Defining the Identity of the Younger Europe

Early Modern Cultures of the Younger Europe

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Introduction

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There is hardly a language under the sun that has spread as far around the world as ours, which is said to be spoken in more than a quarter of Europe. For it is also used by the Czechs, Moravians, Kashubians, Ruthenians, Muscovites, and those from whom we came, the Slavs, Swedes, Dalmatians, Bosnians, Croats, Bulgarians, Rascians [from Serbian region of Raška], Serbs, and several other nations.[1]

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With these words in his *Dialogus de eo, num calicem laicis, et uxores sacerdotibus permitti, ac divina officia vulgari lingua peragi fas sit* (A dialogue concerning whether the chalice should be permitted to laymen, and wives to priests, and whether divine offices should be performed in the vernacular language), the Polish Cardinal Stanisław Hozjusz (1504–79), one of the most influential Catholic writers of his time, outlined a space of peoples and communities united by a common identity. His criteria were primarily linguistic, for in the part of the dialogue from which the above quotation is taken, he discussed using the vernacular in the liturgy. It is not without a certain pride that Hozjusz writes here of the cultural-political success of "our" language. In the second half of the sixteenth century, it was the Poland–Lithuania of the Jagiellons

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1 "Ac uix est ulla lingua sub sole, quae latius, quam nostra pateat, cum plus etiam, quam quartam Europe partem complecti videatur. Hac enim utuntur, & Bohemi, & Moraui, & Cassubi, & Russi, & Moschi, & unde nos originem duxisse putamus, Sclavii, Suetii, Dalmatae, Boznenses, Croatae, Bulgari, Rasciani, Serbi, & aliae gentes nonnullae." Stanislaus Hosius, *Dialogus de eo, num calicem laicis, et uxores sacerdotibus permitti, ac divina official vulgari lingua peragi fas sit* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1558), 05ᵛ–06ʳ.

that was the basis of the Slavic idea of identity, encompassing not only the East but also reaching the Balkans, a power firmly opposed to the advancing Ottoman empire. This experience of identity and community reinforced the sense of unity in the language, despite the obvious differences between its speakers. However, the cultural space outlined by Hozjusz has vague contours, not only because the Hungarians, descendants of Illyrians, Thracians, or Turkic peoples, lived among the Croats, Dalmatians, and Bulgarians. Unexpectedly, the Swedes appear here on the horizon, by no means being Slavs, but mentioned as those "from whom we came." This "our" space is thus integrated by language and other factors, cultural-civilizational analogies, dynastic ties, and geographical proximity. It includes Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe and reaches the shores of the Adriatic Sea. A subjective sense of familiarity and mutual ties defines its horizons, not its borders. Finally, it is as much a geographical-cultural space as a historical one, for this experience of relative affinity was to change over time and be subject to gradual destruction. When Hozjusz wrote his work, Poland–Lithuania, a northern Slavic-Baltic power, was this part of Europe's main cultural and political center. It claimed ownership of the "Slavic" language, dispersed in a multiplicity of dialects. It was the subject and creator of values, as well as their guarantor in a space constantly threatened by the Ottoman shadow before it was replaced in this role by Moscow at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it was to Moscow that the aspirations of some Slavic peoples turned.

The series Brill's Research Perspectives in Early Modern Cultures of the Younger Europe, inaugurated by the present volume, is intended to focus on the history of cultures and civilizations that emerged and developed in this very space during the period from the fall of Constantinople (1453) to the beginning of the Industrial Age. The title of the series evokes the notion of "Younger Europe," a macro-historical concept proposed twenty-five years ago by the prominent Polish historian Jerzy Kłoczowski (1924–2017). In a book by the same title—*Młodsza Europa* (The Younger Europe)—he points to the specificity of that part of the continent, which was Christianized relatively late (in the ninth to tenth centuries and even later in the case of the Baltic peoples), resulting in later processes of Westernization or, respectively, Byzantinization, than elsewhere. Thus, church, university, and state structures were formed later than in "older" Europe and the influence of the Roman legal tradition was weaker, as was the relatively modest radiation of medieval courtly and knightly culture and Renaissance humanist trends. Kłoczowski delineates the cultural space thus characterized, referring mainly to the historical territories and peoples connected by multiple ties with Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary, but he also points out that "in fact, one could also speak of a 'younger' or 'newer'

Europe about the territories of the Byzantine-Slavic and Scandinavian civiliza-
tions, which followed a basically similar civilizational path."[2]

Significant parallels in the formation of state and civilizational forms of the
Scandinavian-Baltic-Slavic-Hungarian space have also been noted by other
scholars, who emphasize the process of replacing political and religious plu-
ralism, characteristic of pagan communities, with the vertically oriented social
and political order, monopolization of authority, and its supernatural legiti-
macy.[3] Local polities appear here as the work of elites and are closely linked
to the importation of a new religion and conversion, largely conceived as a
change at the level of practices and rituals. They are also linked to introducing
a culture of writing of literacy. These religio-political-cultural models imported
from "older" Europe had different origins and, therefore, somewhat different
characteristics. Still, they always became tools of social integration of peoples
already officially introduced into the orbit of Christian civilization, bringing
into this pan-European space the still vivid experience of their "barbarian"
past. For this reason, the "younger" space was characterized for many centu-
ries by an insurmountable multiplicity and diversity linked to the functioning
of minorities that preserved their separateness (and freely migrated to it) and
the experience of existence at the frontier.

The "younger Europe" category we employ here has not gained much pop-
ularity. If it is sometimes used, it is—also due to the studies by Kłoczowski
himself—mainly to characterize the area of interest in the Middle Ages.
However, we have chosen this metaphorical term because it seems the least
susceptible to political and ideological instrumentalization. It also allows us
to cover a wider area than competing (and more frequently used, although
also contested) terms: Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Mitteleuropa, and

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2   Jerzy Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa: Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w kręgu cywilizacji
     chrześcijańskiej średniowiecza* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1998), 14.

3   See, for example, Martin Carver, ed., *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in
     Northern Europe, AD 300–1300,* (York: York Medieval Press, 2003); Richard Fletcher, *The
     Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity, 371–1386* (London: HarperCollins,
     1997); Przemysław Urbańczyk, ed., *Europe around the Year 1000* (Warsaw: DiG, 2001); Nora
     Berend, ed., *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe,
     and Rus', c.900–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Ildar H. Garipzanov,
     Patrick J. Geary, and Przemysław Urbańczyk, eds., *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities
     and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008); Nora Berend,
     Przemysław Urbańczyk, and Przemysław Wiszniewski, eds., *Central Europe in the High
     Middle Ages: Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland, c.900–c.1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University
     Press, 2013).

East-Central Europe.[4] All of them are sometimes labels of imposed identity and are more or less entangled in the apologia of the political and cultural aspirations of the Slavic-Hungarian part of the continent, which remained dominated by neighboring empires, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or in the assertion of its inherent (Eastern) civilizational backwardness as a distinctive feature, or directly in the discourse serving contemporary imperial projects.[5] As American historian Larry Wolff has brilliantly argued, the concept of "Eastern Europe" proved to be a handy weapon for legitimizing the conquests of the Russian empire as early as the mid-eighteenth century.[6] And it is precisely for this reason that (by resorting to categories such as "Eastern Europe," "Central Europe," or "East-Central Europe," which were, of course, unknown not only in the Middle Ages but also in the early modern period) we make historical identities correlative with later political events (including catastrophes), projecting into the past a self-understanding drawn from the present.

Second, the notion of a "younger Europe," which implies a Scandinavian–Slavic synthesis, allows us to shed light on a cultural space oriented around a different axis. The dominant mental map until the Enlightenment, the axis of polarization of Europe, did not divide it into East and West but into North and South. The former turned out to be the space of the "barbarians," heirs of the former invaders, who, in the following centuries, laboriously recovered

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4   See, e.g., Oskar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1952); David Turnock, *The Making of Eastern Europe: From the Earliest Times to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1988); George Schöpflin and Nancy Wood, eds., *In Search of Central Europe* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989); Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1992); Jacques Le Rider, *La Mitteleuropa* (Paris: PUF, 1994); Richard G. Plaschka et al., eds., *Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995); Jerzy Kłoczowski, *L'Europe du Centre-Est dans l'historiographie des pays de la région* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 1995); Philip Longworth, *The Making of Eastern Europe: From Prehistory to Postcommunism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Florin Curta, ed., *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (London: Routledge, 2007); Jerzy Kłoczowski and Hubert Łaszkiewicz, eds., *East-Central Europe in European History: Themes and Debates* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2009); Piotr Górecki and Nancy van Deusen, eds., *Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages: A Cultural History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009).

5   For their insightful analysis, see Nora Berend, "Introduction: Did Central Europe Exist in the Middle Ages?," in Berend, Urbańczyk, and Wiszniewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages*, 1–39.

6   Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

from their uncouthness. The second, of course, was the Roman space, which determined the geographical perspective and the direction of cultural comparisons, with its classical-humanist paradigm of values as a point of reference and aspiration for the northern "barbarians." The triumph of the South found expression (albeit only for a time) not only in aesthetic-axiological terms but, above all, in religion and politics, in the universalism of the Roman church and the renewed Roman Empire.

However, having said that, an important caveat must be made. Our series does not intend to promote any macro-historical concept or myth. As we have argued, the semi-metaphorical term we use in the title only describes, in a rather vague way, the geographical-cultural space to which the monographs published in the series are to refer, a space "younger" in terms of civilization. It should not be understood (as Kłoczowski also insisted) as backwardness in relation to the normatively treated Western model, nor should it be romanticized as a special reservoir of not always fully exploited European energy. The cultural space we refer to complemented the previously Christianized Roman dominion and, in a sense, made Europe as we know it today. If the Middle Ages were a moment of birth for the "younger Europe," the early modern period was a period of its blooming and formation of identities.

The volume *Defining the Identity of the Younger Europe* is largely the fruit of an inaugural conference held on April 7–8, 2022, at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Greater Poland), the cradle of Polish statehood in the tenth century. On that occasion, we invited our guests to reflect on the cultural identities of the peoples living in the Younger Europe, on the assumption that the civilizational "youthfulness" evident at the end of the Middle Ages justified asking about the similarities and differences of the cultural processes taking place in the early modern period, as well as the determinants of the different outcomes of these processes.

When we planned this meeting, however, we did not foresee that, at this very moment, history would draw the attention of people not only in "older" Europe but also in the whole world to this "younger" part of the continent, which had once again become the scene of tragic events. For it so happened that our debate in Poznań took place only eight weeks after the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, at a time when thousands of exhausted and war-traumatized refugees were arriving in Poznań, as in the whole of Poland and many neighboring countries, every day. A dramatic struggle was taking place a few hundred kilometers away—the struggle for the right to one's own identity. The Russian invasion provided a poignant context for our deliberations and, at the same time, reminded us with extraordinary acuity that a false historical narrative is not only a cognitive error that scholars

should beware of but that it can also be a deadly weapon, an instrument of violence and crime, a weapon of imperialism.

This recognition, however, also teaches us to distance ourselves from macro-historical concepts based on hard and often arbitrarily rather than inductively established criteria, which often contain elements of simplification, schematization, and extrapolation that can unfold their ominous potential under different circumstances. Meanwhile, the cultural space of early modern "younger Europe," to which we intend to devote the following volumes in our series, is primarily a space of "soft" identities that do not necessarily coincide with political-state borders. They can be regulated by various factors, such as religion, a set of political rights, language, or traditions derived from local legends and myths.[7] But even identities that cannot be equated with a sense of ethnocultural unity appear, as Ukrainian historian Serhii Plokhy argues, as the result of conscious action by intellectual and political elites; they are not so much discovered as shaped, for specific purposes, as a premise for the construction of new communities and political forms. Seventeenth-century Ukraine, which constructed its identity as a political project of the Hetmanate elite, drawing on the Cossack tradition, the cultural heritage of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, and a commitment to Orthodoxy, emerges as an exemplary case.[8]

The authors of the essays collected in this volume deal with the problem of the various cultural identities of early modern Europe in many dimensions and aspects, but they also analyze it as a theoretical problem. Polities that had already ceased to exist or had completely lost their political independence by the end of the early modern period in the eighteenth century occupy a special place in these discussions: the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the largest European state at the beginning of the seventeenth century with an area of some 990,000 square kilometers; the Ukrainian Hetmanate; and the Kingdom of Hungary. The contributors to this volume analyze various aspects of their historical-cultural identities and highlight the dimensions of the legacies to which the modern political successors of these early modern polities are also related.

The volume opens with an essential historiographical *tour-de-force* by Frank Sysyn (University of Alberta), which shows crucial tensions among historical narratives by Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian scholars and the national agendas

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7   Anna Wallette, "Sweden and Scandinavia: History-Writing as an Identity Project in the Early Modern Period," *Scandia* 75, no. 2 (2009): 87–91, here 89.

8   Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 358.

they often represent. He presents the Khmelnytsky Uprising (1648–54) as an event that witnessed the defeat of the political project of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, whose eastward expansion was not without colonial aspirations, and as the basis for the formation of modern Ukrainian consciousness, the first manifestation of which became the Hetmanate. The events that unfolded in Ukraine in the middle of the seventeenth century were of groundbreaking significance for the entire region. They set in motion processes that, within a few decades, led to the replacement of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth by an emerging Russia, both as the foundation of the Slavic idea of identity and as Sweden's main political rival, and opened the way for reorienting the large parts of the continent that had previously defined themselves in a Western context. In an erudite and insightful discourse, Sysyn analyzes the rebellion's causes and the factors that made it a painful test of the Commonwealth's inclusive power. Above all, he points to the uprising's role in forming the modern Ukrainian identity, regardless of the political consequences, emblematic of which was the Pereiaslav Agreement (1654), which subjected Ukraine to the authority of the Russian tsar. The causes of the uprising, including significant religious, economic, social, and political factors, and its course made it an expression of Ukraine's independence and autonomy. However, the price of establishing the Hetmanate was to prove extremely high in a further historical perspective.

The contemporary context highlights the tragic paradox of the Khmelnytsky Uprising. Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1595–1657), who symbolically led Ukraine to freedom, is at the same time the one who, while liberating it from the Polish yoke, initiated the process of gathering the Ruthenian lands under the aegis of Moscow. Tellingly, a statue of Khmelnytsky, who signed the Pereiaslav Agreement, stands in Kyiv and is currently being shelled by Russian missiles. The heroization of Khmelnytsky, initiated in the early eighteenth century, was arguably a construct to serve Moscow's propaganda. Still, it is hard to deny that the energy of the symbol of Ukrainian national revival and identity, regardless of the actual impact of Khmelnytsky's achievements, remains real and pervasive in Ukrainian culture. But while the case of Ukraine should be seen, as Sysyn argues, as "the place where the Commonwealth failed," the following essays of our volume reveal the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth as an original political project whose consensual nature was the basis for unique identities.

Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz (Polska Akademia Nauk), in her provocatively titled essay "The Younger Europe—or the Older?: Visions of Politics in the Early Modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth," perceptively analyzes the development of political thought in the Commonwealth from 1569 to 1795,

focusing on those aspects of the state's modern understanding that did not find recognition in the eyes of the Polish–Lithuanian noble elites. That led to significant differences in the discourse of the nobility in relation to mainstream European political writing, especially in the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. Their discourse showed surprising indifference to notions such as sovereignty, *raison d'état*, or the abstractly understood notion of state in general. Polish–Lithuanian political thought grew out of the Aristotelian-Ciceronian tradition and Roman republicanism, from which all the concepts used here originated, as well as the assumption that politics, as a practical domain, remains closely linked to ethics, that the common good has absolute priority over the good of the individual, and that the guarantor of the state's prosperity is the virtue of its citizens, the latter defined in terms of their political agency, as individuals possessing a certain set of rights. The state was to be a community (*civitas*) of citizens thus conceived, organized as a mixed monarchy (*monarchia mixta*), in which law, superior even to the monarch's will, secured the liberties of the individual. In the heyday of Renaissance and humanist culture, this discourse resonated harmoniously with the voices of other European theorists of state and law, and the Aristotelian-Ciceronian tradition, only slightly modified, served the needs and aspirations of the nobility surprisingly well at the time when the system of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was being formed. However, by the end of the sixteenth century, new political concepts were emerging in European thought that emphasized structural safeguards for the efficiency of the state's functioning. At the same time, the elites of the Commonwealth, attached to the proven solutions of the past, persisted in maintaining the classical illusion of a virtuous community of citizens. Grześkowiak-Krwawicz's study shows how this humanist attachment in spirit gradually excluded the Commonwealth from the dynamically developing European currents of modern political reflection, eventually leading to its internal weakening.

While Grześkowiak-Krwawicz's essay focuses on the Commonwealth aristocracy's theoretical political discourse, Karin Friedrich examines the battle for the definition of the common good (which had a long history in the early modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth) in two different urban communities of the Commonwealth: Royal Prussia and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Urban culture remained excluded from the elevated discourse on the virtues of social life and confined to the mundane pursuit of self-interest—at least in the prevailing opinion of the nobility, which was convinced of the moral inferiority of urban and commercial activities. However, the two case studies Friedrich proposes show how the concept of the common good (*bonum commune*) was applied in practice in the cities of the Commonwealth: in Danzig (Gdańsk)

during the city's conflict with King Stephen Báthory (r.1576–86), and in Slutsk (Słuck) during the period of Bogusław Radziwiłł's (1620–69) ownership of the city. The stories presented here show how the ruler's violation of legally guaranteed freedoms and privileges (*monarchia mixta*) met with resistance from the inhabitants who did not consider themselves subjects, no less than the nobility, who were convinced of the consensual nature of the Commonwealth's order. Friedrich also sees the influence of Hugo Grotius's (1583–1645) ideas on private property and civic ethics in the royal cities of the Commonwealth, such as Danzig (the concept of property was not addressed in the political thought of the Polish nobility). From the point of view of the Danzig burghers, the common good turned out to be closely related to self-interest, and the two values were mutually reinforcing. Friedrich also sees similar interdependence when she analyzes the case of a private city, the Belarusian city of Slutsk, where Radziwiłł, the *civis bonus*, took admirable care to maintain economic and social order, respecting the city's multi-religious character and ensuring equality before the law for Jews and Christians. In the practice of urban life, a symbiosis was achieved between the common and the private good, and concern for the former in no way implied acts of sacrifice and renunciation but on the contrary, efforts to secure one's prosperity and well-being.

In the Younger Europe, the culture of the South was considered the norm, especially the Roman classical and Latin humanist traditions, which dominated political thought and literature. The success of the Society of Jesus and the educational model promoted by the Jesuits contributed to the consolidation and petrification of the classical humanist ideal and its transmission, which already crossed confessional boundaries. This is explored in Giovanna Brogi's (Università degli Studi di Milano, emerita) intriguing essay, where she again draws the reader's attention to Ukraine. She focuses on the importance of old and more recent manuscripts, especially those produced by Stefan Iavorskii (1658–1722), one of Ukraine's most erudite and influential ecclesiastics and (after 1700) in Russia. The historical context for his activity is Ivan Mazepa's hetmancy (1687–1709), during which Ukraine peaked its social, economic, and intellectual development in the early modern period. Mazepa invested plenty of resources in developing a culture in the Kyiv Monastery and the Mohyla College (an academy since 1697)—moral and intellectual fortresses of Ukraine that symbolized a unique hybrid system of values in this part of the Younger Europe. These values were based on both the Western, that is Polish and European, heritage of Renaissance and baroque culture and the Slavo-Byzantine religious and ethnic tradition. While a comparison of Iavorskii's sermon and Lazar Baranovych's (1620–93) poetry in Brogi's essay offers an unprecedented insight into the relationship between two generations

of the intellectual elite of the Hetmanate, a fuller picture of how that fusion of cultures perspires in Iavorski's text is still to be investigated. Brogi and a team of researchers at universities in Kraków and Kyiv are working on a philological scholarly edition of thirty sermons Iavorskii wrote and delivered in Ukraine. What Brogi has been able to assess in her essay for our volume is that these Ukrainian authors assimilated the Renaissance and baroque traditions that had already been part of the Polish cultural heritage—thanks mostly to the Polish Jesuits of the caliber of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski (1591–1640). Sarbiewski was a celebrated Latin poet in a good part of Europe. He studied in Rome, and in Rome, the pope awarded him with a laurel wreath for his literary talent comparable to Horace. The Jesuit connection with Rome—as both a cultural and administrative center—highlights Roman Catholicism's crucial role in forming the Younger Europe's identity.

It was the Younger Europe, already in the Middle Ages much more religiously diverse than the "older" one, that both the Protestant Reformation and later the Union of Brest (which created the Greek-Catholic Church) transformed into a confessional melting pot in which new collective identities mixed and emerged. Maciej Ptaszyński (University of Warsaw), referring to the widespread opinion in historiography about the social and iconoclastic character of the Protestant Reformation in the Younger Europe, presents the context in which such an image was produced. He uses the example of the events in Stralsund, Duchy of Pomerania, in 1523–25, when the first Reformation preachers appeared in the city, whose sermons were followed by violence, social unrest, and riots. Through carefully examining the historical sources that document these events, Ptaszyński argues that the early Reformation was "driven and played out primarily within the clergy" between the new preachers (often monks) and the priests who defended the status quo. Their confrontation, however, had an undeniable potential for violent transgression since it mostly concerned the morals and structures of the social and religious order.

The Protestant Reformation was instrumental in revising the concept of Europe polarized along the "North–South" axis. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the reference to apostolic and imperial Rome irrevocably lost its integrating power, and in the space of the Protestant–Orthodox North, Poland–Lithuania in the following decades and centuries, was slowly becoming a lonely outpost of Roman Catholicism—a crucial battleground between religious orthodoxy and all other religious affiliations, as the Roman See perceived it.

The role of papal Rome is discussed in Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin's (University College Dublin) essay, "The Younger Europe from a Papal Perspective,

1580–1640." For Rome, the author argues, Poland–Lithuania was of immense importance in the broader Catholic world, for it was "positioned in the middle of Mahometans, schismatics, heretics, and partly Catholics." Hence, the appreciation of papal diplomats (whose relationships with the country are analyzed in this piece) for many aspects of Poland–Lithuania was significant. To Ó hAnnracháin, this was apparent not only on explicitly religious grounds—in opposing heresy and schism and Islam—but also in a keen admiration of the martial capacities of the Commonwealth's inhabitants: papal diplomacy entertained the idea of employing them for the benefit of the wider Catholic world.

Opposing Islam also became an important part of the Younger Europe's Christian identity in Hungary, a region analyzed in the essay "The Battle of Mohács, Re-remembered History, and Hungary's 'Christian' Identity," by Paul Shore, who unfortunately passed away shortly before this volume went to print. His essay briefly examines representative symbols and attendant language found in the nationalist and ethnocentric movements existing in Hungary today to show how Hungary is uniquely shaped by myths set in the distant past of the Magyars since their arrival in Europe and engagement with "Christian civilization" in the ninth century. Shore concludes: "These symbols [...] tap into a deep-seated attraction in a modern European state for the exotic, the idealized, the exclusive, and the historically remote, a tendency that is by no means uniquely Hungarian but is found in many cultures today and is perhaps more apparent in the 'younger Europe.'"

Shore's analysis of the Hungarian micro-case and the preceding studies of other regions of the Younger Europe, from Ukraine to Royal Prussia to Lithuania and Poland, brings us to close our volume with a more general reflection on the meaning of the term we have chosen for this new monographic series, Piotr Chmiel's (Uniwersytet Warszawski) essay "Younger, But How?: Heterochrony of Premodern European Divisions in the Discourse on Central/East-Central Europe." While Sysyn concentrates on the Ukrainian/Russian/Polish historiography in the first essay in this volume, Chmiel retraces the publications by Oskar Halecki (1891–1973), Jenő Szűcs (1928–88), and Milan Kundera (1929–2023)—the authors representing Polish, Hungarian, and Czech historiography, respectively. He is more interested in showing the diachronic rather than the spatial dimension of the continent's East–West divide. The discourse of identity conducted from within the "kidnapped West," that is, the part separated from the Europe of freedom by the Iron Curtain, has the unbearable characteristics of a persistent proof of belonging to the latter; it is limited by the position of heterochrony (to use Benoît Challand's term, after our author). Chmiel concludes that "using heterochrony to explain Central/East-Central

Europe's development since early modern times helped them save history as a conceptual frame for their emancipatory discourse aimed at restoring a kidnapped region to a common European identity."

At the end of the early modern period, the Enlightenment imposed a new polarization of the continent. The newly invented West demanded to be complemented by the opposite East. The mental map's polarization justified political polarization in the eighteenth century and beyond. Eastern Europe was born.

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The eight essays included in this inaugural volume of Brill's Research Perspectives in Early Modern Cultures of the Younger Europe (RPYES) series do not exhaust all the richness of topics and historiographical approaches that can describe the complex reality of the Younger Europe. However, we believe they will provoke a scholarly discussion and inspire more research into the past of the Baltic-Slavic-Hungarian-Romanian-Balkan part of the European continent, free from political presuppositions and biases, to reveal its multifaceted cultural identity and specificity.

The Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Birth of Modern Ukraine: A Reappraisal of the Khmelnytsky "Revolution"

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Abstract

This essay delves into the significance of the Khmelnytsky uprising, spotlighting it as a vivid illustration of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth's political project failure. It examines the lessons the study of the Cossack Hetmanate offers concerning the history of Poland–Lithuania. The author contends that the decline of the Commonwealth's encompassing power, often pinpointed to 1648, likely began earlier, thus making the Union of Lublin provisions instrumental in modern Ukraine's formation. Although the Ukrainian revolt has usually been classified as a revolution due to the sweeping economic, social, and political transformations it triggered, it could also be seen as a frontier response to integration into the more advanced economic and social structures of the Commonwealth. The author suggests that current trends in historiography invite an exploration of the uprising through the lenses of slavery, violence, and colonialism. Despite this, the national and proto-national relations between Poles and Ruthenians remain critical in the discourse. Yet, advancements in research on hybrid identities advocate moving away from binary national perspectives. It is evident that the concept of Rus'-Ukraine as a *patria* was established before the revolt, providing a foundation for the evolution of Cossack Ukraine into an *Otchyzna*. Although the Cossack Hetmanate adopted many political concepts from the Commonwealth without developing into an equally stable republic, the author asserts that Ukraine's history must also be examined within this context.

Keywords

Bohdan Khmelnytsky – Cossack uprising – Ukraine – Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth – religious clashes – rebellion – Hetmanate – republic

This essay addresses the significance of Ukraine as the place where the Commonwealth failed. This failure is not a new question—in the nineteenth century, Polish historians had questioned whether the sixteenth-century extension toward the east was a mistake. Yet despite the iconic nature of the Khmelnytsky uprising of 1648, the largest and one of the most successful revolts in seventeenth-century Europe, the national polemics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries pay relatively little attention to its role in the failure of the Commonwealth in the Ukrainian lands.[1]

1   National Traditions

Polish historiography has too often stopped at the 1772 border of the Commonwealth at the First Partition in studying the period after 1648. In contrast, the modern Ukrainian national movement views the Khmelnytsky revolt and the Cossack Hetmanate as the cornerstones of Ukrainian nationhood. Accordingly, many Ukrainian historians have downplayed the positive aspects of the Commonwealth's traditions and concentrated on the pan-Ukrainian aspects of the revolt, especially its aspirations to encompass the western Ukrainian territories. Before and especially after the First World War (1914–18) and the attempt to establish independent Ukrainian states, many historians emphasized the state-building aspects of the Cossack polity and the genius of its leader. These tendencies occurred despite the problematic nature of the Pereiaslav arrangement of 1654 when Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1569–1657, in office 1648–57) swore allegiance to the Muscovite tsar. Within Soviet Ukraine, especially after the proclamation of the Communist Party's "Theses on the Three-Hundredth Anniversary of the Reunion of the Ukraine with Russia (1654–1954)" in 1954, the Khmelnytsky uprising was reduced to

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1   For literature on the Khmelnytsky uprising, see the bibliographic note and update, "Scholarly Literature on the Khmelnytsky Era," in Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *History of Ukraine-Rus'*, vol. 8, *The Cossack Age, 1626–1650*, trans. Marta Daria Olynyk, ed. Frank E. Sysyn with the assistance of Myroslav Yurkevich (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 2002), 690–718. For the period in general, in addition to the bibliographies and updates in vol. 8, see those in vol. 7, *The Cossack Age to 1625*, trans. Bohdan Strumiński, ed. Serhii Plokhy and Frank E. Sysyn with the assistance of Uliana Pasicznyk (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1999); and the comprehensive bibliography on the Cossack Age in vol. 10, *The Cossack Age, 1657–1659*, trans. Marta Daria Olynyk, ed. Andrew B. Pernal, Yaroslav Fedoruk, and Frank Sysyn with the assistance of Myroslav Yurkevich (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 2014).

a prelude for the imperial and even nationalist Russian agenda of Ukraine's "return" to Russian unity.[2]

These parameters were set early and endured into the twentieth century. When Samuel Twardowski (*c*.1600–61) labeled the war a civil or domestic conflict in his famous epic poem of the seventeenth century, he gave the uprising a social interpretation in which he queried whence came that peasant animosity and rancor to rise against their lords when they might have joined in a campaign against the infidel Ottomans.[3] His vision was to be the dominant strain of Polish historical thought for over two centuries. Nevertheless, other contemporaries of Twardowski in the government camp saw additional aspects to the war, with some viewing it as a conflict with the Ruthenian nation (*naród*) that had nobles in its ranks rather than merely being a struggle against the rebellious masses[4] and ascribing religious motives, above all the machinations of the Orthodox clergy, to the rebels. In a certain way, they presaged early eighteenth-century Ukrainian historiography that saw the conflict as "national" and religious, though the major Ukrainian histories downplayed the elements of plebeian revolt. This perspective was espoused by the major historian of the early eighteenth century Samiilo Velychko (1670–after 1728), who described Twardowski as a source for his factual material but put in the mouth of the revolt's leader Khmelnytsky the following statement when freeing the Polish prisoners from the Battle of Batih (May 23, 1652): "Gentlemen Poles, it seems to me that from now on we part from you forever—we will not be yours and you will not be ours [...]; the cause came not from us but from you yourselves."[5] He also included in his text the famous but clearly subsequently concocted Bila Tserkva universal dated 1648 calling on the Ukrainians (Little Russians) to rise

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2 For a discussion of the historiography with the text of the theses, see John Basarab, *Pereiaslav 1654: A Historiographical Study* (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1982), 270–88.

3 Samuel Twardowski, *Woyna domowa z Kozaki i Tatary, Moskwą, potym Szwedami y z Węgry* (Kraków: Drukarnia wdowy Łukasza Kupisza, 1660), A[r]. "Skąd wam ta złość, o chłopi, i rankor zażarty / Ku swym panom? Nie byłże inszy świat otwarty, / I morze pozwolone, gdziebyście te byli / Tak ciężko zamierzone razy wytoczyli? / Nie podobniej na Turki, i brzydkie pohańce / Wywrzeć było tych jadów?"

4 See the text and discussion that came from the Jeremi Wiśniowiecki (1612–51) camp in Frank E. Sysyn, "A Contemporary's Account of the Causes of the Khmel'nyts'kyi Uprising," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5, no. 2 (June 1981): 254–67; Sysyn, "Seventeenth-Century Views on the Causes of the Khmel'nyts'kyi Uprising: An Examination of the 'Discourse on the Present Cossack or Peasant War,'" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5, no. 4 (December 1981): 430–66.

5 Samiilo Velychko, *Litopys*, ed. Hennadii Boriak and Tetiana Taïrova-Iakovleva (Kyiv: Klio, 2020), 193.

up in defense of their fatherland against the abrogation of their liberties.[6] The Cossack historians had identified Khmelnytsky as a great leader and the revolt as the founding event of Cossack Ukraine.[7]

The stage had thus been set for a debate between Polish and Ukrainian historians about a war seen as fundamental for their respective national histories. At times, they broke ranks, as when the Ukrainian Panteleimon Kulish (1819–97) saw the rebellion as senseless and bloody and the Polish historian Ludwik Kubala (1838–1918) portrayed Khmelnytsky as an inspired leader.[8] Yet the fact that both peoples could be as wracked by disputes over the historicity of literary works as Poles were over Henryk Sienkiewicz's (1846–1916) *Trilogy* in the 1930s or Ukrainians were over Pavlo Zahrebelnyi's (1924–2009) *I, Bohdan* in the 1980s demonstrates how deeply the traditions of the early modern period moved the two societies.[9] Polish readers only slowly accepted that their beloved national literary saga might not necessarily be historically accurate, while Ukrainian readers had to come to terms with a literary work that challenged their vision of a national hero. The national traditions first began to break down in Poland, where Zbigniew Wójcik (1922–2014) could present the Cossacks anew and challenge the Sienkiewicz myths in the 1960s, later followed by Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, who could discuss Ruthenian

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6 For a discussion of the text and its authorship, see Serhii Bahro, "Bilotserkivs'kyi universal Bohdana Khmel'nyts'koho: Pokhodzhennia ta obih tekstu," *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 214 (2012): 474–92. The text attributed to Hetman Khmelnytsky was long thought to be the call explaining why Ukrainians should take up arms but is now usually dated to the early eighteenth century.

7 See Frank E. Sysyn, "'A man worthy of the name hetman': The Fashioning of Khmelnytsky as a Hero in the Hrabianka Chronicle," in *Stories of Khmelnytsky: Competing Literary Legacies of the 1648 Cossack Uprising*, ed. Amelia Glaser (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 36–46.

8 See Panteleimon Kulish, *Otpadenie Malorossii ot Pol'shi (1340–1654)*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1888–89); and Ludwik Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, 2nd rev. ed. (Warsaw: Księgarnia Zakładu Narodowego imienia Ossolińskich, 1924). Kubala's interpretation became part of Hrushevsky's interpretation of Khmelnytsky in his polemic with Viacheslav Lypynsky (1882–1931), see Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *History of Ukraine-Rus'*, vol. 9, book 2, part 2, *The Cossack Age, 1654–1657*, trans. Marta Daria Olynyk, ed. Yaroslav Fedoruk and Frank E. Sysyn with the assistance of Myroslav Yurkevich (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 2010), 416–19.

9 For a discussion of these controversies, see Frank E. Sysyn, "The Changing Image of the Hetman: On the 350th Anniversary of the Khmel'nyts'kyi Uprising," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 46, no. 4 (1998): 531–45, here 543. For the texts of the Sienkiewicz discussion, see Olgierd Górka, *Ogniem i mieczem a rzeczywistość historyczna* (Warsaw: Libraria Nova, 1934); Górka, *Ogniem i mieczem a rzeczywistość historyczna*, ed. Wiesław Majewski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1986).

(Ukrainian) national consciousness.[10] The full turning point came with the publication of Janusz Kaczmarczyk's biography of Khmelnytsky, which revised the diatribe of Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński (1846–1930), a work written from an extremely anti-Ukrainian point of view.[11] Changes then occurred with Ukrainian independence, when Ukrainian historians dismantled the Soviet-Russian "Reunification" myth, first by publishing an uncensored version of Ivan Kryp'iakevych's (1886–1967) classic study and then with a new biography.[12] Subsequently, historians could reconsider the role of religion, the violence in the revolt, and the position of the nobility in writings by Natalia Yakovenko and Natalia Starchenko.[13] Still, much of the older traditions remain, and contemporary historians find much in earlier visions of the two national historiographies that can inspire their writings.

2   Periodization

For both historiographies, 1648 stands out as an epochal turning point. For the early modern authors and much of Ukrainian historiography, the year marks the formation of Cossack Ukraine, the Hetmanate, and the culture that would serve as the touchstone of modern Ukraine. For the Polish tradition, the year is symbolic of the disasters from which the Commonwealth never fully recovered. In this, they are joined by historians of East European Jews who see 1648 as the "Abyss of Despair."[14] While most European historical traditions see the same year as the formation of the modern European state system and the end of the

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10   Zbigniew Wójcik, *Dzikie pola w ogniu: O kozaczyźnie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej,* 3rd rev. ed. (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1968); and Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, *Świadomość narodowa szlachty ukraińskiej i kozaczyzny od schyłku XVI do połowy XVII w.* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985).

11   Franciszek Rawita-Gawroński, *Bohdan Chmielnicki do elekcji Jana Kazimierza,* vol. 1 (Lviv: E. Wende i Sp. and H. Altenberg, 1906); and Rawita-Gawroński *Bohdan Chmielnicki od elekcji Jana Kazimierza do śmierci (1648–1657),* vol. 2 (Lviv: Gebethner i Wolff, 1909); Janusz Kaczmarczyk, *Bohdan Chmielnicki* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988).

12   Ivan Kryp'iakevych, *Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi,* 2nd rev. ed. (Lviv: Svitlo, 1990); V. A. Smolii and V. S. Stepankov, *Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi: Sotsial'no-politychnyi portret* (Kyiv: Lybid', 1993).

13   Natalia Starchenko, *Ukraïns'ki svity Rechi Pospolytoï* (Kyiv: Laurus, 2021); Natalia Iakovenko, *Narys istoriï seredn'ovichnoï ta rann'omodernoï Ukraïny* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2006); Iakovenko, *Paralel'nyi svit: Doslidzhennia z istoriï uiavlen' ta idei v Ukraïni XVI–XVII st.* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2010); Iakovenko, *Ukraïns'ka shliakhta z kintsia XIV do seredyny XVII st. (Volyn' i Tsentral'na Ukraïna)* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1993).

14   See Joel Raba, *Between Remembrance and Denial: The Fate of the Jews in the Wars of the Polish Commonwealth during the Mid-seventeenth Century as Shown in Contemporary Writings and Historical Research* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); and

wars of religion, Polish and Ukrainian historiographies mark the period very differently. Hence the Commonwealth is largely left out of the discussions of the long eighteenth century and what was mainly seen as the return of stability at the end of the seventeenth century. The next caesura after 1648 for the Polish tradition is usually viewed as the Enlightenment and the Partitions and the reforms that accompanied them. Most of the Ukrainian historiography holds in its periodization to the formation of a new polity and society that emerged out of 1648 and endures despite the period of the Ruin when multiple hetmans struggled for dominance (*c*.1663–87) and the disaster at Poltava (1709) when Hetman Mazepa (1639–1709) failed to break his ties with the Muscovite tsar.

Should 1648 continue to hold its central place in Polish historiography? It does so despite the vision of the sixteenth century as Poland's and the Commonwealth's Golden Age and the conceptualization of the early seventeenth century as a Silver Age because of the state's continued importance, albeit by largely staying out of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), and the relatively late discovery of the charms of the Polish baroque. Economic historians have long questioned this division by pointing to the impact of the economic crisis throughout Europe circa 1620 and the deformation of urban structures on much of the state's territories even before 1648 and the Deluge. Political historians have tended to look somewhat later for a manifestation of the decay of the state's parliamentary structures, specifically the magnates' role in dissolving a session of the Polish Sejm in the first *liberum veto* of 1652. Those who see the 1573 Henrician compromise guaranteeing religious liberty to the nobility as crucial to the state's viability have turned back to the view that the Counter-Reformation and ingraining of religious piety of the turn of the century, including the experiment of the Union of Brest of 1596 that united some Orthodox Christians with Rome, undermined the state's equilibrium.

For the Ukrainian tradition, 1648 would seem an almost unassailable marker for periodization. But it has been questioned. The Russian imperial and, even more, the Soviet tradition placed 1654 as the substantive dividing line, and much of Western historiography based on Russian history has accepted this date, despite the lack of clear movement toward the Pereiaslav Agreement in Ukraine or Muscovy in the decades before and the long period after 1654 in which Ukraine's political fate was contested. For non-Soviet Ukrainian historiography, the Union of Lublin that divided the Ukrainian and Belarusian territories and brought the Ukrainian territories into Crown Poland, albeit on different terms from the western Ukrainian lands, was the forerunner of the massive

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Frank E. Sysyn, "The Jewish Massacres in the Historiography of the Khmelnytsky Uprising: A Review Article," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 83–89.

1648 revolt and emergence of the Cossack polity. Some of Yakovenko's work has confirmed Mykhailo Hrushevsky's (1866–1934) thesis that the Ukrainian lands were only lightly integrated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and that a concept of a Rus' based on the Ukrainian territories of the Crown and those annexed from the Grand Duchy developed soon after the union.[15]

Hrushevsky had espoused a different periodization based on the rise of the Cossacks and a cultural-religious revival in the late sixteenth century that was manifested in Cossack-led popular revolts that reached their climax in the quarter-century from 1626 to 1650 and then declined.[16] Indeed, on this, his major antagonist Viacheslav Lypynsky (1882–1931) somewhat agreed in seeing the revolt's revolutionary force as spent by 1650 and more conservative political-social groups emerging, above all from the nobles who joined the revolt, though Lypynsky cast 1654 as the crucial break from the Commonwealth and 1656 as the stabilizing of the Hetmanate through the arrangement with the Pinsk nobility, permitting the region's nobles to join the Cossack polity while retaining their status.[17]

Within this periodization, the Union of Brest plays a significant role as a *casus belli* and the catalyst both of the oppositionist Orthodox Church of the 1620s and the Westernized church loyal to the Commonwealth of the 1630s and 1640s that was created by Metropolitan Petro Mohyla (1547–1647, in office 1633–47). All discussions of the Khmelnytsky revolt deal with when it should be seen as over, with the death of the hetman in 1657 or the Union of Hadiach of 1658 as an attempt to come to an accommodation with the Commonwealth as frequent termini. Others would place the failure of Hetman Petro Doroshenko's (1627–98, in office 1665–76) policies in 1676 as the end of the revolution or even the Battle of Poltava (July 8, 1709) and the flight of Ivan Mazepa (1639–1709, in office 1687–1709) in 1709 as the end point of the movement for state-building

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15   See Natalia Yakovenko, "Choice of Names versus Choice of Path: The Names of Ukrainian Territories from the Late Sixteenth to the Late Seventeenth Century," in *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography*, ed. Georgiy Kasianov and Phillipp Ther (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 115–48, here 122–23.

16   See the preface to the third part of Hrushevsky, *History of Ukraine-Rus'*, 8:416–17; and the introduction by Frank E. Sysyn, "Assessing the 'Crucial Epoch': From the Cossack Revolts to the Khmelnytsky Uprising at its Height," xxxi–lxix.

17   On the two historians' views, see Frank E. Sysyn, "Hrushevsky Confronts Lypynsky: The Historian's Final Assessment of Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky and the Khmelnytsky Era," in Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *History of Ukraine-Rus'*, vol. 9, book 2, part 2, trans. Marta Daria Olynyk, ed. Yaroslav Fedoruk and Frank E. Sysyn with the assistance of Myroslav Yurkevich (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 2010), lx–lxxviii.

and finding a place within the Eastern European and Western Asian context for Cossack Ukraine.[18]

3   The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century and Early Modern Revolts

Beginning in the 1950s, many historians placed the wars, revolts, economic disturbances, and climatic changes in Europe in the context of the General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century, which initially described a period of revolts and economic decline in Europe and later became a discussion that took on global dimensions.[19] An inspiration for the thesis came from Roger Merriman's (1876–1945) *Six Contemporaneous Revolutions*, published in the 1930s on revolts in the 1640s and 1650s.[20] Yet, in contrast to the seventeenth-century volume by Maiolino Bisaccioni (1582–1663), Merriman did not consider the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Khmelnytsky revolt.[21] Indeed, while economic historians took into account data from Poland–Lithuania and its role in international trade, especially in supplying grain and forest products, the large Commonwealth, which played only a peripheral role in the Thirty Years' War and did not develop an absolutist tendency at the end of the century, did not occupy a major place in the discussions. In part, various regions of the vast Commonwealth followed divergent economic paths in this period, in which the slowdown in some of its western zones was compensated by expanding settlement, economic growth, and demographic expansion in the east, above all in the Ukrainian territories. If Polish historians were integrated into general European historical discussions, Ukrainian historians were not, and the Khmelnytsky revolt was not examined fully in either the economic discussions or in the discussion of revolt and revolutions.

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18   For the 1676 terminal date, see V. A. Smolii and V. S. Stepankov, *Ukraïns'ka national'na revoliutsiia XVII st.* (*1648–1676 rr.*), Ukraïna kriz' viky 7 (Kyiv: Al'ternatyvy, 1999). On the periodization of Cossack Ukraine, see Zenon E. Kohut, *The Making of Cossack Ukraine: A Study of Politics, Culture, and Identity Formation, 1569–1714* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2023).

19   For a discussion of the General Crisis regarding the Commonwealth and Ukraine, see Frank E. Sysyn, "Ukraine and the General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: The Khmelnytsky Uprising among the Early Modern 'Revolutions,'" in *Ukraine and Europe: Cultural Encounters and Negotiations*, ed. Giovanna Brogi Bercoff, Marko Pavlyshyn, and Serhii Plokhy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 136–57.

20   Roger Merriman, *Six Contemporaneous Revolutions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938).

21   Maiolino Bisaccioni, "Historia delle guerre civili di Polonia," in *Historia delle guerre civili di questi ultimi questi tempi*, 2nd ed. (Venice, 1654), 272–397.

As a Marxist historian, Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012), the major voice developing the concept of the General Crisis, derived some of his conceptualization from Soviet historiography in predicating a crisis of the feudal order that only England overcame by establishing a new capitalist bourgeois order.[22] Nevertheless, his discussions did not reach the attenuated historical profession that emerged in post-Stalinist Ukraine, and he did not take into account the work of the pre-war Marxist Matvii Yavorsky (1884–1937), who posited that the Cossack revolt in part represented new economic structures breaking through the latifundia-serf structure of the Commonwealth.[23] Certainly, the revolt represented a challenge to the dominant economic model of lord and serf and what was frequently seen as a second serfdom, but while it represented a redistribution of ownership and production, and the Cossacks took part in commerce above all in the Black Sea basin, a capitalist breakthrough was hard to detect. In the same way, Hugh Trevor-Roper's (1914–2003) discussion of the economic demands of royal courts spawning a reaction from the provincial elites and society was difficult to apply to the Commonwealth and Ukraine, though the magnate latifundia/crown lands and private armies might be seen as statelets that were demanding more from the frontier population that rose in revolt against them.[24] Perhaps the most fruitful concept from the General Crisis discussion came from Jack Goldstone, who saw demography as driving the crisis and identified Ukraine as the region with the fastest growth in early seventeenth-century Europe and therefore a land of social instability.[25]

Ukraine had the most to offer to general European discussions in the question of how a successful revolt could be mounted in the seventeenth century that could fulfill many of the criteria of a revolution. Sigmund Neumann's (1904–62) widespread definition of revolution requiring a change in economic production and ownership, social structure, and political institutions was most closely met by the emergence of the Cossack Hetmanate, albeit on the part of the land that rose in revolt.[26] More difficult was the issue of whether the revolt was launched with the concept of change, and here the view that

22   Eric Hobsbawm, "The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century," *Past and Present* 5 (1954): 33–53; and Hobsbawm, "The Crisis in the Seventeenth Century: II," *Past and Present* 6 (1954): 44–65.

23   Matvii Iavors'kyi, *Narysy istorïï Ukraïny*, 2 vols. (Adelaide: Knyha, 1986), 1: 65–139.

24   Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century," in *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999), 43–81.

25   Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 344.

26   I have discussed the uprising as a revolution based on the Neumann definition in "War der Chmel'nyćkyj-Aufstand eine Revolution? Eine Charakteristik der 'großen ukrainischen

innovation often occurred amid a goal to renovate seems most applicable in that those who rose in revolt were attempting to maintain the structures of a frontier society in the face of new structures being instituted by magnates and their factota in economic production, taxing and labor services, and military structures. Scholars such as Yves-Marie Bercé had pointed out that social revolts were likely to occur not in the regions facing the most arduous burdens but rather in areas that had been relatively freer of them and therefore saw any imposition as injustice, an apt description of the Ukrainian frontier.[27] The seventeenth-century discussions even led to examinations of proto-national factors, as John Elliott (1930–2022) maintained that at times a concept of *patria* defended by the established orders could combine with the masses' xenophobia in producing a reaction against alien intrusion.[28] Although the degree to which a *patria* had been formed in the regional bloc of territories detached from Lithuania and attached to Poland before 1648 may be disputed, the elites of these territories had expressed regional and proto-national (Ruthenian) grievances that were transmitted to non-noble orders of the population and to a degree served later in transforming the lands where the Cossacks held control into a Ukrainian fatherland.[29]

Revolte' und der Bildung des kosakischen Het'manstaates," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 43 (1995): 1–18.

