–1387 (no. 12.12-III).
- d) Silver penny of Jogaila (Group I), c. 1388 (no. 19.1-I).
- e) Silver penny of Jogaila (Group I), c. 1388–1392 (no. 39.5-Ib).
- f) Silver penny of Jogaila, c. 1386–1387 (no. 62).
- g) Silver penny of Vytautas (Group II), 1392–1396 (no. 53.5-II/A1).

6. The earliest extant fresco in Vilnius Cathedral, early 15th c. (?).

7. Fragment of a fresco with Patriarch Jacob, early 15th c. Trakai parish church. Photo by Kęstutis Stoškus, 2008.

8. King Władysław II (Jogaila) as defender of the faith, early 15th c. Holy Trinity Chapel, Lublin Castle.
9. King Władysław II (Jogaila), by an unknown artist from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Oil on canvas, 18th c. Photo by Antanas Lukšėnas. Lithuanian Art Museum.
10. Grand Duke Vytautas, by an unknown artist from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Oil on canvas, late 17th – early 18th c. Photo by Antanas Lukšėnas. Lithuanian Art Museum.
11. Great seal of Grand Duke Vytautas, c. 1407. (Courtesy Edmundas Rimša)
- 12 a. Great *sakkos* of Metropolitan Photius, 1414–1417.
- 12 b. Royal couples of Byzantium and Muscovy (John Palaiologos and Anna, and Basil I and Sofia), with the three Lithuanian martyrs between them. Moscow Kremlin, Armoury Chamber.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Large_sakkos_of_photius.jpg (last accessed 15 July 2015)
13. St Casimir (†1484). Painting by an unknown artist, c. 1520. Lithuanian Art Museum.
14. Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis (Michał Giedroyc, † 1485). Woodcut from Jan of Trzciana (Ioannes Arundinensis), *Vita Beati Michaelis Ordinis S. Mariae de Metro de Poenitentia Beatorum Martyrum Conventualis S. Marci Cracoviensis...* (Cracow, 1605).
15. Seal of Vilnius municipal council with the figure of St Christopher carrying the Christ Child, 1444–1568. (Courtesy Edmundas Rimša)
16. St Nicholas' Church, Vilnius; view from the south in 1913–1914. Photo by Jan Bułhak. National Museum of Lithuania.
17. Vilnius Franciscan Church of the Assumption of Our Lady; view from the north in 1915. Photo by Jan Bułhak. National Museum of Lithuania.
18. Churches of St Anne (in front) and Ss Francis of Assisi and Bernardino of Siena in Vilnius (late 15th – early 16th c.); view from 1912–1915. Photo by Jan Bułhak. National Museum of Lithuania.
19. Vilnius Orthodox Cathedral Church of the Most Pure Mother of God; view from 1913. Photo by Jan Bułhak. National Museum of Lithuania.

Index

The following abbreviations are used throughout: Abp: archbishop; Bl: blessed; Bp: bishop; D: duke; E: emperor; GD: grand duke; GM: grand master; K: king; M: metropolitan; ML: master of Livonia; Mrt: martyr; P: pope; Pr: priest; Pt: Patriarch; Q: queen; Ss: saints; St: saint

- Abraham Wojna (Abraomas Vaina), Bp of Vilnius 500
Absalon, Abp of Lund 56
Adalbert-Wojciech, St, Bp of Prague 21, 34–38, 430, 496, 516
Adam of Bremen 28, 29, 53
Adam of Kotra 452
Ademar of Chabannes OSB 43–46
Adolph OFM 90
Aesti, Aisti, *Aestiorum gentes* 23, 25–29
Agné 409, 410
Akerman ⇒ Moncastro
Alanta 500
Albert Iwaskowicz, of Paberžė 465
Albert of Bydgoszcz 428, 447
Albert Suerbeer, Abp of Riga 82, 85
Albert Tabor, Bp of Vilnius 392, 393, 395, 417, 433, 435, 436, 440, 447, 478, 479, 486, 487–490, 493, 508
Albert von Buxhovden, Bp of Riga 59, 60, 61, 82
Albertas Radvila 479
Aleknaitis, Petras 509, 511
Aleksander Soltan 390, 394
Alexander IV, P 80, 85, 86, 88, 90, 93, 94, 104, 386, 387, 392, 417, 486–488, 515, 523
Alexander Jogailaitis 468
Alexander Karijotaitis, D of Podolia 215, 238–240, 406
Alexander Nevsky 106
Alexander V, Antipope 219, 235
Alexander, D of Moldavia 297
Alexander, GD of Lithuania, K of Poland 15, 319, 321, 387, 393, 395, 398, 401, 420, 421, 426, 430, 468, 482, 484, 487, 490
Alexander, St 358
Alexius 457
Alexius of Kuczyn 509
Alexius of Raseiniai 306, 457, 509, 511
Alexius, M of Kiev 165–172, 174, 189
Alfred, K of Wessex 28
Algirdas, GD of Lithuania 2, 6, 138, 139, 143, 145, 148, 156, 157, 158, 160, 161, 165–175, 180, 184–188, 190, 217, 224, 226, 228–234, 237–241, 243, 248, 251–256, 264, 275, 284, 301, 328, 520
Al-Kamil, Sultan of Egypt 193
almshouse 466, 476, 480, 511–514, 516
Alps 25
Alšėniškiai (family) 321, 415
Alšėniškis 479
altars 17, 263, 402, 407, 408, 415, 426, 432, 435, 464, 467, 484, 486, 510, 514, 523
Alytus 509
Amber 27
Anastasia of Kaunas 444
Andreas de Naszyłowo 455
Andreas de Pakost 447
Andreas of Skibniew 452, 477
Andrei, D of Galich 151
Andrew (Goskowicz), Bp of Vilnius 439, 460
Andrew (Jastrzębiec), Bp of Vilnius 278, 288, 302, 423, 438, 477
Andrew Łaskarz, Bp (elect) of Poznań, 348–350, 366, 370, 423
Andrew of Lutsk 423
Andrew of Neverovo 248, 468
Andrew of Rimanowo 248, 447
Andrew of Stirland, ML 79, 81, 102
Andrew Wężyk OP 357
Andrew, Bp of Lutsk 423
Andrew, D of Polotsk 248, 254
Andrew, Pr of Kyna (Kaunas?) 16
Andrew, Pr of Tykocin 454
Andrew, St 515, 523
Andriejus Nadboras 471
Andriejus of Skrobovo 508
Andriejus Songaila 451
Andriejus Galiginaitis 411
Andriušaitis, Jonas, Archdeacon 478
Andriuškevičius, John 439
Andronikos II Palaiologos, E 163
Angevins 279
Anna 451
Anna Iliničienė 466, 468, 476, 513
Anna Mikołajowna of Brańsk 453
Anna, daughter of Basil I 367–370, 372–375

