

This book was originally published by the Lithuanian Institute of History (Vilnius, 2016).

The research for this book was funded by the European Social Fund under the Global Grant Initiative (Grant No. VP1-3.1-ŠMM-07-K-02-049).



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*Creating the Future of Lithuania*

The publication of this book was supported by MG Baltic.





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# Preface

The idea of writing a book that would tell the story of the creation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's political culture and its manifestations between the second half of the fifteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century had a long incubation period. The restoration of an independent Lithuanian state and the study of its history as a discipline in 1990 found political culture as a new and poorly cultivated field of research. The impetus to begin researching the political culture of Lithuania specifically arose from the fact that, after a gap many decades long, the opportunity appeared in Lithuania to become acquainted with research theories and methodology on the issue as well as research on the political culture of other European countries in direct ways and not through rumor or snippets of information. The international context of historiography showed that the time had come to integrate the history of, and research on, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania into the field of European-scale comparative studies. The republication of older sources and the appearance of works of historians who specialized in ancient Lithuanian literature and culture whetted the desire to take on this task. Everyday political life in the restored Lithuanian state and its society strengthened the belief that there was a purpose in going deeper into the political culture of the ancient Grand Duchy of Lithuania and asking whether links could be found between the political culture of today's Lithuania and the political values created and fostered by the society of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The search for conceptual solutions to many issues began in 2013 and lasted several years. Much time for discussion and contemplation was needed to fulfill the wish to formulate a different, more contemporary interpretation based on research as opposed to the kind of interpretation that was entrenched in historiography. International history conferences became a forum where many of the new views toward the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's political nation and culture, expressed in this book, were born and tested in constant flows of ideas as well as regular discussion. What sticks in my mind are the first reactions of fellow historians from Poland and their surprise upon hearing a

different way of speaking about the union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the political values of the Lithuanian boyars. After all, historians made it clear long ago that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's political culture had matured in the womb of the Kingdom of Poland's political culture and adopted the Polish nobility's values and attitudes toward the union of these countries. It is also agreed among historians that the independent-minded position of the magnates, led by the Radziwiłł<sup>1</sup> family, which defended the making of special efforts to distinguish the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a state when the 1569 Union of Lublin was executed, was determined by their personal ambitions and interests—which the average boyar in the country did not support.

The dialogue that was needed on these points took much effort to launch and proceeded slowly. However, it did begin. Today it is easy to laugh when I remember the spirited debates that took place in Warsaw, Lublin, Kraków, Poznań, Vilnius, and elsewhere. Often the conversations that followed a presentation lasted long into the evening. Also, friendships and working relationships were developed with many of the participants. Today I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of my fellow historians in different countries who have been researching the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. You did much to make this book possible.

I also wish to thank my colleagues and coworkers at the Lithuanian Institute of History for your constant financial and moral support. My colleagues at the Department of the History of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania often became the first readers and reviewers of my texts; they were also willing advisors who, on several occasions, showed me important sources for my research.

Yet another group of people aided me in my efforts: my colleagues, doctoral students, and students at the Department of History at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, where I taught an MA-level history course on Lithuania's political culture for many years. In my seminars, we examined sources, explained their importance, debated, looked for traces of the Grand Duchy's political culture in the political life of society in our modern Republic of Lithuania, and discussed what tied us to the society and culture of the past. It was a lively forum of contact with a new generation of future historians and, for me, a wonderful opportunity to see whether intergenerational dialogue among historians was possible. I give them all a heartfelt thank-you.

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1 Radziwiłł is the Polish form of this family name. The Latin form is Radivilli, and the Lithuanian—Radvilos.

I cannot list all the names of those who supported and advised me and those who challenged my work with their doubts and criticism. Believe me, I am extremely grateful to all of you for making my work that much better.

This study was financed under two programs: European Social Fund under the Global Grant Initiative and The Phenomenon of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Early Modern Europe (VP1-3.1–ŠMM–07–K–02–049). The project was administered by the Lithuanian Council of Science. I thank everyone who helped to bring this idea to fruition.