27   The French original was published in 1980. See Yves-Marie Bercé, *Revolt and Revolution in Early Modern Europe: An Essay on the History of Political Violence* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 221.

28   John Elliott, "Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe," *Past and Present* 42 (1969): 35–56, reprinted in Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith, eds., *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 110–33. Citations are from the reprint.

29   See Frank E. Sysyn, "Regionalism in the Ukrainian Lands: 1569–1658," in *Regionalism and Nation in Ukraine*, ed. Guido Hausmann (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2023); and Sysyn, "Regionalism and Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ukraine: The Nobility's Grievances at the Diet of 1641," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 6, no. 2 (1982): 167–90. On the dietines of the incorporation lands, see Karol Mazur, *W stronę integracji z Koroną: Sejmiki Wołynia i Ukrainy w latach 1569–1648* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2006). On the significance of particular laws, see Petro Kulakovs'kyi, *Kantseliariia Rus'koï* (*Volyns'koi*) *metryky 1569–1673: Studiia z istoriï ukraïns'koho rehionalizmu v Rechi Pospolytii* (Ostroh: n.p., 2002). More recent historiography has seen a greater degree of Ruthenian regionalist sentiment even during the Union of Lublin negotiations of 1569. See Henryk Litwin, *Zjednoczenie narodów cnych: polskiego, litewskiego, ruskiego; Wołyń i Kijowszczyzna w Unii Lubelskiej* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2019); and Starchenko, *Ukraïns'ki svity Rechi Pospolytoï*.

4   The Religious Factor

Central to all discussions of the Ukrainian revolt is the question of religion, especially complex because the Eastern Church was often designated as Rus' or Ruthenian and the Latin Catholic Church as Liakh or Polish, terms that intermixed the confessional, proto-national, and social.[30] In European history, the Thirty Years' War, that most historians see as beginning on religious grounds, is seen as culminating in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which is viewed as the end of the religious wars and the formation of a European state system that placed confessional decisions largely at the discretion of rulers. In contrast, Poland was a state that had long had to deal with religious divisions, above all the existence of Orthodox Christians, and that had come to an accommodation with the established Catholic Church and the Reformers in the Henrician Articles of 1573.[31] The union with Lithuania had augmented both Orthodox and Protestant communities. Yet while largely avoiding the Thirty Years' War, the early seventeenth-century Commonwealth was a land of rising religious strife, beginning with the Union of Brest of 1596 that divided the Eastern Christian community.[32] If traditional historiography emphasized religious strife and disagreements, especially over conversions, more recent historiography has pointed out that the conversion of the Orthodox elite proceeded more slowly than once thought, that the union did have some success in winning Ruthenians' allegiance and that noble elites were able to deal with religious divergence within their private and public lives and above all in dealing with subordinate strata with more elasticity than hitherto thought.[33] Yet we still must deal with the rise of confessional consciousness and personal piety in the period in which Catholic reform and the ability to diminish Protestant influence played an essential role. Just as important was the involvement of non-noble strata in religious issues. Not only did Orthodox brotherhoods

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30   On the role of religion in the revolt, see Frank E. Sysyn, "Orthodoxy and Revolt: The Role of Religion in the Seventeenth-Century Ukrainian Uprising against the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth," in *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views from China, Russia, and the West*, ed. James D. Tracy and Marguerite Ragnow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 154–84.

31   See Janusz Tazbir, *A State without Stakes: Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Kościuszko Foundation, 1973).

32   On the Union of Brest, see Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1998).

33   See Iakovenko, *Paralel'nyi svit*; Starchenko, *Ukraïns'ki svity Rechi Pospolytoï*; and Henryk Litwin, "Struktura wyznaniowa szlachty kijowskiej," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 48 (2004): 199–220.

emerge in towns in the Ukrainian and Belarusian territories, but they also formed bonds with nobles and challenged Catholic dominance.[34] Most important was that the Cossacks were drawn into religious issues and received legitimacy from Orthodox intellectuals, above all in the 1620s.[35]

The religious struggles within the Ukrainian and Belarusian lands were also linked to the evolution of international creeds. The Protestant movement had developed international contacts that influenced culture and politics and connected Calvinists and Socinians in international bonds. Post-Tridentine Catholicism and the Jesuit order made for a rejuvenated Catholicism that diminished differences among local churches as it embarked on great missionary ventures abroad. Perhaps most important, an Eastern Christian world that had once been perceived as consisting of Rus' and Greek and Wallachian and other churches had to hone a definition of its creed. It was above all in the Ukrainian and Belarusian territories where distinctions had to be drawn with Uniates that the creed was defined and new institutions were engendered in the church, above all in the age of Moldavian-born Metropolitan Mohyla.[36] Kyiv became an intellectual center of an Orthodox world that increasingly looked to the ancient patriarchates and co-religionists abroad, including in the Balkans and Muscovy (even if the Russians were unsure if they were coreligionists). At the same time, the diversity of religions within the Ukrainian lands and at its borders affected allegiances and stirred tensions. The ancient Armenian communities of Lviv and other cities with their Miaphystic faith were drawn into discussions of religious union with Rome but were also involved in a competition for eastern trade with other religious groups.[37] Jews had long been seen as a religious other and had networks connecting them with Europe and the Middle East. If earlier they were limited in their choice of professions, they now found that the rapidly developing Ukrainian frontier offered new opportunities, including in tax farming and estate management.[38] This expansion would make them major targets of a revolt to turn over the existing order. And across the frontier was the Crimean Khanate, which conducted slave raids and

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34   See Yaroslav Isaievych, *Voluntary Brotherhood: Confraternities of Laymen in Early Modern Ukraine* (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 2009).

35   See Serhii Plokhy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

36   On the Mohylan age, see Ihor Ševčenko, *Ukraine between East and West: Essays on Cultural History to the Early Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 2009), 131–86.

37   On the Armenians of Ukraine, see Kevork Bardakjian, Frank E. Sysyn, and Andrii Iasinovs'kyi, eds., *Virmeno-ukraïns'ki istorychni z'iazky/Armenian–Ukrainian Historical Contacts* (Lviv: UKU and CIUS Press, 2011).

38   On Jews and the revolt, see the special issue of *Jewish History* 17, no. 2 (2003).

the great city of Constantinople/Istanbul, Muslim centers. Greek Orthodox could dream of the city's liberation but often acted as agents of these Muslim powers, and Rome and Venice could look toward the Commonwealth and the Cossacks to join in defense and attack against the Muslim states. The Ukrainian frontier, with its raiders in small craft on the Anatolian coast for booty and its contacts with the slaves beyond the borders, had a very different relationship with the Muslim world, including those with Tatar names among the Cossacks who crossed the religious divide, than other areas of the Commonwealth.[39]

5   New Research Agendas

If religion is a very old topic, including the question of massacres of Jewish communities in 1648, the question of violence in the revolt, so important to contemporaries, has only recently been taken up anew. In the seventeenth century, reports of the violence of the rebels were common in the European press, where even though Polish serfdom was generally viewed as especially onerous, the two issues were only occasionally connected.[40] In the same way, in the wave of violence, relatively little attention was paid within and outside the Commonwealth to massacres of Jews, perhaps because the question of the Jewish position in Ukraine was one of the few issues about which even the Catholic polemicists against the rebels felt on questionable ground. Given the bloodshed of the Thirty Years' War, the violence of the revolt may not have stood out, especially since it occurred to a great degree in a frontier war zone and in an area long subjected to Tatar raids. Present-day interest in violence and mass revolts in Western, especially German historiography, may have brought the question to the fore again. In addition, as opinions of the Khmelnytsky revolt have become less dominated by Ukrainian–Polish national polemics, there has been a greater willingness to recognize the depredations of the rebels even against the peasants and their fellow Ruthenians, thereby departing from Ukrainian traditions that had portrayed the uprising predominantly in

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39 See Orest Subtelny, "Cossack Ukraine and the Turco-Islamic World," in *Rethinking Ukrainian History*, ed. Ivan L. Rudnytsky with the assistance of John-Paul Himka (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1981), 120–34; and Victor Ostapchuk, "Cossack Ukraine in and out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648–1681," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 123–52.

40 See Andreas Kappeler, *Vid kraïny kozakiv do kraïny selian: Ukraïna na vydnokoli Zakhodu u XVI–XVII st.* (Lviv: Litopys, 2022), 63–74.

social or national terms.[41] Of course, the imbalance of sources means that accounts of the vengeance from the landowners and government troops are less likely to be extant. Here, the special interest in violence against Jews and, most recently, attention to Jewish survivors has played a major role in keeping this topic current.[42]

If traditional Ukrainian historiography saw the Cossacks as defenders of the people against a predatory and alien regime, more recent work has dealt with the Cossacks as representative of a warrior or knightly culture regulated by its own code, even in dealing with the noble-led army of the Commonwealth.[43] This focus also makes it easier to explain the contacts and accommodations with the Crimean Tatars, with whom Khmelnytsky came into alliance and who took slaves as their price. Above all, in recent historiography, the Zaporozhian Host with its own traditions and interests can be seen divorced from national, social, and religious questions. It was the structure of the Host, formed over a century before and an agent in international affairs involving Venice and the Holy Roman Empire that explains the revolt's success and the ability to enter into international arrangements. Above all, the Cossackization of the frontier population and the fuller transformation of the Cossacks into a territorial militia that controlled service or rank land explains how the Ukrainian hetman could raise army after army and recover from defeats. Combined with the demographic boom, Goldstone points out, one can understand the old phrase "Fertile is the Cossack Mother" and Khmelnytsky's successes in an organization that Kubala pointed to over a century and a half ago in commenting on the hetman's ability to raise and organize troops through many years of war.

Recent trends in historiography, especially in paying attention to indigenous groups and slave societies, have returned our attention to the revolt's social context. While the Cossack Host did not espouse the abolition of labor services, it offered a structure through which those who were endangered by the new use of the forest-steppe for agriculture that would be farmed and exploited to benefit landlords, leaseholders and overseers could better their position through military service. In practice, the new system offered rewards that attracted large numbers of petty nobles. Still, as the revolt moved farther west into the Volhynian and Ruthenian palatinates or Polissia, the benefits for the peasantry or serfs were less direct. Yet the nineteenth-century folklorists who recorded

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41   Natalia Iakovenko, "U kol'orakh proletars'koï revoliutsiï," *Ukraïns'kyi humanitarnyi ohliad* 3 (2000): 58–78.

42   Adam Teller, *Rescue the Surviving Souls: The Great Jewish Refugee Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

43   Natalia Iakovenko, "Viina iak remeslo, abo shche raz pro kozats'ki viiny seredyny XVII stolittia," *Kwartalnik historyczny* 109, no. 3 (2002): 120–33.

Cossack themes and images of Ukraine may have caught on to an attraction that the revolt offered.[44] However, removal from the Dnipro Basin made the Cossack system less viable, even in Ukrainian- and Belarusian-populated lands. It also brought the revolt into territories where the nobility or *szlachta* were more numerous and more likely to be attracted to their advantages in the Commonwealth as its noble citizens.[45] The thinness of the noble layer in the Dnipro Basin and the refusal to admit those who defended the land, the Cossacks, to estate privileges had been a major reason the revolt could take hold and the political-social-economic system overturned. The other reason may have been the timing of when the serf system was introduced and its greater degree of stability in most of the Polish territories, where it had been established at a time of relative prosperity. As Elliott and Lawrence Stone (1919–99) suggested, we may best understand revolts, especially of the enserfed, by studying areas where they did not occur, a major question in contrasts between most of the Polish territories and the Ukrainian lands.[46]

Attention to indigenous peoples, imperialism, and colonialism has revived the topic in examining the European and Asian history. Indeed, the full Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, has stimulated a rethinking of the field in North America with the catchword of "decolonizing" Russian studies. While the Russian Federation clearly remains an imperial state, the same cannot be said of Crown Poland or the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. Yet, in many ways, what the Spaniards found in the gold of the New World, Poland could find in the wealth of Ukraine.[47] The topic was not unknown to those involved in the eastward expansion of the early modern period. Certainly, when voices were raised during the revolt that the Cossacks should be exterminated and their place taken by Irish émigrés or Walloons, we have echoes of colonial policies.[48] In the same way, when nobles in the incorporation territories argued that the rights they had been guaranteed on their accession to the Crown were not being maintained, we at least have an image of a composite

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44   Mikhail Dragomanov and Vladimir Antonovich, *Istoricheskie pesni malorusskogo naroda*, 2 vols. (Kyiv: Tipografiia M. P. Fritsa, 1874–75).

45   For discussion of the differences of the nobility in various lands, see Frank Sysyn, "The Problem of Nobilities in the Ukrainian Past: The Polish Period," in Rudnytsky with Himka, *Rethinking Ukrainian History*, 29–102.

46   Sysyn, "General Crisis," 44.

47   See Janusz Tazbir, "Kolonie zamorskie i całkiem bliskie," in *Prace wybrane*, vol. 3, *Sarmaci i świat* (Kraków: Universitas, 2001), 203–11.

48   Yaroslav Fedoruk, "An Unrealized Project of Irish Colonization in Ukraine (1655)," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 33–34 (2008–9): 117–34; and Sysyn, "Contemporary's Account of the Causes of the Khmel'nyts'kyi Uprising."

state in which one part was aggrieved.[49] Perhaps the closest to a full colonial policy came after the annexation of the Smolensk and Chernihiv lands, in which a new elite was formed with attention to religious creed and background and in which royal power guaranteed certain rights for the Uniates.[50]

The national and the religious have long been disputed subjects in Ukrainian–Polish relations.[51] The phrase *gente Rutheni, natione Poloni*, often translated as "of Ruthenian stock and of Polish nation" and attributed to Stanisław Orzechowski (1513–66), has served as an explanation that Polish nationhood became "civil" in a certain sense, at least for the Commonwealth's noble citizens, and has been seen as explaining a gradual process of acculturation and assimilation of the Ruthenian elite. Subsequent research has placed the source of the phrase in doubt, together with its distinction between *natio* and *gens*.[52] Attention has been directed to other sources of noble descent (the Lithuanians), the varieties of burgher theories of descent, and the evolution of more intensified Ruthenian identity among various strata occurring just as the process of acculturation and assimilation was underway.[53] Among these phenomena are the first indications that argued that it was blood that made one a Ruthenian, not whether one was Orthodox or Uniate.[54]

The modern Ukrainian movement centered the national narrative on the Cossacks and the Hetmanate. It did so even though many lands with Ukrainian speakers were only tangentially affected by the Cossacks, and most had not been part of the Cossack Hetmanate. It did so in part because the Cossacks had defended the tradition of Rus', and Khmelnytsky had expressed aspirations to the western Ukrainian lands. In addition, the Cossack elite of many origins had taken over the regional concepts of the nobility of the incorporation lands and converted them into a "Ukrainian fatherland on both banks of the Dnipro

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49   Sysyn, "Regionalism and Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ukraine."

50   On the Chernihiv palatinate, see Petro Kulakovs'kyi, *Chernihovo-Sivershchyna u skladi Rechi Pospolytoï, 1618–1648* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2006).

51   See Frank E. Sysyn, "Ukrainian–Polish Relations in the Seventeenth Century: The Role of National Consciousness and National Conflict in the Khmelnytsky Movement," in *Poland and Ukraine: Past and Present*, ed. Peter J. Potichnyj (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1980), 58–82.

52   David Althoen, "Natione Polonus and the Naród szlachecki: Two Myths of National Identity and Noble Solidarity," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 25 (2003): 475–508.

53   On "national" communities in Lviv, see Myron Kapral', *Natsional'ni hromady L'vova XVI–XVII st. (sotsial'no-pravovi vzaiemyny)* (Lviv: LNU im. I. Franka, L'vivs'ke viddilennia In-tu ukraïns'koï arkheohrafiï ta dzhereloznavstva im. M. S. Hrushevs'koho NAN Ukraïny, 2003).

54   David Frick, "Meletij Smotryc'kyj and the Ruthenian Question in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 8, no. 3/4 (1984): 351–75, here 359.

River" that was to serve as a political concept of Ukraine before the age of modern nationalism.[55] The texts of the Cossack Hetmanate provided the national narrative, even though, in some cases, they were more directly associated with a Cossack history. Indeed, while some mentioned the Sarmatians in discussing Ruthenians' relations with Poles, others went for a more direct Cossack history, with Khazars as their ancestors.[56] Although the Poltava Battle doomed the striving for independence of a Cossack state or even for full autonomy, the die in forming an early modern Ukrainian political culture had been cast between 1569 and 1711 when the émigré hetman Pylyp Orlyk (1672–1742) provided the most elaborate plan for a Cossack Hetmanate state.[57] That state never emerged as the émigrés failed to find sufficient foreign support. Although the emerging eighteenth-century Russian empire integrated the Hetmanate into its structures and abolished Ukrainian autonomy, the Cossack revolt of 1648 and the Cossack Hetmanate had thus left an enduring legacy to the modern Ukrainian national movement.

6   Conclusion

In his later writings, Elliott called on historians of the early modern period to pay more attention to the republics that were largely dismissed as outmoded when the discussion of the General Crisis raged.[58] They and composite states have now been conceived of as major political formations in the early modern period. This research agenda offers many new possibilities for the reconsideration of the Commonwealth. Although the Cossack Hetmanate that took so

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55   On the concept of fatherland, see Frank E. Sysyn, "Fatherland in Early Eighteenth-Century Ukrainian Political Culture," in *Mazepa e il suo tempo: Storia, cultura, società*, ed. Giovanna Siedina (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2004), 37–51.

56   On the Khazar myth, see the text and introduction of Hryhorij Hrabjanka's *The Great War of Bohdan Xmel'nyc'kyj*, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature: Texts 9 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); and Andrii Bovgyria, "'Khozary vo kozaki imeniutsia posem': Etnogeneticheskie kontsepty v ukrainskikh tekstakh XVII–XVIII vv.," in *Drevniaia Rus' posle Drevnei Rusi: Diskurs vostochnoslavianskogo (ne)edinstva*, ed. A. V. Doronin (Moscow: Politicheskaia entsiklopediia, 2017), 291–306.

57   Gary Marker, "*Constitutio medievalis*: The Language of Politics and the Politics of Language in Pylyp Orlyk's Constitution of 1710," in *Eighteenth-Century Ukraine: New Perspectives on Social, Cultural, and Intellectual History*, ed. Zenon E. Kohut, Frank E. Sysyn, and Volodymyr Sklokin (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2023), 560–78.

58   J. [John] H. Elliott, "The General Crisis in Retrospect: A Debate without End," in *Early Modern Europe: From Crisis to Stability*, ed. Philip Benedict and Myron P. Gutman (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 31–51, here 46–47.

many political concepts from the Commonwealth never evolved into as stable a republic, Ukraine must also be considered within these parameters. Elliott also led the way examining royal advisors, concentrating on Gaspar de Guzmán, the count-duke of Olivares (1587–1645). Such a trend should take us back to rethinking the role of Jerzy Ossoliński (1595–1650) in bringing on the revolt and allowing it to fester. While it was Khmelnytsky who thought in broad terms and overturned the international situation by allying with the Crimean khan, İslâm Giray (1604–54, r.1644–54), it was Ossoliński's policy that sought to come to an accommodation with the Cossacks, thereby giving the revolt a chance to grow. The enmity of Ossoliński and Jeremi Wiśniowiecki (1612–51), who led the party insisting on a total suppression of the revolt, the break in the old elite that was so important in so many revolts of the period, gave Khmelnytsky his great opportunity just as the death of Władysław IV (1595–1648, r.1632–48) prevented any agreement with a monarch and permitted the revolt to gain steam as opposed to the magnates and not the anointed monarch. With his unexpected success, Khmelnytsky faced two grave questions that most rebels of the period encountered. Could he find a foreign state to back his cause, especially when the Tatars proved unreliable or unable? Could he assume legitimate rule despite his humble background? As Kubala pointed out, he was an ingenious man and searched for many solutions. The Ottoman empire, Muscovy, and even Sweden came into his purview.[59] The marriage of his son into the ruling house of Moldavia offered a possibility of raising his family's position that was shattered by his son Tymish's death in battle (1653). He did not resolve these issues, and the consequences of his oath to the Russian tsar remain much debated to this day. Still, he remade the map of Europe and placed Ukraine upon it. Writing in the 1720s, Velychko was to remind the Poles of the consequences of that act and the beginning of Ukraine's relationship with the Russian tsar when he followed his purported statement on Khmelnytsky's breaking with the Poles with the judgment: "The Poles did not understand the force of these words of Khmelnytsky and disdained his speech, but only came finally to comprehend their sense when the submission of Khmelnytsky to the protection of the All Russian monarch occurred."[60]

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59   See Frank E. Sysyn, "The Political Worlds of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi," *Palaeoslavica* 10, no. 2 (2002): 197–209.

60   Velychko, *Litopys*, 193.

The Younger Europe—or the Older?: Visions of Politics in the Early Modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth

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Abstract

This essay explores the trajectory of Polish–Lithuanian political thought from 1569 to 1795, focusing particularly on elements of modern state concepts that did not find their way into Polish–Lithuanian discourse. In the sixteenth century, political ideology in Poland–Lithuania, much like most European humanists and specifically "civic humanists," was firmly rooted in classical state thinking. Ideas about the state, a citizen's role, and freedom were all drawn from this classical tradition. However, Western European thought started to diverge from these classical theories during the seventeenth century. It established modern notions of sovereignty, natural rights, and the concept of the state as an entity separate from its citizens. Contrastingly, in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, state theorists and political debaters remained loyal to older notions, largely bypassing the emergence of new trends in political thought. The essay illuminates how the ancient tradition was summoned and sustained in Polish–Lithuanian political discourse. It delves into the reasons behind this steadfast adherence, particularly when European thought was veering onto a different course around the cusp of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Furthermore, it illustrates how references to classical antiquity in the eighteenth century provided a platform for re-engaging with contemporary Western theories.

My somewhat provocative title encapsulates the reflections the theme of this volume prompted in my mind. The "younger" Europe, at least the way I see it,

refers to the part of Europe that was late to adopt certain ideas and attitudes and intellectual, artistic, and moral fashions. This also holds true for political thought and political discourse. This essay explores how the noble citizens of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth thought and talked about the state. The word "noble" should be emphasized here, as although bourgeois authors also sketched out their visions of the state over the two hundred years of the Commonwealth's existence, they did so almost entirely beyond the mainstream political discourse.[1] Such discussions were thus reserved for nobles who had, or believed they had, a share in wielding power. As a result, Polish–Lithuanian political discourse started to diverge from what would become the mainstream of West European political thought in the seventeenth century and would not reconverge with it until the second half of the eighteenth century. But did that divergence, as some scholars believe, result only from backwardness, conservatism, xenophobia, and a refusal to open up to foreign influences?[2] Or was it due to the nobility choosing a different path—whether deliberately or otherwise—and turning away from certain solutions and notions, instead opting in favor of other, undoubtedly older concepts?

I was inspired to ask these questions by the work of the Vilnius University professor Aaron Aleksander Olizarowski (1618–59).[3] He was the Commonwealth's best and essentially only expert on Jean Bodin (1530–96). However, he appeared to take no notice of Bodin's concept of sovereignty as a supreme, unaccountable power, a crucial element of the French master's theories. He also regarded the classical terms Bodin used to characterize the ruler's sovereignty as descriptions of tyranny.[4] And although he had a perfect definition by Bodin in plain sight, as Eugeniusz Jarra (1881–1973) has aptly pointed out, he

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1 Such deliberations were mainly penned by burghers in Royal Prussia, as shown in Karin Friedrich's article in this collection, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and this did not change until the end of the eighteenth century, more specifically the period of the Four-Year Sejm (1788–92).

2 Zbigniew Ogonowski, *Filozofia polityczna w Polsce XVII wieku i tradycje demokracji europejskiej* (Warsaw: PAN IFiS, 1992), 103; Jerzy Łukowski, *Disorderly Liberty: The Political Culture of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Continuum, 2010), 13, passim.

3 Aaron Olizarowski, *De politica hominum societate libri tres* (Gdańsk: Georg Forster), 1651.

4 "Voces illae: *Sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas*, *Principis placitum lex est*, *Principi quod libet licet*, *Princeps lege solutus est*, voces, inquam, illae, non sunt regum, sed tyrannorum" (Those voices: Thus I will, thus I command, the will stands for reason, the law is what the prince pleases, the prince is allowed to do what he pleases, the prince is freed by the law, those voices, I say, are not of kings, but of tyrants). Olizarowski, *De politica*, 305 https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=766223 (accessed October 17, 2022); on differences between tyranny and monarchy, see 307; see also Eugeniusz Jarra, "Le Bodinisme en Pologne au XVIIe siècle," *Archives de philosophie du droit et de sociologie juridique* 3, nos. 1–2

nevertheless referred to Aristotle (384–322 BCE) and Cicero (106–143 BCE) in constructing his definition of the state. Thus, despite all his admiration for the French philosopher and knowledge of his theory,[5] Olizarowski clearly found some of Bodin's thoughts unacceptable. The question is, why? To answer this question, the essay analyzes the broader evolution of Polish–Lithuanian political thought from 1569 to 1795, focusing in particular on the aspects of the modern concepts of the state that were not adopted in the Polish–Lithuanian political discourse.

1   On the Main Route: The Republican Tradition

Researchers have long pointed out that the entire concept of the state, as defined by authors first in the Polish Crown and later in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, was based on classical foundations, above all Aristotle's thought and Roman republicanism.[6] Practically all major concepts present in the political discourse were taken from the ancient traditions, as was the approach to politics together with its close links to ethics. Although the latter relationship could be traced to the work of Aristotle, who saw the state as an ethical project, a place where citizens could pursue a good (i.e., virtuous) life,[7] it was the later Roman tradition of Livy (59 BCE–17 CE), Sallustius (86 BCE–*c.*35 BCE), and above all Cicero that was of greater importance in the

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(1933): 125–32, here 129, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k415552f?rk=21459;2 (accessed October 17, 2022).

5   He saw Bodin as "vir summi ingenii et rarae eruditionis" (a man of great talent and of rare erudition) and "sapientissimus rerum politicarum scriptor" (a very wise writer in politics); quoted after Jarra, "Bodinisme," 126.

6   Claude Backvis, *Szkice o kulturze staropolskiej* (Warsaw: PIW, 1975), 467–511, here 515; Robert Frost, "'Liberty without licence?': The Failure of Polish Democratic Thought in the Seventeenth Century," in *Polish Democratic Thought from the Renaissance to the Great Emigration: Essays and Documents*, ed. Mieczysław B. Biskupski and James S. Paula (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 19–54, here 29; Edward Opaliński, "Civic Humanism and Republican Citizenship in the Polish Renaissance," in *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, ed. Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1:160–66; Dorota Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Ład Rzeczypospolitej: Polska myśl polityczna XVI wieku a klasyczna tradycja republikańska* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2012), abbreviated edition: Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Polish Republican Discourse in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Pietrzyk-Reeves, "Recepcja rzymskich idei politycznych w Rzeczypospolitej XVI i XVII wieku," *Teologia polityczna* 8 (2015–16): 45–53; Jan Květina, *Mýtus republiky: Identita a politický diskurz raně novověké polské šlechty* (Hradec Králové: Pavel Mervart, 2019).

7   See esp. Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Ład*, 291–334.

Polish–Lithuanian context, particularly the conviction that the existence of a republic was based on, and only guaranteed by, the virtue of its citizens.[8]

In the Commonwealth's case, those classed as "citizens" were the people vested with political rights rather than all the individuals who lived under one law and one ruler, as Bodin and his successors would have it. Citizens were bound to lead an active public life and love their homeland, which was also understood after the manner of the ancients: "The homeland lieth not within walls, not within borders, not in plentitudes, but in the exercise of rights and liberties."[9] This love manifested itself in putting the common good before the good of the individual. *Salus rei publicae suprema lex esto* (The welfare of the people should be the supreme law) was another eagerly quoted Roman aphorism.

The canon of civic virtues was drawn from classical authors, but so was the concept of the state as a community of citizens; Cicero's definition of a republic as "the gathering of citizens into a society bound together by law and an association of utility"[10] was often invoked, whether more or less deliberately. Another assumption drawn from classical authors, though this time more likely from the Greeks, was that the best system of government for such a state was a *respublica mixta* (mixed republic). The idea of a mixed republic was partly based on Aristotle's *politeia*, but it seems to have been influenced to a greater extent by Polybius (*c.*200 BCE–*c.*118 BCE)[11] and was seen as the only solution able to reconcile the power of the state with the freedom of its citizens. After the manner of ancient authors, above all the eulogists of the Roman Republic, Polish–Lithuanian authors understood freedom primarily as independence from the will of others, the ability to decide for themselves

8   Backvis, *Szkice*, 549–50; in the words of Sławomir Baczewski, in the sixteenth century "virtue in its political aspect became a central component of state ideology." Sławomir Baczewski, *Szlachectwo: Studium z dziejów idei w piśmiennictwie polskim; Druga połowa XVI wieku–XVII wiek* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2009), 67; Benedict Wagner-Rundell, *Common Wealth, Common Good: The Politic of Virtue in Early Modern Poland–Lithuania* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 11.

9   From a letter written by Lithuanian Krzysztof Radziwiłł (1585–1640) to crown magnate Jerzy Zbaraski (1574–1631) around 1630, quoted after Henryk Wisner, *Najjaśniejsza Rzeczpospolita: Szkice z dziejów Polski szlacheckiej* (Warsaw: PIW, 1978), 221.

10   Stanisław Orzechowski, *Dyjalog około egzekucyjej* in Orzechowski, *Wybór pism*, ed. Jerzy Starnawski (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1972), 313, the definition given in Latin and in Polish, though without attribution to Cicero; see also Tomasz W. Gromelski, "The Commonwealth and *Monarchia mixta* in Polish and English Political Thought in the Later Sixteenth Century," in *Britain and Poland–Lithuania: Contacts and Comparison from the Middle Ages to 1795*, ed. Richard Unger with the assistance of Jakub Basista (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 167–82, here 169.

11   Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Ład*, 337–79; Květina, *Mýtus*, 278–86, passim.

and their community, and subordination not to a ruler but to a law they had established—*libertas consistit in legibus* (freedom consists in laws),[12] as they repeated after Cicero. It was not the monarch but the law that was given supreme authority in the state. The law was the only guarantee of freedom, but it also required all members of society, starting with the ruler, to obey it unconditionally.

From this brief outline of the foundations of the idea of the state in theoretical works and political writings on current topics in the Commonwealth in the sixteenth century,[13] we can see that it was a vision deeply rooted in the classical—and therefore undoubtedly older—tradition. However, at least until the end of the sixteenth century, all of Europe talked about politics using a language largely borrowed from ancient writers. The Polish–Lithuanian authors consequently referred to classical traditions when participating in political discussions in Europe. Here, however, they made a decisive choice by following a trend that emerged in the Italian republics in the fifteenth century, particularly in Florence, and spread beyond the Alps in the sixteenth century, providing inspiration for authors in various countries, although to the greatest extent in England, The Netherlands, and the Commonwealth.[14] I am referring here to the phenomenon that Hans Baron (1900–88) defined as civic humanism,[15] and the researchers from English-speaking countries called classical republicanism.[16]

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12 "And thus thou hast no place for freedom, where thou hast no laws"; Andrzej Wolan, *De libertate politica seu civili: O wolności Rzeczypospolitej albo ślacheckiej* [1606], ed. Maciej Eder and Roman Mazurkiewicz (Warsaw: Neriton, 2010), 89.

13 For more on this, see Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Ład*; Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *The Political Discourse of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth: Concepts and Ideas*, trans. Daniel Sax (New York: Routledge, 2021); Květina, *Mýtus*; and from earlier works also Backvis, *Szkice*.

14 The first to emphasize the role of Italian thought was Robert Frost: "In establishing their new political system after 1569, Poles and Lithuanians explicitly identified with the ideas of Italian defenders of political independence and republican self-government"; Frost, "Liberty without licence?," 38; see also Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Ład*, 85–164.

15 Hans Baron first used this term in the 1920s before describing it comprehensively in his famous book *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1955); reflections on civic humanism and polemics against certain earlier research assumptions can be found in the collective work *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). The editor's foreword (1–13) contains a review of earlier discussions on this topic.

16 The concept was introduced by Zera Fink, *The Classical Republicans: An Essay in the Recovery of a Pattern of Thought in Seventeenth-Century England*, 1st ed. (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1945). Both concepts were essentially used interchangeably until they began to be treated as separate trends and even contrasted with each other by researchers from the English-speaking countries in the 1990s—the first do so was Quentin Skinner; see Marco Geuna, "The Tension between Law and Politics," in

Although scholars disagree over whether that trend was influenced more by Aristotle's thought or by the Romans, especially Cicero,[17] the fact remains that those who represented it sketched out their projects related to the system of government based on antique thought and used it to interpret the crucially important terms and ideas that made up the ideal of *vivere civile* (civic life), such as homeland, republic, citizen, civic virtue, patriotism, public good, and finally, or perhaps above all, freedom.[18] Those same concepts provided the basis for the discourse in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and represented a similar vision of the political world.

Polish–Lithuanian authors were not merely passive recipients of external ideas but proposed their own concepts as well. Most theoretical works were written in Latin and were also published outside Poland: Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski's (1503–72) treatise on the reform of the Commonwealth was published in Basel,[19] and Wawrzyniec Goślicki's (1530–1607) work on the perfect senator was published in Venice.[20] Both were translated into German (*De republica emendanda* [On the improvement of the Commonwealth])[21] and English (*De optimo senatore* [On the best senator]) respectively,[22] and aroused considerable interest (this holds true in particular for Goślicki's work).[23] More importantly, however, even the writings that were not intended for an external

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Republican Democracy: Liberty, Law, and Politics, ed. Andreas Niederberger (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 5–40, here 8.

17   The first viewpoint represents, e.g., John G. A. Pocock, the second, e.g., Quentin Skinner.

18   "From the early Renaissance to the Age of Revolution, appropriations of the ancient past loomed large over political debates and processes of republican identification, in terms of imitation and emulation as well as condemnation"; introduction to *Ancient Models in the Early Modern Republican Imagination*, ed. Wyger Velema and Arthur Weststeijn (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1–19, here 19, https://www.academia.edu/35709655/Ancient_Models_in_the_Early_Modern_Republican_Imagination (accessed October 17, 2022); besides, the literature on this topic is vast.

19   Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Commentariorum de republica emendanda libri quinque* (Basel: Ioannes Oporinus, 1559).

20   Wawrzyniec Goślicki, *De optimo senatore libri duo* (Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1568; Basel: Robertus Cambierus, 1593).

21   Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Von Verbesserung des Gemeinen Nutz Fünff Bücher*, trans. Wolfgang Weißenburg (Basel: Nicolaus Brylinger, 1557).

22   *The Counsellor Exactly Pourtraited in Two Bookes* (London: Richard Bradocke, 1598; 2nd ed., 1607).

23   "Thanks to the universal language of Latin, an important contribution to this international republican conversation was made by writers from Poland"; Richard Butterwick, "Europe's Wealth of Civic Traditions," paper delivered at the conference "Citizen Matters: Views and Perspectives on European Citizenship" held at the European Parliament December 10, 2014, 6, https://www.coleurope.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/page/europes_wealth_of_civic_traditions.pdf (accessed October 17, 2022); Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, *Goslicius'*

audience played an important role in the European discussions on the state. Those writings were abundant from the middle of the sixteenth century onward, and the years 1573–76 brought a true deluge of such works. This comes as no surprise: the participants in the Polish–Lithuanian political discussions of that time were confronted with an enormous challenge—they had to name and describe their aspirations and political ideals as well as a political reality that was changing before their very eyes. What had been initiated by the most prominent theorists, namely Modrzewski, Stanisław Orzechowski (1513–66), and Goślicki, was continued by the participants in the major political battles related to the great interregnum. Thus, in the second half of the sixteenth century, the political writers of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth successfully used well-defined classical concepts to create their own vision of the state and their own language of the political discourse, both of which were ideally suited to the needs of the emerging noble Commonwealth. In a sense, the participants in the discussions that played out at the end of the sixteenth century felt that they had created "a new incarnation of the ancient ideal of the civic state,"[24] and they talked about politics using words drawn from the classical tradition, albeit filtered through humanist thought, especially its Italian version.

Even then, however, the Polish–Lithuanian authors made their own decisions about what to adopt, both from that tradition and from its later interpretations. Above all—although they were practically unmatched in "internalizing" the Roman tradition and, just like the Venetians of the Renaissance,[25] regarded their own republic as a direct heir of republican Rome[26]—they rejected

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Ideal Senator and His Cultural Impact over the Centuries: Shakespearean Reflections, Rozprawy Wydziału Filologicznego PAU 78 (Kraków: PAU and UJ 2009).

24 Jerzy Axer, "'Latinitas' jako składnik polskiej tożsamości kulturowej," in *Tradycje antyczne w kulturze europejskiej: Perspektywa polska*, ed. Jerzy Axer (Warsaw: OBTA, 1995), 71–81, here 74; similarly, Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, *Polski wiek świateł: Obszary swoistości* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2002), 193.

25 Eco Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1980), 5; see also Franco Gaeta, "Alcune considerazioni sul mito di Venezia," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 23 (1961): 58–75, here 60.

26 "And here be the form of Republics which we call free [...] and of which there have been but three in the world: the Roman, [...] then it shifted to the Venetians there it remains to this day. Our forebears formed this third of their own, *ad normam* the Venetian one [...]"; "Libera republica quae sit," in *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoszu Zebrzydowskiego 1606–1608*, ed. Jan Czubek, 2 vols. (Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1918), 2:403–9, here 407; Jakub Filonik, "The Polish Nobility's Golden Freedom: On the Ancient Roots of a Political Idea," *European Legacy* 20, no. 7 (October 2015): 1–13, here 9, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281769360_The_Polish_Nobility%27s_Golden_Freedom_On_the_Ancient_Roots_of_a_Political_Idea (accessed October 17, 2022); Tomasz Gromelski,

Roman law, extremely important as it was in European political deliberations, including those considered republican. This was not a complete rejection: the influence of Roman law can be seen especially in the Statutes of Lithuania, for example.[27] However, Justinian's (527–65) *Digest*, which provided the basis for thinking not only about law but also about the state in the whole of Europe, had only very limited influence on the debate, and some authors (such as Orzechowski) even rejected it as constituting the foundation of royal despotism.[28]

This was not the only difference. Contrary to what was once thought, Niccolò Machiavelli's (1469–1527) work was known and widely discussed in the Commonwealth,[29] but it had a decidedly greater influence on Western republicans than on Polish–Lithuanian political thought, which could hardly be described as experiencing what John G. A. Pocock calls a "Machiavellian moment." It lacked what was very important for the English republicans, namely the "mechanization of virtue," the creation of a political construct that would force individuals to adopt attitudes beneficial for the community.[30] Polish–Lithuanian thinkers also had a different attitude toward the government of Venice, which held a fascination for all of republican Europe. Participants in the Polish–Lithuanian discussions about the state knew and admired the government of Venice, but they did not see it as a model to be emulated. What mattered for them before everything else was *libertas Venetiana* (Venetian freedom), as confirmation that they had chosen the right path,[31] and not the

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"Classical Models in Early Modern Poland Lithuania," in Velema and Weststijn, *Ancient Models*, 285–305, here 293.

27   Juliusz Bardach, *Statuty litewskie a prawo rzymskie* (Warsaw: OBTA, 1999); Andrzej Zakrzewski, *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie (XVI–XVIII w.): Prawo—ustrój—społeczeństwo* (Podkowa Leśna: Campidoglio, 2013), chapters 12 and 13: "Statuty litewskie" (215–31) and "Prawo w teorii i praktyce" (232–54); Sławomir Godek, *Elementy prawa rzymskiego w III Statucie litewskim (1588)* (Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, 2004).

28   On the nobility's ambivalence toward Roman law, see Adam Vetulani, "Opory wobec prawa rzymskiego w dawnej Polsce," *Analecta Cracoviensia* 1 (1969): 372–86; Backvis, *Szkice*, 556–57; Stanisław Estreicher, *Kultura prawnicza w Polsce XVI wieku* (Kraków: PAU, 1931), 44f.; Stanisław Grodziski, *Z dziejów staropolskiej kultury prawnej* (Kraków: Universitas, 2004), 166.

29   Robert Frost, "Medicinal Herbs and Poison Plants: Reading Machiavelli in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1560–1700," in *Unie międzypaństwowe—parlamentaryzm—samorządność: Studia z dziejów ustroju Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów*, ed. Wacław Uruszczak et al. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2020), 28–53.

30   Dorota Pietrzyk-Reeves, "Kontynuacja i zmiany w polskim republikanizmie XVII i XVIII wieku," *Czasopismo prawno-historyczne* 67 (2015): 45–74, here 60, https://pressto.amu.edu.pl/index.php/cph/article/view/4217/4285 (October 17, 2022).

31   Backvis, *Szkice*, 728.

specific solutions in terms of the system of government that were topics of a dispute between the English and the Dutch.[32]

2   The Side Path: Disregard of New Concepts

Although these differences were significant, the political thought of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and discussions held throughout Europe could hardly be described as following divergent paths until the end of the sixteenth century, when new elements began to appear in European discussions that would alter the perception of the institutions of the state, authority, the rights of individuals, and the shape of the community, if not completely, then at least to a very substantial degree. Already at the end of the sixteenth century, Bodin outlined the early modern theory of undivided sovereignty. Around the same time, a modern concept of the law of nature began to take shape, developed by Johannes Althusius (1557–1638) and Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), as did, though somewhat later, the vision of the state as *persona ficta* (a legal person), an institution external both to the ruler and to society, the most perfect embodiment of which was Thomas Hobbes's (1588–1679) *Leviathan*.[33] Therefore, this discourse began to break from the classical framework and outline a different picture of the political world in at least some aspects. This also holds true for the narrative described as republican, which already in the middle of the seventeenth century accommodated natural law in its early modern sense, despite remaining in many aspects faithful to the traditional image of community.[34]

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32   Haitsma Mulier, *Myth*, passim; one exception was the treatise by Paweł Palczowski, *Status Venetorum, sive Brevis tractatus de origine et vetustate Venetorum* (Kraków: Officina Lazari, 1604), based largely on Gasparo Contarini's (1483–1542) work, although its author knew Venice from his own experience.

33   Quentin Skinner, "The State," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. Terence Ball, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 90–131, here 102, 112; David Runciman, "The Concept of the State: The Sovereignty of a Fiction," in *States and Citizens: History, Theory, Prospects*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Bo Stråth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 28–38, here 29.

34   "Characteristic republican combination of classical republicanism and natural law theory." Jonathan Scott, *Commonwealth Principles: Republican Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 89, 157; Charlotte Hamel noticed its influence even earlier, in the writings of the Dutch republicans at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Charlotte Hamel, *L'Esprit républicain: Droits naturels et vertu civique chez Algernon Sidney* (Paris: Garnier, 2012), 17.

Meanwhile, Polish–Lithuanian political thought would continue to "adhere to the classical model at any price" for over a century,[35] or, as Robert Frost would have it, remain stuck in "an Aristotelian prison."[36] This outcome was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that it became ossified, refused to open up to foreign influences, and departed from the mainstream of European thought. However, this explanation alone is too simplistic, particularly as lively political discussions took place in the Commonwealth until the middle of the seventeenth century, and their participants (especially in the period of Mikołaj Zebrzydowski's [1553–1620] rebellion of 1606–8) skillfully invoked certain theoretical solutions while almost completely ignoring new political concepts. To understand why this happened, we should compare the circumstances that accompanied the arrival of new concepts and ideas into the political vocabulary and the situation in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, considering how useful those concepts could have been, the extent to which they could have been adapted to the existing discourse and to the political and social reality, and—to go even further—whether there was any need to do so at all.

The most important concepts of the early modern political discourse, such as sovereignty and natural law, were forged where disputes and wars were being waged, often against a religious backdrop,[37] forcing theoreticians, and partially also the participants in those struggles, to ask themselves not only the traditional questions about the ways to ensure peace and security for the state and its inhabitants but also about the limits of government intervention in the lives of individuals, about the right to rebel against legitimate authority, and finally about who should wield that authority. The issues being considered not only laid the foundations for a new philosophy of the state but also became arguments in political clashes. This held true for the concept of undivided sovereignty, which not only provided the basis for talking about the state and authority but also became a weapon in disputes, both for supporters of absolutism (the sovereignty of the monarch) and advocates of republicanism (the sovereignty of the people).[38] Similarly, for both sides, natural law quickly became the basis for the seventeenth-century dispute over power

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35   Pietrzyk-Reeves, "Kontynuacja," 45.

36   Frost, "Liberty without Licence?," 54.

37   "The idea of undivided sovereignty was put forward in response to the European religious wars." Bill Brugger, *Republican Theory in Political Thought: "Virtuous or Virtual?"* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), 23; see also Frost, "Liberty without Licence?," 40.

38   Oscar Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society 1500–1800* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 42; Martin van Gelderen, "Aristotelians, Monarchomachs, and Republicans: Sovereignty and *Respublica mixta* in Dutch and German Political Thought, 1580–1650," in Van Gelderen and Skinner, *Republicanism*, 1:195–217, here 202.

and the pivot around which this dispute turned.[39] On the other hand, the concept of immutable and inalienable natural rights vested in every member of the community—the right to life, property, liberty, and, above all, freedom of conscience—was forged in the course of the battles for religious liberties waged by Protestants and was a fundamental argument in their defense.

Although political disputes also played out in Poland at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they were not characterized by conflicts of such magnitude. Even the most heated dispute in the period of Zebrzydowski's rebellion focused more on the question of how to make the existing system of government work well, and if it amounted to a struggle for power, it was one within that system.[40] Faced with an open dispute with the monarch, the noble opponents of King Sigismund III (1566–1632, r.1587–1632) made some attempts to determine more precisely who wielded supreme authority in the Commonwealth. However, they sketched out their visions within the old framework of *monarchia mixta* (mixed monarchy), which they attempted to fill with new content. The defenders of the monarch's powers likewise did not go beyond the framework of mixed government. As one researcher aptly points out: "Debates on the absolute power of the prince exercised for the good of the citizens, which are known from the history of political thought in almost all European cultures of the time, could not be held in Poland because of this [particular] shape of the network of concepts."[41] However, the idea of popular sovereignty—present in the European deliberations on the state, including those regarded as republican, at least starting from the beginning of the seventeenth century—was absent from the Polish–Lithuanian discourse of the seventeenth century. The vision of authority was outlined within the framework of the classical participatory concept,[42] where there was no notion of sovereignty because it was not needed to describe power or formulate arguments in struggles for power. Those statements did not reflect the opposition between the sovereignty of the ruler and the sovereignty of the people. Instead, we could talk about the clash between the king's unlimited power and the freedom of

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39   "The idea of natural rights could be used to defend either absolutist or liberal theories of government." Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law 1150–1625* (Grand Rapids, MI: B. Eerdmans, 1997), 182.

40   The reformist nature of the political discussions held in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was pointed out by Frost, "Liberty without Licence?," 47.

41   Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna a humanistyczna historia narodowa (1500–1700)* (Kraków: Universitas, 2011), 251–52; Ogonowski, *Filozofia*, 78.

