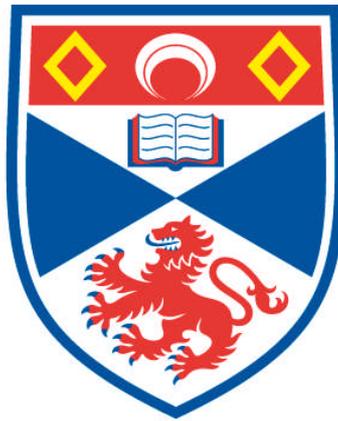


**"MONARCHY AS IT SHOULD BE"?
BRITISH PERCEPTIONS OF POLAND-LITHUANIA IN THE
LONG SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

Martyna Mirecka

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



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“Monarchy as it should be”?
British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania in the long seventeenth century

by
Martyna Mirecka

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of History
University of St Andrews

September 2013

Abstract

Early modern Poland-Lithuania figured significantly in the political perceptions of Europeans in the long seventeenth century – not only due to its considerable size and enormous commercial and military resources, but also, and just as importantly, due to its exceptional religious and political situation. This interest in Poland-Lithuania was shared by many Britons. However, a detailed examination of how Britons perceived Poland-Lithuania at that time and how they treated Poland-Lithuania in their political debates has never been undertaken.

This thesis utilises a wide range of the previously neglected source material and considers the patterns of transmission of information to determine Britons' awareness of Poland-Lithuania and their employment of the Polish-Lithuanian example in the British political discourse during the seventeenth century. It looks at a variety of geographical and historical information, English and Latin descriptions of Poland-Lithuania's physical topography and boundaries, and its ethnic and cultural make-up presented in histories, atlases and maps, to establish what, where and who Poland-Lithuania was for Britons. Poland-Lithuania's political framework, with its composite structure and unique relationship between the crown and nobility, elicited a spectrum of reactions, and so this thesis evaluates the role that both criticism and praise of Poland-Lithuania played in British constitutional debates.

Consequently, the study argues that Britons' perceptions of Poland-Lithuania were characterised by great plasticity. It claims that Britons' impressions of the country were shaped by multiple – real or imagined – borders, whether cultural, economic or political, but also that Britons were affected by the exposure to a uniform, idealised historiography of this country. Crucially, the thesis asserts that references to Poland-Lithuania constituted an ingenious ideological and polemical device that was eagerly used throughout the period by Britons of diverse political sympathies. Moreover, through the examination of the kingdom's geopolitical role, particularly its fluctuating position as a “bulwark of Christendom”, side by side its engagement against Protestants, the thesis challenges the assumption that anti-Catholicism dominated seventeenth-century British perceptions of the world.

Declarations

Candidate's declarations

I, Martyna Mirecka, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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Signature:

I was admitted as a research student in September 2008 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in History in June 2009; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2008 and 2013.

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St Andrews, September 2013

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<i>Akta unji</i>	Stanisław Kutrzeba and Władysław Semkowicz, <i>Akta unji Polski z Litwą 1385-1791</i> (Kraków, 1932)
<i>Anarchy</i>	Sir Robert Filmer, <i>The anarchy of a limited or mixed monarchy</i> (London, 1648)
<i>Bałuk-Ulewiczowa</i>	Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, <i>Goslicius' Ideal Senator and his cultural impact over the centuries: Shakespearean Reflections</i> (Kraków, 2009)
BL	British Library, London
<i>Botero</i>	Giovanni Botero, <i>The travellers breviat</i> (London, 1601)
BRT	<i>Briefe relation of some affaires and transactions</i>
<i>Buczek</i>	Karol Buczek, <i>Dzieje kartografii polskiej od XV do XVIII wieku</i> (Wrocław, Warszawa & Kraków, 1963)
<i>Connor</i>	Bernard Connor, <i>The History of Poland, in Several Letters to Persons of Quality</i> (London, 1698)
<i>Craig</i>	<i>De Unione Regnorum Britanniae tractatus</i> by Sir Thomas Craig, ed. C. Sanford Terry (Edinburgh, 1909)
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series</i> , ed. Mary Anne Everett Green et al. (London, 1857-1960)
CSPV	<i>Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice and in other libraries of Northern Italy</i> , ed. R. Brown et al. (London, 1864-1947)
<i>Dembkowski</i>	Henryk Dembkowski, <i>The Union of Lublin: Polish federalism in the Golden Age</i> (New York, 1982)
DB	<i>Diutinus Britanicus Collector of the Affaires of Great Britaine</i>
<i>D'Avity</i>	Pierre D'Avity, <i>The Estates, Empires, and Principalities of the World</i> (London, 1615)
<i>De origine</i>	Marcin Kromer, <i>De origine de et rebus gestis Polonorum libri XXX</i> (Basle, 1555)
EEBO	Early English Books Online
EFE	<i>Elementa ad Fontium Editiones</i> , ed. C.H. Talbot et al. (Rome, 1960-1982)
<i>English Ortelius</i>	<i>The theatre of whole world: set forth by that excellent geographer Abraham Ortelius</i> (London, [1606])
EMLO	Early Modern Letters Online (http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

<i>Epitome</i> (Norton)	Abraham Ortelius, <i>An Epitome of Ortelius his Theatre of the world</i> , ed. John Norton [Antwerp/London, 1603]
<i>Epitome</i> (Shawe)	Abraham Ortelius, <i>An Epitome of Ortelius his Theatre of the world</i> , ed. James Shawe [Antwerp/London, 1603]
HPP	The Hartlib Papers Project, University of Sheffield (http://hridigital.shef.ac.uk/hartlib)
HUS	<i>Harvard Ukrainian Studies</i>
<i>Jacobean Union</i>	<i>The Jacobean Union. Six tracts of 1604</i> , ed. Bruce R. Galloway and Brian P. Levack (Edinburgh, 1985)
JHC	<i>Journal of the House of Commons</i> , Vols 1-13 (London, 1802)
Kret	Wojciech Kret, <i>Katalog dawnych map Rzeczypospolitej w kolekcji Emeryka Hutten Czapskiego i w innych zbiorach. Tom I: Mapy XV-XVI wieku</i> (Wrocław, 1978)
LG	<i>London Gazette</i>
MI	<i>Moderate Intelligencer</i> (1645)
Moryson	Fynnes Moryson, <i>An itinerary written by Fynes Moryson</i> (London, 1617)
MPC	<i>Mercurius Politicus Comprising the Summ of All Intelligence</i>
NA	National Archives
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford, 2004) (www.oxforddnb.com)
<i>Oldenburg</i>	<i>The correspondence of Henry Oldenburg</i> , ed. and trans. A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (Madison & London, 1966)
<i>Pears</i>	<i>The correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet</i> , ed. Stuart A. Pears (London, 1845)
PD	<i>Perfect Diurnal of Some Passages and Proceedings</i>
PI	<i>Public Intelligencer</i> (1655)
<i>Pitt</i>	Moses Pitt, <i>The English Atlas</i> , vol. I (Oxford, 1680)
<i>Polonia</i>	Marcin Kromer, <i>Polonia sive de situ, populis, moribus, magistratibus et Republica regni Polonici libri duo</i> (Cologne, 1578)
PSB	<i>Polski Słownik Biograficzny</i> , ed. Władysław Konopczyński et al. (48 vols, Kraków & Wrocław, 1935-2012)
<i>Relation</i>	[John Peyton], <i>A Relation of the State of Polonia and the United Provinces of that Crown Anno 1598</i> , ed. C.H. Talbot (Elementa ad Fontium Editiones XIII, Rome, 1965)

RPCS	<i>The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, Series 1</i> , ed. and abrig. John Hill Burton and David Masson (Edinburgh, 1877-1898)
RWCS	<i>A transcript of the registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, from 1640-1708</i> , ed. G.E. Briscoe Eyre, C.R. Rivington and H.R. Plomer (London, 1913-1914)
SEER	<i>The Slavonic and East European Review</i>
<i>Shakespeare's Europe</i>	<i>Shakespeare's Europe: a survey of the condition of Europe at the end of the 16th century being unpublished chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary (1617)</i> , with an introduction and an account of Fynes Moryson's career by Charles Hughes (New York, 1967)
SP	Public Record Office, State Papers
<i>Speed</i>	John Speed, <i>The Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World</i> (London, 1631)
<i>Stepkowski</i>	<i>O senatorze doskonałym studia</i> , ed. Aleksander Stepkowski (Warszawa, 2009)
<i>Thurloe</i>	<i>A collection of the state papers of John Thurloe, Esq; Secretary first to the Council of State and afterwards to the two Protectors Oliver and Richard Cromwell</i> , ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1742)
<i>Wing</i>	<i>Short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English books printed in other countries, 1641-1700</i> , ed. Donald Goddard Wing (New York, 1945-1951)

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Introduction

Purpose and historiography

How does one country get to know another? How does a nation use the other nation's past to shape its own historical experience? To what extent does the nature of sources determine perceptions of others? Those are the questions that have inspired my research and have subsequently determined the purpose of this study, which is to provide a systematic analysis of British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania in the long seventeenth century, with particular emphasis on different interpretations to which the kingdom's constitutional arrangement gave rise. Britons' interpretations of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy varied greatly and, as the title suggests, while some believed it to be "as it should", others questioned its worth.

There are several key reasons for undertaking this study. First, a detailed examination of how Poland-Lithuania was perceived and treated in political debates in seventeenth-century Britain has never been undertaken. Scholars have shown some interest in what Britons knew about Poland-Lithuania; however, their research has been limited in terms of volume and scope. The only monograph that has been focused on discussion of Poland-Lithuania in political writings is *Rzeczpospolita Polska w literaturze politycznej Zachodu* by Stanisław Kot (1919), though this erudite work is now seriously dated.¹ Kot paid little attention to seventeenth century Britain, believing that Britons did not care much for Poland-Lithuania in that period. This thesis will challenge Kot's assessment mainly, but not exclusively, through the examination of a considerably broader spectrum of materials than his study, which is possible due to the advantages of modern technologies offering access to numerous catalogues and databases.

Following research by Stanisław Kot, but also building on discoveries of Waław Borowy and Marek Wajsblum, Henryk Zins has offered a valuable examination

¹ Stanisław Kot, *Rzeczpospolita Polska w literaturze politycznej Zachodu* (Kraków, 1919). Kot conducted extensive research on cultural, religious and political relations between Poland-Lithuania and England, but he never published a monograph on the subject. His works include *Anglo-polonica. Angielskie źródła rękopiśmienne do dziejów stosunków kulturalnych Polski z Anglią* (Warszawa, 1935); 'Oddziaływanie Braci Polskich w Anglii', *Reformacja w Polsce*, 7-8 (1936), 217-244; 'Nationum Proprietates', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 6 (1956), 1-43.

of Britons' knowledge of Poland. However, his *Polska w oczach Anglików, XIV-XVI wiek* does not go beyond the sixteenth century but for a few references, nor does he discuss the application of Polish-Lithuanian example in British political debates.² *Polska a Anglia w XVII wieku* by Edward Mierzwa aimed to supplement the meagre of studies on the seventeenth century, but it focuses on commercial and diplomatic relations between Poland and England rather than on Britons' awareness of Poland-Lithuania. These publications are also methodologically restricted, for to both Zins and Mierzwa the units of their analyses are "England" and "Poland" rather than "Britain" and "Poland-Lithuania". Finally, not the least disadvantage of all these publications is their limited accessibility, as they are available only in Polish. Although in recent years Anglophone historians have shown new interest in Poland-Lithuania, only a few have looked at its impact and influence on Britons. Among them David Worthington's *British and Irish Experiences and Impressions of Central Europe, c. 1560-1688* is a valuable addition to the existing scholarship, though it focuses primarily on the Habsburg Empire.³ In turn, articles by Robert Frost and Allan Macinnes examined specifically the political relevance of Poland-Lithuania, but their brief analyses considered only Scottish perceptions and concentrated mostly on specific issues, such as union and resistance.⁴

In comparison, considerable research has been undertaken by both Polish and Anglophone historians (sometimes in collaboration) on the British presence in Poland-Lithuania. In the last decades, Anna Biegańska has written extensively on Scots in Poland-Lithuania and new works by Peter Bajer, Waldemar Kowalski, David Dobson and essays collected by Tom Devine and David Hesse have added

² Henryk Zins, *Polska w oczach Anglików, XIV-XVI wiek* (Lublin, 2002). Also, commercial and diplomatic links between England and Poland-Lithuania are discussed in some of Zins's other works, for instance, *England and the Baltic in the Elizabethan Era* (Manchester, 1972); 'English Trade with Russia and the Problem of Narva in the Mid-Sixteenth Century', *Laurentian University Review*, 2/3 (1970).

³ David Worthington, *British and Irish Experiences and Impressions of Central Europe, c. 1560-1688* (Farnham, 2012).

⁴ Robert I. Frost, 'Hiding from the Dogs. The Problem of Polish-Scottish Political Dialogue, 1550-1707' in T.M. Devine and David Hesse (eds), *Scotland and Poland. Historical Encounters, 1500-2010* (Edinburgh, 2011), 21-37; Allan Macinnes, 'The Hidden Commonwealth: Poland-Lithuania and Scottish Political Discourse in the Seventeenth Century' in Karin Friedrich and Barbara M. Pendzich (eds), *Citizenship and identity in a multinational commonwealth: Poland-Lithuania in context, 1550-1772* (Leiden & Boston, 2009), 233-260.

substantially to our knowledge of the Scottish communities in Poland-Lithuania.⁵ Steve Murdoch has explored the problem of the identity of Scots travelling to and living in Poland-Lithuania and scrutinised Scotto-Polish military and diplomatic contacts, particularly in the broader context of relations between Britain and Scandinavia.⁶ Additionally, Anglophone scholarship has paid considerable attention to Poland-Lithuania and its position within the European setting. Robert Frost has examined the evolution of the status of Poland-Lithuania in the context of the Thirty Years' War and the Second Northern War, whereas Poland-Lithuania's politics and their place on the European scene have been explored in the collection of essays edited by Richard Butterwick and another prepared by Karin Friedrich and Barbara Pendzich.⁷ Furthermore, Karin Friedrich has provided presentations of both the political thought and culture of Poland-Lithuania.⁸ As we can see, there exists considerable scholarship that examines various aspects of this kingdom and its connections with Britain, but none of it provides a systematic analysis of British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania in the long seventeenth century.

A second reason for this study is to offer another dimension to the research on the relationship between Britain and Poland-Lithuania. Much of the existing scholarship centres on comparisons between the kingdoms, without analysing possible influences and impacts they may have had on each other. This method has been a driving force behind *Britain and Poland-Lithuania: Contact and*

⁵ Her English studies include, for instance: 'Scottish Merchants and Traders in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Warsaw', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, 3 (1984), 19-34; 'In Search for Tolerance Scottish Catholics and Presbyterians in Poland', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, 17 (1992), 37-59; 'The learned Scots in Poland (from the Mid-Sixteenth to the Close of the Eighteenth Century)', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 43/1 (March 2001), 1-27. Peter Paul Bajer, *Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 16th-18th Centuries* (Leiden & Boston, 2012); Waldemar Kowalski, 'The Placement of Urbanised Scots', 53-103 and 'Krakow Citizenship and the Local Scots, 1509-1655' in Richard Unger (ed.) with the assistance of Jakub Basista, *Britain and Poland-Lithuania: Contact and Comparison from the Middle Ages to 1795* (Leiden & Boston, 2008), 263-285; David Dobson, *Scots in Poland, Russia and the Baltic States* (2 vols, Baltimore, 2000-2009); Devine and Hesse, *Scotland and Poland*.

⁶ Steve Murdoch, *Network North Scottish kin, commercial and covert association in Northern Europe, 1603-1746* (Leiden & Boston, 2006) and with Andrew MacKillop, *Fighting for identity: Scottish military experience c. 1550-1900* (Leiden & Boston, 2002).

⁷ Robert I. Frost, 'Scottish soldiers, Poland-Lithuania and the Thirty Years' war' in Steve Murdoch (ed.), *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648* (Leiden & Boston, 2001), 191-213; Idem, *After the deluge: Poland-Lithuania and the second Northern War 1655-1660* (Cambridge, 1993); Richard Butterwick (ed.), *The Polish-Lithuanian monarchy in European context c. 1500-1795* (Basingstoke & New York, 2001); Friedrich and Pendzich, *Citizenship and identity*.

⁸ Karin Friedrich, 'Poland-Lithuania' in Howell A. Lloyd, Glenn Burgess and Simon Hodson (eds), *European political thought 1450-1700. Religion, law and philosophy* (New Haven & London, 2007), 208-242 and idem, *The Other Prussia: Royal Prussia, Poland and Liberty, 1569-1772* (Oxford, 2000).

Comparison from the Middle Ages to 1795, edited by Richard Unger, including Tomasz Gromelski's essay on the sixteenth-century political thought of Poland-Lithuania and England. The same approach has been adopted by Allan Macinnes, who in his articles has connected the political practices of Poland-Lithuania with those of Scotland but in a comparative manner.⁹ In contrast, this study aims to establish what contemporaneous Britons thought of Polish-Lithuanian politics and how they employed the example of Poland-Lithuania in their own political debates. Thus, the study looks at Britons' understanding of Poland-Lithuania rather than simply at comparison between this kingdom and Britain. This approach includes the provision that understanding mechanics of communication is necessary for understanding Britons' perception of Poland-Lithuania. Consequently, much attention is paid to how information about Poland-Lithuania was produced, disseminated and acquired.

A third key reason for undertaking this study is to test, and re-evaluate, several prevailing opinions about the relevance of Polish-Lithuanian political practices for Britons. This relevance has continued to be doubted since Professor Kot's conclusion that the English concentration on Poland-Lithuania was limited and that even those who encountered Polish politicians were not impressed enough to put their thoughts in writing.¹⁰ Similarly, Professor Frost has suggested that Scots knew very little about Poland-Lithuania and they associated it with absolute monarchy and arbitrary power.¹¹ In response, this study will demonstrate that Poland-Lithuania was an important point of reference for British political thinkers and politicians, who predominantly considered Polish-Lithuanian government as limited. The study not only aims to show that Poland-Lithuania's constitutional arrangements informed a broad range of British political debates, but also to analyse the circumstances in which the Polish-Lithuanian example was applied. Those applications may be not as obvious as supposed by the current research, which by and large has presented Poland-Lithuania within a republican, or even democratic, tradition.¹² Both the ideology

⁹ Cf. Macinnes, 'The Hidden Commonwealth'; Idem, 'The Reception of Buchanan in Northern Europe in the Seventeenth Century' in Caroline Erskine and Roger Mason (eds), *George Buchanan: Political Thought in Early Modern Britain and Europe* (Farnham, 2012), 151-187.

¹⁰ Kot, *Rzeczpospolita*, 173.

¹¹ Frost, 'Hiding from the Dogs', 24, 32.

¹² M.B. Biskupski and James S. Pula (eds), *Polish democratic thought from the Renaissance to the Great Emigration: essays and documents* (New York, 1990); Alicja Grzeškowiak-Krwawicz, 'Anti-

and practices of the citizens of Poland-Lithuania justify this approach to a great extent and, indeed, the analysis of political writings reveals that many Britons associated Poland-Lithuania with the strong position of the nobility and the government's limitations. However, as this study will show, Britons' understanding and use of the Polish-Lithuanian political system was more complex, with "republican" disapproval as well as "royalist" appreciation being parts of the broad spectrum of reactions.

Finally, this thesis will take a more thorough approach towards sources than other studies. Firstly, a range of sources that has previously been either neglected or only glanced through will be carefully examined. These materials include atlases, compendia, breviats, maps, history books, political writings, speeches, official documents, newspapers, pamphlets, correspondence and diaries. Secondly, references to Poland-Lithuania will be explored in more depth. This fuller approach is well illustrated by the case of James Harrington's *Oceana*. Historians have noted his reference to Poland-Lithuania in *Oceana*, where he rather casually mentions that "the nobility governed that Country much after the manner of Poland, save that the King was not elective".¹³ Yet they have not elaborated on what such a casual reference might imply: that, for example, the author of *Oceana* assumed that knowledge of the politics of Poland-Lithuania was so commonplace that no additional description was necessary. Equally, they failed to appreciate how an analysis of the Commonwealth of Oceana's government could throw light on Harrington's own understanding of the Polish-Lithuanian constitution. In contrast, this thesis will scrutinize such comments and show their significance.

Methodology

Although the study makes no direct references to methodological works, it will become clear that it has been influenced by Quentin Skinner's concepts of studying political ideas, even if on occasion it departs from his

monarchism in the Polish Republicanism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds), *Republicanism. A shared European heritage* (Cambridge, 2002), I, 43-59.

¹³ James Harrington, *The common-wealth of Oceana* (London, 1656), f. B2r; Kot, *Rzeczpospolita*, 174-175.

recommendations.¹⁴ In addition, while not using the categories or adhering to the methods of the reception theory and the *histoire croisée*, the study has been inspired by the former's assumption about the active role of a text's reader, and the latter's postulate for a more dynamic, flexible approach to conducting historical enquiry.¹⁵

Perception is a fundamental concept for this research, therefore an understanding of both an object (what) and a subject (who) of the process should be clarified. For the purpose of this study, Poland-Lithuania is taken to mean a political entity, which was established as a result of the parliamentary union of Poland and Lithuania (1569), with its particular legal framework and a set of constitutional practices that, naturally, evolved over time. Although the union of 1569 reconfigured also Poland's relationship with other territories, such as Royal Prussia, this study gives precedence to the relationship between Poland and Lithuania. As Poland-Lithuania is conceptualised as a political structure, issues such as those of ethnicity, religious identity or economy will only be considered within this context.¹⁶ Throughout this study this entity will be referred to as Poland-Lithuania or the *Rzeczpospolita* with "Polish" being a corresponding adjectival form. If not stated otherwise, any reference to "Poland" or "Polonia" in the post-1569 context signifies the original usage of an author under discussion.

In turn, Britain here signifies a geographical unit that encompassed both Scotland and England, and Britons being inhabitants of this region. Whereas comparisons will be drawn between Scots' and Englishmen's use of Poland-Lithuania when possible and appropriate, the main analytical unit of the study is Britain and processes within its space. Consequently, the meaning of the word "British" throughout this study is threefold. Firstly, it is meant as a feature of the phenomenon called Britain. Secondly, it is used to characterise the body of writings produced in English: the literary products of Anglophone culture.

¹⁴ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge, 2003), I, esp. 57-89.

¹⁵ Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory. A critical introduction* (London & New York, 1984); Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond comparison: *histoire croisée* and the challenge of reflexivity', *History and theory*, 45 (2006), 30-50.

¹⁶ The full name of this newly emerged political entity was the kingdom of Poland and the grand duchy of Lithuania (*Królestwo Polskie i Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie*). The inhabitants themselves called their state *Rzeczpospolita/Res Publica*.

Finally, it is intended as an umbrella-word that incorporates the qualities of both Englishness and Scottishness with their divergences.

The long seventeenth century here denotes the period between 1573 and 1697, that is the time between the elections of Henri Valois and Friedrich August, the elector of Saxony as kings of Poland-Lithuania that were, for various reasons, watershed moments in the formation of Britons' perceptions of the *Rzeczpospolita*. However, a modified periodization was adopted for the second part of Chapter 3, for it was believed that the discussion about unions will benefit from extending the scope of the study to the 1700s.

The act of perceiving is defined both as becoming aware of and interpreting an object.¹⁷ In what follows, perceptions translate into knowledge and understanding of Poland-Lithuania, and by extension, uses of Poland-Lithuania, that is expressions of this knowledge and understanding. As the study seeks to discover public understanding of the *Rzeczpospolita*, it focuses on the perceptions of Poland-Lithuania presented in printed sources. While manuscripts remained important information and opinion transmitters in the seventeenth century, it is the printed materials – mass-produced, more consistent and accessible – that had greater capacity to present a variety of communications and inform a broader audience. Consequently, the study looks at a large pool of printed sources produced by and for Britons, and available to them, turning to manuscripts only if there is evidence of them having a broader impact or if they can offer significant, and otherwise unattainable, commentary on the subject under discussion. As to the range of selected sources, the study follows those scholars, who accept that political ideas and inferences could be drawn not only from the medium of books, but also from a variety of other sources such as newspapers, pamphlets, broadsides, sermons and diverse literary forms.¹⁸ Efforts were made to examine a wide and comprehensive range of sources, yet the study does not claim to provide a representative portrayal of British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania as a result, but rather to offer a systematic analysis of representations of such perceptions.

¹⁷ Angus Stevenson (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of English* (3rd ed., New York, 2010), 6128.

¹⁸ Richard Ashcraft, 'Political theory and the problem of ideology', *Journal of Politics*, 42 (1980) 687-705; Sarah Barber, *Regicide and republicanism. Politics and ethics in the English Revolution, 1646-1659* (Edinburgh, 1998), 3.

The conspicuous absence of discussion about religion in the study should not be taken as a sign of its insignificance in Britons' perceptions of Poland-Lithuania. Nor should it be interpreted as the author's lack of appreciation of religion's connections with politics. On the contrary, it is believed that religion was an important aspect of Britons' interest in the *Rzeczpospolita* and that in the seventeenth century it continued to be intertwined with politics. However, doctrinal and church-related issues (such as, for instance, inter-confessional reconciliation or the position of the clergy) were omitted as not immediately relevant to the focal point of this study – politics.¹⁹ This focus determined a treatment of religion, which is to be considered only in relation to politics; the clearest exposition of this approach is found in Chapter 4, which centres on religion as a vital factor of shaping perceptions of Poland-Lithuanian in the context of geopolitics. This is not to say that all interconnections between politics and religion are explored – this was impossible for reasons of space. For example, the study does not address the issue of toleration, despite the fact that Poland-Lithuania was often discussed as the country where toleration was guaranteed and despite the fact that that issue was linked with the Exclusion Crisis, which the study examines. Such structuring may be deemed arbitrary, but it was adopted to ensure the overall coherence of the thesis.

Structure and argument

Did Britons perceive Poland-Lithuania as “the monarchy as it should be”? Originally Poland-Lithuania was praised as such for being governed by “the great council” in all things,²⁰ but the answer to this question depended on an enquirer's understanding of a “proper” monarchy as much as on the properties of Poland-Lithuania. Crucially, as this study will argue, the *Rzeczpospolita* was capable of accommodating a wide range of needs. These corresponded with the plethora of Britons' reactions towards the country, which, often simultaneously, could be found civil or barbarian, recognised as familiar or foreign,

¹⁹ This is not to deny political implications of theologies as argued, for instance, in the case of Socinianism – Sarah Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: the Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge, 2010).

²⁰ Thomas Shadwell, *Epsom-Wells a comedy, acted at the Duke's theatre* (London, 1673), 58.

(dis)approved as Catholic or Christian, applauded for its freedom or censured for its licentiousness.

The study claims that the formation of perceptions should be considered in conjunction with the patterns of transmission of information, thus it opens with a discussion of the mechanics of communication. In particular, Chapter 1 examines the roles of Polish-British diplomatic relations, information networks and print markets to ascertain agents and conditions of making Poland-Lithuania known to Britons. Next, the study turns to inspect the range of geographical, chorographical and historical information, English and Latin descriptions of the *Rzeczpospolita's* physical topography and boundaries, its cultural make-up and its past presented in histories, atlases and maps, to establish what, where and who Poland-Lithuania was for Britons. This was by no means fixed and Chapter 2 examines variations and fluctuations in the position of Poland-Lithuania, which Britons could see as remote and on the periphery of Europe, as well as at its centre. Furthermore, it reveals Britons' disregard for Poland-Lithuania's borders and their inclination to dissect mentally the country and allocate its regions to various zones, whether geographical, political, commercial or cultural. This chapter will argue that cartographic and textual representations supported the notion of Poland and its territories rather than that of the *Rzeczpospolita*. Likewise, the dominance of pre-1569 narratives impeded Britons' understanding of the *Rzeczpospolita*. These contributed to the idealisation of a Polish-Lithuanian political system, which resulted in new, often heightened ways of conceptualising the kingdom, ignoring much of its existent circumstances.

Poland-Lithuania's constitutional arrangements provided important ideological and polemical devices for contemporary writers and Chapter 3 follows Britons' reactions to and applications of the *Rzeczpospolita's* unique polity. Poland-Lithuania as a limited monarchy and, in turn, as a composite monarchy, are two structuring categories of this discussion, which is led chronologically within each section in order to show how Britons' interpretations and attitudes towards the system's characteristic features changed over time. Building on findings presented in Chapters 2, Chapter 3 will show how through a body of influential political writings an idealised image of Polish-Lithuanian government became popular in Britain and will discuss the variety of interpretations and applications

of the *Rzeczpospolita*'s political principles and practices. Furthermore, it will explore the use of Poland-Lithuania in British union debates, giving particular attention to the nexus between changing circumstances of the Anglo-Scottish union, Britons' shifting knowledge of unions of the *Rzeczpospolita* and the latter's fluctuating political position.

Having looked at perceptions of Poland-Lithuania's 'domestic' politics, Chapter 4 widens the perspective to focus on its geopolitical position more generally, and on contemporary perceptions of it as a "bulwark of Christendom" in particular. This will entail examining the way in which its self-proclaimed role as the defender of Christendom from the Turks came to be accepted in Britain and the circumstances of this notion's evolution during the seventeenth century. The examination of Poland-Lithuania's position as an *antemurale Christianitatis* is completed with the analysis of the kingdom's involvement with Protestant Sweden to demonstrate the complexity of Britons' reactions towards Poland-Lithuania and to reveal that in the context of geopolitics the *Rzeczpospolita*'s Christianity prevailed over its Catholicism.

The study points to multiple sources of information about Poland-Lithuania and demonstrates Britons' considerable exposure to the subject of the *Rzeczpospolita*. This is not to claim the high quality of available information, which, on the contrary, was often partial, inaccurate and outdate. Yet, the study proves that the limited knowledge of Poland-Lithuania did not prevent Britons from using it to support their positions. What is more, rather than seeing this limited knowledge as a sign of a limited interest, the study argues that to a great extent this fragmentation of information and ambiguity of characterizations contributed to the popularity of Polish-Lithuanian example, for it allowed a high number of interpretations, thus could advance a variety of arguments.

Conventions

All dates are given in their original format, but when necessary the change of the year (adapted to the Gregorian calendar) is indicated. For the sake of brevity, many publications' titles are abridged; their full descriptions are provided in

Bibliography. The rule was to preserve original spelling and italicisation, though obvious typographical errors were corrected. The study adopted a standard editorial convention of using square brackets to denote corrections, explanations and interpolations that were not in the original text. If not stated otherwise, translations are the author's.

Chapter 1

Communicating Poland-Lithuania: contacts, networks and information flows

Introduction

The most obvious impulse for one country to get to know another is shared interests – either positive interests that bind them as allies or negative interests that set them apart as competitors. In addition, curiosity can be awakened by either proximity or, on the contrary, distance, which in turn is often accompanied by an aura of mystery. This curiosity may be satisfied by a flow of people and information, and the accumulation of knowledge of the country leads to the formation of perceptions of it.

Poland-Lithuania was not and, as some historians have argued, could not be a “natural” partner for either England or Scotland.¹ It has been well said that, “Poland has traditionally been too distant to be familiar, yet too close to be exotic”.² Yet, despite that, Polish-British diplomatic relations were not insignificant and their networks quite complex, and these circumstances obviously affected the scope and the quality of information about Poland-Lithuania available to Britons. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the nature of these inter-connections, and the exchanges of both people and information between Poland-Lithuania and Britain in the long seventeenth century. Taking into consideration the development and character of the emerging press market in Britain, this examination aims to demonstrate how the mechanics of communication helped shape Britons’ perceptions of Poland-Lithuania.

The subject is approached in what follows from three different perspectives, reflected in the tripartite structure of the chapter. It begins by looking at diplomatic relations between Poland-Lithuania and Britain. Here the focus is not on diplomacy itself, but on its relevance for the provision of information about the *Rzeczpospolita*. The second part discusses various agents and networks instrumental in gathering and disseminating information about Poland-Lithuania and with that introduces the problems of bias, reliability and impact. Thirdly, the

¹ Mierzwa, *Polska a Anglia w XVII wieku*, 228.

² J.K. Fedorowicz, *England’s Baltic trade in the early seventeenth century. A study in Anglo-Polish commercial diplomacy* (Cambridge, 1980), 5.

last section examines the newspaper and, to a lesser degree, book market in Britain, paying particular attention to control mechanisms and practices that affected availability, accessibility and dissemination of information about Poland-Lithuania.

This analysis is by no means exhaustive, but is tailored rather to the overall scope and objectives of the thesis. Thus it underpins subsequent discussion of what Britons knew about Poland-Lithuania, how they used this knowledge, and what this reveals about Britons' understanding and appreciation of the *Rzeczpospolita*.

The role of diplomatic relations

Diplomatic relations between the *Rzeczpospolita* and England have long been the object of scholarly pursuit. The research area has been systematically revisited and revised in the last decades, and also, aptly, expanded to studies of relations with Scotland.³ Building on this rich scholarship, and taking a broader European rather than simply bilateral approach, three key issues emerge as especially significant in shaping Britons' awareness of Poland-Lithuania. These are: respective international positions and foreign policy objectives, the role of the diplomatic service, particularly before 1603, and the presence of a Scottish diaspora in Poland-Lithuania.

Poland-Lithuania and Britain had very different international positions and objectives, as too, for that matter, had England and Scotland. To begin with, in the second half of the sixteenth century England became eager, and able, to play a more important role in European affairs.⁴ Whereas relations with France settled, conflict with Spain grew in strength and during the last decades of Queen Elizabeth's reign keeping the Spanish Habsburgs in check remained one of the main objectives of her government.⁵ Shared animosity was one of the reasons

³ Cf. Józef Jasnowski, *England & Poland in the XVIth & XVIIth centuries (political relations)* (London, 1948); Rajnold Przeździecki, *Diplomatic Ventures and Adventures (Some Experiences of British Envoys at the Court of Poland)* (London, 1953); Fedorowicz, *England's Baltic trade*; Mierzwa, *Polska a Anglia w XVII wieku*; articles by Anna Kalinowska (see Bibliography).

⁴ Mierzwa, *Polska a Anglia*, 7.

⁵ Paul E. J. Hammer, 'The Crucible of War: English foreign policy, 1589-1603' in Susan Doran and Glenn Richardson (eds), *Tudor England and its neighbours* (Basingstoke, 2005), 242.

why the English formed closer relations with the Turks, for the latter saw the Habsburgs as a great enemy in the Mediterranean.

While England was strengthening its international position, growing economically and fighting for its place in the Atlantic trade, Poland took a rather different course. Following the loss of the Jagiellons' power in Hungary and Bohemia (c.1526) the centre of Poland's political interest gradually shifted towards the East; the process clearly accelerated after the parliamentary union with Lithuania (1569).⁶ Often clashing with the Ottoman Empire, and in that regard, almost by default, allying with the Habsburgs, Poland-Lithuania was clearly far from sharing the diplomatic interests pursued by Queen Elizabeth's government. However, it played an important, if auxiliary, role in catering for them, almost literally. For to realise its strategic plans, which hinged on the possession of naval power, England had to secure both the provision of raw and semi-manufactured goods necessary for its industrial production, and also safe markets for its products. Poland-Lithuania fitted this role perfectly. Trade between England and Poland-Lithuania thrived although their relations were not without occasional rifts, resulting from commercial competition. Commerce was facilitated by the Eastland Company with its headquarters in Elbing (1579), which was granted a monopoly in the Baltic lands lying beyond the Sound. The Company held jurisdiction over all English merchants within Eastland through the person of its deputy, but since it was difficult for English merchants to liaise with the Polish government, it was royal agents who were commissioned to protect their interests in Poland-Lithuania.⁷ This was significant because English diplomats and residents were important channels of communication and sources of information about Poland-Lithuania, even if they only reached a limited audience.

The situation of, and relations with, Scotland were different. Scotland's international position was less prominent than that of its southern neighbour and the country did not have the capacity to influence European politics through naval power and an expansive economy like England. It also follows that

⁶ Urszula Augustyniak, *Historia Polski: 1572-1795* (Warszawa, 2008), 515-516.

⁷ The Poles did not hold merchants in esteem, as reported by the royal agent, John Herbert. Consequently, he advised against including the EC's deputy, Mr Salkins, in the Polish-English commission that was to discuss the privileges of the EC - John Herbert to Francis Walsingham, 13 October 1583 - *EFE*, IV, 52.

Scotland's need for Poland-Lithuania's goods was nothing like that of England. Nonetheless, the Scots were interested in trade with the *Rzeczpospolita*, although both the structure and scale of the Scots' commercial activities differed considerably from that of England, as did also their mercantile organization.⁸ Unlike their English counterparts, Scottish merchants trading in Poland-Lithuania did not belong to any trading company and they lacked the governmental support enjoyed by English traders.⁹ This meant that channels of information, similar to those with England, did not exist between Scotland and Poland-Lithuania until after the union of the crowns. Arguably, there was an alternative and potentially more effective channel of information – Scots living in Poland-Lithuania, whose number some estimated to be 5,000-7,000 people at its peak (the 1640s).¹⁰ For various reasons, this diaspora was considered politically important by both the Scottish and Polish sides.¹¹ However, there is no evidence that either before or after 1603 this group was important for stimulating an interest in Poland-Lithuania and disseminating information about this country in Britain.¹² This is also true for Scottish soldiers and adventurers, who favoured

⁸ The Scottish contribution to the southern Baltic trade was relatively small, though its size varied considerably between towns – S.G.E. Lythe, 'Scottish trade with the Baltic, 1550-1650' in J.K. Eastham (ed.), *Economic essays in commemoration of the Dundee School of Economics 1931-1955* ([Dundee], 1955), 63; John Davidson and Alexander Gray, *The Scottish staple at Veere, A study in the economic history of Scotland* (London, 1909), 108.

⁹ The occupational and social structure of this population remains debatable – cf. T.A. Fischer, *The Scots in Germany*, (Edinburgh, 1902), 54; Waldemar Kowalski, 'The Placement of Urbanised Scots', 53-103 and Idem, 'Krakow Citizenship and the Local Scots, 1509-1655' in Unger, *Britain and Poland-Lithuania*, 263-285; Bajer, *Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, 117-171.

¹⁰ Bajer, *Ibid.*, 114-115. This research challenges the contemporaneous estimation of William Lithgow, who judged that there were "thirty thousand Scots families" living in Poland-Lithuania – *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painfull Peregrinations* (London, 1632), 422. NB, the Scottish diaspora also included Englishmen, who were generally identified as Scots in Poland-Lithuania – Antoni Krawczyk, 'The British in Poland in the Seventeenth Century', *The Seventeenth Century*, 17/2 (2002), 254.

¹¹ In 1625 King James VI & I implored his Scottish Council to prohibit the immigration of Scots without sufficient financial support, fearing that the numbers of young, poor immigrants, "often dying in the streets of Danzig", misrepresented Scotland and had a detrimental effect on Scottish trade there. The Poles also recognised the value – and the political expediency – of the Scottish merchants in Poland-Lithuania. Tellingly, during his unsuccessful mission to London in 1637, the Polish ambassador, Andrzej Rey, who had been refused a royal audience, threatened King Charles with repercussions towards the Scottish merchants in Poland-Lithuania. Yet the diaspora also had other uses and, in turn, King Charles II sought soldiers within this group; moreover, he profited from the special tax on the Scottish and English merchants imposed by the Polish king to help his cause – King James to the Council, 22 February 1625 – *RPCS*, XIII, 702; Anna Kalinowska, 'Misja Andrzeja Reya w Anglii w 1637 roku', *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, (Lipiec 2007), 14; Andrew B. Pernal and Rosanne P. Gasse, 'The 1651 Polish subsidy to the exiled Charles II', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 32 (1999), 7.

