

# The Grand Duchy of Lithuania vis-à-vis Muscovy. *Smuta*, or the Time of Troubles\*

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Since the signing of the Union of Lublin in 1569, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Crown of Poland had a common ruler, whose successors were to be elected together, and one Sejm. The rights and duties of the ruler were derived from both customary (unwritten) and written law: from privileges, from the *Henrician Articles* and *Pacta conventa* passed by the Electoral Sejm in 1573, the constitution and the *Statute of Lithuania* approved by Sigismund Vasa in 1588. All of these, directly and indirectly, also determined the powers of the Sejm.

Territories, offices, the treasury and the army remained separate, under the rule of either the Crown or Lithuania. The unification of the legal system of the Commonwealth, announced in the 1569 Sejm constitution, failed. Each of its states could, albeit to a limited extent, conduct foreign policy. The union charter allowed them to send envoys, on the proviso that if it related to important matters, this had to be done “with joint consent and advice”. The latter was to ensure unity of action, but also to prevent the king, interacting with only one state of the Commonwealth, from determining the stance of the other. It is a separate matter that the provision was flawed, as it did not specify what belonged to matters of importance, and who would decide whether to send an envoy, or how. The *Henrician Articles* admittedly stipulated that envoys were to be sent with the knowledge and consent of the Senate by the king; furthermore, it also stipulated that the two institutions, the king and the Senate, could not decide on matters reserved for the Sejm, namely, among other things, declaring war and making peace. In the case of the envoys, however, this apparently meant those representing the king and the

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two states of the Commonwealth. In addition, even if the Sejm had any direct control, it was sporadic. In turn, what was important for the attitude of the nobility to royal decisions was not the letter of the law, but the degree to which they were in line with the interests, as they understood it, of the Commonwealth, or only their own state, Lithuania or the Crown. Evidence of this can be seen in the silence of the Sejm in 1609 regarding Sigismund III's preparations to strike at Muscovy, and the violent opposition in 1646 to Władysław Vasa's plan for war with Turkey. At the same time, during the Polish-Swedish War of 1625–1629, there were truces that were limited to the territory of one country only. Especially the truce concluded by the Grand Duchy on 19 January 1627 (at Baldenmojza) echoed loudly in the Crown. At that time Sigismund III accused the Lithuanians of disobedience (because they broke his repeated prohibitions), the magnates and the Crown nobility of violating the union (because the decision to suspend actions was made by the senators who came to the Vilnius dietine). Neither the king nor the Crown nobility declared the truce null and void. In other words, they did not challenge the Lithuanians' right to conclude it. The Crown made separate treaties with the Swedes in 1627 and 1628, except that it had royal approval.

The conclusion of a truce in the era of *regnum* by one of the states of the Commonwealth was possible when it was fighting in a separate territory; in the case of the aforementioned Polish-Swedish war – when the Grand Duchy's troops were fighting in Livonia and the Lithuanian borderlands, the Crown's were in Prussia and Greater Poland. On the other hand, during the *interregnum*, Lithuania, whether raising objections from the Crown or not, turned to outside states, as during the first interregnums, when it entered into talks with the tsar over his (or the tsarvich's) election to the Polish throne. In 1632 and 1648, meanwhile, it sent envoys to Muscovy and to the Swedish governor of Livonia, urging them to observe the truces.

In summary, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as a state, had some freedom of action vested in a sovereign state. It did not have it during the period of *Smuta*, because both states of the Commonwealth fought in a single territory, and above all, because the King was periodically in camp. Therefore it is impossible to speak of the contemporary attitude of the Lithuanian state toward Muscovy. Only the attitude of the society may be addressed, and only the indirect influence on the king's decisions, by way of opinions expressed by the senators and by the nobility.