The year 2015 marks the quincentennial of the birth of Duke Mikolaj Radziwiłł the Black, one of the most prominent politicians in fostering defending the state of Lithuania in the sixteenth-century. I dedicate this book to the memory of this eminent representative of the political nation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Allow me to quote several lines from the heroic epic “Radviliada,” written 423 years ago by the old bard of Lithuanian magnates, the poet Jan Radwan, in which he requests help from goddesses:

CALLIOPE, atque ERATO veftras advertite mētes,  
Et date quā virtus ingentem ad fydera vexit  
Ductorem Litauūm, dum pace, & Marte secundo  
Siftit rem patriam, qualisue effufa per Vlæ  
Tempeftas ierit campos, per Evanfcia rura.  
Illius immenſis ut laus attonfa Livonum  
Confiliis, veluti Scythiamque repreſerit héroſ,  
O memorate DEÆ: tum vos date candida cives  
Omina, nã tibi furgit opus LITVANIA PRÆSTANS.

Jonas Radvanas, “Radviliada” (Vilnius: Bibliotheca Baltica, 1997), 6.

This book is a translation of my monograph *Between Rome and Byzantium: The Golden Age of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania’s Political Culture (Second Half of the Fifteenth Century to First Half of the Seventeenth Century)*, originally written in Lithuanian in 2015, without any additional material.

Vilnius, 2018

# Introduction

At the turn of the early modern period, new rules began to form in Europe concerning the co-existence of states and societies, political behaviors and communication, and the foundations of a new political system. Contemporary historiography describes this time of great change by invoking the concept of the “long sixteenth century.” This period, from the middle of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618—or even up to 1650—is understood as one of transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period. The “long sixteenth century” concept gives us an opportunity to see the entire spectrum of events during this time in a way that deftly interweaves signs of the end of the Middle Ages and the birth of the early modern period without contrasting these two epochs. This particular periodization allows us to create a somewhat different picture of European history at the time under discussion than is traditionally depicted. In this tableau, the difference between Western Europe, the instigator of innovation, and the laggard regions that merely adopt and repeat innovation is not accentuated. What is emphasized is that the proto-modernist processes had common roots, from which Early Modern Europe grew.<sup>1</sup> In a Europe that is understood in this way, one may also examine the boyar nation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania—hereinafter, the GDL—illuminate its participation in sociopolitical and sociocultural processes of the epoch, discuss the formation of its political culture, and investigate a broader spectrum of the change that took place within these processes in a European context.

The aim of the study that follows is to show evidence and substantiate the premise that the sociopolitical and sociocultural society of the GDL created

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1 See *Lietuvos istorija*, vol. 4, ed. J. Kiaupienė and R. Petrauskas: *Nauji horizontai: dinastija, visuomenė, valstybė. Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė 1529–1529 m.* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2009), 12–18; *Lietuvos istorija*, vol. 5, ed. J. Kiaupienė and I. Lukšaitė: *Veržli Naujųjų laikų pradžia. Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė 1529–1588 metais* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2013), 23–25.

and fostered its own unique political culture from the second half of the fifteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth century—a political culture that I describe as a European phenomenon. This study examines the political views and attitudes of the fully fledged Lithuanian boyar class that preceded the period under discussion, the values created and disseminated within the state and beyond its borders in various ways that depicted the state, its rule, representation, law, and other links within the sociopolitical system, and the results of the real-life implementation of these values. I look for and develop theoretical and source-based arguments that show that the GDL's political culture played the role of a sociopolitical and sociocultural connector and mediator between the geopolitical and geocultural regions of the Roman West and the Byzantine East, and that it formed an ethnically diverse, multilingual, multi-confessional, and multicultural state that became an integral part of the West's political system in the early modern period. This is a geopolitical area where the national identities of different ethnos formed alongside one another and where a pluralistic sociopolitical community formed a unique form of state identity. I will highlight the long-term effect of this political culture on the formation of the geopolitical and geocultural political mentality of all of Central Eastern Europe. Contemporary historians believe that the GDL's former eastern border area (made up of the Duchy's eastern territories), which seceded from the lands of Muscovy, is today the dividing line between Eastern Europe and Central Eastern Europe. It is also thought that the political mentality of the Lithuanians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians who inhabited the lands of the GDL is different even today as a result.

For this research, I invoke two concepts that researchers of sociopolitical and sociocultural processes coined in order to mark and describe these processes: political culture and political nation.