¹² This evaluation does not take into consideration possible dissemination of information about Poland-Lithuania via private letters of Scottish or English merchants. Such correspondence – scattered, incomplete and most likely irrelevant – was not included in this research for the reason of

Poland-Lithuania as their destination; though some, like Patrick Gordon (1635-1699), left diaries describing their experiences in Poland-Lithuania, nothing points to Scottish soldiers as promoters of information about the *Rzeczpospolita*.¹³

With the union of 1603 we can observe some diplomatic convergence, such as royal diplomats' intercession in Poland-Lithuania on behalf of both Scottish and English merchants; after all, foreign policy was the domain of the king – now the same in Scotland and England. There were also noted shifts in the countries' foreign policies; probably most vividly illustrated by England's peace treaty with the Spanish Habsburgs (1604). But the very circumstances of this initiative tell us how false it would be to claim the emergence of a unified British foreign policy after 1603 and the existence of an uncontested diplomacy, for the unique positions of Scotland and England continued to shape their international relations, and the royal prerogative did not go unchallenged.¹⁴

The internal complexities of British diplomacy added an extra dimension to the relations with the *Rzeczpospolita* and this brief discussion does not do justice to their dynamics. We may notice, for example, how during the rule of the early Stuarts the political role of the *Rzeczpospolita* was reappraised. But demonstrations of support and willingness to promote closer political cooperation did not mark any revolutionary change in Polish-British diplomatic relations; occasional tactical cooperation did not mean convergence between their long term objectives. With the countries being neither instant allies nor enemies, there was not a natural stimulus for exchange of information. What is more, the asymmetry of England's and Scotland's relations with Poland-Lithuania before 1603 fostered their distinctive awareness of the *Rzeczpospolita*, which presumably did not simply disappear with their union.

Although diplomatic relations are beyond the scope of this study, it is worth examining a few cases where the appearance of printed material suggests

efficiency, but also because being private it had little or no impact on public understanding of the *Rzeczpospolita*.

¹³ Gordon's *Diary* (its parts in German translation) was published only in the 19th century. The most recent edition is the first publication of the whole diary in its original form and language – *Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, 1635-1699*, ed. Dmitry Fedosov (6 vols, Aberdeen, 2009-).

¹⁴ This is not to deny the Stuart's efforts to form a unified dynastic foreign policy. See Steve Murdoch, 'Diplomacy in Transition: Stuart-British Diplomacy in Northern Europe, 1603-1618' in Allan I. Macinnes, Thomas Riis and Frederik Pedersen (eds), *Ships, guns and Bibles in the North Sea and Baltic States, c. 1350-1700* (East Linton, 2000), 93-114.

possible connections between fluctuations of diplomatic relations and of interest in the *Rzeczpospolita*.

The late 1590s were years of particular diplomatic intensity, for England's blockade of the Baltic, which started in 1595, caused a serious diplomatic clash. This arose from England's seizure of shipments meant for Spain, which the English perceived as undermining England's security during the time of war with Spain.¹⁵ The Polish king, Sigismund III (1587-1632) was unsympathetic to the demands of the English as he was concerned with the welfare of his own kingdom, and considered the English intervention as an unjustified breach of the natural laws of free trade. The purpose of Paweł Działyński's mission to England in 1597 was to break the existing stalemate, but it failed miserably due to the rather unskilful performance of the Polish envoy.¹⁶ Nor did the embassy of an extraordinary ambassador, George Carew, to King Sigismund III's court in 1598 bring the much sought-after breakthrough. However, neither side had any inclination to inflame the situation; ultimately both governments took conciliatory positions without settling the conflict formally.¹⁷

This Polish-English diplomatic clash was discussed neither in pamphlets nor news-sheets, still rare in that period. Yet, it clearly had an impact on the production of information about Poland-Lithuania. Firstly, it seems to have prompted the first history of Poland-Lithuania written by a Briton – *A Relation of the State of Polonia* [1598].¹⁸ The manuscript's content will be discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, but presently we should note its timing. Namely, it seems reasonable to place this manuscript – an exceptionally well-informed and detailed description of the *Rzeczpospolita*'s geography, history and politics – in the

¹⁵ Fedorowicz, *England's Baltic trade*, 41.

¹⁶ For various accounts of this event see Cecil to the Earl of Essex, 26 July 1597 – *CSPD*, 1595-1597, 473-474; William Carr to his father, 21 September 1597 – *EFE*, IV, 207. Unsurprisingly, Działyński's narrative of his mission was distinctly different – see *Merkuriusz sarmacki z Niderlandów i Anglii 1597* (Wrocław, 1978), 33ff.

¹⁷ Fedorowicz, *England's Baltic trade*, 43.

¹⁸ This manuscript has been variously attributed to William Bruce (Stanisław Kot, 'Bruce, William' – *PSB*, III, 3; Edward Mierzwa, 'Na marginesie wydania angielskiej relacji o Polsce z 1598 r.', *Przegląd Historyczny*, 58/4 (1967), 664-667) or George Carew (Talbot, *Relation*, vii-xv). Sebastian Sobecki has recently argued that *A Relation* was written by John Peyton, supposedly working for Cecil. The matter requires further investigation, but Sobecki's argument is compelling – idem, 'John Peyton's *A Relation of the State of Polonia* and the Accession of King James I, 1598-1603', *The English Historical Review*, forthcoming. I am grateful to Dr Sobecki for sharing this article with me and for our correspondence on the subject. NB, the international team of scholars (including the author of this thesis) led by Dr Sobecki is currently working on a critical edition of Peyton's writings.

context of the commercial and diplomatic activity between England and the *Rzeczpospolita* of the late 1590s. Similarly, the publication of the political treatise *De optimo senatore* by Warzyniec Goślicki in 1598 most likely stemmed from the interest in Poland-Lithuania that had been generated by this diplomatic conflict. How exactly those two events were linked remains debatable and Chapter 3 discusses this issue more fully, yet there is little doubt about the events' interconnection. Thirdly, Działyński's audience was widely commented on, mainly because Queen Elizabeth found the ambassador's speech offensive and cared to reply. Consequently, various sources recounted their exchange in the following years.¹⁹ Though presumably recalled to express the authors' national pride, the circulation of the story had possibly blemished Poland-Lithuania's reputation.

This case clearly shows a positive correlation between a diplomatic event and the production and dissemination of information about Poland-Lithuania. A seemingly parallel connection can be detected in developments around another Polish embassy in 1621, though this time the conduct of the ambassador to King James VI & I, Jerzy Ossoliński, was highly praised, unlike Działyński's. The year of Ossoliński's embassy marked another peak in the diplomatic relations between Britain and Poland-Lithuania and it clearly corresponded with a rise in the number of publications which discussed Poland-Lithuania. Some of the media interest in the *Rzeczpospolita* of that time was stimulated by King James, as will be seen in Chapter 4 which discusses Ossoliński's embassy more fully. However, this increased coverage of affairs of Poland-Lithuania was generated by more than diplomatic activity. Namely, it coincided with the development of corantos – early informational broadsheets – that in turn was connected with a growing public interest in international affairs in general, and in the Ottomans in particular.

In contrast, the 1630s show no indication of the linkage between diplomatic and publication-related developments. Several embassies took place in the years 1633-1637, when the prospect of marriage between Princess Elizabeth, the niece

¹⁹ Działyński's audience was described by Camden in his popular *The historie of the life and reigne of that famous princesse Elizabeth* (London, 1634), 187-190 and has been frequently repeated in various configurations since. See for example, Fulke Greville, *The life of the renowned Sr Philip Sidney* (London, 1651), 201-202; James Howell, *A discours of the empire and of the election of a king of the Romans* (London, 1658), 48.

of King Charles I, and Władysław IV, King of Poland-Lithuania, was intensely discussed.²⁰ Sceptically approached by the mother of the potential bride, the Winter Queen, the matter was, nonetheless, of great interest to King Charles I and was enthusiastically supported by diplomats such as Sir Thomas Roe. Despite that, there is no evidence either of official efforts to promote Poland-Lithuania (and thus the benefits of the marital scheme for Britain), or of the more grassroots interest in the *Rzeczpospolita* that could have been stirred by the project. Moreover, another diplomatic undertaking – the British mediation between Poland-Lithuania and Sweden in Stuhmsdorf (1635) – did not spark extra interest in the kingdom either, although the mediation was commented on by newspapers and was minuted by J. Fowler, the secretary of George Douglas, King Charles' ambassador in charge of the affair. Yet noticeably, Fowler's *History of the troubles of Suethland and Poland* was published only in 1656, when diplomatic relations between England and Scotland barely existed (with the exception of relations with Charles Stuart).

The situation of the 1680s differed greatly from previous cases. Following the victory of Vienna in 1683, a flood of broadsheets and pamphlets in Britain that discussed the conduct of King John III Sobieski and his army was both a testimony to the interest in Poland-Lithuania and an impulse for its reinvigoration. The scope and character of this interest will be discussed in Chapter 4, but let us note that the process took place in the context of limited diplomatic activity between Poland-Lithuania and Britain. While the government-controlled *London Gazette* was instrumental in disseminating news about Poland-Lithuania's fighting with the Ottomans, it was Britons' particular interest in this topic that seemingly acted as a catalyst for the explosion of publications. Likewise, the publication of several histories of Poland-Lithuania in the last decade of the seventeenth century seemed to originate primarily from the public interest in the country, with no diplomatic stimulation or governmental encouragement.²¹

²⁰ For details see Anna Kalinowska, 'The Polish Match? British diplomacy, Poland-Lithuania and the Stuart-Vasa Dynastic Alliance project', *Sarmatia Europae*, 2 (2011/12) – <http://sarmatia-europaea.vot.pl/2012/12/30/022-the-polish-match/> (accessed 1 May 2013).

²¹ Connor; Gaspard de Tende, *An account of Poland* (London, 1698); [François-Paulin] Dalairac, *Polish manuscripts* (London, 1700); [Michel-David] De La Bizardiére, *An historical account of the divisions in Poland* (London, 1700).

As we can see, diplomatic relations and public interest in Poland-Lithuania alike were variously related. Diplomatic intensity could, but did not always, coincide with widespread dissemination of information about Poland-Lithuania. Instead, other factors, such as a wide public interest in particular topics or the structural developments of the press market could be decisive for the increased attention given to the *Rzeczpospolita*.

Networks of information

While we should be cautious about the role of diplomacy in increasing interest in Poland-Lithuania, official and semi-official diplomats undoubtedly were important information providers. Ambassadors, agents and spies exchanged intelligence, sent frequent reports to their superiors and shared their impressions with families and friends. Some diplomats wrote accounts of their visits to Poland-Lithuania, although their impact was questionable. As mentioned earlier, Fowler's description of Douglas's mediation was belatedly published; other writings, such as *A Relation of the State of Polonia* or a diary of Lawrence Hyde, Earl of Rochester (1672), remained in manuscript until modern times.²² Similarly, reports written by royal agents, such as William Bruce and Patrick Gordon, and by the Eastland Company residents most likely reached only a limited audience of government officials and the Company's supervisors. Nor is there any evidence that information and opinions about Poland-Lithuania that were exchanged via private correspondence, such as that between Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet, were distributed more widely.²³ The limitation of information circulation was also adversely affected by an ineffective postal system, which was also detrimental to the development of newspapers.²⁴

²² This is not to diminish the role of manuscript sources, which were often copied and circulated widely; manuscript newsletters continued to be popular through the seventeenth century. However, in accordance with the study's scope, they are excluded from the examination. On the role of manuscript newsletters see Ian Atherton, 'The Itch Grown a Disease: Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century' in Joad Raymond (ed.), *News, newspapers, and the society in early modern Britain* (London, 2002), 39-65.

²³ The political context of this correspondence is discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

²⁴ E. John B. Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe* (The Hague, 1972), 20.

The most comprehensive evidence for communication networks is available for the 1630s-1660s. As this was also a period when significant press-related developments took place, it can be used as a case study for a broader discussion of communication. Though not comprehensive, this examination will allow us to consider particular issues that were pertinent to gathering and circulating information about Poland-Lithuania in Britain, such as variation and impact of networks, informers' bias, as well as reliability of and control over information.

Diplomats were the government's most natural source of information on the *Rzeczpospolita*, yet there existed alternative or, as we shall see, partially complementary intelligence networks. One of the most significant was the circle gathered around Samuel Hartlib, polymath, writer and reformer. Born in Elbing in Poland-Lithuania, Hartlib had immigrated to England in 1628, where he soon became active as an educational reformer and as a supporter of a movement for the unification of Protestants. Hartlib established his international network of correspondents in the late 1620s and cultivated it until his death in 1662. His writings and correspondence have received considerable attention from scholars, particularly those interested in early modern intellectual pursuits and irenic initiatives.²⁵ However, here it is the role of members of the Hartlib circle as transmitters of news and shapers of perceptions of Poland-Lithuania that is important.

Hartlib's known correspondence consists of over 3,600 letters, which were exchanged over a span of more than thirty years. He corresponded with scientist Robert Boyle, alchemist and chemist Johann Moriaen, agriculturalist Ralph Austen, economist Sir William Petty, religious activist John Dury and Jan Amos Komenský, teacher and educator, to name only a few. Many of Hartlib's correspondents were committed pansophists – eager to share their discoveries and exchange their ideas, they were primarily interested in the expansion of knowledge. Nonetheless, they were also individuals of clear religious and political affiliations, who were keenly interested in international affairs and

²⁵ See Mark Greengrass et al. (eds), *Samuel Hartlib and universal reformation: studies in intellectual communication* (Cambridge, 1994); Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Peabworth (eds), *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England* (Columbia, 2000); Ole Peter Grell, *Brethren in Christ: A Calvinist Network in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, 2011).

relied on their fellows for the provision of information.²⁶ Within this circle there was a small, yet very active group of individuals, who were greatly interested in Poland-Lithuania. They exchanged news about domestic issues, such as the Tartars' raids into Poland-Lithuania and the country's parliamentary proceedings, and were occasionally stirred by affairs such as the potential marriage of King Władysław IV and Princess Elizabeth.²⁷ However, their interest in the *Rzeczpospolita* seemed to be primarily connected with their religious interests. Thus, reports by John Dury, whose tour in Poland-Lithuania in 1634-35 was an important part of his mission for the unity of Protestant churches, were eagerly anticipated and commented on.²⁸

This commitment to the cause of Protestantism led them also to discuss the Polish-Swedish war of 1655-60 most vigorously. The welcome reception to the victories of King Karl X Gustav in Poland-Lithuania clearly reflected the Protestant bias of Hartlib and his correspondents. They felt deeply for the Protestant community in Poland-Lithuania, with whom they had strong personal links and about whose situation they often inquired.²⁹ Importantly, members of the Hartlib circle used their expertise and position to influence both the people and the government in Britain. This is testified to by their copying of letters and propaganda materials that were distributed locally, with some letters being translated specifically for the purpose of reaching less educated Britons.³⁰ In addition, the circle's members shared information with the government, either by

²⁶ See, for example, Walter Welles to Hartlib, 12 January 1632: "I long for some joyful lines from you, both on common affairs and your own particular (...), what praises can we render for the prosperity of the King of Sweden and succour of the poor Princes and people of Germany", and letters full of news from the continent, for example, from Caspar Streso, reformed minister in Hague - Streso to Hartlib, 19 October 1634, 26 October 1634; Idem, 2 November 1634; Idem, 22 November 1634; Idem, 19 February - 12 March 1635; unknown to Hartlib, 21 February 1635; Johann Rülz to Hartlib, 12 July 1635; John Richardson to Hartlib, 30 December 1634, where he stated: "I have received many intelligences from you for civil affairs, foreign wars and Mr Dury's negotiations in ecclesiastical pacification". All Hartlib's letters accessed through EMLO - HPP (accessed June-July 2013).

²⁷ Streso to Hartlib, 10 May 1635; Idem, 21 January 1636; Henry Roessler to Hartlib, 15 October [1637]. This marriage was of particular interest to Sir Thomas Roe, who supported the match - Thomas Roe to Hartlib, 21 April 1635, 19 July 1635, 14 July 1636.

²⁸ Dury to unknown, 31 March 1634; Komenský to Hartlib, 17 October 1634.

²⁹ John Suatosius to Hartlib, 16 October 1655; Idem, 28 July 1656.

³⁰ Komenský attached 50 copies of his *Excidium Lesnae* to the letter to Hartlib (5 February 1657) for its wider distribution in Britain. Letters describing the destroying of Leszno (with a copy of Komenský's pamphlet) were sent to Suatosius, who copied them and send them "into the country" - Idem to Hartlib; 28 April 1657. Subsequently, they were "translated into English by a good scholar[s]", for Suatosius wondered "that it was not printed in English that the vulgar people may know it" - Idem, 25 May 1657.

sending letters directly to John Thurloe, the secretary of State, or by trusting in the personal mediation of Hartlib, who seemed to have both Thurloe's and Oliver Cromwell's ear.³¹

Clearly, the position of men of letters was advantageous, for it offered access to a wide range of information and also allowed them to exert considerable influence over people. Similar impressions can be gained from the correspondence of Henry Oldenburg. This scientist of German origin was, in the 1650s, one of the correspondents of Hartlib, whom he frequently provided with political news. Oldenburg's own network grew, especially following his appointment to the position of secretary of the Royal Society (1662) that permitted him to correspond freely at home and abroad.³² Hoping to establish contact with the *Rzeczpospolita's* scientists and philosophers, Oldenburg approached Stanisław Lubieniecki, Polish activist and intellectual, an exile in Hamburg, and Johannes Hevelius, an esteemed astronomer from Danzig.³³

Oldenburg's interest in Poland-Lithuania went beyond science, as indicated by his appreciation of Lubieniecki's convenient location, where the latter could "learn of everything noteworthy in politics, philosophy and mechanics".³⁴ Notably, though Lubieniecki commented on the situation in his fatherland, it was a Paris correspondent, Henri Justel, who kept Oldenburg abreast of political developments in the *Rzeczpospolita* – the Tartars' and the Turks' moves, the Lubomirski's *rokosz* (the noblemen's anti-royal armed rebellion of 1664-66) and the election campaign of 1668.³⁵ Justel was a useful contact, as this librarian's remarkable networking skills and his generous entertainment of foreign visitors gave him good access to information from Europe. Additionally, he appeared to

³¹ Dury to Hartlib, 25 August 1655; Idem, 6 October 1655; Idem, 1 January 1656; Idem, 22 April 1656. Cf. Mark Greengrass, 'Hartlib, Samuel' – *ODNB* (accessed 8 July 2013).

³² Free correspondence was one of the privileges bestowed on the Royal Society – Margery Purver, *The Royal Society: concept and creation* (London, 1967), 136.

³³ Lubieniecki was a historian and an astronomer, and an active supporter of Socinianism; following his turbulent peregrination around Poland-Lithuania and Europe, he settled in Hamburg in 1662 – Janusz Tazbir, 'Lubieniecki, Stanisław młodszy h. Rola', *PSB*, XVI, 603-607. For Oldenburg's inquiries see Oldenburg to Lubienietzki, 19 February 166[7]; Oldenburg to Hevelius, 30 March 1666 – *Oldenburg*, III, 347 and 77-78 respectively.

³⁴ Oldenburg to Lubienietzki, 23 July 1666 – *Oldenburg*, III, 192-193.

³⁵ Lubienietzki to Oldenburg, 18 August 1666, *Ibid.*, 211-212; Justel to Oldenburg, 16 May 1666, *Ibid.*, 135; Idem, 12 August 1668, *Oldenburg*, V, 13; Idem, early September 1668, *ibid.*, 22; Idem, c. 18 October 1668, *ibid.*, 92; Idem, 18 November 1668, *ibid.*, 180; Idem, 9 December 1668, *ibid.*, 229.

remain in touch with John Sobieski, the grand marshal (1665) and the grand hetman of Poland (1668), and a future king of Poland-Lithuania (1674).

Undoubtedly, contact with such an influential politician as Sobieski guaranteed Justel the provision of quality information. Yet tellingly, Justel's intelligencer had a personal interest in the ongoing events, for Sobieski was a supporter of the Prince of Condé, a French candidate to the Polish-Lithuanian crown in 1668.³⁶ Likewise, though apparently a man of moderate convictions, Justel was not a neutral observer and, in turn, he presented news regarding Poland-Lithuania from a French perspective.³⁷ As a result, Oldenburg was in the end presented with an image of Polish-Lithuanian affairs as seen through two sets of particularly biased lenses. The impact of political bias on him and other recipients of news in Britain is difficult to gauge, yet its presence should be recognised, as should the religious agenda of the Hartlib circle. At any rate, we can presume that Oldenburg's correspondence was instrumental in forming opinions about Poland-Lithuania and its people – whether about the importance of money for determining election results or about the reputation of Sobieski as a patron of letters and learned men.³⁸ Such opinions disseminated along different patterns. Since the information about election results concerned politics, it likely circulated more widely, for Oldenburg sent political reports, which included intelligence and commentary about Poland-Lithuania, to Sir Joseph Williamson, keeper of the state paper office.³⁹

Interestingly, Oldenburg also worked for Williamson as a translator of intercepted news.⁴⁰ This was not unusual – scholars were known to be hired by governments – but it leads us to the question of the security of communication channels, especially since the correspondence discussed here was often of a

³⁶ Justel to Oldenburg, 4 November 1668 – *Oldenburg*, V, 131.

³⁷ See for instance his letter to Oldenburg (5 December 1668), where he asserted that “Condé has more claim than anyone to the crown of Poland, which will make France important” – *Oldenburg*, V, 224.

³⁸ Hevelius to Oldenburg, 22 February 167[1] – *Oldenburg*, VII, 467; Oldenburg to Williamson, 11 January 166[9] – *Oldenburg*, V, 335; Idem, c. 3 March 166[9] – *ibid.*, 429.

³⁹ Oldenburg to Williamson, c. 16 July 1666 – *Oldenburg*, III, 183; Idem, c. 25 January 166[7] – *ibid.*, 322-3; Idem, 25 October 1667 – *ibid.*, 539; Idem, 16 January 166[9] – *Oldenburg*, V, 335, where Oldenburg expressed his concern about a double election in Poland-Lithuania, considering “the business important because it may have troublesome consequences”; a similar view was expressed in the letter dated 9 February 166[9] – *ibid.*, 388; Idem, c. 30 May 1669 – *ibid.*, 576. There is also evidence that Oldenburg shared news about Poland-Lithuania with Boyle – Oldenburg to Boyle, 24 September 1667 – *Oldenburg*, III, 480-483.

⁴⁰ Marie Boas Hall, ‘Oldenburg, Henry’ – *ODNB* (accessed 15 March 2013).

sensitive nature. Both law and custom recognised the courier's person and his cargo as inviolable, but the great political value of taking over dispatches often led to breaking of this principle.⁴¹ Similarly, insuring the safety of private correspondence remained highly problematic. For instance, in August 1655 Dury recommended sending letters through Amsterdam rather than Antwerp, because there he had available trustworthy merchants, who could safely pass letters sent to him and by him.⁴² Likewise, Dury was wary about using agents of Britons whose unswerving loyalty towards the Protectorate could be doubted and he took pains to ensure that his letters were sealed and carried by reliable persons. His concerns were not without foundation, for the continental postal service that was monopolised by the family of Taxis, was suspected of intercepting and copying letters they had been entrusted with.⁴³ But interferers were many and, as it happened, some letters addressed to Dury during his sojourn in Kassel were seized in April 1656, allegedly by the direction of the Elector of Mainz.⁴⁴ Unsurprisingly, it was common to send mail via trusted merchants, but also to have it disguised as merchants' letters.⁴⁵

Incidents of correspondence being intercepted may have disrupted or inconvenienced exchanges between the members of the Hartlib circle or secretary Thurloe's wide web of spies and informants, but they did not block the information flow about the affairs of Poland-Lithuania in a substantial way. Of much greater consequence were wartime postal disturbances, such as the Swedes' seizure of control over the *Rzeczpospolita's* postal service that restricted the Poles' communication with the rest of Europe. Consequently, the chances of presenting the Polish-Swedish war from the perspective of the Poles, already slim due to the bias of British correspondents, were subject to additional limits.⁴⁶

⁴¹ E. John B. Allen, *Post and courier service in the diplomacy of early modern Europe* (The Hague, 1972), 21ff.

⁴² Dury to Hartlib, 25 August 1655.

⁴³ Nadine Akkerman, 'The Postmistress, the Diplomat, and a Black Chamber?: Alexandrine of Taxis, Sir Balthazar Gerbier and the Power of Postal Control' in Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox (eds), *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke, 2011), 173-188.

⁴⁴ Dury to Hartlib, 22 April 1656.

⁴⁵ Jephson to Thurloe, 26 October 1657 - *Thurloe*, VI, 577.

⁴⁶ In addition, communication could be interrupted by natural disasters as illustrated by the plague in armies, which deprived the English of the information from Swedes in Poland-Lithuania - D.L. Hobman, *Cromwell's master spy: a study of John Thurloe* (London, 1961), 94.

This is not to say that news on Poland-Lithuania was lacking. Though Hartlib's main correspondents from the kingdom, Komenský and Figulus, subsequently had to leave the country (Komenský fled from Leszno in 1656, whereas Figulus left Danzig in 1658), they continued to provide Hartlib systematically with information about Poland-Lithuania after they had settled in Amsterdam.⁴⁷ Their news came from various places – from private letters sent by acquaintances in the *Rzeczpospolita*, mainly from Elbing and Danzig, or from other European cities and regions, including Hamburg, Frankfurt and Hungary. Moreover, excerpts from local newsbooks were appended to those collections of news gathered from private individuals. As a result, those letters were often comprehensive and multilingual reports on Polish-Lithuanian and other international affairs.

Hartlib's broad network was nonetheless miniscule in comparison with the extensive net of informants in the service of the government of England. Run by the secretary of state, John Thurloe, it consisted of dozens of informers from Archangel to Lisbon, including a high number of unintentional intelligencers, whose correspondence was intercepted. As with the Hartlib circle, most of the reports came either directly from Poland-Lithuania or the territory of the Holy Roman Empire. The political convergence between those two countries and close links between the Habsburgs and the king of Poland-Lithuania made the court of Vienna a place where information on the *Rzeczpospolita* was to be found in abundance. Generally, German cities continued to be the prime sources of information about Poland-Lithuania, though their individual positions changed, with Hamburg and Berlin being brought more to the fore in the mid-seventeenth century. This reflected the shift in European information networks,⁴⁸ but also Brandenburg's growing interest in Poland-Lithuania, which was reconfigured after the Hohenzollerns' sovereignty over the Duchy of Prussia was confirmed (1657).

Yet German cities were only a part of Thurloe's complex intelligence system, which was fed by more than the intellectuals belonging to Hartlib's and

⁴⁷ For instance, Komenský to Hartlib 20 July 1657; Idem, 25 July 1657; Idem, 24 August 1657; Idem, 7 September 1657; Peter Figulus to Hartlib, 21 June 1658; Idem, 12 July 1658; Idem, 26 July 1658; Idem, 30 August 1658; Idem, 27 September 1658.

⁴⁸ Paul Arblaster, 'Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers: England in a European system of communications' in Joad Raymond (ed.), *News Networks in Seventeenth-Century Britain and Europe* (London & New York, 2006), 21.

Oldenburg's circles. Information about Poland-Lithuania flooded to London from diplomats, merchants and soldiers across Europe. News from ambassadors such as Prideaux in Muscovy, Major Rolt in Poland-Lithuania (tellingly, on his mission there in 1655 to King Karl X Gustav, not King John Casimir), Meadowe in Copenhagen, Bendyshe in Constantinople and spies such as Stoupe, based in Paris, gave a rounded overview of affairs.⁴⁹

One of the main concerns of Thurloe's informers was the accuracy of news. According to an anonymous sender writing in 1655, "news from Poland are so uncertain and various that a real writer is loth to send them to a friend", yet the author was ready to trust the news, as it came "from good hands to the emperor's court".⁵⁰ The high position of the information source was believed to guarantee its truthfulness; in a similar vein king Charles II was in 1656 assured about the authenticity of the news, "for it [was] from the queen of Poland's own hand".⁵¹ But the Polish-Swedish war not only challenged the reliability of sources, it also seriously limited access to any information at all. The lack of post was often commented on, though Thurloe's regular correspondents, such as resident Bradshaw, tried hard to provide "intelligence from the best hands in the parts", despite the risk of being punished by either side of the conflict.⁵² As evident, Thurloe's informants made efforts to supply verified information. Additionally, Thurloe's informants complemented, often directly supported, and presumably also controlled each other, as may be deduced from the correspondence of Hamburg resident Bradshaw, who reported to Thurloe about his contacts with Major Rolt.⁵³ All in all, this made Thurloe a well-informed man.

By all accounts, intellectuals and, thanks to Thurloe's efforts, the government of England were well-informed about the affairs of Poland-Lithuania. What made this situation qualitatively different from the 1620-30s was its coinciding with the development of the press; it opened up the possibility of making information

⁴⁹ William Prideaux to Thurloe, Archangel, 29 August 1654 - *Thurloe*, II, 567; Idem, 10 September 1654, Archangel - *ibid.*, 598; Idem, Vologda, 16 December 1654 - *Thurloe*, III, 26-27; Idem, Moscow, 18 April 1655 - *ibid.*, 389; P. Meadowe to Thurloe, 21 September [1657] - *Thurloe*, VI, 509; Thomas Bendyshe to the Protector, 24 July 1658 - *Thurloe*, VII, 286; News from Mr Stoupe, 24 October 1654 - *Thurloe*, II, 692; Idem, 14 November 1654 - *ibid.*, 711.

⁵⁰ Unknown to Thurloe, 4 September 1653 - *Thurloe*, I, 476.

⁵¹ Lord Jermyn to King Charles II, 21 January 1656 - *ibid.*, 691.

⁵² Bradshaw to Thurloe, 20 May 1656 - *Thurloe*, V, 44; Idem, 3 June 1656 - *ibid.*, 85.

⁵³ Mr Bradshaw to Thurloe, 28 August 1655 - *Thurloe*, III, 741; Idem, 20 May 1656 - *Thurloe*, V, 44; Idem, 3 June 1656 - *ibid.*, 85.

available more broadly. Yet, information access was still restricted not just by governmental control, but also by readers' location and by both publications' price and language. We now turn to examine how characteristics of the British newspaper and book market influenced dissemination of the knowledge of Poland-Lithuania.

Newspaper and book markets in Britain

Despite King James's boasting that he allowed greater freedom of discourse than his predecessors, by the 1620 proclamation "against excesses of lavish and licentious speech in political affairs" he aimed to ensure royal control over news, exactly as Queen Elizabeth did before him.⁵⁴ Yet, the reality he faced was qualitatively different from that of the queen, for the "German war" engaged the popular attention as possibly no event before. Re-issuing the proclamation in 1621 suggests how inefficient the royal policy was and granting the licence for publishing news only a few months later shows that the king was wise enough to recognise it.

The very first corantos that became available to Britons in the 1620s contained information about Poland-Lithuania.⁵⁵ Originally, they were illegally imported reprints of Dutch and German corantos in English, but soon Britons themselves engaged in the lucrative business of news provision. A total embargo on publishing pamphlets of overseas news in 1632 proved unsuccessful and the news market continued to grow, though the titles and periodicity of publications remained irregular. A truly substantial growth took place only after the lifting of the ban on producing domestic and foreign news in 1641; subsequently the number of newsbooks and other cheap prints produced in Britain grew freely on an unprecedented scale until 1649, when the parliament regained control over the press.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Fritz Levy, 'The Decorum of News' in *News, newspapers*, 12.

⁵⁵ Cf. Folke Dahl, *A bibliography of English corantos and periodical newsbooks 1620-1642* (London, 1952).

⁵⁶ Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper. English Newsbooks 1641-1649* (Oxford, 1996), 13. Raymond argues that this 'explosion' of print in England was a continuation of earlier events in Scotland - idem, *Pamphlets and pamphleteering in early modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), 187.

However, the growth of indigenous, systematic news publications in the 1640s was not matched by a proportionally high increase of references to Poland-Lithuania. This does not signify that Britons were not interested in the *Rzeczpospolita*, but rather points to their own domestic preoccupations: Britain's civil wars. This was mirrored in the structure and content of newspapers, of which many were dedicated exclusively to discussion of internal affairs.⁵⁷ The great interest in domestic affairs continued; nonetheless, many newspapers of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate followed international developments and they often featured comments on Poland-Lithuania, not least because of its continuous wars. Crucially, those newspapers were tightly controlled by the government. This control was qualitatively different from that of the 1620s and 1630s, for instead of simply banning the production of news, the government took control over its production. The government relied on several information networks operating in that period, as previously discussed. Intelligence about Poland-Lithuania provided by them was utilised by newspapers and, as a result, made information about the country available more broadly than before, though it was censored information, as we will see in Chapter 4.

The governmental control did not cease at the Restoration, for by the conditions of The Licensing Act of 1662 establishing a printing press required approval from the royal licenser. The office gave the power to regulate the newspaper press, which was fully exercised by Roger L'Estrange, appointed to that position in 1663. Ultimately, the newspaper market was in 1665-1695 monopolised by the *London Gazette*.⁵⁸ But governmental control went beyond regulating the press. As with newspapers of the Cromwellian era, the *London Gazette* remained closely tied to the government, and its editor, Sir Joseph Williamson, acted *de facto* as the head of the intelligence system and remained under the supervision of Lord Arlington, the secretary of state.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ For example, a royalist *Mercurius Aulicus* or a parliamentarian *The armies modest [weekly] intelligencer*. Interestingly, first Scottish newspaper, *The Scottish Dove*, was published in England, whereas the first newspaper published in Scotland, *Mercurius Scoticus*, was brought by the English republican army, which is suggestive of the press preoccupation with domestic events – Arthur Williamson, 'Scotland. International Politics, International Press' in Sabrina Alcon Baron et al. (eds), *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* ([Amherst], 2007), 202.

⁵⁸ First twenty three issues of the newspaper (7 December 1665 – 29 January 166[6]) appeared as the *Oxford Gazette*.

⁵⁹ The power of the secretaries of the state within the news area was almost absolute, for being also in control of the post office they "scrutinized every form of news transfer, procural and print" –

The *London Gazette* was intended for the mercantile classes, the legal profession, municipal officers and military officers serving home and abroad.⁶⁰ Its exact print run remains unknown, but it is certain that the newspaper was read across Britain and in the colonies, its readership being substantially higher than its subscription, for reading newspapers in households, exchanging them in coffee houses, markets and fairs, and circulating them via letters was a common practice.⁶¹ For our purposes the role of the *London Gazette* can hardly be overestimated – a closer examination reveals that information regarding Poland-Lithuania featured on average in every other issue. Consequently, a familiarity with Polish-Lithuanian affairs was very likely. Existing diaries, such as those of Ralph Josselin and John Evelyn, clearly point to the *London Gazette* as the source of information about the *Rzeczpospolita*.⁶² What is more, as we will see in Chapter 2, the excerpts from this newspaper were utilised in books on Poland-Lithuania.

News about the *Rzeczpospolita* reported by the *London Gazette* predominantly referred to the country's military efforts (traditionally a popular topic of newspapers), but far more attention than in the previous decades was given to the country's domestic affairs. This was not only because of some events' military aspect, such as Lubomirski's *rokosz*, which was covered in detail by the *Gazette's* predecessor, *Intelligencer published for the satisfaction of the people*.⁶³ Very likely it was a matter of supply, for regular dispatches of intelligence reached Britain through Francis Sanderson, a resident in Danzig, who provided information both for the *Intelligencer* and the *London Gazette*.⁶⁴ He was not an exclusive provider of news or the sole author of reports; often notes, which had clearly been written by Poles, were printed without editing. While this might testify to the *Gazette's* reluctance to interfere, other evidence clearly points to practices of news management. Those were apparent in the negative way of presenting Sobieski, a

Sonja Schultheiß-Heinz, 'Contemporaneity in 1672-1679: the *Paris Gazette*, the *London Gazette*, and the *Teutsche Kriegs-Kurier* (1672-1679) in Brendan Dooley (ed.), *The dissemination of news and the emergence of contemporaneity in early modern Europe* (Farnham & Burlington, 2010), 120.

⁶⁰ P.M. Handover, *A History of the London Gazette 1665-1965* (London, 1965), 12.

⁶¹ Joad Raymond, 'The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century' in *News, newspapers*, 116ff.

⁶² *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683*, ed. Alan Macfarlane (London, 1976), 656; *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S.de Beer (Oxford, 1955), IV, 247, 259, 269-271.

⁶³ The *Intelligencer* regularly commented on the *rokosz* throughout the year 1665. See, for instance, the issues of 6 February 1665[5], 1 May 1665, 11 September 1665.

⁶⁴ R.W.K. Hinton, *The Eastland Trade and the Common weal in the seventeenth century* (Cambridge, 1959), 151-152.

leader of the anti-royal opposition in the early 1670s, and also in overlooking his connections with France; to associate the leader of malcontents with France, with whom England renewed its alliance in 1670, would sit rather uncomfortably with those in charge of England's governmental newspaper.

The monopoly of the *London Gazette* made it very difficult to verify its content, had the reader wished to do so, but with the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695,⁶⁵ the newspaper faced competition from new titles, such as the *Post Boy*, *Post Man* and *Pegasus*. As it turned out, those newspapers not only allowed broader circulation of information about Poland-Lithuania, but they also provided new insights into the *Rzeczpospolita's* affairs, as is well illustrated by the reporting on the interregnum after the death of King John III Sobieski (June 1696). There was some parallel between reports, for sources used by newspapers partially coincided; for instance, both the *London Gazette* and the *Post Boy* reported unrest in the *Rzeczpospolita's* army and the conditions agreed at the general diet that were to be observed by a new king. Indeed, the essence of the news, based in both cases on the anonymous intelligence sent from Warsaw on the 7 September 1696, was the same.⁶⁶ Yet, the news' delivery differed. Thus, a subscriber of the *London Gazette* was presented with a much fuller account of proceedings of the parliament session in Warsaw (including details about the regional conflicts and historical commentary), though he had to suffer a delay in comparison to the *Post Boy's* reader, who could access the news two days earlier.⁶⁷

More significantly the newspapers differed in their analyses of the situation, as illustrated by their respective presentations of candidates to the throne of Poland-Lithuania. As quickly as the 27 July the *London Gazette* predicted an unopposed election of Prince James Sobieski, the deceased king's son. Though the newspaper soon reported that Prince Sapieha and General Jabłonowski were also among the candidates, it continued to claim Prince James's prevailing interest, reasserting

⁶⁵ J.A. Cannon, 'Newspapers' in John Cannon (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to British History* (Oxford, 1997), 307. Alternatively, some historians point to the year 1679 – Raymond, *The Invention*, 14. This is because the 1662 Licensing Act expired in 1679; the act was renewed in 1685 and continued to be in operation until 1695, when the parliament refused to renew it.

⁶⁶ Cf. *LG*, 21 September 1696; *Post Boy*, 19 September 1696.

⁶⁷ This is not say the *London Gazette's* reports were always fuller – for example, while it simply informed about the senate's setting up after the king's death, the *Post Man* printed a full copy of the circular letter of the Archbishop of Gnesna [sic] (acting as the interrex), in which he described the country's loss and plans for the forthcoming election – cf. *LG*, 25 June 1696; *Post Man and the Historical Account*, 11 August 1696.

this information as late as the 20 August.⁶⁸ In contrast, in the very communication confirming John III Sobieski's death *Pegasus* anticipated the royal contest between a very different set of candidates, namely, Prince James, his younger brother, Prince Alexander and the Duke of Lorraine.⁶⁹ Furthermore, this newspaper included an editorial that discussed the potential consequences of the election for both the *Rzeczpospolita* and Europe. The *Post Man* presented the same set of candidates as the *Pegasus*, but it further elucidated the situation by declaring the Poles' dislike of Prince James.⁷⁰ Possibly those differences can be partially accounted for by the news' various origins; while all newspapers received information from Poland-Lithuania (mainly from Warsaw and Danzig), both the *Post Man* and the *Post Boy* had reports also from Königsberg and relied greatly on intelligence sent from Paris and the Hague, in contrast to the *London Gazette*, whose main sources seemed to be Vienna and Hamburg. But the evidence is not conclusive; neither does a closer analysis reveal any particular pattern of bias. What can be stated without doubt are the frequency, volume and form of information provided about Poland-Lithuania. The bi-weekly *London Gazette* discussed the *Rzeczpospolita's* affairs far more systematically and fully than the tri-weekly *Post Man* or the *Post Boy*, though the latter were often quicker in sharing the news.⁷¹ Moreover, though the governmental newspaper had no monopoly over historical commentary, it remarked on Poland-Lithuania's historical precedence and political traditions visibly more often than others.⁷² We may thus conclude that respective titles' readers would have different awareness of Poland-Lithuania, subscribers of the *London Gazette* having much better overview of this kingdom's affairs.