- Anna, Prince Vladimir's wife 45
- Anna, Q of Poland 322
- Anne, St 282, 296, 303, 369, 465
- Anskar, St 31, 32
- Antakalnis 416, 436, 473, 488, 513, 498
- Anthony, Mrt 175, 179, 182, 183, 218
- Antiochus of Syria 117
- Antony IV, P of Constantinople 172, 374, 380, 402
- Anykščiai 402, 432, 472
- Apollonia, St 430
- apostasy 97, 98, 100–103, 107
- Apuolė (*Apulia*) 31
- Ariogala 19, 359
- Armenia 197, 487
- Arnold the Iron Hand 118
- Arpads 279
- Ascherad 125
- Ashmiany 289, 306, 473, 474
- Asia 197, 229, 402
- Astikai (family) 410, 465
- Astikas 510
- Athens 208
- Augustus, E 391
- Aukštaitija 66, 305
- Avars 27
- Avignon 119, 202, 204, 211
- Azov Sea 212
- Bacon, Roger OFM 95, 331
- Bad Wilsnack 304
- Bakshy 459
- Balkan 34
- Balsamon, Michael 182, 188, 189
- Balt, Baltic 3, 5, 8–10, 13, 21–24, 26–30, 32, 33, 52, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 69, 70, 94, 194, 197, 199, 205, 264–266, 379, 519
- Baltic, Sea 3, 21–24, 28, 39, 51, 56, 143, 146
- Baltramiejus 508
- Barbara, daughter of Anna Mikołajowna of Brańsk 453
- Barbarian 22–25, 29, 32, 81, 183, 189, 262, 378, 382
- Barbora, wife of Stanislovas Daukšaitis 415
- Baronas, Darius 462
- Bartholomew (Anglian) OFM 95
- Bartholomew of Alverna 211
- Bartholomew of Bohemia OFM 94, 95
- Bartholomew of Pisa OFM 210, 213, 214–216
- Bartholomew, Bp of Alet 123
- Bartholomew, Bp of Kiev 511
- Bashkirians 198
- Basil I, GD of Moscow 367–370, 374–376, 552
- Basil II, GD of Moscow 376
- Bayezit II, Ottoman Sultan 386, 387
- Bela IV, K of Hungary 105, 113
- Belarus, Belarusian, Belarusians 50, 65, 70, 71, 77, 159, 165, 289, 401, 465
- Benedict (Bogusza) 35, 37
- Benedict Macra 347, 356, 370
- Benedict, Italian hermit 38
- Berdibek, Khan of the Golden Horde 157
- Berend, Nora 8, 9
- Beresnevičius, Gintaras 264
- Berke, Khan of the Golden Horde 103
- Bernard of Clairvaux, St 56, 60
- Bernard, Abbot of St Theofred 123
- Bernard, Vilnius apothecary 441
- Bertold, Bp of Livonia 58
- Bertold, OFM 126–128, 130
- Birutė 301
- Black, Sea 3, 26, 39, 156, 157, 197, 200–202, 204, 209, 212, 236, 239, 381, 461
- Blair, John 10, 491
- Błaszczyk, Grzegorz 357, 476
- Bogdan Kusnierowicz of Zadwieja 507
- Bohemia 10, 34, 38, 94, 116, 130, 139, 145, 194, 204, 205, 285, 291, 314, 377, 434, 368–370,
- 373–375, 377, 379, 381, 386, 390, 402
- Boleslaw the Brave, K of Poland 7, 34, 37–39, 44, 46–48
- Boleslaw V the Shy, D of Cracow 94, 107
- Boleslaw Yury II, D of Galich-Volyn' 151, 152
- Bonagrazia, OFM 196
- Boris Karijotaitis, D of Podolia 257
- Boris, Tsar of Bulgaria 112, 215, 240
- Borzysław, Abp (elect) of Gniezno 119
- Brandenburg 104
- Braslaw 473
- Brasov 203
- Brauer, Michael 266
- Brest (Litovsk) 151, 400, 455, 460, 488, 496, 497, 512
- Briansk 157, 158, 166
- Brno 194
- Broda, Stanisław 450
- Bromley, Yulian 74
- Bruno of Querfurt, St 9, 11, 21, 36, 38–49, 51, 68, 235, 519
- Bruno von Schauenburg, Bp of Olomouc, 116, 118
- Buda 141, 203
- Bukowska-Gorgoni, Christina 449
- Bulgaria, Bulgarian 112, 113, 165, 307, 308, 381
- Burchardt, Bp of Worms 491
- Burckhardt von Hornhausen, ML 97
- Burundai, Tatar warlord 103–105
- Butautas, Henry, D 235, 236, 301
- Butrimas, son of Kęsgaila Mykolas Valmantaitis 510
- Bystryca 292, 475
- Byzantium, Byzantine 10, 50, 111, 166, 169, 173, 182, 219, 265, 367
- Caesarius, Bp of Arles 491
- Caffa 198, 200, 212
- Callistos, Pt of Constantinople 166
- Callixtus III, P 385
- Calvary (close to Daugai) 515, 523

- Carolingians 25
 Casimir (Jagiellończyk),
 GD of Lithuania, K of
 Poland 143, 238, 384,
 386, 388–390, 407, 412,
 418, 425, 426, 478, 480,
 497, 515, 523
 Casimir III the Great, K of
 Poland 139, 140, 142,
 143, 146, 152, 156, 171,
 172, 214, 239, 240,
 319, 385
 Casimir the Great of Po-
 land 141
 Casimir, St 384, 386, 431,
 494
 Caspian Sea 197
 Catherine 413
 Černius, R. 395
 Charlemagne 27
 Charles IV, K of Bohemia
 138, 141–143, 228, 235
 Chelмно 471
 Cherepnin, Lev 11, 249,
 250, 254
 Chernigov 158, 166
 China 198, 201, 202, 212,
 213, 241, 330
 Chingisid khans 63
 Chios 200
 Chodkevičius, Jonas 454
 Chodynicki, Kazimierz
 176, 318
 Chodynicki, K. 318
 Christburg, treaty of 341
 Christian, Bp of Lithuania
 82, 83, 86
 Church Union 80, 323,
 328, 353, 368, 372, 373,
 375, 376, 379, 382, 386,
 387, 389, 401, 402
 Ciolek, Erazm, Bp of Płock
 482
 Čirka, Vaclovas 457
 Clemens Clawco 411
 Clement IV, P 100, 102,
 116
 Clement V, P 205
 Cologne 86, 393, 434
 Compostela 3
 confraternity = fraternity
 Conrad IV, Bp of Wrocław
 424
 Conrad, Mrt 195–197, 205
 consanguinity 15, 298,
 408, 411
 Consistory (court) 11,
 12, 14, 16, 399, 434,
 437–442, 449, 456, 457,
 459, 470, 478, 483, 489,
 491, 495, 498, 504, 505,
 522, 523
 Constance, Council of
 291, 308, 326, 328, 333,
 336, 340, 345–347, 349,
 351, 354, 358, 359,
 364, 366, 367, 370–
 372, 377, 383, 395
 Constantine II Bagration, K
 of Georgia 386
 Constantine the Great 25,
 377
 Constantine VII Porphyro-
 genitus, E 33
 Constantinople 11, 32,
 161, 163–165, 190, 198,
 200, 212, 328, 366–
 369, 371, 374, 377, 380,
 385, 386, 388, 390
 Contarini, Ambrogio, Ve-
 netian diplomat 480
 Cornelius 387
 Council of Basle 309, 377,
 419,
 Cracow 18, 20, 107, 156,
 194, 199, 214, 218, 220,
 221, 236, 256, 257, 278,
 278, 284–286, 291, 296,
 300, 305, 357, 385,
 386, 388, 389, 393,
 423, 425, 426, 428,
 438–440, 452, 457, 461,
 470, 473, 475, 478, 480,
 496, 510, 511, 522,
 Crimea 197, 198, 387
 Crusades (Northern) 9,
 56, 58, 60–63, 88, 92,
 94, 95, 97, 105, 107,
 108, 116, 132, 138,
 146, 148, 199, 224,
 240, 268, 379, 382,
 384, 385, 386, 387, 401,
 402, 422
 Curonia, Curonians 21,
 31, 32, 51, 53, 55, 62,
 96, 97, 269
 customs (burial) 26, 73,
 185, 188, 217, 225, 234,
 264, 302, 417, 451, 455,
 456, 464, 491, 505,
 customs (*mos*, pagan,
 Christian) 6, 24, 28, 98,
 127, 186, 206, 208, 229,
 231, 260, 276, 280, 290,
 291, 297, 302, 306–308,
 311, 319, 324, 334, 336,
 433, 457, 485, 492,
 493, 520
 Cyprian, M of Kiev 170,
 171, 172, 187–189, 217,
 242, 373, 374, 380–382
 Czamańska, Ilona 215
 Czyżak, Marta 480
 D'Avray, D. L. 8
 Dacia 23
 Dahlem (Berlin) 422
 Damian Peter, St 40, 41,
 42–46, 48
 Danes, Danish 30, 31, 53,
 56, 59, 62
 Daniel Ostrogski 152
 Danil, D of Galich 78, 80,
 81, 87, 88, 102, 103,
 109, 110, 113, 115
 Danube 23, 198
 Dargaičiai 410
 Darsūniškis 473
 Daugai 416, 436, 515, 523
 Daugava (Western Dvina)
 21, 22, 51, 57–59, 61,
 62, 72, 153, 154, 157
 Daugėliškės 471, 505
 Daujotas, D 73
 Daukantas, Simonas 84
 Daukšaitis, Stanislovas
 415
 Daumantas (Dovmont), D
 of Nalšia (Orthodox St
 Timofey) 91, 106, 174
 Dausprungas, D 73
 Davaina (family) 502
 Davies, Norman 77
 deanery = *kliuch*
 Deltuva 114, 413, 420,
 436, 440, 442, 472, 473
 Denmark 57–59, 191, 405
 Diego d'Acebes, Bp of
 Osma 191
 Dietrich of Nieheim 352
 Dieveniškės, 474, 505
 Diocletian, E 24
 Długa Dąbrowa 441
 Długosz, Jan 11, 67, 148,
 217, 234, 261–263, 266,
 267, 271, 272–274, 276,
 278, 285, 286, 296, 301,
 329, 336, 339, 342–
 346, 355–357, 359, 360,
 380, 425, 426, 462
 Dmitri Dedko, boyar of
 Galich 152
 Dmitry Ivanovich (Don-
 skoi), GD of Moscow
 11, 168–170, 241, 242,
 251–255
 Dnieper 32, 33, 49, 69,
 151, 157, 203