42   "The classical ideal of the direct participation of the citizen in public life." Frost, "Liberty without Licence?," 47; see also Konstanty Grzybowski, *Teoria reprezentacji w Polsce epoki odrodzenia* (Warsaw: PWN, 1959), 19, 230, in the context of the principle *quod omnes tangit* (that which touches all).

"the people" (i.e., the nobility). In keeping with the classical republican tradition, "freedom" meant that the noble citizens depended on their own will and could decide matters for themselves at the individual and collective level. In this understanding, freedom was, in fact, equal to power, more specifically, the power to decide matters for oneself and the community. Those who expressed their opinions in the political discussions in the Commonwealth did not cross the threshold that would be crossed by Hobbes, arguing that freedom understood in this way meant sovereignty.[43]

The same held true for the concept of natural law in its early modern understanding. Both the concept of natural law as the foundation of authority and the vision of the natural rights vested with "the people," which the king had no right to infringe upon, and the violation of which would amount to tyranny, were, in fact, absent from the political debate. Any echoes of those concepts are scarce, and such references are accidental and cursory.[44] All those issues were regarded almost exclusively in terms of "common" law, that is, customary or enacted norms that remained in force in the Commonwealth and could, on the one hand, form a practical (as opposed to theoretical) basis for the monarch's rule and the principles governing it, and, on the other, protect the liberties of the monarch's subjects.[45] Even in the course of the fiercest disputes with the rulers (Zebrzydowski's rebellion and Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski's [1616–67] rebellion of 1666), their noble participants were not forced to formulate any resistance theory rooted in natural law as they could invoke a positive law: an actual, specific article about *de non praestanda oboedientia* (on non-observance of obedience) contained in the Henrician Articles (1573). As I have already mentioned, the Commonwealth was not characterized by violent religious disputes and struggles for power of the sort that led to the use

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43 Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 76.

44 See Michał Zwierzykowski, "*Sine iustitia in libertate żyć nie chcemy*: Prawo i sprawiedliwość w dyskursie politycznym kampanii sejmowych lat 1696–1762," in *Wartości polityczne Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów: Struktury aksjologiczne i granice cywilizacyjne*, ed. Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz in collaboration with Jerzy Axer (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2011), 264–88, here 275; in the seventeenth century, its distant echoes could sometimes be heard in the speeches of Protestants defending their rights, see, for example, *Uniżona prośba do Króla Jego M[ił]ości i Rzeczypospolitej na sejm MDCXXVII pisana*, in *Państwo świeckie czy księże?: Spór o rolę duchowieństwa katolickiego w Rzeczypospolitej w czasach Zygmunta III Wazy; Wybór tekstów*, ed. Urszula Augustyniak (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 2013), 367–401, here 389.

45 Urszula Augustyniak, "Granice wolności obywatela Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII w. Jednostka wobec władzy, prawa i społeczeństwa," in *Wolność i jej granice: Polskie dylematy*, ed. Jacek Kloczkowski (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2007), 13–36, here 17.

of natural law as an argument in countries such as England, France, and the Netherlands. Even the participants in the *rokosze* (i.e., noble rebellions against the king) believed that they were acting within the existing system of government and saw their goal as being to repair it, not undermine it.

Those who spoke their minds on political issues in the seventeenth century were perfectly capable of formulating their demands without invoking the concepts of sovereignty or natural law. However, the adoption of such a narrative also meant that there was essentially no need for certain other concepts that were crucial for the European discourse. It is striking that property attracted little interest, not only as a natural right but also as a component of the political universe,[46] as property has been a fundamental concept in European political discussions and the basis of visions of the state, society, freedom, and rule since at least the seventeenth century.[47] In extreme cases, such as the English disputes over the state following Oliver Cromwell's (1599–1658) revolution, it could even be described as one of the most frequently used concepts, if not the most important one.[48] However, until the middle of the eighteenth century, property was a marginal concept in the Polish–Lithuanian political discourse. Neither its foundations nor its role in the creation of the community and its life or its political significance became subjects of in-depth considerations. We might get the impression that in the eyes of the noble participants in the political discussions held in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, property belonged to the private sphere, not the political one. This fact resulted from the socio-political reality in the Commonwealth, where political rights were based not on property but on belonging to the noble state, and from the choice of a political language in which property was poorly represented. On the other hand, liberty, almost ubiquitous in the noble discourse, was for a long time treated in a Roman manner and encompassed positive and negative liberty. Those concepts were not separated, with liberty being treated as the property of citizens as opposed to a natural right of every human being. The latter theme, which continued to appear in the writings of Renaissance theorists such as Modrzewski and Andrzej Wolan (1530–1610) in the classical sense,

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46 For a broader take, see Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *Political Discourse*, chapter 11, "In Conclusion, What Concepts Were Absent? Property" (221–38).

47 Ellen Meiksins-Wood, *Liberty and Property: A Social History of Western Political Thought from the Renaissance to Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 2012).

48 Harry T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Methuen 1979); Henry Horwitz, "Liberty, Law, and Property, 1689–1776," in *Liberty Secured?: Britain before and after 1688*, ed. James R. Jones (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 265–97; Howard Nenner, "Liberty, Law, and Property: The Constitution in Retrospect from 1689," in Jones, *Liberty Secured?*, 88–121.

borrowed from the ancient authors,[49] would later practically disappear from the political discourse for a century and a half.

When we analyze the reasons why the participants in the Polish–Lithuanian political discussions of the seventeenth century ignored new notions and concepts, we must remember that their introduction into the political discourse would transform it almost completely. Meanwhile, in the Commonwealth, no one felt the need for such a change. To some extent, the political discourse became a victim of its own success. The vision of the state created at the end of the sixteenth century and the political language used to describe it were ideally suited to the needs of the participants in political life. In addition, they seemed to be an excellent tool for describing not only their political ideals but also the political construct of the Commonwealth they had created. New concepts and ideas appeared, in a sense, too late. In the second half of the sixteenth century, when the vision of a noble republic was taking shape, these concepts and ideas either did not exist or were still nascent. When they appeared in the European discourse, there was no room for them in the Commonwealth's political narrative, which was coherent and encompassed the issues the nobility regarded as important. Their inclusion into the discourse would necessitate changing not only the political language but also the vision of society, noticing its other members, not just nobles, and admitting that the noble citizens were not the only individuals who comprised the people or the nation. The participants in the political discussions of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were not in the least ready for that; republican language, rooted in the tradition of antiquity, was much better suited to their needs. It did not constrain their freedom to formulate political projects and demands—until it ultimately did.

From the middle of the seventeenth century onward, the nobility's political thought became ossified and focused on defending the *status quo* rather than sketching out programs for repairing the increasingly inept political system.[50] Sovereignty and power were not separated, and the political system was not distinguished from the form of government, all of which made it difficult to propose new solutions. The absence of a clearly articulated concept of the delegation of power, linked to the idea of sovereignty, and on the other hand the absence of the early modern notion of the separation of powers, posed considerable obstacles to proposals for improvements in the functioning of the

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49   See Steffen Huber, *Polifonia tradycji: Filozofia polityczna i teoretyczna Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Sub Lupa, 2014), 336; Jan Květina, *Mýtus*, 514.

50   Urszula Augustyniak, *Wazowie i "królowie rodacy"* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 1999), 40.

highest authorities in the Commonwealth. Moreover, the choice of that particular political language made it difficult not only to describe growing problems but even to take notice of members of society other than the nobles.

3   New Propositions: New Roads

Authors in the first half of the eighteenth century, such as Stanisław Karwicki (1640–1724) and Stanisław Leszczyński (1677–1766), were aware of this situation, but no far-reaching change of language occurred until the 1770s, when political thought underwent a great "opening-up to Europe," and new concepts and visions of the state proposed in Enlightenment thought, in particular in France, began to be incorporated into theoretical treatises by such new authors as Józef Wybicki (1747–1822), Hieronim Stroynowski (1752–1815), and Antoni Popławski (1739–99). We can undoubtedly see certain elements of a catching-up process here, with concepts and ideas developed elsewhere being incorporated into Polish–Lithuanian thinking about the state. However, that was still a choice, the adaptation of new concepts into an existing political language rather than radical change. If attempts at the holistic implantation of certain Western proposals were not consistent with this narrative, they remained on the margins of the ongoing discussions and attracted little interest, one example being the otherwise interesting physiocratic treatises by Stroynowski.[51]

The choice of specific Enlightenment projects for the system of government was determined by the distinctive characteristics of the political thought taking shape in the Commonwealth—the fact that it did not break the continuity of the tradition of thinking about the state that had its roots in antiquity. Besides, in the eighteenth century, this tradition was treated not so much as the heritage of antiquity but as a legacy left by ancestors—it was already a tradition of the citizens of the Commonwealth. The ideas of the natural rights of individual humans, popular sovereignty, the social contract, and the separation of powers in their Enlightenment-age version had already appeared and were relatively quickly adopted, and the whole of society, as opposed solely to the nobility, started to be noticed, albeit reluctantly. Importantly, however, the visions of the state sketched out in the Commonwealth remained faithful to the old tradition in which the state was not separated from society—it was still a *civitas*, a community of citizens collectively making decisions about their

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51   Hieronim Stroynowski, *Nauka prawa przyrodzonego, politycznego, ekonomiki politycznej i prawa narodów* (Vilnius: Drukarnia Królewska przy Akademii, 1785).

fate, not an institution external to them. If we concluded, in the manner of the German scholars, that the "absolute sovereign state was the political hallmark of modernity,"[52] then in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the political thought of the eighteenth century rejected modernity thus understood. Similarly, a distinction began to be drawn between political and civil liberty, yet very few authors restricted their reflections to the latter. It was still believed that only those who could decide matters for themselves, including political matters, were fully free. Interestingly, although Stanisław Konarski (1700–73), perhaps the most prominent Polish political thinker of the eighteenth century, showed already in the 1760s how the state should function so that its existence would not have to be determined by virtue of its citizens,[53] the question of their attitudes nonetheless remained important for the participants in political discussions, and the combination of ethics and politics was still very much in evidence in their statements, supported by the theories of Montesquieu (1689–1755) and above all Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78).

The latter authors aroused the strongest interest in the Commonwealth. Together with the physiocrats, from whom the concept of natural law was drawn (unlike the vision of the state), they were the greatest influence on Polish political thought at the end of the eighteenth century. This comes as no surprise: Montesquieu and Rousseau, together with Gabriel Bonnot de Mably (1709–85) (who was likewise known in Poland), rediscovered antiquity, as well as republican ideals and the republican discourse. References were made to their writings because they promoted the latest concepts in the philosophy of the state in a language close to the Polish readers. However, this influence was not merely one-sided. Mably, and above all Rousseau, not only wrote a set of advice for Poland at the request of Michał Wielhorski (c.1730–1814) but also, as we know from Jerzy Michalski's (1924–2007) research, held discussions with the nobles who inspired their works and through them entered into dialogue with the Polish–Lithuanian nobility's vision of the state.[54] Although this was

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52   On the opinions of German researchers, see Martin van Gelderen, "The State and Its Rivals in Early Modern Europe," in Skinner and Stråth, *States and Citizens*, 79–96, here 92.

53   Stanisław Konarski, *O skutecznym rad sposobie*, 4 vols. (Warsaw: Drukarnia Pijarów, 1760–63); see also Jerzy Łukowski, "Stanisław Konarski: Polski Machiavelli?," in *W cieniu wojen i rozbiorów: Studia z dziejów Rzeczypospolitej XVIII i początków XIX wieku*, ed. Urszula Kosińska, Dorota Dukwicz, and Adam Danilczyk (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2014), 181–96; Anna Greśkowiak-Krwawicz, "*Nowe wino w starych butelkach*: O języku politycznym Stanisława Konarskiego," *Wiek Oświecenia* 32 (2016): 11–28.

54   Jerzy Michalski, *Rousseau and Polish Republicanism*, trans. Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski (Warsaw: Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History Polish Academy of Sciences, 2015), https://rcin.org.pl/Content/58076/PDF/WA303_78371_JM_Michalski-eng .pdf (accessed October 17, 2022); Michalski, *Sarmacki republikanizm w oczach Francuza: Mably i konfederaci barscy* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1995).

partially a dialogue of the deaf—based on words that sounded similar yet were understood in different ways (such as people and citizens)—these authors (especially Rousseau) referred to political values that their Polish readers had known about and accepted for a long time. In a sense, history came full circle: for reasons related to its backwardness and attachment to the old traditions, Polish political thought paradoxically had the capacity to adopt certain concepts that marked a breakthrough in European thinking about the state. This happened in the late 1780s and early 1790s, when such authors as Hugo Kołłątaj (1750–1812) and Stanisław Staszic (1755–1826) incorporated the most recent Western concepts, above all those put forward by Rousseau and Montesquieu, into their own traditions to propose a program for reforming the state that took into account society as a whole rather than the noble community alone.[55] However, this is a topic in itself.

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This essay has examined the path that the political thought of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth followed from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. As we have seen, the word "younger" is not necessarily well suited to describe its evolution in this period. Instead, we should discuss it more as one of the many trends that made up the rich and varied European tradition. The participants in political discussions in the Commonwealth followed a path that sometimes ran along the main route and sometimes departed from it, only to rejoin it at a later date. That path sometimes led them astray, was sometimes neglected, but was maintained to reflect the needs of the travelers who used it.

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55 Rafał Lis, *W poszukiwaniu prawdziwej Rzeczypospolitej: Główne nurty myśli politycznej Sejmu Czteroletniego* (Kraków: Akademia Ignatianum, WAM, 2015); Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, "A Polish *Sattelzeit*?: New Concepts in the Political Language at the Twilight of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth," *Acta Poloniae historica* 122 (2020): 7–35, https://apcz.umk.pl/APH/article/view/APH.2020.122.02/28057 (accessed October 17, 2022).

The "Common Good" and Urban Crisis Management in Early Modern East-Central Europe: The Examples of Danzig and Slutsk

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Abstract

This essay scrutinizes how the notion of the common good was interpreted within two distinct urban communities of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, in Royal Prussia and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Karin Friedrich underscores that while the discourse surrounding the common good held significant weight in Polish–Lithuanian political and moral deliberations, urban culture was largely overlooked. This was primarily due to the prevalent belief in the moral inferiority associated with urban and commercial activities. Despite this, the essay presents two case studies demonstrating how the principle of the common good, or "bonum commune," was actualized in the Commonwealth's cities. The examples provided are Danzig (Royal Prussia) during the city's dispute with King Stephen Báthory and Slutsk (Grand Duchy of Lithuania) during the period of Prince Bogusław Radziwiłł's ownership. Friedrich demonstrates that the common good was tightly interwoven with self-interest in urban socio-political and economic life. These two values bolstered each other, creating a potential symbiosis between the common good and individual benefit. Attempts to secure the common good were not perceived as sacrifices but as pursuits of prosperity and overall well-being.

Keywords

Poland–Lithuania – common good – Danzig – Slutsk – Hugo Grotius – urban life

Before the genre of cameralist writings took hold in the eighteenth-century Holy Roman Empire, one of the most interesting treatises defining the common good in an early modern German city was the work of 1564 by Leonhard

Fronsperger (1520–75) *In Praise of Self-Interest*.[1] The author, a soldier and burgher from the city of Ulm, announced that despite the bad reputation that self-interest had among Christians, it was a necessary and useful ingredient for the creation of the common good. Without it, good governance, peace, and prosperity would not be able to exist. Anticipating arguments by Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733), Fronsperger emphasized the value of self-love in improving the motivation of people to contribute to the common welfare, like the bees of a beehive. Inequality of its members, he believed, was the secret of every harmonious body, like pipes of an organ whose different sizes played in concert, resulting in the most beautiful melodies. Winfried Schulze concluded that this treatise contributed to a tradition of economic and social thought that led from the *Hausväterliteratur* (literature on the household economy) to cameralism, and under the influence of the Scotsman Adam Smith (*c.*1723–90) to the school of *Nationalökonomie* (National Economy) during the late eighteenth century, until it eventually engendered European economic liberalism in the nineteenth century.

The battle for the definition of the common good also has a long history in the early modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, where the parenetical literature of noble culture taught that the *bonum commune* (common interest) had to stand above the *bonum proprium* (self-interest). Ever since the publication of Wawrzyniec Goślicki's (1530–1607) treatise *De optimo senatore* (On the best senator)[2] in 1568, this was a widely accepted paradigm among the educated nobility, frequently demanded in the Sejm: in order to strengthen the republic, *privata* (private matters) must be trumped by *publica* (public affairs).[3] Often cited is the comment by Jan Ostroróg (1565–1622), who contrasted good politicians who "preside over public things which they most nobly administer" with "men who do not care much for the public welfare (which is what politicians should do) but only care for what is their own, and even if they seem to care, they measure everything according to their own comfort,

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1   Leonhard Fronsperger, *Von dem Lob des Eigen Nutzen* (Frankfurt am Main: Feyerabend und Hüter, 1564); Winfried Schulze, "Vom Gemeinnutz zum Eigennutz. Über den Normenwandel in der Ständischen Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit," *Historische Zeitschrift* 243 (1986): 591–626.

2   The text was published in English translation in 1598 in London under the title *The Counsellor*.

3   In the same spirit, Goślicki was the only bishop who signed the Warsaw Confederation of 1573 during the Sejm of 1587, which promised equal civic rights for the Protestant nobility to keep the peace; Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, *Goslicius' Ideal Senator and His Cultural Impact over the Centuries: Shakespearean Reflections* (Kraków: PAU, 2009).

without justice."[4] Numerous political treatises and Sejm speeches insisted that the *civis bonus* (good citizen) served with his property and his participation in the military defense of the republic and his king for the common interest of his fatherland, just as he participated in the local dietine and, if elected as envoy, in the general Diet.[5] Peer pressure and the attempt to fit local interests into a wider discourse of the common good of the entire republic dominated noble rhetoric in East-Central European *libertas* (liberty) culture. Towns and cities, however, were excluded from such assumptions of virtuous lifestyle. If Fronsperger had mounted a defense of Polish burghers' self-interest instead of thinking of his fellow burghers in Ulm, it would have merely confirmed the local nobility's assumptions about urban activities and commoners' lack of virtue. The defense of the common good, therefore, played an essential part in Polish nobles' rejection of urban trades and mercantile activities as unworthy of the noble citizen: "The [nobles] do not bestow their freedoms and honors upon plebeians."[6] Not least, as a result of these publicly aired prejudices, Poland–Lithuania received bad press for neglecting its towns, characterized by decline and "ruralization," despite the fact that Anzelm Gostomski's (1508–88) famous instructions on the rural economy led to a boom of urban foundations after he gave plenty of advice to nobles to invest in them—for their own private good.[7]

The following two case studies from within the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth demonstrate a variety of ways the debate about the common good found application in practice: first, in the city of Danzig during its conflict with King Stefan Báthory (1533–86, r.1576–86) in 1577; second, during Bogusław Radziwiłł's (1620–69) government over the privately owned multireligious Belarusian city of Slutsk in the seventeenth-century Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The combination of these two examples might appear strange at first sight. The citizens of both cities relied on medieval law codes that regulated municipal constitutions favorable to urban development and self-government: Danzig's Kulm law was a modified combination of Magdeburg,

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4   *Illustrissimi ac Excellentissimi Domini Ioannis comitis ab Ostrorog Palatini Posn[naniensi]* [...] *Ad filios admonitoria epistola* (Nysa: Augustinus Gründer, 1616), fol. B2 [my translation].

5   See the classic treatise by Caspar Siemek, *Civis bonus Ad* [...] *Dominvm Ioannem a Zebrzydowice Zebrzydowski Regni Poloniæ Ensiferum* [...], *Vbi ciuis boni natura, conditio, leges* [...] *perscribuntur* (Kraków: Officina Typ. Matthiæ Andreouien, 1632).

6   Citation of Maciej Sarbiewski [1630], in Stanisław Kot, "Descriptio Gentium poetów polskich XVII wieku," in *Polska złotego wieku a Europa*, ed. Henryk Barycz (Warsaw: PIW, 1987), 834–73, here 848 [my translation].

7   Anzelm Gostomski, *Gospodarstwo* (Kraków: J. Siebeneicher, 1588). Modern edition, ed. Stanisław Inglot, Biblioteka Narodowa seria 1, no. 139 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1951), 100ff.

Flemish, and Polish customary law, while Slutsk received Magdeburg law in 1441. Significant here, however, is the observation of shared patterns of political behavior, which Władysław Czapliński (1905–81) pointed out seventy years ago, between the role of the Royal Prussian cities and the position of magnates in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.[8] While Czapliński broke with a nineteenth-century Polish historical tradition—ironically shared by nationalist German historiography—that saw Danzig's defense of its autonomy as an assertion of "German" identity, he explained the "self-interested" attitudes of the Danzigers with a "class bias" they shared with the Polish–Lithuanian magnates. Even when the Stalinist constraints of the early 1950s lifted, this characterization of magnate egotism prevailed in Marxist historiography.[9]

In contrast to older views of a static "magnateria," magnate families formed a highly mobile group whose status was anything but stable or clearly defined.[10] Both cities and magnates, who frequently owned and controlled urban centers, however, shared a discourse that set concepts of self-interest and the common good against each other. The lord and owner of Slutsk, Bogusław Radziwiłł, hailed from one of the Commonwealth's most influential magnate families. Like Danzig's Protestant and German-speaking patricians, Radziwiłł was an outsider among his magnate peers.[11] Closely linked to Brandenburg-Prussia through his mother Sophia Elisabeth (1589–1629), a Hohenzollern princess, Radziwiłł collaborated with the Swedes during 1655–58. Having received an amnesty from the Polish king and Sejm in 1658, he accepted an appointment as governor of Ducal Prussia. Danzig and Radziwiłł, albeit strongly hostile to each other, reflected the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of the Commonwealth's elites, whom the Polish nobility repeatedly accused of disloyalty, the pursuit of "particular interests," or even treason.[12] This accusation

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8   Władysław Czapliński, "Problem Gdańska w czasach Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej," *Przegląd historyczny* 43 (1952): 273–86, cited in Michael G. Müller, *Zweite Reformation und städtische Autonomie im Königlichen Preußen: Danzig, Elbing und Thorn in der Epoche der Konfessionalisierung (1557–1660)* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1997), 173.

9   Władysław Czapliński and Józef Długosz, eds., *Życie codzienne magnaterii polskiej w XVII w.* (Warsaw: PIW, 1976), 224.

10   Robert Frost, "The Nobility of Poland–Lithuania 1569–1795," in *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, vol. 2, *Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe*, ed. Hamish M. Scott, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), 266–310.

11   Tadeusz Wasilewski, "Bogusław Radziwiłł," in *Polski słownik biograficzny* 30 (Wrocław: PAN, 1987), 161; Bogusław Radziwiłł, *Autobiografia*, ed. Tadeusz Wasilewski (Warsaw: PIW, 1979).

12   For one of many examples of anti-Radziwiłł rhetoric (Radziwiłł was turned into "Zdradziwiłł" [from "zdrada," treason]), see Bibl. Czart, Teki Naruszewicza 148, fol. 783. For the link between Protestantism and treason, see also Tadeusz Wasilewski, "Zdrada

deserves further examination in the context of the debate on the ability to reconcile self-interest with the common good.

1   Self-Interest versus "Common Good" in the "Younger Europe"

Fronsperger's concept of *honesta voluptas* (honest indulgence) turned against the moral framework of Christian Scholasticism, which in its manifold adaptations in the Holy Roman Empire had defined natural law as a regulator of the common good. This tradition was subject to a lively debate in the empire's sixteenth-century universities and cities, where numerous editions of Thomas Aquinas's (1224/25–74) works were produced in German printing offices. Consequently, new interpretations of, and opposition to, Thomism found dissemination through the Renaissance Republic of Letters.[13] Aquinas had condemned selfish interest in favor of *prudentia politica* (political wisdom),[14] whose task it was to uphold the common good, although he had also distinguished between legitimate individual ownership of property and the Christian obligation to share its use. The crisis of the seventeenth century, its wars, and all the consequences that flowed from them for the common people triggered a strong debate between self-interest (usually attributed to a ruler or urban oligarchy intent on strengthening their authority) on the one hand, and the common good (of the community of citizens intent on defending their traditional immunities) on the other.

It was also a tradition that dominated the political discourse in the monarchies and *Ständestaaten* (states of estates) of East-Central Europe where members of the representative bodies of the noble estates stuck to their vocabulary

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Janusza Radziwiłła w 1655 r. i jej wyznaniowe motywy," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 18 (1973): 125–47.

13   Matthew Levering and Marcus Plested, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). See also the Central European reception of Aristotelian and Thomist ideas through the influence of the natural law schools of Salamanca and Coimbra, represented by the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) and the Jesuit Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), as well as opposition to Thomism by Jesuits such as Luis de Molina (1535–1600). Robert A. Maryks and Juan Antonio Senent de Frutos, eds., *Francisco Suárez (1548–1617): Jesuits and the Complexities of Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); see also Paul O. Kristeller, *Medieval Aspects of Renaissance Learning: Three Essays* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1974); Michel Bastit, *Naissance de la loi moderne: La pensée de la loi de Saint Thomas à Suárez* (Paris: PUF, 1980).

14   Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae prima pars* (Cologne: Cornelii ab Egmond, 1639), quaest. 47, art. 10, 448–49. See Hubert Izdebski, "Własność: Pomiędzy doktryną a dogmatyką prawa," *Czasopismo prawno–historyczne* 56, no. 1 (2004): 161–75, here 167.

of ancient rights and liberties. In contrast to the strong defense of constitutional and elective monarchy alongside *forma mixta* (mixed form) of government in the practice-oriented political writings of Polish (and some Czech, Hungarian, and Transylvanian) authors,[15] German and French political culture increasingly mounted an absolutist challenge, particularly during the later seventeenth century. This crisis of political Aristotelianism was accompanied by the emergence of the *ratio status* (reason of state) doctrine, which, as Horst Dreitzel commented, produced a utility-orientated moral theory of economics and statecraft that not always managed to merge the just and the useful.[16] The late medieval *bien de la chose publique* (the "common good") turned into *le bien d'État* (good of the state), and a mixed form *res publica* (commonweal) turned into the more abstract notion of the "state."[17]

In many cities of the "Younger Europe," these liberties were secured by Magdeburg law charters and institutions of self-government, although private cities that had been granted such statutes did not always enjoy the full range of privileges Magdeburg law afforded to royal cities. Some historians have even compared the abolition of private towns after the partitions of Poland–Lithuania to the end of serfdom.[18] It would be wrong, though, to generalize such a negative, emotive image of oppression. Whether it was the private town lord or the abstract "state," restrictions on Magdeburg charters and "old freedoms" regularly met resistance from the common people who protested that their main goal was to find *gemeine Nahrung* (subsistence) to protect

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15　László Kontler and Balázs Trencsényi, "Hungary," in *European Political Thought, 1450–1700: Religion, Law, and Philosophy*, ed. Howell A. Lloyd, Glenn Burgess, and Simon Hodson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 176–207, here esp. 185–86, 194–95; Graeme Murdock, "'Freely elected in fear': Princely Elections and Political Power in Early Seventeenth-Century Transylvania," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7 (2003): 213–44; Gottfried Schramm, "Polen—Böhmen—Ungarn: Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit," in *Ständefreiheit und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa: Übernationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur vom 16.–18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke, Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, and Norbert Kersken (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag Leipzig, 1996), 13–38, and other contributions to the same volume.

16　Horst Dreitzel, "Reason of State and the Crisis of Political Aristotelianism: An Essay on the Development of Seventeenth-Century Political Philosophy," *History of European Ideas* 28 (2002): 163–87, here 169, 184.

17　James B. Collins, *La monarchie républicaine: État et société dans la France moderne* (Paris: Collège de France, 2016), 13–14.

18　Curtis Murphy, *From Citizens to Subjects: City, State, and the Enlightenment in Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018), 123; see also Tomasz Opas, "Własność w miastach szlacheckich województwa lubelskiego w XVIII wieku," *Czasopismo prawno–historyczne* 22, no. 1 (1970): 21–54.

their livelihood and property. Urban citizens shared a discourse of the common good against un-Christian practices such as usury and the introduction of oppressive new laws and regulations.[19] Particularly in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) in the Holy Roman Empire, the defense of medieval concepts of a virtue-based common good by the urban elites clashed with the new territorial rulers' emphasis on bureaucratic expansion and state-building. The protest of the common man acquired the label of a selfish pursuit of particular and local interests.[20]

2   The "Common Good," Natural Law, and Hugo Grotius

The language of the common good also had adherents among the noble estates. In Poland–Lithuania's dialogue with the late humanist European Republic of Letters during the first decades of the seventeenth century, Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) played a particular role. Based on his reputation as a European natural law thinker, Grotius found great appreciation among his contemporaries in Poland–Lithuania, specifically in the city of Danzig, where Israel Köhne Jaski (1573–1641) conducted a lively correspondence with the Dutchman in the 1630s.[21] Grotius set out his insistence on a city's need for political unity and agreement on religious matters in his early work *De republica emendanda* (On the improvement of the commonweal) of 1601—a title that not coincidentally echoed Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski's (1503–72) opus, *De republica emendanda* of 1551—which recommended respect for religious dissenters on the basis of natural law arguments. Republics flourished best under a government that did not interfere in private consciences. Faith had to be free from coercion, as "the human spirit is so free that it feels and thinks freely even under torture and

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19   See, for example, Yvonne Kleinmann, "Rechtsinstrumente in einer ethnisch–religiös gemischten Stadtgesellschaft des frühneuzeitlichen Polen: Der Fall Rzeszów," in *Religiös–politische Ordnungen in Ostmitteleuropa vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Johannes Gleixner et al. (Munich: BiblionMedia, 2015), 138–73. Also Stefan Rohdewald, *Vom Polocker Venedig: Kollektives Handeln sozialer Gruppen in einer Stadt zwischen Ost- und Mitteleuropa* (Stuttgart: De Gruyter, 2005), and David Frick, *Kith, Kin, and Neighbors: Communities and Confessions in Seventeenth-Century Wilno* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

20   Karin Friedrich and Andreas Holzem, "Marktregulierung, Moral und Theologie für und wider den Markt," in *"Eigennutz" und "gute Ordnung": Ökonomisierungen der Welt im 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Sandra Richter und Guillaume Garner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 485–93.

21   Stanisław Kot, "Hugo Grotius a Polska," in Stanisław Kot, *Polska złotego wieku a Europa: Studia i szkice*, ed. Henryk Barycz (Warsaw: PIW, 1987), 577–614.

does not agree with what the torturer wants it to think."[22] Peace and harmony were preconditions for the common good to blossom. Amid religious ambiguity and dissimulation—widespread among the early reformers[23]—numerous early Protestants embraced Frycz Modrzewski's humanist irenicism,[24] which greatly influenced the emerging image that Poland–Lithuania represented an exceptional—but endangered—model of pragmatic toleration and a safe haven for religious refugees from other parts of Europe.[25]

Grotius was not only informed by the Polish experience; in the first half of the seventeenth century, he also added a critical voice in reaction to the deteriorating position of the dissidents in the Commonwealth. After the destruction of the Calvinist church in Vilnius in 1639, Grotius expressed his sadness about these events to his correspondent in Danzig, Israel Jaski: "What you write to me about Vilnius greatly grieves me. This example of religious hatred displeases me greatly, and nothing is more contrary to the statutes of your kingdom."[26] In the same correspondence, Grotius expressed his desire "to work for the common good and peace that we always have to choose if we want to call ourselves Christians." Disappointed with the decline of toleration in Poland, "which until now has excelled above all nations having untouched freedom of religion and above all kingdoms happily mixed [a constitution of] principality with liberty,"

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22   Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Dzieła wszystkie*, vol. 1, *O poprawie* (Warsaw: PIW, 1953).

23   Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Einleitung," in *Konfessionelle Ambiguität: Uneindeutigkeit und Verstellung als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Andreas Pietsch and Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 214 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2013), 9–26.

24   On more recent assessments of the role of Frycz Modrzewski's influence on irenic ideas, see Maciej Ptaszyński, *Reformacja w Polsce a dziedzictwo Erazma z Rotterdamu* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2018); also Paul Knoll, "Religious Toleration in Sixteenth-Century Poland: Political Realities and Social Constraints," in *Diversity and Dissent: Negotiating Religious Difference in Central Europe, 1500–1800*, ed. Howard Louthan, Gary Cohen, and Franz A. J. Szabo (New York: Berghahn, 2011), 30–52.

25   Michael Müller, "'Nicht für die Religion selbst ist die Conföderation inter dissidentes eingerichtet […]': Bekenntnispolitik und Respublica-Verständnis in Polen-Litauen," in *Aspekte der politischen Kommunikation*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte, *Historische Zeitschrift Beiheft* 39 (2004): 311–28, here 312. See also Joanna Kostyło, "Commonwealth of All Faiths: Republican Myth and the Italian Diaspora in Sixteenth-Century Poland–Lithuania," in *Citizenship and Identity in a Multinational Commonwealth: Poland–Lithuania in Context, 1550–1772*, ed. Karin Friedrich and Barbara Pendzich (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 171–205; Maciej Ptaszyński, "Between Marginalization and Orthodoxy: The Unitas Fratrum in Poland in the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of Moravian History* 14, no. 1 (2014): 1–29; Mirosława Hanusiewicz-Lavallee, *W stronę Albionu: Studia z dziejów polsko–brytyjskich związków literackich w dobie wczesnonowożytnej* (Lublin: KUL, 2017), esp. 131–74.

26   Hugo Grotius, *Epistolæ and Israelem Jaski* (Gdańsk: Typis Rhetianis, 1670), 75–76 [September 22, 1640]; also cited in Kot, "Grotius a Polska," 597 [my translation].

Grotius exempts the city of Danzig from his criticism and sees it as a place where "peace flourishes, and where faith engendered the fruits of peace, that is, learning and commerce."[27] The Danzig city fathers gratefully received this compliment, as the discourse of the common good echoed in the motto that the Dutch Calvinist architect Abraham van den Blocke (1572–1628) had put on Danzig's Golden Gate arch: "Concordia res publicæ parvæ crescunt—discordia magnæ concidunt" (In concord, small republics grow, in disagreement great republics fall).[28]

The common good and self-interest, while they were associated with urban commercial activities, seemed to stand in no conflict for the city fathers. Until the early 1620s, the Danzig council counted among its members several eminent Calvinists. Their Reformed religion had taught them that well-being was measured by the secure and free enjoyment of property.[29] Calvinists regarded owning property as the result of divine providence. By following the duty of hard work and frugality, the acquisition and preservation of property were indeed evidence of a virtuous lifestyle.[30] In the context of Poland–Lithuania's mixed constitution, property was additionally guaranteed by the liberties that its citizens enjoyed, so that Calvinist ideas of property aligned with the civic discourse in the republic. Calvin himself might not have supported individual property rights as strongly as historians following the Max Weber (1864–1920) school later suggested, but this did not prevent Andrzej Wolan (1530–1610) from linking the preservation of life and property with the pre-eminence of liberty:

> This is the highest level of our liberty, that our livelihood be free from all injustice and all fear of murder, that our properties and goods are free from attack and extortion. And in truth, no great wealth and riches can be happily enjoyed where there is no security of livelihood.[31]

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27 Grotius, *Epistolae*, 60, 82.

28 Danzig's exceptional position among the Commonwealth's royal cities as a multi-religious urban space at least until the 1620s is particularly apparent when compared to the situation of Protestant communities in other royal cities. See Howard Louthan, "Irenicism and Ecumenism in the Early Modern World: A Re-evaluation," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 61 (2017): 6–30, esp. 7–8.

29 Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2, *The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 328.

30 Tomasz Szczęch, "Własność w myśli Jana Kalwina," *Czasopismo prawno–historyczne* 56, no. 2 (2004): 195–201, here 196, 200.

31 Andrzej Wolan, *De libertate politica sive civili: O wolności Rzeczypospolitej albo szlachec-kiej*, ed. Maciej Eder and Roman Mazurkiewicz, trans. Stanisław Dubingowicz (Warsaw:

The idea of the mixed form of government, which worked toward the common good, was also incompatible with the idea of the dynastic, hereditary *patrimonium* (inherited property) of an absolute monarch. Łukasz Opaliński (1612–66) singled out the members of the senate as the republic's most trusted guardians, who negotiated the balance between the *szlachta* (nobility) and the king, at all times guided by the law. All this, according to Opaliński, pointed toward the common good: "In the Commonwealth, where the state is not the hereditary property of one, but a society linked to laws and the common fatherland of its citizens, all are concerned for the common good."[32] In consequence—as Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz pointed out for Poland—the culture of the nobility of the "Younger Europe" excluded from its discourse on the common good the concept of (private) property.[33] According to Grotius, however, a society of men of property, such as an urban republic with strong trade links and craft traditions, was built on natural as well as contract law, which regulated the competition between self-interest and the common good. The strong moral foundations of contracts could guarantee a peaceful outcome in this contest. In the words of Knud Haakonssen, "individuals with natural rights are the units of which all social organization is made. They are people who balance pure self-interest and social inclinations by entering in contractual relations with others about property and about modes of living together, especially about authority."[34] While Grotius's ideas on constitutional monarchy, sociability, and reason corresponded to the ideas of the moderate "constitutionalists" among the Polish politicians of the mid-seventeenth century, his emphasis on the importance of property suited the conditions of commercial Dutch society, with a particular relevance to the interests of the citizens in urban agglomerations. Grotian thought spoke to Danzig's merchant community in the seventeenth century. Yet even half a century earlier, Dutch ideas on the benefit of trade and republican freedoms found fertile ground in the city, as the following case study shows.

Neriton, 2010), 157 [my translation]. On Calvin, see Mark Valeri, "Religion, Discipline, and the Economy in Calvin's Geneva," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, no. 1 (1997): 123–42.

32 Łukasz Opaliński, *Polonia defensa contra Ioan. Barclaium* (Gdańsk: Georg Förster, 1648) [Obrona Polski], in *Wybór pism*, ed. Stanisław Grzeszczuk (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1959), 175; see also Maria O. Pryshlak, *Państwo w filozofii politycznej Łukasza Opalińskiego* (Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2000), 97.

33 Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *Dyskurs polityczny Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów: Pojęcia i idee* (Toruń: Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 2018), 377–80.

34 Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 28.

3   Danzig's Conflict with Stefan Báthory

The urban elites of Danzig belonged among the leaders of the Prussian rebellion against the Teutonic Order during the Thirteen Years' War (1454–66) that ended with the Second Peace of Thorn (Toruń) in 1466, when Danzig and the province of Royal Prussia joined the Polish crown. The city retained all its laws and liberties and remained one of the leaders of the Prussian *Landesrat* (Diet), which, under the name of Royal Prussian *sejmik* (dietine), survived the closer union with the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, concluded at the Sejm of Lublin, in 1569. Even after the union of Lublin, however, the representatives of Danzig, Thorn, Elbing (Elbląg), and—until 1662—the smaller cities still took their seats in the Prussian sejmik alongside delegates from the Royal Prussian nobility. This representation within Royal Prussia provided the cities with a stronger voice than the royal cities in other parts of the Commonwealth. Danzig had its own fortifications and city militia. Unlike other royal cities after the Reformation, Danzig, Thorn, and Elbing also received a privilege enabling the free exercise of the Augsburg confession. By the end of the sixteenth century, Danzig had sizable Reformed, Anabaptist, and Bohemian Brethren communities. A strong sense of political independence, both at local and international levels, played a major role in the Danzigers' attitudes. Modeled on the Hanseatic past, the urban constitutions guaranteed taxation policies favorable to commercial activities and the ability to conclude political alliances with other powers.

The city's political leaders expected their immunities to be confirmed by each king who ascended to the Polish throne. After the death of the last Jagiellonian in 1572 and the short interlude of Henry of Valois (1551–89, r.1573–74), Poland–Lithuania had to find a new ruler. Despite its Protestant majority, Danzig openly backed the Habsburg candidate, Maximilian II (1527–76, r.1564–76). The city found itself in good company with a large group of senators and nobles, not all of them Catholics, who also supported the Habsburg side, which had quickly promised support for all of Danzig's ancient liberties, including free religious exercise for the Augsburg confession. Báthory, in contrast, who ultimately gained the Polish crown in 1576, refused to confirm Danzig's laws and immunities, especially the cancellation of the statutes of 1570, introduced by Bishop Stanisław Karnkowski (1520–1603, bishop of Włocławek, 1567–1580, archbishop of Gniezno, 1581–1603), that had restricted Danzig's self-government. Hitherto, these statutes had not been implemented but quickly became the main obstacle to an understanding with the new king. Báthory issued privileges for pirates to block the port and redirected trade to the neighboring city of Elbing. These measures also hurt the nobility, as Danzig was by far Poland–Lithuania's richest and most powerful trading post.

Maximillian's death in October 1576 did not end the conflict. Despite a military defeat for the city in open battle, the Polish troops still could not scale its defensive walls. Both sides conceded.

Danzig's opposition to Báthory, as Maciej Ptaszyński has pointed out, was not only based on the idea of the right of resistance developed by its Calvinist elites during the war against a king who refused to acknowledge the city's previously confirmed immunities. The conflict emerged from "differently constructed vision(s) of the noble republic"[35] and Danzig's assumption that Báthory's refusal to confirm their liberties broke the contract that had been concluded between the city and the Polish crown after the Thirteen Years' War of 1454–66 when Polish Prussia's estates (nobles and cities) joined the Polish crown after the defeat of the Teutonic Order.[36] Danzig stressed that the city was a particular republic, which had its own history and traditions that the kings of Poland had always recognized. It was this recognition that gave the Polish monarch's rule over the city its legitimacy. The king who did not recognize the *lex* (the law), could not be *rex* (king). A solution could only be found through a repeatedly negotiated contract between two self-interests, the city's and the king's.

The Danzig lawyers and elites, many of whom had been educated in the local Gymnasium and then in Dutch or German Reformed universities,[37] had studied Aristotle (384–22 BCE) through commentaries that emphasized the right of resistance against illegitimate power and discussed the danger of benevolent monarchy tipping over into malevolent tyranny, just as Poland's noble education had built on Aristotelian–Ciceronian notions of the *forma mixta*, its commonweal, and the right to reject an unlawful ruler. The discourse about "sovereignty," or Jean Bodin's (1530–96) notion of undivided rule *legibus absolutus* (unbound by the laws), was not a commonwealth discourse and could not have been farther from the Danzig burghers' minds. Bodin laid out the idea that a prince could not "overstep the natural law, established by God, of whom he is the image [...] [and] will also not be able to take another's property

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35   Maciej Ptaszyński, "Kto tu rządzi?: Spór między Gdańskiem a Stefanem Batorym o charakter władzy w szesnastowiecznej Rzeczypospolitej," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 47 (2003): 89–103, here 90–91.

36   Karin Friedrich, *The Other Prussia: Royal Prussia, Poland, and Liberty 1569–1772* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 20–29.

37   Antoni R. Chodyński, "Gdańszczanie w północnych Niderlandach w XVII–XVIII w.," *Kronika zamkowa* 6, no. 72 (2019): 261–79. For university destinations of Royal Prussians, see Marian Pawlak, *Studia uniwersyteckie młodzieży z Prus Królewskich w XVI–XVIII wieku* (Toruń: UMK, 1988), annex, table 4. Students from Royal Prussia went to Leiden, Franeker, Groningen, Utrecht, Heidelberg, Herborn, Duisburg, Basel, Frankfurt am Oder, and Marburg.

without just and reasonable cause, if it cannot otherwise be concluded than by taking the property of private individuals for the preservation of the state."[38] The Danzig magistrates strongly condemned such an eventuality; the notion that no constitutional law or assembly of citizens could prevent a monarch from declaring royal confiscation of property a necessity was deemed wholly unacceptable under the *forma mixta* government of the Commonwealth. For Bodin, divine and natural law might have prevented the monarch from such an act, but there was no legal guarantee in positive law against it. Báthory's similar refusal to give such guarantees to Danzig sparked the city's rebellion.

If the Danzig burghers in 1577 were not familiar with Bodin's political theory, they certainly became aware of it when the "crypto-Calvinist" professor of natural law Bartholomäus Keckermann (1572–1609) came to town. He was well acquainted with Bodinian ideas. In his *De natura et proprietatibus historiae commentarius* (Commentary on the nature and properties of history) of 1595, which he wrote in Heidelberg before he was employed as a teacher at the Danzig Gymnasium, Keckermann defined history as the foremost instrument of forming young minds instead of assigning rhetoric its hitherto dominant place.[39] Consequently, Keckermann was less interested in Bodin's ideas about sovereignty but looked toward pragmatic approaches to history in the Frenchman's *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (Method for the easy comprehension of history) of 1566, which he included in the Gymnasium's curriculum as he started teaching the city's youth about different national histories, peoples, and cities. His lessons also embraced the history of their home city Danzig, its political constitution, economy, and significance within the Commonwealth and the wider world. Even though Keckermann only spent a few years at the helm of the city's academic school, he introduced history as an act of *amor patriae* (love of fatherland), which looked beyond the urban elites' particular (selfish) concern for the city. The philosopher's analysis of the city's constitution as "status Reipublicae temperatus ex Aristocratia et Democratia" (the constitution of a temperate republic, a mixture of aristocratic and democratic forms) extended beyond Danzig's

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38   Jean Bodin, *On Sovereignty: Four Chapters from the Six Books of the Commonwealth*, ed. Julian Franklin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 39 [book 1, chapter 8].

39   The treatise was first published posthumously in 1610 and later became part of Keckermann's *Systema systematum clarissimi viri Dr. Bartholomaei Keckermanni, omnia hujus autoris scripta philosophica uno volumine comprehensa lectori exhibens*, 2 vols. (Hanau: Wilhelm Antonius Erben, 1613). See Wojciech Ryczek, "A Dangerous Domain: Bartholomew Keckermann on History and Historiography," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, Special Issue, 9 (2017): 191–213, http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/OiRwP.2017.SI.09 (accessed December 22, 2022).

markets, its harbor, and ramparts to a body politic where burghers could participate as valued citizens of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.[40] Despite embracing Bodin's historical methodology, Keckermann's legacy was a fiercely Aristotelian–Ciceronian rejection of absolute monarchy.[41] The Aristotelian language used by Keckermann, as well as other theorists of an urban background, such as Sebastian Petrycy (1554–1626) from Pilzno, reflects a consensus that crossed confessions, national identity, social background, and status when it came to urban writers' identification with the constitutional make-up of the Commonwealth and its practical political concerns. The consensus, however, did not include a king who, from Danzig's perspective, refused to confirm the law and disregarded the city's republican ethos.

Such practical matters included the right to free elections. Báthory did not intend to punish the city for not voting for him—"the king does not hold it against them that they were opposed to him during the election because in a free republic, voting should also be free"—but for resisting him after he was anointed and crowned.[42] Despite the often reiterated trope that the Danzigers—and the rest of the Royal Prussian estates who had absented themselves from the 1576 Coronation Sejm—compared themselves with the Lithuanians as a separate nation following their own laws and distinct institutions, the opposition among the Lithuanian magnates against Báthory had already abated earlier.[43] Among the members of the anti-Báthory party in 1576–77, the city fathers of Danzig held out the longest. The case they presented to the king even included—after the model of the Henrician Articles, written in 1573[44]—conditions under which the city could refuse obedience. Yet, the pamphlets produced by the city in justification of their right of resistance did not offer extensive theories of resistance. One explanation is that the death of Maximilian II in October 1576 left both sides little time for a sophisticated and prolonged political propaganda war.[45] Ptaszyński's suggestion that Danzig's anti-Báthorian rhetoric was directed at the German princes and the emperor, particularly after Maximilian's death, is less convincing than his suspicion that

40 Friedrich, *Other Prussia*, 78.

41 Danilo Facca, "Poland Observed by Aristotle: Some Remarks on the Political Aristotelianism of Bartholomaeus Keckermann and Sebastian Petrycy," in *Polish Culture in the Renaissance: Studies in the Arts, Humanism, and Political Thought*, ed. Danilo Facca and Valentina Lepri (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2013), 101–22, here 106.