The expression *political culture* was developed by the sociologists Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba on the basis of their research on the political attitudes of the inhabitants of five countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Mexico) in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> It first came into use in sociology and political science in debates over Almond's and Verba's conclusions; later it was adopted and began to be used in research by historians as well. How it is interpreted in contemporary historiography varies,

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2 G. A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).



different methods of research concerning political culture having taken shape. There is a debate over the propriety of searching for methods and forms of the manifestation of political culture in research of historical periods—antiquity, the Middle Ages, the early modern period—or of societies in those eras, or whether political culture is simply a phenomenon of modern times. I will not reenact these theoretical discussions. Instead, I will relate to Stephen Chilton's discussion of the various ways the term *political culture* is understood, the possibilities of its usage, and its importance for understanding political processes.<sup>3</sup> I also refer to the work of a group of scientists led by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, which examined the concept of *political culture* and looked for new theoretical approaches from the perspective of research on cultural history.<sup>4</sup> These and other theoretical and methodological discussions have expanded the initial meaning of political culture and opened the door to possibilities of not only using it in research on contemporary political processes but also of adapting it to various historical periods. A historian who deals with the medieval and early modern eras, however, understands that the concept cannot be invoked without exceptions. Sociologists can carry out a survey among living members of a society and perform empirical research. A historian who examines the political culture of past times cannot do the same; he or she has to work with information encoded in sundry written sources or artifacts that yield various levels of informativeness. A historian must decode this source material and convey the information hidden in it in a scientific language that the modern reader can understand. This is why not only facts, but also the historian's interpretation, are important in this kind of research.

In modern scientific language, the concept of political culture is not understood in the same way by all researchers. Debates take place as to where politics ends and political culture begins and how political culture is tied to political thought. Also debated is whether the concept covers only the realm of the spiritual life of society and the individual, or whether political culture can

3 *Grounding Political Development* (2nd [www] edition), <http://www.d.umn.edu/~schilton/Articles/GPD6.html>. 2014.11.19; Ronald P. Formisano, "The Concept of Political Culture," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 31, no. 3: (Winter 2001): 393–426; Paul Lichterman and Daniel Cefai, "The Idea of Political Culture," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 392–414.

4 See *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2005). Accessed November 19, 2014, <http://www.d.umn.edu/~schilton/Articles/GPD6.html>.

also be understood as a collection of symbolic actions, with the help of which individuals and groups in society form and implement their goals. Another aspect to consider is whether this concept may be adapted for use in examining the structure and order of the state, its organizational principles, its institutions and their work, and relations between rulers and ruled. Historians may make a significant contribution to the broadening of these theoretical discussions by creating, through their research, a necessary foundation for theoretical insight as well as interpretation, that is, sources. The more such sources appear that researchers can use, the more diverse they will be and the clearer the concept of political culture will become. New opportunities will arise for understanding the mechanisms behind the spreading of political culture in society and ascertaining how political culture is created, identifying the link between political culture and the value systems of classes, groups, and individuals in society, and understanding the formation of political behavior, historical self-understanding, self-awareness, and identity. All of these things will help us to understand what the methods and forms of expressing political culture were. The way a concept is understood is most often determined by the aims of the particular research being done.

In recent years, the concept of political culture has also been increasingly used in the Lithuanian scientific language and public sphere. The theoretical aspects of this issue, however, have not yet been fully discussed. This also goes for the state of research concerning the political culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In this book, political culture is understood in its broad sense, as the full array of theoretical premises that were formed, and practical actions taken, by the country's sociopolitical and sociocultural society in the early modern period.

The concept of the *political nation*, like that of the political culture, has no roots in history and is a construct of modern political philosophy. Historians question the validity of this concept and its use in research on the sociopolitical and sociocultural history of the medieval and early modern periods. Some accept the concept and use it; others reject it as an unfounded modernization of historical events. These two poles can also be seen in contemporary Lithuanian historiography. The views of Alvydas Nikžentaitis and Ingė Lukšaitė stand out in this context due to their emphasis on using the term in their work. Both historians tie the issue of the political nation/community to the problem of national identity, but arrive at different conclusions. Nikžentaitis uses the concept to show that the latest research on political nations considers the political nation an ethno-political structure that encompasses politically active representatives