- Dobrogost, Bp of Poznań 220, 279, 285
- Dobrogostas (Bonifacijus) Narbutaitis 415
- Dolistovo 514
- Dominic, St 191, 192
- Dorgievicz, Nicholas 409, 410
- Dorothy, St 399, 430
- Dorpat 106
- Drohiczyn 289, 402, 452, 455, 456, 476, 508
- Dubonis, Artūtas 69
- Dubysa 247, 248, 336, 338, 341, 344
- Dunin-Kozicki, Z. 501
- Durbė 97, 105, 106, 113, 332
- Durkheim, E. 7
- Dusetos 471, 500
- Einhard 27
- Eišiškės 416, 436, 445
- Elbing 200
- Elbląg 421
- Elena 393, 395, 401
- Elisabeth, Q of Hungary 243, 256, 257
- Emolument(s) 4, 12, 18–20, 399, 403, 422, 429, 432, 460–462, 466, 467, 469, 475, 476, 485, 497, 498, 500, 503, 504, 507–509, 523
- England 5, 367, 405, 424, 469, 474, 475, 521
- Erazm, Ciołek, Bp of Płock 482, 515, 523
- Ermanaric, K of the Ostrogoths 26
- Ernest, Abp of Prague 142
- Erudo 134
- Eskil, Abp of Lund 56
- Estonia, Estonians 55, 61, 62, 125, 225
- Eudokia, daughter of Semen Olelkovich 424
- Eugenius IV, P 419
- Euphemia 152
- Europe 4, 11, 22, 25, 26, 30, 33, 34, 37, 39, 49, 50, 63, 70, 79, 80, 96, 100, 103, 117, 118, 155, 192, 201, 203, 204, 208, 211, 216, 219, 229, 231, 235, 243, 249, 252, 267, 282, 284, 299, 300, 313, 317, 327, 328, 333, 356, 366–368, 371, 373, 380, 386, 387, 406, 413, 417, 421, 422, 435, 442, 491, 492, 501, 519
- Eustathius, Mrt 175, 179, 182, 183, 217, 218
- Fedor Yaroslavovich 398
- Fëdor, D of Kiev 153
- Feliks Krupski, member of the Davaina clan, 15
- Ferdinand II, K of Aragon 386
- Ferreri, Zaccharia, papal legate 19, 485, 496, 505, 513, 516
- Fijałek, Jan 318, 328
- Filipavičius, Jonas 440
- Finno-Ugrian tribes, Finno-Ugrian 21, 27, 29, 32, 67, 266
- France 122, 351, 367, 521
- Francis of Assisi, St 192, 193
- fraternity 14, 18, 295, 400, 408, 425, 452, 464, 474, 477, 492, 504, 505, 509, 510, 512, 522
- fraternity, Corpus Christi in Toruń 428
- fraternity, Franciscan, in Vilnius 411, 474, 502
- fraternity, in Długa Dąbrowa 441
- fraternity, in Drohiczyn 455
- fraternity, in Polonka 441, 474, 502, 503, 507,
- fraternity, of Holy Ghost in Rome 457, 511
- fraternity, of Mercy 513
- fraternity, Ss Peter and Paul Church in Kaunas 501
- fraternity, St John Church in Vilnius 422–424, 444, 509,
- fraternity, St Mary Church in Cracow 510
- Frederick (Jagiellończyk), Abp of Gniezno, Cardinal 421, 423, 505, 506
- Frederick (Pernstein), Abp of Riga 122, 123, 204, 205
- Fredericus of Betygala 448
- Friars Pilgrim (OP) 200, 201, 203, 371, 402
- Friesland 59
- Frost, R. 249
- Galich, Galichian 72, 103, 110, 112, 115, 139, 150, 152, 156, 162, 171, 172, 238, 380
- Galich-Volyn' 57, 72, 73, 77, 88, 92, 94, 102, 103, 109, 111, 114, 116, 150, 151, 152, 156
- Gallus Anonymus 52
- Gaudentius (Radzim), 35
- Gauja 61, 62
- Gdańsk 3, 199, 421, 460,
- Gediminas, GD of Lithuania 2, 6, 7, 119–139, 144, 151–153, 155, 159–161,, 164, 169, 173, 174, 177, 187, 199, 209–214, 222, 223, 226–229, 231, 233, 235–237, 240, 243, 259, 260, 274, 275, 302, 329, 330, 380, 406, 408, 414, 519, 520
- Gedyvdas 78
- Genoa 197, 200, 202, 203
- Geographus Bavarus 27
- George (Karijotid), D of Moldavia 215, 238
- George of Medininkai 424
- George, Bp of Medininkai 14, 424, 439
- George, St 397
- George, St 397, 400, 466, 472
- Georgia 387
- Geraniony 416, 436, 474, 505
- Gerasim, Bp of Smolensk 377
- Gerhard of Dordemuere OFM 125
- Gerhard Rude, vogt of Sambia 333
- Germania, Germany, German 6, 21, 22, 23, 27, 39, 44, 56–58, 61–90, 63, 82, 83, 86, 98, 99, 102, 107, 114, 126, 152, 170, 182, 186, 196, 197, 200, 203, 209, 223, 224, 227, 229, 230, 235, 239, 244, 268, 270, 272, 274, 329, 331, 333, 334, 351, 377, 417, 433, 478, 482, 487, 491, 499, 519
- Gerviaty 472
- Gidžiūnas, Viktoras OFM 195
- Giedraičiai 440, 442, 465
- Giedraitis, Hermanas 480

- Gilbert de Lannoy 369
 Gintautas, Vėlius 225
 Giovanni Manco 295
 Glebaitis, Jonas to
 Taliatiškės 481
 Gniezno 12, 37, 286, 313,
 384, 385, 399, 416, 420,
 430, 435, 436, 438,
 440, 442, 446, 448,
 449, 455, 457, 459, 460,
 470, 478, 480, 491, 493,
 495–498, 522
 Gniozdovo 49
 Golden Horde 63, 64, 103,
 152, 158, 196, 198, 201,
 202, 338, 380
 Gomulka, Jonas 438
 Goniądz 432, 453
 Gorodishche/Greater 474
 Gorodishche/Lesser 474,
 505
 Goštautai (family) 415,
 436, 465
 Goštautas Albertas 7, 399,
 430, 471, 481, 505,
 506, 514
 Goštautas, Jonas 389, 480
 Goštautas, Jurgis 467, 480
 Goštautas, Martynas 414,
 420, 427, 428, 453, 454,
 465, 471, 489
 Goštautas, Petras (fictional
 character) 514
 Gotaulaitis, Jurgis 414
 Goths 26
 Gotland (island) 56, 59
 Gralochas, Jonas 445
 Graūzhyski, 474, 505
 Gregorius of Lwówek 445
 Gregory de Guraw 300
 Gregory de Kamieniec 447
 Gregory IX, P 406
 Gregory the Great, St P
 6, 308
 Gregory Tsamblak, M of
 Kiev 323, 371, 372,
 Gregory X, P 118, 239, 290
 Greimas, Algirdas J. 264
 Grigorii Bolgarinovich, M
 of Kiev 390
 Grodno (Gardinas) 50,
 149, 429, 440, 443,
 473, 475, 488
 Groloch 455
 Grunwald 397
 Grzegorz of Kamieniec 444
 Guillaume Fillastre 348
 Gunther of Schwarzburg
 138
 Gutautas-Stanislovas
 Mikhailovich, of Skrob-
 ov 503
 Güyük, Mongol Khan 87
 Haczo of Wirowo 399
 Hagia Sophia 189
 Hagiography 11, 40, 41,
 207, 345
 Halecki, Oskar 257
 Hannus von Stangberg
 362
 Hanul 244, 257, 289, 463,
 520
 Harran 265
 Heidenreich, Bp of Kulm
 80, 82, 86, 89, 101
 Heinrich Botel, marshal of
 OT 97
 Heinrich I, Bp of Osel-Wiek
 101
 Heinrich Plauen, GM 339
 Heinrich von Lutzberg,
 Bp of of Kurland 101
 Hellmann, Manfred 329
 Henekin 134
 Henry II, E 38, 39, 43, 48
 Henry of Livonia, chroni-
 cles 72
 Henry, Bp of Warmia 248
 Henry, D of Holstein 138
 Henry OFM 130
 Herbut, Mamert, Vilnius
 Canon 498
 Herod of Jerusalem 117
 Hesychasm 167, 189
 Hlebovičiai 507
 Holt, Heinrich, marshal of
 TO 66
 Holy Land 56, 60, 148
 Holy Roman Empire 9, 22,
 24, 25, 27, 38, 494, 519
 Holy See 80, 101, 116,
 386, 418, 455, 494
 Honorius III, P 60
 Horodko 383
 Horodko, treaty of 342,
 345
 Hrydys, Ivan Mikhailovich
 of Skoborov's son 507
 Humbert of Romans OP
 90
 Hungarian, Hungary 9,
 34, 105, 113, 130, 138–
 140, 145, 192, 197, 202,
 215, 228, 231, 239, 256,
 371, 380, 386–388, 401
 Huns 26
 Hyacin OP 192, 199
 Iakov, secretary 389
 Idols, idolaters, idolatry
 262, 273, 275, 276,
 355, 433
 Iglo (Spišska Nova) 380
 Iliničius, George 513
 Il-khans of Persia 152, 201
 Innocent III, P 58, 60
 Innocent IV, P 79, 81, 82,
 85–87, 91, 101, 121
 Iosif, M of Kiev 395
 Isaac ben Abraham 433
 Isabella, Q of Castile 386
 Ishkaldz 474, 505
 Isidore, M of Kiev 388,
 389
 Italy 1, 39, 100, 366, 387,
 433, 478, 490, 521
 Ivan III, GD of Moscow 11,
 250, 314, 393
 Ivan Kalita, GD of Moscow
 154
 Ivaška of Poczapow, court-
 ier 412
 Ivaškovičiai 436
 Ivinskis, Zenonas 520
 Iwaszko 394
 Iwye 416, 436–474, 505
 Iziaslav' 50
 Jacobus de Podskarbice
 447
 Jadwiga, Q of Poland 240,
 244, 249, 256–259,
 276, 279, 283, 305, 382,
 430, 443
 Jagiellonians, Jagiellonian
 387, 425
 Jakub of Mnichow 461
 James at Rotenburg, St
 427
 Jan (Sakran) of Oświęcim
 393
 Jan Albinus, Vilnius Canon
 496, 498–500
 Jan Łaski, Abp of Gniezno
 1, 479, 493, 494, 496,
 497, 510
 Jan of Kocmiery 450
 Jan Zabrzeziński 469
 Jan, brother of Stanisław-
 Hryńko 399
 Jan, *pellifex* 457
 Janibek, Khan of the Gold-
 en Horde 202
 Janow Podlaski 12, 409,
 453, 462
 Janusz I, D of Mazovia
 147
 Janusz III, D of Mazovia
 482
 Jašiūnai 466