42 Felicia Roșu, *Elective Monarchy in Transylvania and Poland–Lithuania, 1569–1587* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 172.

43 Roșu, *Elective Monarchy*, 173.

44 Written for the election of Henry of Valois, during the first interregnum, after the death of Zygmunt II August (1520–72, r.1548–72).

45 Ptaszyński, "Kto tu rządzi?," 100.

the city wanted to ingratiate itself with the Pomeranian nobility who (against their own ruler's wishes) provided Danzig with military support in the war. More plausibly, through its contact with neighbors in the empire, Danzig wanted to demonstrate its autonomy by showing off its international connections and independent diplomacy. At the same time, convinced by the need for further negotiation, the Danzigers wrote to the king:

> We do not doubt that Your Royal Majesty, as a pious and Christian prince whose glory will be increased by all you will grant to us, will not only return to us our laws and liberties but will also, by your royal clemency, increase them and return the safety of our entire city to its original magnificence […]; we will always make sure never to neglect our service and obedience in proving our allegiance and subjection for the illustrious and true benefit of the crown […]. Your Sacred Royal Majesty's faithful and humble subjects, the proconsuls, consuls, judicial officers, judges, and the whole community of the royal city of Gdańsk.[46]

Confessional differences increased the tensions after Báthory brought in military support from the Catholic *szlachta* and primate Jakub Uchański (1502–81, archbishop of Gniezno 1562–81) by promising to revoke the Warsaw Confederation of 1573 and to implement the decrees of the Council of Trent (1564), while Danzig received additional military and naval support from Lutheran Denmark.[47] In the end, as happened frequently in the history of the Commonwealth, compromise prevailed, even if the negotiations that led to it proved difficult. The civic spirit of Danzig imitated and assimilated the principles that the republic had adopted during the first two interregna: that its public affairs had to be directed and guaranteed by the rule of law, which furthered both individual and common good, including the city's ability to negotiate its economic and political affairs with international trade partners. Danzig's common good depended on the mixed form of government of which the monarch was an essential part. The king, however, was also bound by the law and could not refuse to guarantee its implementation to all members of the republic, including the Danzig political leadership. They decided to swear the oath of allegiance to the king in return for a confirmation of all privileges and a lifting of the 1570 legal restrictions. The defense of the self-interest of the merchant community, which formed the foundation of the city's wealth,

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46   Letter of May 7, 1577, in *Stefan Batory pod Gdańskiem w 1576–77 r.: Listy, uniwersały, instrukcye*, ed. Adolf Pawiński (Warsaw: Gebethner i Wolff, 1877), 50–53.

47   Roşu, *Elective Monarchy*, 176.

including the well-being of the wider urban community, had succeeded and was even strengthened.

Amor patriae included not just the small, urban fatherland but the whole republic. The city's loyalty was successfully put to test during the two wars of the seventeenth century when Lutheran Swedes claimed in vain to come as "liberators." Danzig adopted the rhetoric of being a rampart of liberty to save both crown and the Commonwealth. In the later seventeenth century, it led Christoph Hartknoch (1644–87) to assert that the superior character of the Prussian burghers' loyalty demonstrated that they were "better Sarmatian citizens" than the Polish nobility. The Danzig brewer, Elias Schröder von Trewen (1625–80), even aimed a pamphlet against the Polish nobles and the fellow cities Thorn and Elbing who during the Second Northern War (1655–60) succumbed to Swedish occupation: three daughters are promised by a treacherous matchmaker (Vice-Chancellor Hieronim Radziejowski [1612–67], a collaborator of the Swedish king Charles X Gustav [1622–60, r.1654–60]). Only one of the brides (Danzig) refuses to accept the offered Swedish bridegroom and considers suicide rather than accepting her suitor.[48] In the mind of the city's ruling elites, urban privileges and liberties, summarized as "liberty" in the singular, became synonymous with Danzig's *salus publica* (public benefit).[49] The city's special immunities remained the guarantes of a well-functioning commonwealth. The right of resistance remained a central feature in the civic consciousness of the Danzig burghers, since tyranny, disguised as "common good," could become a cause for sedition and civil war. When both sides were satisfied, the commonwealth was restored.[50] Commercial self-interest, enshrined in privileges, coincided with maintaining the common good and a well-ordered government.

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48 "Preussisches Haanen–Geschrey anno 1656," Biblioteka PAN Gdańsk, rkps. 672:32ff.

49 Friedrich, *Other Prussia*, 59–61, 110–112. Cited after Reinhold Curicke, *Commentarius iuridico-historico-politicus de privilegiis* (Gdańsk: Georg Förster, 1670), 206.

50 *Declaratio vera qvibus de caussis ordines ciuitatis Gedanensis cum Serenißimo Principe ac Domino Dno Stephano Rege Poloniae etc. aduersariorum suorum impulsu, iampriden in eam, que nunc etiam durat, controuersiam pertracti sunt: Pro innocentiae suae rationibus, & ipsius negocij circumstantijs palam demonstrandis in lucem edita* (Gdańsk: Jacob Rhode, 1577), PAN Gd, Od 2406 8°: *Appendix declarationis ordinum civitatis Gedanensis de praesenti rerum statu mense Aprili nuper vulgatae* (Gdańsk: n.p., 1577); PAN Gd, Od 2406 8°; *Anhang der Declaration der Ordnungen der Statt Danzigk, so unlangst im Aprill an den tag gegeben unnd in den Druck gefertiget, and Grundliche Erklerung, Aus was Ursache die Ordnungen der Statt Dantzigk mit dem Durchlauchtigsten Großmechtigsten Fürsten und Herren, Herrn Stephano Könige zu Polen ic. Durch antrieb jrer Widdersacher in den jtzo noch obstehenden mitzuerstandt und Weiterung geraten und eingefüret* (Gdańsk: Jacob Rhode, 1577), PAN Gd, 5m: Od 9 8°, Uph. Q 2370; Od 2407 8°, Od 2470 8°.

4   The "Well-Ordered Government" of the City of Slutsk

The second case study considers the multi-religious city of Slutsk in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a private city with a mighty fortress, which had been given Magdeburg law in 1441. In the hands of the powerful Orthodox Olelkovich family[51] until the beginning of the seventeenth century, by marriage and inheritance Slutsk fell to the Reformed Radziwiłł family. Private towns in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth are excellent examples that allow us to contradict Weber's thesis that early modern rulers tolerated self-government only because they had no means to control their subjects.[52] The owner who ruled over Slutsk in the mid-seventeenth century was the Lithuanian magnate and governor of Prussia, Bogusław Radziwiłł, who had been instrumental in crushing the urban opposition in Königsberg during the rebellion against Hohenzollern sovereignty. While he had become the executor of the policies of centralization in Prussia under Frederick William the Elector of Brandenburg (1620–88, r.1640–88), Radziwiłł applied a rather different regime in the city and duchy of Slutsk.

In the dangerous outposts of the eastern borderlands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, it was difficult to find committed administrators willing to settle with their families. Apart from Magdeburg law, the duke (addressed as His Princely Grace, *Jego Książęca Mość*), had to offer perks to his officials. In peace times, such towns were economic powerhouses, as their products such as local grain were traded at local and national markets; some of this was used for the production of alcohol, which was sold to the local population and for which *propinacja* (alcohol tax) had to be paid to the duke.[53] Other sources of Radziwiłł's income were indirect taxes such as mill fees and customs tolls on merchants, while direct taxes remained low.

Radziwiłł employed a legion of officials, nobles, and commoners, who had entered his service and leased landholdings from him, often succeeding their fathers and grandfathers in service, as surveyors, foresters, bailiffs, fortress commanders, and *starostas*.[54] While maintaining regular contact with these

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51   Anastasia A. Skiepjan, "Olelkowicze w xvi wieku w życiu społeczno–kulturalnym Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego," in *Władza i prestiż: Magnateria Rzeczypospolitej w xvi–xviii wieku*, ed. Jerzy Urwanowicz and Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2003), 551–60.

52   Convincingly rejected by Murphy, *From Citizens to Subjects*, 126.

53   Murphy, *From Citizens to Subjects*, see esp. 121–51.

54   A noble territorial official or (in royal towns) a royal administrator with or without powers of jurisdiction.

officials, the magnate was keen to give detailed instructions.[55] In 1667, he wrote to his administrators in Slutsk:

> We need to establish a treasury [*camera*] headed by a treasurer [*Rentmeister*] who follows my ordinances, otherwise there will never be any orderliness, […] who takes his commands from the governor, the *starosta*, and the commissars … controlled by a comptroller [*rewizor*], dependent alone on the lord […] we must not give [the governor] domains or lands, but a good salary [*jurgielt*] for his services.[56]

Radziwiłł appointed a trusted client from the Reformed community, Jan Pękalski (1595–1677), as commissar in Slutsk, who had to act upon the magnate's instructions to implement *porządkowanie* (the instilling of good order), regulation, accounting, obedience, and harmonious coexistence among local urban and rural society.[57] The keyword "good order" occurs repeatedly in documents—often associated with "common good"—and echoes the animus behind what Marc Raeff (1923–2008) called the "well-governed police state," including not just prohibitions but constructive rules for improvement.[58] Pursuing a planned population policy as early as 1652, Radziwiłł invited "citizens of Polish, Lithuanian, and foreign origin, especially of the German nation, of noble or urban status, to settle in Our City Slutsk." Having bought a "house in Pozorowska Street," he refurbished it to establish a church of the Lutheran denomination—intended to attract migrants from Livonia, Courland, and Prussia[59]—to have religious services for Polish and German speakers, "so that they came even faster and with greater willingness."[60] Although the poorer

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55   Marek Miluński, "Zarząd dóbr Bogusława Radziwiłła w latach 1636–1669," in *Administracja i życie codzienne w dobrach Radziwiłłów XVI–XVIII wieku*, ed. Urszula Augustyniak (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DIG, 2009), 195–282.

56   Archiwum Główny Akt Dawnych (AGAD), AR XI, 51, [Bogusław Radziwiłł], "Observatie pewne circa politica, oeconomia," 348–49.

57   "Aby wszelki w majętnościach Xięcia JeMsci był porządek a osobliwie Święta sprawiedliwość w sądach" (So that in the properties of His Excellency the duke be good order and in particular, holy justice in the law courts). AGAD, AR XXIII, 159/II, fol. 1. This ordinance was issued in Radziwiłł's name by Kazimierz Kłokocki (1625–85) and Władysław Huryn (d.1664), governor and commissar of Slutsk respectively, on June 3, 1659.

58   Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), passim.

59   Even more Protestant families were associated with the Radziwiłłs in Samogitia (Żmudź) and the ethnic Lithuanian territories; see Andrzej Rachuba, "Inflantczycy i Kurlandczycy na Żmudzi w XVI–XVIII wieku," *Klio* 35, no. 4 (2015): 45–68, here 62.

60   National Historical Archive of Belarus in Minsk (NHAB), fond 1952, opis 1, no. 2, "Gramoty," July 16, 1652, fols. 9–11ᵛ.

Protestant nobility and the town's small Reformed urban community formed Radziwiłł's most steadfast supporters, confessional plurality remained the rule. Orthodox Ruthenians formed the majority, while the Slutsk printing press was run by a Roman Catholic client, Kazimierz Kłokocki (*c.*1625–84), who produced most of the Protestant hymn books and bibles printed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.[61]

In his attempt to strengthen his city economically and militarily, Radziwiłł passed numerous constitutions with privileges for the Jewish communities on which he relied for credit, but above all for trade. As a result of this endeavor, the Christian and Jewish burghers of Slutsk were treated equally before the law. One binding instruction of the city charter of 1662 read: "In trading relations, Jews are not allowed to disadvantage Christians, just as Christians are not allowed to disadvantage Jews. But nobody may trade here unless they are registered as merchants in the city, whether Christian or Jew."[62] Property ownership (self-interest) was supposed to bind them all to an interest in promoting the common good. While Jews gained access to the town council and to guilds, mediation between the Christian and Jewish communities was essential when conflicts arose.

A recurrent conflict centered on alcohol production and sale. In a letter to his Slutsk commander, Jan Gross (d. after 1667), Radziwiłł wrote in 1656 that "our burghers in Slutsk have complained much that the garrisoned soldiers and the Jews, against our instructions, interfere with the monopoly attached to their leaseholds of serving spirits. Please make sure that the burghers can enjoy their full rights and privileges in this matter."[63] Six years later, however, Radziwiłł triggered Christians' protests when he decided to grant Jews the right to exercise crafts and trade as part of the urban guild structure, which benefited his own tax revenues.[64] When he transferred the right to administer the city's excise tax to the Jewish community, the non-Jewish urban community became suspicious that the ten Jewish-owned pubs in Slutsk were given preference over the six pubs owned by Christians, which, they thought, contradicted Christian law and the "natural order" of things.[65] While of eighty-eight shops in the market in 1661, twenty belonged to Jewish families, by the end of the

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61   Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa, "Kazimierz Krzysztof Kłokocki i drukarnia w Słucku," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 12 (1967): 135–72.

62   Maria Cieśla, *Kupcy, arendarze i rzemieślnicy: Różnorodność zawodowa Żydów w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XVII i XVIII wieku* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2018), 43, 45.

63   AGAD, AR IV teka 4, koperta 47, p. 17. Bogusław Radziwiłł to Jan Gross, November 7, 1656, from Königsberg.

64   Cieśla, *Kupcy, arendarze*, 50.

65   Cieśla, *Kupcy, arendarze*, 59.

century half of all shops belonged to Jews. The most trusted Jews gained the right to put the Radziwiłł coat of arms on their goods and displays.

Vehement protests against the eminent position of the Jewish merchants are reflected in numerous grievances and lively correspondence; yet, the Christian burghers' protest did not result in physical violence against the Jews. To compensate for the advantages that Jews had gained from joining the urban guilds, the duke's regulations obliged them to start their trade two hours after Christian merchants opened their shops. Part of the solution seems therefore to have been the practical steps that Radziwiłł took to address grievances. Despite occasional protests, this urban regime resulted in the relatively peaceful mixing of religious and ethnic communities in Slutsk. It was also the result of the prompt functioning of urban jurisdiction by which during the first half of the seventeenth century the Radziwiłłs intended to strengthen the position of Jews in their towns.[66] This attracted Jewish populations to Slutsk even from other Lithuanian and Belarusian towns. The common good was not just an empty slogan but seems to have resulted in high standards of infrastructure, moderate taxation, and a strong role for positive law, so that burghers, Jewish and non-Jewish, had access to justice when conflicts arose. Concerned about a commissar's trustworthiness, for example, Radziwiłł intervened in 1669, insisting that the official lower the taxes he had demanded, because "I prefer a lower tax rate so that my poor subjects do not exhaust themselves entirely, because then I will not have any benefit from them."[67]

Like other magnates, Radziwiłł was not a philanthropist. In fact, he had a misanthropic disposition. His instruction stated his self-interest as a landlord and revealed the cameralist principles of his policies: prosperous citizens provided the owner with a good and secure income. In the same way as Fronsperger's treatise had advised, self-interest guided the supervision of Radziwiłł's commercial affairs, down to every detail: how much grain was stored, how many barrels of honey and oil were available, and how the trade was best sustained, after tapping into the mercantile networks that Slutsk Jews had to trade centers such as Königsberg and Danzig. The magnate entrusted administration into hands that knew the local economy and political situation well, and who cared for the well-being of his subjects.

Bogusław Radziwiłł's policy of symbiosis between the private and the public good is well expressed in one of the magnate's letters to his cousin Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł (1625–80) in 1668. He justified his departure to the Duchy of Prussia and took on the governorship under the Hohenzollern

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66   Cieśla, *Kupcy, arendarze*, 43.

67   AGAD, AR IV, teka 82, no. 947, p. 12. Radziwiłł to his commissars in Slutsk, December 2, 1669.

rule, opening himself to accusations that he prioritized his foreign career as governor (self-interest) over his duties to the fatherland (common good). The fatherland, however, had not rewarded him or his family in the way that he had expected for his services:

> I understand that my expenses to the public purse and for the common good are not unknown to Your Excellency, which also aim to preserve the good name of Our House [of Radziwiłł]. I remember the last commission during which we did not achieve anything but spent 40,000 złp in vain. This way, at least, I protected our reputation against attacks from our [political] enemies.[68]

5   Conclusion

Working for the common good and being a "civis bonus" in the noble republic meant making sacrifices, through service, taxation, or the gifting of property in a public gesture, seen by all. It was also an instrument for self-aggrandizing, a means to make or destroy one's reputation or career. Refusing such gestures could have serious consequences for a public figure's private well-being. Generosity was an instrument for someone wanting to avoid being called a selfish privateer, the ultimate reputation-breaker. The reason behind such public judgment was obvious: the defense of the Commonwealth frequently depended on the wealth of its noble citizens. Radziwiłł, as a member of one of the richest magnate families of the realm, was expected to provide investment in the defense effort for his fortress of Slutsk to protect the Commonwealth against its enemies from the East. It was the magnates' civic duty to defend and impose a well-ordered government on their cities and fortresses, which Radziwiłł perfectly understood. This contribution to the common good found its equivalent in the loyalty of the rich burghers of Danzig who defended the Commonwealth in the North. Both Danzig and Radziwiłł expected to be reimbursed for their efforts, although in reality, this did not always happen. In Danzig, the city's powerful position and the *forma mixta* monarchy forced all parties to negotiate a solution that respected the commercial interests of the urban republic and the immunities of its Protestant citizens as well as the king's interest to restore the peace. In Slutsk, the solution was the mediation of conflicting commercial interests through detailed instructions and the rule of law over the multi-religious, multi-ethnic urban community. While the law

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68   AGAD, AR IV, no. 804, Bogusław to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, March 4, 1668, p. 52.

emanated from the magnate lord, the implementation followed the principle of delegation through Radziwiłł's client networks whose religious and ethnic make-up often reflected the diversity of the local society over which he established "orderly government."

It seems that self-interest could well coincide with the *bien publique*, or in the words of Jan Szczęsny Herburt (1567–1616), who participated in the Zebrzydowski uprising (1606–9) against royal power: "What is commonly good is also good in particular, public affairs develop from private ones."[69] Herburt might not have been aware of it, but he and many other Polish nobles reiterated here Thomas Hobbes's (1588–1679) thesis that in human nature private and public interests coincided. For Hobbes, this meant that the Leviathan, the absolute ruler, had to define the common good to keep the peace between the rivalling private interests of citizens. This necessarily turned active citizens into obedient subjects. It was a definition of the common good that the citizens of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, who valued civic liberties and individual freedom of conscience, could not accept. In the Commonwealth, *le bien publique* never turned into *le bien d'État*.

69　"Co jest in communi dobrego, to też in particulari dobre, publica ex privatis constant." In "Punkta poddane od Jmsci Szczęśnego Herburta r. 1608 w Krakowie," in Jan Czubek, *Pisma Polityczne z czasów Rokoszu Zebrzydowskiego, 1606–1608*, 3 vols. (Kraków: Nakł. Akademji Umiejętności, · 1918), 3:430–35, here 432.

Good Editions of Unpublished Texts: the Case of Stefan Iavorskii

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Abstract

This essay spotlights the vibrant evolution of Ukrainian literary culture during the latter half of the seventeenth century. It delves into the sermons of Stefan Iavorskii, examined through a wealth of previously unexplored manuscript sources, and considers them within the broader historical, social, and political backdrop of the 1680s and 1690s. The essay highlights the intriguing relationship between Iavorskii and Lazar Baranovych, a leading Ukrainian poet from the same era. The author illustrates the fusion of Western Renaissance motifs with the Church Slavonic Orthodox heritage, emphasizing its importance as a foundational element of modern Ukrainian culture. This integrative aspect significantly sets it apart from the Muscovite tradition. Iavorskii, renowned as a panegyrist, diplomat, Mohylian professor, and court preacher, emerges as a key figure in Ivan Mazepa's circle. His prominence marks the first real princely court manifestation in Ukraine before the culture was heavily stifled by Imperial Russian oppression. A comparative study of Iavorskii's sermons and Baranovych's poetry offers fresh insights into the intergenerational relationship between two cohorts of the Hetmanate's intellectual elite, profoundly influenced by Western culture and literature.

Keywords

1   Historical and Cultural Context

My aim in this essay is to explain why it is important that manuscripts continue to be read, published, and interpreted.[1] As well as applying to very old manuscripts that sometimes transmit unique information and texts from and about ancient or medieval times, when the art of printing was not yet invented, this also applies to manuscripts from relatively "recent" times, which are supposedly easier to locate and investigate because they come from epochs where printed books were dominant. Although seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Europe belongs to this latter period, there are, nonetheless, regions and situations where new documentation offered by manuscripts allows us to gain more knowledge about a certain country and culture, redressing biased information and offering a more accurate historical, cultural, and literary narrative.

This essay focuses on some issues of this kind as they appear in the Ukrainian lands.[2] The Ukrainian regions with their traditional ideological center in Kyiv underwent dramatic changes in the seventeenth century. In the first half of the century, they belonged to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and were ruled by Polish or Ruthenian lords and hetmans: the latter were culturally Polonized and loyal to the Polish crown but in several cases remained Orthodox, the most famous example of which are the princes of Ostróg, in whose "principality" the first Slavonic Bible was printed (1581) and the first Orthodox "Academy" was founded by Prince Konstantyn Vasyl Ostrogsky (1526–1608) in 1576. In this first school of higher education, the main subjects of the Western arts and sciences—Latin and Greek, grammar, poetics and rhetoric, and philosophical thought—were taught together with Church Slavonic and Orthodox religious culture. Similar teaching was given in the Brotherhood schools of Lviv and other centers.[3] As is well known, the expansion of Catholicism, and the pressure

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2 Many of the books published in the last three decades have provided important information and corrected many biased interpretations of early modern Ruthenian history and culture. I will cite just some of the most important and useful ones: Natalia Iakovenko, *Paralel'ny svit: Doslidzhennia z istorii uiavlen ta idei v Ukraïni XVI–XVII st.* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2002) (cf. the review by Serhii Plokhy in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 25, nos. 3–4 [2001]: 267–80); Tatiana Tairova-Yakovleva, *Ivan Mazepa and the Russian Empire* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2020); Zenon E. Kohut, *The Political Culture of Cossack Ukraine: The Shaping of Core Values, Political-Historical Thought, and Identities (1569–1714)* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2023).

3 In the last decades of the sixteenth century, lay Orthodox communities began to organize Brotherhoods in Ukrainian cities. They were modeled on the example of similar organizations

of Polish Catholic influence put an end to the Ostróg Academy (1636) and hampered the work of other Orthodox schools. However, the bright Ostrogian example of integration between Western Renaissance patterns and Church Slavonic Orthodox tradition was later resumed in the Kyivan Brotherhood and the famous Caves Monastery. In 1632, the newly elected metropolitan of Kyiv, Petro Mohyla (1596–1647), a powerful prince from Transylvania who remained faithful to the Orthodox faith, succeeded in creating a college that still bears his name: the Kyiv-Mohyla College, later Academy, in present-day Kyiv-Mohyla University. The college was modeled on the Jesuit organization and curriculum, with the only difference being that the Ruthenian Church Slavonic language and the Orthodox religious tradition were fundamental subjects of education, though the language of teaching was Latin and the handbooks and main models of imitation came from Western European Catholic institutions and printing houses.[4] This created the basis of modern Ukrainian culture and distinguished the Kyivan from the Muscovite tradition.

These developments took place during the reign of the Polish king Władysław IV (1595–1648, r.1632–48), who secured an equilibrium between Polish political domination, local autonomy, and respect for Ukraine's Orthodox traditions and of the Cossacks' "privileges." The influence of Polish and Western culture fostered the development of Ukrainian poetry, polemical religious literature, history writing, and other kinds of verbal and figurative art.

The divide in the development of early modern Ukraine and the Polish Commonwealth was the year 1648. The events of that year had fatal consequences for both peoples: the death of King Władysław IV and the Cossack uprising permanently destroyed the equilibrium between Ukraine and Poland and marked the beginning of Polish decline. For Ukraine itself, on the other hand, 1648 marked the beginning of the concept and the existence of statehood. In that year, the noble Cossack commander Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1595–1657) took command of an uprising that spread among all the social strata, including nobles (*szlachta*) and the peasantry. After defeating the Polish

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that had been flourishing in European cities since the fourteenth century. They were active in teaching, printing, fostering the Ukrainian language, and organizing the civil life of Orthodox people belonging to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. They had great impact on the formation of Ruthenian—and more specifically Ukrainian—identity (Iaroslav Isaevych, *Bratsva ta iikh rol' v rozvitku ukraiins'koii kul'tury XVI–XVIII st.* [Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1966]; Isaevych, "Der Buchdruck und die Entwiklung der Literatursprachen in der Ukraine [16.-1. Hälfte des 17. Jh.]," *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 36, no. 1 [1991]: 40–52).

4   Natalia Iakovenko, *Dzerkala identychnosti: Doslidzhennia z istoriï uiavlen ta idei v Ukraïni XVII–pochatku XVIII st.* (Kyiv: Laurus, 2012); Iakovenko, *U poshukakh novoho neba: Zhyttia i teksty Ioanikiia Galiatovs'koho* (Kyiv: Laurus, 2017).

army at Zhovti Vody (Żółte Wody), Khmelnytsky was received by Metropolitan Sylvestr Kosiv (d.1657) as a victor in the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kyiv and proclaimed the "New Moses" for delivering the "chosen people" (the Ukrainians) from Pharaoh's (Poland's) slavery. The Polish title of hetman became the title of the chief of a sovereign state, the Hetmanate: this marked the emergence of a new nation and a new political entity that identified itself with the Cossack tradition, the Orthodox Church, and a system of values based on both the Western—Polish and European—heritage of Renaissance and baroque culture and the Slavo-Byzantine religious and ethnic tradition.[5]

Khmelnytsky's sovereign Hetmanate lasted only a couple of years: the Cossacks were defeated by the Poles in 1651 at Berestechko, the Tatar allies withdrew their support, and, in 1654, Khmelnytsky decided to side with an apparently less dangerous ally, the Orthodox tsar of Moscow, Aleksei Mikhailovich (1629–76, r.1645–76). From that point onward, Kyiv and its lands became dependent on the Russian state, some efforts at regaining the Polish Confederation notwithstanding (the most important being the Hadiach Treaty, signed by Hetman Ivan Vyhovsky [d.1664] and the Polish king in 1658, which, however, remained unheeded).

Constant wars, the Swedish Deluge (1648–66), and internecine conflicts in the Cossack Hetmanate destabilized and weakened Ukraine but did not arrest its existence and intellectual development. The Kyiv-Mohyla College in the Caves Monastery remained the moral and intellectual fortress of the country. Russian pressure did not allow for independence, but a growing degree of autonomy made Ukraine a social and intellectual body that, while politically weak, was never separated from the West European tradition. This became particularly evident during the hetmancy of the most prominent political leader of seventeenth-century Ukraine, one of the most brilliant personalities of Europe at that time, Ivan Mazepa (1639–1709), whose name rarely appears among the kings, princes, dukes, and other powerful men of seventeenth-century Europe. This is because, in 1708, Mazepa decided to escape from the grip of Peter I (1672–1725, r.1682–1725) and tried to join forces with the Swedish king Charles XII (1682–1718, r.1697–1718). The famous Battle of Poltava (June 8, 1709) marked the defeat of the king and the hetman and the end of the autonomous state of Ukraine and its subjugation to the Russian empire. But why is the period of Mazepa's Hetmancy important to our discourse on manuscripts and their publication?

During Mazepa's Hetmancy (1687–1709), Ukraine peaked its social, economic, and intellectual development in the early modern period. Mazepa was

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5   Cf. Frank Sysyn's account of these events in his essay that is included in this volume.

not only one of the best-educated nobles of the eastern lands of the Polish Commonwealth and Russian tsardom; the years he spent as a page at the court of King John II Casimir (1609–72, r.1648–68) also made him a perfect courtier and a skilled politician. His ability to speak and use Latin rhetoric was well known. He spoke and wrote in perfect Polish and Middle Ukrainian and had a good command of German, Italian, French, and Tatar. He fostered the country's economic development by supporting private enterprises (water mills, ceramics, textile products, glass and soap products, and alcohol production) while limiting the use of forced labor. The centralization of power and a rigorous, well-regulated system of taxation brought enormous riches to both the state and his personal treasury. Mazepa invested great sums in the development of culture in the Kyiv Monastery and the Mohyla College, the construction of new churches and residencies, fortifications, endowments for architecture, painting, book printing, engraving, and all kinds of arts. Mazepian baroque became an emblematic style that characterized dozens of constructions founded by the hetman. His political ability manifested itself first when he understood that the domination of the regent Sofia Mikhailovich (1657–1704, r.1682–89) and Vasily Golitsyn (1643–1714) was no longer viable and supported the ascension of the Naryshkin family and of Peter I as tsar (formally 1689, in actual fact 1694). Being thirty-five years older than Peter and extremely experienced and intelligent, in the first years of Peter's rule as tsar, Mazepa gained influence over him and became one of his wise counselors. He managed to obtain Peter's trust, as a result of which he was able to reign over his Hetmanate with a substantial degree of autonomy. He knew the Machiavellian political theories that developed in seventeenth-century Europe and applied them in the most sensible and well-calculated way.

Mazepa's entourage can be considered the first manifestation of a real princely court in Ukraine. Banquets, theater, music, dance, orations, and poems were written and performed in the capital city of Baturyn, in the Mohyla College, and probably in other places where Mazepa happened to reside. Learned monks wrote long treatises of doctrinal theory and practice (Innokentii Gizel' [1600–83], Ioanikii Galiatovskii [c.1620–88], Ivan Maksymovych [1651–1715]); epic Polish poems were translated and adapted (Samuel Twardowski [c.1600–61]); Latin treatises of poetics and rhetoric were written for the pupils of the Mohyla College; hagiography was represented by the splendid collection of Lives of Saints written in Middle Ukrainian by the monk Dmytro Tuptalo Rostovskii (1651–1709), son of a Cossack; historiography narrated the Cossack deeds and illustrated Ukraine's past, sometimes in mythological terms modeled on Western historiography; poems were written

by priests, nobles, and burghers such as Ivan Velychkovskii (*c.*1630/50–1701), Danylo Bratkovskii (*c.*1642–1702), and Kliment Zinoviiv (*c.*1650–1717); long and complicated panegyrical poems were prepared in Latin, Polish, and Ukrainian, both by monks and lay writers (Stefan Iavorskii [1658–1722], Jan Ornovskii [*c.*1651–after 1705], Pylyp Orlyk [1672–1742], Ioasaf Krokovskii [*c.*1650–1718]); Teofan Prokopovych (1681–1736) dedicated to Mazepa an amazing theatrical piece about St. Volodymyr the Baptizer (*c.*960–1015, r.980–1015); and hundreds of sermons were recited in church services, and then printed, by I. Galiatovskii, Antonii Radyvylovskii (*c.*1620–88), Tuptalo, Iavorskii, and several other highly educated preachers.

The richness and breadth of this cultural milieu were suddenly interrupted by Mazepa's fall in 1709. True, the activity of the Mohyla College, which had become an academy in 1697, continued throughout the eighteenth century,[6] and the Caves Monastery did not lose its prestige as a religious and intellectual center, but Peter's reforms, and later the oppression of imperial Russia (especially under Catherine II [1729–96, r.1762–96]), strongly limited Ukrainian culture: Peter prohibited the Middle Ukrainian language in printing, censorship hampered intellectual liberty, Catherine II abolished the Hetmanate and the Sich (including the very name),[7] the Russian model of "Westernization" dominated in every field of culture, and the Russian language was imposed on the education system as well as public and intellectual life.[8] Russian scholarly research about the Mazepian period focuses mainly on the imperial perspective and the ecclesiastic culture centered on the Muscovite patriarchate. The works of literature and art of the Mazepian baroque culture were "appropriated" by Russian culture and examined only from a Russian perspective.[9]

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6   Maksym Iaremenko, *Akademiki ta akademiia: Socialna istoriia osviti j osvichenosti v Ukraïni XVIII st.* (Kharkiv: Akta, 2014); Iaremenko, *Pered viklikami unifikaciï ta disciplinuvannia: Kiïvska pravoslavna mitropoliia u XVIII stolitti* (Lviv: Vid. UKU, 2017).

7   The Sich was a fortress and military center on the Island of Khortytsia (Zaporizhzhia), on the lower Dnipro River, the cradle of the Cossack army. Because of its military and symbolic significance for Ukrainian identity, it was abolished and destroyed by Catherine II in 1775.

8   In the nineteenth century, two decrees (Valuev circular, 1863; Ems ukase, 1876) plainly prohibited the printing and public use of Ukrainian in any form. They remained active until 1906.

9   There are exceptions, however, namely the excellent book by Tatiana Tairova (*Ivan Mazepa and the Russian Empire*).

2   Stefan Iavorskii's Heritage

I will now focus on Stefan Iavorskii, one of the main representatives of Mazepa's entourage. He acted as a panegyrist, a diplomat, a Mohylian professor, and a court preacher at the peak of the hetman's glory. Iavorskii was one of the most erudite and influential monks and church hierarchs in Ukraine and (after 1700) in Russia. Articles and several books have been devoted to his life and work, beginning in the nineteenth century. His last monumental work *Kamen' very* (The stone of faith) is considered the first real theological treatise in the Slav Orthodox tradition. Recently, two important editions have finally put at our disposal Iavorskii's letters and a doctrinal treatise.[10]

All this notwithstanding, the quantity and, most importantly, quality of Iavorskii's published work is very poor. As a preacher and a brilliant member of Mazepa's court, he wrote long and extremely elaborate Polish and Latin panegyrics for the hetman and Metropolitan Varlaam Iasynskii (1627–1707); he also wrote dozens of sermons delivered in the main churches of the Hetmanate. As the "chief" of the Russian Orthodox Church and the "official" preacher of Peter I (from 1700), he wrote hundreds of sermons for liturgical and occasional holidays of the tsar's family and court.

The panegyrics were printed in the 1680s and 1690s, but few copies have survived in Russian, Ukrainian, or Polish libraries; they have practically never been investigated in depth.[11] Among the sermons, those written and pronounced in Russia were partly printed in 1804–5 but in a heavily Russianized

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10   Ilarion A. Chistovich, "Neizdannye propovedi Stefana Iavorskogo," *Khristianskoe chtenie* 1 (1867): 259–79, 414–29, 814–37; 2:99–149; Ilia Shljapkin, *Sv. Dimitrii Rostovskii i ego vremia* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Transhel, 1901); Ioann Morev, *Kamen' very Mitropolita Stefana Javorskogo* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Artilleriiskogo Zhurnala, 1904); Ryszard Łużny, *Pisarze kręgu Akademii Kijowsko-Mohylańskiej a literatura polska* (Kraków: Nakładem Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1966); Rostysław Radyszewśkyj, *Roksolański Parnas*, 2 vols. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Oddziału Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1996–98); Giovanna Brogi Bercoff, "The Hetman and the Metropolitan: Cooperation between State and Church in the Time of Varlaam Jasyns'kyj," in *Mazepa e il suo tempo: Storia, società, cultura; Mazepa and His Time: History, Society, Culture*, ed. Giovanna Siedina (Alessandria: Dell'Orso Editore, 2004), 417–44; Ihor S. Zakhara, *Stefan Javors'kyj* (Lviv: Kameniar, 1991); Leonid Ushkalov, *Svit ukraïnskoho barokko* (Kharkiv: Fakt, 2006); Serhii Pavlenko, *Otochennja Getmana Mazepy: Soratnyky ta prybichnyky* (Kyiv: кМ Akademiia, 2004); Viktor M. Zhivov, *Iz tserkovnoi istorii vremen Petra Velikogo* (Moscow: Literaturnoe obozrenie, 2004); Marina Fedotova, *Epistoliarnoe nasledie Dmitriia Rostovskogo: Issledovanie i materialy* (Moscow: Indrik, 2005), 451–53, 132–34.

11   Iaroslav A. Zapasko and Iaroslav D. Isaevych, *Pam'jatky knizhkoho Mystectva: Katalog starodrukiv vydanyx na Ukraïni*, vol. 1 (Lviv: Lvivskyi Derzhavnyj Universytet, 1981).

language.[12] Their text has never been closely compared to the original text preserved in the autograph manuscript no. 1592, fond 834, held by the Archiv sviateishago pravitel'stvujushchago sinoda in the Russian State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg. Some of the so-called "occasional" or "victory" sermons, held for the celebration of the imperial family's holy days or for the glorification of Peter's victories or war campaigns, were printed in journals and books up until the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, but the editors' choices make the situation even worse: they create a biased image of Stefan's personality and his relationship with the tsar.

Fortunately, the manuscript mentioned above still exists. In the early 2000s, the library sent me a microfilm of the whole manuscript, and I was able to single out the sermons that Stefan delivered in Ukraine before he was obliged to become metropolitan of Ryazan and spend the remaining twenty-two years of his life at the service of Peter I. Thanks to the cooperation of researchers from Italy, Poland, and Ukraine, it has since been possible to access a scanned version of all the panegyrics and the sermons he certainly wrote and pronounced in Kyiv and Baturyn, the religious and political capitals of Mazepa's Hetmanate.

I will not dwell here on the panegyrics. The results of recent investigations demonstrate not only Iavorskii's superb mastery of the Polish language and versification, the high quality of his Latin texts, the enormous amount of quotations of Polish and Western classical, Renaissance, and baroque sources but also his skills in creating fascinating epic narratives and in shaping works that show the author's acquaintance with the most representative trends of European literature of the time while remaining highly original and creative.[13] The panegyrics also provide some insight into the political thought of the Ukrainian elites, both ecclesiastic and governmental. Quotations from Virgil (70 BCE–19 BCE) and Horace (65 BCE–8 BCE) suggest that Iavorskii drew a parallel between Mazepa and the Roman emperor Augustus (63 BCE–14 CE, r.27 BCE–14 CE); this also allows us to highlight the identitarian sentiment of

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12   *Propovedi blazhennyia pamiati Stefana Javorskogo*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Sinodalnaja tipografiia, 1804–5). Cf. Giovanna Brogi Bercoff, "Barokova homiletyka u sxidnoslov'jans'komu kul'turnomu prostori," in *Contributi italiani al XIV Congresso Internazionale degli Slavisti* (*Ohrid 10–16 settembre 2008*) (Florence: FUP, 2008), 179–200; Brogi Bercoff, "I sermoni ucraini di Stefan Jaworski," in *Per Aleksander Naumow: Studi in suo onore*, ed. Ljiljana Banjanin, Persida Lazarević Di Giacomo, and Krasimir Stanchev (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2019), 207–23.

13   Cf. Bartosz Awianowicz, "The Classical and Jesuit Erudition of Stefan Iavorskii in His Panegyrics to Varlaam Iasinskii," *Philologia classica* 15, no. 2 (2020): 246–60. Further investigations by Awianowicz and Jakub Niedźwiedź are still ongoing.

the Kyivan intellectuals in the Hetmanate and the ardent wish for stability and peace nurtured by the ecclesiastic authorities of the Kyiv metropole.[14]

3   Documentary and Cultural Significance

Iavorskii's Ukrainian sermons have never been published. This neglect is undoubtedly due to political reasons. In the Russian empire, any Ukrainian cultural "product" produced under Mazepa, the "traitor," the "devil," and "Juda,"[15] was banned or had to be formulated in such a way as to glorify Russia and Peter's imperial rule. Stefan's Ukrainian sermons were addressed to the Kyivan milieu, to the listeners of the metropolitan church, or to the Mazepian court and had no real significance for the glory of Peter or of Russia; hence they were simply erased from the public memory.

I am currently working with a team of researchers at universities in Kraków and Kyiv on a philological scholarly edition of thirty sermons that were written and delivered by Iavorskii in Ukraine. They were written between 1691 and 1698, as testified by the title page of each text. The titles are mostly in Latin and indicate the date and the church where the sermons were delivered (see fig. 1).

Most of the sermons were given in Kyivan churches (the Cathedral of St. Sophia, the Monastery of St. Nicolas, the Church of the Dormition of the Caves Monastery, the Female Monastery of the Assumption, the Church of Peter and Paul, and others) or in a church in Baturyn, the capital city where Hetman Mazepa had his official residence.

The sermons devoted to St. John are remarkable because the Baptist was Mazepa's patron. The sermon held in Baturyn on January 7, 1693, has several points of special interest.[16] The definition "itinerant sermon" is somewhat ambiguous: it can be interpreted both as a sermon written for and pronounced on the occasion of a liturgical celebration out of town (which had thus required a journey), or as a sermon meant for a celebration, including a procession with participants moving from place to place, either inside or outside the church.

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14   Natalia Iakovenko, *Paralel'nyi svit: Doslidzhennia z istorii uiavlen ta idei v Ukraïni XVI–XVII st.* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2002); Iakovenko, *U poshukakh Novogo neba: Zhittia i teksty Ioanikiia Galiatovskogo* (Kyiv: Laurus, 2017); Larysa Dovha, *Systema tsynnostei v ukraïns'koi kul'turi XVII stolittia* (Lviv: Svychado, 2012), 272–79; Brogi Bercoff, "Hetman and the Metropolitan."

15   Giovanna Brogi, "Mazepa, lo zar e il diavolo: Un inedito di Stefan Javorskij," *Russica romana* 7 (2000): 167–88.

16   The sermon bears the title *Vox clamantis in deserto* (The voice in the wilderness; Mark 1:3) and appears in MS 1592 on fols. 853–58.

FIGURE 1   Title page of Iavorskii's Sermon "Vox clamantis in deserto" (1693)

Both interpretations may apply in this case: Iavorskii indeed traveled from Kyiv to Baturyn, thus raising the possibility that he hastily prepared the sermon while traveling; the sermon may also have been accompanied by a procession inside or outside the church. The sermon is clearly of political significance: it was pronounced "Coram toto senatu Rossiaco Baturini" (in the presence of the whole senate of the Hetmanate [fol. 853]); the voice of the Baptist is compared to a "trumpet," which the preacher explains (literally, historically) as an appeal to war against infidel Muslims (the Ottoman army) and (metaphorically, morally) as an appeal against the army of human sins and for repentance. The sermon is explicitly devoted to Hetman Mazepa (fol. 857^v). The dedication to the Russian tsar is also remarkable: this is the only sermon of Iavorskii's Ukrainian period containing an explicit dedication to a tsar but, surprisingly, the only

Russian tsar that is mentioned is Ivan Alekseevich (1666–96, r.1682–96), who also celebrated his name day on the feast of St. John (fol. 857). A possible reason for this choice is Iavorskii's desire to remain within the limits of strictly religious and liturgical frames (St. John's name day). Another reason may be found in the fact that, in 1693, Peter did not yet have total power. The dedication to the tsar may also indicate that representatives of the Russian authorities were present in the liturgical celebration. Be that as it may, the sermon testifies to the high standing the preacher already had in the political life of the Hetmanate and his role as a diplomat at Mazepa's court. On the Sunday of Theophany, which follows the day of Christ's Baptism by St. John, Iavorskii was again engaged in preaching while celebrating the rite of the blessing of water. The title page also indicates that the sermon was held before the "Senate," the highest council of Cossack nobility and one of the most important institutions of the Hetmanate. Until the end of the seventeenth century, it was customary to convene the council ahead of Epiphany. This event would normally last several days. The rite of the Great Blessing of Water became part of the official ceremonial of the court during Mazepa's Hetmanate. The sermon is short and straightforward when compared to the other sermons, even when they were addressed to a lay audience in public state ceremonies. It is unclear why this should be the case: Was Mazepa absent, so the preacher did not put as much effort into preparing the sermon? It should also be noted that the sermon was followed by the rite of the benediction of water, which took place on the river's shores during the cold weather in January. The sermon must have been directed at a lay audience with a "practical" approach to life suited to political and military elites. The parallel established by the author between the eyes of the "beloved" and "a lake leading to perdition" and the reference to the temptation for young people seems to confirm this hypothesis. As in any other courtly milieu of the time, the life of Mazepa's entourage and the various dominant clans of the Hetmanate was certainly not always modest and pious.

Iavorskii prepared a sermon for the same celebration on January 10, 1697, under the title "BALNEUM Lacrymarum paenitentialium" (A bath of penitential tears; fols. 1057–1063). In some respects, it is similar to the text of 1693. The motif of water plays the main symbolic role and is associated with a wide range of figures and metaphors; the exhortation to repentance is equally important, but the images provided in the first part are somewhat darker. In the second part, the 1697 sermon alludes to historical or pseudohistorical persons and narrations and everyday realia. Interestingly, one also finds facetious remarks, which are uncommon in Stefan's sermons.

It is noteworthy that this second sermon (1697) devoted to Theophany is followed by an "afterword" addressed to Mazepa containing some unknown

historical data (fols. 1064–1064ᵛ). The speech was probably to be delivered in the presence of the hetman himself, supposedly in the church after the liturgy. The first part of this speech contains lofty lauds and good wishes to Mazepa for the name day that had occurred only three days earlier (St. John the Baptist's day on January 7). Since Mazepa was sick and could not have attended the ceremony, it is safe to assume that Stefan paid a courtesy visit to the hetman as the head of state (Lat. *dux*), and perhaps the meeting between the two men took place in Mazepa's bedchamber or in some of the chancery rooms. The preacher may have handed the text of the sermon with the benediction of the patron St. John directly to the hetman (or to one of his assistants): St. John is metaphorically represented in the speech by the "spiritual olive branch" brought back to Noah by the dove, while Stefan underlines that he, like the dove sent by Noah, came as a representative of the metropolitan see, hence as a messenger of Varlaam Iasynskii. St. John (the olive tree) brings three gifts, namely a shadow to protect its recipient from heat, oil for pain relief, and protection from sin. Next, Mazepa himself is referred to as an olive tree that protects the homeland from enemies (it is of great interest that, in 1708, in the sermon for the "anathema" against Mazepa, the preacher used these same images but with the opposite significance: Mazepa was no longer an "olive tree" but a "flexible weed" damned to destruction).[17] Toward the end of the speech, Stefan offers Mazepa a second gift: the full course of theology he taught in the years 1693–97 at the "Kyivan Athens" (the Mohyla College). In doing so, he expresses his gratitude to the patron who sponsored this important enterprise. As has recently been demonstrated, this is the only authentic document revealing that the first complete course of theology in Kyiv was held in the years 1693–97. As extant documents show, the first course of theology was initiated in 1692 by Ioasaf Krokovskii (metropolitan of Kyiv 1708–18), but this was interrupted after a few weeks because of Ioasaf's many engagements and a journey to Vilnius. Thus, it was Stefan Iavorskii who was entrusted with the entire course of theology, which lasted four years. This is confirmed by the fact that, in 1693, Metropolitan Iasinskii officially asked Patriarch Adrian (1638–1700) for permission to teach theology. Iasinskii avoided mentioning the articles of the Hadiach Treaty of 1658 in which the Polish king allowed the Mohyla College to have the same status as Kraków University. Most probably, however, Varlaam had this precedent

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17   On the ambiguity of Iavorskii's sermon of 1708, see Giovanna Brogi, "Poltava: A Turning Point in the History of Preaching," in *Poltava 1709: The Battle and the Myth*, ed. Serhii Plokhy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 205–26.

in mind when asking to enlarge the curriculum of the Kyivan college, thus elevating it to the status of an academy.[18]

4   Stefan Iavorskii and Lazar Baranovych

Another interesting piece of new information in Iavorskii's Ukrainian sermons is a "funeral note" commemorating the death of the archbishop of Chernihiv Lazar Baranovych (1620–93) (fols. 309ᵛ–310). This short but dense text has been added to the "Sermon for the Nativity of the Virgin Mary," delivered at Kyiv's Metropolitan Cathedral of St. Sophia on September 8, 1693 (fols. 303–309ᵛ). The sermon is written in "plain language" (*prosta mova*), which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was used in the Hetmanate for a broad range of purposes. The use of this language (the Ukrainian elite used it with equal ease as Polish, Latin, and Church Slavonic)[19] indicates that Iavorskii addressed the audience directly, almost "personally," expressing his sorrow for losing an outstanding personality. This loss makes the Ruthenian church and culture poorer—he declares—but there is consolation: the preacher invites his listeners to follow the church's teaching and go to encounter the Celestial Groom. The deceased archbishop will be the ambassador—the preacher continues—preparing this encounter: "Now the Spouse of the Holy Spirit comes into the world; Whom will the world send to encounter the Spouse of the Holy Spirit? A lamb will be sent to the purest Lamb: the Blessed Virgin Mother of God" (fol. 310).