of the magnate class, who were characterized by a clearly expressed national self-awareness. He highlights the fact that the most recent literature on the subject emphasizes, in particular, the importance of national self-awareness. Namely, the existence or absence of such awareness is considered the most important criterion of a political nation in the medieval or early modern period.<sup>5</sup> Lukšaitė, discussing the accuracy of the concept of the political nation and the practicality of its use, emphasizes that though this term has spread in works that investigate GDL history, there are other views about its suitability in both of its components. In lieu of “political nation” (*politinė tauta* in Lithuanian), she proposes the term “state nation” (*valstybinė tauta* in Lithuanian) as developed by Anna Kłosowska, a Polish researcher of sociological theories and concepts relating to the development of society. If so, the term would denote two things: political and state consolidation, and ethnic (national) processes. To skirt the ambiguity of the concept in Lithuanian, it would be worth forgoing the term *tauta* (nation) when one wishes to describe a community that has jelled to create a state in cases where its ethnic consolidation is not being examined. This would lessen the confusion that stalks these concepts. Lukšaitė suggests that we call a community that is created or that unites by belonging to a state a *political community* or a *state community*, because political communities and national traits are not one and the same.<sup>6</sup>

In each case, historians determine the primary concepts that they place in their theoretical toolkits on the basis of their research priorities and strategies. The terms *political nation* and *political culture* are chosen by those who favor a strategy of constructivism—who in talking about the past strive to not repeat the language of their sources and instead to create their own conceptual scientific language that is understandable to the modern reader.<sup>7</sup> Having chosen the theoretical concept of constructivism as our preference, I invoke concepts in this study that currently are widely accepted and most often used by historians.

5 Alvydas Nikžentaitis, “Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės politinės tautos specifika ir santykis su moderniąja tauta,” in *Praeities pėdsakai. Skiriama Profesoriaus daktaro Zigmanto Kiaupos 65-mečiui*, ed. Edmundas Rimša, Egidijus Aleksandravičius, and Artūras Dubonis (Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2007), 135–154.

6 Ingė Lukšaitė, “Liublino unija ir identitetų kaitos Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje XVI a. antroje pusėje” / “Unia lubelska a zmiany tożsamości w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w drugiej połowie XVI wieku,” in *Liublino unija: idėja ir jos tęstinumas / Unia lubelska: idea i jej kontynuacja*, ed. Liudas Glemža and Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė (Vilnius: Nacionalinis muziejus Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės valdovų rūmai, 2011), 224–225; 243.

7 See Zenonas Norkus, “Maxo Weberio feodalizmo samprata ir Lietuvos istorija,” *Lietuvos istorijos studijos* 1 (1997): 44–45.

Were I to create new terms in this case, I would only introduce additional confusion. Furthermore, it would be unhelpful in clarifying the concepts and allowing for the discovery of a language acceptable to everyone.

For the topic of this study, I choose the term *political nation* to describe the full-fledged multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-confessional, and multi-cultural boyar community that developed in the GDL, which sat at the geopolitical and geocultural crossroads between Western (Roman) civilization and Eastern (Byzantine) civilization. This term best captures the nature of the sociopolitical and sociocultural demos that was brought together by the ancient Lithuanian state and its policies, which created and fostered a unique political culture at the beginning of the early modern period. Sources bear witness to the fact that during the time under discussion, this community would affirm its belonging to the state with the words “We, Lithuania,” and “We, the nation of Lithuania.”<sup>8</sup> When modified by the adjective *political*, the word *nation* takes on a meaning that is broader than the modern understanding of the nation. In the context of Lithuanian historiographical research, I discuss the concept of the political nation more comprehensively in the chapter titled “A Sociopolitical and Sociocultural Portrait of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.”

The metaphor *golden age* in the title of this book was chosen to emphasize that the period at issue—from the second half of the fifteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth—was an uninterrupted term in which the political nation of the GDL developed, creating and fostering a unique culture of state rule and the defense and representation of itself. It was a time when the political nation first adopted the political values created by the medieval Lithuanian ducal monarchy and then breathed into them a spirit formed by the Renaissance and Early Baroque cultures. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these values underwent modifications that were determined largely by a new epoch and that became intellectual wealth in the hands of the heirs of the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the modern nations of Central Eastern Europe. They used this intellectual wealth in creating their nation states, the manifestation of which can be seen in the mentality of the modern nations in that region. By acquainting ourselves with political culture, we may see the mental ties that link contemporary societies with the world of values fostered in the past.