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From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the second decade of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the attitude of the Grand Duchy's nobility toward Muscovy, or more precisely, toward relations with it, changed twice. The first period lasted until the beginning of the reign of Vasily Shuisky (1606–1610). The attitude toward Muscovy was first shaped by the memory of defeats suffered since the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The sense of inability to oppose the neighbour with one's own forces was strengthened by the decisions of Sigismund Augustus, which preceded or even forced the conclusion of the Union of Lublin. I mean here the incorporation of almost a third of the territory of the Grand Duchy, Volhynia, Kiev and Podlachia, into the Crown. It does not seem that the mood changed fundamentally after the union, or even after the victory of the combined Polish-Lithuanian forces, which was crowned by the Treaty of Yam-Zapolsky (1582), since it was overshadowed by the awareness of the hardships of the campaign, the enormity of the losses and, above all, the impossibility of capturing Pskov. As a result, the victory was treated as an episode. It should be added that even more than a quarter of a century later, Piotr Palczowski, author of *Wyprawy Króla Jęgości* [His Majesty's quest], published in Vilnius, thought it necessary to explain that defeating Muscovy again was possible, that 'King Stefan showed us that this devil was not as black as he was painted to be'. Meanwhile, the Grand Duchy wanted to ensure its security through peace, not war. This was demonstrated by the attempts made during the interregna to reach an agreement with first Ivan the Terrible, then Fyodor, on their election to the Polish throne, i.e. a personal union, and to support their candidacies in the elections. As a side note, it can be mentioned that in 1587, when there was a split among the mighty and nobles of the Crown gathered for the election, when some chose the Swedish heir to the throne Sigismund Vasa as king (19 August), while others chose Maximilian III, Archduke of Austria (22 August), the Lithuanians proposed to annul the decisions, add tsar Fyodor to the prince and archduke and choose the ruler by a draw of lots: 'Envoys of the Council of Lords of Lithuania [...] have submitted [...] a motion for the three, the Swede, the Muscovite and the Austrian, to be chosen by a draw of lots'.<sup>1</sup> As for the projects for the conclusion of a real union, the matter is complicated by the fact that their author or authors have not been identified. We may only suspect that at least the Voivode of Vilnius Voivodeship Krzysztof Radziwiłł 'Piorun', Chancellor of the Crown Jan Zamoyski and Lew Sapieha were privy to them. It is not known whether the attitude of the Lithuanians influenced Sigismund III's decision to present the proposal to Muscovy. In any case, the first one was taken by envoys in 1590 (Lithuanian Deputy Chancellor Gabriel Wojna, Lithuanian

1 *Diariusze sejmowe r. 1587: sejmy konwokacyjny i elekcyjny* [Sejm diaries for 1587: convocational and electoral sejms], publ. A. Sokołowski (Cracow: 1887), p. 149. All quotations in English in this text are translated from Polish editions.

Great Clerk Maciej Wojna, Voivode of the Podlasie Voivodeship Stanisław Radziwiński), and the second one in 1600 (Lew Sapieha, the Lithuanian Great Clerk Elias Pielgrzymowski, the Warsaw castellan Stanisław Warszycki). In both cases, the instructions given to the envoys recommended bringing the two states and societies closer together. The first proposed, among other things, unrestricted resettlement of people.<sup>2</sup> The second spoke of a future (not equal) unification of states under the sceptre of a common ruler.<sup>3</sup> The Godunovs' successor would be the ruler of the Commonwealth, and if he died first, the choice of the successor would be made by the nobility and Muscovy deputies only. What is more, they were to choose from among princes, and only in their absence, to return the crown to the tsar. The union envisaged separate administrations and territories, as well as, right from the time of signing, freedom of movement of people and cooperation in foreign and defence policies.

Undoubtedly, the acceptance of the proposal by the Muscovite side would have had an inestimable significance for the balance of power in Europe, for the international and internal situation of both states, including their political systems. For the Commonwealth, it would have meant transforming it into a hereditary kingdom of first the Vasas, then the rulers of Muscovy. This proposal, however, was rejected by Muscovy. The envoys did not even manage to conclude peace, but only extended the truce for twenty years, until 1622. The tsar approved it in Moscow on 11 March 1601; the king did so in Vilnius on 17 January 1602.<sup>4</sup> As a side note, the