- Jaunutis, GD of Lithuania 180
 Jędrzejow (Cracow diocese) 461
 Jeremias de Czarnow 447
 Jerome of Prague 291
 Jerome, St 521
 Jersika 61, 72
 Jerusalem 383
 Joachim 398
 Joanna, princess 143
 Joannes Wolski, 447
 Jogaila, GD of Lithuania, Władysław II, K of Poland, 2, 7, 11, 66, 159, 217–220, 224, 229, 233, 234–236, 240–267, 273–280, 282–285, 287–289, 295–298, 300, 305, 308, 316–318, 320–324, 326, 328, 334–337, 339, 342–350, 353–361, 363, 366, 369–373, 375–377, 379, 380, 383, 384, 386, 388, 401, 402, 414, 417, 423, 424, 459, 461, 462, 468, 477, 487, 520
 Johannes Lituanus 448
 Johannes Surbach, OT 230, 272
 John (Rzeszowski), Abp of Lviv, 345, 353, 354, 358, 417
 John Albert, K of Poland 387, 393
 John Andriušaitis 478
 John Andriuševičius 439
 John Cantius (Jan Kanty), St 480
 John Dominici, Abp of Ragusa 353
 John Kozielkowicz 444
 John Malalas 264
 John Nemira 303
 John Ochko, Abp of Prague 214
 John of Bzovia 293
 John of Ciechanowice 452
 John of Geraniony 453
 John of Luxembourg, K of Bohemia 132, 133, 138
 John of Montecorvino OFM 201, 212
 John of Piano Carpini OFM 87
 John of the Lithuanian Dukes, Bp of Vilnius 407, 433, 434, 479–481, 496–498, 505
 John Palaiologos, E 368–370, 373–375
 John the Baptist 19, 282, 418, 430, 466, 469, 501, 516
 John the Evangelist 466, 501
 John the Little of Poland OFM 290
 John VI Cantacuzenus, E 167
 John XIII Glykys, Pt of Constantinople 163
 John XXII, Pope 119, 122, 169, 421, 425
 John XXIII, Antipope 290, 297, 349
 John, Bp of Moldavia 297
 John, Bp of Pomesania 248
 John, Bp of Sultania 368
 John, Italian hermit 38
 John, merchant of Vilnius 478
 John, Pr of Ashmiany 306
 John, Pr of Mordy 450, 452, 505
 John, St 175, 179, 181–183, 218, 381, 422–424, 444, 460, 465, 509
 John-Jerome of Prague 309–315, 356
 Jonas Jurginek 445, 455
 Jonas of Pyzdry 438
 Jonas Silvijus Siciliētis (Siculus), Vilnius Canon 481, 500
 Jonas, Katras 451
 Jonas, son of Petras Načkus Ginvilaitis 19
 Jonas-Nekrašius of Skrob-ovo 508
 Jordan, Bp of Sabina 308
 Junigeda ⇒ Veliuona
 Jurgis Mek, Vilnius burgher 445
 Jurgis of Chernichovo 507
 Jutland 27
 Kalisz 318
 Kaitinėnai 19, 359
 Kaitinėnai 359
 Kamenets-Podilskii 239
 Karaites 381, 433
 Karakorum 63, 122
 Karaliūnas, Simas 68, 69
 Karelians 71
 Karijotas, D of Novgorodok 237, 238
 Karijotids (Karijotaičiai) 215, 216, 239–241
 Kaspar of Warsaw 445
 Kaunas 16, 232, 233, 268, 270, 289, 314, 344, 354, 411, 416, 417, 421, 428, 430, 436, 440, 444, 462, 468, 472–475, 501, 522
 Kernavė 116, 224, 225, 432
 Kešgaila, Mykolas Valmantaitis, starosta of Žemaitija 510
 Kešgailos (family) 415, 436
 Keštutis, GD of Lithuania 136, 139–142, 147, 156, 180, 184, 226, 228–248, 253, 254, 259, 284, 301, 304, 328, 332, 334, Kiev 32, 45, 51, 88, 110, 153, 157, 158, 161–166, 170, 171, 199, 325, 375, 380–382, 388–391, 402, 420, 424, 434, 454, 459, 462, 477, 488, 511, 522
 Kiev Cave monastery 51, 302
 Kievan Rus' 32, 34, 63, 70, 117, 149, 162, 174, 299
 Kilia 203, 387
 Kipchak Khanate ⇒ Golden Horde
 Kletsk 474
 Kliuch 473, 488, 498, 500, 522
 Kłoczowski, J. 7
 Knituva 362
 Kobylnik 432
 Koknese 61, 72
 Komorowski, Stanisław, notary 498
 Kondrataitis, Jurgis (Georgius Cond Rathowycz) 475
 Kondratavičius, Petras 445
 Königsberg 138, 338
 Konrad von Jungingen, GM 338
 Konrad Zöllner von Rotenstein, GM 248
 Korčakas, Vaclavas 424
 Kossinna, Gustaf 74
 Kostka, Drohiczyn sub-judge 452
 Kot, Wincenty, Abp of Gniezno 384