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8 See Jūratė Kiaupienė, “*Mes, Lietuva.*” *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės bajorija XVI a. (viešasis ir privatus gyvenimas)* (Vilnius: Kronta, 2003).

This study covers the period from the second half of the fifteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth century. The date chosen for the beginning of this era was the election of the youngest son of the Polish King and Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila, Casimir, as the Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1440. The choice of Casimir was coordinated neither with King Władysław III of Poland, Casimir's older brother, nor with the magnates of the Kingdom of Poland. It reflected the political will of Lithuania's political elite, which represented the still-forming political nation. The election of Casimir as Grand Duke violated the 1413 Union of Horodło<sup>9</sup> and bore witness to the process of consolidation that was occurring among Lithuania's magnates and the new relationship that was being created with Casimir and the magnates of the Kingdom of Poland, with whom they were bound together by the tethers of a dynastic union.<sup>10</sup> A new trait that united this embryonic political community was the understanding that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was the state not only of the Grand Duke but also of themselves, meaning, it was their political homeland. According to Stephen C. Rowell, the concept of this state as the homeland of this political nation is key to understanding the pluralistic Grand Duchy of Lithuania as well as Lithuanian-Polish relations in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the most important event in the creation of the Lithuanian political nation and the political and social life of the state was the privilege of May 2, 1447, issued by Lithuanian Grand Duke Casimir in response to the concrete political situation in which the ruler of the country resided elsewhere. With Casimir taking the Polish throne, the privilege emphasized his relationship with the sovereign political nation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as the heir to the Lithuanian state and to the Gediminids' dynastic rights. Casimir

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9 On October 2, 1413, King Jogaila of Poland and Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania held a summit in Horodło with representatives of the magnates and boyars from both states. The documents adopted at the summit are examined in *1413 m. Horodlės aktai (dokumentai ir tyrinėjimai) / Akty Horodelskie z 1413 roku (dokumenty i studia)*, ed. Jūratė Kiaupienė, Lidia Korczak, Piotr Rabiej, Edmundas Rimša, Jan Wroniszewski (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2013).

10 For a prosopographic portrait of the magnates at the time under discussion, see Rimvydas Petrauskas, *Lietuvos diduomenė XIV a. pabaigoje—XV a. Sudėtis—struktūra—valdžia* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2003), 188–208.

11 Stephen C. Rowell, "Casimir Jagiellończyk and the Polish Gamble, 1445–7," *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 4 (1999): "In the 1440s the Lithuanian nobility was only just beginning to consolidate its nascent opinion that the Grand Duchy was its political patrimony too. It is in patrimony, not patriotism that key to understanding the mid-fifteenth-century pluralistic Grand Duchy and Lithuano-Polish relations, especially the coronation election of 1445–47 lies" (39).

promised in this document that he would give estates, castles, and secular and ecclesiastical positions only to local nobility and not decide upon issues of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania without the consent of the land's magnates. Thus the principle of *ius indigenatus*, which had become entrenched in many European countries at the time—reserving offices and positions for the nobility of the country—was extended to the Lithuanian case. Boyars wishing to improve their knightly skills were allowed to leave the country, unhindered, to all foreign lands except those that were enemies. This opened up cultural and political contacts with Renaissance Europe.

The 1447 privilege, couched in legal jargon, recorded the foundations of the independence of the GDL boyar class and launched a new period for the still-formative political nation to participate in ruling the state. The privilege was not the act of a medieval ruler who applied it in reflection of his good will and grace as before, but a formalized agreement with his subjects that created social ties based on the concepts of *laws* and *obligations*. The character and spirit of the 1447 act is proof of the changes that were going on in the GDL's early period of modernization.