- 2 M. Szczerbatow, *Istoriija rossijskaja* [Russian history], vol. 6, part 2 (Petersburg: 1790), pp. 227–237; B. Floria, *Russkoje–polskije odnoszenija i baltijski wopros w konce XII–nacziale XIII w.* [Russian–Polish relations and the Baltic question in the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Moscow: 1973). Recently: A. Baliulis, “Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės ir Maskvos valstybės diplomatiniai santykiai XVI a. pabaigoje (Lietuvos Metrikos 594 apžvalga)” [Diplomatic relations between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the State of Moscow at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (review of Lithuanian Metrika 594)] in: *Lituanistica*, Vilnius 2002, no. 3, pp. 3–32. It should be noted, however, that the author discusses the relations of the Commonwealth, and not of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, with Muscovy.
- 3 Library of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow (hereinafter: BPAU–PAN Kr.), MS 1050, pp. 1–44. Journal of Lew Sapieha's diplomatic mission to tsar Boris Godunov. 5.10–9.12.1600; K. Tyszkowski, *Poselstwo Lwa Sapiehy w Moskwie 1600 r.* [Lew Sapieha's diplomatic mission in Moscow in 1600] (Lviv: 1927), p. 37. E. Pielgrzymowski's account has been recently published in Polish and Lithuanian: E. Pilgrimovijus, *Didžioji Leono Sapiegos pasiuntinybė i Moskvą* [The grand envoy of Leo Sapieha to Moscow], parengė J. Kiaupienė (Vilnius: 2002).
- 4 Treaty text: *Sbornik imperatorskogo russkogo istoriczeskogo obszczestwa* [Collection of the imperial Russian historical society], vol. 137 (Moscow: 1912), pp. 58–73; Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. The Radziwiłł Archives (hereinafter: AR, s. I, no. 903: The truce between tsar Boris Ivanovich and King Sigismund III, 1601; Nacionalnaja Biblioteka Rossii, Petersburg, Otdel Rukopisiej. Polskije awtografiy iz sobranija P.P. Duborowskogo (hereinafter: Awt.) 152, f. 66–71. On the treaty with Muscovy, 5–20.01.1602, Vilnius.

king reserved that the treaty did not apply to him as ruler of Sweden, dethroned at the time, but fighting to regain the throne.

Also, the armed conflict between the Commonwealth and Sweden broke out in 1600 and, contrary to hopes of an easy victory, became an increasing burden, especially for Lithuania. Although the military activities took place outside its borders, in Livonia, this did not change the need to pay the army and, above all, the unruly soldiers staying in the Grand Duchy or marching through it caused a significant reduction in internal security. As a result, news, which at the very least threatened to exacerbate relations with Muscovy, caused unrest. We are talking about Sigismund III's letter of February 1604, in which he wrote that a man claiming to be Dmitry, son of Ivan the Terrible, was staying in the Commonwealth, and asked the senators what should be done in this situation.<sup>5</sup> In response, the starost of Samogitia Jan Karol Chodkiewicz warned the king against decisions that would cause Muscovy to consider the truce broken:

Idzie o przymierze, które wzruszone, nigdy pociesz-  
nego efektu nie odniosło.

This is about an alliance that, once shaken, will  
never have the right effect.<sup>6</sup>

Vilnius voivode Mikołaj Krzysztof 'the Orphan' Radziwiłł wrote to his cousin, Lithuanian cup-bearer Janusz Radziwiłł, expressing the opinion that the priority was to first end the war with Sweden:

Odprawić by pierwaj Inflanty, dopiero o Moskwie  
pomyśleć.

We should first deal with Livonia, and only then  
think about Muscovy.<sup>7</sup>

The cup-bearer, referring to the preparations taken up by the Sandomierz voivode Jerzy Mniszech to provide military support to Dmitry in his struggle for the Muscovite throne, reflected that if the troops crossed the border, it would have disastrous consequences:

Rzeczy takie [...] nic mogą być żadną miarą, jeno,  
ze złym, a bodaj i nie ze zgubą Ojczyzny.