- Kozielkowicz 444
 Kozłowski, Mikołaj 377
 Kražiai 359
 Krėva 245, 247, 249, 257
 Kriveikiškės 225
 Krivichians 65
 Kroshin 474, 505
 Krupska, Hanula (Itamila),
 of the Nasuta family 15
 Kuczyński, S. M., 157
 Kuczyński, Jakub, warden
 445
 Kuleszowie, Maciej and
 Jan 451
 Kulikovo pole 242
 Kulm 80, 82, 86, 89, 101,
 194, 200
 Kupiatycze 398
 Kurczewski, Jan 499
 Kurland 79, 101
 Kurtyka, Janusz 238
 Kybartaitė-Sirtautaitienė,
 Ona 448, 478
 Kybartas, Mikalojus 17
 Labanoras 459
 Lațcu, D of Moldavia 214
 Latvians 21, 67, 69
 Laurence Zeleznicki 446
 Laurence, Pr of Drohiczyn
 456
 Laurence, Pr of Labanoras
 415
 Laurence, Pr of Węgrow
 451
 Leitis, leičiai 69, 70
 Leliušai (family) 415, 436
 Leliušas, Petras 411
 Lengvenis (George) 271,
 322
 Leonard Alemanus 446
 Lev II, D of Galich 115, 151
 Levi, Carlo 1
 Licostomo 203
 Lida 289, 411, 412, 473
 Lietauka 68
 Lipa 474, 505
 Lithuania *passim*
 Litua, *Литва* 47, 48, 67,
 68, 70
 liturgy (vestments, vessels)
 18, 19, 20, 208, 231,
 294, 301, 322, 374, 389,
 398, 425, 426, 427, 429,
 431, 432, 468, 469,
 494, 499, 515, 523
 Liubartas, D of Volyn' 152,
 156, 237
 Liubavskii, Matvei 159
 Livonia, Livonian 1,
 57–60, 76, 81, 90, 99,
 106, 114, 118, 121, 125,
 131, 136, 138, 143, 186,
 199, 204, 205, 222–224,
 244, 245, 247, 248,
 269–271, 298, 332,
 324, 356
 Livs 57, 58, 61
 Loccum 58
 Losovičius, Jonas, Bp of
 Vilnius 424
 Lotva, 474, 505
 Louis I the Great, K of
 Hungary 138–141, 145,
 228, 256
 Louis the Bavarian, E 122,
 137
 Louis, margrave of Bran-
 denburg 146
 Lovat 72
 Lubawa 471
 Lübeck 56, 194
 Lubutsk 168
 Lucania (Basilicata), 1
 Luchtanas, Aleksiejus 225
 Lucy, St 506
 Ludolf Konig, GM 138
 Ludovico, Neapolitan
 knight 295
 Lukia 507
 Lukow 94, 95
 Lull, Raymond, OFM 197
 Luticians 38, 39, 329
 Lutsk 12–14, 395, 399,
 409, 410, 423, 424, 434,
 435, 438, 439, 446,
 449, 452, 453, 457,
 459–463, 477–479, 483,
 488–490, 493, 498,
 502, 504, 510, 517, 523
 Lyntupy 440
 Lyons 118
 Maciej of Prawkow 427
 Macz 450
 Magdalena, widow of
 Jagintas 412
 Mainz 434
 Maišiagala 301, 415, 416,
 421, 432, 436, 449,
 468, 473, 475, 483, 488,
 498, 500
 Mamay, Tatar warlord 242
 Mangirdaitis, Petras 509
 Mantautai (family) 415
 Mantautas, Aleksandras
 411
 Manuel II Palaiologos, E
 367, 368
 Manvydai (family) 502
 Marcus Aurelius, E 23
 Margaret of Siret, Duchess
 of Valachia 240
 Margaret, St 430
 Maria, Q of Hungary 244,
 256
 Maria, sister of GD Jogaila
 252, 256,
 Marian of Florence OFM
 196
 Marienburg 147, 243,
 340, 368
 Marina Vladyczanka 399
 Marina, Duchess of Traby
 399
 Marino de Fregano 385
 Mark, Cardinal 386
 Mark, St 398
 Marquard von Raschau
 OT 333
 Marriage (dynastic, legal
 disputes, legitimisation)
 15, 143, 156, 160, 240,
 246, 249, 251, 252,
 253–255, 257–259,
 279, 281, 283, 298,
 319, 321, 367, 369, 370,
 373–375, 401, 404–406,
 408–411, 415, 435, 463,
 469, 484, 522
 Martha, wife of Mindaugas
 88, 92
 Martin III, Bp of Me-
 dininkai 478
 Martin of Ahd OFM, Mrt
 204, 205, 206, 208
 Martin of Brańsk 453
 Martin of Duszniki, Vilnius
 Canon 512
 Martin of Ostrolęka 452
 Martin of Radom, Pr 3
 Martin Swianiczski 447
 Martinus (Johannis) Litua-
 nus 439
 Martinus de Ostrolęka 477
 Martinus Janczelowicz,
 Vilnius burgher 478
 Mathew, St 192
 Matthias 451
 Matthias Albas de Krasne
 14
 Matthias of Czysrk, Sacris-
 tan 500
 Matthias of Topola 439
 Matthias Olekhnowicz 446
 Matthias, Bp of Vilnius
 288, 321, 363, 365,
 388, 389, 408, 417,
 423, 438
 Mažeika, Jonas 412

- Mažeika, Rasa 145, 181, 204, 412
- Mazovia, Mazovian 14, 92, 94, 151, 156, 243, 283, 314, 382, 402, 438, 439, 450, 460, 482
- Mažvydas, Martynas 433, 510
- Medininkai 12, 14, 292, 333, 346, 358, 359, 361, 362–364, 420, 438, 440, 445, 460–462, 466, 473–475, 478, 481, 482, 487, 488, 495, 496, 517
- Medininkai (close to Vilnius) 292, 293
- Medininkai (Varniai) 327, 459, 479
- Mediterranean 27, 61, 282, 322
- Mediterranean Sea 25
- Meinhard, Bp at Ikškile 57, 58
- Mellitus, Abp of Canterbury 6
- Melno, peace of 365
- Memel (Klaipėda) 96, 333
- Memoria* (Commemoration of the dead) 8, 18, 21, 22, 301, 397, 411–413, 454, 464, 501, 503, 504, 508, 510, 516
- Menghu Timur, Khan of the Golden Horde 198
- Mengli Girej, Khan of Crimea 387
- Merkinė 344, 440, 443
- Merovingians 25
- Mesopotamia 265
- Meyendorff, John 170, 178, 180, 189
- Meyer, Leo 98
- Miadzvedzichy 474
- Michael Doukas 369
- Michael Küchenmeister, GM 339
- Michael Trestke, Bp of Kiev 426
- Mieszko I, ruler of Poland 286
- Mikalojus (Dargaitis) 409
- Mikalojus Astikaitis 409
- Mikalojus Gnat 509
- Mikalojus Iliničius 415
- Mikalojus Radvila 412, 479, 481
- Mikhail Glinsky 390, 397
- Mikhail, GD of Tver' 154, 168–170
- Mikolaj Ostotski, 509
- Mikołaj of Błonie 431
- Mikołaj of Gorzków, Bp of Vilnius 477
- Mikołaj of Wolborz 447
- Mikołaj Spyczemir 385
- Mikołaj Zadzyan 454
- Milan 79
- Milokhona, wife of Jonas Mažeika 412
- Mindaugas, K of Lithuania 2, 7, 55, 69, 73, 76, 77–108, 111–115, 117, 121, 149, 150, 247, 265, 267, 271, 329, 330, 335–337, 466, 519, 520
- Misael, Archimandrite 390
- Moldavia 175, 202, 203, 214, 215, 297, 377, 380, 382, 387, 402, 424
- Molėtai 459, 500
- Moncastro 387
- Mongol Empire 63
- Mongolia, Mongol 192, 201, 202, 210
- Mordvians 198
- Mordy 450
- Morocco 193
- Moscow (Grand Duchy of), Muscovy, Muscovites 11, 20, 154–157, 163, 165, 168–174, 177, 180, 241, 242, 251–255, 319, 321, 323, 325, 328, 367–370, 373–377, 380, 381, 389, 391, 393, 395, 401, 402, 421, 467, 515
- Moses of Brest 455
- Moszczye 455
- Motiejus 475
- Münster 86
- Muslim, Muslim lands 29, 61, 193, 209, 381, 401
- Mykolaitė, Elzbieta 475
- Mykolas Žygmantaitis 407, 414
- Mykolas, son of Petras Načkus Ginvilaitis 19
- Nalšia 114
- Nanker, Bp of Cracow 425
- Narbutt, Teodor 84
- Narev 151
- Neilos, Pt of Constantinople 172
- Nemenčinė 416, 436, 473, 509
- Nemunas (Neman) 21, 49, 50, 64, 65, 67, 70, 76, 96, 137, 232, 233, 242, 248, 344, 356, 369, 474, 505
- Neris (land) 91
- Neris 32, 70, 74, 76, 114, 222–224, 232, 305, 354, 513
- Nero, E 117
- Nesselmann, Georg H. Fesslmann
- Nestor 51, 185
- Netimer 48
- Nevēžis 263
- Niasvizh 474, 505
- Nicephorus Gregoras 166, 167
- Nicholas Banczko 446
- Nicholas Banczko, Vilnius burgher 446
- Nicholas Dorgievicz 409, 410
- Nicholas Hostikowicz 409, 410
- Nicholas I, P 308
- Nicholas IV, P 321
- Nicholas Labunski, Bp of Kamieniec 424
- Nicholas Melsak OFM 212, 213
- Nicholas Mychno Tolstikowicz, Vilnius burgher 478
- Nicholas of Chandzin 447
- Nicholas of Opava (in Silesia) 142
- Nicholas of Zhygmuntsishki 483
- Nicholas OFM, provincial 128
- Nicholas OP 122, 126, 128, 130, 133, 134, 213
- Nicholas Radvila, Bp of Medininkai 490
- Nicholas V, P 385, 411, 423
- Nicholas Wolborz 444
- Nicholas, Bp of Medininkai 423
- Nicholas, Bp of Riga 79
- Nicholas, Bp of Vilnius 19, 385, 424
- Nicholas, Bp of Vilnius 424
- Nicholas, Pr of Kroshin 508
- Nicholas, Pr of Shchuchin 511
- Nicholas, Pr of Shchuchin 511
- Nicholas, Pr of Varniany, 446