⁶⁸ *LG*, 27 July 1696; 30 July 1696; 6 August 1696; 20 August 1696.

⁶⁹ *Pegasus Being an History of the Most Remarkable Events*, 24 June 1696.

⁷⁰ *Post Man*, 25 June 1696.

⁷¹ Notably, the news they presented could also reach the local reader quite quickly, for their publishing was synchronised with the post dispatches – Michael Harris, *London newspapers in the age of Walpole: a study of the origins of the modern English press* (New York & London, 1987), 33.

⁷² See, for instance, *LG*, 31 August 1696; 10 September 1696; 12 October 1696.

The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

From Monday, November 7. to Thursday November 10. 1670.

Falmouth; Novemb. 2.

The 28th past came in here the *Contents of Fowey*, laden with Salt from *Croyfick*, informing us that Two great Fregats are building, and may in little time be launched at *Brest*, one of them of Two thousand six hundred Tuns, and the other of Eighteen hundred.

The *Dolphin* of *London* coming from *Kinsale*, laden with Irish Commodities, homewards bound, was the last week cast away about the Lands-end, Ten of the men saved, but Five drowned with the Master: who stayed too long behind, endeavouring to have saved a considerable sum of Moneys which he had on board.

Dantzick, Octob. 14. His Majesty of *Poland* was some days since diverted from the care of publick affairs by an indisposition of body, which confined him several days to his chamber, and one day to his bed, but he is again well recovered, to the great satisfaction of the whole Court and Kingdom.

The 25 past the Nuncio's and Members of the Lower House pressed the Senators to oblige themselves under the same oath, which had some time before been univerfally taken by the Nobles, but this was opposed by the Bishops, as a thing not formerly practis'd, and therefore against their priviledges; they afterwards pressed that the Senators and the principal Gentry would unite and enter into a League or confederation with the King according to what had been formerly practis'd with King *Casimir* in the year 1662, but nothing was determined in this affair; the same day a Citation was sent to the Great Treasurer *Morstein*, but he being at that time employed to *Cracovia* with other Commissioners, to bring thence the Crown and Regal Ornaments for the Queens Coronation; the Citation was left at his house in the hands of his Lady.

The next day being the 26th, Monfegnior *Nerli*, the Popes Nuncio, who had been for some time at *Warsaw*, incognito, made his publick and solemn entry with the usual Train of Coaches, having been received at *Fisfona*, a little without the City, by the chief Secretary with his Majesties Coaches; he had his publick Audience from his Majesty the 29th, and the next day from the Queen, with the usual Ceremonies and Formalities.

The Deputies from the Army have had an Audience from His Majesty in full Senate, in which they demanded payment of their Arrears, and the reinforcement of their Companies and Regiments, which are much weakened, and consequently rendered incapable to make opposition to any considerable enemy; but in conclusion, complained of their misfortune, that an ill interpretation had been put upon their intentions, desiring, that the Senators would give them another Audience, where the King might be present, in which they might with more freedom propose their desires; to all which, His Ma-

jesty returned them a general answer, and in sum; That he would advise with the Senate about all the affairs of the Army.

On the 28 past, His Majesty gave Audience to the Count *de Numer*, Envoye Extraordinary from the Court of *Spain*, who the next morning was admitted to a more private Conference with His Majesty, and in the afternoon made his Compliments of Congratulation to the Queen upon the account of her marriage.

Since this, nothing remarkable happened till the second instant, when the Deputies from the Army were admitted to the Audience which they before had desired from the Senate alone, in which they earnestly pressed, that satisfaction might be given them by the Nobles of *Syradia*, who had first by a particular Article proposed the depriving of their General, the Great Marshal *Sobiesky* of his command, which was a point which had very sensibly offended the Army, desiring also that good Winter Quarters might be allowed them, but so as to exempt the Kings, and all Ecclesiastical Lands from the burthen of it.

A great dispute hath lately happened in the Diet between the two Houses, upon a Proposition made in the lower House, that twenty four of their Members might be made choice of to be present and assisting at all judgments that should pass in the Diet; But this was strongly opposed, not onely by the Senators, but by several of the Nobles, as being contrary to an ancient constitution which allows but six, and would take away the whole power of the Senators, by overvoting them upon all occasions, who at present do not amount to so great a number.

Rome, Octob. 18. The Pope by his late diversions at *Madonna della Vittoria*, at the Cardinal *Branaccis*'s Garden, and the Vineyards of the *Sieur Avila*, to all which places he went to take the air on Sunday last, has given sufficient testimony of the recovery of his strength, to the great satisfaction, not only of his Relations, but of all the people, who entertain themselves with the hopes of great and good effects of his Government, since he has made so many declarations of his intention to ease them from their burthens: He has lately much encouraged the Mounts of Piety, and is endeavouring to make a retrenchment upon the priviledges which have been allowed to Ambassadors, Cardinals, and Clerks of the Chamber, and has called a private Congregation in order to the raising of a considerable sum of Money by laying a Taxe of Five *per Cent.* upon all persons who enjoy any Benefices within the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The Spanish Ambassador having some days since an Audience from the Pope, and discoursing about the vacant Bishopricks in *Portugal*, the Pope was pleased to expref his zeal for the preservation of a right understanding between the Crowns of *Spain* and *Portugal*, shewing many reasons which would oblige him to take particular care of the Churches in *Portugal*, which had for so many years suffered under the want of Pastors.

Yesterday arrived here the Marquess *Risardi*, Ambassade

Figure 1.1 Front page of the *London Gazette*, 7 November 1670 (highlights - MM).

Yet this wide press coverage in the second half of the seventeenth century, though contributing to greater awareness of Poland-Lithuania, could possibly have a certain downside. Namely, by the association with newspapers, which were deplored for its vulgarity and sensationalism, the country itself could have gained a poorer reputation. Since lack of news was considered good news, the mere presence of information about the *Rzeczpospolita* could have conveyed an impression of a troubled country. There is no method that would allow such an intangible, most probably unconscious perception to be measured, but presumably the impression could have been stronger in periods without historical books specifically and entirely dedicated to Poland-Lithuania, for books, unlike newspapers, were associated with dignity and truthfulness.⁷³

Thus far it has been assumed that Britain's newspaper press market was uniform. Yet this was not so either in organisation or law, and the crucial difference was the absence of any Scottish equivalent to the Stationers' Company in England.⁷⁴ However, in practical terms, the newspaper market in Scotland was to a large extent determined by developments in England, for newspapers printed in Scotland were predominantly reprints of English newspapers until the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Furthermore, newspaper publishing was centred in London and, in terms of the dissemination of news, it is more realistic to juxtapose London and other regions of Britain rather than England and Scotland.

A greater distinction can be discerned between Scotland's and England's book markets; however its relevance for our discussion is limited.⁷⁶ For that matter, any consideration of the book markets' structures might seem immaterial considering the paucity of English-language publications about Poland-Lithuania. Nonetheless, we should observe two significant characteristics that both markets had in common: their reliance on the continental provision of Latin books and their limited capacity and technology.

⁷³ Daniel Woolf, 'News, history and the construction of the present in early modern England' in Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (eds), *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London & New York, 2001), 98.

⁷⁴ Hamish Mathison, 'Scotland' in Joad Raymond (ed.), *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture vol. 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford, 2011), 34.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁷⁶ The book trade in Scotland was controlled by the crown, but also by the church and burghs and this local and geographically dispersed control resembled the organisation of the Low Countries' trade far more than England's – Jonquil Bevan, 'Scotland' in John Barnard and D.F. McKenzie (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain vol. 4: 1557-1695* (Cambridge, 2002), 687.

Both Scottish and English booksellers frequented continental book fairs to replenish their stocks, but importantly, the Thirty Years' War significantly obstructed the trade with main centres such as Frankfurt, Leipzig and Cologne.⁷⁷ Access to Latin books could be further impeded by a substantial decline in the popularity of Latin writings from the 1630s onwards and, although Scottish and English book merchants imported Latin texts extensively from Amsterdam, Antwerp, Rotterdam and Leiden throughout the seventeenth century, most of those texts were religious and with no connection to Poland-Lithuania.⁷⁸ The consequences of those difficulties in accessing Latin books should not be overlooked, for in the absence of English-language publications, Latin books were a primary source of information about Poland-Lithuania.

In turn, presentation of data about Poland-Lithuania, especially cartographic, was affected by technological limitations. Map production required a special kind of press that for many years was not widely available either in England or Scotland, while copper, necessary for the production of suitable map plates, was prohibitively expensive. Moreover, British printers were not properly trained to operate successfully the rolling press and as a result, for many years the atlas and map printing relied on foreign expertise.⁷⁹

As suggested earlier, it was not differences between England and Scotland that were important for the dissemination of information about Poland-Lithuania, but rather the unique characteristics of the newspaper and book market in Britain. Naturally, commodities offered by this market varied greatly and in the context of the current discussion particular notice should be taken of the language and the price of publications, for both were crucial in determining the level of accessibility. For obvious reasons, Latin (or, more generally, non-English language) sources were accessible to a smaller group of readers while cheap prints such as newspapers were more likely to reach a wider audience than books. Consequently, different segments of readers had access to different information about Poland-Lithuania.

⁷⁷ Marjorie Plant, *The English book trade* (London, 1974), 261.

⁷⁸ Ian Maclean, 'The market for scholarly books and conceptions of genre in Northern Europe, 1570-1630' in Ian Gadd (ed.), *The History of the Book in the West: 1455-1700* (Farnham & Burlington, 2010), 364; Alastair J. Mann, *The Scottish Book Trade, 1500-1720* (East Linton, 2000), 232, 69-93.

⁷⁹ Laurence Warmis, 'Maps and Atlases' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 228.

Conclusion

Both the international position and political imperatives of Poland-Lithuania diverged considerably from those of England and Scotland. However, trade (and traders) linked them strongly and was the driving force of their diplomatic relations. Importantly, the pattern of diplomatic relations was not symmetrical to the pattern of interest in Poland-Lithuania. The latter was generated by diplomatic initiatives, but also by people's interests and developments in the press market. The emergence of regular newspapers was crucial for a broader dissemination of information about Poland-Lithuania though, critically, newspapers remained under the strict control of the government which utilised information provided by both formal and informal networks. Information flows were determined by informers' biases, but also depended on more external factors such as the postal structure. Similarly, intrinsic characteristics of the book industry – its trade arrangements and its technological limitations – influenced dissemination of knowledge about Poland-Lithuania. All in all, the mechanics of communication seriously impinged on the nature, content and form of communications.

This chapter opened with the proposition that shared interest is the most obvious impulse for one country to get to know another and with the assessment that Poland-Lithuania and Britain were not “natural” partners for each other. Be that as it may, evidence shows that there was a continuous flow of information about Poland-Lithuania. Let us now turn to discover what Britons knew about the *Rzeczpospolita's* geography, chorography and history.

Chapter 2

Framing Poland-Lithuania: geography, chorography and history

Introduction

There is no evidence to suggest that when Moses Pitt reassured readers of his *Atlas* (1680) that camels did not belong to Poland's fauna, he meant anything more than to illustrate the kingdom's cold climate.¹ Belief in the presence of exotic animals in Poland-Lithuania might not have been such an oddity considering the plethora of stories about the kingdom being plagued by horrible dragons and populated by mice and rats, an instrument of God's vengeance against tyrannous rulers.² Such tales, popularised either for entertainment or moral teaching, had been in circulation for centuries. Pitt's scholarly, well-informed atlas did not belong to the same genre; it aimed to provide "the accurate description of the world" and contribute to the advancement of science.³ And yet, the provision of an accurate description of Poland-Lithuania was problematic. Unlike Britain, Poland, and later Poland-Lithuania, changed its borders several times over the course of the long seventeenth century. Keeping track of the Polish kingdom's dominions was a demanding task as continuous wars with immediate and more distant neighbours, coupled with the change of the status of its fiefs and dependent territories, brought frequent and significant modifications to the size and shape of the *Rzeczpospolita*. In addition, prior to its birth, the *Rzeczpospolita's* structure was affected by land shifts between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.⁴ These territorial transfers, political changes and social and cultural diversity hindered the emergence of a homogenous and consistent picture of even the essential features

¹ Pitt, 2.

² The tale of King Popiel, a degenerated king eaten by mice, became popular through Kromer's *De Polonia*. This particular excerpt was soon translated into English and published in London as *A notable example of Gods vengeance, uppon a murdering king* [1560]. For the stories both about the dragon living near Cracow and Popiel see for example Nathaniel Wanley, *The wonders of the little world* (London, 1678), 61. The appearance of the new vocabulary based on Popiel's name may be a testimony of the myth's popularity - "Poplemans: a sort of hobgoblins, so called from Popleman, a cruel tyrant, anciently of Polonia" - Edward Philips, *The new world of English words* (London, 1658), n.p.

³ Pitt, n.p.

⁴ At the 1569 Sejm, the voivodships of Volhynia, Braclaw and Kiev, and also Podlasie were incorporated into the Crown of Poland.

of Poland-Lithuania and led instead to a variety of subjective and often already out-dated descriptions remaining in circulation.

Notwithstanding those challenges, this chapter aims to answer what, where and who Poland-Lithuania was in the seventeenth century as recorded in geographical, chorographical and historical sources of the period. Those include world atlases, compendia, breviats, travel accounts and history books in both English and Latin, written by Poles and non-Poles alike for an international audience.

This chapter begins with a background of cartographic developments that had preceded the publication of the first books in English which presented descriptions and maps of Poland-Lithuania. On one hand, this section introduces problems of originality and authority, while on the other hand it signals the diversity of presentations of Poland-Lithuania. The following section examines nomenclatures and classifications that were applied to describe the *Rzeczpospolita* and its provinces, and shows how the variety of linguistic and methodological practices led to the multi-identification of the *Rzeczpospolita*. The section on mapping looks at how Poland-Lithuania was represented on the maps, but also how descriptions and maps of Poland-Lithuania were presented in atlases. It is proposed that cartographic developments, but also atlases' arrangements, projected the image of a disunited *Rzeczpospolita*. In turn, 'Orientating Poland-Lithuania' inspects travellers' accounts and discusses Britons' impressions and evaluations of this kingdom. Finally, the section 'Projecting the past' analyses Britons' exposure to and familiarity with the history of Poland-Lithuania. It argues that despite a multiplicity of sources, Britons were predominantly presented with one particular version of the *Rzeczpospolita's* history.

At the beginning was Ptolemy

It was the translation into Latin and the subsequent publication of multiple editions of Ptolemy's *Geographike Hyphegesis* in the fifteenth century that instigated the renaissance of cartography and geography in Western Europe,

while in Poland it gave a strong impulse for those disciplines' development.⁵ Among the numerous editions of Ptolemy's book that flooded the market, the Roman edition of 1507 is of particular significance for this discussion. Like all those printed before, it lacked a separate map of Poland and provided only a map of the part of Europe encompassing this kingdom. However, unlike the Berlinghieri's edition of Ptolemy (1482) which presented the territory of Poland on two maps (*Germania* and *Sarmatia Europaea*) without actually naming it, the map of the 1507 edition for the first time named Poland – and Lithuania – specifically – *Tabula Moderna Polonie, Ungarie, Boemie, Germanie, Russie, Lithuanie*.⁶ Crucially, as a result of the editor's, Marcus Beneventanus's, consultations with a Pole, Bernard Wapowski, this map included much more detailed and accurate information about Poland and Lithuania.

Recognised as the "father of Polish cartography", Wapowski was the author of the first complete printed map of Poland which was published in Basel in 1526.⁷ The map, probably named *Mappa in qua illustr[antur ditiones Regni] Poloniae ac Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae pars*, most likely represented the territories between Frankfurt (Oder) and Bar in Podolia, and from the borders of Samogitia and Courland to upper Hungary.⁸ Although only remnants of Wapowski's map have survived, its content is known through contemporary copies and through works of other cartographers who drew upon his maps. Different variations of the map were circulated widely in Europe through Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* (1544) and the printed loose maps of Antonio Salamanca (1548), George Lily and

⁵ Walter Goffart, *Historical atlases* (Chicago & London, 2003), 14.

⁶ *Kret*, 17, 21; 2EHC/Map 1 and 6EHC/Map 3 respectively. NB, the name Polonia was used for the first time in the 13th century by Matthew of Paris on his map of the world, remaining in manuscript.

⁷ Czesław Chowanec, 'The first geographical map of Bernard Wapowski', *Imago Mundi* 12 (1955), 59. Like the map of Beneventanus, it was based on the earlier map of Cusanus (Nicholas of Cusa). The untitled, manuscript map (or, possibly, the copy of the map) of Cusanus was reproduced by Hieronim Münzer in Hartmann Schedel's *Liber chronicarum* (Nürnberg, 1493), of which allegedly as many as 3,000 copies were published, thus making Cusanus' map widely known – *Kret*, 20.

⁸ Even less is known about Wapowski's map of the region printed in Cracow before 1528. Presumably titled *Tabula Sarmatia...*, it is deduced from the remaining fragments of its southern part covering south and central Poland, upper and eastern Hungary, Transylvania and the northern part of the modern Balkans, whereas the northern part of the map is supposed to cover eastern Pomerania, Samogitia, east Prussia, Livonia, Lithuania proper, northeastern Grand Duchy of Muscovy and southeastern Sweden. Regrettably, no fragment of the 'Northern Sarmatia' has survived; however, the 'Southern Sarmatia' can be reconstructed from later works, for instance, Heinrich Zell's map of Europe (Nuremberg, ca 1533) and *Polonia and Hungaria* in Münster's edition of Ptolemy – Zsolt G. Török, 'Renaissance Cartography in East-Central Europe, ca 1450-1560' in David Woodward and J.B. Harley (eds), *The History of Cartography vol. 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance* (Chicago & London, 2007), II, 1820.

Michaele Tramezzino (1553), Giacomo Gastaldi (1562 & 1568) and Wacław Grodecki.⁹ The map of the latter, based on Wapowski's work, but with new details of the eastern borderlands of Poland, was printed in Basel in 1562. More importantly, in terms of dissemination of the Wapowski-Grodecki map, its inclusion in Abraham Ortelius's atlas proved decisive.

There could be no discussion of the development of European cartography without the name of Abraham Ortelius. Antiquarian, historian and engraver, Ortelius dedicated half of his life to creating and improving his world atlas. The *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, his masterpiece, published in Antwerp in 1570, was not only praised by scholars and professionals, but also achieved a huge commercial success. The print run of the *Theatrum* is unknown, but the appearance in the same year of a second edition clearly indicates a huge interest among readers, impressed with the quality of the work and delighted with its format.¹⁰ Frustrated with the contemporary presentations of map-books (bundles of maps of various size), Ortelius offered a new, much more expedient arrangement by unifying the size of all sheets and assembling smaller maps together to be printed on one sheet. Another novelty lay in adding explanatory texts – brief overviews of the regions presented in the maps.

No fewer than thirty-one editions of the *Theatrum* in Latin, German, Spanish, Dutch, Italian and French had been published by 1612, with the only English edition appearing in London in 1606. This single edition should not be seen as an indication of the limited regard of the *Theatrum* among Britons. On the contrary, Latin editions were widely popular (among their owners were Lord Burghley, Rhys Lhuyd, Richard Hakluyt the younger, William Camden, John Johnston and King James VI & I) and frequently quoted as an authority.¹¹ It was indeed the readers' appreciation of the Latin editions, and also commercial concerns that most likely explains the belated publication of a vernacular version.¹² Importantly, the *English Ortelius* in folio was preceded by two different, i.e. based

⁹ *Kret*, 11.

¹⁰ It is estimated that about 2,200 copies were sold between 1570 and 1598 – *Abraham Ortelius Theatrum Orbis Terrarum: Antwerp 1570*, with an introduction by R.A. Skelton (Amsterdam, 1964), ix.

¹¹ *Abraham Ortelius The Theatre of the Whole World: London 1606*, with an introduction by R.A. Skelton (Amsterdam, 1968), v. I am grateful to Professor Mason for the information about John Johnston's collection.

¹² *Ibid.*

on two sets of plates and texts, editions of *An epitome of Ortelius his Theatre of the World*, both published in 1603. These oblong octavo “pocket” books, edited respectively by James Shawe and John Norton, were not only the earliest world atlases with English text published in Britain; they were also the first books in English printed in Britain that presented maps and descriptions of Poland-Lithuania.¹³

This debut was far from spectacular. Not only were the maps of both editions very crude and lacking the quality and accuracy of the earlier Latin folio editions, but they also used imprecise nomenclature (see Map 2.1, p. 46). Whereas the title of the map encompassing the *Rzeczpospolita*'s regions in the recent Latin editions matched the territorial and constitutional changes of 1569 (the union with Lithuania), reading *Poloniae, Lituaniaeq. Descriptio*, the *Epitomes*' maps described these territories simply as *Polonia*.¹⁴ The nature of the relationship between Poland and Lithuania was elucidated in the side texts but, interestingly, differently in each edition. Whereas, according to Shawe's edition, Lithuania (and also Samogitia, Masovia, Volhynia, Podolia and Russia) “were contayned under the crown of Poland”, the text of Norton's edition only stated that the peoples of those regions (also including Moldavia) were “called by all authors Sarmates”, without any reference to the territories' political status.¹⁵

This was one among many differences between the texts. These discrepancies cannot be explained solely by the time-gap between the texts' creation (Norton's edition relied on the Dutch pocket edition of 1577, whereas Shawe's edition was based on the Latin text prepared after 1601), but indicated also the authors' various interests. The latter, written by the reputed cartographer, mathematician and engineer, Michel Coignet, contained multiple references to the kingdom's political system, urbanization and defence system, compared with the cursory remarks on the kingdom's topography and natural resources.¹⁶ Interestingly, Coignet dedicated the translation to Sir Walter Raleigh and angling his text towards its English audience (for instance, the comment about the commercial presence of the English in Elbing) is suggestive of an additional bow towards the

¹³ As mentioned earlier, *A Relation* was not published until the 20th century. NB, though exceptionally detailed and accurate, the book did not contain any map of Poland-Lithuania.

¹⁴ *Epitome* (Shawe), f. 94v, *Epitome* (Norton), f. 94v.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Epitome* (Shawe), f. 94v.

dedicatee. In contrast, Norton’s generally less detailed edition, originally penned by Pieter Heyns, paid much more attention to geographical features and the place’s fauna.¹⁷ Discussions about other territorial units, whether those constitutionally linked with the *Rzeczpospolita*, such as Prussia and the Dukedoms of Oświęcim and Zator, or neighbouring kingdoms, revealed further discrepancies between the *Epitome*’s editions. For example, the authors differed in placing Danzig and while in Shawe’s edition the town was discussed in the section on Prussia, Norton linked it directly with Polonia. Tellingly, the nuances of presenting Danzig in the books’ different sections or signing the map “Russia” instead of “Russia or rather Moscovia” denoted more than the texts’ singularities; in truth, as it will be demonstrated, they signalled problems of terminology and taxonomy that were to affect perceptions of Poland-Lithuania for decades.



Map 2.1 Map of Polonia from *An epitome of Ortelius his Theater of the world* [1603].

¹⁷ *Epitome* (Norton), f. 94v.

What and where? In the terminological Gordian knot

The reference to the Sarmates inhabiting the region in Norton's edition was yet another testimony to Ptolemy's lasting legacy. According to this Roman geographer, the territories including Poland were Sarmatia Europea, bordering on the east with Sarmatia Asiatica. This division was popularised by Maciej z Miechowa (Matthew de Miechow) in his *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis, Asiana et Europiana* (Cracow, 1517), where he described the latter region as stretching between the Vistula and the Don.¹⁸ The extent of Europa Sarmatia was elucidated by Martin Waldseemüller, whose map of Sarmatian Europe in his edition of Ptolemy (1513) encompassed Hungary, Poland, Ruthenia, Prussia and Walachia, and Sebastian Münster, who in his *Cosmographia* expanded Waldseemüller's list to include Bulgaria. Symptomatically, their maps encompassed the territory of Lithuania, though the country's name was absent from the maps' titles.¹⁹

Both characterisations of European Sarmatia continued to appear in the books' subsequent editions, though the map reference to Sarmatia Europea in the late sixteenth-century publications in Britain became scarce. Nonetheless, atlases' texts and compendia continued to feature the name in various configurations. The equation of Sarmatia with Poland alone was popularised through a Balliol College fellow and future archbishop, George Abbot's *Briefe description of the whole worlde* (1599), the work presumably intended for the author's students. Abbot was influenced by Maciej z Miechowa or, possibly, by a German scholar, Joannes Boamus who in his *Mores, leges, et ritus omnium* (1541) expressly had used the term Sarmatia interchangeably with Polonia. Interestingly, this stood in contrast with the practice of Boemus's follower, Sebastian Münster, whose widely acclaimed *Cosmographia* talked about Polonia being a part of Sarmatia but also, inconsistently, gave the then reigning Sigismund Augustus the title of "Sarmatiae ac Poloniae regi".²⁰ This practice pioneered by Abbot continued throughout the century and the opinion that "the most ancient name of [Poland] was Sarmatia" was to be found in works of Britons and non-Britons alike,

¹⁸ Cf. Maciej z Miechowa, *Opis Sarmacji Europejskiej i Azjatyckiej* (Wrocław et al., 1972), 61.

¹⁹ Kret, *Katalog*, 23. NB, Waldseemüller's Europe Sarmatia was based on Wapowski's map – Chowaniec, 'The first geographical map', 64.

²⁰ Boemus's compendium was translated into English as *The manners, lawes, and customs of all nations collected out of the best writers* (London, 1611). Cf. *Ibid.*, 215, 232 and 233; George Abbot, *A briefe description of the whole world* (London, 1599), f. B3; Münster, *Cosmographia*, 885.

including Peter Heylyn's *Microcosmus* (1621 et seq.), John Speed's *The prospect of the most famous parts of the world* (1627 et seq.) and the *Cosmography and geography* by the greatly respected French cartographer, Nicholas Sanson (1682).²¹ Simultaneously, the old distinction remained in use, especially when the authority of Ptolemy was directly called upon, and such writers as Gabriel Richardson, Robert Morden and Peregrine Clifford Chamberlayne subscribed to the view that Poland was only a part of European Sarmatia.²² However, when the name resurfaced – in either configuration – it was typically used not in reference to the contemporary state but as a reflection on either Poland's or the *Rzeczpospolita's* distant past and the origin of its people; the present, late-sixteenth century entity was Polonia.

Yet, although the nominal shift in English texts from "Sarmatia" to "Polonia" (or, more frequently from the beginning of the seventeenth century, "Poland") implied a higher degree of accuracy, in reality no clarity was guaranteed because of the new convention's triple use. In purely geographical terms, it was a name of the province, often referred to as Poland proper. But two other uses referred to political characteristics, thus "Polonia" could denote either the Kingdom of Poland (occasionally described as the Crown), or the Commonwealth of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the *Rzeczpospolita*, the political entity created by the terms of the union of Lublin (1569).²³ Notably, the *Rzeczpospolita* was not described by its full name, but called instead by the name of Poland or the Kingdom of Poland, without any acknowledgment of the status of Lithuania.²⁴ It stood in stark contrast with the practice of the Muscovites, who

²¹ Peter Heylyn, *Microcosmus* (Oxford, 1621), 188 (repeated in subsequent editions: 1625, 1627, 1629, 1631); Speed, 33. All subsequent editions repeated the description of Poland-Lithuania of the 1627 original. Nicholas Sanson, *Cosmography and geography* (London, 1682), 84. NB, Heylyn (who in turn was quoted by John Speed) indicated Olaf Magnus's as his source.

²² Cf. Gabriel Richardson: "(...) [Poland and Hungary] both nations of Sarmatia" in *Of the state of Europe XIII books* (Oxford, 1627), 4; Robert Morden: "Poland, formerly but a part of Sarmatia" in *Geography rectified* (London, 1680), 113; Peregrine Clifford Chamberlayne: "Sarmatia, that part of Europe which comprehends Muscovy and Poland" in *Compendium geographicum* (London, 1682), 64, 118.

²³ According to Miega, "the great Dukedom of Lithuania is united to the Crown of Poland", whereas Morden defined Poland as "an aggregate body, consisting of many distinct provinces, united into one estate, of which Poland being the chief, hath given the name to the rest" – Guy Miega, *A new cosmography* (London, 1682), 111; Morden, *Geography rectified*, 113.

²⁴ Thus, ironically, the convention of referring to the *Rzeczpospolita* as Poland, which is seen (often rightly) as a sign of contemporary Poles' appropriation of the multinational kingdom's past and thus much criticised by modern historians is, in this particular context, historically correct. Only occasionally was the *Rzeczpospolita* referred to as the Commonwealth; when this happened, it was clearly a verbatim translation of the kingdom's Latin name (*Respublica*).

at the end of the sixteenth century referred to the ruler of the *Rzeczpospolita* as the “Lithuanian king”.²⁵ What makes this perfectly understandable manner of address (especially in the light of the Russian-Lithuanian territorial proximity) so intriguing is the Muscovite diplomats’ recognition of the distinctive status of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Their comment on “the Lithuanian king’s great ambassador – the chancellor of the grand duchy of Lithuania” and on “the Lithuanian state, the Polish Crown and the Lithuanian Grand Duchy”, made it clear that the term “the Lithuanian king” was not applied to the ruler of the Grand Duchy, but to that of the Commonwealth and that of “the Lithuanian state” to the *Rzeczpospolita*.²⁶

Conversely, such a practice was completely unknown in Western Europe, where even the correct recognition of the Grand Duchy’s status was a rare occurrence. Moreover, as a rule, the position of Lithuania was lowered to that of any other province of the *Rzeczpospolita*, and Robert Stafford’s elevation of the Grand Duchy to the rank of a kingdom (even if only for the purpose of theoretical classification) – a unique example of favourable inaccuracy – was an exception that proved the rule.²⁷

The case of Lithuania (which will be returned to) was only the tip of the iceberg in relation to the provinces of Poland-Lithuania. To start with, there was no consensus as to the number of provinces the *Rzeczpospolita* was comprised of, the figures stretching from six (Malynes) to twenty four (Mundy). Table 2.1 *A comparative list of the Rzeczpospolita’s provinces* (see pp. 52-53) illustrates the range of possibilities. This spectrum can be explained by a variety of methodological approaches as well as by the authors’ learning. Thus, for instance, a careful reader of Gerard Malynes (1622) realises that the conspicuous absence of Lithuania from the list of Polonia’s regions, which otherwise included “Prussia, Russia, Volhinia, Massovia, Livonia and Poland”, originated apparently

²⁵ Prince Semen Zvenigorodski and dyak Torkh Antonov sent by Fedor Ivanovich on the 23rd of April 7097 [viz. 23 April/ 3 May 1589] to the Georgian Land in W.E.D. Allen, *Russian embassies to the Georgian Kings (1589-1605)*(Cambridge, 1970), I, 93-4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 410. This practice might have risen because it was the Lithuanian chancery which after 1569 was responsible for diplomatic relations with Muscovy.

²⁷ Robert Stafford, *A geographical and anthological description of all the empires and kingdomes* (London, 1607), 7. Later in the text Stafford elucidates that “This kingdom [Lithuania] is governed by a Duke, but subject unto the king of Poland” – *ibid.*, 25.

from the author's confusion of Lithuania with Livonia.²⁸ No such mistake tainted Peter Heylyn's work published four years later, where he named "Lithuania, Volinia, Samogitia, Podolia, Russia Nigra, Mazovia, Prussia, Podlassia, the Dukedoms of Oswitz and Zator [Oświęcim and Zator], and Poland" as the *Rzeczpospolita's* chief provinces.²⁹ Yet, even agreement on the number of provinces was not always accompanied by agreement about its composition. For example, among Lewes Roberts' list of ten (1638) – in essence the same as Heylyn's – Livonia can be found, but not the Dukedoms of Oświęcim and Zator, whereas neither of those two regions was acknowledged by Robert Morden, whose *Geography Rectified* (1680, 1688, 1693, 1700) listed Cujavia instead in every edition.³⁰

Characteristically, individual selections were shaped by the sources used rather than by actual territorial changes. Whereas doubts could surround the classification of Livonia, as part of it, including the chief town, Riga, was lost to Sweden in 1629,³¹ there were no such uncertainties about either Cujavia or the Dukedoms of Oświęcim and Zator, whose links with the *Rzeczpospolita* have essentially remained unchanged.³² Yet tellingly, British authors did not always rely on the most recent – and supposedly the most up-to-date – sources. This may be explained by accessibility, for it was probably easier to access books that had remained in circulation for years or decades rather than on publications that were hot off the press. What is more, certain authors – such as Ptolemy or Ortelius – enjoyed a particularly esteemed position and their authority should be appreciated.

²⁸ Gerard Malynes, *Consuetudo, vel Lex mercatoria* (London, 1622), 68. Based on the text, it is impossible to determine, whether Malynes mistakenly called Lithuania by name of Livonia (he clearly was aware of the existence of Lithuania) or, for some reason, he decided to consider data about Lithuania together with information about Livonia.

²⁹ Heylyn, *Microcosmus*, 348-350.

³⁰ Lewes Roberts, *The merchants mappe of commerce* (London, 1638), 164; Morden, *Geography rectified* (1680), 115; (1688), 71; (1693 & 1700), 84.

³¹ Certain changes were slow to be recognised: both Roberts in his publication of 1638, but also Clarke writing nineteen years later, still attached Livonia with Riga to Poland – cf. Roberts, *The mappe*, 164; Samuel Clarke, *A geographical description of all the countries* (London, 1657), 155. Also, the out-dated classification were replicated; for instance, Edward Chamberlayne's reference to Luconia [i.e. Livonia] as the province of Poland, strongly suggest his reading of Roberts, who used the same erroneous term – Chamberlayne, *The present state of England* (London, 1683), 260.

³² The dukedoms of Oświęcim and Zator, lost at the end of the thirteenth century were bought out by the Polish kings in the fifteenth century. Originally they remained the property of the Polish kings, but were incorporated into the Crown in 1562-64.

Despite the difficulty in determining the rationale behind preferences for particular sources, it is relatively easy to identify the sources themselves. Thus, the presence of the Dukedoms of Oświęcim and Zator indicates familiarity with Ortelius (or with the works of his immediate followers, such as Gerard Mercator and Johannes Janssonius), who not only provided these provinces' description but also incorporated the provinces' map in the *Theatrum*, while the addition of Cujavia suggests cognizance of works by Nicholas Sanson.³³ Importantly, the works of this French cartographer promoted territorial delineation based on administrative organisation. This was a growing tendency in the seventeenth century, but historical classifications persisted. Consequently, discussion about the provinces continued to be marred by the dilemma of geographical, historical and political demarcation. Topped with mistakes, this resulted in most peculiar presentations such as that of the Duchy of Prussia which, listed among Poland's twelve main provinces, was then described as being divided into "Royal Prussia, including Pomerania, subject to the Swedes (...) and Ducal Prussia, under the Duke of Brandenburg".³⁴

³³ Naturally, Britons were familiar with Cujavia long before the publication of *Cosmography and geography*, but this historical province was re-introduced by Sanson in his political-administrative-based systematization. A similar approach is observed in Gordon's classification, where he recognised different status of Poland's parts – a dukedom (i.e. Lithuania, Courland) and a province (e.g. Podolia, Volhynia) – Patrick Gordon, *Geography anatomised* (London, 1699), 49-52.

³⁴ Laurence Echard, *A most compleat compendium of geography* (London, 1691), 67-68.

Name	Poland/ Polonia	Lithu- -ania	Livonia	Samogitia	Cujavia	Masovia	Russia/ Ruthenia	Prussia	Volhynia	Podole	Polesie	Oś./Z. **	Others	No.
Ortelius (1570)	x2	x	-	x	-	x	South	x	x	x	-	x	*	9(10)
Botero (1601)	x2	x	x	-	-	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	7(8)
<i>Epitome</i> (Shawe)	x2	x	-	x	-	x	x	x a)	x	x	-	x b)	-	7(10)
<i>Epitome</i> (Norton)	x2	x	-	x	-	x		x2 a)	x	x	-	x b)	*	7(11)
Malynes (1622)	x	c)	x	-	-	x	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	5(6)
Lewes (1638)	x	x	Luconia	x	-	x	Nigra	x	x	x	x	-	-	10
Bleau (1648)	Propria x2	x	x	x	-	x	Nigra	x	x	x	x	x	Cassu- -bia	12(13)
Clarke (1657)	Propria	x	x	x	-	x	Nigra	Regal	x	x	Podlasia	x	-	11
Sanson (1672)	x2	x	-	x	x	x	Noire	x2	x2	x2	x	-	Polaq- -uia, Mos- covia's part	10(15)
Morden (1680)	x	x	-	x	x	x	Little/ Lesser/ Black/Red Meridional	Royal	x	x d)	-	-	Polaq- -uia	10(11)
Chambe- -rlayne (1683)	x	x	Luconia	x	-	x	Nigra	x	x	x	Podlasia	-	-	10
Blome (1699)	x	x	-	-	x	x	Nigra	x	x	x	-	-	Polaq- -uia	9
Gordon (1699)	Propria x2	x	-	x	-	War- -sovia	Little	x	x	x	-	-	Polaq- -uia	9 (10)

Table 2.1 A comparative list of the Rzeczpospolita's provinces.

Key

/ Alternative names

* Poland's protection of Moldavia remarked upon; Moldavia discussed alongside other provinces of Poland

** Oświęcim and Zator

x2 Provinces' division recognised (Poland – Greater and Lesser; Prussia – Royal/Regal and Ducal; Volhynia – Higher and Lower; Podole – Higher and Lower)

a) Discussed separately in the atlas' different sections

b) Counted among the 14 dukedoms of Silesia, but discussed separately in a section with Poland, not Silesia, itself included among the provinces of Germany

c) Apparently included under Livonia

d) Including the Ukraine

Understanding of the region's political geography was additionally impeded by terminological confusion, particularly regarding the name of Russia/Ruthenia. Whereas most authors listed Russia among the provinces of the *Rzeczpospolita*, they often failed to distinguish between different regions designated "Russia": Negra (the region encompassing the voivodships of Brest, Troki and Novograd), Rubra (the territory between the San, Dniestr and Prypeć rivers, with Lwów [Leopolis/Lviv] as its capital) and Alba (the part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania between the Dźwina, Prypeć and upper Dnieper rivers). Unlike Russia Negra (Black Russia/Russia Noire/Black Ruthenia), named most frequently, Russia Rubra (Red Ruthenia) was apparently *terra incognita*. However, closer examination reveals that it was rather a case of *nomen incognitum*, as generations of writers referred to the territory with the capital of Leopolis (viz. Russia Rubra) as Russia Negra. Ironically, the blame for the disappearance of Red Ruthenia from maps should be shouldered by Wapowski as he, unlike other cartographers using the map of Cusanus, described the region simply as Russia.³⁵ Russia Rubra returned to world atlases via the Radziwiłł-Makowski map of Lithuania (1613). This reintroduction was seemingly reinforced by the authority of Willem Blaeu, the publisher of the celebrated *Novus Atlas*.³⁶ Published in Amsterdam in 1648, the *Atlas* found its way to readers in Britain. Nonetheless, this modification regarding Russia Rubra did not resonate strongly in Britain where authors continued to write exclusively about Russia Negra or Lesser Russia. It was only in 1680 that Morden referred to Red Russia, claiming it to be synonymous with the province known as Black Russia or Lesser Russia.³⁷ Morden, admirably diligent in updating his information in subsequent editions of his book (1688, 1693, 1700), apparently remained unfamiliar with Moses Pitt's *English Atlas* (1680), which was the first British publication where Russia Negra and Russia

³⁵ See the maps of Nicholaus Germanus (Eichstatt, 1491), Giovanni Andrea Varassone [ca 1530] and Henryk Zell (1535) – in *Buczek*, n.p., Maps II, III and VIII respectively. NB, whereas Black and Red Ruthenia remained as geographical designations, the latter became largely encompassed in the administrative entity – the Ruthenian palatinate, this dual geographical-administrative division contributing to the confusion.