Such things [...] cannot possibly bring any good,  
only bad, possibly the doom of the Motherland.<sup>8</sup>

Lew Sapieha did not mince any words; he claimed that even Dmitry's success would have fateful consequences:

5 Recently: A. Andrusiewicz, *Dzieje wielkiej smuty* [History of the Time of Troubles] (Katowice: 1999). This work contains abundant literature.

6 BPAU-PAN Kr. MS 931, f. 44. Jan Karol Chodkiewicz to Sigismund III, 19.03.1604, Riga.

7 *Archiwum Domu Radziwiłłów* [The Radziwiłł Family Archives], publ. A. Sokołowski (Cracow: 1885), p. 51: Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł 'the Orphan' to Janusz Radziwiłł, 7.03.1604, Nieśwież.

8 AR, s. IV, no. 172: Janusz Radziwiłł to Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł 'the Orphan', 14.09.1604, Stara Wieś.

Lubo mu się poszczęści, albo nie, jednakże źle  
Ojczyźnie i nam uczyni.

Whether he succeeds or not, it will bring harm to  
us and to the Motherland.<sup>9</sup>

It is a separate issue whether Janusz Radziwiłł and Lew Sapieha considered the Grand Duchy or the entire Commonwealth to be their Motherland. During the 1605 Sejm, the support of Dmitry was opposed by the Bishop of Vilnius Abraham Wojna and the Grand Marshal of Lithuania Krzysztof Dorohostajski. The latter pointed out that the king could not violate the treaty of truce, as he had sworn it not only on his own behalf, but also on behalf of the entire nation:

Przyśiągłeś Wasza Królewska Mość na pokój z oso-  
by swej, przysiągłeś za nas senatory, przysiągłeś i za  
stan rycerski...

You have sworn the peace, Your Majesty, in your  
own name, you have sworn in our, the senators'  
name, and you have sworn in the name of the  
knighthood...<sup>10</sup>

Anyway, like most Lithuanians, he called for taking care of Livonia, where the army, not receiving its pay, did not want to fight.

The instructions to the Sejm (20 January – 3 March 1605) would have provided a more complete knowledge of the position of the nobility as a whole. From the instructions of the Slonim dietine, known in several copies, it appears that it was agreed to discuss the problem created by Dmitry's presence, but not to violate the truce: 'Keeping in mind... the oath of His Majesty the King and the peace of the Commonwealth.'<sup>11</sup> We might assume that the tone of other instructions was similar.

In the fall of 1604, Dmitry, finally supported by Sigismund III, albeit unofficially, crossed the borders of Muscovy. Following some initial victories, he was defeated in Dobrynich (31 January 1605), which heightened fears of reprisals in Lithuania. As a result, the Vilnius Convocation, which met in early May 1605, passed a resolution because of the 'danger from Muscovy's borders' to hold a presentation on 8 September to check the nobility's combat readiness, which could take the form of a mass mobilization.<sup>12</sup> Yet the situation in Muscovy changed unexpectedly. Boris Godunov died, his son and successor Fyodor was killed, and Dmitry was appointed to the throne (triumphal entry into Moscow on 30 June, coronation on 31 July 1605). As a result, Lew Sapieha, having forgotten his predications, became an advocate of strengthening the best relations with the tsar. In the spring of 1606, he recalled that it was at his fervent insistence that the king sent

9 AR, s. V, no. 13588: Lew Sapieha to Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł, 10.09.1604, Ikażn.

10 *Russkaja istoričeskaja biblioteka* [Russian historical library], vol. 1 (Petersburg: 1872), p. 6: Votum at the Sejm. Krzysztof Dorohostajski, 31.01.1605.

11 BPAU– PAN Kr. MS 365, f. 14: Slonim instruction given to the envoys to Sejm: Jan Mielezka and Mikołaj Tryzna, 9.12, Dziewiątkowice.