Alexander, succeeding Casimir as Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1492, issued a privilege of his own the same year. The document did more than reconfirm all the obligations of earlier rulers to the Lithuanian state and its political community; it included new articles. The most important of them in terms of political culture was the enshrining in law of a political institution that had grown out of the Grand Duke's council—the Council of Lords—and the prerogatives of its work. In the privilege, Alexander promised to refrain from amending resolutions taken by the Grand Duke together with the Council of Lords. From then on, GDL officials had to be appointed and dismissed, as well as foreign policy agreed upon, with the knowledge and consent of the Council of Lords.<sup>12</sup>

A new situation arose at the end of the fifteenth century, the most important trait of which was that the Council of Lords, which was made up of representatives of the political nation—high ecclesiastical and secular officials—received political rights and assumed political obligations in tandem with the ruler as a “collective” monarch or, alternatively, a “corporative” dynasty.<sup>13</sup> In a 1506

12 See *Lietuvos istorija*, vol. 4, 315–320.

13 The concept of a “corporative” dynasty, which supplemented the Jagiellonian dynasty in tandem with the formation and strengthening of the political society (the nation), is discussed in Stephen C. Rowell, “Išdavystė ar paprasti nesutarimai? Kazimieras Jogailaitis ir Lietuvos diduomenė 1440–1481 metais,” in *Lietuvos valstybė XII–XVIII a.*, ed. Zigmantas Kiaupa, Arturas Mickevičius, and Jolita Sarcevičienė (Vilnius, 1997), 45–74; Stephen C. Rowell,

privilege declared by Sigismund the Old and a 1529 privilege proclaimed by Sigismund Augustus, the rights of the Council were reconfirmed and extended.

This study ends with the beginning of the military and political crisis that struck the Commonwealth of the Two Nations and all of Central Eastern Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century. Although the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a political and state entity withstood these upheavals, its society emerged from the crisis having experienced massive demographic, material, and spiritual losses. The Union of Kėdainiai—the agreement executed between the GDL and the Kingdom of Sweden on October 20, 1655 in Kėdainiai—is chosen as the symbolic event that marks the end of this stage of the country's political culture. With this act, the GDL's 1569 union with the Kingdom of Poland was terminated and the Duchy seceded from the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. The Union was signed by more than 1,100 representatives of the GDL's political nation, who, in their own name and that of their successors, renounced their loyalty to King John (II) Casimir Vasa of Poland, abolished all rights of the Lithuanian state, and declared Swedish King Charles X Gustav<sup>14</sup> the Grand Duke of Lithuania. This, the Lithuanian historian Gintautas

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“Bears and Traitors, or Political Tensions in the Grand Duchy, ca. 1440–1481,” *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 2 (1997): 28–55: “The importance of family tradition in the consolidation of the political nation, of inherited interest, of a corporative ‘alternative’ to the royal line” (44).

- 14 There are numerous and often opposing views of the 1655 Treaty of Kėdainiai in historiography. A classic work of Lithuanian historiography is Adolfas Šapoka's study *1655 metų Kėdainių sutartis, arba švedai Lietuvoje 1655–1656 metais* (Vilnius: Mokslas 1990), written on the eve of World War II and published by Antanas Tyla in 1990. A new view of the subject in Lithuanian historiography is laid out in *Lietuvos istorija*, vol. 6, ed. Gintautas Sliesoriūnas: *Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė XVI a. pabaigoje—XVIII a. pradžioje (1588–1733)* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2015). An interpretation by contemporary Polish historiography is laid out in *Wielka Historia Polski*, vol. 3, part 1, ed. Józef Andrzej Gierowski: *Rzeczpospolita w dobie złotej wolności (1648–1763)* (Kraków: Fogra Oficyna Wydawnicza 2003). Another stance in contemporary historiography is discussed in a dissertation prepared and published in Sweden: Andrej Kotljarchuk, *In the Shadows of Poland and Russia. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Sweden in the European Crisis of the Mid-Seventeenth Century* (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2006). A short overview of evaluations of discussions on the Treaty of Kėdainiai is provided in Jūratė Kiaupienė and Andrzej Zakrzewski, “Unie polsko-litewskie—próba nowego spojrzenia,” in *Lex est Rex in Polonia et in Lithuania ... Tradycje prawno-ustrojowe Rzeczypospolitej—doświadczenie i dziedzictwo*, ed. Adam Jankiewicz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Trybunału Konstytucyjnego, 2008), 65–82; second supplemented edition: Jūratė Kiaupienė and Andrzej Zakrzewski, “Unie polsko-litewskie—spojrzenie z dwóch stron,” in *Lex est Rex in Polonia et in Lithuania ... Tradycje prawno-ustrojowe Rzeczypospolitej—doświadczenie i dziedzictwo*, ed. Adam Jankiewicz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Trybunału Konstytucyjnego, 2011), 61–84.