³⁶ Willem Blaeu, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Amsterdam, 1648), n.p. Also known as the *Novus Atlas* (that included three volumes), it turned into the *Atlas Maior* in 1658, after publishing additional ten volumes.

³⁷ Morden, *Geography rectified*, 117.

Rubra were recognised as two distinct provinces and their position described correctly.³⁸

The main city of the latter province, Lwów, was frequently designated as Russia's capital. Interestingly, it was seen not only as the capital of Russia Rubra and Negra but also, according to Henry Austell, the late sixteenth-century explorer, of Russia Alba, the region supposedly stretching as far as Kamieniec.³⁹ His is a truly unique description since the name of Russia Alba was hardly ever used in a Polish context, but described instead the Dukedom of Muscovy. This entirely Western convention, which originated from the late medieval association of White Russia with the Great Novograd, was supposedly unknown among the Eastern Slavs.⁴⁰ The polonised Italian, Aleksander Gwagnin (Alessandro Guagnini), who popularised this locution in his *Sarmatiae Europae descriptio* (Cracow, 1578), may indeed be acquitted of being a Slav, yet it is clear that this convention was known among Western Slavs before Guagnini's publication, as may be deduced from Wapowski's map inscription "Russia Alba sive Moscovia". At any rate, the name remained in use in Britain and Europe in the next century and the first English explorer of Muscovy, Richard Chancellor, was neither the first to report that "Muscovy has also the name of Russia the white", nor the last, as works by Peter Heylyn (1621 et seq.), John Speed (1627 et seq.) and Guy Miege (1682) illustrate.⁴¹

On the other hand, the plurality of Russias could bring out original (mis)interpretations, to which Shawe's edition of the *Epitome* is a clear testimony. The book presented White Russia as a territory held by the Duke of Muscovy, who claimed the title of Emperor of all Russia, and explained that "under the name of Russia also in general Polonia and Lituania are comprehended"; a statement repeated in the *English Ortelius*.⁴² It was potentially a highly

³⁸ Pitt, 1, 2.

³⁹ Little is known about Austell, whom Hakluyt noted as one of his sources and whom accorded the title of ship's captain and master – Richard Hakluyt, *The principal navigations, voyages, traffiques and discoveries of the English nation* (London, 1599/1600), III, 197.

⁴⁰ This opinion of Ales Biely is discussed in Oleg Łatyszczek, *Od Rusinów Białych do Białorusinów* (Białystok, 2006), 22-25.

⁴¹ Heylyn, *Microcosmus*, 183; Speed, 32; Miege, *A new cosmography*, 89. Heylyn and Speed referred to the *Rzeczpospolita's* Russia as Russia Negra or Ruthenia – *ibid.*, 185; 32 respectively.

⁴² *Epitome* (Shawe), f. 97v. Interestingly, on this occasion, the wording of Norton's edition was more accurate, as it read: "Russia or rather Moscovia" – *Epitome* (Norton), f. 97v; *English Ortelius*, 104,

controversial remark considering that the style of Muscovy rulers was a continuous bone of contention in Polish-Muscovite relations. The Poles' unwillingness to address Muscovite's ruler as the czar was noted, yet usually not shared by Britons as shown by Giles Fletcher, the author of the first English history of Russia, who freely bestowed on the Muscovy's prince the title of "the emperor of all Russia".⁴³ Neither controversy nor linguistic disorientation diminished with the title of "the emperor of all Sarmatia", an alternative suggested by Fletcher, who acknowledged Sarmatia as the ancient name of Russia and claimed an ancient division between the White and the Black Sarmatias.⁴⁴ However, this particular terminology, unlike the style of "the emperor of all Russia", met with limited reception, despite its dissemination through Richard Hakluyt's *Navigations*.⁴⁵

Another take on the multiplicity of Russias was to be found in the reprint of the already mentioned *The manners, lawes, and customs* by Boemus. According to this relatively old, but still highly esteemed and widely read compendium, Russia Alba (together with Russia superior and Russia inferior) constituted a part of Russia, where Russia itself "called also by the names of Ruthenia and Podolia" denoted the Dukedom of Muscovy.⁴⁶ As the province called Podolia was a part of the *Rzeczpospolita* this statement created even greater terminological confusion.

The association with Muscovy also took other forms. Suggestively, the alternative adjective "lesser" or "little" was used to distinguish Russia within the *Rzeczpospolita*'s borders from Great Russia, that is, Muscovy. Most frequently used as a physical distinction, it could also be invoked to capture the province's religious distinctiveness. Thus Thomas Fuller (1639) defined Little Russia as the country following the Eastern Church (like Great Russia/Muscovy), but

where the region in question is described as "Russia or rather the Empire of the Grand Duke of Moscovia".

⁴³ Giles Fletcher, *Of the Russe Commonwealth* (London, 1591), 6. 19, 23.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁵ Hakluyt, *Navigations*, I, 474.

⁴⁶ Boemus, *The manners, lawes, and customs*, 215. This description is even more intriguing through the fact that Podolia – already in Boemus's lifetime – belonged to Poland. A comparison with a seemingly similar but crucially different excerpt of Münster's *Cosmographia*, which reads "Russia, quae etiam Ruthenia et Podolia, Alba superior et inferior, pars Polonici Regni, quae et Roxolania, habet ad orientum Moschum..." suggests a translation or transcription error made either by Boemus himself or an editor of his work.

remaining under the King of Poland-Lithuania.⁴⁷ This signalled the province's multidimensional identity and while politically the province was tied with Poland-Lithuania, religiously it was ascribed to Muscovy.

It is clear that one of the kingdom's main components, Poland, was favoured at the expense of the other, and not only through lending its name to the *Rzeczpospolita* as a whole. Although formally an equal partner, Lithuania appeared predominantly as one of the *Rzeczpospolita's* provinces – a clear testimony to the dominance of the Polish interpretation of the union. Moreover, the available information fostered the perception of the territory and political organisation of 'Poland' and its dependent territories rather than of the *Rzeczpospolita*. Different approaches to categorising provinces and, consequently, their varying numbers, further undermined the concept of the separate, clearly defined *Rzeczpospolita*. Could mapping help to delineate it?

Mapping Poland-Lithuania

The Dnieper river (the Borysthenes/Dniepr) on the east, the Vistula river on the west, the Baltic Sea on the north and Hungary on the south – this was an almost universally accepted description of Poland-Lithuania's borders by British authors throughout the century.⁴⁸ Crucially, this general delineation cut off a considerable part of the kingdom lying beyond those rivers. This inaccuracy was not remedied by the first maps of the *Rzeczpospolita* published in Britain, though any visual shortcomings of the *Epitome's* editions were balanced by the publication of the royal, in format and presentation, *English Ortelius* in folio [1606].⁴⁹ Of much higher quality than the pocket editions, both the maps of Livonia, Prussia, Pomerania and the Dukedoms of Oświęcim and Zator, and the map of Poland-Lithuania, *Poloniae Lithuaniaeq[ue] Descriptio*, included in the *English Ortelius* were, nonetheless, reproductions of the pre-existing maps.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁷ Thomas Fuller, *The historie of the holy warre* (London, 1639), 177.

⁴⁸ For instance, Clarke, *A geographical description*, p. 83; Chamberlayne, *The present state of England*, 260.

⁴⁹ It was based on the Antwerp Latin edition of 1603 – *Abraham Ortelius The Theatre*, viii.

⁵⁰ *Livoniae nova descriptio* was Ortelius's revision of the lost map of Joannes Portantius, whereas others were based on Kaspar Hennenberg's *Prussiae vero descriptio* (1576), *Pomeraniae, Wandaliae*

Poloniae clearly admitted the authorship of Waclaw Grodecki and corrections by Andrzej Pograbka.⁵¹

From Grodecki's map came the even more graphically splendid presentation of Poland-Lithuania, included in the earliest world atlas compiled by a Briton – John Speed's *Prospect of the most famous parts of the world* (London, 1627). Notwithstanding its pretensions, *A newe mape of Poland done into English by I. Speede* was printed (like almost all others) in Amsterdam from existing plates, engraved by Abraham Goos for Claes Visscher, one of the leading Amsterdam publishers.⁵² The same is true of the *Prospect* as the whole. Apparently designed as a companion piece to the same author's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (London, 1611), unlike the *Theatre*, an admirable example of British cartography and an exquisite illustration of Speed's scholarly abilities, the *Prospect* was a rather haphazard and unoriginal commercial venture, designed to catch a tide in the market.⁵³

The Wapowski-Grodecki map remained the main point of reference for those interested in the region; however, whereas the west and central parts were relatively well depicted, the eastern regions of the *Rzeczpospolita* were poorly represented, despite several revisions.⁵⁴ Work on the north-east territories was commissioned as early as the 1570s by King Stephan Bathory, in preparation for his military campaign against Muscovy. Although the historical and geographical description of Livonia written by Maciej Strubicz, the king's main cartographer, allegedly did not satisfy the royal requirements and was published only in 1727, his cartographic work met with greater appreciation.⁵⁵ Strubicz's map *Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae, Livoniae, et Moscoviae descriptio* was included in

Regionis, typ. [n.d., 1573], Stanislaw Porebski's *Ducatus Oswieczimen et Zatoriensis descriptio* (1563) – *Kret*, 38, 42.

⁵¹ *English Ortelius*, n.p.

Published in Venice in 1570, *Partis Sarmatiae Europae, quae Sigismundo Augusto Regi Poloniae potentissimo subiacet, nova descriptio* by Andrzej Pograbka z Pilzna was basically a compilation of Grodecki's map and the map of Europe by Mercator (1554), augmented, however, with a number of towns, routes and historical scenes – *Buczek*, 35-36.

⁵² Only 3 or 4 maps included in the *Prospect* were original; the rest can be identified with the maps printed by Blaeu or Visscher between c. 1617-25 – *John Speed A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World: London 1627*, with an introduction by R.A. Skelton (Amsterdam, 1966), ix. NB, the same map of Poland was used in all editions of Speed's *Prospect*.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, v.

⁵⁴ *Buczek*, 33ff, 65.

⁵⁵ Michael J. Mikoś, 'Monarchs and Magnates: Maps of Poland in the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in David Buissevet (ed.), *Monarchs, ministers and maps* (Chicago & London, 1992), 170.

Marcin Kromer's book *Polonia* (Cologne, 1589) and became the base for the first individual map of Lithuania, published in Mercator's *Atlas* in Duisburg in 1595.⁵⁶

A more detailed visual representation of Lithuania was soon provided, following the efforts of Prince Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł. Published in Amsterdam in 1613, the beautifully engraved *Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae*, which included data on administrative and judicial divisions, bishoprics (both Catholic and Orthodox), residences of influential nobility, with about a quarter of localities mapped for the first time, soon featured in most European world atlases, including an English edition of Mercator's *Atlas* (1636).⁵⁷

This impressive four-plate map included also the Dnieper and encompassed parts of the Ukraine, but this province was fully described only in 1648, when Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan published in Danzig his *Delineatio generalis camporum desertorum vulgo Ukraina cum adiacentibus provinciis*.⁵⁸ In addition, Beauplan shared his knowledge of the region, which he had acquired during his long stay in Poland-Lithuania while working as a military engineer, in the book *Description des contrées du royaume de Pologne* (Rouen, 1651). Although only one hundred copies were published originally, an expanded and renamed book went through further editions (*Description d'Ukraine*, Rouen, 1660; reissues Rouen-Paris, 1661; Rouen, 1673).⁵⁹ The book was translated into English only in 1732, but there is evidence of Britons' familiarity with the French original, whose content was also possibly known to Britons through the excerpts included in various editions of Blaeu's atlases.⁶⁰ Beauplan's work was not limited to the Ukraine; in addition, he authored the map of Poland-Lithuania. This small-scale map published in Danzig in 1652, together with the much larger-scale-map of

⁵⁶ Buczek, 43.

⁵⁷ This map is commonly known as Radziwiłł-Makowski map although the contribution of Makowski, the engraver, has been misleadingly overemphasised and the work on the map was more collaborative than its name suggests. For details, see Török, 'Renaissance Cartography', 1840.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Other maps of the Ukraine are discussed in A. B. Pernal and D. F. Essar, 'The 1652 Beauplan Maps of the Ukraine', *HUS*, 9/1-2 (June 1985), 61-84.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁶⁰ It was published in London as *A Description of Ukraine, Containing several Provinces of the Kingdom of Poland*. The original was known to the scientists Robert Boyle and Bernard Connor - Boyle, *New experiments and observations touching cold* (London, 1665), 539; Connor, I, xv. NB, a facsimile edition of the book, with Ukrainian translation (trans. and annot. by Andrew B. Pernal and Dennis F. Essar) was published by the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute in 1993.

Nicholas Sanson (1655), remained for a century the principal base for maps of Poland-Lithuania in use.

Notably, whereas both Sanson and Beauplan utilised the same materials (Mercator's map of Poland, Radziwiłł-Makowski's of Lithuania, Henneberg's Prussia, Scandinavia by Bureus and Beauplan's maps of the Ukraine), the effects of their compilations were distinctively different. Beauplan's care and diligence resulted in a radically improved presentation of Poland-Lithuania, in contrast with Sanson's far less accurate map, created mainly for use by merchants.⁶¹ Importantly, by drawing correctly the course of the Dnieper, the French engineer "restored" a vast territory to Poland-Lithuania. Although his work was never published in Britain (unlike Sanson's), Beauplan clearly influenced British cartographers and compilers such as Robert Morden. The size and sketchiness of the maps included in editions of Morden's *Geography rectified* renders detailed comparisons very difficult, but the examination of certain topographic details, such as a characteristic meander of the Dnieper, makes it clear that Morden was familiar with some of Beauplan's maps (see Map 2.2, p. 61). Crucially, Morden's map of Poland-Lithuania was reproduced in the country's first history in English, Bernard Connor's *History of Poland* (1698). Subsequently, it appeared also in Patrick Gordon's *Geography anatomised* (1699). Furthermore, the large scale versions of Beauplan's map of the *Rzeczpospolita* were circulated in Europe through the works of German and Dutch engravers such as Sandert, Danckert, Allard and Janssonius.

Crucially, the plates of the latter were used to create the first proper large-scale world atlas in Britain. Prompted by the market vacuum created by the discontinuation of the two dominating world atlases – Blaeu's and Janssonius's – Moses Pitt, a London publisher, decided to satisfy public demand. Working under the auspices of the Royal Society, themselves enticed by the desire to create an up-to-date large folio world atlas in English, Pitt commenced work in 1678. The arrangements soon revealed that Pitt had neither interest nor suitable resources to complete such a serious enterprise and intended to profit from simply re-producing maps from already existing plates bought from Janssonius's

⁶¹ See *Buczek*, 66ff for their detailed comparison.

family.⁶² Of the intended eight volumes of the *English Atlas* only four saw the light of day and, notably, the first volume, published in Oxford in 1680, contained a description of Poland-Lithuania. Although the *English Atlas's* project as envisaged by the learned members of the Royal Society ended in failure, it was an important step in the visualisation of the *Rzeczpospolita*. In addition to the general Beauplean map of Poland-Lithuania and the older regional maps, such as the map of Prussia by Kaspar Henneberg (1576) and the map of Livonia of Janssonius (1641), the atlas contained more recent local maps: of Great Poland, *Palatinatus Posnaniensis*, by Jerzy Freudenhammer, published for the first time in 1645, a detailed map of part of East Prussia, *Tractatum Borussiss circa Gedanum et Elbingam, ab incolis Werder appellati etc.* by Olof Hansson Örnehufvud (ca 1636) and Beauplan's recent map of the Ukraine.



Map 2.2 Map of Poland from Robert Morden's *Geography rectified* (1680).

⁶² E.G.R. Taylor, "The English Atlas' of Moses Pitt, 1680-83", *The Geographical Journal*, 95/4 (1940), 291.

Simultaneously, Britons were presented with Sanson's vision of the *Rzeczpospolita*. His works were first translated into English in 1670, when they were published in London as *A geographical description of the four parts of the world, taken from the notes & workes of the famous Monsieur Sanson, geographer to the French King, and other eminent travellers and authors* and later included into *Cosmography and geography* (1682). Besides these publications (organized by Richard Blome, one of the chief promoters of a new wave of English cartography), Sanson's loose maps of Poland-Lithuania – both general and local – remained in circulation in Europe.⁶³

It is clear that by the end of the seventeenth century Britons had at their disposal a range of cartographic representations of the *Rzeczpospolita*, be it in part or as a whole. World atlases and geographical dictionaries constituted the dominant but not exclusive source of information. Maps and chorographical details were also to be found in historical works. Significantly, these included books not related to the subject of Poland-Lithuania directly, as readers of Samuel Pufendorf's history of Carolus Gustavus, which included Dahlberg's map of the *Rzeczpospolita*, could discover.⁶⁴ The advance of geographical and cartographic exposition, like the development of Polish cartography itself, was not linear but rather more haphazard. An analogous erratic pattern characterised works of British authors, restricted by the accessibility of the sources (i.e. the atlas' high price), but also motivated in their choices by personal attachment to recognised authorities. Likewise, when facing a number of contemporaneous sources, they could be indiscriminate and eclectic in their choices, Morden's use of both Beauplan's topography and Sanson's taxonomy being the classic illustration.

As a rule, maps' publishers relied on existing sources, usually provided by inhabitants of a particular country, who were often commissioned by their own governments, increasingly appreciative of the value of accurate maps with clearly delineated borders, whether for fiscal, military or diplomatic purposes.⁶⁵

⁶³ S. Mendyk, 'Blome, Richard' – *ODNB* (accessed 12 March 2013).

Those included maps of Prussia (1659), Masovia (1665), Volhynia (1665), Podolia and the Ukraine (1665). Notably, Sanson produced also several maps of various palatinates of Lithuania (1665 & 1666) – *gallica.fr* (accessed 15 April 2013).

⁶⁴ Samuel Pufendorf, *De rebus a Gustavo Carolo gestis* (Nuremberg, 1696), n.p.

⁶⁵ Significantly, 79 per cent of maps in Blaeu's *Theatre du monde* (1644) had boundaries in comparison to 45 per cent of the maps in the 1570 edition of Ortelius' *Theatrum* – James R.

Thus, the accuracy of maps of Poland-Lithuania available through world atlases serves as a barometer of domestic (rulers' and elites') initiatives rather than the interest of European audience. On the other hand, it may be presumed that the material on the *Rzeczpospolita* was included in atlases, and also actualised and expanded, because it was believed to be of interest to readers. Their curiosity was satisfied and their knowledge and understanding of the *Rzeczpospolita* variously formed through the range of chorographical and geographical data. But their perceptions were also shaped by the atlases' meta-space – the arrangement of the atlases' content. Its analysis yields additional insights as to how Poland-Lithuania or, arguably, Poland and Lithuania, was perceived.

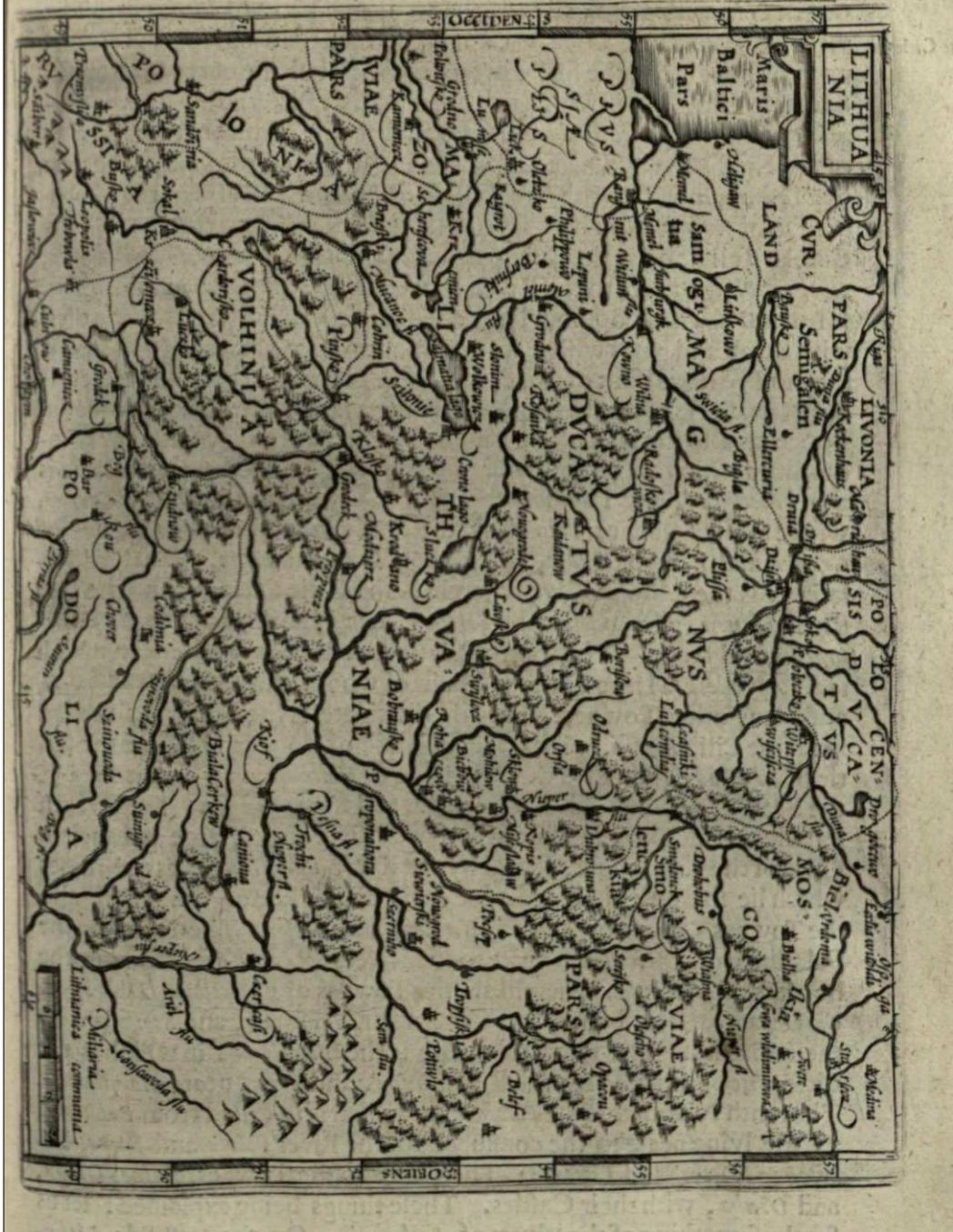
The various cartographic developments discussed earlier explain diverse presentations of maps and overviews. In that light, it is not surprising that in Gerhard Mercator's *Historia mundi*, "commented in English with new additions and much enlarged", published in London in 1635, Poland and Lithuania are discussed separately, under sections headed respectively "the Kingdom of Poland" and "the Dukedome of Lithuania". Not the distinction itself, but Mercator's taxonomy was rather unusual as it was of a political rather than geographical nature.⁶⁶ Despite the fact that the text clearly referred to "the union (...) of Lithuania into one body of a common-wealth with the Polanders", the headings highlighted the sovereign status of both countries and gave no indication of their union.⁶⁷ This separation between Poland and Lithuania was additionally enhanced by placing their descriptions and maps in two distinct parts of the atlas; whereas Lithuania was grouped with Livonia and Muscovy, Poland was discussed between Transylvania and Germany (cf. Map 2.3, p. 64 and Map 2.4, p. 65).

Akerman, 'The Structuring of Political Territory in Early Modern Printed Atlases', *Imago Mundi*, 47 (1995), 141.

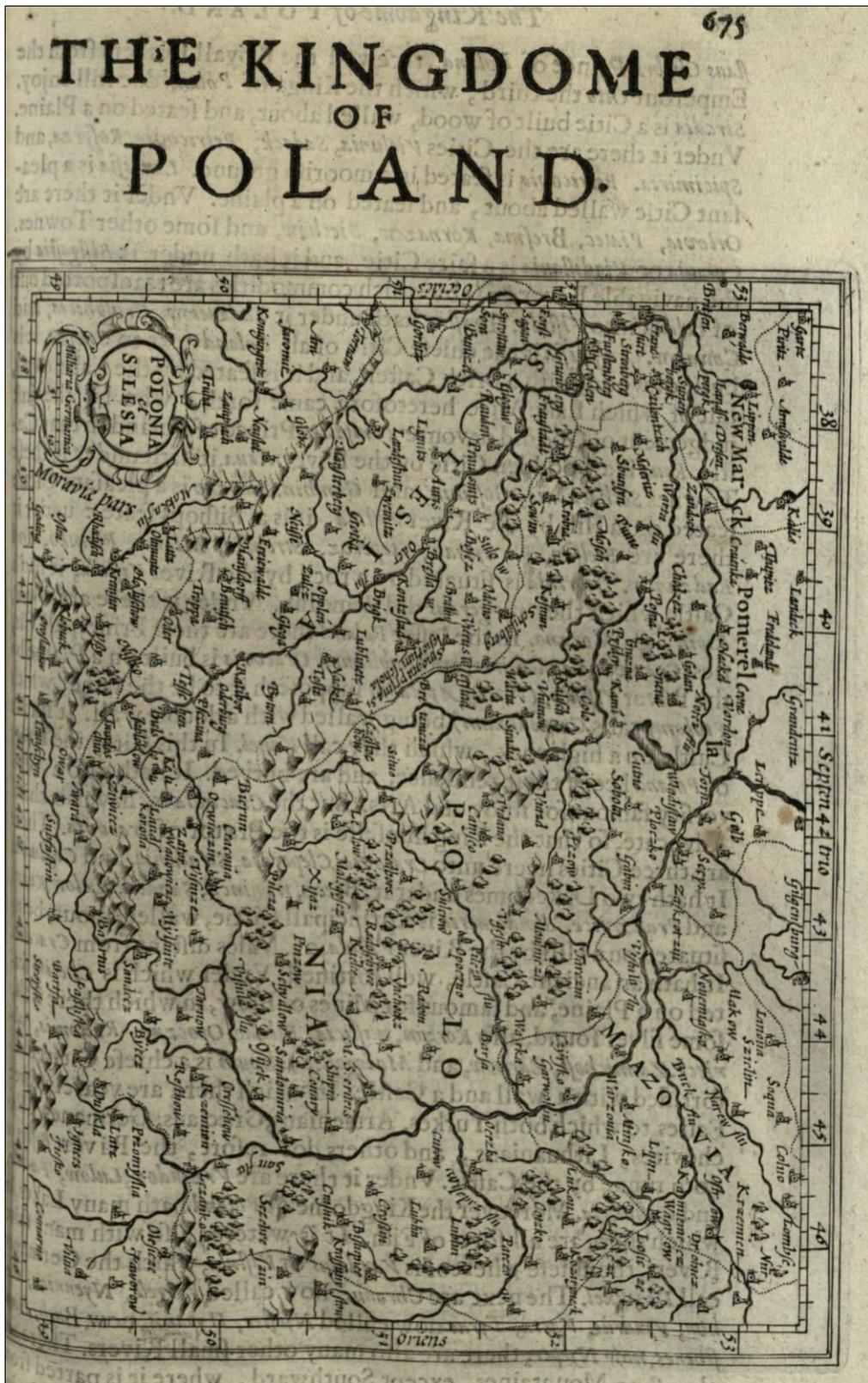
⁶⁶ For comparison, the headline in the *English Ortelius* also reads the Kingdom of Poland, but it discusses Lithuania (which is not even mentioned in the table of content) within this section – *English Ortelius*, 98. A very different approach was adopted by Gerard de Jode, one of the Ortelius' main competitors, whose *Speculum Orbis Terrarum* (Antwerp, 1578) discusses Lithuania within the overview of *Livonia et Moscovia ducatus*, while the subsequent section, *Poloniae regnum* does not mention Lithuania at all. As indicated, Lithuania received various treatments but there is no evidence of Britons following de Jode's convention. Very likely it was the result of limited dissemination of the *Speculum*, which faced with the "formidable competition" of Ortelius' *Theatrum* was a commercial failure – for details see Skelton's introduction in *Gerard de Jode Speculum Orbis Terrarum: Antwerpen 1578* (Amsterdam, 1968), ix.

⁶⁷ Gerhard Mercator, *Historia mundi* (London, 1635), 171.

THE DVKEDOME OF LITHVANIA.



Map 2.3 Map of Lithuania from Gerhard Mercator's *Historia mundi* (1635).



Map 2.4 Map of Poland from Gerhard Mercator's *Historia mundi* (1635).

This layout of the *Historia mundi* of 1635, a pirated version of an earlier Latin edition of Mercator's *Atlas*,⁶⁸ differed substantially from the one presented in the licensed copy of Mercator-Hondius-Janssonius' *Atlas*, published in 1636, where neither the texts' arrangement nor the maps' titles suggested comparable mapping. Though this edition similarly described Poland and Lithuania in separate sections, they were placed close to each other. Furthermore, the section's heading "The description of Lithuania, Samogitia, Russia the Swart, Volhinia" did not indicate Lithuania's independent status, but suggested that Lithuania was treated rather as a geographical, or possibly administrative, unit.⁶⁹ Importantly, the *Atlas* included the Radziwiłł-Makowski map of Lithuania, which depicted the shifts of the palatinates of Bratslav, Volhynia and Kyiv from Lithuania to Poland that took place in 1569. Thus, whether through its texts, maps or layout, the *Atlas* - unlike the *Historia* - showed Poland and Lithuania as linked together.

Both the *Historia* and the *Atlas* were re-issued twice in their original formats (1637 & 1639; 1638 & 1641 respectively). Whereas it would be impossible to establish which edition was more influential, we should appreciate that through their respective meta-space each publication shaped - in a dramatically different way - the reader's perception of Poland-Lithuania.

This was not only the matter of perception of the *Rzeczpospolita's* current structure, but also of its past and identity, as additionally showed by the case of Silesia. Its connection with Poland was signalled in the *Historia* (1635) by titling the map *Polonia and Silesia* (see Map 2.4, p. 65) and reinforced by interjecting an overview of Silesia between two, partially reiterative descriptions of Poland.⁷⁰ Was that a comment on Poland's historical claim to Silesia or rather an expression of the perceived association between Poland and Germany, which lands, for that matter, were discussed in the *Historia* immediately before Poland? This is not clear, but in contrast, in the *Atlas* nothing linked Silesia with Poland,

⁶⁸ *Historia mundi* included maps engraved for the oblong octavo *Atlas minor* of 1607 and used in subsequent editions up to 1621, which plates were sold to London booksellers in unclear circumstances, with the text translated from the original large folio editions, was published by Michael Sparke - *Mercator-Hondius-Janssonius Atlas or a geographicke description of the world: Amsterdam 1636*, with an introduction by R.A. Skelton (Amsterdam, 1968), xv-xvi.

⁶⁹ Gerhard Mercator, *Atlas* (Amsterdam, 1636), 109.

⁷⁰ Mercator, *Historia mundi*, 675.

for the province's description was removed from Poland's and Silesia was instead discussed among the territories of the Holy Roman Empire.⁷¹ The map title was also revised, for it now read *Polonia*, rather than *Polonia and Silesia*.⁷²

Yet this is not to say that Poland's association with Silesia and Germany ceased to be circulated, as clearly illustrated by Speed's *Prospect*. Unlike the *Historia's*, the *Prospect's* map title, *Polonia*, did not make any reference to Silesia, yet it visually linked this region with Poland-Lithuania. Following the original Dutch format, which included decorative borders containing panels of costumed figures and plans of towns, the map encompassing Poland and parts of Lithuania was adorned with side pictures of representatives of Polish gentry and of a bride and maid at Danzig, but also of a Silesian bride and woman (see Map 2.5, p. 68). This pictorial association was endorsed by the presence of a panel of the arms of Silesia. The same was suggested by the text, for though admitting that Silesia was a province of Germany, Speed grouped it with Poland in his overview of European regions. Furthermore, according to Speed, the kingdom of Poland not only bordered with Germany but "indeede as farre as the River Vistula, it [was] accounted a part of the Empire" through similarity of the language, religion and customs.⁷³ The country's division was reflected in the taxonomy, marking the Vistula as the border between *Polonia Germanica* on the west and *Polonia Sarmatica* on the east.⁷⁴ The imitative character of Speed's *Prospect*, which, according to Skelton, was based heavily on Heylyn's *Cosmographie*, has been discussed before, yet it is worth noting that neither this work, nor the *English Ortelius* or any other contemporary world atlas, made any remark about *Polonia Sarmatia* and *Germanica*.⁷⁵ Instead, it appears that Speed decided to adapt Ptolomey's classification of *Germania* and *Sarmatia Europa*.

⁷¹ Cf. Lithuania, Poland, Silesia – *ibid.*, 109-110, 113-114, 193-194 respectively.

⁷² For comparison, Blaeu's presentation of Poland on the map reading *Polonia Regnum and Silesia Ducatus* was clearly a matter of using the old plates (NB, Mercator's), not a political statement, as a separate map of Silesia and its description is incorporated into the Germany section – Blaeu, *Theatrum*, 31, n.p.

⁷³ Speed, 31.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Cosmographie* was the expanded version of Heylyn's *Microcosmus* – Anthony Milton, 'Heylyn, Peter' – *ODNB* (accessed 18 September 2013).



Map 2.5 Map of Poland from John Speed's *Prospect of the most famous parts of the world* (1676).

Its echo can be detected in John Stubbs' comment about "Poland, a piece of Germany" (1579) and Echard's note that the country was "part of the ancient Sarmatia Europea, and part of the old Germany" (1691), but also in Malynes' presentation of the information about Polonia (viz. *the Rzeczpospolita*) within the section "Germania" and Miede listing the Vistula as one of Germany's main rivers.⁷⁶ However, Speed was the only author who linked Poland with Germany so explicitly, and this exception carries unexpected weight considering the *Prospect's* popularity – the text of all ten editions remained the same, thus carrying the ancient concept throughout the seventeenth century.⁷⁷ Unexpectedly, there was no similar conceptualisation with the use of Prussia. The character of this region's ties with the *Rzeczpospolita* was often disputed, but since the 1570 edition of the *Theatrum*, which organizationally allocated Prussia to Germany, subsequent publications discussed Prussia either in vicinity to or within the section on the *Rzeczpospolita* (or Poland).

While those authors configured the *Rzeczpospolita* along perceived cultural and historical lines, others apprehended the kingdom in the economic terms and linked it with Eastland, referred to also as the East parts or East Countries. Customarily, this territory describes the sub-region of commercial activities of the Eastland Company defined in the Queen's privilege.⁷⁸ However, the phrasing of official documents does not delineate the region clearly and suggests that it was referred more loosely to the Baltic region, for reports talked about "the East Countries [on the Baltic]"⁷⁹ and about "the Swede, Dane, Pole and almost all the East countries arming".⁸⁰ On the other hand, merchants' and scholars' writings

⁷⁶ It is also possible that Speed relied on another subscriber to the concept of Vistula as the border between Sarmatia and Germany, Pomponius Mela, whose work Speed most definitely was familiar with – *Speed*, 23, 132. For Pomponius Mela's description see *The worke of Pomponius Mela, the cosmographer, concerninge the situation of the world* (London, 1585), 73. John Stubb, 'The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf' [1579] in Lloyd E. Berry (ed.), *John Stubb's "Gaping Gulf" with letters and other relevant documents* (Charlottesville, 1968), 65; Echard, *Compendium*, 66; Malynes, *Consuetudo*, 68; Miede, *A new cosmography*, 98.

⁷⁷ The *Prospect* in folio appeared in 1627, 1631, 1646, 1662 and 1676 with additional five editions in octavo in 1646-75 – *Abraham Ortelius The Theatre*, xvii.

⁷⁸ Eastland was defined by the Patent Roll as "domynyons through the Sounde into the said realms, kyngdomes, domynyons, dukedomes, countryes, citytes and townes of Norway, Swethen, Poland and the terrytores of the same kingdome of Pole, Norway and Swethen, Lettow, Leefland and Prussen with territories of the same and also Pomerland from the river Odera eastward with Rye, Revell, Kynninburgh, Elbynge, Brownsburgh, Dantzick and Elsenor, Finland, Golland, Ewland and Burntholme" – Henryk Zins, "Przywilej Elżbiety I z 1579r. dla Angielskiej Kompanii Wschodniej", *Rocznik Elbląski*, 3 (1966), 89.

⁷⁹ *CSPD*, 1648-1649, 428.

⁸⁰ *CSPD*, 1652-53, 296.

on commerce explicitly show that the *Rzeczpospolita*, although linked with Eastland, was not seen as a part of it. For instance, Malynes (1622) contemptuously discussed coinage in “Poland, Sweden, Denmark and Eastland” and mentioned the abundance of corn exported from “the East Countries, Poland and other places”.⁸¹ Similarly, Lewes Roberts, Welsh merchant and writer on economics, also set Poland-Lithuania apart from Eastland, although for analytical purpose he joined both in the same section of his treatise’s chapter (1638).⁸² A closer look at his analysis reveals its complexity, a result of more than commercial concern. To begin with, the cities of Königsberg, Riga, Revel, Stralsund and Stettin were discussed under the Eastland umbrella, although Riga acknowledged the King of Poland-Lithuania’s protection. On the other hand, other free cities like Danzig and Elbing, similarly enjoying a semi-independent status, were discussed with the *Rzeczpospolita*. Moreover, Prussia, together with Danzig and Königsberg, otherwise clearly classified as the Eastland’s city, was counted as one of the kingdom’s provinces.⁸³ This already established political link between Prussia and the *Rzeczpospolita* was severed when Roberts considered the cultural differences. Thus, while commenting on the limited disposition towards mercantile pursuits that supposedly characterised the Poles, he not only made a geographical division (inland vs Prussia, where the kingdom’s main traders dwell) but also an ethnic one (Prussia’s Polish vs foreign merchants).⁸⁴

Characteristically, despite this nomenclature and clear location of the *Rzeczpospolita* in the east of Europe, the kingdom was rarely described as an eastern country, but rather, following the antique division drawn by the “wine and olives” circle of latitude, it was usually considered northern. Again, atlases’ layouts illustrate this tension between geographical east and climatic north. Only Blaeu’s index explicitly grouped countries into supra-regions and placed Poland-Lithuania within “Europae Septentrionalia et Orientalia”, this spacious section containing among others Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Muscovy, Hungary, Serbia and Slavonia.⁸⁵ Tellingly, the starting point of the volume of Pitt’s atlas

⁸¹ Malynes, *Consuetudo*, 278, 387.

⁸² Roberts, *The mappe*, 173.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁸⁵ Blaeu, *Theatrum*, n.p.

describing Poland-Lithuania is the North Pole and it encompassed also Muscovy, Sweden and Denmark. In turn, Morden placed Poland-Lithuania between Sweden and Muscovy (1680) and between Muscovy and Tartary in Europe (1688 & 1693), whereas Blome, apparently following the organization put forward by Sanson, located the *Rzeczpospolita* with France, Germany and Belgium (including its estates) among “the most innermost parts of the continent”, similarly to Chamberlayne, who placed Poland-Lithuania with Germany and France (1682).⁸⁶ To those authors the category of “innermost” was explicitly drawn along the north-south, not the east-west axis and it seems likely that Gordon, who discussed Poland-Lithuania between Germany and Spain, likewise subscribed to this notion.⁸⁷ When the atlases organizationally joined the *Rzeczpospolita* with Livonia, Tartaria and Muscovy, they textually pronounced the kingdom northern, with “the air so cold that they have no wine or grapes”.⁸⁸ What is more, the frequent point of entry via the Baltic Sea likely fostered among British travellers coming from Denmark the notion of the *Rzeczpospolita* as a northern country.