12 Library of the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław, MS 2284, f. 137.

his chamberlain Krasowski to Moscow with gifts to celebrate the wedding of Dmitry and Maryna Mniszech.<sup>13</sup> The gifts were delivered by the great envoys of the king, the Crown and the Grand Duchy, castellan of Małogoszcz Mikołaj Oleśnicki and the starost of Wieliz Aleksander Gosiewski.<sup>14</sup>

The main task of the envoys was to discuss once again the establishment of something like a federation, or even an alliance between the Commonwealth and Muscovy. Unlike in 1600, there was no longer any mention of uniting the two states under the sceptre of a single ruler, but only, among other things, of a common foreign policy and freedom of movement of the people. As chance had it, however, when the talks began (25 May 1606), an uprising broke out in Moscow and Dmitry was killed (26/27 May 1606). Vasily Shuisky, who was hostile to the Commonwealth, ascended to the throne (1606–1610) and imprisoned Maryna, the envoys and the Poles who were in the capital (some, however, were killed earlier). This stirred up various reactions in the Commonwealth, where a movement that ended up in the Zebrzydowski's Rebellion [*rokosz Zebrzydowskiego*] was just gaining momentum. The rebellious camp believed that this was God's punishment for the hubris that Dmitry showed to the Polish envoys, and thus to the king himself and the entire noble estate.<sup>15</sup> The fear of reprisals was once again rekindled in Lithuania and in the borderlands between the Crown and Muscovy. As a result, the nobles of Minsk and Vitebsk, as well as probably others, certainly thought that going to the rebellion convention [*zjazd rokoszowy*] was impossible. The Vitebsk dietine ordered the envoys to ask that a plan be devised to protect the border.<sup>16</sup> It also ordered the deputies sent to the Sejm (7 March – 18 April 1606) to ask the king to strive for the liberation of the Poles still imprisoned in Moscow, but to do so via diplomatic measures, 'through envoys'.<sup>17</sup>

The beginning of the second period falls in the first months of Vasily Shuisky's reign. The attitude began to shift in Lithuania probably already in late autumn 1606, and this process was initiated by the petty nobility, for whom the perceived

13 Naruszewicz Records (hereinafter: TN), vol. 101, no. 22: Lew Sapieha to Mikołaj Oleśnicki, 06.04.1606.

14 Princes Czartoryski Library in Cracow (hereinafter: Czart.), MS 342, no. 43: Diariusz dziejów moskiewskich i legacji... Mikołaja Oleśnickiego... Aleksandra Korwina Gosiewskiego... spisany w roku 1606 w Moskwie [Diary of the Muscovite events and of the delegation [...] of Mikołaj Oleśnicki [...] Aleksander Korwin Gosiewski [...] written in the year 1606 in Moscow].

15 AR, s. V, no. 15367: Jan Sulkowicz to Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł 'the Orphan'. 31.08.1606 from Lenarce n. Sandomierz.

16 AR, s. II, no. 500: Minsk instruction given to nine envoys to the rebellion convention, 17.08.1606, Minsk, Czart, MS 2 244, no 26: Information to the envoys: Ostafiej Kurcz and Adam Kos, sent to the main rebellion convention near Sandomierz, 21.07.1606, Vitebsk.

17 TN, vol. 103, no. 27: Vitebsk instruction given to the envoys to Sejm: Mikołaj Hlebowicz and Aleksander Sapieha, 26.03.1607, Vitebsk.

weakness of the Muscovite state became the impetus for plundering expeditions. We may suspect there were many of these, as they triggered the king to intervene. In March 1607 he issued a universal to voivodes, starosts and the nobility of borderland regions, in which he ordered them to take counteraction.<sup>18</sup> It seems unlikely that any attempts were taken to carry out the king's order. In any case, the expeditions deep into Muscovy intensified, especially when, in the summer of 1607, another Dmitry appeared. It was proclaimed he was once again miraculously saved, but in reality he was a Polish impostor who only compounded the chaos.

It was probably the same factor, that is the weakness of the Muscovy state, that affected the attitude of the Lithuanian magnates. None, admittedly, took off for Moscow without authorisation. A partial exception was the Usvyaty starost Jan Piotr Sapieha, but he was not so much a magnate, as a member of a magnate family. If Lew Sapieha condemned him for this, it is not known. Only his fear of a possible failure's aftermath can be deduced from his letter dated 11 August 1608:

Jeśliby się tam naszym noga powinęła [...] obawiać się potrzeba, by ten nieprzyjaciel rozdrażniony nie chciał na nas ubezpieczonych mścić się krzywdy swej.