- Nicholas, St 224, 289, 396, 397, 427, 430, 466, 468, 469, 514
- Nicholas, Vilnius wojt 443
- Nicolaus Hostikowicz 409
- Nikopolis 380
- Nizhni-Novgorod 170
- Norkučiai (family) 436
- Norsemen, Norse 32, 33, 48, 50, 53
- North Sea 25
- Novgorod 51, 62, 72, 104, 109, 112, 115, 154, 187, 241, 244, 349, 389
- Novgorod Severskii 244
- Novgorodok (Naugardukas) 50, 65, 109–111, 113, 114, 149, 164, 237, 238, 387, 389, 400, 473, 474, 488, 502, 508
- Novosil' 170
- Obolensky, Dimitri 374
- Ochmański, J. 470, 472, 476, 488
- Ogitskii, Dimitri 178
- Oka 49
- Okyssykowa, Jadwiga 443
- Olaf, Swedish K 31
- Olekhno Rymshych (of Pinchin) 503, 507, 508
- Olelkovich, Semen, prince 424
- Olelkovich (family) 391
- Oleśnicki Zbigniew, Bp of Cracow 389, 422, 423, 428
- Olomouc 93, 116, 118, 194
- Ona, wife of Astikas 510
- Ona, wife of Jonas Jurginek 445
- Opizo, papal legate 87, 94
- Orsha 395
- Ösel (Saaremaa) 79, 80
- Ostremieczowicz, Jerzy 484
- Ostrogsky, Konstantin 396, 397
- Otto II, E 34
- Otto III, E 37, 38, 48
- Ottomans, Ottoman empire 367, 368, 369, 380, 383, 384, 386, 387
- Owsej Peter 507
- Pabaiskas 397, 465
- Pacevičius, Jurgis 465, 511
- Pagan 1–10, 13, 14, 18, 24, 25, 28, 30, 34, 35–42, 45, 48, 50–54, 56, 57–59, 61, 62, 64, 70, 78–81, 84, 85, 91, 92, 94, 95–100, 102, 104, 105, 107, 108, 112–114, 116–127, 129, 131, 132, 135–141, 143–149, 156, 158, 160, 161, 163, 167, 172–175, 177, 180–183, 185–187, 189, 191, 192, 197, 199, 204–214, 216–237, 239, 241, 243, 245–247, 249, 251–253, 255, 257, 258–278, 280, 284, 288, 297–302, 307–318, 327–337, 340, 342, 346, 350, 355–357, 361–367, 377, 379, 391, 392, 394, 401, 408, 413, 417, 433, 450, 457, 459, 463, 485, 486, 489, 491–493, 507, 509, 510, 514, 516, 519, 520, 521, 523
- Paknys, Mindaugas 466
- Panevėžys 4, 472
- Pantheon 306
- Parbus, prince 91
- Paris 96, 197
- Parish (network, density) 1–5, 8, 11, 12–14, 18–20, 219, 282, 285–288, 292, 295, 299, 304, 306, 337, 341, 358, 359, 388, 395, 396, 398–404, 406–408, 412–415, 417, 419, 422–425, 427–432, 434, 436, 441–446, 449–457, 459, 460, 462–467, 469–477, 480–491, 494, 495, 498, 499–505, 507–516, 521–524
- Paštuva 137
- Pasvalys 472
- Paszkievicz, Henryk 250
- Paul Alšėniškis, Bp of Vilnius 440, 479, 490, 498
- Paul II, P 394
- Paul Vladimiri 350, 352
- Paul von Rusdorf, GM 424
- Paul, Apostle 207, 358
- Paul, Bp of Kamieniec 423
- Paul, Grodno apothecary 443
- Paul, Vilnius pipe-welder 441, 449
- Paulinus 521
- Paulius of Przasnysz, Canon of Medininkai 438
- Pechenegs 41, 44
- Pera 200
- Perkūnas, god 270
- Persian empire, Persian 202, 386
- Persian Gulf 197
- Peter 450
- Peter and Paul, Ss 418, 420, 430
- Peter of Dusborg 65, 97, 184, 196, 331
- Peter of Turośń 450
- Peter of Wistycze, St 484
- Peter the Tailor 4369
- Peter Wolfram 350
- Peter Wormditt 351
- Peter, Apostle 358
- Peter, M of Kiev 154, 164, 165
- Petkaitis, Svyriškis 481
- Petras Načkus Ginvilaitis 19
- Petras Račkus Strocevičius (Raczko Strocewicz) 400
- Petras Thorneyczysz 508
- Petros Philargis OFM ⇒ Alexander V
- Philothoes, Pt of Constantinople 165, 167, 169–172, 187, 189
- Photius, M of Kiev 323
- Piccolomini, Aeneas Sylvius ⇒ Pius II
- Pieštėv 137
- Pilėnai 137
- Pinsk 114, 149, 150, 151, 289, 398, 488
- Piotr of Tczeboszewo 450
- Piotrkow 495
- Pius II, P 309, 385, 454
- Plikosova, Duchess 73
- Plock 12, 14, 15, 426, 438, 457, 482, 484
- Podlasie 399, 401, 409, 434, 460, 462, 473, 482, 514,
- Podlesie 151
- Podolia 158, 203, 215, 237–240, 380–382, 402, 406
- Poland, Polish, Poles 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 29, 34, 35, 37, 38, 44, 46, 47, 57, 67, 78, 81, 87, 92, 103, 106, 107, 119, 121, 139, 145, 148, 151, 152, 156, 159, 177, 192, 194, 200, 202–205, 209, 214, 219–221, 225, 229, 237–242,

- 250, 256–259, 262, 263, 266, 276, 278, 279, 281, 290, 291, 296, 298, 290, 314–316, 320–325, 327, 328, 336–338, 340–346, 348–352, 355, 356, 365–368, 370, 371, 373–377, 379, 381–385, 387, 389, 388, 393, 402, 404, 407, 419, 420, 422, 425, 426, 431, 434, 435, 438, 446, 452, 457, 459, 466, 470, 473, 474, 477, 478, 482, 487, 488, 492–497, 499, 501, 507–509, 515, 516, 519–523
- Polonka 400, 401, 422, 441, 463, 502, 503, 516, 522
- Polotsk 72, 81, 149, 150, 153, 164, 166, 335, 380, 388, 395, 401, 475, 488, 502, 515
- Poznań 93, 220, 279, 285, 348, 370, 426, 496, 522
- Prague 34, 38, 116, 142, 194, 199, 214, 236, 291, 300, 309, 313
- Přemysl Ottokar II, K of Bohemia 100, 108, 116, 133
- Priest(s) (Christian) *passim*
- Priest(s) (pagan) 181, 261–263, 267, 269–272, 277, 313, 314
- Pripet, River 150, 151
- Processions 18, 150, 285, 390, 397, 425–430, 432–434, 436, 457, 487, 499, 511, 522
- Prussia, Prussians, Prussian 4, 11, 27, 28, 35, 41, 52, 60, 62, 63, 65, 67, 71, 76, 88, 96, 106, 114, 118, 125, 128, 136, 138, 143, 184, 191, 195, 196, 197, 199, 200, 204, 205, 229, 244, 247, 248, 266, 270, 298, 303, 330, 332, 334, 335, 338–341, 353, 363, 382, 383, 385, 425, 428, 433, 501
- Pskov 62, 91, 349
- Ptolemy 25
- Pułusk 14
- Punia 369, 370, 416, 430, 436
- Qa'it Bay, Mamluk Sultan 386
- Raciąż 92, 338
- Radvila Astikaitis 410
- Radvila Mikalojus II, Mikalojaitis, chancellor 479
- Radvila, Albertas 461, 488, 490, 495, 496, 505
- Radvila, Jurgis 493
- Radvila, Mikalojus Mikalojaitis 397
- Radvila, Nicholas, Bp of Medininkai 479, 490, 491
- Radvilos [Radziwiłłs] 410, 415, 436, 465, 501
- Ragnit 232
- Raids (of booty) 26, 51, 55, 56, 62, 64, 71, 72, 95, 96, 103, 105, 106, 116–118, 121, 136, 138, 145, 149, 150, 168, 169, 186, 187, 202, 215, 216, 222, 225, 230, 258, 268, 270, 271, 289, 310, 333, 334, 353, 355, 368, 463
- Ramygala 4, 472, 485, 521
- Raseiniai 359
- Reaction (pagan) 36, 85, 107, 114, 180, 207, 232, 233, 277, 306, 313, 325, 333, 361, 362, 365, 382, 402
- Reformation (Catholic) 3, 20, 315, 483, 485,
- Reformation (Protestant), 5, 8, 18, 19, 470, 519, 520
- register (of 1626) 11, 250–255
- Riga 59, 60, 78, 81, 118, 121, 125, 128, 131, 200, 204, 205, 354, 421, 429, 495
- Rimbert, Abp of Bremen-Hamburg 32
- Rimvydas, Jonas 412
- Ringailė 297
- Riurikids (clan) 32–34, 49, 50, 63, 64, 70, 71, 159, 391
- Robert, Bp of Liege, Bishop 425
- Rokitnica (Kulesze Kościelne) 451
- Roman Daniilovich, D of Novgorodok 110–112
- Roman, M of Lithuania 165, 166, 170, 173
- Romanovichi 151, 152
- Rome 1, 3, 12, 15–18, 43, 96, 197, 211, 293, 366, 382, 384, 385, 389, 393, 394, 400, 402, 404, 406, 409, 411, 412, 414, 417–418, 421, 427, 435, 442, 446, 449, 457, 483, 486, 489, 490, 511, 519, 522, 524
- Romuald, St 38, 40
- Rowell, S. C. 126, 128, 163, 178, 182, 204
- Rudamina 473, 474
- Rudau 232
- Rurik 391
- Rus', Rus, Rus'ian 9, 10, 11, 13, 29, 32, 41, 44, 45, 46, 50, 51, 62, 64, 68, 70, 71, 78, 80, 81, 87, 88, 94, 108, 110, 111, 117, 131, 144, 121, 149–152, 153–155, 158, 159, 161, 163, 166, 170, 171, 173, 202, 209, 213, 222, 225, 227, 237, 242, 249, 250, 253, 255, 265, 287, 290, 297, 299, 307, 309, 315–317, 320, 324, 325, 344, 345, 349, 354, 363, 366–368, 373, 375, 377, 379, 380, 382, 388–390, 392, 393, 398, 400, 402, 450, 459, 460, 463, 466, 475, 488, 501, 502, 511, 519, 523
- Rusina, Olena 158
- Russia 63, 154, 155, 159, 162, 163, 174, 249, 250, 315, 402, 501
- Ruthenian 6, 7, 20, 81, 92, 93, 119, 129, 143, 146, 151, 153, 190, 203, 270, 387, 236, 258, 212, 225, 229, 388–391, 393, 395, 399, 401, 424, 448, 451, 467, 468, 470, 523
- Rymek 450
- Rzhev 157
- Sabius, Sabians 265
- Saczyńska-Kaliszúk, Monika 404, 407
- Salakas 440, 481, 522
- Šalčininkai 416, 436
- Šalčininkėliai 474, 505
- Salinwerder, treaty of 382
- Salome, Bl 94
- Sambian 27
- Samland 29