As demonstrated, though varying in their accuracy, numerous maps of Poland-Lithuania were available to Britons. Importantly, through the efforts of people such as Radziwiłł and Beauplan, the cartography not only of Poland but also of the eastern parts of the *Rzeczpospolita* became available and, consequently, Poland-Lithuania’s territory was wholly represented. Yet, by no means there was an equivalent of the integrated *Rzeczpospolita* on a conceptual level. Instead, both the atlases’ content and its arrangement were highly suggestive of a disunited kingdom, consisting of assorted pieces rather than integral parts. In vain one would search for a coherent perception of the *Rzeczpospolita* with clearly defined borders. On the contrary, the existing evidence clearly shows us how the country was constantly re-configured along perceived linguistic, cultural, political or economic lines, thus creating various sets of borders. There were multiple ways of defining the *Rzeczpospolita*. As we will see, correspondingly, the *Rzeczpospolita* could also be variously evaluated.

⁸⁶ Richard Blome, *The gentlemans recreation in two parts* (London, 1686), 122, Sanson, *Cosmography and geography*, 7; Chamberlayne, *Compendium*, 21.

⁸⁷ Gordon, *Geography anatomised*, ‘The content table’, n.p.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Epitome* (Norton), f. 94v; *Speed*, 31.

Orientating Poland-Lithuania

As we have seen, though often based on the first-hand information, maps underwent a large number of revisions, which did not always advance knowledge of the *Rzeczpospolita* and sometimes, on the contrary, disseminated incomplete and erroneous information, contributing to long-lasting misconceptions. The same problem marred the content of atlases, compendia and breviats. Eye-witness accounts provided by explorers, merchants and diplomats balanced, corrected or replaced existing descriptions of foreign countries. The breadth, depth and substance of the available information might have been different had Poland-Lithuania been a popular travel destination. But it was not. While Britons developed a taste for travelling, they preferred to explore – and read about – more exotic countries, as testified to by the popularity of travel accounts to China, the Ottoman Empire and India.⁸⁹ Closer to home, travelling through the Continent became a popular element of the education of young men of the ruling class, but the Grand Tour did not include the *Rzeczpospolita*, whose appeal apparently did not match that of France and Italy.⁹⁰ Unlike young Philip Sidney, determined to overcome any obstacles on his expedition to Poland-Lithuania to witness the coronation of Henri Valois (1574), most of the later visitors were rather casual travellers.⁹¹ The country to go to for some, the *Rzeczpospolita* was a territory to go through for most others – en route to Constantinople, Russia or China, and a brief excursion on the tour via France, Germany and Italy. There was no British equivalent of Martin Zeiller, who in 1663 dedicated two out of a 12-volume German guide to Europe to Poland and Lithuania.⁹² Yet there were Morysons, Bargraves and Gordons ready to comment on their experiences and share their opinions about the *Rzeczpospolita*. However, since only some of those accounts were published contemporaneously and members of the considerable British community living in Poland-Lithuania were reluctant to commit their impressions to writing, as with the maps, Britons usually saw the kingdom through the eyes of others. So how familiar was Poland-Lithuania to them?

⁸⁹ Edward Godfrey Cox, *A reference guide to the literature of travel* (Seattle, 1935), I, 177-200, 201-349.

⁹⁰ James Buzard, 'The Grand Tour and after (1660-1840)' in Robert Hume and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge & New York, 2002), 38.

⁹¹ "I passed thence through Poland to Italy, because France was shut up" – *Moryson*, 16.

⁹² Antoni Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1995), 27.

On a very general level, Poland-Lithuania belonged to the same geographical sphere as Britain simply by being a component of Europe which, with Asia and Africa, was considered the most ancient and superior continents, contrasted with recently discovered America.⁹³ More narrowly, they both belonged to Christendom. The crossing of the *Rzeczpospolita's* border, seen as the frontier of Christendom, was welcomed with a sense of relief by the merchant Robert Bargrave, on his entrance to Poland-Lithuania from Moldavia, this region itself being Christian but thought unsafe due to the strong position of the Ottomans.⁹⁴

The transition, however, was not that clear. Undoubtedly, on crossing the Polish-Ottoman border one was entering Christendom, but his leaving the Turk behind was far less indisputable for, as was commonly observed, the Poles took up a number of Turkish customs. The most noticeable were similarities in costume – as commented by Bargrave, different from Turkish only in having the furred caps instead of turbans.⁹⁵ In comparison, to traveller Peter Mundy, who helpfully provided both descriptions and drawings of various national costumes, it was the costumes and a gentleman's haircut (a characteristically shaved head with a topknot) that made a resemblance between the Poles and Ottomans and led him to consider them “territorial neighbours, also near in customs”.⁹⁶ Mundy's journal was not published until modern times, but images of the Poles styled so distinctively were presented both in Speed's and Blaeu's atlases and generally frequently remarked on. In addition, the Poles' imitation of the Turkish fashion of horse riding, their choice of weaponry and the pomp in military adornments were commented upon. The latter practice was criticised, but by and large the remarks were ideologically neutral.

Importantly, the Turkish features of the *Rzeczpospolita* did not make the kingdom less Christian, though they gave a peculiar twist to the “we-Christians” versus “they-the Turks” binary. Nor is there any evidence that this cultural divergence deemed Poland-Lithuania less civil. Yet the ambivalence of the kingdom's position on Europe's ladder of civilization resurfaced even without considering

⁹³ Blome, *The gentlemen recreation*, 119.

⁹⁴ Robert Bargrave, *The travel diary of Robert Bargrave, Levant merchant (1647-1656)*, ed. Michael G. Brennan (London, 1999), 141.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁹⁶ Peter Mundy, *The travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, ed. Sir Richard Carnac Temple (Cambridge, 1925), 190ff; 201.

the particular Turkish influences. First, both “northernness” and “easterness” could be more than simple agricultural, climatic or geographic statements, since historically they conveyed connotations of cultural barbarism. “Northernness”, in every sense a relative label, was used by Samuel Clarke – as an Englishman, a northerner himself – against the Scots and the Irish to emphasize their rudeness.⁹⁷ In a similar vein, Chamberlayne described Muscovy as the most northern and the most rude country of Europe, whose remark in no way stood in contradiction with Milton’s that Russia was the most northern region of Europe reputed to be civil;⁹⁸ “northernness”, like civility itself, came in different shades and grades, depending on the commentator’s position.

Even greater comparativeness characterised discussion about the people – and the peoples – of the *Rzeczpospolita*. In its entirety, the inhabitants of Poland-Lithuania, frequently classified as a northern people, were often found guilty of this region’s vices, such as drunkenness.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, they were never accused of barbarism. However, dealings with the kingdom’s individual peoples were more nuanced and, while the ethnic Poles escaped such allegations, the Samogitians and the Russians inhabiting Volhynia were still considered rude and barbaric. In the case of the former this judgement had religious connotations and originated in the opinion, uncritically repeated for decades, that the Samogitians were pagans: snake worshippers.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, their barbarism referred to their extreme poverty, which affected their manners and the way of living; this resulted in the perception of the Samogitians as wild occupants of simple huts, which they shared with their animals. In turn, the rudeness and fierceness of the Ruthenians was explained by their geography, for being constantly exposed to the Tartars’ incursions, they became exceedingly valiant and warlike, but also incidentally they developed a nature akin to their barbarian oppressors.¹⁰¹

Within a kingdom encompassing varied peoples, the Poles supposedly acted as a civilising model for others, as shown by comments about the Lithuanians living

⁹⁷ Clarke, *A geographical description*, 155;

⁹⁸ Chamberlayne, *Compendium*, 31; John Milton, *A brief history of Moscovia* (London, 1682), n.p.

⁹⁹ B.W. *Free ports* (London, 1652), 2; *Botero*, 80; *Shakespeare's Europe*, 282, 396.

¹⁰⁰ Münster, *Cosmographia*, 906 (he ascribed this practice more generally to the Lithuanians); *Botero*, 79; *English Ortelius*, 98; *Speed*, 34; *Connor*, I, 292. NB, this was not groundless, for the depth of christianisation in Samogitia was debatable.

¹⁰¹ *Relation*, 32.

after the manner of the Poles or descriptions of more civilized Tartars – the result of them emulating the Poles.¹⁰² The Poles were also suggested reformers for the Muscovites, whom already mentioned Giles Fletcher found full of reasonable capacities but, lamentably, also too proud to train themselves “after the Polish method”.¹⁰³ Admittedly, the Poles’ superiority was not intrinsic, but came from their fortunate closeness to civilization. For example, the author of *A Relation* found the Lithuanians less industrious and their region apparently inferior to Polonia and Prussia, because of it being distant from “the commerce and civility of civil nations”.¹⁰⁴ The hidden supposition that the Poles and the Prussians were closer to civilization was openly voiced a century later by the Scottish officer, Patrick Gordon, who praised Poznań (Posen) in Great Poland as the kingdom’s most pleasant city, explaining that the place’s high qualities, crowned with the inhabitants’ civility, were occasioned by their emulation of the strangers living among them and the city’s proximity to Germany.¹⁰⁵

Yet despite appearances, it would be unjustified to take those remarks as anticipating the formation of the West-East division of Europe that supposedly developed after the Enlightenment.¹⁰⁶ Firstly, contemporary travel accounts are too few and contradictory for formulating such a definitive conclusion. Importantly, records of the period generally lacked the sense of superiority that permeates so many eighteenth-century descriptions. The late sixteenth-century comment about the Poles’ use of heavy weaponry, an example of “the Easterly nation as yet not applying themselves to the Westerly fight” is a rare instance of an assessment pointing out the superiority of Western technology and the inevitability of its imitation.¹⁰⁷ This is not to say that descriptions and impressions of Poland-Lithuania were neutral; on the contrary, they were often highly subjective. However, even critical comparisons drawn between the *Rzeczpospolita* and Britain or other countries predominantly underlined difference

¹⁰² Stafforde, *A geographical and anthological description*, 25; Fletcher, *Of the Russe Commonwealth*, 36; repeated by Clarke, *A geographical description*, 80 and Hakluyt, *Navigations*, I, 490.

¹⁰³ Fletcher, *Of the Russe Commonwealth*, 115.

¹⁰⁴ *Relation*, 35.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon, *Diary*, I, 20-21.

¹⁰⁶ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994), 6ff. This is opposed by Bernhard Struck, who claimed that Poland[-Lithuania] was perceived as a northern country until the mid-nineteenth century – idem, *Nie Zachód, nie Wschód. Francja i Polska w oczach niemieckich podróżnych w latach 1750-1850* (Warszawa, 2012), 411.

¹⁰⁷ *Relation*, 4.

not degrees of civilization. It was national pride rather than a sense of superior civilization that underpinned most of the judgements.

Another notable feature was the changing reactions to the same aspects of the kingdom. Poland-Lithuania's vastness, its scarce population and remoteness (to an eighteenth-century observer a proof of neglect), were clearly linked by seventeenth-century travellers and commentators with the kingdom's abundance of natural resources. Woodlands, populated by a variety of beasts, were a source of precious timber, furs and honey; stretches of fields yielded profusion of wheat, barley and rye and pastures fed the numerous cattle, which were only some of Poland-Lithuania's export products.¹⁰⁸ The exceptional fertility of the *Rzeczpospolita* in general and some of its regions, like Podolia and the Ukraine in particular, continued to be widely commented on, especially since the grain supply relieved other provinces in time of dearth, and Poland-Lithuania was honoured as the 'girnel' of western Europe (Lithgow, 1632) and this continent's Egypt (Pitt, 1680).¹⁰⁹ The observations about the regions' fertility were accompanied by remarks on the relatively limited husbandry, but notably, in most cases the aim was to emphasise the land's fecundity rather than to imply the people's agricultural backwardness – the people's extra activity seemed unnecessary where already "one sowing gave three harvest" and where "bees were their own guardians".¹¹⁰

This richness of nature stood in contrast with the modesty of buildings. Town buildings, mostly of timber and clay rather than stone, evoked a wide spectrum of reactions. Fynes Moryson, who visited Poland-Lithuania in 1593, saw the kingdom's towns differently from villages only in the degree of poverty and dirt and only a few of the greatest, like Cracow, met with his approval.¹¹¹ Mundy, likewise, remained unimpressed with poor and unfashionable habitations and bad town planning. In contrast, to Bargrave the whole country was like a continuous city, with "the towns resembling palaces, the road the streets and the

¹⁰⁸ *Moryson*, Part III, 101-102.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 62; *Speed*, 33; *Lithgow*, *The totall discourse*, 421; *Pitt*, 1.

¹¹⁰ *Clarke*, *A geographical description*, 156; *Speed*, 33.

¹¹¹ *Moryson*, Part I, 63, 67;

villages the meaner buildings” and who found in Poland-Lithuania “the world’s most beautiful passage”.¹¹²

In truth, Poland-Lithuania’s urbanization pattern differed greatly from that of Britain. This did not escape Moryson’s notice and his observation about a small number of cities in a country of that size was frequently repeated and their exiguousness in comparison with other European settlements remarked upon.¹¹³ Yet, the evidence suggests that a city’s size was not the only, and often not the main, reason why it was acknowledged by Britons or, on the contrary, why it failed to secure recognition. The decorative panel around Poland-Lithuania’s map in Speed’s *Prospect* featured plans of Danzig, Cracow, Poznań, Krosno and Sandomierz, but characteristically in line with Speed’s neglect of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, none of its towns appeared, even its capital, Vilno – of bigger population and greater importance than some of the listed Polish towns.¹¹⁴ Indeed, few travellers reached a distant Vilno, although more detailed studies compared Vilno positively to London. Clearly, it was a matter of individual learning and personal experience to discuss some places, while omitting others. Also, the publication type and the author’s purpose were considerable factors that determined both the content of descriptions and the order of detailed lists of administrative or religious centres, market places or fortresses.¹¹⁵

As a port of huge commercial strength and the main entry into the *Rzeczpospolita*’s hinterland, Danzig naturally topped the kingdom’s town rankings. The city’s historical, commercial and linguistic connections with Germany and its privileged constitutional position contributed to its fame. Simultaneously, as demonstrated earlier, this undercut its links with the *Rzeczpospolita*, as revealed through the vocabulary which emphasised crossing the border between Danzig to the *Rzeczpospolita* and entering distinctively different territory or even explicitly counting Danzig among the cities of Germany.¹¹⁶ It was probably this town’s considerable political autonomy and its

¹¹² Mundy, *The travels*, 200; Bargrave, *The travel diary*, 148, 150.

¹¹³ *Shakespeare's Europe*, 90.

The lack of any of the *Rzeczpospolita*’s town among the plans of European metropolis in Speed’s atlas was a tacit comment on that situation – *Speed*, n.p.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Richardson, *Of the state*, 45ff.

¹¹⁶ *Moryson*, Part I, 61, 200. In contrast, Queen Elizabeth’s councillors talked about “Polish towns in this part of Germania” – *Merkuriusz sarmacki*, 44.

commercial links, not only a linguistic similarity that led one commentator to describe Danzig (Dansk) as one of Denmark's ports.¹¹⁷

In turn, the high position of Cracow, the royal seat, coronation place, and also home of Poland's oldest and leading university, was undisputable, but the capital was sometimes found unimpressive or unworthy of detailed discussion.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, the place was praised for its beauty and charm, if not for its grandness. According to Bernard Connor, it was the best built and the most beautiful town of the kingdom, equal to most towns of Germany or Italy and the position of its university was likened to that formerly held by Athens within Greece.¹¹⁹ Others emphasized Cracow's commercial prominence, though gradually challenged by Warsaw – “the most frequented, best traded and the capital city of the kingdom”.¹²⁰ Warsaw remained relatively unknown for the first decades of the seventeenth century, despite officially becoming the king's new seat in 1611. However, like Lublin and Grodno, Warsaw became known as a host of parliamentary meetings and it gradually grew in consequence and fame, especially with the increasing presence of foreign powers at royal elections and consequent higher news coverage.¹²¹

The latter development explains the coincidental popularity of places such as Jaworów and Żółkiew, two of the favourite residences of King John III Sobieski (1674-96); the names of these king's headquarters during his anti-Ottoman campaign became familiar signposts for readers hungry for news on the Polish-Ottoman conflict in the 1670s.¹²² However, the short-lived fame of Jaworów and Żółkiew was nothing like the recognition achieved by Kamieniec. The fortress in Podolia, whose name means literally stone-built, was a long-lasting symbol of resistance against and protection from the Ottomans. Mentioned systematically in popular dictionaries and scholarly treaties alike, “a divinely built” town, reputed as “one of the strongest by nature and situation that can be seen”, was decisive in shaping historical memory about individuals: King Michał Korybut

¹¹⁷ *Corante, or weekly news from Italy, Germany (London, according to the Dutch copy)*, 30 September 1621.

¹¹⁸ ‘Memorial of Master George Barkley’ in Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimes In five books* (London, 1625), I, 629.

¹¹⁹ Connor, I, 238, 241.

¹²⁰ Chamberlayne, *The present state of England*, 260; John Beaumont, *The present state of the universe* (London, 1694), 72.

¹²¹ *Moryson*, 101.

¹²² For instance, *LG*, 22 November 1680; 13 December 1680; 30 December 1680.

Wiśniowiecki, whose legacy was defined by his loss of Kamieniec to the Turks in 1672, or John Sobieski, who gained fame as the town's defender.¹²³

Without doubt warfare raised the profile of particular locations. Ironically, the *Rzeczpospolita's* eastern parts, the last to be mapped, came to be discussed with the highest frequency. This was particularly true of the Ukraine – the war theatre of struggles with the Cossacks, Tartars, Muscovites and the Ottomans. Significantly, war not only popularised certain places but also redeemed the kingdom's characteristic remoteness and simple construction techniques. This is proved by Edward Brown's comments on the most eastern part of Europe becoming the centre of its attention in 1672 and comments of Pierre Chevalier, who explained that the town walls of earth could survive the cannon attack better than those built of plaster.¹²⁴ Clearly, there was more than met the eye. In his turn Connor stated that:

they have no strong Forts or Castles to shelter their Enemies, where they happen to make any Progress in their Country; yet I verily believe that an Army of fifty Thousand well-disciplin'd Men would at present conquer the whole Kingdom of Poland, tho' at the same Time I am of Opinion that an Hundred Thousand could not be able to keep it.¹²⁵

Although decentralised, predominantly agricultural Poland-Lithuania did not align well with increasingly centralising, commercially orientated Britain and other European countries, evidently the kingdom's features could be reassessed, justified and reconfigured. Let us now turn to examine whether the country's past required absolution and rehabilitation as well.

Projecting the past

In his *Introduction to the history of the principal kingdoms and states of Europe*, translated into English and published in London in 1695, Baron Pufendorf observed that England and Scotland “take no great interest of Poland and other

¹²³ Clarke, *A geographical description*, 156; D'Avity, p. 630; Hakluyt, *Navigations*, III, 197; Pitt, 8.

¹²⁴ Pierre Chevalier, *A discourse of the original, countrey, manners, government and religion of the Cossacks* (London, 1672), 19.

¹²⁵ Connor, II, 114.

such like states".¹²⁶ The German scholar saw strong interconnections between geographical features and political aims and accordingly explained insular Britain's focus on other naval powers. In truth, if the publication of history books is taken as indicative, the appearance of the first English monograph on Polish history, Bernard Connor's *The History of Poland, in Several Letters to Persons of Quality*, only in 1698 seems to confirm Pufendorf's opinion.¹²⁷

Though not in exact Pufendorfian sense, the appearance of the Polish histories in English can still be explained by geopolitical factors. As mentioned earlier, it seems reasonable to place *A Relation of the state of Polonia* in the context of the commercial and diplomatic activity between England and the *Rzeczpospolita*. Similarly, Connor, by his own admission, was prompted to publish his *History* to satisfy the interest that was generated by the election of the Elector of Saxony to the Polish throne (1697); the event which resulted in a dynastic union between these countries.

This study does not intend to deny such connections between geopolitics and publications. However, this does not provide a satisfactory explanation of the shortage and late publication of histories of the *Rzeczpospolita*. Advancing the explanation originally proposed by Professor Frost, it will be claimed that this phenomenon can be understood better through the nature of the Polish history book market.¹²⁸ On the other hand, the study will argue for a fuller appreciation of the existing sources and, crucially, it will challenge the popular view that the relatively limited number of publications on Poland-Lithuania signified a lack of interest in this kingdom.¹²⁹ The scope and character of this interest will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, but before that, let us examine the corpus of historical materials regarding Poland-Lithuania that was available to British readers in the long seventeenth century.

Before Connor's *History* became available, Britons, like other European readers, had access to many Latin works on the subject. *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis: Asiana et Europiana* and *Chronica Polonorum*, both by Maciej z Miechowa, were

¹²⁶ Samuel Pufendorf, *An introduction to the history of the principal kingdoms and states of Europe* (London, 1695), 172.

¹²⁷ The second volume of Connor's *History* was composed by his friend, John Savage, from Connor's notes - Gerald Stone, 'Connor, Bernard' - *ODNB* (accessed 16 March 2010).

¹²⁸ Frost, 'Hiding from the Dogs', 27-28.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 26, 29; Macinnes, 'The Hidden Commonwealth', 239.

published for the first time in 1517 and 1519 respectively. The former book, with its ground-breaking geographical information, became particularly influential; it went through several Latin editions and, additionally, was translated into German and Italian, resulting in over twenty editions before the end of the century.¹³⁰ Miechowita's books were soon followed by many others, for the second half of the sixteenth century was particularly rich in historical publications. Not only historians but also politicians, poets and lawyers took to writing. Among numerous history books those written by Aleksander Gwagnin (1578), Stanisław Sarnicki (1582) and Erazm Glincher (1597) gained particular popularity.¹³¹ However, their reputation could not match that of works by Marcin Kromer (Martin Cromer/Martinus Cromerus). His *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum libri XXX* originally appeared in Basel in 1555 and was reprinted in the Oporinus printing house in 1558 and 1568, with another edition being published in 1589 in Cologne. *De origine* was followed a few years later by *Polonia sive de situ, populis moribus, magistratibus et republica regni Polonici libri duo*, initially published in Frankfurt in 1575 without the author's permission. The first authorised edition appeared in Cologne two years later and was republished there in 1578 and 1579. Importantly, Kromer's books circulated not only in their own right, but were often incorporated into works by other contemporary historians. As we shall see, this practice had a significant bearing on the perception of the *Rzeczpospolita's* history.

Much more than in the previous decades, seventeenth-century Polish historiography was dominated by the kingdom's military engagements. Crucially, a state of warfare affected intellectual communication between Poland-Lithuania and the rest of Europe. One of the most striking illustrations of that process is the answer to John Barclay, a Gallicised Scot. His *Icon Animorum*, the fourth part of *Satyricon*, which among others included an unflattering description of Poland-Lithuania, appeared in Paris and London in 1614.¹³² However, it was rebutted only in 1648 by Łukasz Opaliński, who, outraged by Barclay's

¹³⁰ See Bibliography.

¹³¹ Aleksander Gwagnin, *Sarmatiae Europae descriptio* (Kraków, 1578), another edition in Spira (1581); *Rerum Polonicarum tomi tres* (Frankfurt, 1584). Aleksander Gwagnin is a polonised name of Alessandro Guagnini who was born in Italy but was naturalised in 1571; Stanisław Sarnicki, *Annales, sive De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum et Litvanorum* (Kraków, 1582 & 1587); *Descriptio veteris et novae Poloniae* (Kraków, 1585); Erazm Glincher, *Chronicon regum Poloniae* (Toruń, 1597).

¹³² Its English translation was published in London in 1631 and 1633.

“offensive portrait, or rather satire”, published *Polonia defensa contra Joannem Barclaium*.¹³³ Needless to say, this belated reply had a limited effect. But other consequences of the state of warfare were of no less importance, like the precedence of particular war accounts over more comprehensive history books. Also, it can be presumed that the character of wartime communication – designed to inform, but also to persuade and mobilise a broader audience – expedited the use of vernacular publications, which were discernibly growing in that period.

Despite the fact that composing historical and political works in Polish became more and more popular, there was still a selection of Latin history books available like those by Stanisław Krzysztanowic (1606), Paweł Piasecki (1648), Stanisław Kobierzycki (1655) and Wespazjan Kochowski (1683).¹³⁴ Among them, Piasecki’s history, spanning the years from 1575 to 1645¹³⁵ was particularly highly praised by his countrymen for candour and clarity.¹³⁶ Similarly, Kochowski’s account of the reign of King John Casimir (1648-68) and his successor, King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669-73) was distinguished as a well-researched work. These were books on the recent past, but there appeared posthumous publications discussing much earlier events like Reinhold Heidenstein’s history (1672), which ended with the reign of Sigismund Augustus (1572).¹³⁷ Additionally, many older chronicles and history books were re-published either under the names of the original authors or “in disguise”. Thus, fragments of the fifteenth-century chronicle by Jan Długosz (Johannes Dlugossus) were included in *Historia Polonica* (1615);¹³⁸ Stanisław Orzechowski’s *Annales* (spanning 1548-1552) were published for the first time in 1611 and republished in 1643;¹³⁹ whereas *Chronicon seu rerum Polonicarum compendiosa descriptio* by Jan Herburt z Felsztyna appearing firstly in Basel in 1571 and later frequently republished (Gdańsk, 1609 & 1647; Basel, 1615; Königsberg, 1658) was mainly an adaptation

¹³³ Łukasz Opaliński, *Polonia defensa contra Joan. Barclaium* (Gdańsk, 1648).

¹³⁴ Stanisław Krzysztanowic, *Polonia seu Brevis descriptio statuum regni Poloniae* (Moguntia, 1606); Paweł Piasecki, *Chronica gestorum in Europa singularium* (Kraków, 1648); Stanisław Kobierzycki, *Historia Vladislai Poloniae et Sueciae principis* (Gdańsk, 1655); Wespazjan Kochowski, *Annalium Poloniae ab obitu Vladislai IV* (Kraków, 1683).

¹³⁵ Second edition has described the events up to 1648.

¹³⁶ Paweł Piasecki, *Kronika Pawła Piaseckiego, biskupa przemyskiego* (Kraków, 1870), 5.

¹³⁷ Reinhold Heidenstein, *Rerum Polonicarum ab excessu Sigismundi Augusti libri XII* (Frankfurt, 1672).

¹³⁸ Jan Długosz and Jan Herburt, *Historia Polonica* (Dobromyśl, 1615).

¹³⁹ Stanisław Orzechowski, *Annales* (Dobromyśl, 1611 & Gdańsk, 1614).

of Kromer's works. Similarly, Joachim Pastorius, the Vasas' royal historiographer, on the whole copied Kromer's *De origine* in his own *Florus Polonicus seu Polonicae historiae epitome nova* that was printed for the first time in Leiden in 1641 and went through several more editions by the end of the century.¹⁴⁰ In short, works in Latin continued to be available, though significantly, most of them discussed the sixteenth century or earlier periods.

Moreover, writings by Polish authors were circulated via anthologies on the *Rzeczpospolita*, such as *Polonicae Historiae Corpus* by Johannes Pistorius (Basel, 1582). This three-volume opus, a collection of selected treatises, speeches and poetry, presented excerpts from Kromer alongside works of Maciej z Miechowa, Aleksander Gwagnin, Ludwik Jost Decjusz (Ludwig Jodok Dietz), Klemens Janicki and other popular sixteenth-century Polish writers. A similar volume on Poland, Lithuania, Prussia and Livonia, *Respublica sive Status Regni Poloniae, Lithuaniae, Prusiae, Livoniae, etc. diversorum auctorum*, was published in Leiden by Gilbert Elsevier as a part of the series on places and cities of Europe, Asia, Africa and the Near East that had started in 1625.¹⁴¹ It testifies to the *Respublica's* popularity that another edition appeared in the same year (1627) (see Figure 2.1, p. 84). Interestingly, it was not simply a reprint of a previous version, but a much expanded edition, which contained earlier excerpts from Gwagnin, Kromer, Botero, Krzyszstanowic and Johann Heinrich Alsted, but also extracts by Salomon Neugebauer, Jan Lasicki, Jan Grzegorz Chodkiewicz, Jacques Auguste de Thou, Honorius and John Barclay. Another edition followed in 1642. Even in extended form, the content of these publications was hardly original, unlike its format (accepted for the whole series). Thanks to the size of the volumes (first edition – sextodecimo, second and third – vicesimo-quarto) they were very handy, easy to travel with, but also cheap and hence available for broader population. As books presenting the writings of well-known authors, they fulfilled their purpose – furnishing the market with inexpensive editions of classic texts in reliable, scholarly versions.¹⁴² However, on the whole, the *Respublica* presented texts by

¹⁴⁰ Joachim Pastorius, *Florus Polonicus seu Polonicae historiae epitome nova* (Leiden, 1641); (Frankfurt & Gdańsk, 1679); (Gdańsk, 1680). See Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna a humanistyczna historia narodowa (1500-1700)* (Kraków, 2011) for a formidably in-depth analysis of Poland's and the *Rzeczpospolita's* historical writing.

¹⁴¹ The publication was also known as *Poloniae descriptio*; Daniel Traister (ed.), *The Elsevier Republics* (Bethesda, 1988), 3.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 2.

well-established Polish and international historians and, albeit haphazardly assembled and structured, the collection was an important contribution to the popularisation of the *Rzeczpospolita's* history, geography and culture.



Figure 2.1 Title page of *Respublica sive Status Regni Poloniae, Lituaniae, Prussiae, Livoniae etc.* (1627).

Existing evidence clearly shows that by and large these books found their way to Britain. The catalogues of the Bodleian Library, which were compiled in 1605 and 1620, record the increasing number of copies of Maciej z Miechowa's *Tractatus* and *Chronicon*, Kromer's *De origine, Polonia* and religious works, the Paris edition of Kalimach's *Opera* (1577) and his various historical poems, three volumes of historical writings of Decjusz, Jan Herbut's *Statuta* and *Chronica*, and Gwagnin's *Sarmatiae descriptio*.¹⁴³ In addition, the Bodleian Library also held numerous political treatises by Stanisław Orzechowski, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski and Jan Zamoyski among others. A similar canon is found in the library of Lord Lumley.¹⁴⁴ Books on Polish history and political thought are found in private libraries, whether of recognised literati or of the ranks of less prominent lawyers and clergymen. For instance, the courtier Sir Thomas Knyvett (1539-1618) held among his books Modrzewski's *De republica emendanda* and both Kromer's *De*

¹⁴³ A detailed comparison of both catalogues was presented by Zins in his *Polska w oczach Anglików*, 150-154.

¹⁴⁴ Jayne Sears and Francis R. Johnson, *The Lumley library: the catalogue of 1609* (London, 1956), 156-7, 165, 178, 179, 188, 279.

origine and *Polonia*, while the library of the renowned politician and scholar, George Digby, the second earl of Bristol (1612-77), contained Gwagnin's histories (*Chronicon* and *Sarmatiae*), but also political writings by Stanisław Starowolski and Krzysztof Warszewicki.¹⁴⁵ Writings of the latter author, but also of Zamoyski, were owned by William Drummond of Hawthornden, while among *Polonica* in the possession of James Nairn (1629-78), Church of Scotland minister and intended bishop of Dunblane, was a copy of Piasecki's *Chronica*, Chevalier's history of the wars between the Poles and the Tartars (1672) and *De politica hominum societate* (1651), a famous political treatise by the Lithuanian scholar, A.A. Olizovarius.¹⁴⁶ The stock of *Polonica* of the London bookseller, Robert Littlebury, included not only classics like Herbut's *Chronica*, Frycz Modrzewski's *De republica emendanda* and Gwagnin's *Rerum Polonicarum* and more recent histories – Piasecki's *Chronica gestorum* (1648), Kobierzycki's *Historia Vladislai* (1655) and Hartknoch's *De republica Polonica* (1687), but also otherwise rarely found publications such as *Legatio Polono Lithuanica in Moscoviam* (1689), an account of the embassy of Baron Tanner.¹⁴⁷ Now and again we see canonical pieces by Kromer, Gwagnin, Herbut, Pastorius and Fredro listed among individuals' holdings, but also later English publications such as Connor's *History* and *Scanderbeg Redivivus* (a story of the life and actions of King John III Sobieski, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4),¹⁴⁸ alongside various editions of Elsevier's *Respublica*¹⁴⁹ and vernacular monographs by non-Poles such as *Casimir Roy de Pologne Nouvelle* (Paris, 1679). This work – partly a biography of King Casimir Vasa, partly a history of Poland-Lithuania but mostly gossip, rumour and invention – was very popular on the continent and was soon translated into English (1681).¹⁵⁰ What is more, the impact of the ubiquitous

¹⁴⁵ D.J. McKitterick (ed.), *The library of Sir Thomas Knyvett of Ashwellthorpe, c.1539-1618* (Cambridge, 1978), 89-90.

¹⁴⁶ *Auctarium bibliothecae Edinburgensae, sive Catalogus librorum quos Guilielmus Drummondus ab Hawthornden bibliothecae D. D. Q. Anno. 1627* (Edinburgh, 1627), 37, 40; Murray S.T. Simpson, *A catalogue of the library of the Revd James Nairn (1629- 1678): bequeathed by him to Edinburgh University Library* (Edinburgh, 1990), 85, 155, 164.

¹⁴⁷ *Bibliopolii Littleburiani pars tertia* (London, 1697), 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

¹⁴⁸ *A catalogue of the libraries of Mr. Jer Copping, late of Sion Colledge, Gent. and Anselm Beaumont, late of the Middle Temple, Esq; with others; John Bullord, A catalogue of the libraries of Sr Andrew Henley, Kt & Bart, and an eminent clergyman, both deceased* ([London], 1700), 1, 13, 20; [John] Bullard, *Bibliotheca Blewitiana* (London, 1693), 9; *Bibliopolii Littleburiani pars prima* (London, 1696), 34.

¹⁴⁹ Frans Korsten, *A catalogue of the library of Thomas Baker* (Cambridge, 1990), 126; Simpson, *A catalogue*, 173.

¹⁵⁰ The authorship of the book, signed D.L.V.R. is assigned to Michel Rousseau de La Valette; three editions appeared in 1679, followed by a German translation in 1680.

presence of various universal histories by de Thou, Botero and D'Avity, to list only the most popular, should not be overlooked. As we will see, especially the last two publications played a significant role as sources of information on Poland-Lithuania.

The limited number of library catalogues and their mode of compilation rarely allow tracing either the history of particular purchases or the actual book owners. Consequently, this makes them of limited use for the appraisal of trends and interests in Polish historiography. However, they testify beyond any doubt to the widespread presence of Polish history books in Britain before Connor's publication and translations of other works at the end of the century. But how can we discover which authors were specifically valued by Britons?

For once, we have a glimpse of an early modern British professional's insight into Polish historiography. In his exposition on *ars historica* published in 1637 an Oxford historian, Degory Wheare, named Marcin Kromer the historian of the Poles.¹⁵¹ Subsequently, the 1662 Latin edition of this book, as well as its English translation of 1685, included an appendix concerning historians of particular nations, which was prepared by another Oxford fellow, Nicholas Horseman.¹⁵² As a postscript to the earlier discussion on the *Rzeczpospolita's* provinces, we should start with noticing the section's subtitle of Horseman's book: "The Historians of the Polanders and Borussians". Significantly, no historian of the Lithuanians and the Ruthenians, nor the people themselves were mentioned, not even in the section discussing the historians of the Tartars, Muscovites and Sarmatians.¹⁵³ Apart from Kromer's *De origine*, this section discussed Gwagnin's history of Poland, Decjusz's "book of the antiquities of Poland", Miechowita's chronicle, the work of the famous fifteenth-century chronicler, Długosz, and the history of the Polish-Turkish wars by Kalimach.¹⁵⁴ Significantly, despite the claim of discussing "qua vetustioribus et qua recentioribus", none of the mentioned authors was a post-Kromer writer; Horseman's was a much fuller overview than

¹⁵¹ Degory Wheare, *Relectiones hyemales, de ratione & methodo legendi utraq[ue] historias, civiles et ecclesiasticas* (Oxford, 1637), 120.

¹⁵² Wheare, *Reflectiones hyemales* (Oxford, 1662), 167-169; *The method and order of reading both civil and ecclesiastical histories* (London, 1685), 195-197.

¹⁵³ NB, contrary to the common practice (as discussed earlier), Horseman did not identify the Poles as Sarmatians.

¹⁵⁴ The fifteenth-century history of the reign of Vladislau IV by Filip Kalimach (Filippo Buonaccorsi) was published only in 1582.

Where's, yet not a more updated one. Was Horseman unfamiliar with more recent Polish historiography? Or did he find contemporary authors unworthy of distinction? Or maybe, he invited his reader to explore Poland-Lithuania's more distant past?

We do not know the answer to these questions, but since the only indicated source on the history of Prussia was the book of antiquities of the Borussians by Erasmus Stella (d. 1521), it may be supposed that Horseman felt more at ease with authors who had passed the trial of time. This attitude was not unique; as previous parts of this study have demonstrated, those interested in geography had done the same. What is more, the examination of references suggests that British authors shared Horseman's predilection for sixteenth-century authors. Dozens called upon the authority of Kromer, Kalimach, Miechowita, Gwagnin, Orzechowski, Frycz-Modrzewski, Herbut and Neugebauer. We find their names in writings of different times and various genres, including popular compendia, such as Heylyn's *Microcosmus* (1621), religious works of Richard Field (1628) and Edward Stillingfleet (1671), political treatises of Thomas Bilson (1585), William Prynne (1643 & 1666) and Sir Peter Pett (1687), and legal precedents discussed by a barrister and legal antiquarian, Fabian Phillips (1676).¹⁵⁵

It would be impossible to consider all citations and, at any rate, authors evoking the example of Poland-Lithuania often neglected to indicate their sources, hence the sample cannot be seen as representative or the analysis as exhaustive. However, there is a strong indication that Kromer's books, *De origine* in particular, were cited with much higher frequency than others. Although no individual edition of Kromer's history was published in the seventeenth century, his presence was ubiquitous.¹⁵⁶ Firstly, excerpts of his works continued to appear in various anthologies (like the *Respublica*) and many authors relied heavily on his works, often simply citing whole passages of his books. This was the case of

¹⁵⁵ Heylyn, *Microcosmus*, 16-17; Richard Field, *Of the Church five books* (London, 1628), 51; Edward Stillingfleet, *A discourse concerning the idolatry* (London, 1671), 381; *The grand question, concerning the bishops right to vote in parliament* (London, 1680), 11; Bilson, *The true difference* (London, 1585), 444; William Prynne, *The fourth part of the sovereign power* (London, 1643), 85; Idem, *An exact chronological history* (London, 1666), 238, 280; Sir Peter Pett, *The obligation resulting from the oath of supremacy* (London, 1687), 57; Fabian Phillips, *The ancient, legal fundamental, and necessary rights of courts of justice* (London, 1676), 14, 29, 83.

¹⁵⁶ This section reaffirms and expands the findings of Professor Frost, who traced Kromer's presence in Scotland - cf. Frost, 'Hiding from the Dogs', 27-28.

the later editions of Albert Krantz's *Wandalia* (1575 & 1580), Botero's *Relationi universali* (1595) and D'Avity's *Les Estats, empires, et principautéz du monde* (1613).¹⁵⁷ Works of both Botero and D'Avity were translated into English and regularly cited, for example, by Robert Filmer.¹⁵⁸ Similarly *Wandalia*, though never translated into English, functioned as a source of information about Poland-Lithuania, as testified by its use by William Prynne and Gilbert Burnet.¹⁵⁹

Secondly, Kromer was the authority systematically and persistently called upon throughout the century, regardless of individual interests; his word was taken with equal confidence by historian William Camden (1605) and scientist Robert Boyle (1699); his name is found in Robert Parsons' political treatise on the succession (1595) and Robert Burton's semi-scholarly work, *Anatomy of melancholy* (1621); his writings were explored in detail by Sir Henry Saville (1605) and casually mentioned by James Howell (1653).¹⁶⁰ Justifiably, we can talk about the "Kromerization" of Polish history in Britain. Crucially, there is more to this than the popularity of a particular historian; it suggests the dominance of a particular historical perspective.