If we trip up over there [...] I fear this irritated enemy might want to avenge its grievance on us, the insured.<sup>19</sup>

The insurance mentioned was the truce concluded with Vasily Shuisky, which was to remain in force for three years and eleven months from 20 July 1608.

There is nothing to corroborate the thesis that Sigismund's preparations for war were widely opposed in Lithuania in 1608. Telling in this context is the letter of Krzysztof Radziwiłł to his half-brother Janusz, and more precisely, a calmly delivered information that Sigismund III has ordered a military draft in order to attack Muscovy following an alliance with the Swedish king Charles IX, and to put his son Władysław on the throne by force.<sup>20</sup> The senators of the Grand Duchy are not known to have protested against this in 1609, during or after the Senate's deliberation, which, though not unanimously, authorised the king to launch the action. When the king set off for Smolensk, he was accompanied by, among others, Krzysztof Dorohostajski, Lew Sapieha, Aleksander Gosiewski, who was slowly rising in the social hierarchy, and the Lithuanian clerk Janusz Skumin Tyszkiewicz. In time they would be joined by Great Hetman of Lithuania Jan Karol Chodkiewicz. The latter, however, prompted some disapproving comments. As Hieronim Chodkiewicz wrote in a letter to Jan Karol,

18 BPAU–PAN Kr. MS 344, 97 Sigismund III to Lew Sapieha, 14.03.1607, Cracow.

19 AR. s. V, no. 13855: Lew Sapieha to Janusz Radziwiłł, 06.08.1608, Cracow.

20 AR, s. IV, no. 298: Krzysztof Radziwiłł to Janusz Radziwiłł. 19.11.1608, Vizuny.

mów uszczypliwych i animuszów tak namnożyło od Waszmości [...] odwróconych, że tego pełna Litwa i Polska.

[...] Lithuania and Poland are buzzing with harsh words and animosities of those who have turned against you.<sup>21</sup>

What provoked the criticism was not so much the decision itself, but rather its inconsistency with the Hetman's previously undisguised reluctance to meddle in Muscovite affairs. Janusz Radziwiłł remained a steadfast opponent of the war. In 1611 he agreed with all those who 'did not contribute to this war neither with their advice, nor with their money'.<sup>22</sup>

The king's undeniable success in capturing Smolensk (13 June 1611) showed that, according to the Lithuanians, the purpose of the war was to regain the territories lost in the previous century, and the seizure of the fortress was its achievement. For from then on, first in correspondence, then in the instructions of the dietines, the problem of their future belonging was raised. The aforementioned Janusz Radziwiłł, while thanking God for his success, wondered whether the king would incorporate the fortress, and the Principality of Smolensk, into the Crown or into Lithuania:

Obaczmy, czy bardziej w Panu przemaga afekt ku Koronie, czy krew jagiellońska.

We shall see whether the Lord's affection for the Crown is stronger than the Jagiellonian blood.<sup>23</sup>

The prince's opinion deserves attention for yet another reason: that he considered the king, and not the Sejm, to be authorized to change the territory of each state of the Commonwealth. The dietines thought the same; the question of incorporation of the newly acquired territories into the Grand Duchy began to recur in their resolutions with increasing frequency:

Smoleńsk i wszystkie Ziemia Siewierska, jako przedtem do Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego należała, tak, aby teraz [...] inkorporowana [...] była –

Smolensk and all of Severia, should now be [...] incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, to which it belonged before [...] –

the Vilnius dietine warned already in August 1611, as did all the others whose instructions are known.<sup>24</sup> At the same time the Minsk and Oszmiana dietines called for ending the war by way of negotiations, and for using force only if they should

21 *Korespondencja Jana Karola Chodkiewicza* [Correspondence of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz], ed. W. Chomętowski (Warsaw: 1875), p. 119: Hieronim Chodkiewicz to Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, 27.05.1611, Vilnius.