A typical baroque wordplay with the name of the deceased indicates the "lamb" Baranovych ("baran" means "sheep") who is elevated to the Virgin Mary: she is the "most pure Lamb" bearing Christ in her womb. This is a first indication of the importance Baranovych had for generations of Ukrainian literati as well as for Iavorskii himself: the wordplay on *baran*/Baranovych appears in Lazar's own poems and in a collection of panegyrical poems written by Ivan Velychkovskii around 1690, a typographer who worked in the printing house

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18   Maksym Yaremenko, "Koly i khto prochytav u Kyievo-Mohylianskomu kolegiumi povnii bohoslovskii kurs?," *Kyivska akademiia* 16 (2019): 11–30, here 23–28.

19   David Frick, "Meletij Smotryc'kyj and the Ruthenian Language Question," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 9, nos. 1–2 (1985): 25–52; Michael Moser, *Prychynky do istorii ukrains'koï movy* (Kharkiv: Prapor, 2008); Moser, *New Contributions to the History of the Ukrainian Language* (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 2016). Sergejus Temčinas, "Języki kultury ruskiej w Pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej," in *Między Wschodem i Zachodem: Prawosławie i unia,* ed. Marzanna Kuczyńska (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2017), 81–120; Giovanna Brogi, "Vybir movy ta vybir kul'tury v Ukraïni XVII stolittja," *Kyjivska akademija* 12 (2015): 33–45.

FIGURE 2 Title page of Ivan Velychkovskii's collection of poems dedicated to Lazar Baranowych

founded by the archbishop in Chernihiv.[20] Iavorskii certainly knew every page of these poets and preachers (see fig. 2). The poems and sermons of the three

20 Ivan Velychkovskii, *Tvory* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1972); Giovanna Brogi, "Identificazione fra lingua e nazione: Un'idea solo romantica?," in *Mosty Mostite: Studi in onore di Marcello Garzaniti*, ed. Alberto Alberti, Maria C. Ferro, and Francesca Romoli (Florence: FUP, 2016), 241–50; Łazarz Baranowicz, *Lutnia Apollinowa kożdej sprawie gotowa* (Kyiv: Typographia Kijowo-Pieczarska, 1671); Baranowicz, "Lutnia Apollinowa kożdej sprawie gotowa," *Terminus* 2 (2004): 95–149.

writers reveal that the connections between the generations of Baranovych and Iavorskii were very deep and that they were inspired by similar late Renaissance and baroque trends connected to Polish, Italian, and generally European models. They also show that there were significant differences and that Ukrainian literature experienced a profound evolution in the second half of the seventeenth century. Let us look deeper into the relationship between Baranovych and Iavorskii, who had the former as one of his teachers.

In one of Baranovych's sermons from the collection named *Mech duchovnyi* (The spiritual sword) (Kyiv, 1666), the thema quotes the Gospel (John 11:12) "Лазарь другъ нашъ успе" (Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep). The narration combines the episode from the Gospel with apocryphal events according to which, after his resurrection, Lazarus became bishop of Kition. The quote from the Gospel has been "reactivated" by Iavorskii, giving it a new meaning. Stefan's wording is: "Лазар не другъ але пастыр наш успе" (Not our friend Lazar, but Lazar, our pastor, passed away). This formula may be interpreted as a declaration of deference (the eminent archbishop could not be considered a friend by the still young preacher) and as a statement of respect: respect toward the sacred "function" of the archbishop, but also toward the churchman, who, although controversial and not always admired, was probably the most famous man of letters and church hierarch in the Kyivan Hetmanate after Mohyla of the first generation of "Latinizers." Iavorskii owned Baranovych's works and certainly knew the latter's sermon. I would argue that he deliberately selected that particular quotation as a sort of thematic clue and a thread for his funeral note.

Among the other affinities between Baranovych and Iavorskii that I have described elsewhere,[21] I will highlight another important point. The sermon that precedes the funeral note is intermingled with allusions to Baranovych's poems, which, in some cases, form structural features of the whole composition. Already in the exordium, the preacher announces that he will dwell on the signification of the five letters forming the name MARIA: "Обачимо що знаменуетъ и въ своих пяти лѣтерах Марiа, и в самой вещи и истиннѣ. […] А я о пятолѣтерном имени МАРІА, пят враговъ побѣждающемъ, пят чувствъ исцѣляющем, въ сей пятокъ […] тебе самую пемовятко святое на помощъ призываю" (fol. 304ʳ).[22] The name of Jesus also contains five letters and is associated with Mary. This appears as a verbal "translation" of

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21　　Giovanna Brogi, "In the Name of Mary: Baranowicz, Jaworski, and the Good Pastor," *pl.it. Rassegna italiana di argomenti polacchi* 12 (2021): 110–32.

22　　"Let us gaze at what the name Maria [and] its five letters signify, according to the matter and the divine essence […] But, in the five letters of the name MARIA, I read the winner overcoming the five enemies, healing our five senses, on this Friday […] I invoke thy help and [the help of] the Holy Infant."
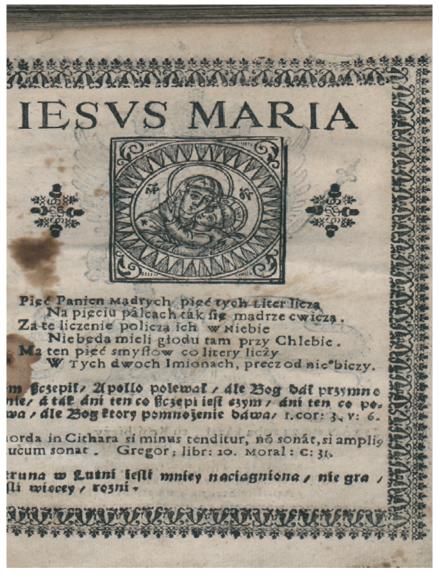
FIGURE 3   Front page of Lazar Baranovych's Lutnia Apollinowa (1671)

the frontpage image of Baranovych's collection of poems *Lutnia Apollinowa* (Apollo's lute [Kyiv, 1671]), where, in the shape of an emblem, the image of the Mother of God with the Child Jesus is preceded by the names JESUS MARIA (functioning as motto) and by six regular rhyming couplets of eleven-syllabic verses explaining the image and motto: the first four verses present the five wise virgins who have gained heaven because they have counted the five letters of the name Maria and Jesus on their five fingers (see fig. 3).

Moreover, the text of Iavorskii's sermon contains the name MARIA, in capital letters, no fewer than twenty-eight times: a feature that never appears in the same author's other sermons and shows how intensely Baranovych's poems inspired Stefan's sermon. It is well known that Baranovych wrote many poems devoted to the Virgin Mary. Among the most noteworthy is the poem called MARIA MARIA, where the second word means Latin *maria*, the seas:

> MARIA, morza, rzeki tu ściekają
> I wszytkie łaski w Maryją spływają.
> Słone bywają morza, ale słodkie Twoje,
> Pił bowiem z Ciebie, Jezus Słodki, słodkie zdroje.
> Morze Twe jako ziemia obiecana
> Miodem i mlekiem jest z góry polana.[23]

The association of the name of Mary with the Latin *maria* is expressed as follows in Iavorskii's sermon: "МАРІА знаменует море. МАРІА море!" (MARIA means the sea. MARIA the sea) (fol. 304ʳ). Other analogies between Iavorskii's sermon and the following verses of Baranovych's poem appear in the next folio: "Вси потоци текут въ море, и море нѣст насыщаяся; всѣ тые горести Сладчайший Іс̃ услаждает [...] [fol. 304ᵛ]. Церковъ [...] ст̃ая нарыцает ю Землею обѣтованною из ней же течет мед и млеко."[24] The first phrase is a quote from Eccl. 1:7, but the whole text quoted above is connected to Polish Marian religiosity and liturgy and is an exact reformulation of Baranovych's verses.

The question arises of how far we are allowed to speak about the direct influence of the "teacher" Baranovych on the "pupil" Iavorskii: both authors refer to the same image and topos, but there is a difference of accents. This leads to different interpretations of the same biblical quotations and metaphorical figures. Baranovych says that seas are sometimes "salted," which means "bitter," but the dominant motif is the "sweetness" of Mary's "sources," which "sweet" infant Jesus sucks. Iavorskii stresses the bitterness symbolized by the very name MARIA, which means "a sea of bitterness" (МАРІА знаменует МОРЕ ГОРЕСТИ; fol. 307ᵛ) (the syntagm is underlined in the manuscript). Complying

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23   Baranovych, *Lutnia*, 222. "Maria means seas, rivers flow into them / All graces flow into Mary. / Seas are salted, but for him [Jesus] they are sweet / because Sweet Jesus drank from you [Mary]. / Your sea is like the Promised Land / over which heaven spills honey and milk."

24   "All the rivers run toward the sea, and the sea is never full; Jesus makes every bitterness sweet [...]. The holy church [...] calls her the Promised Land from which honey and milk flow."

with the nature and function of baroque homiletics, the preacher goes beyond poetic images and exploits his remarkable erudition to interpret and explain the symbolic significance of Mary's "bitterness." For this end, he reaches to the *Commentarius* to Luke 1:27 by the Flemish Jesuit Cornelius a Lapide (van den Steen [1567–1637]) and explains that Maria is named Mirjam in Hebrew, which means bitter, because "Hebraei enim tradunt sororem Mosis dictam esse Mariam, eo quod, cum ipsa nasceretur, coepit amara Pharaonis tyrannis mergendi infantes Hebraeorum (Exodi 1)" (the Hebrew tradition tells us that Moses's sister was called Maria because, when she was born, the tyrant Pharaoh began drowning the Jewish children [Ex. 1]). Bypassing a Lapide's reference to St. Ambrose (d.397 CE) and Isidore (c.560–636), Stefan continues translating from a Lapide: "Maria mare gratiarum […] quare sicut omnia flumina intrant in mare Eccles. 1." (Mary is a sea of grace […] similar to the sea where all rivers flow). The interpretation of Mary as a "sea of grace where all rivers merge" indicates that Baranovych and Iavorskii had a common biblical source. Did both look at the interpretations given by a Lapide, or did Stefan "follow" Lazar? The question is hard to answer. Baranovych is likely to have known about a Lapide's *Commentarius* (probably since the time of his education in Jesuit colleges), but there is no evidence that he had the book at his disposal when he wrote *Lutnia*. His pupil Iavorskii had direct access to a Lapide's books, which he had in his personal library, but he certainly also had his master's poetry in mind. Hence, rather than a simple "influence," one should follow complex intertextual relationships that include the common cultural background of the two Ukrainian literati, the Bible and its commentaries, and the different functions of the poem and the sermon, which were written and delivered in different situations of communication.

Though it is easy to find other examples of an intertextual connection between the two authors,[25] there is also clear evidence of Iavorskii's originality. This appears from the final result of the works examined here and from a direct formulation by Iavorskii himself. Indeed, a few lines later in the sermon, he writes: "Yet another idea comes to my mind" (Мнѣ єднакъ […] иншая еще на мысл приходит рація; fol. 308ʳ). Besides essentially being a Cyrillic transliteration of Polish "*Mnie jednak […] insza jeszcze przychodzi do głowy racja," this assertion seems to indicate the author's desire to show his ability in playing with "inherited" intertextual materials and new, original creativity. Iavorskii explains that "bitter sea" derives from the rivers of tears shed by all the righteous who were born before Mary, from our sins that make water bitter and from repentants' tears. The idea and the image are probably not truly original,

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25   Brogi, "In the Name," 124–30.

but it is evident that the younger preacher wanted to distance himself from the deceased "teacher."

5   Conclusion

Comparing Iavorskii's sermon and Baranovych's poetry offers an unprecedented insight into the relationship between two generations of the intellectual elite of the Hetmanate on both a personal and cultural level. The formula "our pastor, not our friend" should not be read as a sign of animosity toward the archbishop, even if the latter had a harsh dispute in the 1670s with Iavorskii's "patron" Varlaam Iasinskii, the metropolitan of Kyiv (1691–1707).[26] Having returned to Kyiv after receiving a Polish education in Jesuit academies in 1689, four years later, Iavorskii already had a solid position as a preacher and a poet at Mazepa's court. He probably looked at Baranovych's "figural" poetry, at his "popular" inspiration, and his ornate (but somewhat "messy") sermons with some detachment or even smugly. However, he certainly appreciated Baranovych's activity as a founder of typography, a defender of anti-Muslim crusades, and a strong supporter of the Kyivan Orthodox Church and tradition. Although there is no documentary evidence, it is reasonable to assume that the two churchmen shared the idea of the need to accept the "protection of the high arm of the tsar" while still nurturing hopes that Kyiv could maintain much of its traditional ecclesiastic autonomy. Later events show this was wishful thinking, but in 1693, thanks to Mazepa's rising power, such illusions may not have seemed so far-fetched.

If we think of the development of Ukrainian literature, we should see Baranovych as a representative of the Renaissance tradition the Ukrainian literati had partially assimilated under Polish rule and as a follower of the baroque predilection for conceptism, figures of language and thought, sharp contrasts, as recommended by the Jesuit Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski's (1591–1640) theoretical treatises and poems. Baranovych refers to Jan Kochanowski (1530–84) as a sort of "model" (though recognizing the latter's superiority) but is fond of many "tricks" of European baroque poetics and rhetoric. Iavorskii was two generations younger and represents a more advanced stage of poetry and literature. He knew how to create tension and how to develop complex epic narratives in line with Twardowski's poems. His verse and strophe compositions are complex and sophisticated and testify to a dramatic growth of poetic and

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26   Anatolii Makarov, *Chernihivski Afiny* (Kyiv: Mystectstvo, 2002), 19–29, 37, 61–64, 90–92, 107–8.

linguistic skills in Polish, Latin, and Ukrainian verse and prose. This essay's comparison of Baranovych's and Iavorskii's texts has also shown how freely the "pupil" reinterpreted the "teacher's" model and how freely both reinterpreted their Latin sources and adjusted them to their public, creating new, original poetry and prose.

The final conclusion brings me to stress once again the need to continue (or resume) the long and demanding task of editing and publishing manuscripts. In the case under discussion, one single manuscript offers

– new information about the history and society of Ukraine, Poland, and Russia;
– the possibility of tracing the evolution of literature and culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a field that has been neglected or willfully misconstrued, particularly in the Soviet period;
– the possibility of reconstructing mutual relationships between the literati in the Hetmanate, a subject about which very little is known;
– new insights into the lively atmosphere of the Mazepian court and the intellectual elite of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy;
– rich material to investigate the Latin, Polish, or broadly European sources of one of the leading Ukrainian intellectuals, more precisely to outline the methods of choosing and quoting the sources and the significance they acquire in the new context; and
– new information about the language: our manuscript offers copious and excellent material to examine the functioning of the four languages (*prosta mova*, Polish, Latin, and Church Slavonic), used in Ukraine in the Mazepian era.

I have pinpointed only some aspects of possible further research in the text of this manuscript when it is published. Among these possibilities, I will recall the comparison between the "Ukrainian" and the "Russian" sermons (particularly with analogous subjects and themas), and the comparison of Iavorskii's poetic and homiletic works devoted to the same or similar subjects.

Words Spoken and Unspoken: Preachers and the Baltic Reformation in the Younger Europe[1]

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Abstract

This essay elucidates some unique characteristics of the early Reformation in the Younger Europe and emphasizes the need for further comparative studies. It concentrates on the period 1523–25 in Stralsund (Duchy of Pomerania) and the initial clashes between the reformative preachers and the Catholic clergy. The author thoroughly analyzes and compares Catholic and Protestant sources, exploring the teachings disseminated during these conflicts, the progression of events, and the attempts from both factions to justify their respective causes. The early Reformation is primarily portrayed as a clerical endeavor in this essay. However, it also highlights the period's potential for instigating violent breaches of morals and social and political structures.

Keywords

Duchy of Pomerania – Stralsund – early Reformation – religious conflict – preaching – iconoclasm – Christian Ketelhut

1 Introduction

When Christian Ketelhut (1492–1546), an ex-canon of the Premonstratensian monastery and Reformation preacher, arrived in Stralsund in 1523, he did not intend to make any public appearances but merely to listen to some sermons before moving on.[1] Yet it was not long before an extremely dark pic-

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ture revealed itself to him: all the priests were incompetent, neglected their duties, and lived with "prostitutes" (*huer*). "I have not met a single clergyman in Pomerania who knew a word of Hebrew or Greek, nay, who [had] even [mastered] Latin well," he noted contemptuously.[2] Soon, other preachers followed Ketelhut and came to Stralsund, where they began to deliver sermons of their own. In 1525, after an episode of violent iconoclasm, the magistrate officially introduced the Reformation in the city by proclaiming the church order (church ordinance, *Kirchenordnung*) legalizing the activities of Reformation preachers.[3] The goal of this succinct document, drafted by a school teacher, was to organize church relations in the city under the separation from the diocese of Schwerin when the city council took control of ecclesiastical structures. In the following decades, almost every territory introducing the Reformation enacted its own church order. The adoption of the documents became a crossing of the Rubicon, a symbolic gesture of inclusion in the world of the Reformation, which was then under the control of secular authority: city councils, princes, and kings.

This essay focuses on the period 1523–25, prior to the publication of the first church orders. These were the very first moments of the Reformation, "a widespread, spontaneous, many-voiced popular movement, which included members from all walks of life and mobilized in particular those excluded from power and wealth."[4] This popular movement was triggered by the promulgation of theses against indulgences in Wittenberg in 1517, which led some historians to proclaim "Luther as the starting point of *the* Reformation,"[5] even when historical analysis reveals the production of the new theology in Wittenberg to have been a team effort.[6] Subsequently, the movement, "greatly enhanced through sermons, tracts, translation of the Bible and hymns in German,"[7]

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2 Stadtarchiv Stralsund [StAS], Rep. 28, no. 41a (a copy); published in Johann Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chronik und die noch vorhandenen Auszüge aus alten verloren gegangenen Stralsundischen Chroniken*, ed. Gottlieb Mohnike and Ernst Heinrich Zober (Stralsund: Löffler, 1833), 253–78, here 272.

3 Heiner Lück and Dirk Schleinert, eds., *Die Stralsunder Kirchen- und Schulordnung von 1525 mit Beiträgen von Norbert Buske* (Schwerin: Thomas Helms Verlag, 2017); Roxane Berwinkel, *Weltliche Macht und geistlicher Anspruch: Die Hansestadt Stralsund im Konflikt um das Augsburger Interim* (Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 2008), 43–49.

4 Berndt Hamm, *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety: Essays*, ed. Robert J. Bast (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 218.

5 Thomas Kaufmann, "Luther and Lutheranism," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations*, ed. Ulinka Rublack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 148.

6 Irene Dingel, *Reformation: Zentren—Akteure—Ereignisse* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 48.

7 Hamm, *Reformation of Faith*, 218.

became not just "a German affair" but an international event.[8] Against the tendency to stretch *le temps des réformes* (the time of reforms) and "pluralization of the notion of Reformation,"[9] this essay looks at the movement in its cradle. In this narrow context, it intends to highlight some distinctive characteristics of the early Reformation in the Younger Europe and calls for other comparative studies in the region.

The spotlight of this essay is on the first confrontations between Reformation preachers and Catholic clergy. Witnessed by a handful of people, these clashes were direct, face-to-face conflicts whose medium was the spoken word. Taking place before "preaching mandates" allowing itinerant preachers to deliver sermons and the first attempts to legalize the Reformation that provided access to the printing press, the content of these altercations remains a mystery. While some historians supposed that the content of the sermons was chaos and "wild growth" (*Wildwuchs*) without theological order or intellectual discipline, other researchers tried to define the main idea that moved the crowds. It was in this context that Bernd Moeller defended the thesis of the universal dominance of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, developed at Wittenberg.[10] Moeller's intriguing hypothesis, formulated on the grounds of a relatively limited number of printed sources (*Flugschriften*, ephemeral printed matter), met with criticism, but it also demonstrated the relevance of the question: What was preached in sermons during the first days of the Reformation?

To some extent, Moeller's hypothesis fits with another classic narrative about the nature and consequences of religious change. According to this interpretation, the Reformation implied a massive breakthrough not only in the field of religious, social, and political life but also in sensuality and even

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8   See Andrew Pettegree, "The Early Reformation in Europe: A German Affair or an International Movement?," in *The Early Reformation in Europe*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–22. More recently, see Ulinka Rublack, ed., *Protestant Empires: Globalizing the Reformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

9   Heinz Schilling, "Reformation: Umbruch oder Gipfelpunkt eines *Temps des Réforms*," in *Die frühe Reformation in Deutschland als Umbruch*, ed. Bernd Moeller (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verl.-Haus, 1998), 13–34; Thomas A. Brady, "'We have lost the Reformation': Heinz Schilling and the Rise of the Confessionalization Thesis," in *Wege der Neuzeit: Festschrift für Heinz Schilling zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Stefan Ehrenpreis (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2007), 33–56.

10   Bernd Moeller, "Was wurde in der Frühzeit der Reformation in den deutschen Städten gepredigt?," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 75 (1984): 176–93; Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "Preaching the Word in Early Modern Germany," in *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 193–219.

semantics. If medieval Christianity engaged the faithful in many ways in a rich and sensual religious life, even beyond the colorful and noisy liturgy, then the Reformation allegedly restricted the religious experience to the pure administration of the word of scripture. Supposedly, the new confession focused on the intellectual and spiritual experience, not on sensual impressions. While this opposition became popular among the scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who depicted the Reformation as the incubator of modernity, more recently researchers have tended to reject this view as a product of historical myth-building.[11] In his biography of Martin Luther (1483–1546), Heinz Schilling notes that "an enduring interpretation developed in the nineteenth century […] proposed that the rebellion of an Augustinian monk in Saxony enabled the breakthrough of modernity; yet that same rebellion can also be interpreted as a reaction against modernizing impulses emanating from Rome."[12] Meanwhile, the question about the nature of the historical experience of the Reformation change remained unanswered. As Peter Blickle (1938–2017) perceptively put it: "Why did people in 1515 want to 'see' the Host, and why in 1525 did they want to 'hear' the plain Word of God?"[13] One may also ask whether the people of the Younger Europe, where Christianity was not so deeply rooted, wanted to hear the Gospel with greater or more muted eagerness.

To answer these questions, this essay turns its attention to a case study of the early Reformation in Stralsund, analyzing the events of 1523–25 by comparing Catholic and Protestant sources. By looking at Stralsund, the essay intends to ask what the earliest Reformation encounters looked like when representatives of reform met defenders of the traditional church. How did the course of events appear from the point of view of different actors? What was actually preached at these moments of conflict? What means were used to prove the rightness of one's cause and doctrine?

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11   Jacob M. Baum, *Reformation of the Senses: The Paradox of Religious Belief and Practice in Germany* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 2.

12   Heinz Schilling, *Martin Luther: Rebel in an Age of Upheaval*, trans. Rona Johnston Gordon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 19, 524.

13   Peter Blickle, "Die Reformation vor dem Hintergrund von Kommunalisierung und Christianisierung: Eine Skizze," in *Kommunalisierung und Christianisierung: Voraussetzungen und Folgen der Reformation 1400–1600*, ed. Peter Blickle and Johannes Kunisch (Berlin: Duncker, 1989), 9–28, here 24; quoted after Baum, *Reformation of the Senses*, 12.

2   Early Reformation in the North

From a historical perspective, Ketelhut's arrival and the religious change in
Stralsund were important moments in the Reformation of the north of the
Holy Roman Empire. The first significant manifestations of the Reformation
did not take place in Pomerania until shortly after Luther's hearing in Worms
in 1521 when numerous preachers began popping up along the Baltic coast.
Andreas Knöpke (1468–1539) set out from the Premonstratensian Abbey of
Białoboki (Belbuck) to Riga via Stralsund. Simultaneously, Johannes Knipstro
(1497–1556), a Franciscan from Pyrzyce (Pyritz), preached in Szczecin (Stettin)
and Stargard. Another Franciscan, Heinrich Never (d.1553), then began preach-
ing in Wismar, as did Joachim Slüter (1490–1532) in Rostock. On June 22, 1522,
Jakob Hegge (*fl.*1522–29) gave the first sermon in Danzig (Gdańsk). The simul-
taneity of these appearances may indicate that their cause should not be
sought in local changes but in supra-regional conditions. These demonstra-
tions of faith and the new understanding of it may have been the result of the
increasing fame of Luther, who addressed the Diet of the Reich in Worms in
1521.[14] It was with delays and reservations that the Edict of Worms (1521) and
subsequent anti-Lutheran imperial decrees were promulgated by the princes
of the Reich, leaving a window of opportunity for an organic upheaval along
Lutheran lines. The public appearances of the preachers culminated in crisis
and then in transitions of power, some successful, some not, in 1524/25.

The deepest crisis of the early Reformation was the peasant revolts, known
as the Peasants' War, that broke out in 1524–25 in the south of the Reich.
Simultaneously, armed conflicts erupted in many cities in the north of the
Holy Roman Empire, such as Lübeck, Rostock, Stralsund, and Wismar.[15]
Many of them were deeply immersed in the social and economic conflicts of
the late medieval period, in which the argument of anti-clericalism was often
employed.[16] However, as Heinz Schilling has emphasized: "The so-called
dominance of political, social, and economic demands within this burgher

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14   See Markus Wriedt and Werner Zager, eds., *Martin Luther auf dem Reichstag zu Worms:
      Ereignis und Rezeption* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2022); Joachim Knape, *1521:
      Martin Luthers rhetorischer Moment oder die Einführung des Protests* (Berlin: De Gruyter,
      2017).

15   Christopher Ocker, *Church Robbers and Reformers in Germany, 1525–1547: Confiscation and
      Religious Purpose in the Holy Roman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 50–103.

16   Johannes Schildhauer, *Soziale, politische und religiöse Auseinandersetzungen in den
      Hansestädten Stralsund, Rostock und Wismar im ersten Drittel des 16. Jahrhunderts*
      (Weimar: Böhlau, 1959).

movement is no indicator of the weakness of religious."[17] In the course of events, the perpetrators also targeted the equipment of churches. And so, after the famous (but also very dubious) events in Wittenberg in 1522, some church interiors were destroyed or at least damaged in Lübeck and Halberstadt (both 1523), then in Mühlhausen, Königsberg, Magdeburg, and Zwickau (all in 1524), and finally in Stolp, Stettin, Torgau, and Stralsund (all in 1525).[18] Between 1524 and 1525, about twelve cities of the northern Germanic lands were affected by broadly defined iconoclasm; this number grows to nineteen if we combine the northern and central Reich together.[19]

For Catholics, these events were a pretext for forging accusations of a link between church reform and social revolution, while for Protestants, they were the impetus for carefully explaining doctrine, "to define the evangelical movement as an anti-papal orthodoxy."[20] On the other hand, for secular authorities, these events served as a pretext to seize control of church property and sometimes to issue concessions to Protestant preachers, under the guise of peacemaking and fighting radicalism. They were an important step toward establishing the magisterial Reformation, introduced in Stralsund in 1525, and followed by the princes' Reformation in Pomerania ten years later (1535).[21] These dramatic events overshadowed the history that preceded them. Thus, this essay is intended to shed light on the events before the Stralsund iconoclasm.

3   Stralsund on the Eve of Iconoclasm

At that moment in time, Stralsund was one of the wealthiest and most powerful cities in the Pomeranian duchy, and indeed in the whole Baltic region.[22]

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17   Heinz Schilling, "The Reformation of the Hanseatic Cities," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14 (1983): 443–56, here 453.

18   Norbert Schnitzler, *Ikonoklasmus: Bildersturm; Theologischer Bilderstreit und ikonoklastisches Handeln während des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Fink, 1996), 146f.

19   Ocker, *Church Robbers and Reformers in Germany*, 58.

20   Ocker, *Church Robbers and Reformers in Germany*, 64.

21   For general introductions, see Maciej Ptaszyński, *Beruf und Berufung: Die evangelische Geistlichkeit und die Konfessionsbildung in den Herzogtümern Pommern, 1560–1618* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 31–62; Helmuth Heyden, *Kirchengeschichte Pommerns*, 2 vols. (Braunsfeld, Cologne: Müller, 1957); Alfred Uckeley, "Der Werdegang der kirchlichen Reformbewegung im Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts in den Stadtgemeinden Pommerns," *Pommersche Jahrbücher* 18 (1917): 1–108; Otto Fock, *Rügen'sch-Pommersche Geschichten aus sieben Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient, 1868), 5:171–217.

22   See Roderick Schmidt, "Pommern, Cammin," in *Die Territorien des Reichs*, ed. Anton Schindling and Walther Ziegler, 7 vols. (Münster: Aschendorff,1991), 2:182–205.

The harbor city, which probably had more than twelve thousand inhabitants, was not a ducal residence—unlike Wolgast and Szczecin (Stettin)—but paradoxically, as a result, it could develop faster and more freely, as a member of the Hanseatic League. In addition, it was not subject to the bishopric of Kamień (Kammin), which the Griffins were just now taking control of in Pomerania. In fact, the city was located at the edge of the diocese of Schwerin, which was controlled by the rulers of Mecklenburg, a neighboring Reich duchy. As a result, the dukes of Pomerania had to share control over the city's ecclesiastical structures (*ius patronatus*) with the bishop of Schwerin.[23] In the late Middle Ages, Stralsund was an element in a patchwork of dependencies, which could also be an advantage and a bargaining chip in the struggle for municipal sovereignty. Subsequently, the city authorities (mayors, city council, and patriciate) extended their authority over the church infrastructure, which was extremely extensive—in line with the financial capacities of the inhabitants and their needs.

In the late Middle Ages, the city had three large parish churches: St. Nikolai, St. Jakobi, and St. Marien, a number of independent chapels and monasteries—Franciscans (St. Johannis) and Dominicans (St. Katharinen), Beguines (St. Anne), Birgittines—a few hospitals (St. Spiritus, St. Georg, St. Gertrud), and poorhouses (like St. Antonius). Each church or chapel was the center of a rich religious life. And so, in the main town church of St. Nikolai, there were fifty-six altars and chapels, a number that surpassed even that of the Marienkirche in Gdańsk (Danzig), where there were only forty-eight.[24] The Stralsund St. Marien had forty-four, and St. Jakobi thirty altars.[25] By comparison, in the other churches of the largest urban centers, there were usually around twenty to thirty altars, which corresponded to the situation in the medium-sized and larger cities of the Reich.[26]

Altars and chapels were workplaces, with people hired to serve at them. Stralsund's ecclesiastical structures employed hundreds of people, and religious life was flourishing, yet the observations of the itinerant preacher were probably correct. The city's wealth contrasted with the decentralized character of power: neither bishop nor princes could impose their power over the city.

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23   Heyden, *Kirchengeschichte Pommerns*, 2:31.

24   Sabine-Maria Weitzel, *Die Ausstattung von St. Nikolai in Stralsund: Funktion, Bedeutung und Nutzung einer hansestädtischen Pfarrkirche* (Kiel: Ludwig, 2011), 131–34, 155; Katarzyna Cieślak, *Między Rzymem, Wittenbergą a Genewą: Sztuka Gdańska jako miasta podzielonego wyznaniowo* (Wrocław: Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 2000), 47.

25   Hellmuth Heyden, *Die Kirchen Stralsunds und ihre Geschichte* (Berlin: Evangelische Verl. Anst., 1961), 38.

26   Baum, *Reformation of the Senses*, 29.

Living standards, the quality of education, and the behavior of church workers sometimes left much to be desired. Despite its high economic status, the city was not a center of education or culture. How could it be without the printing press or the university?

Nevertheless, the arrival of Ketelhut and several other preachers triggered an immediate protest from the church workers. Hippolith von Steinwehr (d.1529), the head of the municipal church, left no stone unturned. First, he appealed to the dukes of Mecklenburg (June 1523) and the Schwerin chapter (July 1523), then to the Pomeranian dukes (September 1523) and the Stralsund authorities (1524), and finally to the Reich Chamber Court, where the case dragged on for years.[27] In 1527, his accusations served as a catalog of questions during the examination of witnesses.[28] In January 1528, Ketelhut and his colleagues handed an apology to the city council, submitting their version of the course of the Reformation in the metropolis.[29] These documents serve here as the basis for further discussion.

3.1   *Apology*

Let us reverse the chronology of the origins of the sources and look first at Ketelhut's *Apology*, formulated in 1528 against Steinwehr's accusations. While submitting the document, Ketelhut and his colleagues were working as official preachers in the city's churches, having been appointed to their positions by the city council following the success of the Reformation. In their apology, they focused on two points: (1) that they were accused of being "apostates and fugitive monks" who had expelled the true pastors from their parishes; and (2) that as "rebellious preachers" they had agitated the crowd, violated the social order, even gone so far as to criticize the rulers of Pomerania, and finally provoked riots.

Were the early preachers "fugitive monks"? The author of the *Apology* admitted that Ketelhut, Johann (Hans) Kuricke (dates unknown), and one

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27   See Georg Christian Friedrich Lisch, "Brief–Sammlung," *Jahrbücher des Vereins für Mecklenburgische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 3 (1838): 169–93, here 181 (1523); Martin Wehrmann, "Zur Reformationsgeschichte Stralsunds," *Pommersche Jahrbücher* 6 (1905): 49–76, here 55–66 (1524). Stadtarchiv, Stralsund, Rep. 28 no. 40b, Beschwerden des Hippolyt Steinwehr an den Rat von Stralsund (1524); published in Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chronik*, 363–73; Ludwig G. Kosegarten, "Die Fragestücke des Hippolytus Steinwer, Oberkirchherr zu Stralsund, abgefaßt für die Vernehmung der von der Stadt Stralsund zu ihrer Vertheidigung gestellten, und im Sommer 1529 zu Greifswald abgehörten Zeugen," *Baltische Studien* 18 (1860): 159–86.

28   Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie, Sąd Kamery Rzeszy, sign. 1708, vol. 6 [65/6/0/17/1708], 283–436 [further as: APS, AKS, 1708]. The same documents in APS, AKS, 1706, 283–436.

29   See fn. 2.

more preacher had indeed "worn monastic hoods" (*kappen haben getragen*), but they were not fugitives. Ketelhut added that he had spent sixteen weeks at the Premonstratensian Abbey of Białoboki (Belbuck), but then the abbot had delegated him to some other tasks. Like other preachers, Ketelhut arrived in Stralsund by chance and with the intention of continuing his journey. Stralsund was a good communication hub, not a center of new ideas.

The main accusation was that the preachers were rioters, inciting the mob and encouraging violence. Ketelhut tried to defend himself against this charge by repeatedly emphasizing that the Stralsund preachers had nothing to do with the unrest (*uffruhr*) in the city. On the contrary, they had always urged people to show loyalty and obedience to secular authority. Ketelhut claimed that two things had forced him to step up publicly: the poor state of the church, and a coincidence.

The poor condition of religious life surprised Ketelhut the most when he arrived in Stralsund. His description of this state of affairs can be read like a gossip column. A priest in the church of St. Nikolai was not performing his duties but was living with a woman who was pregnant. A second clergyman was also cohabiting with a woman with whom he had a daughter. A clergyman in St. Marien Church had "a whole bunch of children" with his partner. The second clergyman (with the mouthwatering name of Teufelsbaum, which can be translated as "devil's tree") went out straight after Mass with a married woman into the field, where they were caught and beaten. The clergyman at the monastery of St. Georg (St. Jürgen) had adult children. Instead of the parish priests, it was their incompetent deputies who preached in the churches. The content of the sermons was highly disappointing: they were on holy water, purgatory, indulgences, the miracles of holy images, or the symbolism of the interior decoration of the church. "One wanted to cry rather than laugh at the fact that the poor people had to listen to such childish, stupid, and lying fables as the Word of God [...]; it is embarrassing even to write about it."[30] Apparently, the loose power structure was reflected in the loose morals of the church administration: in Ketelhut's eyes, all the priests lived with prostitutes, and none of them knew Latin.

According to Ketelhut, his decision to step into a public role was triggered by pure coincidence. In the monastery of St. Katharine, he was recognized by one of the churchgoers, who denounced him to a priest. When the priest wanted to instruct Ketelhut by pointing him to the writings of St. Anthony (1195–1231), Ketelhut replied: "You can only point to divine punishments, you

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30   Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 265.

unlearned donkey."[31] Having uttered these words, Ketelhut left the church, but a few days later, at the request of the citizens, he preached three sermons in the courtyard of St. Jürgen's monastery, where a provisional pulpit had been built.

The content of Ketelhut's sermons was purely devotional. The pericopes of the first three sermons were Gospel passages: Mt. 11:28: "Come to me, all [ye] that labor, and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest"; Jn. 16:23: "And in that day ye will ask me nothing: Verily, verily, I say to you, Whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give [it] you"; and Mk. 16:15: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Building on the concept of hard, physical work, the preacher clearly addressed the entire spectrum of city society. He preached on the subject of justification by faith through the sacrifice of Christ while explaining his role as an itinerant preacher as interpreting the Word and taking up the legacy of the apostles. Simultaneously, the preacher criticized indulgences and relics, false piety, and the many cases of abuse of the clergy that violated these interpretations of the Gospel themes.[32]

As Ketelhut reports, after his speech, the city magistrate forbade him to preach until the matter was settled by the duke. His opponents used this opportunity to slander the preacher, spreading the rumor that Ketelhut was possessed; that he owned a book from which devils flew out; that he claimed that Mary was only a woman and had other children besides Christ; that the sacred authority could be disregarded; and that people were allowed to steal. He was even said to have threatened his opponents with the warning "that he would put the sacrament in [...] (I dare not say where)."[33] To defend himself against these rumors, Ketelhut decided to write down the sermons and supplement them with biblical references in order to "protect the honor of God, which these filthy swine had grumbled about."[34] Then the preacher also proposed to hold a debate: if he failed, he should be drowned in a sack.[35] Finally, he decided to preach at St. Nikolai's Church on Sunday at noon. As he pointed out, some members of the magistracy appeared at the service, but no one carried any weapon. After this sermon, the other preachers also started giving regular sermons in other city churches.

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31 Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 266.

32 Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 268–70.

33 Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 266.

34 Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 269.

35 Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 269.

This cohabitation of the Protestant preachers and Catholic priests was interrupted by the riots that broke out on April 10, 1525.[36] During the riots, church furnishings, valuable objects, and documents were destroyed, removed, or stolen from town churches and monasteries. According to Ketelhut, the cause of the events was trivial: the council had decided to conduct a survey of the poor and ordered them to come to the church of St. Nikolai, where they were to receive begging permits. As it was a Monday, many craftsmen and laborers who had the day off also showed up. Seeing the crowd gathering, a concerned townswoman ordered her maid to take for safekeeping two reliquaries she had donated to the church. The clumsiness of the maid, who damaged one of the reliquaries, sparked a riot that ended in widespread damage to the churches and monasteries. According to Ketelhut, this was an own goal on the part of the congregation; the town authorities did not manage to prevent it in time, and the new preachers were entirely uninvolved in the affair.

The city riots forced further changes. When the priests and their superior decided to leave the city, the preachers, out of necessity, took their place, claimed Ketelhut:

> Neither the city council nor the municipality ordered us to preach every day in every church. They did not direct us to distribute the sacraments of the body and blood of Christ and baptism. We dared to do this out of Christian duty, for we could not answer before God if we had forsaken the faithful.[37]

3.2   *Accusation*

As already mentioned, Ketelhut's *Apology* was an answer to the series of complaints presented by Steinwehr between 1523 and 1527.[38] From the very beginning, the list of accusations was long and only expanded as the dispute continued. It consisted of four major allegations: (1) violation of the law and privileges of the church; (2) illegal activities of the wandering preachers;

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36   The description in Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 259–61.

37   Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 272: "Als nun Hypolitus sambt den seinen war weggezogen, und die kirchen verlassen, sind wir genötigt aus christlicher pflicht; denn wir es nicht wüsten gegen gott zu verantworten, so wir diesen hauffen volck hetten verlassen; haben uns derselben unbestand—nicht gefordert, nicht geordnet, nicht gesetzt durch einen erbaren rath oder gemein, auch nicht aus eigenen dörfftigen bevehl, sünder mit allen fruchten—in jeder kirchen des tags ein sermon zu thun, dem volck (die des begerens weren) die heiligen sacramenta des leichnams und bluts unsers herrn Jhesu Christi und die tauff (wie sie Christus hätt eingesetzt und bevohlen) zu vorreichen."

38   See fn. 28.

(3) violent behavior of the citizens and the city council; and (4) the riots of April 1525.

At the core of the list was the violation of the rights and liberties of the Catholic clergy, deprived of their income and burdened with city taxes. To this violation of privileges, confirmed in imperial laws such as the Golden Bull, Steinwehr added ferocious attacks, and insults in churches and on streets, and ridicule in plays and carnival celebrations.

According to his accusation, the "fugitive monks and apostates" were responsible for the riots.[39] They had been expelled from other cities because of their rebellious preaching. In Stralsund, their supporters installed them violently ("with halberds, spears, and rifles") in the churches, where they preached day and night as well as performed other church services. Already in September 1523, Steinwehr complained that the "Lutherans" used a portable pulpit, which was placed in various city churches to taunt and insult priests.[40]

In his preaching, the new preacher attacked "the emperor and his mandates" and called the pope and the priests "Antichrists, hypocrites, wolves, traitors, liars." He allegedly said that all the sacraments were an invention of the devil and priests. These sermons culminated with the call to violence: the faithful should "wash their hands in the priests' blood."[41] What is more, the preachers began to perform baptisms, funerals, and weddings, abandoning the auricular confession and including the German language in the liturgy.[42] In 1527, Steinwehr even claimed that they married nuns and remarried some people who were already married, thus committing the crime of bigamy.[43] They neglected the liturgy and accepted customs in performing all these ceremonies by such practices as baptizing children in unconsecrated water, drawn from a bucket or bowl.

Steinwehr claimed that the sermons provoked further "disturbances" that ranged from insults, and throwing of stones and excrement, to beatings and perhaps even murder.[44] At the houses of the clergy, including Steinwehr's own, people regularly smashed windows. During the carnival, the townsfolk staged

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39 Here summarized after APS, AKS, 1708, 283–310. This part is almost identical to the accusations presented on September 21, 1523, in Wehrmann, "Zur Reformationsgeschichte," 55–66.

40 Wehrmann, "Zur Reformationsgeschichte," 66 ("auch sunderliche Predigstuel, die sie mit sich tragen, in die Kirchen oder wo die geordnet Prediger predigen, bei und neben ihnen aufrichten, aufsteigen und gegen sie predigen, honen, schenden und schentlich schelten lassen").

41 See Wehrmann, "Zur Reformationsgeschichte," 60 ("auch die Hende in irem Blut waschen").

42 Wehrmann, "Zur Reformationsgeschichte," 65f.

43 APS, AKS, 1708, 299.

44 First direct threats in 1524 in Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 365f.

the throwing of the clergy into the moat and their expulsion from the town. Additionally, they regularly insulted the clergy. The nuns were openly called "heavenly whores" (*Himmelhuren*).[45] On the streets, one could hear the cry "Kill the priest!" (*slag todt den pfaffen, slag todt*).[46] Finally, they disturbed the celebration of Mass and the delivery of sermons. On October 16, 1524, when a priest in St. Nikolai Church spoke in his sermon about the duty of obedience toward authority and superiors, he was attacked with "sticks, knives, and chairs," beaten "till he bled like a stuck pig," and was then threatened with burning at the stake.[47] In the end, some priests and friars were forced to leave the city.

The mob's attitude to the furnishing of the churches formed an important part of the accusations. The containers for holy water and baptisteries were put upside down or filled with excrement. The preachers demanded the removal of images of saints from churches. As a result, people soiled the noses, eyes, and faces of saints with excrement. They also decapitated and burned images and statues of saints or threw them into the waterways. Even some images of Christ and Mary were destroyed. The angry citizens deprived some statues of their heads, or cut off their arms, and placed them along the roads leading to Stralsund.

A separate part of the accusation was directed against the city council. The city magistracy not only tolerated the preachers and their excesses but actively supported them. At the beginning of the riots, the city magistracy put large chests in three parish churches for all the church revenues.[48] By doing this, they took control of the church finances. Two mayors seized assets belonging to the church and church workers. Members of the magistracy orchestrated attacks on the clergy in some rural parishes around the city. A member of the city council, Christoffer Lorber (d.1555), threatened a clergyman that he would "drive him from the pulpit, from the altar, and from the church with knives and sticks." As the dispute escalated, he regularly disrupted church celebrations.[49]

According to the plaintiff, these events culminated in the riots of April 25, 1525, when the citizens descended on the churches, destroyed the

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45   Wehrmann, "Zur Reformationsgeschichte," 62 ("Die armen andechtigen begebenen Jungfrawen in Clostern, Kirchen und Choren mit Steinen und Dreck geworfen, offentlich und gantz schentlich vor Himmelhuren und sunst jemerlich gescholten").

46   Berckmann, *Stralsundische Chroniken*, 265 ("Sla dot den papen! Sunte Peter plach sulke perde nicht to ridende").

47   APS, AKS, 1708, 298.

48   APS, AKS, 1708, 366 ("hat die casten gesehen").

49   APS, AKS, 1708, 317, 326f., 348f., 359f., 366, 373, 396.

interiors, and plundered church property (pieces of art, gold and silver, and documents).

3.3 *Testimony*

In June and July 1527, these accusations were corroborated by the eighteen witnesses, most of whom were connected with church structures or the ducal administration. The statements of the witnesses presented by the Catholic side were extremely precise. The witnesses always distinguished between whether they had personally seen the event or heard the words they were reporting, or whether they knew about them only indirectly, as secondhand stories.

TABLE 1   The witnesses in Hippolith Steinwehr v. Stralsund, Greifswald hearing, June/July 1527

Name	Age	Profession
Joachim Schmidt	28	Official of the prince
Paul Huffnagel	22	Servant in the church in Szczecin
Antonius Kuchmeister (Grunnenberg)	50	Citizen in Szczecin
Barthel Lussow	60	Priest in Stralsund
Thonigers Hanes	45	Friar in the Dominican Order
Christoffer Marcham	40	Friar in the Franciscan Order
Joachim Krueger	26	Cleric and teacher
Karten Schultze	30	Layperson
Augustinus Gadebusch	35	Vicar of the parish in Greifenberg
Paulus Wyse	34	Priest in Altentreptow (Treptow an der Tollense)
Kurdt Jegher	50	Official of the prince
Henning Plotze	48	Priest in the Schwerin chapter and vicar of the parish in Grimmen
Johannes Polingk	60	Priest
Gaben Bernekow	55	Nobleman and mayor of Barth
Jurgen Blawfus	50	Mayor of Barth
Janeke von Horn	50	Nobleman
Jakob Kleist	36	Priest in Reinberg
Heinrich Gelhaer	51	Citizen in Stralsund and Greifswald

SOURCE: ARCHIWUM PAŃSTWOWE W SZCZECINIE [THE STATE ARCHIVE IN STETTIN], SĄD KAMERY RZESZY, SYGN. 1708 [65/6/0/17/1708], 283–436.