To begin with, it is essentially a Polonocentric history. Although certain aspects of Lithuania's past are discussed, *De origine's* prime focus is Poland between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. This is partially explained by the timing and the author's birth – the book was written before the creation of the *Rzeczpospolita* in 1569, by a native of Lesser Poland. But this gap also reflects the limited knowledge of Lithuania. The dearth of geographical and chorographical

¹⁵⁷ Kromer's *Polonia* without the author's permission was published in Frankfurt in 1575 as a part of Krantz's *Wandalia* – Marcin Kromer, *Polska, czyli o położeniu, ludności, obyczajach, urządach i sprawach publicznych Królestwa Polskiego księgi dwie* (Olsztyn, 1977), xx. Also, the analysis of the 1580 edition of *Wandalia* reveals that it relied heavily on Kromer as well.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Botero; Giovanni Botero, *Relations of the most famous kingdomes and common-wealths thorowout the world* (London, 1630), D'Avity, Filmer's use of these authors is discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁹ Prynne, *An exact chronological history*, 280; Gilbert Burnet, *A collection of several tracts and discourses* (London, 1685), 24.

¹⁶⁰ William Camden, *Remains of a greater work* (London, 1605), 108. (NB, Camden's library included Kromer's *De origine* and also Warszewicki's speech *In obitum Stephani Primi*); Robert Boyle, *The works* (London, 1699), 125. Characteristically, Kromer is also identified as an authority in the relation published in the Royal Society's journal – *Philosophical Transactions*, 1 January 1670, 2002. [R. Doleman], *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England* (Amsterdam, 1594), 29; Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London, 1621), 175, 649, 723; 'Historical collections by Sir Henry Savile' in *Jacobean Union*, 218-219; James Howell, *A German diet, or, the balance of Europe* (London, 1653), 3.

information about Lithuania has already been mentioned; historical data was similarly faulty and Kromer himself admitted as much in *Polonia*.¹⁶¹

Indeed, the format and condition of Lithuanian historiography should be seen as one of the major factors that shaped the formation of Britons' perceptions of Poland-Lithuania. To begin with, there was a problem of linguistic accessibility. The Lithuanian Chronicles, the primary historical sources of Lithuania, were written in a dialect of Ruthenian – in contrast to many Polish histories written in or translated into Latin.¹⁶² Other works, such as *Rozmowa Polaka z Litwinem* [Conversation between a Pole and a Lithuanian] by Augustinus Rotundus, a crucial exposition of Lithuanian separateness, was available only in Polish for it was intended as a polemic with the Poles' claim of superiority, particularly with the views expressed by Stanisław Orzechowski in *Quincunx*.¹⁶³

The language barrier had far-reaching consequences as it restricted the promotion of particular views. Importantly, Rotundus was a proponent of the idea of the Roman origin of the Lithuanians and an opponent of the Polish nobility's hegemony. A similar stand was taken by Michalonus Litanus (Mykalos Lietuvis), the author of *De moribus tartarorum, lituanorum and moscorum* ([1550]/Basle, 1615). But his work, although accessible to a broader audience, hardly promoted the Lithuanians as it was highly critical of the Grand Duchy's political system, whose faults were to be remedied by emulating the structures of Muscovy and Tartary – considered in Britain and Europe the model tyrannies.¹⁶⁴

Both Rotundus and Litanus used this theory of ethnogenesis for political ends; they emphasised the Lithuanians' distinctiveness from the Poles and sought to reform the Lithuanian political system outside the Polish pattern. The myth of the Lithuanians' Roman origin failed to turn into a national ideology.¹⁶⁵ Yet

¹⁶¹ Kromer, *Polska*, 6.

¹⁶² However, the Lithuanian Chronicles were known to and used by Długosz, and thus were indirectly accessible to others.

¹⁶³ Augustinus Miesius Rotundus, *Rozmowa Polaka z Litwinem. Przydana jest rozmowa o niewoli litewskiej* [Brest, 1565].

¹⁶⁴ Artūras Vasiliauskas, 'Antyk i sarmatyzm' in Vytautas Ališauskas et al. (eds), *Kultura Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego* (Kraków, 2011), 11.

¹⁶⁵ This is not say that the Lithuanians lacked the sense of distinctiveness since the process of Polonization, though generally significant, was multi-layered and variously infiltrative. For details see Jerzy Ochmański, 'The National Idea in Lithuania from the 16th to the First Half of the 19th Century: the Problem of Cultural-Linguistic Differentiation', *HUS*, 10/ 3-4 (December 1986), 308-9 in particular.

crucially, it had been successfully incorporated into the Polish myth of the Sarmatian origin, which itself soon developed into a potent cultural and political ideology with noblemen's freedom and equality as one of its chief tenets.¹⁶⁶ This "ideological merger" was stimulated by Kromer, whose version of the Sarmatian myth was inclusive and apart from the Poles encompassed other peoples, and soon was widespread. Notably, efforts to reconcile those two myths were undertaken even by apologists of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, such as Maciej Strykowski, the author of *Kronika Polska, Litewska, Żmódzka i wszystkiej Rusi*. In turn, Albert Wijuk Kojalowicz (Albertas Vijūkas-Kojalavičius) in his *Historiae Lithuaniae* (1650 & 1669) addressed the problem of the nation's origin from a cultural, not a political perspective. Notably, his was the only *expressis verbis* history of the country available; after Kojalowicz Lithuanian historical writing ceased almost entirely until the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁷

Lithuanian historical writings had a low capacity to influence an international audience owing to linguistic and quantitative limitations, but also because they lacked the potent nation-mobilising ideas. This stood in strong contrast to the widely accessible, substantial body of ideologically stimulating Polish historical publications and accounted for the domination of Polish historiography. And the sole presence of the second volume of Kojalowicz's history among the holdings of an unnamed gentleman combined with no indication that his history was ever referred to by Britons serves as this domination's prime illustration.¹⁶⁸

Ukrainian historiography's exposure was even more restricted. Though following the creation of the *Rzeczpospolita*, the Ukrainians began to produce their own historical writings to inform their contemporaries of the past of the Rus, they were written in Slavonic or Ruthenian.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, the texts considered by historians the key corpus of the Ukrainians' historical writings, the so-called

¹⁶⁶ The literature on Sarmatism is vast – see Tadeusz Ulewicz, *Sarmacja: studium z problematyki słowiańskiej XV i XVI w.* (Kraków, 1950); Stanisław Cynarski, *Kilka uwag w sprawie sarmatyzmu w Polsce w początkach XVII w.* (Kraków, 1950), 118-119, 124 and idem, 'Sarmayzm – ideologia i styl życia' in Janusz Tazbir (ed.), *Polska XVII wieku. Państwo, społeczeństwo, kultura* (Warszawa, 1969); Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, 'Sarmatismus - Zur Begriffsgeschichte und den Chancen und Grenzen als forschungsleitender Begriff', *Jahrbücher für osteuropäische Geschichte*, 57/3 (2009), 402-408.

¹⁶⁷ Vasiliauskas, 'Antyk i sarmatyzm', 15-16.

¹⁶⁸ *Bibliotheca excellentissima* (1694), 7.

¹⁶⁹ Frank Sysyn, 'Concepts of Nationhood in Ukrainian History Writing, 1620-1690', *HUS*, 10/3-4 (December 1986), 395.

Cossacks chronicles, were written only at the end of the seventeenth century and remained in manuscript until the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁷⁰

Though written not in Latin, but the vernacular, the sixteenth-century Prussian chronicles by Simon Grunau, Caspar Hennenberger and Caspar Schütz were more accessible than those in Lithuanian, Ruthenian or Old Church Slavonic.¹⁷¹ Importantly, all three sources relied on the history of Prussia by Erasmus Stella who integrated the Prussians into the Sarmatian culture, as did his followers.¹⁷² What is more, people such as Hartknoch and Pastorius – historians of Royal Prussia, but also the authors of histories of Poland-Lithuania – were instrumental in promoting the sense of their peoples' shared traditions and political values and loyalties.¹⁷³ Here again we discover the significance of Kromer, whose *Polonia* was recommended as the vital Polish history textbook and whose version of the Sarmatian myth was commonly recognised in Royal Prussia.¹⁷⁴

As we can see, though written from a Polish perspective, Kromer's presentation of the past advanced the inclusive myth that could provide for all the *Rzeczpospolita*'s peoples. Yet importantly, as noted by Professor Frost, Kromer's *De origine* ended around 1506 and, though it followed the process of Poland's consolidation, including its various unions, it did not discuss the crucial structural and constitutional changes occurring both during the reign and after the death of the last Jagiellonian (1572), that is, the actual creation of the *Rzeczpospolita*.¹⁷⁵ This was only partially addressed in the *Polonia*, where Kromer pointed out that Lithuania voluntarily entered the union with Poland as an equal partner.¹⁷⁶ As a result, cumulatively, the scope, character and popularity of Kromer's books had major consequences for the formation of perceptions of Poland-Lithuania, for through them the history of the origins of the *Rzeczpospolita*, without its complex and often turbulent aftermath, was promoted throughout the following century. In conjunction, as has already been suggested,

¹⁷⁰ Idem, 'The Cossacks Chronicles and the Development of Modern Ukrainian Culture and National Identity', *HUS*, 14/ 3-4 (December 1990), 595.

¹⁷¹ Simon Grunau's *Preussische Chronik* remained in manuscript until the 19th century, though it was frequently copied; Caspar Hennenberger, *Kurze und wahrhaftige Beschreibung des Landes ze Presußen* (Königsberg, 1584); Caspar Schütz, *Historia Rerum Prussicarum* (Danzig, 1599).

¹⁷² Karin Friedrich, *The Other Prussia*, 83.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁷⁵ Frost, 'Hiding from the Dogs', 29.

¹⁷⁶ *Polonia*, 4.

that entailed advertising a specific view of the country's political system. On the pages of his history, Kromer declared the Poles' attachment to monarchy, simultaneously referring frequently to the rights and privileges of the noble estate and emphasising their love of freedom and equality. He repeated those views in *Polonia*, which, tellingly, was offered to Henry de Valois on his entry into Poland for his coronation in 1574, following the first official election *viritim* that had taken place a few months earlier.¹⁷⁷

This practice of *viritim* election, like many others, was instituted in the interregnum of 1572-1573, which confirmed and reinforced the *szlachta's* position. But this practice, like many others, also occasioned abuse and misuse of the *szlachta's* power. Yet those were not described by Kromer as his *Polonia's* narrative ended in 1569. In contrast, Peyton had a different tale to tell. In *A Relation* he heavily criticised the extent of liberty – “the patrimony of the Polish nobility” – as detrimental to the good of the country and felt that in their pursuit of privileges the noblemen had encroached too much on the king's position, with every free election diminishing his powers and leaving the office merely the shadow of a monarchy.¹⁷⁸ Only a wise king – like Stephan Bathory – could attain enough power to control the nobility.¹⁷⁹ And some form of control was indeed required as, to the author's evident dismay, noblemen had absolute power over their subjects (unmatched by any prince in Europe), held vast lands and numerous privileges, which were growing with each election. As to the latter, Peyton disputed the Poles' claim to the kingdom's unbroken electiveness, confidently discussing the *Rzeczpospolita's* past and arguing that the right of election was introduced only after the extinction of the Piast dynasty.¹⁸⁰ His strong argument and perceptive analysis of the Polish political system were underpinned by his good command of historical evidence and nuanced knowledge of politics. Aware of the nobility's determination to protect their rights against the king, but also against themselves, he criticized the means employed to guarantee their privileges, such as a lack of statutory election regulations, preference for foreign candidates and universal consent. Fearing that this was bringing factions and disorder and, eventually, the country's ruin, he

¹⁷⁷ Kromer, *Polska*, xx.

¹⁷⁸ *Relation*, 43-53.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 55, 59.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

recommended emulating other elective kingdoms – like the Danes and the Hungarians, the Poles should “yield to the suit of their princes”. Without doubt, effectively noblemen’s liberty in those countries was almost lost, but it served their countries’ good.¹⁸¹

It remains disputable how well-founded this critique was. Nonetheless, it was stimulated by the developments on which Kromer had remained silent. Yet Kromer’s books circulated widely, whereas the *Relation* remained in manuscript until the twentieth century and, while it probably informed the English diplomatic circle for whom it was apparently written, it could not match the influence exerted by Kromer’s writings.

We should not therefore be blinded by the publication of the English history of Poland-Lithuania only in 1698; we need rather to appreciate the impact of the corpus of historical writings by Kromer and other Polish and international authors. Notably, the “Kromerization” of Polish history was challenged only at the end of the seventeenth century, when history books by those who had visited Poland-Lithuania appeared in Britain. But in the meantime other, non-Kromer-based sources remained in circulation, hence appreciation of the sources should also open us to a mine of information provided by less comprehensive history books, discussing particular events relating to the *Rzeczpospolita*’s history such as Fowler’s *The history of the troubles of Suethland and Poland* (1656) and Chevalier’s *A discourse of (...) the Cossacks with another of the Precopian Tartars: and the history of the wars of the Cossacks against Poland* (1672), not to mention rich literature on the Ottoman Empire – customarily discussing Poland-Lithuania – which will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter.

Additionally, certain publications offered more in-depth information than the genre’s conventions would suggest. For example, Pitt’s *English Atlas* (1680) not only provided maps and detailed descriptions of the *Rzeczpospolita*’s provinces, but also a substantial overview of its history and political system, including lists of rulers and offices, practices of elections and diets, proceedings of the interregna and the content of *pacta conventa*.¹⁸² It drew on the books by Kromer but, significantly, it also relied on more recent sources, such as Mikołaj

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 44ff.

¹⁸² *Pitt*, 1-30.

Chwałkowski's *Regni Poloniae ius publicum* (1676) and writings by Starowolski, Fredro and Hartknoch. Similarly, a Scottish minister, Alexander Tayler's *Memoires of the life and actions of the most invincible and triumphant prince, Ihon the Great, third of that name, present king of Poland* (Edinburgh, 1685) was more than a verbose panegyric to John III Sobieski, but was indeed a brief history of Poland-Lithuania. Consequently, apart from the biography of Sobieski, Tayler's reader could find detailed information about the *Rzeczpospolita's* seventeenth-century wars, whether hostilities with external enemies such as Sweden, Muscovy and the Tartars and the Turks, or domestic conflicts, such as the Cossacks' uprising. Moreover, Poland-Lithuania's laws and customs, among them the *rokosz* (legal rebellion), *liberum veto* (an individual right's to oppose parliamentary resolutions), *pacta conventa* (agreements between kings and the *Rzeczpospolita*), royal election and abdication, were discussed in detail both as concepts and historical and political events.

Noticeably, much of Tayler's book was copied from the anonymously written *Scanderbeg rediivivus*, published in London in 1684, which in turn relied on the sixteenth-century writings of Orzechowski, but also on the *London Gazette's* reports. This example is highly suggestive. It shows Britons who were willing and who knew how to get hold of information on Poland-Lithuania and utilised it – snippets of news and whole books alike. It confirms that books travelled between England and Scotland, and shows how the information was remodelled and re-circulated.¹⁸³

It transpires that Connor's history – though it might have been the first publication that presented British readers with an accurate portrait of Poland-Lithuania¹⁸⁴ – did not appear in a vacuum. Yet importantly, his was the first published full-fledged history of Poland-Lithuania by an English speaker with personal experience of the country. Although Connor, a personal physician to King John III Sobieski, spent only a few months in Poland-Lithuania, his work revealed surprisingly in-depth knowledge of Polish politics and history; not only did he provide an eyewitness account of the *Rzeczpospolita*, but he also examined

¹⁸³ Furthermore, the evidence suggests that some sources discussing Poland-Lithuania are lost to us, such as "An account of Poland with relation to the government ecclesiastical civill and military", licensed 10 April 1694, but apparently never published – *RWCS*, III, 438. I was not able to locate this publication or connect it with any now known title.

¹⁸⁴ Kot, *Rzeczpospolita*, 174.

a variety of written materials and consulted many contemporary authorities. His sources included books by Długosz, Guagnini, Hartknoch, Heidenstein, Herbut, Kromer, Krzyszstanowic, Lithuanus, Lubieniecki, Miechowita, Neugebauer, Orzechowski, Pastorius and Starowolski, but also works of Botero, Beauplan, de Tende, Honorius, Krantz and others. This wide selection of sources, which comprised Polish and international authors' materials on history, law, geography and language, demonstrated how meticulous Connor was. Also, his comment on Starowolski who "hath never hitherto been esteemed for fabulous" indicates that Connor took the author's credibility into account.¹⁸⁵

Connor's book was a well-informed, balanced, yet not uncritical description of Poland-Lithuania. He commented harshly on the tyranny over the Cossacks and the slave-like position of the peasantry; criticised the lack of discipline and mismanagement of the army; censured noblemen's excessive privileges and their despotic power over the subjects. However, though Connor disapproved of many practices and arrangements of the *Rzeczpospolita*, he often justified them and also repeated and reaffirmed more positive stereotypes. Thus, he praised noblemen as "followers of the prudent example of the Roman Commonwealth"; hailed their attachment to freedom and equality and their active resistance against absolutism, as exemplified by the Lubomirski's *rokosz*; embraced the creed of the elective kingdom since time immemorial.¹⁸⁶

Notably, this "immemorial" practice had been increasingly coming under fire. The contested election after the death of King John III Sobieski (1697) divided Poland-Lithuania into supporters of the French candidate, Prince de Conti, and of the Elector of Saxony, Friedrich August. The tumultuous parliamentary session and subsequent violation of law and use of armed forces were a dramatic illustration of dangers potentially embedded within the *Rzeczpospolita's* political system. Britons had this negative image of disorder and anarchy pressed on them through publications such as La Bizardiere's *An historical account of the divisions in Poland* (1700) and *Polish manuscript: or the secret history of the reign of John Sobieski* by Dalairac (1700), whose tone, we may presume, was influenced by the French candidate's abortive efforts to secure the Polish throne. But arguably not only

¹⁸⁵ Connor, I, 25.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 173-178, 134, 13.

national interests, but also natives' experiences of politics and convictions about good and bad political practices underpinned authors' judgments. This is clear from reading of de Tende's *Relation historique de la Pologne* (1686), which was translated into English and published in London in 1698. De Tende had much appreciation for Poland-Lithuania, yet the reader could clearly detect his antipathy for its decentralised government and limited royal sovereignty. Noticeably, though relying on de Tende, Connor differed in his interpretations of the Polish-Lithuanian system and, as mentioned earlier, was more appreciative of its "democratic" elements. Furthermore, in contrast to international critics of the Poles, who denied them "the same proportions of sense and judgment with most other nations", Connor argued that there was method in the alleged madness of Poland-Lithuania's politics as its intricacy protected the country from being easily influenced by foreign powers.¹⁸⁷

Connor was a sympathetic commentator. Other authors writing about Poland-Lithuania, whether non-Britons such as the already mentioned French writers or Britons such as the anonymous author of *The ancient and present state of Poland* (London, 1697), were less positively disposed towards the country. In turn, the sympathies of their readers remain largely unknown; however, translations and publications of these books clearly indicate that Britons were interested in the history and politics of Poland-Lithuania. Though an English history of Poland-Lithuania was produced only in 1698, in the meantime many Britons went beyond the passive readership and provided their own contributions. Interestingly, they not only translated foreign books on the subject, but also appended writings to the editions. A notable example of this practice was de Tende's *Account* which was published with other texts, including the chronology of the Polish kings, a source related to the abdication of King John Casimir, a relation of the last interregnum and of the election and coronation of Friedrich August. These were anonymous, but clearly written by an Englishman.

Britons were interested in the past of Poland-Lithuania in the long seventeenth century. Ironically, their growing interest, particularly from the 1680s, coincided with dramatic contemporaneous events that weakened the kingdom's standing. Election disputes, civil strife, military and diplomatic defeats at the turn of the

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 19-20.

seventeenth century did not testify to the state's efficiency. There are signals that the growth of criticism correlated with the divergence of the native concepts (or priorities) of a state. But we may also conjecture that had Britons been less under the spell of Kromer and his anachronistic presentation of Poland/the *Rzeczpospolita*, their reactions might have been more balanced.

Conclusion

As we have seen, Britons had a considerable amount of information on Poland-Lithuania at their disposal. Yet, the seemingly simple questions of what the *Rzeczpospolita* was, received various, and not necessarily straightforward answers. Behind them stood a range of geographical, historical, administrative and religious rationalisations. In addition, as based on the frameworks of antiquity and constructed out of the imprecise toponomy, such diverse narratives created the impression of the country defined by multiple nets of borders, whether cultural, economic or political. The latter remained particularly problematic as the *Rzeczpospolita* was usually presented as an expanded Poland, without full appreciation of the position of other provinces, in particular of the kingdom's other founding component – Lithuania, whose role was manifestly downplayed.

Similarly, the *Rzeczpospolita's* historiography was dominated by the Polish experience. In particular, Britons were subject to “Kromerization”, that is they were exposed to a specific, broadly disseminated, interpretation of the Poles' past, dispositions and practices, which put an emphasis on the Poles' distinctive Sarmatian origin. Importantly, other peoples of the *Rzeczpospolita* were incorporated into the Sarmatian myth and Polish political traditions were gladly emulated (or recognised as their own) by them. However, though this subscription to a set of common beliefs and principles unified the *Rzeczpospolita's* peoples, non-Poles contribution to and their experience of the *Rzeczpospolita* remained largely unknown to Britons through the seventeenth century. This was because the sources accessible to Britons were written from a predominantly

Polish perspective and those mostly available relied on Kromer's books that had been written in the previous century.

Crucially, the manner of presenting the *Rzeczpospolita's* past conveyed an impression of a relatively uniform character of the kingdom's constitution - in contrast to its more fluid geographical and cultural identities. As we will see, reactions to and interpretations of this constitution were, nonetheless, far from uniform.

Chapter 3

Poland-Lithuania as a limited and composite monarchy

Introduction

Writing from Warsaw in 1629, Sir Thomas Roe observed that the Poles, like no other people, boast of their liberty. As he admitted, “it was indeed great and used especially in their parliaments”, nonetheless, it could be curbed by a skilful king.¹ The intricacies of the relationship between the Polish nobility and crown continued to baffle, intrigue and inspire Britons throughout the century, and this chapter will examine presentations of this “odd constitution of the Polish government” and explore how, by whom and in what contexts it was employed.² “Constitution” has here a dual meaning, which is used to organize the following discussion. First, it denotes the system of fundamental principles prescribing the nature of Polish-Lithuanian government. By and large, Poland-Lithuania was identified as a limited monarchy and, consequently, this broad term is used as a reference point through the first six, chronologically led, sections of the chapter. The reason behind discussing Poland-Lithuania’s constitution in this holistic way rather than examining Britons’ awareness of singular practices associated with it, i.e. *liberum veto* or *rokosz*, is to recognise the complexity of Britons’ responses to and uses of this limited monarchy, for its characteristics were interpreted in multiple ways and selected to fit current controversies in Britain. Second, “constitution” stands here for the kingdom’s composition. Thus, the last two sections look at Poland-Lithuania as a composite monarchy and trace how this example was discussed in British union debates.

This chapter will endeavour to ascertain how applicable and relevant the *Rzeczpospolita*’s constitution was to Britons and will discuss the nature of comparisons made between the political systems of Poland-Lithuania and Britain. Much attention will be given to available sources of information and their role in determining Britons’ perception of the *Rzeczpospolita*’s government. Also, the chapter aims to highlight differences in Scottish and English treatment of Poland-Lithuania’s constitution and map the changes and fluctuations in

¹ Sir Thomas Roe, *Letters relating to the mission of Sir Thomas Roe to Gustavus Adolphus, 1629-30*, ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (London, 1875), 55.

² Sir Thomas Brown, *Certain miscellany tracts written by Thomas Brown* (London, 1683), 187.

referring to this example over time. In what follows, demonstrations of the range of rhetorical contexts in which the Polish-Lithuanian exemplar was employed will challenge the assumption about the limited interest in Poland-Lithuania's government and instead show its popularity among Britons.

Goślicki's perfect kingdom

For all their popularity, Kromer's works were not translated into English, apart from the 20 pages excerpted from the *De origine*. The honour of being the only Polish political author translated into English belongs to Wawrzyniec Grzymała Goślicki (Laurentius Grimalius Goslicius). Royal secretary, diplomat and bishop, Goślicki became known to an international audience as the author of *De optimo senatore*. This classical *speculum*, which argued for the indispensability of a body of advisors for the commonweal and described the qualities of an ideal counsellor, quickly gained popularity across Europe. Originally published in Venice in 1568 and republished in Basel in 1593, the work was soon plagiarised into German translation and also became highly influential in Spain.³ A part of it was translated into English by 1585, with a variety of subsequent complete editions being published under different titles in 1598, 1607, 1660 and 1733, and another partial translation being published in Edinburgh in 1723.⁴ While the contexts of those publications will be touched upon later, let us focus on an examination of its content, particularly, its presentation of Poland, which is crucial for this study.

As mentioned above, the practical model of the senator rather than the ideal was what Goślicki had been after; a person who could realistically be "produced"

³ Aleksander Stępkowski, 'Obecność "De Optimo Senatore" za granicą' in *Stępkowski*, 158-160.

⁴ "The First Book of Lawrentius Grimalius Goslicius of the Best Senator" translated by Robert Chester by 1585 (in manuscript); *The Counsellor* (London, 1598); *The Common-wealth of Good Counsaile* (London, 1607); *The Sage Senator: or, An exact character of a prudent statesmen* (London, 1660) and another edition in the same year titled *The Sage Senator Delineated, or, A discourse of the qualifications; The Accomplished Senator* (London, 1733); a partial translation *The Character and Qualifications of a Senator of Justice* (Edinburgh, 1723). The 1660 edition was also advertised as *The Sage Senator, or a discourse on the wisdom of such as are called to public Employments for their country* – see an advert for Robert Harford's publishing house in Louis de Gaya, *A treatise of the arms* (London, 1678), n.p. See *Batuk-Ulewiczowa* for an informed discussion about all translations, esp. 132-156, 216-234.

given specific circumstances, unlike a Platonic or Ciceronian unattainable idea.⁵ Envisaging the senator as a practitioner of virtue, whose main role was to ensure the country's peace, welfare and felicity, Goślicki drew on multiple, predominantly ancient, illustrations to establish the framework of the model counsellor's education, conduct and duties. This included knowledge of history, philosophy and laws, but also experience of travelling and the skills of eloquence and jurisprudence. In addition, the ideal senator was supposed to be an experienced statesman, devoid of greed and guided by virtue and the common good.⁶

The provision of virtuous senators was crucial since an advisory body was indispensable to any good government. Though Goślicki saw the expediency of various forms of government, he undeniably preferred the aristocratic monarchy.⁷ Neither monarchy nor aristocracy was immune to degeneration, but they were in much less danger than democracy, where the making and maintenance of good laws presented a bigger challenge. Importantly, when Goślicki discussed the popular element, it was in the context of the recognition of the common people's needs rather than their participation in government and, when he permitted the latter, he made it clear that people should only be given power proportionate to their standing. To him, virtue (a gradable quality) and social position were inextricably linked and this determined the scope of power various individuals should possess. Thus, active government was reserved for the aristocracy, who alone could be truly virtuous, while the lower ranks of society, like artisans and merchants, were permitted only a passive role.⁸ Born to serve rather than to command, they were allowed to choose the great magistrates, but they were excluded from government itself. Yet, just as he feared the people's propensity to licence, so Goślicki equally dreaded the king being deprived of counsel and his degeneration into a tyrant.⁹ Only the

⁵ "My intent is not to frame an *Idaea*, or Councillor imagined, such a one as cannot be seene but onely in concept, or that the heauens haue skantly any so perfect, or the earth doth not containe any shadowe of such a man; (as did *Plato* in his common weale and *Cicero* in his Orator) but our speach shall tende to thinges possible, not exceeding the ordinarie use of men" - Goślicki, *The Counsellor*, 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 41ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 17ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

counsellors/senators escaped such risk, being protected collectively by their wisdom (unlike the people) and their number (in contrast to the king).

It becomes evident from a close reading of the text that the role Goślicki reserved for the senators went beyond mere advice: they were destined “to find the perfection of all things and consider what are the offices of kings and what the duty of people, with the right, liberties and laws appertaining to either”.¹⁰ Thus, they were the ultimate shapers of the country’s constitution. Their influential and pro-active role was reflected in the terms Goślicki used to describe them – counsellors and senators, but also ‘moderators’, that is, in the Roman tradition, men of prudence, wisdom and responsibility, leaders who acted for the good of those in their care and relied on persuasion rather than force in their actions.¹¹ Was a country with such people and such a constitution ever to be found?

Goślicki singled out the Athenian monarchy and praised various elements and practices of ancient Sparta and Rome alongside contemporary Venice, but the fullest expression of the system he advertised was to be found in Poland. The first inkling of this view appeared in the dedication, where he described Polonia as the most perfect kingdom on earth; the habitation of liberty and the seat of just government. However, while Goślicki referred to the virtues of the current king, Sigismund Augustus – incidentally, his dedicatee – later he discussed the king’s office rather than his person. If the prince of Poland seemed to be a living incarnation of the ruler recommended by Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon, it was because of the perfect balance of monarchical, aristocratic and popular elements achieved in the country.¹² The perfect union of the orders prevented the king from following his own fancy; he was powerless without the advice and the authority of his council who, conversely, could not decide anything without the king’s approbation and the people’s consent.¹³ Notably, in this context “the people” denoted only knights and gentlemen, that is, exactly as Goślicki argued elsewhere, only those capable of acting truly virtuously. Of critical importance was the authority of the law, which all solemnly swore to keep and uphold. As law was the protection against tyranny and everybody, including the king, was

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The term is discussed by Jerzy Mańkowski, although he reaches different conclusions – Mańkowski, ‘Moderator i filozof’ in *Stępkowski*, 95ff.

¹² Goślicki, *The Counsellor*, 27.

¹³ Ibid., 26-7.

committed to preserving the law, the Poles enjoyed great freedom, while their king was not simply obeyed, but loved and cherished.¹⁴

Moreover, this already flawless political system reached another dimension of perfection through its elective element. Election was so appreciated because it provided a favourable environment for virtue and reason to be actualised. Firstly, elective kings were chosen for their own merit; for virtue that originated not from riches or the achievements of their families, but was accomplished through their personal endeavours. Secondly, election allowed men to follow their natural inclination to make kings those who excel in virtue. Both actions were dictated by reason – nothing could be more reasonable than one’s desire to acquire virtue and others’ willingness to recognise and reward it.¹⁵ Thus, the election of a virtuous prince by virtuous electors was nothing less than the quintessence of reason in action.¹⁶

Goślicki knew only too well that the senators of Poland-Lithuania did not match this ideal picture. Tools in the king’s hands and rivals to the members of the lower house, senators were often selected for their loyalty towards the king instead of personal merit and served his or other individuals’ interests rather than that of the *Rzeczpospolita*.¹⁷ Therefore, in the Polish context the treatise should be seen as a manual for them and, more broadly, for all statesmen.¹⁸ However, read from a British perspective, a different impression was likely to have been gained. Unfamiliar with the details of Poland’s internal power-struggles and institutional developments, Britons were more likely to be impressed with the image that Goślicki was at pains to emphasise of virtuous, highly dedicated and, crucially, real practitioners of politics. But were they?

The extent of Britons’ familiarity with Goślicki’s work is difficult to gauge, but numerous references suggest it was considerable. We find him being cited in the writings of John Dee, Maurice Kyffin, Gabriel Harvey and Robert Allott, and

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁵ Goślicki, *The Counsellor*, 15.

¹⁶ Tellingly, as noted by Professor Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, Goślicki’s critical comment on hereditary monarchy – one sentence associating hereditary monarchy with tyranny – was eliminated from the translation – *Bałuk-Ulewiczowa*, 140; cf. *The Counsellor*, 16 and Wawrzyniec Goślicki, *De optimo senatore libri duo/O senatorze doskonałym księgi dwie*, trans. Tadeusz Bieńkowski, ed. Mirosław Korolko (Kraków, 2000), 60, 62.

¹⁷ For an analysis of the Polish senate in the time of Goślicki see Aleksander Stępkowski, ‘Senat doby jagiellońskiej’ in *Stępkowski*, 83-91.

¹⁸ *Bałuk-Ulewiczowa*, 58.

later of William Prynne.¹⁹ Interestingly, all these citations were of the original text and most of them came from the period before 1598, leading to the conclusion that the treatise was well known before its translation into English.²⁰ It would appear that the 1598 publication was a politically rather than culturally motivated enterprise. However, there is no consensus about its origin, which current scholarship explains in two different ways.

Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa puts the translation in the context of the contemporaneous Polish-English strife over the Baltic trade. As mentioned in Chapter 1, England's blockade of the Baltic, which started in 1595, caused a serious diplomatic clash. Działyński's mission in 1597 did not help to alleviate the situation. Instead, the Polish envoy enraged Queen Elizabeth, who famously described his conduct as characteristic of a herald rather than of an ambassador.²¹ The situation could have deteriorated further following the staging of Thomas Nashe's and Ben Jonson's *The Isle of Dogs* (1597), allegedly slandering the King of Poland-Lithuania. Professor Bałuk-Ulewiczowa attributes the suppression of the play and the subsequent publication of Goślicki's book to Robert Cecil's determination to renew negotiation with Poland-Lithuania in order to ensure the required corn trade pattern (i.e. grain provision to England, but not to Spain). She argues that certain characteristics of Goślicki's text, namely the inclusion of the original 1568 dedication and the new caption on the title page "Consecrated to the Polonian Empyre", clearly indicate the English government's efforts to placate the Polish king.²²

In contrast, Markku Peltonen places the publication of the *Counsellor* in a domestic rather than international context. He reminds us that in the 1590s England faced a serious political crisis caused by the Irish rebellion, conflict with

¹⁹ John Dee, *General and rare memorials* (London, 1577), 9; Maurice Kyffin, *The blessedness of Brytaine* (London, 1587), f. A4r; Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces supererogation* (London, 1593), 114; Robert Allott, *Wits theatre of the little world* (London, 1599), 165; William Prynne, *The sovereign power of parliaments* (London, 1643), 161. Moreover, existing evidence shows Shakespeare's familiarity with Goślicki – cf. Israel Gollancz, "Bits of Timber. Some Observations on Shakespearian Names: 'Shylock', 'Polonius', 'Malvolio'" in idem (ed.), *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1916), 173-177; Józef Andrzej Teslar, "Shakespeare's Worthy Counsellor" in *Sacrum Poloniae Millenium. Rozprawy – Szkice – Materiały historyczne VII* (Rome, 1960), 1-144; Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, 167-215.

²⁰ Its popularity could be further advanced by Bartholomeu Filippes's *The counsellor* (London, 1598) where frequent references to Goślicki are made.

²¹ Camden, *The historie*, 187-190.

²² Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, 152-156.

Spain, the succession problem, factionalism and corruption.²³ At the same time, he shows that by 1598 the humanist idea of virtue had gained popularity among the English and many were warming towards the idea of mixed, republican government.²⁴ Consequently, Professor Peltonen argues for the interpretation of the translation and publication of Goślicki's treatise against this backdrop. He sees the almost simultaneous publication of Gasparo Contarini's *The commonwealth and government of Venice* (London, 1599) – another exposition of mixed government rooted in a virtuous civic life – as further evidence supporting his case.

The year 1598 was one of the key moments in Polish-English diplomatic relations and, as mentioned earlier, the appearance of *A Relation of the State of Polonia* can be interpreted as a testimony to the particular interest taken in Poland-Lithuania at that time. However, should the publication of the *Counsellor* be seen as a planned step of the diplomatic campaign or rather as a side-effect of this diplomatic stir? To start with, there is no hard evidence linking *The Isle of Dogs* with Poland-Lithuania. The text of this satire is lost, but it appears that the chief reason for its suppression was its seditious content and as to its international context, if there was any, the play seemed to contain some references to the tsar of Russia rather than to the king of the *Rzeczpospolita*.²⁵ However, had it contained slander against the Polish monarch and had it been suppressed by Robert Cecil on that account – a perfectly understandable intervention within the remit of a person in charge of foreign policy – Cecil's supposed initiative to publish Goślicki's treatise would be far more difficult to explain. First of all, this is because of the treatise's ideological content that did not align with the dominant – and the Crown's supported – political ideology.²⁶ A “monarchical republic” was a creed of the past; the idea of *monarchia mixta* was discredited by the 1590s, when the establishment found it incompatible with a monarchical state and when the view that the sovereignty resided in the queen alone became

²³ Markku Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism in English political thought 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1995), 104.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 105-119.

²⁵ Cf. E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923), III, 455; Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford, 2011); Idem, ‘The Isle of Dogs (lost play)’ in David Bevington et al. (eds), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson* (Cambridge, 2012), I, 101-109.

²⁶ The subversiveness of Goślicki's treatise has already been noted by Teslar – “Shakespeare's Worthy Counsellor”, 60 – though Teslar's interpretation of the English politics and the ideas of Goślicki should be approached with caution.

dominant.²⁷ Little is known about Robert Cecil's political ideas, but no evidence suggests that his willingness to keep on good terms with the parliament and the privy council extended to promoting these bodies' position at the cost of the queen's. Nor, unlike his father, Lord Burghley, did he seem to consider creating a counsellor-led emergency government in case of interregnum, for which Goślicki's work could have provided ideological support.²⁸ Also, if the publication was meant to show the good will of the English government towards its Polish counterpart, one would expect to find some indication of this intention. Yet, the publication had no link to the English court or the privy council, whether through the printing house, text reference or symbol. In addition, it may be noticed that the caption "Consecrated to the Polonian Empire" pointed to a doctrinal rather than diplomatic reading. Nowhere in the Polish-English diplomatic correspondence was the *Rzeczpospolita* designated an empire, but referred to as a kingdom or a commonwealth (*Regnum/Respublica*) instead.²⁹ On the other hand, the term "empire" with its strong ideological association, which expressed the full sovereignty and stressed independence from any external or internal power or agency, resonated well in England, especially in the context of its break with Rome.³⁰ As Goślicki's treatise promoted mixed government, it may plausibly be conjectured that the person(s) responsible for the book's publication wanted to use this well-known and powerful category to endorse the discredited concept of the *monarchia mixta*; and to signal that this form of government did not weaken the state. Similarly, the attachment of the original dedication to late King Sigismund Augustus (d. 1572) might not necessarily be meant as a bow towards the present Polish king, Sigismund Augustus' nephew, but as a veiled criticism of Queen Elizabeth herself. It may be recalled that Goślicki opened his dedication with a reminder that "those commonweales be most blessed where men do live

²⁷ John Guy, *The reign of Elizabeth I. Court and culture in the last decade* (Cambridge, 1995), 12-15.

²⁸ Stephen Alford, 'The Political Creed of William Cecil' in John F. McDiarmid (ed.), *The monarchical republic of early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2007), 87-89.

²⁹ For example, Elizabeth, Queen of England to Stephan, King of Poland, December 1586 - *EFE*, IV, 87; Christopher Parkins to Sigismund III, King of Poland, [28 September 1590] - *EFE*, IV, 100; Robert Cecil to George Carew, June 1598 - *EFE*, IV, 212-216.