- Sapiega, Jonas 395, 401
 Saray 63, 198, 212
 Sarmatia 10
 Sarmatians 1
 Saulė 62, 332
 Saxony 40, 120, 135, 194, 195,
 'Schismatics' 94, 108, 114, 119, 211, 213, 322, 323, 327, 328, 371, 379, 390, 391, 392, 399, 400, 401, 402, 406, 456, 487, 502
 Scythia 10, 27
 Seeburg, now Grobiņa 31
 Semeliškės 440
 Semigalia, Semgallians 21, 51, 62–64, 75, 96
 Semkowicz, W. 498
 Seniškės 471
 Seraphin 452
 Sergius of Radonezh, St 188
 Ševčenko, Ihor 173
 Shchara 474
 Shvarno, D, son of Daniil Romanovich 109, 115
 Šiauliai 62, 64
 Šiedle 12, 13
 Siemowit I, D of Mazovia 92
 Siemowit III, D of Mazovia 243
 Sienka Wyszadowicz 507
 Sigismund of Luxembourg, E 66, 256, 346
 Sigismund the Old, K of Poland and GD of Lithuania 395
 Simeon I, Pt of Trebizond 390
 Sinderamus OP 89
 Siret 213, 214, 216, 240
 Sirtautaitis, Pacas 448, 478
 Širvintos 516
 Sixtus IV, P 390, 394
 Skalvia 184
 Skibniew 502
 Skilandzienė, Kotryna Jurgaitė 466
 Skirgaila, D of Trakai 243–245, 257, 259, 317, 318, 321, 463
 Skolimov 452
 Slav, Slavs, Slavic 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 38, 50, 52, 55–57, 69–71, 121, 145, 156, 230, 271, 201, 329, 349, 365, 519
 Slavic, Slavonic 2, 5, 21, 24, 64–69, 158, 159, 179, 189, 190, 263, 264, 267, 284, 391, 502, 509
 Slavs, Polabian 52, 55, 57, 365
 Sławomierz 14
 Slonim 111, 473, 488
 Slovakia 24
 Smolensk 78, 156, 157, 169, 170, 325, 377, 380, 381, 395, 400, 488
 Smotrych 239
Societas Fratrum peregrinantium propter Christum ⇒ Friars Pilgrim
 Sofia Holszańska, Q of Poland 385, 388, 406, 418, 466, 468
 Sofia, wife of Basil I 368–370, 374, 381
 Sokołów Podlaski 399
 Soldaia 198
 Soltan, Aleksandrer 412
 Spain 53, 197
 Spiridon 390, 391
 Stačkus, Jonas 412
 Stigel, Vincentius, Vilnius goldsmith 15
 Stakauskas, Juozapas 98, 100
 Stalin, Iosif, mass murderer and tyrant 11
 Stanislaus de Wilna named Iwan 447
 Stanislaus of Skrobovo 508
 Stanisław Broda 450
 Stanisław Ciołek, Bp of Poznań 426
 Stanisław Dambrovka of Vilnius 514
 Stanisław de Gambicze 447
 Stanisław Drodzowski, notary 446
 Stanisław Dworek 441
 Stanisław Harnazelyg, organ-maker 440
 Stanisław II (z Pawłowic), Bp of Płock 426
 Stanisław Komorowski, notary 441, 498
 Stanisław of Nieczęcy 399
 Stanisław of Ruda 456
 Stanisław of Skarbomierz 492
 Stanisław of Verkiai 445, 449
 Stanisław Słanczanka, Pr of Vilnius 446
 Stanisław Stawski, Bp of Lutsk 452, 453, 483
 Stanisław Wodyński, notary 476
 Stanisław, D of Mazovia 482
 Stanisław, Goštautas' chaplain, 454
 Stanisław, Pr at Rokitnica 451
 Stanisław, Pr of Drohiczyn 452
 Stanisław, Pr of Robytnycze 455
 Stanisław, Ruda wojt 456
 Stanisław, St Bp of Cracow 94, 278, 279, 285, 418, 419, 448, 461, 464, 515, 523
 Stanisław, Vilnius Canon 511
 Stanisław-Hryńko, Ruthenian 399
 Stanislovas Hlebvavičius, Polotsk lieutenant 400, 401, 502
 Stanislovas Sudivojaitis 420, 492
 Stanko Voyzechowicz 447
 Staraja Ladoga 33
 Staw 455
 Stephen Grube, Bp of Riga 421
 Stephen, St 465
 Strėva 232, 238
 Strocevičius, Račkus Petras 463, 502
 Strykowski, Maciej 314, 336, 359
 Strzyszewo 502
 Subotniki 474, 505
 Sudimantas 15
 Sudivojus Valmantaitis (*Sandwogius*) 413
 supplication(s) 3, 10, 11, 20, 403–436, 439, 442, 455, 457, 486, 489, 502, 511, 522, 524
 Survilishki 474, 491, 505
 Suviekas 471, 500
 Suzdal' 78, 106
 Svar 253, 254
 Švenčionys 440, 465
 Šventėzeris 305
 Sviatoslaj 305
 Sviatoslav, D of Smolensk 169