22 TN, vol. 106, no. 15: Janusz Radziwiłł to Lew Sapieha, 03.05.1611, Koydanava.

23 AR, s. IV, no. 172: Janusz Radziwiłł to Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł 'the Orphan', 22.06.1611, Dolałyce.

24 BPAU–PAN Kr. MS 365, f. 44: Vilnius instruction given to the envoys to the Sejm, Jan Sapieha and Jan Czyż, 17.08.1611, Vilnius.

fail.<sup>25</sup> The Polotsk and Samogitian dietines spoke of defending the borders.<sup>26</sup> The Vilnius dietine stopped at agreeing to the Sejm's adoption of taxes earmarked for the war. All in all, at least some of the dietines, certainly the Polotsk and Samogitian ones, did not take the enormity of the military success achieved as a permanent interpretation of the power relationship between the Commonwealth and Muscovy. On the contrary, the Polotsk dietine demanded that the people who supposedly persuaded the king to start the war be exposed and punished.<sup>27</sup>

The reason for keeping silent about the election of Prince Władysław to the tsar's throne (1610) and, in time, his rights to it, despite the strong Unionist sentiment beforehand, is unknown. Based on the current state of research, it can only be surmised that, first of all, it was considered unrealistic for him to obtain the crown, and even – although this obviously contradicted the union project that Lew Sapieha presented in Moscow in 1600 – unfavourable for the Commonwealth. After all, the election of Władysław also to the Polish throne would have led to an immeasurable increase in monarchical power, and thus to a depletion of the nobility's rights.

At least some of the Lithuanian politicians advocating a quick end to the war pointed out that the collaboration between Muscovy and Sweden would result in the defeat of Lithuania and the Commonwealth as a whole. As Lithuanian Deputy Chancellor Eustachy Wołłowicz said some time later, during the 1618 Sejm:

gdzieby stamtąd [z Inflant] i z Moskwy oraz na nas nastąpiono, pewnie by już nie o Wilno, ale o Wisłę [...] opierał się nieprzyjaciel.

if the enemy had attacked us from there [i.e. Livonia] and from Muscovy, [...] it would probably be not just in Vilnius now, but at the Vistula River.<sup>28</sup>

In the third period, the mood was shaped by the awareness of the revival of Muscovy's power, as demonstrated by the capitulation of the Polish troops stationed in the capital (1612), the failure of another expedition of Sigismund III, or the attempt to claim lost territories, including the blockade of Smolensk, by the regiments of the new tsar Mikhail Romanov. At the same time, looting, rape, and murder by armed gangs bringing together people of different estates and nationalities, but always oblivious to divine and human law, became a scourge felt throughout the

25 TN, vol. 106, no. 46: Oszmiana instruction given to the envoys to the Sejm, Paweł Sapieha and Jan Naruszewicz, 15.08.1611, Oszmiana.

26 BPAU-PAN Kr. MS 360, f. 218: Samogitian instruction given to the envoys to Sejm: Malcher Szemet and Jan Talat, 15.08.1611.

27 BPAU-PAN Kr. MS 365, f. 49: Polotsk instruction given to the envoys to Sejm: Piotr Stabrowski and Aleksander Tyszkiewicz, 15.08.1611, Polotsk.

28 PAN Library in Kórnik, MS 326, f. 361: Votum of Eustachy Wołłowicz, Bishop of Vilnius, Deputy Chancellor of the Great Duchy of Lithuania, 21.02.1618.

Grand Duchy. All this led to increased criticism of the decision to go to war. In 1613, the pre-Sejm Lithuanian dietines of Oszmiana, Vilnius and Wiłkomierz, as well as probably others, whose instructions are not known, demanded that the king's advisers who incited him to break the truce be revealed:

Radzibyśmy [...] wiedzieli [...] kto wżdy był tak wielkiej Rzeczypospolitej szkody przyczyną i radą.

We would like to know [...] who had been the cause and counsel of such great harm to the Commonwealth.