³⁰ David Armitage, 'The Elizabethan Idea of Empire', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Series 6, 14 (2004), 272. NB, the only instance of Poland-Lithuania being referred to as imperial (though notably, not as an empire) is given by ambassador Horsey, who cited the correspondence between Queen Elizabeth and King Sigismund III concerning the English merchants. To the king's marvel that so a high majesty interceded on the behalf of a sort of peasants, Queen Elizabeth was supposed to reply that "she writes unto the Majesty of Poland in the same style and manner as her highness does to all other imperial kings, her allies and friends" - 'Travels of Sir Jerome Horsey' in *Russia at the close of the sixteenth century*, ed. Edward A. Bond (London, 1856), 246-247.

in peace: so are those countries miserable where people are not maintained in securitie", and emphasised the king's chief role in ensuring the public peace and welfare.³¹ As mentioned earlier, England was not exactly peaceful and secure at that time, and the list of Sigismund Augustus' virtues and their positive effect on the country's wellbeing could be a gentle reminder of what was expected of the Queen. In truth, the lack of a dedication or a letter to the sponsor is unusual. It could not be that it was the "republican" content that made the originator(s) of the publication of the *Counsellor* cautious since Contarini's treatise included both the translator's name and the dedication.³² However, it is probable that it was precisely the above mentioned commercial-diplomatic conflict and, subsequently, hostility to Poland-Lithuania, that made those behind the publication reluctant to reveal their identity and to risk Queen Elizabeth's or Cecil's wrath. Although the diplomatic context should not be overlooked, for likely it provided the stimulus for the growth of interest in Poland-Lithuania in the late 1590s and thus could be instrumental in promoting Goślicki's work, it appears that the publication of Goślicki's treatise in 1598 did not stem from diplomatic efforts but rather from the genuine interest in such literature. Indeed, in a country plagued by endemic corruption and ineffective, peremptory government, Goślicki's *speculum* that described the practical counsel and the successful mixed government could have been welcomed as a highly relevant publication.

Notably, *De optimo senatore* was written before the union of Lublin (1569), which turned the Polish-Lithuanian dynastic union into a parliamentary one, and before the first interregnum (1572/3), which introduced the *viritim* election. Those changes did not simply extend the political *modus operandi* of Poland to Lithuania, but they created the *Rzeczpospolita*, a new political entity with a unique constitution; an entity and a constitution unknown to Goślicki at the time of the treatise's composition. However, since the original description of the country's political system remained unrevised, it was precisely this ideal of a past political reality that was circulated through subsequent editions.

³¹ Goślicki, *The Counsellor*, f. [A1].

³² *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum* was translated by Lewes Lewkenor and dedicated to Lady Anne, Countess of Warwick.

Importantly, Goślicki's apotheosis of the Polish constitution was not a stand-alone creation, but the positive image of Poland's political system was endorsed by many other Polish authors. Though divided in their diagnoses of the state of the kingdom's political system and appropriate ways of its optimization, on the whole, Polish thinkers shared the strong belief in the uniqueness of their country's constitution. As is evident from library catalogues, which were discussed earlier, and text references, many of those Polish political writers were known to Britons. The most popular appear to have been sixteenth-century authors such as Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski and Stanisław Orzechowski, though there is also evidence of some familiarity with seventeenth-century writers, such as Szymon Starowolski.³³

Frycz Modrzewski gained great popularity at home and abroad through his highly original *De republica emendanda* (1554), the semi-utopian exposition of social and political reforms.³⁴ Its title and content clearly indicated that in the author's opinion Poland was not perfect; nonetheless, he thought that its constitution surpassed other countries. He praised the kingdom's tradition of electing rulers as it allowed it to choose those skilful in governance and helped to prevent the tyranny of the king, who, limited by other estates, was bound to rule within the law and act for the welfare of the country. Consequently, unlike kings in other countries, Polish rulers were hardly ever faced with the subjects' opposition, being cherished and fondly remembered instead.³⁵

Similarly to Frycz Modrzewski, his contemporary Orzechowski (d. 1566) believed the *monarchia mixta* to be the best form of government, as it was the only government that could guarantee people's freedom – the most precious possession in the world.³⁶ Significantly, Orzechowski believed that in comparison to the great freedom enjoyed by the Poles, the freedom of any other country was slavery. The unique elective mixed monarchy of Poland, which was rooted in law

³³ See for example: William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix* (London, 1633), 693; Phillips, *The ancient rights*, 391; Matthew Sutcliffe, *A true relation of Englands happiness* (London, 1629), 87, 182, 359; Richard Baxter, *A key for Catholicks* (London, 1659), 225; Pitt, n.p.; Connor, II, 5, 7, 13, 24, 28, 38.

³⁴ The treatise discussed proper organization of a republica, although it was clearly influenced by developments in and intended as a reform programme for the *Rzeczpospolita*. For the informed discussion see Stanisław Tarnowski, *Pisarze polityczni XVI wieku*, ed. Bogdan Szlachta (Kraków, 2000), Ch. 3, esp. 254-269.

³⁵ Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *O poprawie Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. Kazimierz Józef Turowski (Przemyśl, 1857), 38-39.

³⁶ Włodzimierz Bernacki, *Myśl polityczna I Rzeczypospolitej* (Kraków, 2011), 78.

and supported by custom and tradition, was a stimulating environment for freedom to grow and flourish. A fervent supporter of elective monarchy, Orzechowski pointed out that this freedom was protected against abuse from the king, who functioned as “the mouth of the kingdom” and thus was bound to act lawfully and with the people’s consent.³⁷ As discussed in the previous chapter, similar commendations of free election and praise of Polish freedom were popularised by Kromer. Characteristically, all those historians and political thinkers, whose works were largely created before 1569, remained popular in Britain throughout the seventeenth century.

Brutus, Barclay and Bodin on Poland-Lithuania’s government

Idealisation of the *Rzeczpospolita*’s political system was not a domain only of the Poles. The Polish constitution was eulogised in *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* [1579], “the most famous contribution to the Huguenot theory of revolution”.³⁸ The anonymous author,³⁹ writing under the name of Stephanus Junius Brutus, discussed the relationship between the king and the people, and argued for the ultimate sovereignty of the latter, and had nothing but praise for the Polish solutions. He applauded the supremacy of the people (represented by the nobility) over the king, which was to him as obvious as the superiority of the Venetian aristocracy over the doge.⁴⁰ In Poland-Lithuania, the king’s position was determined by his election, when he was admitted by the representatives of the corporation of the people. As the king took the coronation oath, he bound himself absolutely to rule justly, in accordance with the ancestral laws, as had clearly been demonstrated at the election and coronation of Henry Valois (1573/4).⁴¹ The law forbade the king to alienate lands and impose taxes without the authority of a public assembly.⁴² Moreover, the latter was the chief

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁸ Quentin Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought* (Cambridge & New York, 1978), II, 305.

³⁹ The identity of the author remains in dispute, Hubert Languet and Philip du Plessis Mornay being the main contestants. For details see Garnett’s Introduction to his translation of *Vindiciae - Vindiciae contra tyrannos: or, Concerning the legitimate power of a prince over the people, and of the people over a prince/ Stephanus Junius Brutus, the Celt*, ed. and trans. George Garnett (Cambridge, 1994), lv-lxxvi.

⁴⁰ *Vindiciae*, 82.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 101, 133.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 117, 120.

instrument of law making as no new law could be passed without public consent. Although Poland had not escaped tyrants, like Popielus, who by deceit and parricide had endeavoured to turn the elective kingship into a hereditary monarchy, Brutus confidently reminded his readers about executions of tyrants in Poland, as given in trustworthy historical testimonies.⁴³ In addition, the text's layout provided another insight as to how Brutus perceived Poland-Lithuania; revealingly, all references to the country's politics and history were placed within the section that discussed the matter of resistance towards a prince oppressing the commonwealth.

While it can be supposed that Brutus's radicalism, epitomised by the substantial power given to lesser magistrates, including that of tyrannicide, would be odious to Goślicki, both authors were comparable in their commendation of limited elective government and the importance of law.⁴⁴ Significantly, with all their differences, both of them viewed the *Rzeczpospolita* as the embodiment of their ideals. This not only shows the range of possible interpretations of the Polish political system, but also its capacity to accommodate incongruous visions.

However, Poland-Lithuania was not an epitome of the perfect government to all. William Barclay in his *De regno et regali potestate* (1600), a refutation of Brutus and other "monarchomachs" had a different take on the Polish constitution. The Scottish jurist enthusiastically seized upon Brutus's references to Poland-Lithuania and Venice to argue that the *Rzeczpospolita* is not a kingdom at all. While Brutus linked those countries to demonstrate the pre-eminence of the people over the head of state, Barclay transformed Brutus's association into a comparison between the doge and the Polish king. Barclay agreed that following the example of the Romans and the Germans, Polish kings were chosen by the people. But if the Poles, like the Venetians, wanted to see themselves as superior to the king and as the ultimate holders of sovereignty, it followed that the title and the position of their king were equally as empty as the doge's.⁴⁵ To Barclay,

⁴³ Ibid., 149, 163. Brutus did not identify his sources, but the text analysis clearly points to Kromer, and possibly to Bodin.

⁴⁴ Although Goślicki does not discuss the problem of resistance to a tyrant, the tone of moderation permeating his treatise and also the superior position of the senators within government strongly suggests that he would be reluctant to permit acts of active resistance, especially from the hands of lesser magistrates.

⁴⁵ William Barclay, *De regno et regali potestate* (Paris, 1600), 282-3.

for whom absolute monarchy was the best and the only divinely sanctioned form of government, Poland-Lithuania held little value, and he mockingly observed that only strangers agreed to rule the country with such an empty title.⁴⁶ As a staunch opponent of resistance to the king, he remained unmoved by the case of King Boleslaus, who had been reprehended by Bishop Stanislaus for his misgovernment. This story, akin to the one of Henry II and Thomas Becket, was often evoked to legitimize opposition to tyrants. Yet neither the *Rzeczpospolita's* past, nor its current constitution was redeemed in Barclay's eyes; deprived of the kingdom and the king, Poland-Lithuania was condemned as an oligarchy.⁴⁷

In his understanding of sovereignty Barclay was clearly indebted to Jean Bodin, whose opinion of Poland-Lithuania as presented in *Les six livres de la Republique* (1576) was nonetheless much more informed and balanced than Barclay's. However, despite Bodin's undeniable familiarity with Polish authors, including Kromer and Frycz Modrzewski, and his consultations with the Polish ambassadors, like Zamoyski and Łaski, who had come to Paris in 1573 to take an oath from the recently elected Henry Valois, he found the classification of the Polish government challenging.⁴⁸ This difficulty partially arose from the nature of Bodin's work – a combination of theory and practical evidence. Determined to define the true nature of sovereignty and pinpoint its characteristics, Bodin appeared confused when faced with the *Rzeczpospolita's* system, which did not fit neatly into his categories but, simultaneously, with its numerous commendable features, could not be easily dismissed.

Bodin believed that a hereditary monarchy was the only system where true, that is full and undivided, sovereignty could be realised.⁴⁹ He did not immediately denounce the Poles, whose preference for elective government he explained by their geographical position – as was the case of all northern people, they were brought up in liberty and did not take easily to being commanded imperiously.⁵⁰ More importantly to Bodin, the quality of monarchy was determined by the

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 283. The exact repetition of this phrase by Howell testifies to Barclay's popularity in Britain – cf. James Howell, *A German Diet* (London, 1653), 9.

⁴⁸ Bodin makes explicit references to the authors quoted and the people consulted, although often misspells their names – Jean Bodin, *The six bookes of a common-weale* (London, 1606), 59, 121, 435, 512, 548, 672, 773.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 721.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 563, 672.

means of governing the state rather than by the way of acceding to the throne.⁵¹ Consequently, he condemned election for its effects on the scope of sovereignty and the danger it brought to the public peace, as the vacuum created by the king's death gave rise to civil wars and posed a danger of limiting the king's majesty by the nobility.⁵² While Bodin noted with approval the historical tendency of the Polish nobility to choose their kings from the same dynasty, he associated the extinction of the Jagiellon dynasty and the subsequent free election with the erosion of sovereignty. He lamented the limitations and conditions imposed on Henry Valois upon his election, claiming it made him a prince rather than a king; fashioned him "such an one as (amongst others) is chiefe in a Commonweale".⁵³ As certain prerogatives, like the resolution of peace and war and the appointment of magistrates, belonged to the nobility rather than the king, Poland-Lithuania seemed to him to be aristocratic rather than regal.⁵⁴ Yet, in other parts of his treatise he distinctly referred to the *Rzeczpospolita* not only as a monarchy, but as one of the greatest and most flourishing monarchies in the world.⁵⁵ This should be read in the context of Bodin's differentiation between a monarchy in name only and a real monarchy, where the king possessed absolute sovereignty. On the other hand, this nomenclature came from his occasional – implicit – treatment of Poland-Lithuania as a *monarchia mixta* rather than as an aristocracy. The change in terminology did not make Bodin's judgement of the country's system less harsh. On the contrary, mixed government was what Bodin utterly detested as a system incompatible with indivisible sovereignty.⁵⁶ He distrusted the popular element and was not reassured by the Polish practice of unanimous decision making, fearing the victory of the majority through their persuasion.⁵⁷ However, while criticising the *Rzeczpospolita* either as an aristocracy

⁵¹ Ibid., 208.

⁵² Ibid., 723.

⁵³ Ibid., 435, 94-95, 511. Prior to his coronation, Henri Valois was required to sign a set of legal acts that became known as *Articuli Henriciani*. This unchanging contract with the *Rzeczpospolita* that stated the fundamental principles of governance had to be signed by each subsequent king-elect, alongside with *pacta conventa* – agreements that were individually tailored for each king.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 166-8.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 485, 719.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 185.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 715. Unanimous voting was one of the fundamental constitutional rules of the *Rzeczpospolita*. As the execution of laws relied on goodwill of the noblemen, it was believed that only the unanimous support could guarantee efficient government. This rule was interwoven with the practice of *liberum veto* ("free vote"), which allowed any Diet's member to end a session and nullify the proceedings – Jerzy Lukowski, "'Machines of Government': Replacing the Liberum Veto in the Eighteenth-Century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth", *SEER*, 90/1 (January 2012), 69.

or a *monarchia mixta*, he clearly admired the Poles, who were never subdued by another nation.⁵⁸ Furthermore, he applauded the law against the alienation of land and revenue, the king's right to mint coin and the senate's position, with its perpetual appointments limited to noble persons only, which all testified to the soundness of the country's political system.⁵⁹

How were *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, *The six books of a common-weale* and *De regno et regali* relevant for shaping Britons' perceptions of the Polish-Lithuanian political system? To begin with, these publications were highly popular in Britain,⁶⁰ and consequently they contributed to a wider dissemination of descriptions of the *Rzeczpospolita's* political system among Britons. Yet it was not only the matter of diverse presentations of this system. What is more, such varied interpretations possibly reinforced the uncertainties about the *Rzeczpospolita's* constitution, for although all authors seemed to agree that Poland-Lithuania was a limited government, they had different opinions about the exact nature of those limitations. Also, it may only be guessed how these authors' particular profiles ("republican", "royalist") influenced Britons' reading of Poland-Lithuania's government.⁶¹

The authors' opinions about Poland-Lithuania's constitution affected their treatment of Poland-Lithuania's history. Bodin believed that, although not ideal, the *Rzeczpospolita's* government was much better before the introduction of free election in 1572/3, which he saw as a significant erosion of royal sovereignty. What Bodin saw as regression, Brutus praised as progression. Such diverse attitudes to the changes of Poland-Lithuania's constitution stimulated different appraisals of the country's past. Whereas supporters of the *viritim* election and the coronation oath with its disobedience clause saw their introduction in 1573 as

⁵⁸ Bodin, *Six books*, 136.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 576-7, 651-2; 258-9, 277.

⁶⁰ This is particularly true about *Vindiciae* and *Republicque*, which were widely read by Britons even before their translations into English (1648 & 1688; 1610 respectively).

⁶¹ Not only should we appreciate the impact of those principal works, but also realise the implications of the want of treatment of Poland-Lithuania at the hands of other prominent thinkers, such as George Buchanan. His ideas as expressed in *De jure regni apud Scotos* (1579) and *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* (1582) had much in common with those of Goślicki, yet Buchanan, an exponent of the elective nature of the Scottish monarchy and limited government, did not discuss the Polish-Lithuanian constitution at all. Considering the profound influence Buchanan wielded in Scotland and elsewhere, this was a very powerful absence. For discussion about Buchanan's authority see Roger Mason, *Kingship and the Commonweal* (East Linton, 1998) and *idem* with Caroline Erskine (eds), *George Buchanan* (Franham, 2012).

a natural continuation and a stronger articulation of previous traditions, their opponents not only disapproved of such practices, but also saw them as a break with historical continuity.

Indeed, at that time the *viritim* election was unique in Europe. The few elective countries such as Denmark and the Holy Roman Empire chose their rulers by means of a limited number of electors. Adopting the practice of electing the king by the votes of all, exceptionally numerous, noblemen was truly revolutionary. The correspondence of Hubert Languet and Sir Philip Sidney gives a glimpse of how it resonated in Britain.

Sidney and Languet

Since the beginning of their friendship (1572) Hubert Languet, himself an established humanist and diplomat, served as a tutor and advisor to young Philip Sidney in matters of all colour and gravity, of travels and marriage alike.⁶² Most importantly, he encouraged and shaped Sidney's interests in history and politics. They corresponded regularly between 1573 and 1580 and the letters of the period of 1573 to 1574 are of particular interest for the current discussion.

Since 1573 Languet had been staying in Vienna where he represented the Elector of Saxony at the imperial court. This place gave him a vantage point for observation of developments in Poland-Lithuania, which clearly interested him greatly. Languet was determined to attend the coronation of Henri Valois and recommended his friend to join him in Cracow, pressing and encouraging Sidney with regular updates about Valois' moves, promises of a splendid spectacle and information about preparations made to ease Sidney's journey and stay in Poland-Lithuania.⁶³ His letter to Sidney's companion, Philip Louis, count of Hanau and Münzenberg, similarly exhorted both Philips to go to "Sarmata [sic] (...) to see whether the lily of France takes roots in Polish soil – for it is a thing of

⁶² Edward Berry, 'Hubert Languet and the "Making" of Philip Sidney', *Studies in Philology*, 85/3 (Summer, 1988), 306.

⁶³ Languet to Sidney, 4 December 1573, where he also referred to his previous letter to Sidney regarding the same matter; 21 December 1573; 1 January 1574 – *Pears*, 7, 13, 18-20 respectively.

which men will speak for some time to come".⁶⁴ Sympathetic about his young protégée's difficulty in getting to Cracow on time, Languet was relieved to hear about the rescheduling of the coronation and urged Sidney not to miss such an opportunity.⁶⁵ On his side, Sidney regretted the predicted delay and absence from a place "where there [is] so much to [be] seen and learnt" and implored Languet to send him Languet's history of the Polish election.⁶⁶ From the subsequent correspondence it becomes clear that the writing in question was not a book, but a letter or a pamphlet that Languet was unable to send due to the lack of copy.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, details of this writing about the Polish election are unknown. That it existed may be gathered from the correspondents' references, who plainly remarked on showing/seeing the letter in the past.⁶⁸ Most likely its content dealt with the recent election of Henry Valois – the first *viritim* election – but it cannot be discounted that it was of a more historical nature.⁶⁹

The mystery surrounding this text will likely remain unsolved, but it is certain that Sidney's determination to procure it went beyond conventional courtesy among friends-authors. He was resolved "to take absolutely no excuses for [Languet] not giving [him] a letter on the affairs of Poland", a view he repeated with even greater emphasis in a letter sent a month later, where he stated; "I shall hunt out all that you have written, private or published, about the Polish inauguration".⁷⁰

And yet, despite (or maybe because of) such great interest and high expectations, Sidney's visit to Poland-Lithuania ended up in disappointment. Little is known about his sojourn in Poland-Lithuania, where he stayed during the autumn of 1574. Not only did he miss the coronation of Henri Valois (February 1574), but he missed the king himself, who fled from his recently adopted kingdom after receiving tidings of the death of his brother, Charles IX (July 1574). Back in Vienna, Sidney communicated to the Earl of Leicester the Poles' acute

⁶⁴ Cited in Jan A. van Dorsten, 'Sidney and Languet', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 29/3 (May 1966), 215.

⁶⁵ Languet to Sidney, 5 February 1574 – *Pears*, 40.

⁶⁶ Sidney to Languet, 19 December 1573 – *ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁷ Languet to Sidney, 1 January 1574 – *ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁸ See Notes 66 & 67.

⁶⁹ Even assuming Languet's authorship of the *Vindiciae* does not provide a clue since the treatise, as mentioned earlier, discusses both the recent and historical elections of the *Rzeczpospolita*.

⁷⁰ Sidney to Languet, 15 January 1574; *Idem*, 26 February 1574 – *Pears*, 24 and 42 respectively.

disappointment with Valois, who left them kingless and with unfulfilled promises.⁷¹ In the same letter and also a communication sent to Lord Burghley he reported an anti-Protestant riot that took place in Cracow, which happily was quickly appeased.⁷² Nonetheless, the experience could hardly convince Sidney that religious toleration was well-practised in Poland-Lithuania.⁷³ Indeed, Sidney seems to have been greatly affected by the incident, which he saw as a very dangerous sedition, and which reminded him of the ruinous results of similar events in France and Flanders. Both Sidney and Languet were deeply committed to the Protestant cause and, having witnessed the St Bartholomew's Day massacre, they were particularly eager to see fellow Protestants elsewhere safe. Significantly, one of the conditions of Henry Valois's admission to the Polish throne was his recognition and acceptance of the act of religious toleration passed by the Confederation of Warsaw (1573). In view of that, it may be supposed that the element of curbing the king's manoeuvrability with regard to the policy of religious toleration was what drew Sidney and Languet to the Polish election in particular.⁷⁴

This attraction seems to be lost through Sidney's experience in Cracow and it is possible that it adversely affected his interest in the *Rzeczpospolita* in general, seeing that he did not discuss the kingdom's political system in his writings.⁷⁵ However, some of Sidney's opinions were divulged by his close friend, Fulke Greville. Greville recalled Sidney's judgement of Poland-Lithuania as "a well-mixed and balanced aristocracy" and his critical observation of King Stephan Bathory's endeavours to expand his royal sovereignty.⁷⁶ Recognising the ancient king-nobility struggle in Poland-Lithuania and admitting the nobility's eagerness to diminish those few royal prerogatives even more, Sidney clearly sided with

⁷¹ Sidney to the Earl of Leicester, 27 November 1574 - *ibid.*, 91.

⁷² Sidney to Lord Burghley, 17 December 1574 - *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge, 1923), III, 101.

⁷³ George Gomori, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Polish Friend: An Amendment', *The Polish Review*, 40/1 (1995), 71.

⁷⁴ Languet was clearly aware of the proceedings of the parliament of 1573, of which he wrote to Sidney: "In this Diet greater liberty has been granted to those who profess the reformed Religion that they ever had before" - Languet to Sidney, the last day of March, 1578 - *Pears*, 140. However, in truth, he seemed to be more interested in the war with Muscovy and in the Polish intervention in Moldavia.

⁷⁵ However, he commented on Bathory's campaign in Livonia - [Sir Philip Sidney], *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella* (London, 1591), 13.

⁷⁶ Fulke Greville, 'Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney' in *The prose works of Fulke Greville*, Lord Brooke, ed. John Gouws (Oxford, 1986), 49-50.

the nobility, because despite his respect for Bathory, he found the king's aspirations dangerous.⁷⁷ However, while this account indicates Sidney's support for mixed government, it does not testify to his approval of elective monarchy, but rather it reinforces the impression conveyed by his correspondence with Languet that Sidney's main concern was the limitations of royal power.

The reader may be sure of the veracity of this anecdote because of Greville's own – dramatically different – views on Poland-Lithuania. The *Rzeczpospolita* was mentioned several times in his poem of political philosophy, *Treatise of Monarchy*, completed by 1610, where tellingly, the same character of the country's political system praised by Sidney was heavily criticised by Greville. A staunch supporter of hereditary monarchy, Greville wondered at the strong position of the Polish nobility – since they owed their elevation to the king, how could they surpass him and be in charge of his appointment? This situation of “creatures overgrowing their creator” was unnatural.⁷⁸ Greville disliked both aristocratic and popular government believing them to result in an oligarchic tyranny.⁷⁹ With all its flaws, the only acceptable government was hereditary monarchy, contrasted with countries like Poland-Lithuania, where “nothing left Kings, but a name to boast”.⁸⁰ The destructive effect of the strong position of the Polish nobility transcended the political system and was also felt within society, where noblemen showed no respect for their inferiors, whom they could even murder and escape punishment by paying a small amount of money. Greville deplored this dog-like treatment of the peasantry and reminded his readers bitterly that all men were made in the image of God.⁸¹ Unfortunately for the Poles, their God was Catholic and this gave Greville another reason for criticism. Interestingly, however, although he condemned Rome for the corruption of Christian doctrine, his objection towards Poland-Lithuania and other Catholic countries was essentially political.⁸² Important as the church was in its service to the

⁷⁷ Ibid. In his good opinion of Bathory Sidney was possibly influenced by Languet, who joined in a general praise of the king's wisdom and moderation and whom he found the only king in Christendom possessing some goodness – Languet to Sidney, the last day of March, 1578 – *Pears*, 142.

⁷⁸ Fulke Greville, 'A Treatise of Monarchy' in idem, *The Remains, being poems of monarchy and religion*, ed. G.A. Wilkes (Oxford, 1965), 121.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 196.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 121.

⁸¹ Ibid., 120.

⁸² Ibid., 87, 88.

government, Greville insisted that spiritual and temporal powers should be kept separated and used Catholic countries as a warning illustration against the mitre encroaching on the sceptre.⁸³

Though critical, Greville's comments were yet another proof that Poland-Lithuania's reputation as a mixed monarchy was well established by the beginning of the seventeenth century. The writings of the popular Polish political writers such as Goślicki, Modrzewski and Orzechowski proved to be instrumental in that process, which was already advanced by the writings of Kromer, and was further accelerated through treatises by Brutus, Bodin and Barclay. The evidence shows that in general Britons accepted Poland-Lithuania as a mixed, limited government. However, when looked at more closely, the reality turned out to be more complex. To begin with, these Polish authors presented an idealised image of Poland, which others subsequently projected – as it seems, uncritically – onto Poland-Lithuania and, for that matter, reasons for identifying the system as ideal differed greatly, as indicated by the cases of Goślicki and Brutus. Furthermore, the extent of knowledge and understanding of the Polish constitution remained problematic. It was not only the matter of accuracy and fullness of information, but also the transition of deceptively similar categories, for example, “*monarchia mixta*”. The mixed government of Poland-Lithuania was not a familiar king/queen-in-parliament formula, but rather an example of tripartite sovereignty.⁸⁴ Also, Britons were presented with different visions of the balance between *monarchia mixta*'s components. Whereas Goślicki emphasised the position of the aristocratic element, it was the system's “democratic” component that was considered crucial by Brutus. Indeed, defining those components was difficult since the *szlachta* had no equivalent of the Scottish or English classes of nobility/gentry, either legally or socially.⁸⁵ Finally,

⁸³ Ibid., 87, 241n.

⁸⁴ Gromelski, ‘The Commonwealth and *Monarchia Mixta* in Polish and English Political Thought in the Later Sixteenth Century’ in Unger, *Britain and Poland-Lithuania*, 178. See also Janusz Ekes, *Trójpodział władzy i zgoda wszystkich: naczelné zasady "ustroju mieszanego" w staropolskiej refleksji politycznej* (Siedlce, 2001); Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska, ‘Rzeczpospolita jako „monarchia mixta” – dylematy władzy i wolności’ in Andrzej Bartnicki et al. (eds), *Kultura - polityka - dyplomacja* (Warszawa, 1990), 264-279.

⁸⁵ In contrast to Britain, where representatives of boroughs enjoyed political rights, in the *Rzeczpospolita* only members of the *szlachta* were considered citizens. The *szlachta* were more numerous than the titled nobility in Western Europe, but unlike the gentry, not only had they a special social status, but also legal privileges; by law, no titles differentiated the *szlachta* all noblemen were equal, but in practice they differed greatly in their wealth, position and influence.

there was a discrepancy of appreciating the system's particular limitations. The Poles considered election a crucial means of curbing their king and one of their fundamental rights. In comparison, Britons separated election from limited government, as suggested by Sidney's comments on Poland-Lithuania. However, other proponents of hereditary monarchy supported the principle of election and used it in their arguments. For this became clear that despite (and maybe because of) those ambiguities by the end of the sixteenth century Britons felt comfortable enough to use the Polish-Lithuanian constitution as an example in their own debates.

The question of succession

Britons were divided not only in their attitudes to the principle and practice of election. Though generally the *Rzeczpospolita* was identified as an elective kingdom, because of the well-established practice of choosing rulers within the same dynasty, some were prone to consider Poland-Lithuania as an almost hereditary kingdom. Consequently, the Polish-Lithuanian exemplar – conveniently open to interpretation – featured significantly in the heated debate around the potential succession to the throne of England after the anticipated death of Queen Elizabeth. The official ban in 1571 and its reaffirmation in 1581 made the discussion of the succession a treasonable offence, but did not prevent heated debate taking place.⁸⁶ It was reignited by the appearance of *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England* (Amsterdam, 1594). The treatise arrived in Britain in 1595, where it created a storm, in particular at the Scottish court. Indeed, James VI was exasperated and highly offended by the book that

For a detailed analysis see – Jerzy Topolski, 'The Structure of the Polish Nobility in the 16th and the 17th Century: Some New Findings and Reflections', *Historical Social Research*, 10 (1985), 60-70; Andrzej Kamiński, 'The Szlachta of the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth and Their Government' in Ivo Banac and Paul Bushkovitch (eds), *The nobility in Russia and Eastern Europe* (New Haven, 1983), 17-45; Robert I. Frost, 'The Nobility of Poland-Lithuania, 1569-1795' in H.M. Scott (ed.), *The European nobilities in the 17th and 18th centuries* (London & New York, 1995), II, 183-222; Idem, 'Union as Process: Confused Sovereignty and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1385-1796' in Andrew Mackillop and Micheál Ó Siochrú (eds), *Forging the state: European state formation and the Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707* (Dundee, 2009), esp. 83-89 for the effects of the union on the Lithuanian and Ruthenian nobilities; Tomasz W. Gromelski, 'The Greater and Lesser Nobility in Early Modern Europe: Poland-Lithuania and England and Wales in the Sixteenth Century', *EUI Working Paper MWP 2010/25*, 1-15.

⁸⁶ *Select statutes and other constitutional documents illustrative of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I*, ed. G.W. Prothero (4th ed. Oxford, 1913), 59ff, 77ff.

challenged his hereditary right to the throne of England and yet, reportedly, unable to separate himself from the book.⁸⁷ Signed by R. Doleman, the book's true author was probably Robert Parsons, one of the leaders of the Catholics in England and also an influential figure at the Spanish court. Previously a supporter of James VI's succession, Parsons had a change of heart when it became evident that the king of Scotland would not convert to Catholicism. Committed above all to the cause of religion, Parsons shifted his support from James VI and looked for another – indisputably Catholic – candidate. Thus, the aim of the *Conference* was, firstly, to argue that propinquity of blood could be disregarded as the rightful law of succession, and secondly, to pave the way for the succession of the Spanish infanta. In order to achieve this, Parsons dedicated the first part of the *Conference* to theoretical considerations, where the elective nature of all governments was emphasized, and then proceeded to the claims of heredity, where he asserted the infanta's superior right to the throne of England. Numerous examples were called upon to persuade the reader of the legitimacy of waiving the laws of succession, among them that of Poland-Lithuania.

According to Parsons, government was God's creation. However, the multitude and the diversity of forms of government that have existed proved that no particular political regime was of God's provenance – nature reveals universal, constant rules whereas different nations have adopted various types of government. Moreover, history showed that the same nation could change its political system over time. Thus, Parsons concluded, where God's approbation ended, human invention started.⁸⁸ The transformation of Polonia from a dukedom into a kingdom illustrated the case.⁸⁹ Similarly, various ways of choosing and limiting monarchs indicated the multiplicity of options available to and chosen by people. Poland-Lithuania and England differed in that respect, for Polish kings were severely limited in their actions by the officers of the state and could not pass the crown to their children, unless the latter were elected.⁹⁰ In England, on the contrary, the king's power was more absolute and the next in

⁸⁷ Susan Doran, 'James VI and the English succession' in Ralph Houlbrooke (ed.), *James VI and I. Ideas, Authority, and Government* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 29; Peter Lake, 'The King (the Queen) and the Jesuit: James Stuart's "True Law of Free Monarchies"' in *Context/s', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Series 6, 14 (2004), 246.

⁸⁸ *Conference*, 9, 123.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

blood ordinarily succeeded.⁹¹ Parsons did not evoke the Polish-Lithuanian government to promote election over hereditary succession (although he clearly preferred the latter), but to argue that no form of government was set in stone – each and every one had been invented by the people and, if required, could be altered by them.

Crucially, although governments might differ in the extent of their power, in one sense they were all limited: they were circumscribed by the common good, the very purpose of all commonwealths' existence. The common good was safeguarded by the contract between the ruler and his subjects, made through the coronation oath. Consequently, were the ruler to abuse the power transferred to him by the people, were he to act against the law and the commonweal, he could – and even should – be deposed. Parsons illustrated his argument with a detailed description of the coronation procedure of Poland-Lithuania, based on writings by Gwagnin, Orzechowski and Bodin. He emphasized the oath's reciprocal character; the king was made aware of his obligations towards the people and accepted their conditional obedience, which he sealed with the promise. In turn, all the counsellors, nobility and people present expressed their assent (or, possibly, its lack) to the prince's rule.⁹² Furthermore, the *Rzeczpospolita* was cited as the first contemporary case in the part addressing the matter of the kings' dethroning. The deposition of Henry Valois by act of parliament was explained by the king's actions against the commonwealth, that is, his unlicensed departure from the country and failure to return at the time set by the parliament.⁹³

Parsons' explosive tract generated many polemical responses. While some, such as Peter Wentworth in *A discourse containing the authors opinion of the true and lawfull successor to her Majestie* and John Harrington in *A tract on the succession to the crowne* focused primarily on the case of England and did not trouble

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 92-93. NB, Parsons, although a supporter of a strong position of the clergy, diminished their role in the coronation; bishops anointed kings and received their oaths, but it was the coronation oath itself and the people's approval, not the anointment, which was crucial for establishing the contract between the prince and his subjects and the subsequent transfer of power.

⁹³ Ibid., 54-55. Henry Valois was elected king of Poland-Lithuania in 1573. Crowned in February 1574, he fled the country in June 1574 upon receiving the news about the death of his brother, Charles IX, king of France. Prompted numerous times to return to the *Rzeczpospolita*, he was finally conditioned to return by the final deadline set on May 1575; otherwise he was to lose the throne. Henry Valois has never returned to Poland-Lithuania, but stayed in France, when he was crowned king in February 1575. Consequently, he was considered to have abdicated the throne of the *Rzeczpospolita*.

themselves with refuting foreign examples, others decided to scrutinize and challenge Parsons' historical evidence though in a significantly different context.⁹⁴

Sir John Hayward's *An Answer to the First Part of a Certain Conference Concerning Succession*, published not long since under the name of R. Dolman was entered for the press two weeks after the death of Queen Elizabeth.⁹⁵ There was no need to defend James VI's right to the throne of England as his succession, supported by the most influential man in England, Robert Cecil, was already secured. And in truth, Hayward's objective was not to discuss the succession, but to engage with Parsons' exposition of limited monarchy. As a protestant royalist in need of royal favour, Hayward applied his scholarly talents to undermine Parsons' argument and defend a hereditary, absolute monarchy with control over ecclesiastical as well as temporal affairs. This included the reinterpretation of the Polish-Lithuanian example. Using his historical expertise, Hayward reminded his readers that before the line of Jagiellon became extinct, the people of Polonia, although in possession of the right of election, accepted their kings by propinquity of blood.⁹⁶ Whereas Parsons contented himself with admitting his sympathy for a hereditary monarchy, with no disapproval of an elective government, Hayward severely criticised free election and correlated the unbroken line of succession with a country's standing. As long as the crown passed according to the propinquity of blood, Polonia was esteemed a sovereign monarchy but, through the election of Henry Valois and subsequent changes of monarchs, the Poles had exposed their state to danger and ruin.⁹⁷

Hayward pointed to the custom of electing the king within the same family to challenge Parsons' claim that the coronation oath was a standard convention of the kings of Polonia; he called the statement false and declared Henry Valois's coronation oath with the conditional obedience clause the first instance of such practice. He did not entirely undermine Parsons' credibility and acknowledged the account of the deposition of Henry Valois to be truthful. Moreover, he found the act itself true and just. But the praise hid a sting as Hayward blamed Parsons

⁹⁴ Wentworth's tract was published posthumously in 1598; Sir John Harington, *A tract on the succession to the crown, A.D. 1602*, ed. Clements R. Markham (London, 1880).

⁹⁵ John J. Manning, 'Hayward, Sir John' – ODNB (accessed 2 August 2012).

⁹⁶ John Hayward, *An answer to the first part of a certaine conference* (London, 1603), 17.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

for making a general rule out of one example and for claiming every deposition to be lawful. As to Poland-Lithuania, Hayward's understanding of this particular act of deposition did not warm him to the concept in general; he found the conditional obedience clause to be "irritant and the kingdom's government swaggering".⁹⁸ Hayward not only differed from Parsons in his opinion about Poland-Lithuania's system, but he also reconfigured the example it set to suit his own purpose. While the use of Poland-Lithuania's example was auxiliary in Parsons' argument, it lay more at the core of Hayward's. It is doubtful that by criticising Polish-Lithuanian government Hayward hoped to please his main intended reader, King James VI & I, as nothing suggests the king's particular interest in the *Rzeczpospolita*; curiously, Hayward's reflection on Polish political practices was much more limited in his subsequent works. However, it may be conjectured that he found Poland-Lithuania a very useful example of the type of government he targeted. If true, this would clearly testify to the strong perception of the *Rzeczpospolita* as a limited government.

Interestingly, the example of elective Poland-Lithuania was also used in a less immediate context, that is, to discuss the succession in Bohemia. This is well illustrated by *Bohemica iura defensa* (1620) by John Harrison, the former groom to Queen Elizabeth, who became engaged in the pamphlet war on behalf of the Elector Palatine, Frederic V and his wife, Elizabeth Stuart (King James's daughter).⁹⁹ Harrison had already published a history of Bohemia and a pamphlet entitled *A short relation of the departure of the high and mightie Prince Frederick King Elect of Bohemia* (1619) that discussed the situation in Bohemia. In another pamphlet, *The reasons which compelled the states of Bohemia to reject the Archiduke Ferdinand*, where Harrison argued at length about the elective nature of the Bohemian government, the *Rzeczpospolita* was mentioned only in a historical context. He reminded his readers that Vladislaus, "of the family of Princes of Lithuania, sonne of Casimir, king of Polonia" was chosen the king of Bohemia in 1471 over the late King George's sons, this election being one of the historical

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. [M3v].

⁹⁹ John Harrison, *Bohemica iura defensa* (n.p., 1620).