Sliesoriūnas states with emphasis, was the only true attempt to break the ties between Lithuania and Poland ever since 1569 Union of Lublin brought the Commonwealth into being.

The 1655 Union of Kėdainiai did not create a political entity. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania renewed state ties with the Kingdom of Poland and the Commonwealth of the Two Nations remained on Europe's geopolitical map. It did, however, change. The preconditions for change in its political culture emerged during the years of war and occupation in the mid-seventeenth century. What we see in this political culture are traits of a different nature, marked by crisis at the geopolitical and statehood levels. The attitudes and behavior of the Commonwealth's political communities also changed—a topic that can be viewed more deeply only through separate research.

The political culture of the GDL from the second half of the fifteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth century has not been fully examined in Lithuanian historiography as a separate subject of research. The first observations on the unique traits of this culture in the sixteenth century, which taken and introduced to an international audience more than a decade ago, did not provoke discussion.<sup>15</sup> More recently in his first volume<sup>16</sup> of a three-part series, the Lithuanian historian Darius Kuolys focuses most of his attention on certain forms of expression of political culture in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century. Kuolys emphasizes that the still-extant division between ancient Lithuania and modern Lithuania and the GDL's fragmented narrative were among the most important aspects that spurred him to do more in-depth research on this story and try to shed more light on the core ideas, symbolic meanings, images, and commonalities of this narrative. The cultural issues that he examines, as well as his sources, often intersect with those of our study. I will be taking a look at Kuolys's ideas and observations frequently and either use them as a predicate for my own observations or discuss them in greater detail.

15 Jūratė Kiaupienė, "Litewskie cechy kultury politycznej szlachty Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVI wieku," in *Kultura Litwy i Polski w dziejach. Tożsamość i współistnienie*, ed. Jerzy Wyrozumski (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury w Krakowie 2000), 67–78; Iurate Kiaupene, "Osobennosti politicheskoj kul'tury Velikogo Kniazhestva Litovskogo v XVI v.," in *Balty i Velikoe kniazhestvo Litovskoe. Istoriko-lingvisticheskiĭ vzgliad* (Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo, 2007), 54–66. See also *XVI amžiaus Lietuvos ir Lenkijos politinės kultūros šaltiniai (1562 metų tekstai)*, compiled by Jūratė Kiaupienė (Vilnius: Leidykla Eugrimas 2008).

16 D. Kuolys, *Res Lituana. Kunigaikštystės bendrija*, v. 1: *Respublikos steigimas* (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2009).



Polish historiography understands and treats the GDL's political culture differently. Its long-standing view is dominated by the belief that the Polish-Lithuanian union created in 1386 gave rise to the beginning of the integration of the Lithuanian state and Lithuanian boyar class into their Polish equivalents, culminating in the sixteenth century with the total integration of the two political bodies and the creation of an undivided Poland. This tradition of incorporation does not recognize the independent sociopolitical and sociocultural role of the GDL's political community.

It is in this spirit of Polish historiography that the Polish historian Edward Opaliński produced his study on political culture, which translates into English as "The political culture of the Polish Szlachta 1587–1652: Parliamentary system and civic culture."<sup>17</sup> If we take this title verbatim, we could put the book aside in the belief that it covers only the political culture of Poland. In explaining his aim, however, Opaliński states his intent to reveal as fully as possible the understanding of the meaning of political culture for the Polish, Lithuanian, and Ruthenian *szlachta*<sup>18</sup> at the end of the sixteenth century and first half of the seventeenth. His topics of research are the attitudes of the *szlachta* toward the Republic's political system and its constituent institutions; the *szlachta*'s value system and political identity; its reaction to central government's decisions, and its demands of and aims vis-à-vis the creators of the political system. Finally, as Opaliński writes, the research also covers the ties between political order and political culture. This kind of inquiry, he hopes and states with emphasis, will allow him to determine whether the Polish, Lithuanian, and Ruthenian political culture [sic Opaliński] truly showed traits of civic culture characteristic of societies that have an understanding of political responsibility.<sup>19</sup>

17 E. Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej w latach 1587–1652. System parlamentarny a społeczeństwo obywatelskie* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1995). Opaliński also discusses earlier twentieth-century Polish historiographical research on the issue (10–15).