- Švitrigaila, GD of
Lithuania 308, 363,
376, 383, 389, 424
- Svyriškis 501
- Svyriškis (Šwirski), D 414
- Svyriškis, Andriejus 457,
461
- Swanson, R. N. 418
- Sweden, Swedish 31, 55,
58, 70
- Syncretism 314, 491, 521
- Tabris (in Persia) 198
- Tacitus 22, 23, 26
- Tagino, Abp of Magde-
burg 39
- Taliatas, Jonas 481
- Taliatas, Jurgis 463
- Tamerlane (Temür) 158
- Tana 212
- Tannenberg 327, 339,
341, 367, 368, 374, 383,
- Tarnowski of Chelm 424
- Tartary 198, 199, 480
- Tartu (Dopart) 80, 106
- Tatar, Tatars 3, 63, 64,
78, 87, 88, 95, 103,
104–106, 108, 111,
113, 117, 140, 143, 46,
151–158, 169, 174, 198,
199, 203, 212, 238–242,
262, 284, 290, 386, 373,
377, 379–385, 387, 397,
398, 401, 402, 413, 417,
418, 420, 462, 487
- Tatars see also Golden
Horde
- Tauragė 433
- Tauragnai 459
- Tautvilas 78, 79, 81, 106,
107, 335
- Temchin, Sergey (Sergejus
Temčinas) 265
- Temple(s) (pagan) 84,
263, 267, 268–277, 309,
310, 313, 355, 524
- Theoderic, K of the Ostro-
goths 26
- Theodorik Ticha, Pr of
Oboltsy 306
- Theodosius II, Pt of Trnovo
165
- Theognostos, M of Kiev
160, 165
- Theophilus, M of Lithuania
164, 165, 168, 173
- Thietmar of Merseburg
41, 44, 47
- Thomas 451
- Thomas Aquinas, St 427
- Timofey of Pskov ⇒
Daumantas
- Timur Kotluk, Khan of the
Golden Horde 381
- Tokhta, Khan of the Gold-
en Horde 198
- Tokhtamysh, Khan of the
Golden Horde 242,
253, 380, 381, 401
- Tolochko, Ihor 110
- Tolstikowicz, Mychno 478
- Topiczewo James (Jakub)
450
- Toporov, Vladimir 264
- Toropets 154, 157
- Toruń 194, 215, 216, 339,
342, 428
- Toruń, peace of 339
- Toulouse 192
- Traby 474, 505
- Trade (in slaves) 29, 30,
282, 373, 501
- Traidenis, GD of Lithuania
103, 116–118, 150, 222
- Trajan, E 22
- Trakai 229, 241, 245–247,
275, 292, 293, 344,
346, 362, 392, 402, 407,
408, 411, 414, 433, 440,
467, 473, 475, 488, 498,
500, 505, 508
- Trakeliai 412
- Trebizond 198, 200
- Treniota, GD of Lithuania
106, 107, 114
- Trzciana 468
- Tsybulska, Dorota 481
- Turkish 203, 385
- Turov 149, 150, 151, 164,
166, 488
- Tver', Tverite 154, 156,
160, 165, 169, 170, 172,
218, 253, 381, 390
- Tykocin 16, 388, 454, 475
- Tyniec 293
- Ugrovska 115
- Ukmergė 500, 516
- Ukraine, Ukrainians 71,
157, 158, 159
- Ul'ianovskii, V. I. 390
- Ulrich of Adlenchovitze,
Mrt 204, 205, 206, 208
- Ulrich Richental 348
- Ulrich von Jungingen,
GM 368
- Upninkai 412
- Urban IV, P 107, 108, 425
- Urban VI, P 273, 274, 279,
282, 337, 460, 461
- Ushakovo 467
- Usielub, 474, 505
- Uzbek, Khan of the Golden
Horde 154, 198
- Užupis 397
- Vaclav of Hradec Kralove
(Bohemia) 285
- Vaidotas, D 233
- Vaidutis, Prince 236
- Vaiškavičius, Stanislovas
476
- Vaišvilkas (Vaišelga,
Voishelk), GD of Lithu-
ania 64, 108–117, 174
- Valachia 212, 213, 240,
307, 377
- Valmantaitis, Jonas-Jau-
nius 408, 412, 413
- Vandžiogala 268, 269
- Varangians 49
- Varniai 327, 358, 359,
461, 502
- Varniany 440, 472
- Vasilko Romanovich, D of
Volyn' 115, 117
- Veliuona 137, 356, 359,
364, 465
- Verkholantsev, Julia 20
- Verkiai 440, 459
- Vicina 203
- Viduklė 359
- Viking, Scandinavian 30,
49, 50, 51, 55, 70, 154,
246
- Vikul, Tatiana 110
- Vilgaila, D 73
- Vilnia (Vilnelė) 222, 223,
277, 397, 513
- Vilnius 3, 6, 7, 8, 10–16,
18, 19, 83, 84, 122, 124,
125, 131, 133–136, 148,
160, 175, 177, 180, 184,
202, 204, 206, 208–210,
213–227, 231, 232, 235,
244, 245, 256, 257,
261–263, 267, 272–274,
276–289, 292–295, 299–
303, 305, 311, 320, 321,
337, 345, 353, 354, 363,
365, 372, 382–385, 388,
389, 391–402, 407–409,
411–424, 426–449, 452,
453, 455, 457, 459–467,
470, 472–482, 484–490,
493–498, 500–503, 509,
511–514, 516, 517, 520,
522, 523
- Visitation, Vilnius (1522)
8, 18, 429, 474, 481,
488, 494–500, 522, 523

- Visitation, Žemaitija (1579) 19, 408
 Vistula 21, 22, 26, 28, 35
 Vitebsk 153, 160, 244, 291, 321, 473, 488
 Vladimir Andreevich, D of Serpukhov 253–255
 Vladimir, D of Kiev 43, 45–48
 Vladimir, ruler of Bulgaria 112
 Vladimir-in-Volyn' 488
 Vladimir-on- Kliaz'ma 154, 162, 376
 Voislav, Mrt 195, 196
 Volga 32, 49, 63, 154, 157
 Volkhov 32
 Volkovysk 111, 440, 473, 488
 Volyn', Volynian 72, 110, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 139, 151, 152, 156, 237, 238, 325, 460
 Vorskla 338, 382, 402, 417
 Vygantas (Alexander), D of Kernavė 296
 Vykintas, D 78
 Vytautas (Alexander), GD of Lithuania 7, 66, 157, 233–236, 241, 243, 245–248, 268, 282, 284, 285, 287, 288, 292, 293, 296–298, 301–303, 308–311, 313, 315, 317–319, 322, 323, 326, 328, 335, 337–339, 344, 346, 347, 349, 353–356, 358, 360–364, 366, 368–373, 375–377, 379–384, 386, 388, 394, 401, 402, 406, 408, 417, 420, 423, 460, 462, 501, 520
 Vytenis, GD of Lithuania 118, 136, 153, 164, 184, 195, 205, 223, 228, 275
 Waldemar II, K of Denmark 62
 Warband(s) 61, 64, 68–72, 75
 Wawrzyniec of Węgrow 409, 410
 Wenden (Cēsis) 106
 Werner von Orseln, GM 132
 Wibert 42
 Wieluń 318
 Wigand of Marburg 184
 William de Prato, Abp of Beijing 212
 William IV, Count of Holland 138
 William of Rubruk OFM 87
 William, Austrian Prince 256
 Wilsnack 322
 Winrich von Kniprode, GM 148, 243
 Wit, Bp of Lithuania 92, 93
 Władysław (Ladislav), St 278, 279,
 Władysław I (Łokietek), King of Poland 151
 Władysław II = Jogaila
 Władysław III, K of Poland 384, 388
 Władysław, K of Hungary 387
 Wojciech Kostka Skibniewski, Drohiczyn under-judge 477
 Wolborz, Nicholas 444
 Wolfram von Nellenburg, *Deutschmeister* of OT 142
 Wrocław (Breslau) 93, 142, 194, 199, 214, 425, 470
 Wulfstan, Anglo-Saxon merchant 27, 28, 30
 Yaroslav the Wise, D of Rus' 50
 Yatvingians 21, 50, 51, 63, 78, 92, 95, 96, 225, 331
 Yuliana of Tver', wife of GD Algirdas 11, 160, 165, 218, 241, 251, 253
 Yurii Danilovich, GD of Moscow 154
 Yury Surozhich, 509
 Zabiela, Gintautas 225
 Zabrzezinsky, Jan Janowic, marshal 15
 Zaccharia Ferreri = Ferreri
 Zarasai 471
 Żaslai 19
 Zawisza, Drohiczyn judge 476
 Žeimena 292
 Žeimiai 473
 Zelva 476, 513
 Žemaitija, Žemaitijans (Samogitians) 1, 2, 19, 62, 64, 66, 70, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 81, 83, 96, 98, 105, 106, 131, 132, 133, 135, 136, 232, 245, 247, 260, 262, 263, 269, 270, 298, 311, 325, 327–366, 370, 377, 408, 416, 417, 428, 432, 436, 459, 465, 466, 470, 477–479, 489, 490, 496, 498, 502, 510
 Zhaludok 476
 Zhibort Khotko of Skrabovo 508, 509
 Zhygmunt'shki 416, 436, 474, 505
 Žiežmariai 472, 473, 481
 Živindubas 73
 Zofia Korczewska 401
 Zofija, wife of Jan Zabrzeziński 469
 Zuckerman, Constantin 165
 Žukas, Steponas' son-in-law 508
 Žygmantas 388
 Žygmantas Kęstutaitis, GD of Lithuania 304, 324, 383, 424