The same demand was put forward by the Nowogródek dietine in 1615, with the argument that the war not only

mało nie ostatnią zgubę Ojczyźnie naszej przyniosła, z dostatków złupiła, niezliczonej kupy ludzi rycerskich pozbawiła,

nearly brought the Motherland to its end, plundered it of its wealth, deprived it of many a knight,

but also brought shame to the Commonwealth: 'Covered it in infamy and disgrace before other nations'.<sup>29</sup> The Polish Minsk nobility gave mostly the same instructions to its envoys, with the exception of the international aspect:

*autores* wojny tej moskiewskiej, która nam i Ojczyźnie naszej wszystko zło przyniosła [...] karanie odnieśli.

so that *autores* of this war with Muscovy that brought upon us and upon the Motherland all kinds of evil [...] may be punished.<sup>30</sup>

The issue of knowledge gained in Lithuania about the Muscovite state and society in the course of the war awaits elaboration. It is certain that there were a few avenues of discovery: participation in the war, accounts of participants, literary works, and finally contact with prisoners of war, people who were taken and those who came voluntarily. However, it should be added that their number cannot even be estimated. That is was rather frequent is evidenced by the fact that the Muscovites even stayed at the court of Krzysztof Radziwiłł, who did not participate in the activities on the territory of Muscovy. As follows from a letter written by Lew Sapieha after the conclusion of the Truce of Deulino, the chancellor had sent the prince 'two Muscovite women for embroidery work'. Now, expressing the hope

29 BPAU– PAN Kr. MS 365, f. 70. Urazy w swobodach i wolnościach, i prawach naszych podane... posłom na sejm... 1615 z sejmiku nowogrodzkiego, Albrychtowi Władysławowi Radziwiłłowi i Janowi Protasowiczowi. [Injuries in freedoms and liberties and our rights reported by the Nowogródek dietine... to the envoys to the 1615 Sejm..., Albrycht Władysław Radziwiłł and Jan Protasowicz].

30 TN, vol. 110, no. 72: Minsk instruction given to the envoys to Sejm: Mikołaj Wiazewicz and Olbrycht Oborski, 02.01.1618, Minsk. (Error in the date, it should be: 1615).

that they had trained successors, he asked that they be sent back so that they could return home in accordance with the terms of the truce.<sup>31</sup>

To sum up: three main periods may be distinguished in the attitude of the Great Duchy of Lithuania toward Muscovy. The first period, which lasted until the early reign of Vasyli Shuisky (1606–1610), was marked by a striving to reach a definitive end of the conflict by way of concluding personal or real union, peace, or at least a lasting truce. The second period encompassed the years following Shuisky's ascension to the throne or, more specifically, the time when it became evident that the country was out of control. This period saw the first unauthorized expeditions undertaken by people who did not find a place and means for themselves in the Motherland, followed by passive and active support given by the Lithuanian magnates to Sigismund III's decision to go to war. The capture of Smolensk (1611) was apparently considered the achievement of its goal. The third period begins with the resurgence of Muscovy's power becoming apparent, which coincided with a decline in internal security as a result of the actions of the troops enlisted in the war and all sorts of gangs mercilessly pillaging their own country. Most opinions from the time were critical of the decision to start the war and accompanied by demands to end it, but with preservation of the territories gained as its result.

*Translated by Maja Jaros  
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31 Lietuvos Mokslų, Akademijos Biblioteka, Vilnius. MS F 9–432. Two letters from Lew Sapieha to Krzysztof Radziwiłł: p. 12. Undated, but it was written after the Truce of Deulino: p. 14. Second letter: 09.05.1619.

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### ABSTRACT

The article takes a closer look at the historical relationship between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Moscow during the Time of Troubles. It discusses, among other things, the Muscovite expeditions or the conquest of Smolensk, which events are interpreted from a Lithuanian perspective. It is also noted that three periods can be distinguished in the relations between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Moscow during that time: the quest for peace, the inability to control the country and the resurgence of Moscow's power.

**KEYWORDS:** Moscow, history 17<sup>th</sup> century, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Time of Troubles 1598–1613.

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