18 In Polish historiography, the word *szlachta* (*šlėkta* in Lithuanian) denotes the middle and petty boyars, as distinct from the *magnatów* (magnates), who comprised the highest boyar class. Lithuanian historians use the term "boyar" to denote all members of the aristocracy. When I do the same, I do not attempt to erase the borders that mark their internal categorization, overlook differences among members of the class, and on this basis determine their economic, social, and political status in society. Concepts such as "dukes," "magnates," and middle, petty, or regular "boyars" are used in this book to distinguish among strata within this class. I use the word *szlachta*, a lexeme of Polish origin that a specific meaning like the Latin *nobilis*, only in quoting sources or other authors' research and in writing about Polish society. See Kiaupienė, "Mes, Lietuva," 50–69.

19 Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna*, 15–16: "Cel, który przed sobą stawiamy, to możliwie całościowe ujęcie kultury politycznej szlachty polskiej, litewskiej i ruskiej u schyłku XVI

If so, the primary subject of Opaliński's research is the civic attitude of the *szlachta* of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. Opaliński defines the *szlachta* as a demos of boyars united by class that fostered identical political values and agreed on the tools with which to achieve their goals. Opaliński does not consider when and how this integrated political group arose and of what it was composed. He does address himself to the last-mentioned question in his own way, however, by examining the historical identity of the Commonwealth's *szlachta*. He has no doubts that the *szlachta* of Poland, Lithuania, and Rus', the land of the Ruthenians, knew that their forefathers had lived in separate state organisms and that living traditions of their own statehood persisted at the time under discussion. However, the existence of this identity did not hinder the forming of a common *szlachta* tradition. The creation of the Commonwealth's political system and the process of the *szlachta*'s acquisition of political rights, which began in the late fourteenth century and lasted several hundred years, created the conditions for the formation not only of an integrated *szlachta* but also of a common historical identity. In Opaliński's opinion, several factors influenced this process powerfully, foremost the long-term nature of the integration process, the gradual inclusion of Ruthenians and Lithuanians in it, and recognition of the *szlachta*'s languages and religions as equal under the law. It is also important that Poland's *szlachta* gave preference to the traditions of the Jagiellonian dynasty, which were shared by Poles, Lithuanians, and Ruthenians, and not to those of the Piast dynasty.<sup>20</sup> Through this understanding, Opaliński

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wieku i w pierwszej połowie następnego stulecia. Zgodnie z przyjętą definicją przedmiotem badań są postawy szlachty wobec panującego w Rzeczypospolitej systemu politycznego, w tym poszczególnych instytucji tworzących go, a także szlachecki system wartości i świadomość polityczna, reakcje społeczeństwa szlacheckiego na decyzje władz centralnych oraz postulaty i żądania pod adresem instytucji tworzących system polityczny. Przedmiotem badań stały się wreszcie relacje między ustrojem politycznym a kulturą polityczną. Spodziewamy się, iż takie ujęcie tematu umożliwi udzielenie odpowiedzi na pytanie, czy kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej, litewskiej i ruskiej posiadała istotnie cechy kultury obywatelskiej, charakterystycznej dla społeczeństw świadomych własnej podmiotowości i własnej politycznej odpowiedzialności."

- 20 Ibid., 52: "Czy historia była czynnikiem integrującym społeczeństwo szlacheckie i czy istniała wspólna tradycja historyczna dla całej szlachty Rzeczypospolitej? Nie ulega wątpliwości, że szlachta polska, litewska i ruska były świadome, że w przeszłości przodkowie ich zamieszkiwali odrębne organizmy państwowe. Tradycja własnych państwowości była w interesującym nas okresie wciąż żywa. Jednakże fakt jej istnienia nie przeszkadzał w wykształceniu się wspólnej dla całej braci herbowej tradycji historycznej. Trwający od schyłku XIV stulecia kilkusetletni proces powstawania systemu politycznego Rzeczypospolitej i związanego z nim uzyskiwania praw politycznych przez szlachtę sprzyjał nie tylko powstaniu zintegrowanego społeczeństwa szlacheckiego, ale także narodzeniu się wspólnej tradycji i wspólnej

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