The first part of the interviews, concerning matters of legal principle, was rather disappointing. The witnesses were usually neither interested nor competent in the law, and when asked about violations of the Reich constitution, they did not answer. The later parts of the interviews, about the preachers and the Reformation events, were much more interesting. Witnesses called by the Catholic side, on the one hand, obviously wanted to diminish the achievements of the Reformation preachers. On the other hand, however, they wanted to portray the "Lutheran" preachers as responsible for the crisis and for the riots of 1525. And so they unanimously depicted the preachers as undereducated and incompetent. Additionally, they often emphasized the fact that the preachers were married.[50] Sometimes, they also paid attention to external differences: preachers had beards and wore secular robes (a kind of peasant costume).[51]

At the same time, the testimonies mirrored the great attractiveness of the sermons and the popularity of the preachers. Almost all witnesses attested to an extraordinary atmosphere at the Reformation gatherings, and the aggressive or even confrontational character of the sermons. Once, when a bell started to toll during Kuricke's appearance, the faithful thought it was a deliberate attempt to silence the preacher, so they destroyed the clock.[52] The appeal of the sermons was also due to their staging and organization. A priest confirmed that he had seen the improvised pulpit erected for Ketelhut in front of the St. Johannes Church. When the friar Henning Bude (dates unknown) began his sermon in the church, Ketelhut tried to shout him down in a strident voice, calling him "a wolf and a liar" and urging the townspeople to banish the priests from the city.[53] No wonder, then, that the sermons attracted a large audience. What is perhaps even more important is that among the onlookers were also members of the city council and mayors. A priest saw in the crowd three mayors and had heard a rumor they followed the teachings of the sermons.[54]

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50   APS, AKS, 1708, 344 ("alle uxoraten auffrurische prediger"); 406 ("alle haben eheweyber"); 420 ("Johann Curecke und Ketelhot verlauffene Munich die weibere haben").

51   APS, AKS, 1708, 392 ("hat auch gesehen viel priester und Munich mit langen berthen und in pawr kletheen im stralsundt geen und wancken und alle gesanck in pfarrkichen und Clostern gelegert ist und die auffrurische in den pfarkirchen predigen").

52   APS, AKS, 1708, 316.

53   APS, AKS, 1708, 418 ("hat gesehn das einer von den nygen predigern Ketelhoet gnant seinen predigstuel lies setzen in sanct Johannis Kirche gegen den andern predigstuel da, der pater Guardian mit namhem Hemmyges Budde auff stunt predigende und der Ketelhot steyk auff seinen stuel, und sprach mit lauter stymmen, das steet der Wulff der ewer guth hat aufgefressen, was er redet das leugt er Ir sollet in hinnwegk jagen und viel andere unczinliche wort dies hat der zeug selbst gesehen und gehort").

54   APS, AKS, 1708, 419.

Interestingly, we can acquire very little knowledge about the content of the sermons. Naturally, Catholic witnesses were able to summarize the sermons only in general terms. As Steinwehr's accusations implied, the preacher attacked the emperor, the pope, and the Pomeranian rulers. Only one witness heard a sermon on a more specific topic, on fasting, which the preacher claimed was not a good deed and therefore did not have to be observed and "you are free to eat whatever you want."[55] Besides those targets, the preachers criticized the decoration of churches, the display of paintings, and the use of monstrances. And obviously, they attacked their Catholic opponents.

Even if some witnesses missed the reference to "washing their hands in the priests' blood,"[56] they could usually recollect analogical phrases. A nobleman remembered hearing the sentence "It will not be good until the blood flows to the city gates."[57] A mayor of Barth heard the expression "It will not be good until we walk in priests' blood."[58] An old priest admitted that he had heard similar words from the father of one of the mayors, who had said "he wishes to live long enough to see the day he can walk up to his ankles in priests' and monks' blood."[59] One apprentice admitted he did not hear that statement but participated in the sermon of Kuricke, who said from the pulpit that the priests should be burned but that it would be better to drown them rather than waste the wood. Another witness, a Dominican friar, confirmed that Kuricke craved the blood of the friars: "We cannot get rid of the monks with tonsures, but we can smash their heads and get our hands on them."[60] The same witness quoted another fragment of Kuricke's sermon: "Things will never be right in

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55　APS, AKS, 1708, 414 ("Er hat sie hort predigen, das man Essen und trincken soll was und wenner eynem gelibt und darb kein guth werck thun mit bettel vasten und der gleichen").

56　APS, AKS, 1708, 381 ("die wort aus dem blut die hende zu waschen hat er nicht gehort").

57　APS, AKS, 1708, 402 ("offenbar hat gesehen das Johannes Cureke und Kersten Ketelhot erstmals auf den predigstuel in die kirchen geweldichlich gebracht wurden, und der gleich ander mehr und von in Predigen gort, und sonderlich in unser lieben frawen Kirchen diese wort, 'Es wirt nicht ehr guet das das bluet lauffe zum thor aus'").

58　APS, AKS, 1708, 408 ("hat auch gehort das die prediger itzt zum Stralsundt sollen sagen, das es nicht guet wirt werden zum Stralsundt, eh das men mit fuessen in der gaistlichen blutte gehe").

59　APS, AKS, 1708, 396 ("Cristoffer Lorber Vater, Olanus gnant, solte gesagt haben, Er wollte den tagk leben man sollte in der priester und Muniche blutte geen yum enkelen tyff").

60　APS, AKS, 1708, 344 ("hat dar Zeuge Johann Curken hort predigen und sagen solche oder der gleiche wort: 'wir kunnen dieser pfaffen und beschoren Munich nicht anig und loß werden, sundern wir aber sie mussen haben bluttige kopfe, und unser hande an sie schlaen'").

Stralsund until the nuns and monks are banished until we wash our hands in their blood."[61]

Generally, the witnesses confirmed the picture of religious life depicted by Steinwehr. The new preacher baptized children with unconsecrated water and married those who asked for it. Some of the witnesses explicitly confirmed the practice of remarriage: "I know more than one man who has his previous wife alive, but married again."[62] "A man, called Blumberg, left his wife and took another one, his wife, in turn, took another man, and the same [thing] do the others."[63] What was more, a priest witnessed the baptism of a dog named Hektor.[64]

The witnesses confirmed the violent behavior of the faithful, attacks on the clergy, and the destruction of the church interiors. Almost everyone presented an instance of a different Mass or another sermon that had been disrupted by the behavior of the townspeople, who threatened and attacked clergy, shouted at them, and called them "hypocrites and wolves."[65]

These attacks went so far as to impede services. Citizens wanted to take away cups or books from the altar.[66] With a certain fascination, they reached for the monstrance. When one of them grabbed the sacrament container and started shaking it, and the priest urged him not to do so, he replied: "Why not? I'm a priest like you too."[67] The attacks were so frequent that the officials had to lock the church during the Mass.[68] One of the witnesses complained that the citizens had "shat on the altar, but he didn't know if it was made by a dog or

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61   APS, AKS, 1708, 353 ("Es wirt nimmer guet zum Stralsunde sunder men mues die pfaffen Muniche und Nunnen außjagen, und schlaen das man die hende ihm blut waschet under wollte vorgaren und angreiffen").

62   APS, AKS, 1708, 349 ("kennt auch mehr dan einen, die ihre Echte oder Eheliche weyber lebendich haben und nach andere sich haben da zu trawen lassen"); 372, 398, 409.

63   APS, AKS, 1708, 359 ("zu urkundt einer genannt Blumebreg vorließ seine Ehefrawen und nam eyn ander, widderomb nam die frawe eynen anderen man und der gleichen thuen ander und sagt seines bedunckens woll dreihunder vorlauffen Muniche im Stralsund sein"), 362, 391.

64   APS, AKS, 1708, 376 ("hat gesehen das die yungen eynen hundt haben getaufft im Weyyel-steyne sagende hier brengen wir einen haiden etc. so man die kinder pflegt zutauffen und gaben dem hunde den namen hector und gassen ihm wasser auffs haupt"); 404 ("hat auch selbst gesehen die kinder hunde tauffen in den weywasser steinen").

65   APS, AKS, 1708, 408–9.

66   APS, AKS, 1708, 347.

67   APS, AKS, 1708, 357 ("dar auff Balts im antworttede und sprach Warum nicht pyn ich doch auch eyn prister, so woll alß du bist, solches hat der zeug von gesagten priester frater Wilhelm gehort").

68   APS, AKS, 1708, 365–66.

by a human."[69] Even if the containers for holy water and baptisteries were not turned upside down, they were filled with excrement.

Some priests among the witnesses confirmed they were the targets of the attacks and insults. A Dominican friar said: "He has seen it and heard it, and he was thrown at with stones, and his habit was stripped from his body."[70] A nobleman confirmed he knew a monk who was pushed from the pulpit and whose robe was torn on his back.[71] Nuns attracted particular hatred. Almost everyone heard the expression "heavenly whores" (*Himmelhuren*). One witness remembered the phrase: "You heavenly whores, go make babies."[72] In addition to insults, they also faced other forms of persecution. One of the craftsmen exposed himself in front of a nun: "He showed his private parts and said: Look, you should have one, you have waited for it so long."[73]

Many witnesses had no doubt that members of the magistracy stood behind the attacks on the clergy and the theft of church property. One mayor had allegedly called on the citizens "to go and destroy."[74] Not only did the city authorities support the preachers, assuring them impunity, but they also allowed churches to be plundered in April 1525, claimed the witnesses, and then used the confusion to introduce the Reformation.

4 Conclusion

This depiction fits well with the image of the first days of the Reformation as known in other Germanic cities. The early Reformation in Stralsund was driven by and primarily played out among the clergy; the clergy working for the old church and the new clergy, wearing beards and secular robes, faced

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69 APS, AKS, 1708, 336 ("sagt der zeugk das auffs altar geschieß war, oder es stundt in zweifel ob das ein hunt oder mensch hette gethaen").

70 APS, AKS, 1708, 346 ("er hat solichs wie articuliert offte gehort und gesehen, und ist selbst mit stainen geworffen und ihm die Cappe auf dem leibe zurissen wurden").

71 APS, AKS, 1708, 403 ("kenne eynem Munich der jtzt zu divitze ist und sich enthelt der vom predigstuele gejagt wurt und die cappe wurdet ihm auffem Ruggen geschnitten").

72 APS, AKS, 1708, 365 ("'hie aus Ir Hymmelhuren und lasset euch Kinder machen' und der gleiche andere untzimliche worte").

73 APS, AKS, 1708, 357 ("und einer genanth Gelbeke soll eyner Junckfrawem myt nhamen heße kyßowen seyne schande geweyset und gesagt haben, sieh kum her nach solichen hastn lange geharret"), 389 ("sonderlich das einer seine schande in die handt genummen ein Junckfrawen geweisset und gesagt soll haben, sieh her solich einen solstu nu haben du hast langezeit der nach geharret"); 397 ("ein scheinder gnant Bischoffs soll in unczimlich sein schande gewijset haben").

74 APS, AKS, 1708, 349 ("soll haben gesagt zu den weldigern, 'sturmen und brechen'").

off against each other in Stralsund between 1523 and 1525. Accordingly, the centers of new religious ideas were monasteries—in Pomerania, it was the abbey in Belbuck (Białoboki), where the abbot Johann Boldewan (1485–1533) and Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558) organized a hub for the new ideas. A similar climate prevailed in many other monastic houses at that time, such as the Augustinian monastery in Sternberg, the monastery of St. Catherine in Lübeck, and the Franciscan monastery in Wismar. The Reformation consisted of a critical discussion by the clergy about the conditions of the church, religion, and faith.

This debate had a universal dimension in Europe: names and places changed, but the arguments were similar everywhere. In the German-speaking lands, however, a specific structural condition enabled this discussion to reach a new level of intensity. A relatively dense network of large and medium-sized cities, a developed structure of universities and colleges, a relatively high level of literacy, and easy access to the printing press made the Reformation possible, or—to put it more carefully—they enabled the Reformation to flourish. Yet, Stralsund lacked both a university and a printing press.

The apology, accusations, and testimonies produced in Stralsund directly after the Reformation reveal three often contrasting perspectives of the early conflict between old clergy and new preachers. From the perspective of the old priests and friers, the conflict concerned politics and social life as much as it concerned religion. They complained that the preachers, supported by the city magistrates, were violating the rights and privileges of the corporation, but this violation of laws and customs was part of a larger project. By attacking the secular authority, the Reformation preachers aimed to undermine the entire social order, starting with property rights, through sacraments and social institutions (such as baptism and marriage), and ending with the abolition of the power of princes and emperors.

The rhetoric of social crisis painted a picture of the early Reformation as a world turned upside down, as good as anarchic, orchestrated by the new preachers, and protected by the city magistrates. Many elements of this vision can probably be sourced in descriptions of the carnival, which was a moment when the social roles were traditionally reversed.[75] In the early years of the

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75   Peter Burke, "The World of Carnival," in Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd ed. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 255–88; Norbert Schindler, *Rebellion, Community, and Custom in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Alessandro Testa, *Rituality and Social (Dis)order: The Historical Anthropology of Popular Carnival in Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

Reformation, the complaints of the church hierarchs over the abuse of these cultural elements multiplied in the Holy Roman Empire and along the Baltic coast. Not only from Königsberg to Stralsund but also even to Nuremberg or Strasbourg, critics used the moment, the language, and the codes of the carnival to attack the pope, bishops, priests, monks, friars, and nuns. The repetitiveness of the descriptions and the similarity of the behavior, however, does not necessarily undermine the credibility of witness testimony describing radical transgressions by believers and preachers.

The apology of the preacher presented a totally different view of events, but—paradoxically—it had a similar meaning. The preachers argued that they were filling the void left by incompetent church workers neglecting their duties. The criticism in their apology targeted the matters of morals (breaches of celibacy) and professionalism (incompetence) rather than theology. Apparently, the early Reformation preachers moved into a grey area, separating the internal criticism of the old church, formulated by its servant, from the external criticism, voiced by those who had left its structures. The preachers could not, of course, deny the riots that accompanied the early Reformation, but they intended to prove that their Catholic opponents were responsible for the escalation of the conflicts. At the same time, these accusations pointed to the "common men" as the perpetrators. By doing this, the preachers defended themselves and the city authorities.

Eventually, both sides agreed on the description of the conflict as a prelude to iconoclasm perpetrated by the plebs and common people. Despite the social significance of the dispute, the content of the Reformation sermons—as presented by the *Apology*—fits into the traditional picture of the Reformation transition, but at the same time, the contexts—as depicted by the witnesses—enable it to be questioned. According to Ketelhut, at the sermons' center stood the foundations of the new theology forged at Wittenberg, as well as calls to limit forms of piety and purify religious life. In the eyes of the new preachers, their performance was motivated by an internal call and was limited mainly to preaching the Gospel, thus appealing primarily to the sense of hearing and the rational component. Simultaneously, their opponents and witnesses presented an entirely different picture of the events. Regardless of the shape and language of the liturgy, religious life engaged all the senses of the faithful. The churches were full of smells, the importance of which was underlined by the use of excrement. To paraphrase Blickle's *bon mot*, one might say that the faithful wanted to both touch the host and hear the Word, even if the staging of the sermons, the lavish dress (or lack thereof) of the preacher, or his voice were far more important than the content of the readings.

The Younger Europe from a Papal Perspective, 1580–1640

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Abstract

This essay delves into the major influences that shaped papal perspectives towards East-Central Europe from 1580 to 1640, focusing on the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth. It proposes that the main national distinction of interest for the Italian-dominated Curia, or papal court was between Italians and the ultramontane. Consequently, the view of Poland–Lithuania, Scandinavia, Bohemia, and Hungary was not remarkably different from that of France or the England/Scotland/Ireland region. Poland–Lithuania was perceived as a significant Catholic stronghold, serving as a crucial frontier against the Protestant, Orthodox, and Islamic spheres. As observed elsewhere, a relatively generalized categorization of "heretics," showcasing little to no interest in specific confessional differences among Protestants, was applied and contrasted with the Catholic party. This dismissive attitude was similarly prevalent towards Orthodox Christians, even though Rome upheld the Union of Brest. Across the region, Rome consistently resisted the Confederation of Warsaw, advocated for curbing non-Catholic clergy activities, and strove to minimize the number of influential positions granted to non-Catholics. In geopolitical terms, besides strengthening the Catholic party, Rome endeavored to sway monarchs towards actions beneficial to other Catholic sovereigns while fostering anti-Turkish policies and alliances.

Keywords

papacy – Poland – Lithuania – diplomacy – Catholic Reform – Confederation of Warsaw – fighting Islam – confessional identity – King Sigismund III – Pope Clement VIII – Pope Paul V

1   Introduction: Catholic Geography of Europe

Some years after the turbulent Irish parliament of 1613 that saw the gerrymandered overturning of the Catholic majority in the lower house, the vice-primate of Ireland the scholar David Rothe (1573–1650), reflected on the strategies adopted by his co-religionists during its proceedings. The geographical and religious framework of Catholic Europe in which he situated the Irish crisis is of particular interest for the present discussion. According to Rothe, the Irish

> sent letters and orators to friends and acquaintances through particular parts of Europe in which the Catholic Church has spread; to the mother city of the Christian world, the seat of the Ecclesiastical Monarchy, to its daughters and sisters in Italy, Spain, France, the Spanish Netherlands, Germany its sound arrived to the Hungarians and to the Poles and people nearer to the Pole; of all they prayed the help that by their prayers and others offices of piety that they should work to propitiate God […]. This is a great reward, a great solace, and especially a great support of the Catholic communion to those living in its most holy association, this joining together of such an influence of merits, of so many prayers and of other works; that those who on their own are not in control of and are destitute of help and planning are protected by the fortifications of others and are surrounded by their riches. There are not these fortresses in the mutually warring hills of the schismatics, who because they have divided themselves from the union of the whole body and violated the sacrament of unity, and because the boughs cannot bear fruit unless they remain on the vine, having been cut off from the living root and trunk, they dry up. This was always true of all sects, and it will be forever; as the ancients were, so [are] the moderns; as the Arians, Macedonians, Pelagians; so the Protestants, Familialists, Puritans.[1]

To some extent, Rothe's mental architecture did suggest a different perception of Younger Europe, with Poles, Hungarians, and Scandinavians recorded in a separate clause to Italy, Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Germany, but the level of distinction was very slight and paled into insignificance compared

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1   "Non sunt illa praesidia in compugnantibus Schismaticorum collibus; qui, cum se diviserint ab unione totius corporis, & Sacramentum unitatis violârint, cum non possint palmites fructum ferre nisi manerint in vite, precisi ipsi à vitali radice, & stipites exarescunt de omnibus sectis semper verum fuit, eritque in sempiternum; sive illi veteres sint, sint novi; sive Ariani, Macedoniani, Pelagiani; sive Protestantes, Familistae, Puritani": David Rothe, *The* Analecta *of David Rothe, Bishop of Ossory*, ed. Patrick F. Moran (Dublin: Gill and Son, 1884), 66–67.

with the two points of central importance in his schema, namely the central-ity of Rome and the fundamental kinship between Catholic peoples and their equally fundamental difference from non-Catholics. Rothe had spent many years in Rome prior to returning to Ireland, and one of the major themes of his writings explored the notion of center and periphery within Catholicism, noting, for instance, that the identical practice of the same religion brought persecution in Ireland but honor, glory, and respect in continental Europe. Nevertheless, the idea of an essentialist Catholic identity dominating all other distinctions represented an unshakeable core to his work in the midst of a great deal of rhetorical play. While Rothe was a voice from the periphery, strikingly similar attitudes toward the Younger Europe are visible in the correspondence between the papal diplomats who took up sojourns as nuncios to the emperor, which also involved oversight over the affairs of the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia, and to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Because of pres-sures of space, in what follows, the discussion concentrates in particular on Poland–Lithuania in the reigns of the first two Vaza monarchs.[2]

Italian perceptions of northern Europe as a geographical area were not necessarily enthusiastic. In 1649, the nuncio to Ireland made a comparison between Italy and countries that "had never seen the sun."[3] In 1628, having received polite Christmas greetings from the nuncio in Poland, the bishop of Verona revealingly expressed his appreciation at having been remem-bered from countries so far away and cold.[4] Earlier the same year, the Italian Franciscan Giovanni Fanano (1595–1645) cuttingly dismissed notions that he was seeking to become provincial of the Polish province by declaring he was going there to demonstrate obedience, not from any desire for promotion, not-ing that he had lost both time and health there in the past and that he had

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2   For an analysis and contextualization of the source basis of the *relazioni* of papal nuncios in Poland, see Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, "Le relazioni dei nunzi apostolici sulla Polonia nell'età moderna: Introduzione alla problematica," in *Nel mondo degli Slavi: Incontri e dialoghi tra culture; Studi in onore di Giovanna Borgi Bercoff*, ed. Giovanna Brogi Bercoff et al. (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2008), 85–93; for a wider discussion of perceptions of Polish society by nuncios of the early modern period, see Wojciech Tygielski, "Geograficamente distanti ma spiritualmente vicini: La realtà politica e sociale polacca del XVI e del XVII secolo agli occhi dei nunzi apostolici," in *Kurie und Politik: Stand und Perspektiven der Nuntiaturberichtsforschung*, ed. Alexander Koller (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), 226–35.

3   "'Non si vede mai sole': Gianbattista Rinuccini's relation to Pope Innocent X (1574–1655, r.1644–55)," in *Nunziatura in Irlanda di Monsignor Gio. Batista Rinuccini arcivescovo di Fermo negli anni 1645 à 1649*, ed. Giuseppe Aiazzi (Florence: Dalla Tipografia Piatti, 1844), 433.

4   "Paesi tanto lontani et tanto freddi": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXIII Antonius Santa Croce (1627–1630)*, vol. 2 (*1 VIII 1628–31 III 1629*), ed. Henryk Litwin and Paweł Duda (Kraków: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2021), 2:135.

previously resigned the provincialship in Bohemia, an area that was a great deal more attractive than Poland.[5] Weather, combined with distance, also undoubtedly made communication between Rome and Poland difficult. It was practically impossible for any communication to arrive in less than two weeks, but double or triple this length of time was by no means unusual, and throughout the period, there were frequent complaints from Rome at the non-arrival of regular letters from Poland and more guarded notifications from nuncios of lost missives from their superiors.

Geography not only made communication difficult but, similarly to an area like Ireland, it meant that Polish affairs were less geopolitically urgent for the Roman curia.[6] The Commonwealth was still undoubtedly important. During the period under review, when various branches of the Habsburgs had swallowed the royal titles of Portugal, Naples, Bohemia, and Hungary, and with the monarchies of the Atlantic archipelago and Scandinavia having become Protestant, the Polish kingdom occupied a particular position as one of the four principal crowns of Catholic Europe (in 1628, for instance, rather gossipy speculation about promotions to the sacred college reported that it was expected that the nuncios of the four crowns would be elevated[7]), and the only one not directly implicated in the Valois/Bourbon rivalry with the Habsburgs. The king of Poland was also unique among these monarchs in that it was guaranteed that he could not intervene directly in Italy. This was seen as a positive rather than a regrettable attribute: since the beginning of the Italian Wars (1494–1559), papal policy had been directed at keeping *oltramontani* (from beyond the mountains) out of Italy, although from 1559 this had morphed into the desire to prevent war in the peninsula rather than trying to shake Habsburg control of Milan and Naples—but it necessarily made geopolitical considerations concerning Poland a little more abstract than, for instance, the

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5   "Non potrei ricevere maggior mortificatione che d'essere astretto dall'obedienza a fermarmi qualche tempo in queste parti, nelle quali ho perso la sanità e il tempo. Io fui, già sono decorsi cinque anni, fatto il Provintiale di Boemia, tenni il carico alcuni pochi mesi e lo renonciai, e pure quei parti sono assai più commode di quelli. Il mio fine di venire in Polonia è stato per avanzarmi nell'obedienza e non nei gradi": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXIII*, 2:161; in this regard, see also Domenico Roncalli, *Dominici Roncalli panegyris in laudem Polonorum* (Rome: Apud Franciscum Cavallum, 1633), which emphasizes Poland's reputation from antiquity as a frigid and unfertile area; Dorota Gregorowicz, "Final Reports of Papal Diplomats as a Cultural Message: The Case of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth," *Legatio: The Journal for Renaissance and Early Modern Diplomatic Studies* 1 (2017): 5–32, here 18.

6   For a discussion of Ireland, see Tadhg Ó hAnnrachain, "Vatican Diplomacy and the Mission of Rinuccini to Ireland," *Archivium Hibernicum* 47 (1993): 78–88.

7   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae, XXIII*, 2:74.

Franco-Savoy, Valtelline, and Mantua crises of the first decades of the seventeenth century.[8]

The Polish monarchy was not always convinced that it was treated with the respect that it was due. Toward the end of his reign, Sigismund III (1566–1632, r.1587–1632) reminisced with the nuncio Antonio Santa Croce (1599–1641) about how Clement VIII (1536–1605, r.1592–1605) had always communicated with him on parchment but that his successors used smaller and less ornate paper, which he took as a sign of diminished respect. This aroused genuine confusion in Rome, where the distinction between papal briefs, on the one hand, written on parchment, and ordinary letters on paper, on the other, was a universal rule that could not have been changed for one monarch alone, unless, it was speculated, Clement's personal experience as legate in Poland had made him aware of how this would be interpreted and inclined him to break protocols.[9] Similarly, Sigismund's obstinate attempts to have a former nuncio, Giovanni Battista Lancellotti (1575–1656), elevated to the cardinalate, despite clear refusals from Rome, seems partly to have been motivated by his sense that the representations of other monarchs would have been more successful. Rome sought to soften this blow, pointing out that Lancellotti was not the king's subject and that the papacy had clearly refrained from appointments in Poland likely to disappoint the king while also insisting that the nuncios of other monarchs had on occasion been refused on similar grounds. Most importantly, it was made clear that the pope was perfectly willing to elevate a Pole or another royal nominee, other than a figure whose promotion would represent a humiliating climbdown for the pope in that he had already been clearly signaled as unacceptable.[10] The desire to show respect for the Polish crown was communicated in many other ways, such as the decision to merely dismiss a papal chorister originally recommended by Sigismund rather than execute a judicial condemnation to the galleys and, in a marked concession to the king, to open a process for the sanctification of the recently deceased Uniate archbishop Jozafat Kuncewicz (1580–1623) despite his death having

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8   Christine Shaw, "The Papacy and the European Powers," in *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500–1530*, ed. Christine Shaw (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 107–28; Maria Antonietta Visceglia, "The International Policy of the Papacy: Critical Approaches to the Concepts of Universalism and Italianità," in *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima et à moderna*, ed. Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Rome: Viella, 2013), 17–63.

9   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII*, 2:18, 53; interestingly, in the context of peace negotiations with Poland, the agents of Gustavus Adolphus objected to the fact that the credentials of the Polish negotiators were not written on parchment, which may be indicative of a shared northern European perspective: *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII*, 1:210.

10   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII*, 2:30, 37–38, 48, 158, 178–79, 185–86.

occurred a mere handful of years previously, in 1623, rather than the requisite fifty years.[11]

2   Perceptions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth

What, therefore, were the prisms through which Rome viewed the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and that may also have been influential in shaping attitudes toward other areas of Younger Europe? In the first instance, Poland–Lithuania was seen as a crucial battleground between religious orthodoxy, defined crucially as an acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Roman See, on the one hand, and all other religious affiliations, on the other. This was the binary opposition that trumped all others. In February 1637, for instance, the nuncio Mario Filonardi (1594–1644) recorded to Rome that in an audience with the king, he had "prayed his majesty to interpose his royal piety and authority so that in this [forthcoming] Diet, the heretics, schismatics and Jews would not be advanced, nor that he would concede to them anything to the prejudice of the Catholics and of our holy religion."[12]

This might be taken as a summary of the position advanced by every papal nuncio during the entire course of the reigns of the first Vasa monarchs. It was no accident that the nuncio placed special importance on the relationship with the king, given that the monarchy was seen as the critical institution that had allowed for a massive recovery of Catholicism in the Commonwealth. As Filonardi's instructions detailed in 1635, on Sigismund III's accession, he found "almost all the Senate and a great part of the people infected with heresy,"[13] but his zeal had procured a way to set about reducing its threat. Critical in this regard had been the king's capacity to appoint to offices, and his control of revenues and of appeals from the courts of inferior magistrates. Thus despite the limitations on his power that meant that without the consent of the Senate

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11   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII*, 2:120, 163.

12   "Pregai anco Sua Maestà ad interporre la sua real pietà et autorità affinch'in questa Dieta gli heretici, scismatici et Hebrei non s'avanzino più, né se li conceda cos'alcuna in preiudicio di cattolici e della nostra Santa Religione": Mario FiLonardi to Francesco Barberini, February 20, 1637, *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXV Marius Filonardi*, vol. 2 (*1 XI 1636–31 X 1637*), ed. Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel (Kraków: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2006), 90; for further context on Filonardi's activity, see Chynczewska-Hennel, "Le relazioni dei nunzi apostolici," 87–91.

13   "Quasi tutto il Senato e gran parte del popolo infetti d'heresia": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXV*, vol. 1, *Marius Filonardi (12 II 1635–29 X 1636)*, ed. Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel (Kraków: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2003), 21.

and orders of the kingdom, he could not make war nor peace, nor create nobles nor coin money, nor impose taxes nor hear ambassadors of princes, the importance of the king's favor gave him vital levers on the mechanisms of power. Rome happily noted that Sigismund, "in the vacancies of heretical senators, replaced them with Catholics, and with the conferring of honors and offices on the followers of the true religion, he reduced not only the first order but also the rest of the people to that state of piety than one now observes."[14] This had then opened the way to further gains for Catholicism,

> since the nobility of that kingdom not only prevails over but are almost absolutely lords of those of low condition and in the country in particular, who although more obstinate than all other nations in following the religion in which they were born, since the former are the arbiters of the lives and property of the latter it happens that they easily accommodate themselves to the rite and religion of their Lords.[15]

A particular *bête noire* of the nuncios was, of course, the Confederation of Warsaw, the agreement first promulgated in 1573 that restricted the capacity of both the crown and the church to exercise religious coercion against the Polish nobility.[16] As the nuncio Francesco Simonetta (*c.*1555–1612) insisted to the Polish bishops in 1607:

> And they should take the example of the other kingdoms and of those nearby above all; what ruin, destruction, fires, and slaughter were occasioned by similar permissions; reminding them further that in the same moment they would lose the renown of being such Catholics and the reputation they had acquired as valorous soldiers, that for a present doubt of

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14   "Nelle vacanze de' Senatori heretici, vi surrogava Cattolici, e col compartir gli honori e gli uffitii a seguaci della vera Religione, ha ridotto non solo il primo Ordine, ma anche il resto delle genti a quello stato di pietà che hora si scorge": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXV*, 1:21–22.

15   "Essendo che la nobiltà in quel Regno, non solo prevaglia ma quasi assolutamente domini a quelli di bassa conditione et a rustici in particolare, i quali benché più duri dell'altre nationi in seguir la religione nella quale sono nati, nondimeno, essendo eglino padroni della vita e della robba d'essi, avviene che facilmente si accomodino al rito e religione de' loro Signori": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXV*, 1:21.

16   Laurent Tatarenko, "La Confédération de Varsovie du 28 janvier 1573: Une politique de tolérance au service des privilèges nobiliaires," *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* 125, no. 1 (2018): 9–23.

not being able to resist to the forces of a conspiracy of a small number of people, they would consent to such damage.[17]

By the 1630s, the success of the Vasas in promoting Catholicism had even helped to create a more favorable perspective on the Polish constitution, Filonardi's instructions noting that "although in appearance monarchical it is miraculously tempered by aristocracy."[18] This was in marked contrast to the attitude even twenty years into Sigismund's reign, when, for instance, Simonetta offered quite sharp criticism of the Commonwealth's political structures:

> By the particular constitution of this kingdom, the decrees of the Senate do not come into effect nor have force if all the senators and all the secular delegates who represent the nobility that they call the knightly order do not consent. Whereupon if one only contradicts or opposes, the decree is invalid. And what is worse, even if they have agreed on many decrees, if one alone disagrees with one single decree, by the disagreement of this single person to a single decree, all the other decrees are rendered invalid and destroyed, and the discussion and resolution of them left to the next Diet. From which abuse what disorders can originate, your Illustrious Lordship may well consider.[19]

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17   "Et che prendino l'essempio da gli altri Regni, et da li vicini sopratutto; quanta rovina, destruttione, incendii e strage da simil permissione ne siano cagionate; ricordandogli in oltre che in un medesimo tempo perderebbono il nome di tanto Cattolici et la riputatione acquistata di valorosi soldati, che per dubbio hora di non poter resistere a le forze d'una congiura di poche persone, condescendano a tanti danni": Simonetta to Scipone Borghese, May 12, 1607, *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XVIII Franciscus Simonetta (1606–1612)*, vol. 1 (*21 VI 1606–30 IX 1607*), ed. Wojciech Tygielski (Rome: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 1990), 195.

18   "Benché in apparenza monarcico [*sic*], è mirabilmente temprato d'aristocratia": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXV*, 1:21.

19   "Per constitutione particolare di questo Regno li Senatusconsulti non conseguiscono effetto, né hanno forza, se tutti li Senatori et tutti li Nuntii Terrestri che rappresentano la Nobiltà, che chiamano ordine equestre, non consentono, dove che, se un solo contradice et si oppone, il decreto non vale. Et quel ch'è peggio, ancorché siano d'accordo in molti decreti, se un solo discordarà in un sol' decreto, per la discordia di questo solo et in un'articolo solo, si rompono et si rendono nulli tutti gli altri decreti, et la risolutione et discussione di essi si rimette a la Dieta sequente. Dal qual abuso quanti disordini possano nascere, lo consideri v.ra Signoria Ill.ma.": June 16, 1607, Simonetta to Scipione Borghese, *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XVIII*, 1:246.

The nuncio of the 1590s, Germanico Malaspina (1547–1603), had also been conscious of the difficulties created by Polish constitutional structures:

> Because in popular republics, there are more voices than nuts, as they say in Spain, and more credit is given to verbal persuasion than to the truth, and because also here is great license in speaking, neither here is the respect given here to the families and external princes that would be desired.[20]

In the seventeenth century, the nuncio fought his way through a particularly fraught week of discussions in the Diet that centered on the intersection of political interest and ecclesiastical immunity and function. By the end, his nervous exhaustion became palpable, as he reported to Rome:

> This week was for us the most troublesome and the most difficult ever, because in all sessions something was always proposed that related to the ecclesiastical state: that the Jesuits be expelled, or at least that they not be permitted to expand to other places; that these and all other churches in the future should be incapable of [gaining] other temporal goods, or at least those goods that they might in the future acquire should be subject to all the dues as those of the laity; that the law cases that may originate concerning these goods should be held before a secular judge; that the apostolic nuncio should not be able to be in the place of the sessions so as not to prejudice the authority of their born legate, the archbishop of Gniezno. And many other subjects, such as the annates and appeals and similar things.[21]

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20 "Perché nelle republiche populari più sono le voci che le noci, come si suoi dire in Hispagna, et si da più credito persuasioni verbali che alle verità, et perché anco vi è gran licenza nel dire, qua né si porta rispetto alle famiglie et prencipi esterni come si ricercarebbe […]": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. xv, Germanicus Malaspina (1591–1598)*, vol. 1 (*1 XII 1591–31 XII 1592*) *in quo publicantur etiam documenta legationem a latere cardinalis Georgii Radziwiłł necnon munera ab Attilio Amalteo et Maximiliano de Pernštejn expleta illustrantia*, ed. Leszek Jarmiński (Kraków: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2000), 211–13; concerning his political analysis of the Commonwealth, see Gregorowicz, "Final Reports of Papal Diplomats," 19.

21 "Questa settimana per noi è stata la più fastidiosa et la più difficile di nissuna sin'hora, poiché in tutti li Comitii sempre si è proposta qualche cosa spettante a lo Stato Ecclesiastico: che li Giesuiti siano discacciati, o almeno non possano estendersi ad altri luoghi; che essi et tutte l'altre Chiese per l'avvenire siano incapaci d'altri beni temporali, o almeno che questi beni che per innanzi acquistaranno, siano sottoposti a tutti li pesi, come li laicali;

Yet it is important to stress that even when critical, such commentary almost invariably remained political, rather than crudely ethnographic. There was little attempt to link any perceived deficiencies to national character.[22] Certainly, Poles could be seen as fairly touchy. In 1612, the nuncio Lelio Ruini (*c.*1570–1621) was warned to make sure that it was constantly clear that his objectives were purely religious "in order not to give occasion for suspicion and jealousies that fall fairly easily in to the minds of that nation," and his successor Francesco Diotallevi (1579–1622) was urged to be similarly circumspect because "he had to treat with people of diverse customs to ours and prone to take offense even on flimsy grounds," but even mild generalizations of this kind were uncommon and were reflective of an awareness of cultural difference.[23] In the register, they are very similar to the instruction to the Irish nuncio in 1645, Gianbattista Rinuccini (1592–1653), which informed him that "the Irish like all other foreigners are full of suspicion and wariness."[24] Significantly, the totalizing effects of the Catholic/non-Catholic distinction meant that different otherizing tropes were largely absent. For example, the employment of a dismissive vocabulary was restricted to those outside the Catholic community, who became the subject of systematic impoliteness, underpinned by the clear desire to deny symbolic recognition of positive face to non-Catholics.[25] The Orthodox, for instance, were almost invariably scornfully referred to as *scismatici* (schismatics), while Protestants of various kinds were most commonly comprehended under the term *eretici* (heretics). Rather than *chiese* (churches), Protestant churches were designated as *sinagoghe* (synagogues) or

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che gli giuditii che potranno nasceré sopra questi beni, siano fatti avanti il giudice secolare; che il Nuntio Apostolico non possa stare al luogo de' Comitii per non dar pregiuditio a l'autorità del loro legato nato, l'Arcivescovo di Gnesna. Et molti altri capi, come de le annate, de le appellationi et simili": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. xviii*, 1:230.

22   Gregorowicz, "Final Reports of Papal Diplomats," 22–23, briefly discusses some commentary on national characteristics.

23   "Per non dare occasione d'ombre e di gelosie assai facili a cadere negli animi di quella natione": instructions for Lelio Ruini, September 26, 1612, *Le Istruzioni Generali di Paolo V ai diplomatici pontifici 1605–1621*, ed. Silvano Giordano, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2003), 2:835; "dovendosi trattare con gente di costumi diversi da i nostri et facili ad offendersi anco per lievi cause," instructions for Francesco Diotallevi, September 3, 1614, *Istruzioni Generali di Paolo V*, 2:983.

24   "Essendo gli Irlandesi, come tutti gli altri oltramontani, pieni di sospetti e d'ombre": instructions to Gianbattista Rinuccini, 1645, Aiazzi, *Nunziatura in Irlanda*, li.

25   Jim O'Driscoll, "About Face: A Defence and Elaboration of Universal Dualism," *Journal of Pragmatics* 25, no. 1 (1996): 1–32, here 13.

tempi (temples).[26] While great care was generally taken in describing Catholic dignitaries with their official titles in the third person, such as *sua maestà* (his majesty), *sua altezza* (his highness), the Protestant members of the Vasa family received shorter shrift. *Il Gostavo* (Gustav) and sometimes *Gostavo usurpatore* (Gustav the usurper) was the most common appellation of Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632, r.1611–32), while his father, Karl IX (1550–1611, r.1604–11), generally figured in correspondence as *Carlo Sueco* (Charles the Swede) or *asserto re di Svetia* (pretended king of Sweden). The only Protestant member of the Vasa family who on occasion earned a degree of respect was Sigismund's sister Anna (1568–1625), described as *sua altezza* (her highness) in one dispatch from Rome. The Protestant prince of Transylvania, Bethlen Gábor (1580–1629, r.1613–29), in sharp contrast to Prince Sigismund Báthory (1573–1613, r.1586–98, 1598–99, 1601–2), for instance, commonly referred to as *sua altezza* or *questo serinissimo principe* (this most serene prince), was simply *il Gabor* (Gabriel) in correspondence. The nuncio in Prague, Cesare Speciano (1539–1607), referred to the future prince of Transylvania, István Bocskay (1557–1606, r.1605–6), as a *buon homaccione* (good big man)—the rather informal noun presumably reflecting disdain for his Protestantism but the qualifying adjective apparently inspired by a hope that he might convert to Catholicism.[27] The grand duke of Muscovy was most commonly referred to as *Il Moscovito* (the Muscovite) or *Il Mosco* (the Moscow), and the Supreme Porte was rarely mentioned as anything other than *Il Turco* (the Turk), while the Tartars of the Caucasus were subsumed under the singular generic of *Il Tartaro* (the Tartar).

Societal differences in Poland were certainly remarked upon but presented to provide a context for understanding rather than explicit judgment. Thus the ferocious physical punishments that could be handed out to serfs of both genders and their status similar to the slaves of antiquity were noted by the nuncio Simonetta—"the serfs of both sexes are beaten and made to beat severely by their masters, the serfs of this kingdom being of the same condition as ancient slaves"[28]—but not as something that had to be reformed or changed.

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26   See, for example, Henryk Litwin, ed., *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII Antonius Santa Croce (1627–1630)*, vol. 1 (*1 III 1627–29 VII 1628*) (Rome: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2006), 123.

27   Endre Veress, ed., *Erdélyországi Pápai Követek Jelentései VIII Kelemen idejéből (1592–1600)*, 2nd ed. (Budapest: Metem, 2001), 164.

28   "Li Villani de l'uno et l'altro sesso siano battuti et fatti battere a mal modo da li Padroni, sendo li Villani di questo Regno di quella conditione ch'erano li servi antichi": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XVIII*, 1:149.

Even in the specific domain of religion, negative comment on the national character was limited. In 1606, Simonetta was instructed to keep a close eye on the Polish bishops, who were generally admirable, but for whom the liberty of the country was seen as giving opportunity for scandalous behavior. This can be seen as more of a comment on human than Polish nature.[29] Simonetta himself rather factually reported on the unsatisfactory customs of Polish ecclesiastics, including their tendency to conform to the customs of the country in excessive drinking and the frequentation of taverns without any shame or regret.[30] The Italian master of ceremonies, Paolo Aleone (dates unknown), who accompanied Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł (1556–1600) in his capacity as papal legate to bless the nuptials of Sigismund III and his bride, Anna Habsburg (1573–1598), in the early 1590s, was not surprisingly particularly alert to make sure that correct procedure was followed and approvingly noted when set pieces were staged "according to our Roman ceremonies."[31] Contrarily, he was unhappy when Radziwiłł made concessions to local ritual, disapprovingly noting things done "in confusion and without order according to Polish custom."[32] For example, he noted that Radziwiłł attended the nuptial feast, with his chaplain holding the cross of his legation and comporting himself in everything according to the custom of the kingdom, which the master of ceremonies deemed highly inappropriate to the sacred dignity of the cross and because of the general lack of decorum.[33] Yet, although Polish difference was certainly implicitly seen as inferior, the quality of reproach was essentially technical; as papal legate, Radziwiłł was viewed as having responsibilities to the Holy See and to the preservation of its dignity and position as arbiter of orthodoxy. Moreover, the axiomatic assumption of papal superiority vis-à-vis local custom did not mark Poland off as in any way different from other areas of the Catholic world. For all Catholics, the closest possible conformity to Italian procedure was considered desirable—but it was custom not character that was the subject of criticism. The consistent negativity toward the regular orders in Poland can be viewed in a similar light.

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29   "Perché la libertà del paese porta seco gran licenza di vivere, et non molta obedienza, onde ne nascano scandali": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XVIII*, 1:26.

30   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XVIII*, 1:150.

31   "Iuxta caerimonias nostras Romanas": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:453.

32   "Prout de more Polono inconfuse et sine ordine": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:451.

33   "Et adfuit festis et coreis nuptialibus praesente cruce suae legationis, quam tenuit cappellanus, et in omnibus actibus semper apud se habuit iuxta consuetudinem huius regni, quae mihi non placet tenere crucem in conviviis et saltationibus et aliis festis Polonicis. Ego non curavi videre propter confusionem": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:453.

Through the reports of its nuncios, Rome certainly became convinced that, with the exception of the Jesuits and the Discalced Carmelites, the condition of the regular clergy in Poland was deeply unsatisfactory and that the best way of effecting reform was Italian influence, either by the introduction of Italian superiors into convents or at least by supplying native Poles with Italian advisors.[34] But this was because of the formation and training of Italian friars rather than any innate national characteristic or deficiency of the Poles. On the contrary, the nuncio, Malaspina, showed himself extraordinarily positive about the inhabitants of the Commonwealth. Malaspina claimed to love the "nation" as if he had been a native.[35] And while the public context of his discourse to the Polish bishops in 1592 may have disposed him to employ a certain amount of flattery, the religious and historical context in which he placed Polish Catholicism was noteworthy.

For Malaspina, by its isolated position surrounded by non-Catholic enemies, Poland represented a watchtower and fortress helping to ensure the safety of the Christian world. Its historical relationship with Rome entailed a dialectic of virtue: Poland had received good laws transmitted by Italian prelates whose work reaped a bountiful harvest of Polish virtue in producing many saintly native bishops, such as Saint Stanisław (1030–79) and Saint Wojciech (956–97). The Poles excelled over other peoples in the respect they showed for religion and for clerics, and this had been of immense utility to the Commonwealth. He made an explicit contrast between Polish kings and their equivalents in Bohemia and Hungary, noting that no monarch of Poland had ever lapsed into heresy. In an earlier letter to the Polish primate, Malaspina had detected a providential element in the manner in which the virtues of Polish bishops shone with particular brightness, despite the immense distance separating them from Rome. Naturally, this providential dispensation was seen to demand an appropriate response: "As the Poles were ornamented with divine privileges above all other nations, thus it should confirm them to excel other peoples in piety and unity."[36]

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34   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII*, 1:7.
35   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:280; private correspondence to the nuncio also indicated the pope's own affection toward Poland, presumably the result of his sojourn there as legate: see Cinzio Aldobrandini to Malaspina, December 12, 1592, *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:351.
36   "Poloni divinis privilegiis praeter caeteras omnes nationes fuerunt a Deo ornati, ita caeteros populos pietate et animorum coniunctione praestare eos debere confirmat": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:194.

Malaspina used many encomia in describing Poland in his correspondence with important figures in the kingdom, referring to it in correspondence with Cardinal Radziwiłł, and with the primate, using terms such as most noble and most powerful kingdom. But while this may have been influenced by a desire to conciliate his correspondents, the positivity of private comments between Rome and its nuncios was notable. When Santa Croce was appointed in the 1620s, the importance of his role as representative to the "king defender of the Christian world" was emphasized.[37] Malaspina himself also saw Polish affairs as of critical importance for all of Christendom.[38] And he was dripping in his praise of the Polish king, Sigismund III, compared to other princes:

> But I cannot omit to say, for the duty that I sustain, that although the Holy See and Your Holiness may well have many princes, lords, and kings who show that respect that is due, nevertheless, none perhaps will be found who could place their foot ahead of this majesty and who could equal him in filial obedience, love, and observance toward your holiness.[39]

From a religious perspective, the Union of Brest (1596), the agreement established during the pontificate of Clement VIII to bring the Ruthenian church into full communion with Rome,[40] occupied an important position in papal considerations of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Despite its disappointing results, the hostility of both the Latin Catholic and the Orthodox populations of the Commonwealth, and the sometimes scandalous behavior of certain Uniate prelates, Rome remained committed to the union. When an account is taken of the importance of liturgical exactitude to all strands of Italian reformist thinking, this was not without significance. At times, a note of regret pervaded correspondence at having to rein in the laudable zeal of Latin Polish Catholics for trying to introduce the "most pure Latin rite,"[41] but Poland in fact acted as a key testing ground of the notion that "rite and Roman

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37   "Apud Regem Christiani Orbis defensorem": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII*, 1:13.

38   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:380.

39   "Ma non posso già pretermettere di dire, per la carica che sostengo, che se bene la Santa Sede et v.s. hanno molti prencipi, signori et re quali le portano quell'ossequio che si conviene, nondimeno niun forse si ritrova qual metta il piede innanzi a questa Mtà et l' agguagli nella figliai obedienza, amore et osservanza verso v.Stà": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:235.

40   Laurent Tatarenko, "La naissance de l'Union de Brest," *Cahiers du monde russe* 46, nos. 1–2 (2005): 345–54.

41   "Il purissimo Rito Latino": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII*, 1:30.

church does not mean only we Latins, but Greeks, Armenians, Ruthenes, and all others who having given up their errors and schism, return to the womb of the holy church, it being the same to say Roman church and to say Orthodox, Apostolic Catholic Church."[42]

Given the still common assumption of the almost reflexive conservatism of the curia in the face of the assertion of rights to liturgical individuality, the consistency of support for the Uniate position was noteworthy and chimes with British historian Simon Ditchfield's insistence on the under-estimated willingness of the Roman church to entertain liturgical diversity through processes of dialogue.[43] In Poland–Lithuania, the papal stance almost certainly reflected the continuing hope that the union still held out the possibility of much wider gains. Thus, in the 1620s, the utmost importance of ensuring the continuation of royal protection for Uniate bishops was impressed upon the nuncio Santa Croce:

> Because by their means it would be possible to reduce in the progress of time Muscovy and other provinces to the Catholic Union, for the maintenance of which the same Sacred Congregation [of Propaganda Fide] had commanded the general of the Jesuits that he should order the provincial of Lithuania that neither he nor any of his priests, and particularly the confessors should seek to draw the Ruthenes to the Latin rite.[44]

In the following decade, the nuncio reacted sharply to the attempts of the Latin archbishops to deny their Uniate counterpart the right to use the title of "archbishop," informing them tartly that if it was good enough for Rome to recognize him as such, then they must accept it.[45]

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42   "Rito e Chiesa Romana non s'intende solo de noi Latini, ma de Greci, Armeni, Rutheni et ogn'altro che deposto i loro scisma et errori, ritornano al grembo di Santa Chiesa, essendo l'istesso dir Chiesa Romana e dir Chiesa Cattholica Apostolica ortodossa": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXV*, 2:97.

43   See, for example, Simon Ditchfield, "Innovation and Its Limits: The Case of Italy (ca. 1512–ca. 1572)," in *La réforme en France et en Italie*, ed. Philip Benedict, Silvana Seidel Menchi, and Alain Tallon (Rome: École française de Rome, 2007), https://books.openedition.org /efr/1696 (accessed October 25, 2022).

44   "Perché per mezzo loro si potrebbono ridurre in progresso di tempo e la Moscovia et altre Provincie all'Unione Catolica, per mantenimento della quale la medesima Sacra Congregatione ha comandato al Generale de' Giesuiti ch'ordini al Provincia di Lituania, che né egli, né altri suoi Padri, e particolarmente i Confessori, cerchino di tirare li Ruteni uniti al Rito Latino": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae XXIII*, 1:66–67.

45   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXV*, 2:67–68.

The papal view of the union, therefore, was not merely in terms of the internal religious divides within Poland but part of a much wider vision. But it was not exclusively with regard to the Orthodox world that Poland was seen as a vital frontier. Rather, it was also a territory of immense strategic importance in terms of Roman Catholicism's relationships with what Rome perceived as its two most existential foes, namely European Protestantism and Islam.[46] Particularly because of the dynastic link between the different branches of the Vasa family, Sweden figured very largely in papal thinking about Poland. The great hope was certainly that Poland could act as a springboard for the reinvigoration of Swedish Catholicism. While not prepared to offer support to any idea that Sigismund could renounce the Polish crown in order to position himself better to inherit from his father in the early 1590s, Rome was equally eager to see Sigismund's claim to the Swedish throne maintained. In 1592, for instance, the nuncio Malaspina was urged to convince the chancellor Jan Zamoyski (1542–1605) that it would be to Poland's benefit if the king managed to secure Sweden. He adopted an even stronger line with the influential archbishop of Gniezno, reporting that he had insisted

> that this nation would have sinned and denigrated in a certain way the brightness of its glory and particularly the ecclesiastical state and the archbishop of Gniezno more than any other, and all the Catholics would have lost much in the universal assembly place of the world if being able to acquire that kingdom [Sweden] for the true faith and Catholic Church, and to preserve it in the person of their king without detriment to their own peace and tranquility, rather with an increase of authority, power, and strength, they would have permitted it to fall into the hands of a heretical prince in such a calamity to the honor of God and damage to their present king and his successors and to the kingdom of Poland itself, with which in time it could merge.[47]

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46 Henryk Litwin, *Chwała Północy: Rzeczpospolita w polityce Stolicy Apostolskiej; 1598–1648* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2018); Dorota Gregorowicz, *Tiara w grze o koronę: Stolica Apostolska wobec wolnych elekcji w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w drugiej połowie XVI wieku* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2019).

47 "Havrebbe peccato questa natione et denigrato in qualche parte il candore della gloria sua, et particularmente lo stato ecclesiastico, et più d'ogn'altro l'arcivescovo gnesnense, et tutti li catolici havrebbono perso molto nella universale piazza del mondo se potendo acquistar quel regno alla vera fede et Catholica Chiesa, et conservarlo ne la persona del loro re senza detrimento della pace et tranquillità loro, anzi con augumento di auttorità, potenza et forza, havessero permesso che con tanta iattura dell'honore de Dio et danno del presente loro re et suoi successori, et de l'istesso Regno di Polonia, al quale forsi

And the nuncio consistently exerted himself both to protect Sigismund's Polish kingship and not have the king's hands tied in such a way as to make his Swedish claim unrealizable.[48] Throughout the ensuing intermittent Polish–Swedish Wars (1600–29), the papacy yearned for news of Polish victories and did what it could to stiffen the Commonwealth's determination to maintain the war. Even as the long conflict drew to a close, the Barberini papacy saw the imperial victories over Denmark as a possible avenue to the regaining of the Swedish throne and exerted itself throughout 1628 to encourage the Poles to maintain the conflict.[49] With equal constancy during this era, the papacy also strove to promote good relations between the Commonwealth and the Habsburgs so that they could assist each other in confronting their non-Catholic enemies. Particularly for Poland, this was seen as vital, and papal diplomacy was highly active in a variety of Habsburg courts to try to ensure that the Treaty of Bytom and Będzin (1589) was accepted by the House of Austria.[50] The later 1620s figured as a time of particularly dizzying optimism in Rome in that a general war of Catholic powers against Protestant Europe seemed almost attainable, as the emperor moved to crush Denmark, and Spain pursued its war with the Dutch, while France and Spain both bizarrely found themselves in conflict with the Stuarts, and Poland confronted Sweden. Papal diplomacy strove, in particular, to unite Poland with the Habsburgs, and in 1627 the mission of Charles de Bonnières (d.1632) to Sigismund, with secret offers of assistance from Spain and the emperor to re-establish the Polish branch of the Vasa family in Sweden, received every furtherance it could from the papal nuncio, Santa Croce.[51] Urban VIII (1568–1644, r.1623–44) tended to be much less openhanded than his predecessors in terms of direct subsidies toward Catholic wars, but in this context, he was more than happy to give permission for the Polish clergy to contribute an extraordinary payment to help continue the war with Sweden.[52]

Papal hostility toward the Ottoman empire was an equal constant in its diplomacy. The urgency that Clement VIII was to demonstrate in trying to fashion an anti-Turkish coalition during his pontificate was another reason for

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anco con il tempo se potrebbe incorporare, fosse caduto in mano di principe heretico": Malaspina to Cinzio Aldobrandini, December 18, 1592, *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:372.

48   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:313.

49   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXIII*, 1:213–14.

50   In this treaty of 1589, following his capture the previous year, Maximilian III Habsburg renounced his claim to the Polish throne.

51   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXIII*, 1:174–75.

52   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXIII*, 1:203.

the efforts made to convince Archduke Maximilian III (1558–1618, r.1612–18) to accept the agreement of Bytom and Będzin since it was the clear advice of papal ministers that without this condition it was impossible to see Polish adherence to the imperial war with the Ottomans.[53] During the pontificate of Paul V (1550–1621, r.1605–21), the nuncio was instructed to impress on the Poles that, in the event of renewed Habsburg/Ottoman war in Hungary, it would be suicidal for the Commonwealth not to give assistance to their co-religionists.[54] In Rome, the Turks were considered greatly to fear the Poles, partly because of a prophecy that their destruction would come from the north, and very close attention was paid to any possibility that the Commonwealth could be brought into conflict with the Ottoman empire. The Polish victory at Khotyn (Chocim) in 1621 was received with great excitement in Rome. Upon his accession, Gregory XV (1554–1623, r.1621–23) was disappointed at the evaporation of Habsburg–Polish cooperation, which he still hoped to resuscitate if Polish anger at the insufficient appreciation of their contribution to the Bohemian war that had commenced in 1618 could be dissipated.[55] During the following decade, it was Władysław IV (1595–1648, r.1632–48) who seemed to offer hope as the key to a Christian alliance that could reconquer Constantinople if he was prepared to dedicate himself to the task and in which he would enjoy the fervent diplomatic support of the Barberini papacy.[56]

3   Conclusion

Papal perception of Poland–Lithuania throughout this period was of an advanced outpost of the Catholic world "positioned in the middle of Mahometans, schismatics, heretics, and partly Catholics,"[57] rendering it of immense importance both defensively and offensively in a three-front struggle. In dealing with the Commonwealth, papal diplomacy showed a keen awareness that very different cultural contexts existed north of the Alps. Italians chosen

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53 *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XV*, 1:378–80.

54 Instructions for Francesco Diotallevi, *Istruzioni Generali di Paolo V*, 987.

55 Instructions for Giovanni Battista Lancellotti, December 14, 1622, *Acta nuntiaturae Poloniae. XX/1: Ioannes Baptista Lancellotti (1622–27)*, ed. Thaddaeus Fitych (Kraków: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2000), 44–47.

56 See the instructions for Mario Filonardi, July 19, 1635, *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXV*, 1:14, 16, 35–38.

57 "Posto in mezzo fra maomettani, scismatici, heretici, et parte fra cattolici": instructions for Francesco Diotallevi, *Le istruzioni Generali di Paolo V*, 981.

to navigate the complexities of these contours as pontifical representatives
were required to show flexibility while making sure their behavior did noth-
ing to compromise the dignity or the policies of their masters. In northern
Europe, they evidently benefited from operating in an environment of con-
siderable respect for Italian cultural prestige and where strong links existed
between northern Italy, in particular, and Poland.[58] Italians represented one of
the most important body of migrants in the Commonwealth, settling in par-
ticular in Kraków, Lublin, Lwów, and Poznań.[59] And Polish Catholics of vari-
ous different political perspectives were generally eager to demonstrate, often
fervently, their reverence for the throne of St. Peter. But even the Protestants of
the municipal government of Gdańsk signified to the papal nuncio "the great
esteem and veneration in which the holiness of Our Lord was held by them,
even if not as the head of the universal church but as a prince of great status
and of excellent governance."[60] As a language, Italian remained more popu-
lar than French down to the end of the seventeenth century, and an important
cultural influence was mediated by figures such as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–
1527) and Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529).[61] Italians were highly prized in a
variety of different roles, including employment in the royal court and in the
households of magnates. In the 1620s, for instance, it was somewhat embarrass-
ing for Rome when one of the secretaries of the nuncio Lancellotti, Domenico
Roncalli (d. after 1643), who had previously had oversight over the ciphered let-
ters of diplomatic correspondence, passed into royal service as an Italian tutor
to the younger princes.[62] Prince and later King Władysław was an Italophile
who employed Italian clerics whom he sought successfully to advance to Italian

58   Jeannie Łabno, *Commemorating the Polish Renaissance Child: Funeral Monuments and
      Their European Context* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Meredith Ray, "East of Italy: Women
      and Alchemy at the 'Peripheries' of Early Modern Europe," *Early Modern Women: An
      Interdisciplinary Journal* 15, no. 2 (2021): 143–54; in his panoramic analysis of the Italian
      presence, Wojciech Tygielski, *Italians in Early Modern Poland: The Lost Opportunity for
      Modernization* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015) identifies the century after 1650 as
      the period most favorable to Italian migrants.

59   Michal Salamonik, *In Their Majesties' Service: The Career of Francesco De Gratta (1613–1676)
      as a Royal Servant and Trader in Gdańsk* (Stockholm: Södertörns högskola, Huddinge,
      2017), 22–23.

60   "La grande stima e veneratione, in che era tenuta da loro la Santità di N.ro Signore, benché
      non come Capo Universale della Chiesa, ma come Prencipe di grande stato e d'ottimo
      governo": *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXIII*, 1:98; for a detailed exposition of the career of
      one Italian in the city, see Salamonik, *In Their Majesties' Service*.

61   Tygielski, *Italians in Early Modern Poland*, chapter 4 (275–382).

62   Santa Croce to Francesco Barberini, June 24, 1627, *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. XXIII*, 1:37.

bishoprics[63] and an Italian engineer to oversee court entertainment, as well as famously figuring as the patron of Costante Tencallo (1610–47) and Clemente Molli (1599–1664). In 1627, an unfortunate woman rescued from kidnap by the bishop of Kraków was given into the care of some Italian matrons, evidently considered a reassuring and honorific gesture. Yet respect did not flow merely in one direction. The appreciation of papal diplomats for many aspects of Poland–Lithuania was significant. This was most apparent on explicitly religious grounds, in opposing heresy and schism and Islam. But there was a keen admiration of the inhabitants of the Commonwealth's martial capacities, too, and a desire to see them employed for the benefit of the wider Catholic world. Above all, although there was a definite metropolitan tinge in Italian attitudes toward their Polish co-religionists, there was no doubt that they considered themselves to share a common religious identity, beside which other differences shrank markedly in importance.

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63   *Acta nuntiaturae Polonae T. xxv*, 2:122.

The Battle of Mohács, Re-remembered History, and Hungary's "Christian" Identity

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Abstract

This essay scrutinizes the symbols and language employed to articulate the emerging identity of a pan-Christian Hungary, a nation often contrasted with liberal Enlightenment values and non-European cultures attempting to settle or transit through the central European state. Hungary's liberation from Soviet rule in 1989 left it with a population largely disconnected from institutional Christianity's rituals and ideologies. Hungary's cultural memory has been profoundly influenced by its catastrophic defeat in the 1526 Battle of Mohács against the Ottomans and its subsequent subjugation by foreign powers, notably the Ottoman and Austrian rulers. The author conducts a detailed analysis of the predominant symbols and rhetoric employed by contemporary Hungarian nationalist movements. He illustrates how these elements have been repurposed and transformed into integral components of a distinctive neo-Christian identity. The author argues that this evolving "Christian democracy" encompasses "pan-Christian" symbols and messages, drawing parallels with the pan-Indian trends observed in North America.

Keywords

The past half-century has seen an increase in the use of religious symbolism by nationalist and nativist movements in societies worldwide.[1] While there are

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1   Mitja Velikonja, "*In hoc signo vinces*: Religious Symbolism in the Balkan Wars 1991–1995," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17, no. 1 (2003): 25–40; Christopher Marsh, "Religion and Nationalism," in *Nations and Nationalisms in Global Perspective: An Encyclopedia of Origins, Development, and Contemporary Transitions*, ed. Guntram H. Herb

superficial similarities in the ways in which these symbols and language are used, the differences among these phenomena are equally important.

This essay will briefly examine a selection of the symbols and attendant language found in the nationalist and ethnocentric movements existing in Hungary today. The essay is not specifically about the personality and political aspirations of Viktor Orbán (in office 2010–), although these figure in the story. Nor shall I be claiming that seemingly self-contradictory expressions of national identity in religious terms are at all unique to Hungary.

Rather, this brief investigation seeks to explore the relationship between Hungary's past, as understood by a significant segment of its population, and some current social trends, acknowledging that this understanding is by no means monolithic but is influenced by geography, historic religious affiliation, mass and social media, and possibly urban versus rural settings.[2]

Perhaps more than the narratives embraced by nationalist and nativist movements in other countries, the popularly held history of Hungary is strongly shaped by myths set in the distant past. Originating in Central Asia, the Magyars arrived in Europe in the ninth century before settling in the Danube Basin during the following century.[3] Vajk (*c.*975–1038), leader of a federation of Magyar tribes, embraced Christianity and in 1000 was crowned king of Hungary (r.1000–38), taking the name Stephen—which means "crown" in Greek—and received regalia from the pope.[4]

The earlier origins of the Magyars and their relationship to other peoples of Central Asia has been a subject of interest and controversy in Hungary since at least the middle of the eighteenth century.[5] In 1770, Hungarian Jesuit János

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and David H. Kaplan (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 99–110; Hank Johnston, "Religious Nationalism: Six Propositions from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union," in *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: Revival of Religious Fundamentalism in East and West*, ed. Bronislaw Misztal and Anson D. Shupe (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 67–80; Meenakshi Malhotra, "The Dark Goddess and the Nation: The Political Uses of Religious Symbolism," in *Retold Feminine Memoirs: Our Collective Past and Present*, ed. Gabriela Mádlo (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 11–19; Tommy Nanto, "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: Christian Nationalist Belief and Behavior in the United States," *Sigma: A Journal of Political and International Studies* 39 (2022): 33–51.

2 In 2020, seventy-two percent of Hungary's population was classed as urban. "Urban Population (% of Total Population): Hungary," World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=HU (accessed September 5, 2022).

3 Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary*, trans. Anna Magyar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 15–18.

4 Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church, AD 681–1071* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), 252.

5 László Kontler, "The Lappon, the Scythian, and the Hungarian, or Our (Former) Selves as 'Others': Philosophical History in Eighteenth-Century Hungary," in *Encountering Otherness:*

Sajnovics (1733–85) published *Demonstratio idioma Ungarorum et Lapponum idem esse* (Demonstration of the identity of the languages of the Hungarians and Lapps),[6] in which he identified a connection between the Magyar and Lapp languages. While the connection between shared linguistic features and shared ethnogenesis is no longer regarded as necessarily close, in the eighteenth century this connection was assumed, with the implication that Sámi (Lapps) and Magyars were somehow related. Although his book's appearance produced controversy, Sajnovics was not seeking conflict with the master narrative of the origins of the Magyars but was applying his training as a Jesuit to linguistic patterns he had encountered.

Among the consequences of the debate that followed has been the perpetuation of the tension between the two understandings of the Hungarians. In one, Hungarians are seen as descendants of the Christianized Magyars—itself a connection that is neither simple nor linear—as exemplified by Stephen and many subsequent kings. The other narrative emphasizes the identity of Hungarians as descendants of an Asiatic people with non-Christian beliefs and practices, speaking a language unconnected to any found in Western Europe and bringing with them certain alleged characteristics of an equestrian warrior culture.

The foundation myth associated with King Stephen has elements of both inwardly and outwardly defined Christianity. Inward in that Stephen waged a violent struggle against elements of his kingdom who resisted the new faith,[7] including "Black Hungarians" (here, the term "black" references the compass direction of north and thus dark, not this tribe's physical appearance),[8] as well as members of the king's own family.[9] Christianization, in this narrative,

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Diversities and Transcultural Experiences in Early Modern European Culture, ed. Guido Abbattista (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2011), 131–45.

6   Joannes Sajnovics, […] *Demonstratio, idioma Ungarorum et Lapponum idem esse* (Trnava: Coll. Soc. 1770). The idea that Hungarians were in some way related to "mere Lapps munching on dried fish" was offensive to those who wished to preserve a connection between the Magyars and heroic ancient warrior peoples. In the process, the Slavic ancestry of Sajnovics was also denigrated. László Kontler, "Politicians, Patriots, and Plotters: Unlikely Debates Occasioned by Maximilian Hell's Venus Transit Expedition of 1769," *Journal of Astronomical Data* 19, no. 1 (2013): 84–93, here 87.

7   Nora Berend, "Violence as Identity: Christians and Muslims in Hungary in the Medieval and Early Modern Period," *Austrian History Yearbook* 44 (2013): 1–13, here 4.

8   Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat*, trans. Ann Major (London: Hurst, 2003), 31–32.

9   Zoltan J. Kosztolnyik, "The Negative Results of the Enforced Missionary Policy of King Saint Stephen of Hungary: The Uprising of 1046," *Catholic Historical Review* 59, no. 4 (1974): 569–86, here 570.

was the turning of the Hungarians toward the true faith, accompanied by the purging of those who did not convert.

This identity is outwardly defined in that the legitimacy of the Christian king's authority was endorsed by papal gifts and Latin documents (at least one of which was later found to be a forgery).[10] Stephen's importation of diocesan organization led by bishops (documented as early as 1015) and his establishment of monasteries were other ways in which systems and concepts from Western Europe shaped Christianity in Hungary.[11] Stephen's miraculously preserved right hand is the focus of a procession—Szent Jobb Körmenet—combining military and religious symbolism, still held each year.

Hungary continued as a Christian polity in the Western model for the next few centuries. Like communities across late medieval Europe, Hungarian municipalities made liberal use of Christian and royal symbolism in the construction of their heraldic devices. For example, the coat of arms of the town of Kulcs (which means "key" in Hungarian) features a key with Latin crosses on either side surmounted by a crown.

Both the inward and outward understandings of Hungarian Christian identity were reinforced by the consequences of the disastrous Battle of Mohács in 1526 in which seven Hungarian Catholic bishops and the reigning Hungarian king, Louis II (1506–26, r.1516–26), were killed.[12] Hungary's "martyrdom" as a Christian power defeated by Turkish Muslim invaders was followed by the country's tripartite division into Ottoman- and Habsburg-controlled sections, with an additional, semi-autonomous Principality of Transylvania that tolerated several "received" faiths, including Unitarianism (following an edict of 1571).[13]

The "reconquest" of Hungary by the armies of the Habsburg house of Austria starting in 1686 established Catholicism as the only fully acknowledged faith

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10   A Hungarian Jesuit, Melchior Inchofer (c.1585–1648), may have played a role in the forgery of the document forming the basis for the claim that the king of Hungary was "apostolic" and granted his title by the pope. Lewis L. Kropf. "Pope Sylvester II and Stephen I of Hungary," *English Historical Review* 13, no. 50 (1898): 290–95.

11   Tamás Nótári, "The Early Period of Lawmaking in Medieval Hungary," *West Bohemian Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (2014): 13–28, here 23.

12   David Eggenberger, *An Encyclopedia of Battles: Accounts of Over 1,560 Battles from 1479 B.C. to the Present* (New York: Dover Publications, 1985), 285.

13   Ulrich A. Wien, "New Perspective on the Establishing of Confession in Early Modern Transylvania: Context and Theological Profile of the Formula Pii Consensus 1572 as Heterodox Reception of the Wittenberg Theology," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5, no. 1 (2018): 57–74, https://doi.org/10.1515/jemc-2018-0004 (accessed September 5, 2022).

within "Royal Hungary" (e.g., excluding Transylvania),[14] a position enduring until the reforms of Joseph II (1741–90, r.1780–90). The Habsburgs, wishing to leave their own visual imprint on the land, supported the wholesale construction of Catholic churches in the baroque style, directly modeling them on churches in Austria and other parts of Western Europe.[15]

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin (also known as the University Church) in Budapest, probably designed by the Austrian Andreas Mayerhoffer (1690–1771), consecrated in 1742 and completed in 1768, is representative of these new churches.[16] Such buildings, often the largest structure for miles around, symbolized in the official narrative the "return" of Hungary to its Catholic roots but were also reminders of foreign dominance.[17] These structures also underlined the distance between the ruling power and the significant numbers of non-Catholic subjects of the Hungarian crown, who were themselves divided into various Protestant confessions, Jews, Roma (who might be affiliated with a Christian denomination, with Islam, or with none of these religious groups), and a handful of Muslims. The "Danubian baroque"[18] architecture likewise owed little, if anything, to native Hungarian Christian religious structures or symbolism.

Written materials, often produced by the presses of the Society of Jesus, also drove home the connection between an imagined outward-oriented Hungarian medieval Christian past and much newer architectural landmarks. An illustration from *Ungaricae sanctitatis indicia* (Evidence of Hungarian sanctity) by the Jesuit Gábor Hevenesi (1656–1715), published in 1737, demonstrates this clearly.[19] As a thirteenth-century German mystic (the granddaughter of a Hungarian

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14   R. J. W. [Robert John Weston] Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Central Europe c.1683–1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3–4.

15   The ultimate direction for the plans of these churches lay even farther afield, in the *Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae* (Guidance for the structure and furnishings of a church [1577]) of St. Carlo Borromeo (1538–84).

16   "Egyetemi Kisboldogasszony Templomigazgatóság," Esztergom-budapesti főegyházmegye, https://web.archive.org/web/20200920214612/https://www.esztergomi-ersekseg.hu/ple baniak/egyetemi-kisboldogasszony-templomigazgatosag/#tortenet (accessed September 5, 2022).

17   In modern times, a "Catholic" view of Hungarian history has been regarded as unduly cosmopolitan, too accepting of Habsburg dominance, and insufficiently imbued with national fervor. Thank you to the anonymous reviewer who called attention to this point.

18   Voit Pál, *A barokk Magyarországon* (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1970).

19   *Ungaricae sanctitatis indicia sive brevis quinquaginta quinque sanctorum, beatorum a venerabilium memoria iconibus expressa* (Trnava: Typ. Acad. per Berger 1737). The work was first published in 1692 and has also been attributed to István Tarnoczi (1623–89). See also the writer's forthcoming "Two Visions of a Sacred Kingdom: Samuel Timon and Gabriel Hevenesi as Expositors of Holy Hungary," in *Central European Pasts: Old and New in the*

king) contemplates an anachronistic image of the Child Jesus (probably the Infant of Prague, created in the sixteenth century in Spain), a putto hovers nearby with a model of a baroque church in Aldenburg, in the diocese of Trier, later associated with the convent in which she had lived. The historical reality of the massive exit from Catholicism to Lutheranism, Calvinism, and even Unitarianism in sixteenth-century Hungary, to say nothing of the collaboration of figures such as jurist István Werbőczy (1458–1541) with the Ottomans,[20] was overlooked in the retelling of this narrative of "Christian Hungary." Likewise, these historical facts are downplayed in the version promoted in Hungary today, in which "Christian" is understood as opposed to liberal, progressive, secular culture as well as to non-"Western" migrant cultures.

But not all Hungarians accepted this high baroque Catholic, aesthetically universalist rendering of Hungarian history and identity. Here is the flag of Transylvanian prince Francis II Rákóczi (1676–1735, r.1704–11), who was born in the Reformed (Calvinist) Church but later became Catholic, and that was used around 1705 during his rebellion against the Habsburgs.

Its red-and-white stripes reference the standard of the Árpád dynasty (of whom St. Stephen was a member), but its motto is "non-denominational" and in fact not even identifiably Christian.[21] The motto may have been based upon a phrase in Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sirach), as rendered in the Latin Vulgate, *Deus autem non relinquit misericordiam suam* (But God does not withdraw his mercy), and is thus related to Hebrew wisdom literature.

Another key symbol of medieval Hungary is the Holy Crown (*Szent Korona*). Parts date from the eleventh century and show the influence of Byzantine traditions; the cross is bent, possibly due to the lid of the iron chest housing the insignia being hastily closed without the crown having been placed in it

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Intellectual Culture of Habsburg Europe, 1700–1750, ed. Thomas Wallnig and Ines Peper, Cultures and Practices of Knowledge in History 6 (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022).

20   Martyn Rady, "Stephen Werbőczy and His Tripartitum," in *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary in Three Parts* (*1517*), ed. and trans. János M. Bak, Péter Banyó, and Martyn Rady (Budapest: Central European University, 2005), xxvii–xliv, here xxviii.

21   An example of this flag is recorded among the holdings of the Hungarian National Museum in 1870. Florian Romer, *Illustrirter Führer in der Münz- und Alterthumsabtheilung des UngarischenNational-Museums* (Pest: Druckerei des "Athaneum," 1870), 65. The motto was involved as recently as 2019 in a ceremony held in Beregszasz, a community now in Transcarpathian Ukraine with a large Hungarian population. Mondik Márta, "'Isten az igaz ügyet nem hagyja el': Átadták II. Rákóczi Ferenc lovasszobrát Beregszászban," Karpatalia.ma, December 17, 2019, https://karpatalja.ma/karpatalja/kozelet/isten-az-igaz -ugyet-nem-hagyja-el-atadtak-ii-rakoczi-ferenc-lovasszobrat-beregszaszban (accessed September 5, 2022).

FIGURE 1   Banner displayed by Francis II Rákóczi, who sought to
            be King of Hungary and was the Prince of Transylvania,
            throughout his 1703–11 conflict against the Habsburgs.
            Public Domain

properly. According to one account, the chest in which it was stored had to
be broken into in 1638 for the coronation of Ferdinand III (1608–57, r.1625–57)
(a Habsburg, and thus a non-Hungarian).[22] This retelling of the story is
itself symbolic. The cross has since been left in this slanted position and is
now typically depicted as such (see fig. 2). The Greek inscription next to
the enamel of the Hungarian king Géza I (c.1040–77, r.1074–77) on the back
of the crown reads "ΕΩΒΙΤΖΑϹ ΠΙϹΤΟϹ ΚΡΑΛΗϹ ΤΟΥΡΚΙΑϹ" (Faithful [or
believer] Geobitzas [Géza] king of Turkey [or land of the Turks]). For those
who desire to identify with the Central Asian heritage of the Magyars,[23] the
reference to Turkey is significant. However, the identification of Géza I as a
ΚΡΑΛΗϹ, a Hellenized form of the South Slavic word for "king" (cf. Croatian
kralj), itself drawn from the name Karl (e.g., Charlemagne), suggests a different

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22   Representations of the crown prior to 1618 show an upright cross. The story of the broken
      chest is found in Keisz Ágoston, "Kétbalkezes lakatosok tették tönkre a Szent Koronát,"
      Origo, April 3, 2013, https://www.origo.hu/tudomany/20130402-szent-korona-kereszt-mag
      yar-tortenelem-palffy-geza.html (accessed September 5, 2022). The title of this essay
      translates as "The Holy Crown was Spoilt by Clumsy Locksmiths," conveying both conde-
      scension and criticism of the non-Hungarians who inflicted this damage.

23   See, e.g., The ReTeller, May 19, 2015, https://thereteller.tumblr.com/post/158948254097
      /magyars-were-with-turkic-warrior-tribes-oghurs (accessed September 5, 2022). This
      view is not accepted by most scholars.

FIGURE 2 The Holy Crown of Hungary, also referred to as the Crown of Saint Stephen and known in Hungarian as Szent Korona and in Latin as Sacra Corona, was primarily used for coronations in the Kingdom of Hungary and named in honor of its first king, Stephen I. Public Domain

FIGURE 3 Coat of arms of Hungary. Public Domain

geographical orientation from what was then the lands of the Turks. In the last years of the Dual Monarchy (1867–1918), the Holy Crown appeared with the mythical pagan Turul bird soaring above it on Hungarian postage stamps.[24] This combination of pagan and Christian symbolism set the stage for later expressions of Hungarian identity.

The Holy Crown is also part of a sculpture in Heroes' Square, Budapest, a project begun in 1896 to commemorate the millennium of the entry of the Magyars into the Danube Basin.[25] The figure portrayed is Archangel Gabriel, holding aloft the Cross of Lorraine (sometimes called the "Patriarchal Cross" and also used by

24 The word "Turul" is of Turkic origin, the Turkic form being *toġrïl*. Árpád Berta and András Róna-Tas, "Old Turkish Loan Words in Hungarian: Overview and Samples," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 55, no. 1/3 (2002): 43–67, here 44.

25 The 1896 celebrations can best be understood in the context of the Europe-wide elevation of national heroes (perhaps fostered by Thomas Carlyle's [1795–1881] writings) and the ideas of "backward-looking prophets" (*rückwärts gekehrter Propheten*, a phrase coined by Friedrich Schlegel [1772–1829]) who sought to discover the national community in the remote past. Bálint Varga, *The Monumental Nation: Magyar Nationalism and Symbolic Politics in Fin-de-siècle Hungary* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 21.

modern-day Slovakia).[26] The top beam represents the plaque bearing the Latin inscription "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews." Gabriel stands on a Corinthian column, suggesting a connection to imperial or papal Rome.

The coat of arms Hungary has used since 1990 can be seen in figure 3. Note the combination of the Holy Crown, the Patriarchal Cross, and the Árpádian stripes. The threefold mountain the cross stands on was added in the late Middle Ages. Here, the crown, to which supernatural powers were attributed for centuries, conveys the sense of being damaged (if one accepts the above-mentioned story, in the process of crowning a foreigner as king) but surviving, with metaphorical significance for Hungarian nationalists and irredentists. Other countries near Hungary that are not monarchies and do not have an "official" religion also use the blending of royal and Christian symbolism. These countries include Serbia and Russia.

This extended historical survey has been necessary both because of the prominent place some of these events hold in school history curricula in Hungary and because, put together, they form a narrative that explains the place of Hungary in the world to many Hungarians. While retaining pre-Christian symbols and themes, that place is implicitly among the historically "Christian nations."

Let us turn now to the twentieth century. Béla Kun (1886–1938), whose Bolshevik government held power for a few months in 1919, introduced severe anti-religious measures: Catholic teaching orders were suppressed, church services violently broken up, and so forth.[27] Although Kun's government sought to defend Hungary from the encroachments of its neighbors, even invading the territory of the new state of Czechoslovakia, this episode is ignored or portrayed negatively in most narratives of Hungarian nationalists.

As Hungarians of the modern right have not forgotten, many of the leaders of the 1919 revolution were Jewish. Among these were Kun, Jenő Landler (1875–1928) (commander of the Hungarian Red Army), György Lukács (1885–1971) (people's commissar for education and culture), Tibor Szamuely (1890–1919)

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26   The connection between the Patriarchal Cross and the Kingdom of Hungary stretches back at least to the late twelfth century, when Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelos (1156–1204, r.1185–95, 1203–4) presented a reliquary in this shape to either the king of Hungary or the archbishop of Esztergom. Alicia Simpson, "Byzantium and Hungary in the Late Twelfth Century and on the Eve of the Fourth Crusade: Personal Ties and Spheres of Influence," in *Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality (11th–15th c.)*, ed. Nikolaos Chrissis, Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki, and Angeliki Papageorgiou (London: Routledge, 2019), 192–205, here 199–200.

27   Istvan Deak, "Budapest and the Hungarian Revolutions of 1918–1919," *Slavonic and East European Review* 46, no. 106 (1968): 129–40.

(people's commissar of public education), and Mátyás Rákosi (1892–1971) (later communist leader of postwar Hungary).[28] The long-standing anti-Semitism in Hungarian history is not articulated explicitly in current Christian symbolism, but the bearers of these symbols not infrequently hold anti-Semitic views. A noted historian of Hungary observes: "Throughout the period between the two world wars, [religious and secular leaders] debated whether Christianity marked a religious, cultural or racial identity."[29] A common thread in this debate was anti-Semitism.

The period immediately before the Second World War saw Hungary, relatively isolated and greatly reduced in size and population, reaching out for recognition from the international community. A "kingdom without a king," the country veered toward right-wing dictatorship with close relations between the Catholic Church and state under Miklós Horthy (1868–1957, in office 1920–44), whose regime had followed that of Kun. The Eucharistic Congress of 1938, held at the same time as commemorations of the nine-hundredth anniversary of the death of King Stephen (now the patron saint of Hungary),[30] employed religious and national symbols such as banners displayed on the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest. The symbol appearing on these banners was essentially the one re-adopted in 1990.

Hungarian Christian identity in both this period and in recent years should be distinguished from Belgian Rexism and Spanish Falangism in Older Europe, which are exclusively Catholic and place no emphasis on connection to a land conquered by ancestors of the current inhabitants. Nor are the symbols of "Christian Hungary" explicitly royalist in a political sense, despite the prominence of the Holy Crown among them. Rather, the crown is part of a narrative articulating Hungary's special role as a kingdom ruled by the Virgin Mary (*Regnum Marianum*) and possessing a special continuity.[31] Already in

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28   William O. McCagg Jr., "Jews in Revolutions: The Hungarian Experience," *Journal of Social History* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1972): 78–105. Often forgotten is the fact that many prominent political figures of pre-1918 Habsburg Hungary were also Jewish.

29   Paul Hanebrink, *In Defense of Christian Hungary: Religion, Nationalism, and Antisemitism 1890–1944* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

30   The overall tone of these events was Catholic, but a recent writer has asserted that non-Catholics, including "Israelites" (*sic*), were able to participate by making the St. Stephen commemorations a national event. Éva Teiszler, "Lasting Works of the St. Stephen Memorial Year," in *The Hungarian World 1938–1940*, ed. Szilvia Rási and Tamás Vizi (Budapest: Institute for Hungarian Studies, 2021), 241–48, here 242–43.

31   Katalin Sinkó, "Arpad versus Saint Istvan: Competing Heroes and Competing Interests in the Figurative Representation of Hungarian History," *Ethnologia europaea* 19 (1989): 67–84.

FIGURE 4   The emblem of the Hungarian National Socialist
Workers Party. Public Domain

the years leading up to the Second World War, national and Christian symbols had become fused in the symbol of the Hungarian National Socialist Workers' Party, transformed following its prohibition in 1933. Note again the mythical Turul bird, now armed with a sword (see fig. 4).[32]

The Arrow Cross Party was in power from October 1944 until March 1945, when Hungary functioned as a virtual client state of the Third Reich. Its flag references the standard of the Árpáds while introducing a cruciform symbol that echoes the Nazi swastika.[33] A similar symbol is seen on tattoos today (see fig. 5).[34]

The official coat of arms of Hungary during the regime of the Arrow Cross Party thus combined old and new symbolism, with the introduction of the initial H, referencing the Latin name of the country, "Hungaria" (see fig. 6).

While not always easily visible, the conflation of nationalist and Christian ideas and symbols continued after the Second World War and rapidly gained prominence after 1989 when it began to penetrate national politics. The recognition of uniquely Christian Hungarian identity was formalized on June 20, 2018, when a seventh amendment was adopted to Hungary's Fundamental Law of 2011 stating that "the protection of Hungary's self-identity and its Christian culture is the duty of all state organizations."[35]

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32   From Szabolcs KissPál, "The Rise of a Fallen Feather: The Symbolism of the Turul Bird in Contemporary Hungary," e-flux Journal 56 (June 2014), https://www.e-flux.com/jour nal/56/60354/the-rise-of-a-fallen-feather-the-symbolism-of-the-turul-bird-in-contempo rary-hungary (accessed September 5, 2022).

33   Áron Szele, "The Arrow Cross: The Ideology of Hungarian Fascism; A Conceptual Approach" (Ph.D. diss., Central European University, 2015).

34   KissPál, "Rise of a Fallen Feather."

35   Cited in Gábor Halmai, "The Role of Religion in the Illiberal Hungarian Constitutional System," in Brave New Hungary: Mapping the "System of National Cooperation", ed. János

FIGURE 5
Tattoo featuring the Turul bird alongside an arrow cross, an emblem associated with the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party from 1939–45, which had ties to the Nazis. Source: tattoomary.deviantart.com

FIGURE 6
Coat of arms of Hungary (1945). Public Domain

History and religious identity have also been intertwined in public gestures made by the current prime minister. In September 2021, Orbán presented the pope with a copy of a 1243 letter from King Béla IV (1206–70, r.1235–70) beseeching Pope Innocent IV (1195–1254, r.1243–54) for help in resisting the Mongol invasion of Europe and complaining of a lack of solidarity from other European Christian monarchs.[36] Balázs Orbán, deputy minister for the prime minister's office, wrote on Facebook: "There are many similarities between the situation at that time and today […]."[37]

Mátyás Kovács and Balázs Trencsényi (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020), 99–110, here 100.

36   Béla's "Tatar letter" is best understood in the context of rapprochement among the Polish, Hungarian, and Halych–Volhynian territories following Tatar incursions. Márta Font, "Prince Rostislav in the Court of Béla IV," *Russian History* 44, no. 4 (2017): 486–504, here 488.

37   Quoted in Shay Cullen, "The World Accepts and Rejects Migrants and Refugees," Columban Missionaries Britain, September 22, 2021, https://columbans.co.uk/reflection/8286 /the-world-rejects-and-accepts-migrants-and-refugees (accessed September 5, 2022).

The conflating of the armed invasion to which Béla IV alluded with the flood of refugees escaping war and privation then appearing on Hungary's borders is a remarkably cynical act, but more than that it demonstrates a perversion of fundamental Christian values (e.g., to care for the poor and vulnerable). It also placed Hungary in opposition to many Western European nations such as Germany, which as largely secular states were fulfilling their "Christian" duty with greater fidelity than was "Christian Hungary."

The prime minister's gesture was in large degree intended for home consumption, but the critique of Western European values implied in the original document was also a challenge to France and to members of the European Union that have criticized Hungary's anti-immigrant policies. With such public acts, the Christian identity of contemporary Hungary symbolized in the reuse of historical documents, is set against outsiders, who are distinguished from Hungarians as much by their ethnicity as by their religious heritage.

Irredentism is linked to the historical legend of "Great Hungary" in which a medieval kingdom the size of France confronted invaders from the east. The reduction of this kingdom through the Treaty of Trianon (1920) is reinterpreted as ingratitude and even perfidy on the part of the Christian nations that Hungary had protected.[38] Irredentism and Christian symbolism are commonly intertwined in Hungarian consumer products. A map of pre-Trianon (i.e., pre-1920) Hungary[39] combined with the Patriarchal Cross can be purchased as a belt buckle, a pin, or as an image on a flask or hoodie.

After the Second World War, communist symbols of national identity emphasized details shared with Soviet heraldry and, in the words of one commentator, were "without any grounding in Hungarian tradition or history."[40]

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38   As early as 1938, Louis Kossuth Birinyi (1886–1941) wrote in an attack on the Trianon settlement: "Why is world Christianity reverting to paganism?" Louis Kossuth Birinyi, *Why the Treaty of Trianon Is Void* (Grand Rapids, MI: Simmons, 1938), 1. To underscore the connection between Hungarian irredentism and Christianity, the book's cover shows a map of pre-Trianon Hungary nailed to a cross and surmounted with a crown of thorns, with post-Trianon Hungary outlined within the larger territory.

39   The Treaty of Trianon, signed June 4, 1920, reduced the area of Hungary by more than seventy percent and its population by more than sixty-five percent. Large ethnic Hungarian populations were now citizens of Hungary's neighbors. Trianon was—and still is—regarded as a gross injustice by many Hungarians, and displaying an outline or fully detailed map of pre-Trianon Hungary is a common expression of irredentism. "Pre Trianon Map," Hungarian Store, September 9, 2021, https://thehungarianstore.com /?attachment_id=10634 (accessed September 5, 2022).

40   Ajtony Virágh, "The 1956 Revolution's Symbols: The Hole with the Flag in the Center," Freedom First, n.d., https://www.freedomfirst1956.com/the-1956-revolutions-symbol-the -hole-with-a-flag-in-the-center (accessed September 5, 2022).

These symbols have totally vanished from contemporary national presentations. Instead, modern nationalists may employ simultaneously the idea of "two Hungarys": the Western (Christian) and the Eastern (Asian) pagan, tribal one.[41]

Hungary's conflicted relationship with an imagined Central Asia, as potentially suggested by the inscription on the Holy Crown referencing "Turkey," is likewise expressed through "Hungarian Native Faith," which draws on quasi-scientific views of the origins of the Magyars and the relation of their language to those of other groups—overlooking the fact that shared language heritage is not necessarily the same as biological continuity. This movement (in Hungarian: Ősmagyar vallás) overlaps with neopaganism and is not generally sympathetic to traditional Christianity, although it makes use of a form of the Patriarchal Cross, calling it the "Tree of Life." Simultaneously, the alleged connection proposed by some between the modern-day Magyars and the Hebrews[42] of the Old Testament is an indirect link between Hungarian nativist religion and elements of traditional Christianity. These ideas are taken even further with the claims of what Ádám Kolozsi calls the "Pap-Szántai circle," who imagine an ancient, monotheistic religious culture shared by Huns, Scythians, and Avars, with a syncretistic belief system that reverenced manifestations of Jesus and the "Blessed Lady" (Boldogasszony).[43] Notions of the "noble savage" and claims of the inherent moral superiority of indigenous religion create another tension point in Hungarian nationalist politics when contrasted with

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41   Hungarian Nobel laureate in literature Imre Kertész (1929–2016) sees this as a profound difficulty, remarking, "Je me demande si ce pays a fait un choix entre Asie et Occident [...]. Tous les Hongrois ont donc en tête ce double jeu d'appartenance. Cette contradiction aussi. Car les normes d'une société chrétienne sont différentes de celles d'une société clanique" (I wonder if this country has ever made a choice between Asia and the West [...]. All Hungarians therefore have in their mind this double game of belonging. This is moreover a contradiction, since the norms of a Christian society are different from those of a clan society); "La Hongrie est une fatalité," *Le monde*, February 9, 2021; https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2012/02/09/imre-kertesz-la-hongrie-est-une-fatalite_1640790_3260.html (accessed September 5, 2022).

42   A linguistic connection was proposed as early as the sixteenth century by János Sylvester (1504–52). Graeme Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier, 1600–1660: International Calvinism and the Reformed Church in Hungary and Transylvania* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 264.

43   Ádám Kolozsi, "Social Construction of the Native Faith: Mytho-historical Narratives and Identity-Discourse in Hungarian Neo-paganism" (MA thesis, Central European University, 2012), 79–80.

pan-Christian exceptionalism.[44] The "corrupt West" and Orthodox Christianity can likewise be contrasted to the "purity" of indigenous religion.

A contributing factor to the sense of difference that has fostered Hungarian nativism is the country's linguistic isolation, which has long affected relations with Western Europe. Historically, this isolation has slowed the communication of ideas from Western Europe to a wider Hungarian audience, and vice versa. While the advent of the Internet has significantly reduced this impediment, Hungary retains some vestiges of this isolation: some ultranationalist websites are posted only in Hungarian.

Four unique or significant aspects can be identified in the resulting Christian nativism. First, the use of Christian symbols by Hungarian nativists does not translate into the cultivation of political alliances with Christian states (however defined). The term "Christian" is even applied in Hungarian political discourse with resentment, implying the failure of once Christian European polities (for which Hungarians had sacrificed) to preserve their religious heritage. The current Hungarian government has sought closer ties with Muslim governments in Central Asia (notably Azerbaijan).[45] Also, Hungary is the only Visegrád state not to acknowledge the 1915 Armenian genocide.[46] Turkey is by no means a historic ally of Hungary, nor does it share close linguistic ties, but the two nations may both be regarded as "European outsiders" with ties to Asia.

Second, recent history is less important in the development of the current symbols of Christian Hungary than are earlier periods: for example, during Soviet domination, Hungarian churches did not play the role that the Catholic Church did in Poland as a rallying point for opposition to the communist regime. In fact, the communist government saw to it that bishops compliant with the regime's program were appointed. Thus there is no leader in the history of Hungarian Christianity under communism comparable to Karol Wojtyła (1920–2005) (Pope John Paul II [r.1978–2005]), although Bishop Vilmos Apor (1892–1945) fits into the "Christian martyr" model exemplified by one retelling

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44   A hint of this pan-Christian sentiment is found in the proposed (but subsequently cancelled) "Memorial Mass" for Miklós Horthy, Hungary's regent between 1920 and 1944, and his niece Ilona Edelsheim-Gyulai (1918–2013). Horthy was a member of the Reformed Church, which historically was an arch-opponent of Catholicism in Hungary. "'Memorial Mass' for Miklós Horthy Cancelled," Hungarian Spectrum, January 26, 2018, https://hungarianspectrum.org/2018/01/26/memorial-mass-for-miklos-horthy-cancelled (accessed September 5, 2022).

45   "Azerbaijan–Hungary Relations," http://mfa.gov.az/files/file/Azerbaijan_-_Hungary_relations_26.09.2014.pdf (accessed April 27, 2022).

46   In 2012, Armenia suspended diplomatic relations with Hungary. "Bilateral Relations," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, n.d., https://www.mfa.am/en/bilateral-relations/hu (accessed September 5, 2022).

of the Battle of Mohács, in which Hungarian nobility and high-ranking clergy died trying to protect Christian Europe from Muslim, Asiatic invaders.[47] In addition, the Hungarian Calvinist Church prided itself on being composed almost exclusively of ethnic Magyars.[48]

Lastly, a "pan-Christian" approach is also necessary to include such Lutheran Hungarian patriots as Lajos Kossuth (1802–94) and Thököly in the narrative of national heroes. Notably, both were renowned as opponents of the Catholic Habsburgs. Both fled Hungary: Kossuth to exile in Britain and Italy, and Thököly to Ottoman territory.

A review of some of the symbols employed to articulate a Christian identity reminds us that the non- or even anti-democratic tone of foundational Christian documents cannot be ignored.[49] The distortion of Gospel teachings is moreover shared by many "Christian" movements worldwide: in this regard, Hungary is not unique. At the same time, the authoritarian sympathies of some who wear these Christian symbols are compatible with the ideologies and histories of many Christian churches, among the most infamous of which is the German Christian Church of the Nazi era.[50]

In Hungary, there is a marked divergence between documented church attendance and religious identification. In such a context, symbolism becomes more important, since other indicators of religious identification may be lacking. Many more Hungarians claim a Christian identity than are regular churchgoers.[51] For many Hungarians not actively engaged with Christian

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47 Apor was shot and killed by Soviet soldiers while protecting women sheltering in his residence. In 1997 John Paul II led the ceremony beatifying Apor. "Beato Guglielmo Apor vescovo e martire," Santi Beati, n.d., http://www.santiebeati.it/dettaglio/91367 (accessed September 5, 2022).

48 Hanebrink, *Defense of Christian Hungary*, 9. In 2011, adherents of the Reformed (Calvinist) Church were most numerous in northeastern and eastern Hungary. "Distribution of Religions and Irreligion in Hungary, 2011 Census," Wikiwand, https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Religion_in_Hungary (accessed September 5, 2022).

49 For example, Romans 13:1–2: "Everyone is to obey the governing authorities, because there is no authority except from God and so whatever authorities exist have been appointed by God. 2. So anyone who disobeys an authority is rebelling against God's ordinance; and rebels must expect to receive the condemnation they deserve." New Jerusalem Bible, Romans, 13, Bíblia Católica Online, https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/romans/13 (accessed September 5, 2022). Many other Christian writers have of course found in Christian teachings the grounds for resisting worldly authority.

50 Samuel Koehne, "Nazi Germany as a Christian State: The 'Protestant Experience' of 1933 in Württemberg," *Central European History* 46 (2013): 96–123.

51 Church attendance in Hungary is probably between twelve and twenty-two percent, while over half of the population identifies as Christian. Noah Buyon, "Religion in Hungary," Georgetown University Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs,

institutions, Christianity is less a set of beliefs, rituals, and doctrines than a heritage setting them apart from recent cultural trends (including the acceptance of LGBTQ+ rights) and from groups such as Muslims seen as undesirable, alien, or dangerous.[52]

Yet the relationship of a Hungarian Christian identity to Islam is not as simple as outright rejection. First, since anti-Semitism has long been a feature of much of Hungarian nativist nationalist rhetoric, the opposition of many Muslim states to Israel can be a point of agreement. Moreover, Islam formerly offered a model of gender roles and a fusion of religion and state for some in the far-right party Jobbik.[53] More recently, however, Hungarian anti-Muslim polemic has borrowed from "Western European far-right discourse in which Islam [is] framed in the context of a cultural war between the Christian West and the Muslim world."[54] The reliance of Hungarian Christian polemic on representational art (e.g., of the Turul, Holy Crown, the Archangel Gabriel) creates an additional gulf separating Christian nationalism from the symbolic expression of religious identity in many Muslim societies.

As Hungary's historically Christian identity has gained prominence, the country's indictment of Western Europe's faltering commitment to Christianity is framed in terms of Hungary's own "Christian identity." As Orbán put it on September 16, 2017: "We want a Hungarian Hungary and a European Europe. This is only possible if we also affirm that we want a Christian Hungary in a Christian Europe."[55] Public statements such as these are primarily for a domestic audience and are echoed by statements from Hungarian Christian leaders.[56] However, these pronouncements also provide a platform for public

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May 3, 2016, https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/religion-in-hungary (accessed September 5, 2022).

52   Josip Kešić and Jan Willem Duyvendak describe a similar phenomenon in the Netherlands as "cultural Christianity." Josip Kešić and Jan Willem Duyvendak, "The Nation under Threat: Secularist, Racial, and Populist Nativism in the Netherlands," *Patterns of Prejudice* 53, no. 5 (2019): 441–63, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0031322X.2019.1656886?scroll=top&needAccess=true (accessed September 5, 2022). Theological unity, and the formerly important elements of confessional identity, are largely lacking here.

53   The party flag of Jobbik for many years featured the Patriarchal Cross, but one might also discern in it a red crescent.

54   Péter Krekó, Bulcsú Hunyadi, and Patrik Szicherle, "Anti-Muslim Populism in Hungary: From the Margins to the Mainstream," Brookings, July 24, 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/research/anti-muslim-populism-in-hungary-from-the-margins-to-the-mainstream (accessed September 5, 2022).

55   Personal website of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, https://primeminister.hu (accessed September 5, 2022).

56   For example, László Kiss-Rigó, the Catholic bishop of Szeged, who in 2019 stated: "Europe can ignore or deny or struggle against its own identity and its Christian roots. But by

critiques of Western European cultures (especially France), which are remembered for their role in Trianon. That France has long been identified with the rationalist Enlightenment, as well as shifts in governmental support of personal morality,[57] and ultimately with the red flag of communism, only adds strength to this critique.

A brief comparison can be made here with another identity movement: North American pan-Indianism. Both movements possess a perception of historic injustice and a fusion of different spiritual traditions. Symbolic language reflects this fusion. Theologian Paul Tillich (1886–1965) asserts that symbols are neither arbitrary nor created intentionally; no one person can create a symbol or determine its meaning by themselves.[58] Rather, symbols grow out of the collective unconscious, something akin to what Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) called the *Zeitgeist*. Driving the power of these symbols in both Hungarian and North American contexts is a belief in an uncorrupted and holy ("sacred") past. This idea goes far beyond Hesiod's (*fl. c.*750 and 650 BCE) "Golden Age" in that its principle identifying feature is virtue, and that this virtue is presented as a link between life in the sacred past and (perhaps latent) characteristics of the modern-day population claiming descent from the earlier people.

Conclusion

Hungary's engagement with symbols of Christianity, both traditional ones and those of more recent origin, is multifaceted. Tension persists between the need to separate Hungary and "true" Hungarians from other populations, echoed in Hungary's linguistic isolation from and quarrels with its neighbors, as well as its role on the losing side in two world wars, and the desire to identify with a major strand of Western (conceived of as potentially broader than merely Western European) "Christian civilization." Yet this civilization, as envisioned by many Hungarians, is very much at odds with contemporary Christian democratic movements of Western Europe, which have been supporters of European

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doing so the society commits suicide." Shaun Walker, "Orbán Deploys Christianity with a Twist to Tighten Grip in Hungary," *Guardian*, July 14, 2019; https://www.theguardian.com /world/2019/jul/14/viktor-orban-budapest-hungary-christianity-with-a-twist (accessed September 5, 2022).

57   For example, the law of September 20, 1792, which legalized divorce.

58   James B. Ashbrook, ed., *Paul Tillich in Conversation* (Bristol, IN: Wyndham Hall Press, 1988), 102.

integration and pluralism.[59] The result of this tension is a combining of religious and quasi-religious symbols in which the separatist element is more prominent yet not entirely dominant. The universalist aspects of Christian symbolism are less emphasized, although many symbols can be described as "pan-Christian." Yet this "pan-Christian" tendency largely avoids reference to Eastern Christianity—with the exception of the Cross of Lorraine (which may not be understood by many Hungarians as part of Orthodox symbolism). The symbolic expression of Hungary's claimed Christian identity, like that of some other Christian nationalist movements, is largely bereft of aspects of Christian teachings emphasizing humility, self-denial, divine grace, or admission of sin.[60] The person of Christ is also conspicuous through his absence, as is any reference to a benevolent, all-embracing God or the Holy Spirit.

While it is easy to dismiss these omissions as manipulations by cynical political leadership, they point to something much deeper. Christian identity in Hungary can function as a default position of security for a population often feeling excluded and powerless in a more rapidly changing world than the one it had inhabited before the fall of communism in 1989. These feelings can manifest themselves in a "passive individualism" that does not foster a strong independent civil society. This attitude finds its expression in the symbols of identity we have just encountered, which, it must be acknowledged, may not mean the same things to all who use them.[61] To these feelings is added a sense of injustice imposed on the nation by great powers, which heightened after the forced dismemberment of "Great Hungary" after 1918 but can in fact be traced back as far as memories of Ottoman occupation before 1686.

One response to perceived injustice is to develop solidarity with those with whom one shares this perception. In the case of Hungary, the symbols associated with the pre-1989 communist government are overwhelmingly discredited, although they too were intended to foster a sense of solidarity and identity, albeit based on different grounds. One visible outcome of this

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59   Jan-Werner Mueller, "False Advertising: Christian Democracy or Illiberal Democracy?," Balkan Insight, February 3, 2020, https://balkaninsight.com/2020/02/03/false-adverti sing-christian-democracy-or-illiberal-democracy (accessed September 5, 2022).

60   The tensions between the positions of many claiming a Christian identity for Hungary and traditional Christian teachings are discussed in Geraldine Fagan, "Political Christianity in Orbán's Hungary," *East West Church Review*, April 3, 2018, https://budapest beacon.com/political-christianity-in-orbans-hungary (accessed April 29, 2022).

61   András Bozóki and Eszter Simon, "Hungary since 1989," in *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 204–32, here 227.

rejection of earlier symbols of solidarity is the appearance in public settings of recreations of the pre-1989 Hungarian flag with a hole in the middle, the communist symbols having been removed, as they were briefly during the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. The present employment of a range of symbols from Hungary's historic and mystical history illustrates the enduring hold of solidarity rooted in a shared historical narrative, achieved through the visual, and enhanced through social media.

The greater significance of the use of such symbols in Hungary is found in the way they can help define the essence of "Hungarianness" in a state where considerable pressure exists to conform to an ethnic Hungarian ideal (e.g., perhaps seven percent of the population are believed to be Roma, but only about two percent identified themselves as such in 2001).[62] Yet Christian identity has not emerged as the sole marker of being Hungarian: a majority of Hungarians in a recent poll also recognize atheists as "real Hungarians."[63]

The inwardly defined symbols of Hungary's religious identity, both Christian and pagan, express a rejection of globalization and standardization.[64] The outwardly defined ones reflect a desire for acceptance while simultaneously revealing a willingness to judge other historically Christian cultures critically, not only for their policies (and, implicitly, for their military victories over Hungary) but for what they have allegedly become in recent years. The Hungarian government has participated in this critique by producing a video placed on—and later banned by—Facebook claiming that "white Christians" are no longer found in parts of Vienna.[65]

These symbols also tap into a deep-seated attraction in a modern European state for the exotic, the idealized, the exclusive, and the historically remote, a

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62   "The number of those identifying themselves Gypsy varies hectically from census to census and this results in a distrust regarding the related census data." János Pénzes et al., "The Roma Population in Hungary: Spatial Distribution and Its Temporal Changes," *DETUROPE: The Central European Journal of Regional Development and Tourism* 11, no. 3 (2019): 138–59, here 140.

63   In 2018, fifty-two percent of respondents stated that an atheist could be a "real Hungarian." D. Clark, "Perceptions on Religious Identity and Being Hungarian in 2018," Statistica, December 20, 2021, https://www.statista.com/statistics/900326/religious-identity-and-being-hungarian (accessed September 5, 2022).

64   This rejection, articulated in religious terms, is documented in other cultures affected by globalization. See Hakan Yılmaz, "Conservatism in Turkey," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2008): 57–63, here 60.

65   Lili Bayer, "Facebook Removes Hungarian Government Video about 'White Christians,'" Politico, March 7, 2018, https://www.politico.eu/article/white-christians-hungary-facebook-removent-government-video (accessed September 5, 2022).

tendency that is by no means uniquely Hungarian but is found in many cultures today and is perhaps more apparent in the "younger Europe." The Hungarian case is notable in that it sometimes draws on the symbols of a religion that has, at least in principle since its beginnings, rejected exclusivity and claims relevance in today's cultures.

I close this essay with the first St. Stephen's Day parade in Budapest on August 20, 2021: a statue of the first Christian king is surrounded by a giant Turul and representations of pagan shamans, something that would have no doubt pained that monarch.[66] What directions this constructed narrative of Hungary's religious past and present may take next, and how these developments relate to those occurring in its "younger European" neighbors, only time will tell.

Acknowledgements

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66   Támas Vaski, "August 20 Parade Features Huge Turul and Golden St Stephen Statue: PHOTOS!," Hungary Today, August 20, 2021, https://hungarytoday.hu/august-20-st-step hens-parade-photos (accessed September 5, 2022).

Younger, but How?: Heterochrony of Premodern European Divisions in the Discourse on Central/East-Central Europe

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Abstract

This essay centers on the notion of Central (or East-Central) Europe as developed by Polish, Czech, and Hungarian intellectuals during the Cold War. The author seeks to trace the temporal rather than spatial dimensions of the region's characterization as conveyed in their most significant publications, particularly those referencing the early modern period. Through the examination of different macro-historical concepts often applied to Central and Eastern Europe, the author aims to discern if works produced within this discourse—developed by the region's historians and thinkers from the 1950s to the 1980s—can be interpreted in the context of temporal divisions of the continent, rather than spatial ones. He explains the diachronic specificity of East-Central Europe's evolution in historiography during the medieval and early modern periods. The author investigates what critical dates or periods are selected and contemplates the potential utility of "allochronism" and "heterochrony" notions for future analysis.

Keywords

Younger Europe – Central Europe – East/West divisions – temporal differences – allochronism – heterochrony – Jerzy Kłoczowski – Oskar Halecki – Jenő Szűcs – Milan Kundera

1 Introduction

The topic of the series of which this book is the opening volume refers to the idea of "the younger Europe," introduced to the historiographic discourse by Polish historian Jerzy Kłoczowski (1924–2017). Although Kłoczowski equated the "younger Europe" with what is today conventionally called

Central/East-Central Europe,[1] he defined the notion by reference to factors other than the merely spatial determinants customarily used to divide Europe into regions. According to Kłoczowski, "the younger Europe" consists of "historical areas related to Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary, three monarchies formed in the tenth–twelfth centuries," completed by "areas and peoples whose fates were extremely strongly intertwined over many centuries with the history of Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians." Among these "areas and peoples," he lists a number of territories and polities, such as Slovakia, Silesia, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, thus indicating a period in which they were related to the history of the three previously mentioned nations. For example, he observes that Silesia formed "from the end of the tenth century a district of Piast in Poland, [and] in the fourteenth–eighteenth centuries it was an integral part of the Czech kingdom."[2] Using temporal criteria to draw the region's boundaries is characteristic of Kłoczowski's definition, which is more about "historical areas" and is strongly related to transformations that happened over time. At first glance, this conclusion should not be surprising, especially for a historian.

Nevertheless, spatial notions such as "Mediterranean," "West," and especially "Eastern" and "Western" Europe" are usually accepted as frames for interpreting European history, regardless of the period to which they refer. As a consequence, the East–West divide of the continent, when related to early modern times, is indeed an "anachronistic construct" as indicated in the introductory note to the present book series.[3] Taking a cue from Kłoczowski's concept, my attention is redirected to the idea of Central (or East-Central) Europe[4] as developed by Polish, Czech, and Hungarian intellectuals in the Cold War, who shared the view that their homelands constitute a separate entity within the

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1 Jerzy Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa: Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w kręgu cywilizacji chrześcijańskiej średniowiecza* [Younger Europe: Central and Eastern Europe in the circle of medieval Christian civilization] (Warsaw: PIW, 1998), 11. Translations of quotations from this book into English are mine.

2 Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa*, 11–12.

3 https://brill.com/display/serial/RPYES (accessed September 3, 2023).

4 For an introduction to the topic, see in particular Balázs Trenscényi, "Central Europe," in *European Regions and Boundaries: A Conceptual History*, ed. Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trenscényi (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 166–87; and, mostly focused on literary aspects, Simona Škrabec, *L'atzar de la lluita: El concepte de Europa Central al segle XX* [The fate of the struggle: The concept of Central Europe in the twentieth century] (Catarroja: Afers, 2005). Since the authors of the works analyzed in this essay used the term of Central Europe (Milan Kundera) or East-Central Europe (Oskar Halecki, Jenő Szűcs) when referring to the region, I opted to use both terms throughout unless it is related to a specific use by one of the authors.

Eastern Bloc in terms of their culture and socio-political structures. Bearing in mind the anachronistic character of the East–West divide, I found it interesting to retrace the diachronic rather than spatial dimension of the region's definition in their most important publications, in particular when referring to the early modern period. This is the rationale behind the present contribution, which focuses on three texts:[5] Oskar Halecki's (1891–1973) *The Limits and Divisions of European History* (1950),[6] Jenő Szűcs's (1928–88) *Three Europes* (1981),[7] and Milan Kundera's (1929–2023) "The Tragedy of Central Europe" (1984).[8]

The texts analyzed in this essay share some similarities despite their obvious differences. The book by Halecki is the oldest, published in 1950, while the other two were created in the 1980s. Halecki's and Szűcs's works are attempts to describe Europe's divisions through the use of historical methodology, in contrast to Kundera's literary essay, which is much looser in form and characterized by the emancipatory agenda of a member of an enslaved nation. Nevertheless, all were produced in the context of the Cold War, with its division of Europe into two opposing political blocs, leaving no room for other hybrid spatial identities. Each of the essays, therefore, stimulated discussion on the separate identity of the area they focused on, paving the way to a discourse on the reintegration of Central/ East-Central European countries into Western political structures after the broader geopolitical changes of the 1990s. The three texts also tried to challenge established conceptualizations of Europe,

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5   Apart from these three authors, a Polish poet and Nobel Prize-winner Czesław Miłosz (1911–2004) should also be mentioned among those intellectuals who significantly contributed to the debate on Central/ East-Central European identity, developed during the Cold War period. See, e.g., his *Native Realm: A Search for Self-definition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), original ed.: Czesław Miłosz, *Rodzinna Europa* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1959).

6   Oskar Halecki, *The Limits and Divisions of European History* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1950).

7   Jenő Szűcs, "The Three Historical Regions of Europe: An Outline," in *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, ed. John Keane (London: Verso, 1988), 291–332. The English version of the text is only an abridged one; the full essay, published in Hungarian both in a journal (Jenő Szűcs, "Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról" [Outline of the three historical regions of Europe], *Történelmi Szemle* 24, no. 3 [1981]: 313–59) and as a book (Jenő Szűcs, *Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról* [Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1983]), is known in some other language versions under the title "Three Europes," taken from its early French translation: Jenő Szűcs, *Les trois Europes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985). This translation was also the main source of some other language versions of Szűcs's book, including the Polish one: Jenő Szűcs, *Trzy Europy* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 1995).

8   Milan Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," *New York Review of Books* 31, no. 7 (1984): 2, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1984/04/26/the-tragedy-of-central-europe (accessed June 8, 2022). Throughout this essay, Kundera's text is referred to with references to its numbered paragraphs, not pages. The article was originally written in French: "Un Occident kidnappé ou la tragédie de l'Europe Centrale" [A kidnapped West or the tragedy of Central Europe], *Le débat* 27, no. 5 (1983): 3–23.

developed especially in the sphere of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German and French historical culture, which essentially limited the European community to countries formed in the area of what was once the empire of Charlemagne (747–814, r.800–14).[9] Finally, all of them focus on Poland, Czechia, and Hungary, or rather on areas covered by the polities whose successors these modern countries consider themselves to be, that is, on countries defined as the core of Kłoczowski's "younger Europe."

2 East–West Divide

First, however, a few words should be dedicated to the divisions of Europe against which these authors developed their concepts. The continent's East–West divide is most deeply rooted in the present-day humanities, regardless of the criteria adopted to explain the differences between these two parts of Europe. Among these criteria, an important place is occupied by the social and economic factors that led to the creation of diverging patterns of development in the early modern period both east and west of the Elbe. This theory of dual economic division, present in the works of eminent Polish historians in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Marian Małowist [1909–88] and Witold Kula [1916–88]),[10] was reflected in publications by Immanuel Wallerstein (1930–2019) and Fernand Braudel (1902–85), thus establishing the standards for the

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9   An emblematic example of such a conceptualization is the well-known work by Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1909 [1824]).

10   Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System: Towards a Model of the Polish Economy, 1500–1800* (London: NLB and Humanities Press, 1976), published in Polish in 1962; Marian Małowist, *Wschód a Zachód Europy w XIII–XVI w.: Konfrontacja struktur społeczno-gospodarczych* [East and West Europe in the thirteenth–sixteenth centuries: Confrontation of socio-economic structures] (Warsaw: PWN, 1973). See also Jean Batou and Henryk Szlajfer, eds., *Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and World Development: 13th–18th Centuries; Collections of Essays of Marian Małowist* (Leiden: Brill, 2010). On Wallerstein's inspirations from Małowist's works, see Adam F. Kola, "Marian Małowist's World History and Its Application to World Literature," in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature and World History*, ed. May Hawas (London: Routledge, 2018), 57–68. For a thorough review of theories of premodern socio-economic divisions of Europe and the place of Poland in this context, presented by influential Polish historians of the Cold War period such as Witold Kula, Marian Małowist, Jerzy Topolski (1928–98), and Andrzej Wyczański (1924–2008), see Anna Sosnowska, *Explaining Economic Backwardness: Post-1945 Polish Historians on Eastern Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2019 [2004]).

discussion of early modern economic history in that period.[11] According to this model, economic determinants, such as diffusion of the rental service of peasants and intensive agriculture in Western Europe, as opposed to feudal peasant service and extensive agriculture in the other part of the continent, had long-lasting social and economic effects that were further intensified by the political expansion of Western European countries and its consequences for global trade. Nevertheless, this famous division of the continent along the Elbe line is certainly not the only one discussed by economic historians. The recent debate around the concept of the "Little Divergence"[12] has contributed to reshaping the map of early modern European divisions based on economic factors along a different axis, contrasting the "North Sea area"—comprising the United Kingdom and the Low Countries in particular—to the rest of Europe.[13]

The continent's East–West divide has also been interpreted in line with the model proposed by Edward Said (1935–2003) in his pathbreaking study on European/Western visions of extra-European cultures, mostly focused on the Middle East.[14] At first glance, Said's model seems better suited to the Western European cultural construct of the orientalized Balkans—imagined as an area composed of unstable polities without an established political

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11   This matter was also raised by Robert Brenner (b.1943) in the context of his research on the origins of capitalism in different regions of premodern Europe (mostly focused on social factors). Brenner's theses started a longer discussion among historians, known as the "Brenner Debate," at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. The contributions to this debate were published in *Past and Present* and subsequently gathered in the volume: Trevor H. Aston and Charles H. E. Philpin, eds., *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-industrial Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

12   This term draws from the concept of "Great Divergence" developed by Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). The concept is used to describe the changes that led to Europe's economic growth when compared to other parts of the world in modern times. Accordingly, the "Little Divergence" refers to differences in the paths of economic development in Europe in the same period.

13   Alexandra M. De Pleijt and Jan Luiten Van Zanden, "Accounting for the 'Little Divergence': What Drove Economic Growth in Pre-industrial Europe, 1300–1800?," *European Review of Economic History* 20, no. 4 (2016): 387–409 (on the "North Sea area": 387); Mikołaj Malinowski, "Little Divergence Revisited: Polish Weighted Real Wages in a European Perspective, 1500–1800," *European Review of Economic History* 20, no. 3 (2016): 345–67. On demographic divisions of Europe, following the theory of patterns of family dominating east and west of the Trieste–St. Petersburg line, see Sarah G. Carmichael et al., "The European Marriage Pattern and Its Measurement," *Journal of Economic History* 76, no. 1 (2016): 196–204.

14   Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

culture, including interethnic and interreligious tolerance.[15] Nonetheless, in an excellent study by Larry Wolff (b.1957),[16] the alleged "Eastern" character of the peoples inhabiting the "belt of mixed populations"[17] has been identified as dominating Western European views on the eastern part of the continent since the Enlightenment. Wolff's book includes numerous extracts from eighteenth-century descriptions of the eastern part of Europe by West European travelers who presented the countries they visited as inherently different from their homelands. As a consequence, the cultures and polities of the eastern part of the continent became a place where a man (or sometimes a woman) of the Western Enlightenment was supposed to fulfill their historic mission of addressing Otherness, after having it imagined, mapped, and possessed—to refer to the subsequent chapter titles of Wolff's analysis.[18]

3   From Spatial to Temporal Divisions

All types of discourses on the meridional division of Europe follow a similar line of reasoning, attributing to the eastern part of the continent an undeveloped and unmodern character, visible socially, economically, or culturally.[19] In this context, it is useful to recall a notion used by Johannes Fabian (b.1937) to define, or rather to criticize, a practice in anthropology, characterized by treating described persons as backward and hence as not being coeval to the

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15   The Western construct of the Balkans is thoroughly analyzed by Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

16   Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

17   This expression is often attributed to Hannah Arendt (1906–75). However, while used in her oft-quoted *magnum opus* (*The Origins of Totalitarianism* [Cleveland: Meridian, 1962], 232, 235, 268, 274, 276), it appears there as a quotation from Carlile A. Macartney, *National States and National Minorities* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

18   On relations between the (Eastern) peripheries and the (Western) core of Europe and their perception in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century discourse in Central/East-Central Europe (on the examples of Poland and Romania), see Błażej Brzostek, *Paryże Innej Europy: Warszawa i Bukareszt, XIX i XX wiek* [Parises of another Europe: Warsaw and Bucharest in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries] (Warsaw: WAB, 2015). On postcolonial contexts and interpretations of historical conditions of Poland against the background of the region, see also Dariusz Skórczewski, *Polish Literature and National Identity: A Postcolonial Perspective* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020).

19   This reasoning has also influenced a recent discourse in Poland on the legacy of the social structures of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. This debate was started by Jan Sowa, *Fantomowe ciało króla: Peryferyjne zmagania z nowoczesną formą* [The phantom body of the king: Peripheral struggles with a modern form] (Kraków: Universitas, 2011).

observer. He called this "denial of coevalness" "allochronism."[20] Building on Fabian's concept, Benoît Challand defined another useful term related to a perceived "denial of coevalness," this time directly concerning the division between Eastern and Western Europe. He identified differences between the two parts of the continent with regard to social memory, as different "themes occupy the forefront of collective debates" on memory in Central/East-Central Europe on the one hand and in Western Europe on the other.[21] As a consequence, the elites of Central/East-Central Europe are expected to comply with models of remembrance developed by intellectuals and politicians in Western Europe in order to reach Western standards. Commenting on these differences, Challand introduced the notion of "heterochrony," defined as a situation in which a given group, presented as "backward," does not have the proper capacity to choose the "cognitive means to perceive itself," that is, to develop its own discourse that could be endorsed by those who present themselves as "more modern." Therefore, this discourse usually accepts an alleged difference in time between both groups but tries to use it for the benefit of those who are "backward."[22] According to Challand's definition, heterochrony is the reverse of allochronism. More precisely, this notion is used to designate a reply by the Eastern European elites to the Western European discourse of memory.[23]

Bearing in mind the contexts of the East–West divide, strengthened by a hard border between the two political blocs during the Cold War, it would be reasonable to assume that intellectuals from beyond the Iron Curtain, such as those promoting the idea of a separate Central/ East-Central European identity, would have attempted to neutralize or even counter that divide. They could have adopted at least one of two different strategies in this regard. First, they could have dismissed the division itself as anachronistic and not related to the remoter past of Europe. Second, they could have proposed another firm

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20　Johannes Fabian, *Times and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014 [1983]), 33.

21　Benoît Challand, "1989, Contested Memories and the Shifting Cognitive Maps of Europe," *European Journal of Social Theory* 12, no. 3 (2009): 397–408, here 401. The text was further developed in Chiara Bottici and Benoît Challand, *Imagining Europe: Myth, Memory, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 65–83.

22　Challand, "1989, Contested Memories," 400.

23　In Challand's work, it is exemplified by Central and Eastern European attempts to introduce narratives related to the Soviet occupation and communism to the common European memory, as presently more important for the societies of the region than other issues in the twentieth-century history of Europe (Bottici and Challand, *Imagining Europe*, 76–81).

division of Europe, for example, focusing on differences between the north and the south of the continent.[24]

But they did not do so. They accepted the divide along the meridian axis and its long-lasting character but modified it by introducing a new entity (Central or East-Central Europe) to partly break its bipolar character. This leads to the question: Why did they choose this strategy, and how did they use diachronic arguments to sustain their reasoning?

4   Views on Europe: Time and Space

First of all, contrary to what might be expected from the promoters of a new European regional concept, the spatial notions used by the three authors are not characterized by fixed boundaries. This view—with regard to the borders of Central Europe—is most clearly expressed by Kundera, for whom the region is a sort of "fate" with "imaginary and ever-changing boundaries" that "must be drawn and redrawn with each new historical situation."[25] It is against this backdrop that he presents the changing boundaries between Western and Eastern Europe after the Second World War.[26] But even the other two authors, whose observations are of a less literary nature, agree on the shifting nature of borders between European regions. In fact, the very model of three parts of Europe, defined by Szűcs, assumes that the limit of "Europa Occidens" (Western Europe) moved eastward around 1200 to include the three "millennial countries" (Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary); it then backed away to the Elbe–Leitha line around 1500.[27] Szűcs also defines the region's borders as "permeable."[28] In a similar vein, reflecting on the nature of regional

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24   This strategy was adopted by another Polish historian, Henryk Samsonowicz (1930–2021), in his book *Północ–Południe* [North–South] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1999).

25   Kundera, "Tragedy of Central Europe," 6.

26   Kundera, "Tragedy of Central Europe," 2.

27   Or—more precisely—the old border on the Elbe–Leitha line reappeared, putting in question the belonging of the "millennial countries" to Europa Occidens, see Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 294, 313.

28   It is important to notice divergences between the translations of Szűcs's text into different languages. While the English translation does not include the observation in question, the Polish edition of the book mentions "uncertain and 'permeable' borders" (Szűcs, *Trzy Europy*, 78: "niepewne i 'przepuszczalne' granice"), and the Italian translation refers to "permeable frontiers" (Jenő Szűcs, *Disegno delle tre regioni storiche in Europa* [Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino, 1996], 61: "frontiere permeabili"). In the Hungarian text, the boundaries are defined as "átmosódó": Szűcs, "Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról," 340.

boundaries, Halecki observes that "some of these distinctions are at the same time a serious warning against the oversimplified conception of permanent boundaries between cultural regions, drawn once for all."[29] His observation is valid not only for Central/East-Central Europe but also for other regions of the continent, as shown by the "controversial, fluctuating, western border of Germany."[30]

This shifting nature of European boundaries is expressed by Halecki in terms similar to Kłoczowski's concept, that is, by using the division between "new" and "old" Europe yet referring to different spatial realities at given times. First, Halecki calls "Old Europe" that part of the continent that once belonged to the Roman Empire,[31] in contrast to the "New Europe," situated outside the Roman *limes*. At that time, "the dividing line was not yet running from the north to the south, but from the north-west to the south-east of the continent."[32] Commenting on the early modern period, Halecki contrasts the old Europe, that is, the one within its geographical borders, to the new one composed of European colonies or polities located on the American continent.[33] Finally, in its third meaning, the expression "New Europe" is borrowed by Halecki from the traveler and journalist Bernard Newman (1897–1968) to designate twelve countries that (re-)gained independence after the First World War,[34] which makes this notion's referent similar to that of Kłoczowski's idea.

Moreover, as presented by the authors under analysis, Europe in general is framed within diachronic definitions, thus being a truly chronotopic concept. For Halecki, the history of Europe is not only "the history of a distinct community placed in the universal space of the globe; it is also the history of a specific age within the time of human destinies."[35] More precisely, he defines the European Age as following the Mediterranean Age and preceding the Atlantic Age. According to his periodization, the Mediterranean Age ended in the eighth century, after a four-century decline, thus paving the way to the formation of Europe understood as a new common identity. One hundred years after the end of this epoch, the European community was broadened by new areas in northeastern Europe, which Halecki views as compensation for Europe's territorial losses due to the Arab expansion following the dissolution of the

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29   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 109.
30   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 130.
31   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 35.
32   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 35.
33   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 55.
34   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 135.
35   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 17.

Roman Empire. For Halecki, this enlargement of Europe marks the beginning of the European Age, defined as the time of the European community's greatness.[36] Consequently, Halecki perceives his contemporary era as the end of the European Age and the final stage in Europe's decline. Halecki's division of universal history into three general ages provides a temporal frame for his definition of East-Central Europe. Although he does not state as much, it is clear that the time frames of the European Age, and thus of presumed European greatness, roughly coincide with the period when East-Central Europe—and in particular Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary—was part of the West, that is, before its annexation by the Soviet bloc after the Second World War.

The three authors thus share a vision of Central/ East-Central Europe as a region with shifting borders in time and space, as an inherent part of the continent that also has to be (re-)defined in diachronic terms. Out of the region's historical panorama, they attribute a particularly important role to the early modern period.

5   Reflections on Early Modern Times

While all three authors view the history of the region in the Middle Ages through the lens of its integration—even if incomplete—with the rest of (Western) Europe, it is much more difficult to find the *Leitmotiv* of its early modern past. For Kundera, the history of the early modern period, which he extends to the final centuries of the Middle Ages, instead serves as a repertoire of events that contributed to the formation of a common regional inheritance. Among these events, which Kundera calls "situations," the following are mentioned: establishment of the university center in Prague, gathering members of numerous regional nations; the Hussite revolution; the Renaissance in Hungary; the union of Bohemia, Hungary, and Austria under the aegis of the Habsburg empire; joint campaigns against the Turks; and the Counter-Reformation.[37] Against this background, a special role was played by baroque art in unifying the region's countries and cultures.[38]

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36   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 41.

37   Kundera, "Tragedy of Central Europe," 6.

38   Kundera, "Tragedy of Central Europe," 6. On the unifying role of baroque culture, see, e.g., Endre Angyal, *Die slawische Barockwelt* [The Slavic world of the baroque] (Leipzig: Seemann, 1961), who stresses the particular character of regional baroque culture, expressed for example by the motif of the bulwark of Christendom; or the idea of a baroque "cultural league" (area of cultural convergence) in the region, as formulated by

However, it is remarkable that these texts interpret certain events in the region's early modern history as signs of its future decline, especially if juxtaposed to the history of Western Europe. Szűcs, for example, emphasizes the difference between what he describes as the "luckier" and "less fortunate" regions at the very start of the early modern period.[39] For him, "success dates" such as 1492 mark the starting point of the epoch for the luckier regions, while the history of the less fortunate regions is indicated by dates of catastrophes, such as the 1526 Battle of Mohács in the case of Hungary.[40] This division implicitly refers to Western and East-Central Europe respectively; to complete this classification, Szűcs introduces potentially relevant dates for Russian, that is, Eastern European, history, concerning, for example, the process of the "gathering of the Russian lands" or subsequent dates of annexation carried out by Muscovy to the west of its borders.[41]

Halecki also uses certain events of the early modern period as early markers of later tendencies concerning the region's history, one example of which is "the first German–Russian alliance, concluded as early as 1490" and an answer to it "as early as 1500 by a first alliance of the whole Jagiellonian system—Poland, Lithuania, Bohemia, and Hungary […]," that is, by Central/ East-Central Europe. For Halecki, the first "German–Russian" partnership marks not only a presage of the region's "fate," to use Kundera's words, but also indicates a frame of its history in early modern times. Indeed, Halecki compares two international meetings in Vienna that took place at the beginning and the end of the early modern period, namely in 1515 and 1815; while the first meeting, attended by Jagiellonians and Habsburgs, was characterized by the equal status of its participants, the other was guided by completely different rules, sanctioning the end of the independent existence of this part of Europe.[42]

Hence it should not be surprising that Halecki describes the early modern period as an epoch of vanishing freedoms. He perceived the development of absolutism as the source of this phenomenon. This determinant of early modern history culminated in the partitioning of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, considered by Halecki to be an event of historical importance:

Urszula Augustyniak, *Historia Polski, 1572–1795* [History of Poland, 1572–1795] (Warsaw: PWN: 2008), 366.

39   Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 308. In English translation: "modern times." The context suggests it refers to the early modern period (cf. "nowożytny"—"early modern" in the Polish translation: Szűcs, *Trzy Europy*, 70; in the Hungarian original, it is "újkor": Szűcs, "Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról," 336).

40   Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 308.

41   Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 308–9.

42   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 140.

a "diplomatic revolution" similar to the French and American revolutions.[43] According to Halecki, lack of interest on the part of other Europeans in what happened to the Commonwealth crowned the separation of politics from ethics, already initiated by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). As a consequence, the continent's later history was characterized by a permanent "state of unrest," visible in the revolutions of the nineteenth century and the rise of twentieth-century imperialisms.[44] Furthermore, these phenomena ran parallel to an overwhelming process of European disintegration that contributed to the slow decline of the European Age. For Halecki, this coincided with the start of a "naive faith in uninterrupted progress of what was usually called Western culture,"[45] manifested by a growing divergence between material progress, especially after the Industrial Revolution, and a lack of progress "in other fields."[46] This conclusion, historiosophical in nature, is echoed by Kundera's vision. However, for the Czech/French writer, the end of Europe understood as a unity, occurred only in the twentieth century; before that, European unity was first rooted in medieval universalism based on religion, and then, in the early modern period, founded on a common culture.[47]

While this decadent belief in European dawn is not shared by Szűcs, the Hungarian historian's narrative of the early modern epoch is characterized by the development of two absolutisms: Western and Eastern, whose "scopes and functions" were similar.[48] In Szűcs's view, both absolutisms were equally perilous for East-Central Europe, situated between them and being exposed to expansion undertaken from two directions, east and west.[49] As the region "crossed the threshold of modern times amidst newly developing 'Eastern European' conditions, but with defective 'Western-like' structures,"[50] a number

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43 Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 174–75.

44 Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 176–77, 179.

45 Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 50.

46 Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 50.

47 Kundera, "Tragedy of Central Europe," 8.

48 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 315. It is remarkable, however, that the English translation of this passus is much more cautious toward making both types of absolutism equal, cf.: "Other aims and functions beside defence of the retrievable elements of feudalism were shared in common by these states [from Eastern and Western Europe respectively—my clarification]" and the Polish translation: "Let us repeat: the scopes and functions of both absolutisms are similar" (Szűcs, *Trzy Europy*, 78: "Cele i funkcje obu absolutyzmów są—powtórzmy—podobne"); the same sentence in Hungarian reads as follows: "A célok és funkciók különben a feudalizmus menthető elemének mentésén túl is rokonságot mutattak": Szűcs, "Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról," 340–41).

49 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 313.

50 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 322. It is worth noting that "Western-like structures" are in the Polish translation characterized as "dominant but undeveloped" (Szűcs, *Trzy*

of mixed models of political, social, and economic structures were developed. These included both an exemplary, Eastern pattern of the absolutist state, developed in Brandenburg-Prussia with a "precision characteristic of the West," and, on the other hand, a noble republic of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, built on medieval Western-like political freedoms in the context of Eastern social and economic conditions. Among these models, a particular place is devoted to the state of the *domus Austriae* (House of Austria): a "hybrid variant" between the above-mentioned regional extremes.[51] However, according to Szűcs, the hybrid nature of the model represented by the Habsburg Empire was the very reason for its decline.[52] In 1648, "the Habsburgs were driven politically out from Western Europe," and afterward they were not able to compete economically with those countries of the continent that were expanding overseas.[53] The Habsburg Empire also failed to address the challenges posed by the rise of modern nationalism.[54] It thus failed to modernize, which led to the state's dissolution in 1918 following the fate of other hybrid variants of development in the region, such as the earlier polities created by Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians. Seen from this perspective, the early modern period was marked by the region's general decline.

6 Toward a Conclusion: Heterochrony, History, and the East–West Divide

In Szűcs's view, the Habsburg monarchy and other polities of East-Central Europe failed to adapt to modern conditions, marked by a "great historical turning point in Europe" in 1789.[55] Perhaps this is expressed in the strongest terms with regard to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and its nobility, accused by Szűcs of trying to "behave as if they were living in a [still] expansive region" and of "an absurd and overextended attempt […] to preserve [a] medieval 'Western' structure."[56] He uses similar words to define Hungarian society as

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Europy, 88: "dominujące, choć nierozwinięte"), which seems to be closer to the Hungarian original ("domináns, de hiányos": Szűcs, "Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról," 345).

51 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 323–25.
52 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 328.
53 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 328.
54 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 327.
55 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 327.
56 Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 323–24. It should be noted that the English translation does not include the world "still," which is present in the Polish translation ("wciąż": Szűcs, *Trzy Europy*, 89).

anachronistic,[57] quoting a comment by historian Ferenc Eckhart (1885–1957) that they "held Montesquieu and Rousseau in one hand and *Tripartitum* [a sixteenth-century collection of nobility privileges] in the other."[58]

While a similar concept is less evident in Halecki, the Polish historian underlines the exceptionality of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, whose elites were able to preserve individual freedoms in early modern times, contrary to tendencies present across the continent, and to carry out reforms without a violent revolution, as exemplified by the Constitution of May 3, 1791.[59] Following this line of reasoning, the developments in the Commonwealth in the late eighteenth century lacked a temporal synergy with the rest of (Western) Europe, putting the Commonwealth's ruling class in a heterochrony with the latter. Another perception of heterochrony by the region's elites is presented by Kundera, though this is related to his own times. According to Kundera, the cultural elites of Central Europe were still attached to culture as the unifying factor of the continent's identity. However, in his view, Western society has already become "post-cultural" and insensitive to the role of culture in European unity. Hence, in the Central European revolts of the twentieth century, "there is something conservative, nearly anachronistic: they are desperately trying to restore the past, the past of culture, the past of the modern era. It is only in that period, only in a world that maintains a cultural dimension, that Central Europe can still defend its identity."[60]

These reflections on the role of the past for Central European societies raise the question of Kundera's attitude toward history understood as a discipline. Given his emancipatory agenda, it would not be totally unexpected if he were to reject history as such, much like certain scholars of postcolonial thought.[61] Indeed, for Kundera history should be treated with distrust in Central Europe

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57   Szűcs, "Three Historical Regions," 329: "So there remained the anachronism: while the West set out towards national absolutism and the East towards imperial autocracy, Hungary's noble society did not (and could not) imagine any other option than that of sticking to the medieval dualism of royal power and Estates."

58   Szűcs, *Trzy Europy*, 100: "Węgierskie społeczeństwo polityczne nadal, by użyć sformułowania F. Eckharda, 'w jednej ręce trzymało Monteskiusza i Rousseau, a w drugiej—*Tripartitum*'"; the same quotation is present in the Hungarian original: Szűcs, "Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról," 352: "Egyik kezében Montesquieut és Rousseaut, a másikban pedig a Tripartitumot tartotta." The quoted historian is Ferenc Echkart (not Eckhard). This quotation is absent from the English version of the text.

59   Halecki, *Limits and Divisions of European History*, 195.

60   Kundera, "Tragedy of Central Europe," 11.

61   Ashis Nandy, "History's Forgotten Doubles," in *World History: Ideologies, Structures, and Identities*, ed. Philip Pomper, Richard H. Elphick, and Richard T. Vann (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 159–78.

since it favors the external conquerors of the region at the expense of its nations. This distrust, however, is not total, as Kundera admits that the peoples in question "cannot be separated from European history; they cannot exist outside it"; they simply "represent the wrong side of this history; they are its victims and outsiders."[62] Similar views are echoed by Halecki, who perceives the Commonwealth's partitions or Russo-German alliances as wrongful acts toward the region and the inhabitants that fell victim to them.

Nevertheless, all three authors ultimately consider the Central/East-Central European peoples to be inherently (West) European, despite all criticisms of Western European countries or societies in the past or in the present, or the comparisons they draw with Eastern (Russian) expansionism and autocracy. They present the region as a particular entity of Western origins, even if "somehow deformed"[63] and "most fragile,"[64] yet whose history has been entangled with that of Western Europe since the Middle Ages. At the same time, however, they had to face the problem of an "anachronistic" division of the continent, leaving their homelands on the unwanted side of the dividing line in the twentieth century. This was especially necessary for the region's early modern history that did not fit into the general picture of a periphery swiftly catching up with the (Western) European core, in particular since the epoch ended with a general redefinition of political and social reality on the continent, to the detriment of the region. Therefore, the authors analyzed in this essay chose to defend values considered important for the post-1945 Western world, such as individual freedoms and abandonment of territorial expansion. They tried to identify the presence of these values in the early modern history of Central/East-Central Europe as if that presence had been a continuation of the socio-political patterns shared with Western Europe in the earlier stages of history, that is, mostly in the Middle Ages,[65] regardless of further historical developments that separated both parts of Europe. Seen from this perspective, it is easier to understand why the three thinkers in question did not seek to

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62   Kundera, "Tragedy of Central Europe," 7.

63   Szűcs, *Trzy Europy*, 66. This part is absent in the English translation, but it is present in the Hungarian original ("valamilyen mértékben deformáltak": Szűcs, "Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról," 334).

64   Kundera, "Tragedy of Central Europe," 5.

65   This periodization is relative and cannot be limited by any set dates—at least in Halecki, who is in general distrustful of such an approach. It would instead be more appropriate to indicate the later part of the early modern period as the time of the region's decline defined in his work (i.e., partly coinciding with the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth), which differs from Szűcs, who was inspired by the history of Hungary and its earlier loss of political independence. For Kundera, the region's decline shifts much more toward later times—mostly to the twentieth century (see n. 47 and 60).

cancel the allegedly perennial East–West divide of the continent even when referring to premodern European history.

However, while it has been shown that the three authors use the word "anachronistic" to describe the social, political, or cultural views of the region's elites when compared to Western European trends at a certain time, the word "heterochrony"/"heterochronic" (as defined above) would better suit this concept. Indeed, it was not an objective chronological inconsistency that this term refers to in the works quoted. Instead, their authors' concern was with views and ideas that were impossible to preserve when events occurred that were beyond the agency of local elites or were not fully dependent on them. In this perspective, Central/ East-Central Europe's identity was indeed younger than Western Europe's in objective, chronological terms. However, relatively (heterochronically), it was older, as it was still drawing upon the same values as in the remote past.

Regions with blurred boundaries, characterized by historical "situations" and changing over time: this vision of Europe and its parts helped the three authors to develop their arguments. Finally, using heterochrony to explain Central/East-Central Europe's development since early modern times helped them to save history as a conceptual frame for their emancipatory discourse aimed at restoring a kidnapped region to a common European identity.

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Anhang der Declaration der Ordnungen der Statt Dantzigk, so unlangst im Aprill an den tag gegeben unnd in den Druck gefertiget, and Grundliche Erklerung, Aus was Ursache die Ordnungen der Statt Dantzigk mit dem Durchlauchtigste Großmechtigsten Fürsten und Herren, Herrn Stephano Könige zu Polen ic. Durch antrieb jrer Widdersacher in den jtzo noch obstehenden mitzuerstandt und Weiterung geraten und eingefüret. Gdańsk: Rhode, 1577.

Appendix declarationis ordinum civitatis Gedanensis de praesenti rerum statu mense Aprili nuper vulgatae. Gdańsk: n.p., 1577.

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