In 1619 Frederic V, Elector Palatine and the leader of the Protestant Union, was chosen the king of Bohemia by this country's estates, who rebelled against their Catholic king Ferdinand. In the ensuing conflict Ferdinand V (vainly) hoped to gain support of his father-in-law, James VI & I; unlike their monarch, Britons were actively sympathetic to Ferdinand V's cause.

proofs against the hereditary character of the Bohemian throne.¹⁰⁰ However, in the *Bohemica iura defensa*, which was published as a response to the anonymous Catholic tract condemning the deposition of Frederic of Styria,¹⁰¹ the example of Poland-Lithuania was applied far more extensively. As in his previous writings, Harrison argued that Bohemia was elective since time immemorial – much like Polonia, both kingdoms having “almost the self-same foundation”.¹⁰² The continued succession of blood did not preclude the government from being elective as it was evident in the example of the ruling king of the *Rzeczpospolita* – a Swede and yet elected to the Polish throne as a descendant of the Jagiellon dynasty. The conviction that “[the Crowne of Polonia] without any contradiction [is] plainly and most freely elective, no man ever denied” was further supported by the authority of Kromer. In addition, the argument was strengthened through a comparative analysis of royal marriages and the succession of women. Harrison noted that Mary and Hedwig, the daughters of Louis, King of Hungary and Polonia, married respectively Sigismund, the Emperor and the King of Bohemia, and Jagiełło, Prince of Lithuania and King of Poland. Upon their wives’ deaths both men remained in their offices despite the fact that neither of them belonged to the ruling dynasty; they could not therefore lay claim to the throne by blood. This stood in contrast with England, where after the death of Queen Mary, the crown was passed onto her sister, Elizabeth, instead of Mary’s husband, Philip.¹⁰³

Harrison’s employment of Poland-Lithuania to support his case was dual. Firstly, he likened Bohemia to the *Rzeczpospolita* and argued that since they shared their origin, the contemporary practices of Bohemia reflected those of Poland-Lithuania. Secondly, he treated the *Rzeczpospolita* as a model elective monarchy, and as an example to others. How could anybody reject the free election of the

¹⁰⁰ John Harrison, *The reasons which compelled the states of Bohemia to reject the Archiduke Ferdinand &c. & inforced them to elect a new king* (London, 1619), 5. This historical example was popular in the debate on Bohemia and can be found in other pamphlets, for instance, *Bohemiae regnum electiuum* (London, 1620), 28.

¹⁰¹ Alfred Thomas, *The blessed shore. England and Bohemia from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (New York, 2007), 185. Both Harrison and the author of *Bohemiae regnum* polemic with the Informer/the Informator, however, I was unable to determine the title and the author of the pamphlet they referred to.

¹⁰² Harrison, *Bohemica iura defensa*, 14.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 36.

Bohemians when they follow the example of the most free and elective monarchy?

A different aspect of the elective Polish-Lithuanian monarchy was explored in the anonymous pamphlet *A cleare demonstration, that Ferdinand is by his owne demerits fallen from the kingdome of Bohemia, and the incorporate provinces* (1619). Various reasons were provided in order to defend the actions of the Bohemian states against Ferdinand, among them the conditional mode of the oath. Having established that for many centuries Bohemia had “an absolute free election of their king and lord”, the author turned to argue the subjects’ right to disobedience towards their elective and conditional kings, who had broken their royal oaths.¹⁰⁴ Polish historical precedents were invoked to support this argument. The reader was reminded about the oath of Stephan Batory that “the inhabitants of the kingdom shall not be bound to perform to [him] any obedience if [he] shall break [his] oath in any thing”. Moreover, the author recalled the warning issued by the Chancellor Jan Zamoyski towards Bathory’s successor, King Sigismund III, that the king shall not be surprised if the States renounce their obedience upon the king failing to keep his side of the agreement.¹⁰⁵

This anonymous pamphlet was supposedly written by “a noble-man of Polonia”. Most assuredly that was not the case, for it would be improbable for a native to rely on the work of David Chytraeus instead of one of the Polish historians. Rather, it may be supposed that this appropriation served rhetorical purposes and it suggests that the Poles were seen as quintessentially elective-minded and as experts on the subject of limited monarchy.

The situation in Bohemia induced Britons to inspect their country’s politics, as illustrated by writings of Thomas Scott. A St Andrews and Cambridge graduate, Scott became immensely active in the debate about the king’s foreign policy, which gained in strength after 1618 and was placated only in 1623. This was the period “swarming with pamphlets more dangerous than mortall poysons”, when “the very name of Spain caused people to snarl and murmur”.¹⁰⁶ Wholeheartedly committed to the cause of opposing Spain, Scott launched his career with *Vox*

¹⁰⁴ *A cleare demonstration, that Ferdinand is by his owne demerits fallen from the kingdome of Bohemia, and the incorporate provinces. Written by a noble-man of Polonia* (Dort., 1619), 4.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 16, 19.

¹⁰⁶ Peltonen, *Classical humanism*, 230.

populi (1620). Allegedly a report addressed to the council of states of Spain by Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador to England, who was proudly describing his successes in destabilizing the English government and his plans to create a universal Catholic monarchy, the pamphlet was taken for a genuine report and caused uproar.¹⁰⁷ To avoid the ensuing persecution, Scott fled to the Netherlands, where he continued his career as a prolific and influential pamphleteer. We might have ignored his writings, where Poland-Lithuania features only marginally, were it not for his translation of Trajano Boccalini's *Ragguagli di Parnaso* (1622). This two-volume satire was widely circulated in Europe.¹⁰⁸ It was written by a vigorous opponent of Spanish domination, which explains what may have attracted Scott to this work.

Scott translated only a small part of the *Ragguagli*. The choice seemed to be mainly dictated by the propagandist purpose as the selected fragments focused on the Spanish monarchy. The aim of the treatise was to discuss the government of the world's greatest monarchies. When it came to the monarchy of Poland, the regret of all European princes was expressed for the insufficient punishment of the seditious noblemen (a clear reference to the *rokosz* of 1606-1608) that would have deterred others from following in their footsteps.¹⁰⁹ This charge was answered by the persona of King Sigismund, who explained that "actions commodious in a hereditary state would have been prejudicial in his elective kingdom". As his kingdom was a gift from the nobility, in whose power it was to elect a new king, it was advisable to avoid their disappointment as it might result in the senators recalling their liberality. The assurance of the nobility's love and favour was recommended to King Sigismund in particular, since he was the first king of this dynasty in Poland-Lithuania, where the nobility tended to use their right to elect a new king of the royal blood, unless discouraged by the king's conduct.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Sean Kelsey, 'Scott, Thomas' - ODNB (accessed 2 August 2012).

¹⁰⁸ Both volumes were published in Venice in 1612 and 1613 respectively.

¹⁰⁹ In 1606 the group of *szlachta* (led by Mikołaj Zebrzydowski) raised arms against King Sigismund III, whom they accused of attempts to introduce absolutism, over-favouring the Jesuits and unjust disposition of offices. The *rokosz* successfully stopped the king from strengthening his position.

¹¹⁰ [Thomas Scott], *Newes from Mount Pernassus* (London, 1622), 63-64.

However, what seemed to attract Scott was not the elective nature of the monarchy itself, but rather the king's dependence on the Senate.¹¹¹ It was recalled that the Poles' hatred of servitude makes the king – as in all elective monarchies – most vigilant in “matters of state”, but, tellingly, it was done so the king “least seemeth either to see or know anything”.¹¹² The limited ability of kings to decide in matters of state was presumably attractive to Scott, who, disappointed with King James VI & I's pro-Spanish policy, advocated that parliament's role in shaping foreign policy be greatly enhanced.¹¹³ This interpretation appears to be additionally supported by the fact that other original “advertisements” touching Poland-Lithuania's government (incidentally, discussing noblemen's corruption) were not translated. It was not the only instance of Scott's tampering with the translation. Understandably, Poland-Lithuania's Catholicism and alliance with the Habsburgs made it rather inconvenient for the anti-Spanish Protestant pamphleteer.¹¹⁴ Both “Protestant” and “Catholic” meant to Scott more than a religious denomination; they signified patriotism on the one hand and the lack of it on the other.¹¹⁵ It is then unsurprising that Boccalini's mention of “the seditious heresies which had crept amongst the Poles” – a reference to the advance of Protestantism in Poland-Lithuania – was bluntly cut out by Scott.¹¹⁶

Though there is no doubt that Scott's main purpose in turning to the *Ragguagli* was to tarnish Spain, he appeared also to be using it to express his frustration with the workings of the political system in his country. In contrast, the relationship between the king and the nobility in Poland-Lithuania seemed to appeal to Scott and “King Sigismund's” compliance with the senate not only justifiable, but also recommendable.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ NB, the senate and the nobility of the state are used interchangeably in the text.

¹¹² [Scott], *Newes*, 64.

¹¹³ Thomas Cogswell, *The blessed revolution: English politics and the coming of war, 1621-1624* (Cambridge, 1989), 285-286. Though the parliament's approval was necessary for obtaining the money financing foreign policy, the latter remained one of the royal prerogatives. However, this arrangement has been increasingly contested by the parliament, who was particularly critical of the king at the session of 1621 with regards to his plans of Prince Charles's marriage to the Spanish infanta.

¹¹⁴ However, Scott described Poland-Lithuania as a victim of Spanish machinations rather than their co-manufacturer – [Thomas Scott], *The Belgick souldier warre was a blessing* (n.p., 1624), f. Cr.

¹¹⁵ See Scott's *The interpreter wherein three principall termes of state much mistaken by the vulgar are clearly unfolded* (n.p., 1622).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Scott, *Newes*, 31, Trajano Boccalini, *I Ragguagli di Parnasso or Advertisements from Parnassus (...)* translated by Henry Earl of Monmouth (London, 1657), 339.

¹¹⁷ Scott, *Newes*, 64.

Disputed sovereignty

As this makes clear, various aspects of the constitution of Poland-Lithuania featured in political debates in early seventeenth-century Britain. It might be expected that, since the issues of popular sovereignty, contract and disobedience were so strongly associated with the Polish political system, the example of the *Rzeczpospolita* would become particularly popular in Britain during the mid-century civil wars. It should be even more likely seeing that earlier texts, which had discussed Poland-Lithuania's government in positive terms, were (re)published at this time of constitutional crisis. For example, Parsons' *Conference* was resurrected (ironically, now by Protestants) and abbreviated versions were published in 1648 under the title *Severall speeches delivered at a conference concerning the power of Parliament* and in 1655 as *A treatise concerning the broken succession of the crown of England*. In turn, *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* was translated into English and published twice in 1648.¹¹⁸ Consequently, Parsons' and Brutus's affirmative views of Poland-Lithuania reappeared in circulation. Does this mean that the political order of the *Rzeczpospolita* was found to be inspiring? As we will see, the situation was far from straightforward.

An estimation of the level of support for particular models of government must be approached with caution, due, in part, to a high number of pamphlets and broadsheets which flooded the market during the 1640s and 1650s. However, it appears that in the 1640s Poland-Lithuania was a frequent, though not immediate, point of reference for supporters of limited government in search of encouragement. On the other hand, the kingdom's government was reviewed – not always critically – by defenders of royal authority. This ambiguity in the use of the Polish-Lithuanian exemplar is well illustrated by the case of Henry Parker. Paradoxically, this lawyer, one of the most influential exponents of parliament's position, made no use of Poland-Lithuania at all. There is no reference to the *Rzeczpospolita* in the pamphlet *Observations upon some of his Majesties Late Answers and Expresses* (July 1642), which established Parker's reputation as a major figure on the public stage, nor in any of his subsequent publications.¹¹⁹ Nonetheless,

¹¹⁸ *Vindiciae contra tyrannos, a defence of liberty against tyrants (...) being a treatise written in Latin and French by Junius Brutus, and translated out of both into English* (London, 1648) – cf. Wing/L414 and Wing/L415.

¹¹⁹ Michael Mendle, 'Parker, Henry' – ODNB (accessed 10 September 2012).

many of his opponents (most intriguingly Robert Filmer) decided to pursue the subject of the Polish-Lithuanian constitution.

Among them was William Ball, who in *A caveat for subjects, moderating the Observer* (1642) refuted Parker's chief proposition that power was originally inherent in the people.¹²⁰ In contrast, Ball saw power as God's gift to nature, and stated that the power was in people only if they were absolutely free to choose their own government, like the Jews before they established their monarchy. On the other hand, in established monarchies power – limited in various ways – was inherent in the prince. Importantly, however, such limitations came not from the people, but from the self-restricting king, who out of grace granted his subjects privileges and immunities.¹²¹ Ball agreed that royal limitations in elective monarchies – of which Poland-Lithuania was his chief example – were more severe than in hereditary monarchies, yet in neither case did sovereignty belong to the people. Although able to set down the conditions of their submission, people in elective monarchies could not claim more liberty than had originally been agreed on; they could not act as they pleased with no regard for the kingdom's constitutions.¹²² These were characteristically royalist assertions. Yet the treatise's objective was not to defend the king's power but, as careful reading reveals, to protect the political order set by the fundamental laws of England.

Ball restated this message another pamphlets, *Tractatus de jure regnandi et rege* (1645), where he discussed the boundaries of sovereignty belonging to the king and the parliament.¹²³ In response to those believing the king's prerogative power to be vast, unknown and thus, unlimited, and others imagining the parliament's power to be absolute and boundless, he considered both sides incorrect. Once more Ball pondered the origin and nature of sovereignty, and reiterated that all power came from God, but in addition he discussed how it was maintained by different agents, i.e. the king, the parliament and the people, in

¹²⁰ William Ball, *A caveat for subjects, moderating the Observer* (London, 1642), 2, (the Observer being Parker's moniker). The text was published anonymously under the alternative title 'Seasonable animadversions upon the late Observer, and his seaven Anti-monarchicall assertions' with other texts as *An appendix to the late answer printed by His Majesties command* (London, 1642).

¹²¹ Ball, *A caveat*, 3.

¹²² Ball was obviously familiar with the Polish practice of *pacta conventa* sworn by the king as a part of his coronation oath, though he does not use the name and calls it conditional inaugurations – *ibid.*, 4.

¹²³ Ball's understanding of sovereignty was unclear and his vocabulary variably suggested the division of sovereignty and the multi-agents execution of undivided sovereignty.

particular political regimes. Although he restated that kings had their *jus regnandi* from God, not from the people, it would be a mistake to assume that Ball aimed to diminish the role of the people. On the contrary, his main purpose was to argue that the people's well-being was the chief object of both the king and the parliament, and it gave life to their actions.¹²⁴ It was the people to whom *jus regni* belonged and who could lawfully rise up if their liberties were endangered. Ball did not doubt that such a threat might also come from the parliament, a designated representative body of the kingdom, and his *Constitutio liberi populi* (1646) was expressly written to repudiate parliament's claim to absolute power, a claim brought to the fore by the issue of control over the army. In particular, the *Constitutio* was aimed at the views of a common lawyer and a self-professed zealous servant of the parliament, John Cook.¹²⁵ In the *Constitutio*, much more strongly than in his earlier writings, Ball emphasised the position of the people, whom he saw as being "the efficient, final cause, under God, of the parliament" and having the right and freedom to exert their fundamental power.¹²⁶ However, as before, he stressed the importance of the existing order. Consequently, the people could end this "lease of trust" with the parliament only if their liberties were violated. Similarly, he explained that the king's right to reign, although inherited by him, was subject to his performance and that the people could exercise their original power if the king failed to act to safeguard their welfare.¹²⁷

Little is known of Ball's career, but the evolution of his views can be easily seen as a reaction to changing circumstances, such as the one coming from the radicalisation of the army. Apparently, his main commitment was to the preservation of liberty, which could be secured by the proper balance of power. In Ball's own words:

Anathema to such, who desire to deprive a king of his just prerogative; anathema be to such, who desire to deprive the parliament of their just privilege, but anathema maranatha be to such who should in any way desire to deprive a free-born people of their just liberty or property.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹²⁵ John Cook, *The Vindication of the Professors and Profession of the Law* (London, 1646), n.p.

¹²⁶ William Ball, *Constitutio liberi populi* (London, 1646), 14-15.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

What may surprise in the context of the current discussion is Ball's use of the exemplar of Poland-Lithuania. Unexpectedly, he did not reach for the popular example of the Polish coronation oath to support his argument, unlike, for example, the anonymous author of *A survey of monarchie* (1644).¹²⁹ Neither did Ball evoke examples of the deposition of Polish kings in contrast to authors such as Thomas Beard and Eleutheris Philodemius, who discussed at length historical evidence of this practice.¹³⁰ Yet, Ball was obviously familiar with the Polish constitution and in the *Constitutio* he discussed in detail the king's authority (both his sole prerogatives and his powers over and shared with the nobility) to argue that power could be supreme in some areas, but not in others.¹³¹ However, in the pamphlet aiming to emphasise the rule of a free-born people Ball did not exploit the position of the Polish nobility, known for their freedom. Why then was Poland-Lithuania's case introduced? It may be presumed that Ball's use of Poland-Lithuania arose from his unconventional understanding of the kingdom's government. Tellingly, Ball classified both England and Poland-Lithuania as mixed governments with the king as the weakest part of the system. There was, however, a significant difference between the two polities. Whereas the former consisted of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, the latter was comprised of monarchy and aristocracy only.¹³² Clearly, Ball discarded the notion accepted by most contemporaries that the numerous *szlachta* was representing the people, thus constituting a democratic element of the Polish *monarchia mixta*. What seems to determine Ball's interpretation was the lack of burghers in the Polish parliament as he defined the English people as "the feoffees, the knights, citizens and burgesses".¹³³ Despite this difference and despite the fact that the king of Poland-Lithuania was elective, royal power in both countries was essentially the same because both kings received their *jus regnandi* from God, not from the people. Those who considered the "meerly elective" monarchs to be "shadows of the kings" could perceive this comparison with England as elevation of the

¹²⁹ The treatise informed that the coronation oath in Poland included, among others, a clause forbidding the king to impose any tax or tribute without the consent of the Estates - *A survey of monarchie* (London, 1644), 11.

¹³⁰ Thomas Beard, *The theatre of God's judgements* (London, 1642), 194-195, 202. Originally printed in 1597, it was republished in 1632, 1642 & 1648. Eleutherius Philodemius, *The armies vindication ... in reply to Mr William Sedgwick* (1649), 52.

¹³¹ Ball, *Constitutio*, 8.

¹³² William Ball, *Tractatus de jure regnandi et regni* (London, 1645), 4.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 5.

elected rulers.¹³⁴ However, on the other hand, it could equally have a sobering effect on those enlarging the position of English kings and remind them that hereditary kings – like their elective counterparts – were subject to limitations. This interpretation seems highly plausible in the light of what was said about Ball’s efforts to defend the existing order and the spheres of government.

The same had already been suggested in *A Caveat*, where Ball stated that the Polish aristocracy might choose the ruler, but they were not a sole efficient cause of his power, which was *jure constituto Corone*.¹³⁵ He likened the position of Polish kings elected by the nobility to that of Saul and David, who were chosen in part by the Jews’ consent and approbation, not noticing that this comparison could potentially destabilize his analysis. As mentioned earlier, Ball considered the Jews before the establishment of their monarchy an absolutely free people. If the Poles were like the Jews, it would follow that the power was originally inherent in them and it is they, not – as he argued elsewhere – the king, who imposed restrictions on themselves. A subsequent part of the text seems to confirm this reading. Yet, crucially, Ball appeared to suggest that the Poles – like the Jews – had to accept the consequences of their cession of power and had to respect concessions that had been agreed upon. Thus, he substantiated his main point that the legal frameworks of kingdoms – either elective or hereditary – were binding; without exception.

In passing, comments may be made on John Cook’s, Ball’s opponent’s, remarks on Poland-Lithuania. Those were scarce, but show an interesting change of perception in this judge and future prosecutor of Charles I. In the *Vindication* (1646) Cook rather casually quoted the opinion that there were only six properly called kings in Christendom of whom the Spanish and the French had too much power, the Polish and the Swedish too little (as some politicians claim), and the

¹³⁴ The notion of the superiority of the hereditary monarchy over an elective one was well spread and proud declarations that “our [i.e. English] king was not merely elective, but had a title to the Crowne by succession, and a just Hereditation [sic]”, unlike in “merely elective Poland, where kings’ admissions were conditional” were not rare. A similar sentiment was conveyed by expressions like “not truly, but painted kings” – Christopher Love, *Modest and clear vindication of the serious representation* (London, 1649), 47; H[enry] Ferne, *The resolving of conscience* (London, 1642), 22; James Stewart, *Jus populi vindicated* (London, 1669), 123, 385 respectively. However, the phrase “merely elective” was also often used in a neutral, non-derogative way, as testified by Botero and Prynne.

¹³⁵ NB, Ball misleadingly uses “the aristocracy” and “the nobility” interchangeably.

kings of England and Denmark with enough power to make people happy.¹³⁶ This opinion was repeated verbatim in his *Redintegratio amoris* (1647), with the addition of Poland-Lithuania – together with England – among mixed and coordinate governments.¹³⁷ But in his 1649 speech intended for the king's prosecution, Cook failed to mention any shortcomings of the Polish government. On the contrary, he classified Poland-Lithuania together with England as “a government politique and mixed, where the law keeps the beam between Sovereignty and Subjection and where [the law] is like a sweet smooth stream, running by the pleasant fields and meadows”.¹³⁸ It may be seriously doubted that Cook's revised opinion about the *Rzeczpospolita's* government sprang from his increased knowledge of the kingdom; otherwise, he would have likely used details of its historical experiences and political practices to support his case for regicide. However, Cook's shift strongly suggests how popular – though not necessarily well-informed – the association of Poland-Lithuania with mixed, limited government was.

This association was deemed strong – and troublesome – enough to provoke a reaction from the leading, if not the most representative, royalist ideologue of the period, Sir Robert Filmer,¹³⁹ in whose treatise, *The Anarchy of a limited or mixed monarchy*, the government of Poland-Lithuania received deftly manipulative treatment. *The Anarchy*, published only in 1648, although most likely completed by 1644, was a reply to one of the best-known works of parliamentary political theory – *Treatise of monarchy* by Philip Hunton (1643).¹⁴⁰ Yet, Hunton was not the only author at whom Filmer's trenchant criticism was levelled, the other being Henry Parker, the *Observer*. As mentioned earlier, there was not a word about Poland-Lithuania in Parker's *Observations* (and for that matter – neither in Hunton's *Treatise*). Nonetheless, Filmer dedicated several – expertly constructed – pages of his text to the *Rzeczpospolita's* government in order to refute Parker's position.

¹³⁶ Cook, *The Vindication*, 35.

¹³⁷ John Cook, *Redintegratio amoris* (London, 1647), 26.

¹³⁸ Idem, *King Charles, his case, or An Appeal* (London, 1649), 7. This tract is a version of Cook's intended speech for the prosecution, which was published after Charles I's execution – Barber, *Regicide and republicanism*, 125.

¹³⁹ James Daly, *Sir Robert Filmer and English political thought* (Toronto, Buffalo & London, 1979), 124.

¹⁴⁰ Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1991), xii.

Filmer liberally quotes a whole section from Parker only to tear it apart piece by piece. The cited passage centred on the superior jurisdiction of the parliament, representing the primary majesty of the whole community, over the princes.¹⁴¹ According to Parker, the present peaceful execution of this jurisdiction was preceded by turbulent power struggles and revolutionary-like efforts to reclaim the people's power from princes, which often led to civil unrest.¹⁴² Happily, Parker claimed, nowadays most countries found the peaceful order for public assemblies, whereby the people could assert their own power. In response, Filmer questioned Parker's interpretation of historical examples and chronology, and challenged him to name any contemporary country, where such order could be found. Interestingly, Filmer himself provided possible contenders. Poland-Lithuania, Denmark and Sweden were believed to have such limited and moderated governments, but in his view this was wholly unfounded. An ensuing appraisal of the Polish government, based exclusively on Bodin, Botero and D'Avity, served to demonstrate that Poland-Lithuania was not a kingdom with a community-led limited government.¹⁴³ Filmer attacked this idea from various directions and his argument can be distilled to four – inconsistent and even self-contradictory – propositions.

Firstly, Filmer claimed that it was not the community, but the nobility, which has the main say in the country. But who was the community? The exceptionally numerous *szlachta*, or more specifically their regional representatives in the lower house of the bi-cameral parliament, was nearly universally considered "the people" by those who classified Poland-Lithuania as a *monarchia mixta*, while the senators, that is the members of the higher house, were considered the aristocratic element. Filmer went against this widely accepted interpretation and he undermined the position of the nobility as the representatives of the people to a greater extent by repeating Botero's opinion that the Polish government

¹⁴¹ Cf. *Anarchy*, 32-34; Parker, *Observations*, 14-15.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ In passing, it may be observed that the discussion of Denmark is far more limited, whereas Sweden received an only cursory glance – *Anarchy*, 38-39.

NB, Filmer did not name D'Avity, whom he referred to as "the French author of the book called *The Estates of the World*". This was originally identified by Teresa Bałuk as F. de Belleforest's *La Cosmographie universelle de tout le monde* (Paris, 1575) – *idem*, 'Sir Robert Filmer's Description of the Polish Constitutional System in the Seventeenth Century', *SEER*, 62/2 (Apr., 1984), 241-249. The author was accurately named by Sommerville in his critical edition of Filmer's writings – *op. cit.*, 163.

represented aristocracy rather than a kingdom.¹⁴⁴ Botero explained his classification by the strong position of the nobility, but this seemed to be affected also by his misleading equation of the nobility with the aristocracy.¹⁴⁵ In his turn Filmer, both implicitly and explicitly, identified the nobility with the narrow group of senators, thus discrediting the idea of the nobility as representing the community.¹⁴⁶ However, while Botero's was most likely an honest, translation-linked mistake, there are grounds to suspect Filmer of deliberate manipulation. As a keen reader of D'Avity, Filmer could not misunderstand the structure, function and *modus operandi* of Polish institutions, particularly the parliament, whose development, format and procedures D'Avity examined in detail. Yet, it is evident that Filmer's choice of inserted citations was selective and designed to confuse his reader rather than to present him with a faithful, or at least a clear, description of the organization and the position of the Polish nobility.

On the other hand, Filmer equated the community with the commons, who, as he had already demonstrated, were not only excluded from the political system, but who "are vassals either to the king or the nobility and enjoy as little freedom or liberty as any nation".¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, he continued to distort D'Avity's description and rejected the idea that the representatives of the provinces stood for the commons (i.e. presumably the community) and presented them as agents and officers of the nobility instead.¹⁴⁸ Ironically, Filmer's earlier creative reinterpretation of the concepts of "nobility" and "community" made this potentially truthful statement completely false. Filmer's verbal acrobatics resulted in the conclusion that this was not the community, but the nobility – a narrow group, deceptively camouflaged as the broad community or its representation – who held the power to limit the king.

¹⁴⁴ *Anarchy*, 35.

¹⁴⁵ *Botero*, 81. See also Note 85.

¹⁴⁶ *Anarchy*, 37-38.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Due to Filmer's manipulation of the sources, it would be difficult for his reader to understand the position of the "earthly messengers or nuntios", that is, the nobility's regional representatives, who constituted the lower house of the parliament. Although Filmer repeated D'Avity's correct description that "those deputies make one body called the order of knights", he presented their origin and role in a very unclear way. Moreover, Filmer distorted D'Avity's description of the conflict between the lower house, representing the masses of the nobility, and the senate, and placed this conflict between the nobility and their deputies instead – *Anarchy*, 36-37. This could not be assigned to Filmer's limited ability to read with understanding; most likely, this was done purposefully to present the nobility as divided and antagonistic, and to weaken the notion of their sanctioned representation.

However, having established (with the help of relevant passages from D'Avity) the supreme power of the nobility that reduced the king's sovereignty to a slavish royalty, Filmer disrupted his argument with a surprising volte-face. Namely, he emphasised the nobility's eagerness to please their king and reminded his readers that, despite the freedom of election, the Poles had never rejected the king's successor and only on one occasion had they chosen their king from a different dynasty.¹⁴⁹ He saw the election as a formality rather than a sign of real power and claimed that the nobility made a show of their strong position. Thus, Filmer implied in his second proposition, the power of the *Rzeczpospolita's* king was not in fact limited. If, however, the nobility bound the king - and Filmer generously conceded such a possibility - one had to conclude that Poland-Lithuania was a commonweal[th] rather than a monarchy. Hence, Filmer seemed to propose, this discredited kingdom "with but the shadow of a sovereign" should be banned from the test set by him altogether.

In his fourth proposition, Filmer discussed the origin of the nobility's power. His earlier refusal to recognise the *szlachta* as representing the community was now coupled with his negation of the popular legitimization of the nobility's power. This had not come from any original contract or convention; worse, it had resulted from the interposition of the popish clergy, by whose advice good and religious princes of Poland had given some of their royal privileges to their subjects.¹⁵⁰ Yet, it was insufficient to evoke the example of this deplorable Polish historical development, thus Filmer turned this into a general observation and by associating the parliaments' growth with popery (a cardinal sin in England and Scotland) and, in consequence, by tainting the concept, he disarmed the parliamentarians' rhetorical weapons.

The idea of Poland-Lithuania as a limited monarchy was indeed widely broadcast. Not least as it was used in the officially commissioned defence of the

¹⁴⁹ Even this single case - the election of Waclaw II, king of Bohemia - is presented as disputable, for it had followed the deposition of Wladyslaw I, who was afterwards restored by the Poles. Conveniently, Filmer, unlike his sources, failed to mention the election of Louis of Hungary or Henry Valois, which could undermine his argument. Moreover, he explained the practice of choosing rulers from the same dynasty by the danger of sedition, contrary to D'Avity, who ascribed the election of royal children to the honour and respect felt towards their fathers. Cf. *Anarchy*, 37-38; *D'Avity*, 642.

¹⁵⁰ Tellingly, Filmer commented on the process as "kings being merely cheated of some of their royalties" - *Anarchy*, 38.

sovereignty of parliament written by William Prynne.¹⁵¹ Prynne was not a novice user of the Polish-Lithuanian example, which – in the role of both a victim and an oppressor – he often invoked in his anti-Jesuit writings. However, *The sovereign power of the parliaments and kingdomes* (1643) was unique for its extensive use of a specifically political argument. Prynne, drawing on an abundance of historical and legal examples, aimed to demonstrate that parliaments, senates, diets, general assemblies and other representative bodies were the supreme sovereign powers, superior to emperors, kings and princes.¹⁵² The latter were created by their kingdoms and peoples for the people's good, and had therefore to act within the limitations of law; if they violated the law, they could be opposed (and even deposed) by the people. These were standard principles generally appealed to by supporters of limited government, and Prynne's treatise added nothing new to this strand of political theory.¹⁵³ However, its very ordinariness and, more specifically, Prynne's firm location of Poland-Lithuania within it, are illuminating. Namely, it showed the *Rzeczpospolita* as an archetypal limited government or, at least, a willingness to appropriate the country as such, despite those who disputed the claim.

Prynne used the same sources as Filmer to a great extent. While Filmer referred to Botero and D'Avity, Prynne turned directly to the authority those historians drew on – Marcin Kromer. Prynne opened his reflection on the *Rzeczpospolita* with an extensive citation from Kromer, who himself compared Poland to Venice and ancient Sparta. However, unlike Filmer's, Prynne's reader was not at risk of mistaking the Polish nobility for aristocracy or senators, as the faithfully cited excerpt from Kromer's *Polonia* clearly distinguished between them.¹⁵⁴ Though Prynne made small editorial comments, for example, to point out similarities between the parliaments of England and Poland-Lithuania, unlike Filmer he did not meddle with his source. Then again, Prynne's source reinforced his argument. As discussed in the previous chapter, Kromer presented Poland as a *monarchia mixta* ruled by law. A similarly idealised image of the kingdom was presented by Brutus and Goślicki, to whom, as it happens, Prynne also referred.

¹⁵¹ William M. Lamont, *Marginal Prynne, 1600-1669* (London, 1963), 85.

¹⁵² William Prynne, *The sovereign power of parliaments and kingdomes divided into foure parts* (London, 1643), 152.

¹⁵³ William Lamont, 'Prynne, William' – ODNB (accessed 17 December 2012).

¹⁵⁴ Prynne, *The sovereign power*, 85-86.

The list of restrictions on and obligations of the king, and also the institutional solutions (e.g. the existence of the permanent body of counsellors to guide the king and prevent him from slipping into tyranny) played well with Prynne's ideas and his work's objectives. The coronation oath of King Stephen, which Prynne cited in full, was presented as unanswerable evidence of the States of the *Rzeczpospolita's* absolute sovereignty over their king.¹⁵⁵ Their supremacy manifested itself also through numerous acts of opposition towards and deposition of kings. Supported also by works of other European historians, including Münster and Chytreus, Prynne described cases of dethroned Polish rulers such as Mieszko, Boleslaus and, more recently, Henry Valois. Nor did Prynne miss the chance to give an account of the nobility's armed resistance against King Stephen for violating their privileges.¹⁵⁶ It may be added that in the later discussion regarding the execution of King Charles I, Prynne, the opponent of this idea, emphasised different aspect of the Polish kings' depositions and pointed out that they were never judicially condemned to death.¹⁵⁷ However, in 1643 his focus was on the post factum justification of the actions of the English parliament and the presentation of the parliament's rights and powers. The constitution of Poland-Lithuania, Prynne believed, supported his argument greatly. Importantly, as testified by the approval of his pamphlet, it was also what the English parliament itself was convinced of.

Finally, Samuel Rutherford also turned to the Polish-Lithuanian example to justify armed resistance against King Charles. In *Lex, Rex* (1644), a detailed response to James Maxwell's, *Sacro-sancta regum majestas* (1644), Rutherford pointed to a covenant between the people and the king as the foundation of government. The coronation oath of Polish rulers was to him evidence of such a pact, which both sides were bound to keep.¹⁵⁸ Kings subverting law and acting against their subjects were tyrants, who could be justly opposed, and the examples of Henry Valois and Sigismund (as the king of Sweden) followed

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ [William Prynne], *Part of the famous speech of William Prynne esq, Decemb. 48, touching K. Charles I* ([London], 1648), 8. Ironically, Prynne's earlier references to Poland-Lithuania's depositions were used to counter his later position on the king's deposition in the satirical pamphlet *Prynne against Prinn* (London, 1649), which was probably written by regicide William Purefoy.

¹⁵⁸ Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex* (London, 1644), 406.

immediately after Mary, Queen of Scots.¹⁵⁹ The position of Polish kings, unable to perform anything without the consent of the senate or act against law, illustrated the supreme position of the people, who continued to maintain the right to choose their rulers. Although Rutherford did not recommend election as a rule, acknowledging that both elective and hereditary monarchies had their advantages and disadvantages, he saw Poland-Lithuania's election as a proof that all kingdoms, without exception, were patrimonies of the people.¹⁶⁰ If not in his argument, Rutherford was unique in the use of his sources, apparently ignoring Kromer and drawing instead from Henning Arnisaeus, the German political theoretician and philosopher.

The Commonwealth, the Protectorate and the *Rzeczpospolita*

This frequent use of the Polish-Lithuanian example came to an abrupt halt in 1649. The execution of Charles I presented Britons with the challenge of establishing a new political order, yet inspiration was not to be found in the *Rzeczpospolita*, as the scarcity of the references to Poland-Lithuania strongly suggests. What is more, treatment of Poland-Lithuania was dramatically different during the Commonwealth. This becomes apparent from reading its propaganda machine, *Mercurius Politicus*, conceived and orchestrated by Marchamont Needham. With the skill of an experienced propagandist and the zeal of a convert, Needham presented principles, or rather ideals, of a new state in a series of editorials published from September 1651 to August 1652.¹⁶¹ In about twenty issues he proved "that a free state or a government by a free election and consent of the People, settled in a due and orderly succession of their supreme assemblies is much more excellent than any other form". The article series mentioned Poland-Lithuania only three times. This itself was not determinative, as the illustrations Needham provided to support his argument were predominantly taken from ancient history; this extensive use of Roman history being

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 217.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 76ff, 110.

¹⁶¹ In 1647-49 Needham was an editor of the pro-royalist *Mercurius Pragmaticus*. Tellingly, he took this position after he had been released from prison for personal attacks on the king in *Mercurius Britannicus* (1643-46) – a pro-parliamentarian newsbook, written as a response to John Birkendhead's royalist *Mercurius Aulicus* – Joad Raymond, 'Nedham, Marchamont' – ODNB (accessed 17 December 2010).

characteristic of his earlier republican writings.¹⁶² He considered Athens and Rome at particular times to be the only pattern of a free state suitable for worldwide emulation. Significantly, the only contemporary examples that meet with his – conditional – approval were the Netherlands and the Swiss Cantons. Needham’s position was uncompromisingly antimonarchical – an elective form of government was not only better than monarchy, but it was also the most natural and only suitable to the reason of mankind as evident from the fact that most princes who ruled by the right of inheritance proved to be no better than savage beasts, and all of them wicked.¹⁶³ Hereditary succession was irrevocably condemned and the only tolerable form of monarchy was an elective one. However, this turned out to be purely a hypothetical option, as Needham had no illusion about such form of government. Elective by name only, in reality this type of monarchy deprived people of power, mocked them and adorned the triumphs of aspiring tyranny. Poland-Lithuania, like Bohemia, Hungary and Sweden, retained only the form of election, but it was in fact hereditary; the power was swallowed up; the people’s right of election eaten out.¹⁶⁴ It is clear that in that respect Needham considered Poland-Lithuania a worthless example as it was a wolf of monarchy in a sheep’s elective clothes. This harsh judgement was only slightly mitigated in one of the subsequent issues of the *Mercurius Politicus*, where Needham praised the position of Polish kings, “who were (no more than what all Kings should be) mere elective officers in trust [for the execution of Law]”.¹⁶⁵ Through this arrangement Poland managed to keep its liberty to this time in a good measure. Yet, danger was imminent and by letting in French interests and by internal divisions the Poles “began to lose their liberty every day”.

Among those applying the example of Poland-Lithuania Needham was unique in going beyond the use of past historical transactions and turning to the present political situation. For that matter, contemporaneous political developments in Poland-Lithuania were likely to contribute to the ambiguity about the country’s

¹⁶² Cf. Marchamont Needham, *Certain Considerations Tendered in All Humility* (London, 1649) and *The case of the Common-Wealth of England stated* (London, 1650); indeed, the editorials were on whole the literal reprints of the latter – J. Milton French, ‘Milton, Needham and “Mercurius Politicus”’, *Studies in Philology*, 33/2 (Apr., 1936), 238-240.

¹⁶³ MPC, 29 January 1652.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ MPC, 1 July 1652.

government. The condition of the *Rzeczpospolita* was frequently commented on in newspapers, especially since the beginning of the Cossacks' uprising in 1648. As will be discussed in the following chapter, this civil war in Poland-Lithuania (1648-54) echoed loudly in Britain, where it was looked on as a warning lesson.¹⁶⁶ The link between civil unrest and the *Rzeczpospolita's* government was noted. However, this was rarely seen as a cause-effect relationship and whilst the *Rzeczpospolita's* political system was scrutinised, it was seldom identified as the cause of the problem. Instead the focus was on the government's methods, and their effectiveness, in dealing with the issue at hand and the impact those undertakings had on the position of various political agents. Thus, for example, the Poles' dissatisfaction with new war taxes was noticed. This was seen as a means of curbing the *szlachta*; encroach on their liberties and it was predicted that they would soon try to get rid of this yoke, to which they had never been used.¹⁶⁷ Neither was there any doubt about divisions and disagreements on how "the Cossacks' question" should be approached. Emotions ran high and reports of the parliament's heated disputes were common.¹⁶⁸ Newspapers made it clear that the Polish nobility was dissatisfied with the king's role in the affair and they also suspected him of using the circumstances to strengthen his position.¹⁶⁹ Communications describing the king "holding with [the Cossacks] against his own nobles and gentry" conveyed a strong notion of high political tension and it was predicted that the growing position of the Cossacks would lead to "a great revolution in that state; even to the change of the government".¹⁷⁰ Even after the storm has passed, as it was believed, the feelings of mutual suspicion and distrust lingered on and the *szlachta* was continuously reported to be suspicious of the king's absolutist inclinations.¹⁷¹

On the other hand, reports on developments in Poland-Lithuania also provided information about the kingdom's political practices. This included, for example, information about "anciently determined and religiously observed" six-week

¹⁶⁶ *MI*, 12 October 1648; "thus poor Poland is a glass therein all nations may see the miseries of war" – *BRT*, 16 April 1650.

¹⁶⁷ *BRT*, 5 February 1649.

¹⁶⁸ *BRT*, 5 February 1649; 12 February 1649.

¹⁶⁹ *BRT*, 6 November 1649; 20 November 1649; *BRT*, 4 December 1649.

¹⁷⁰ *BRT*, 2 October 1649; 20 November 1649.

¹⁷¹ *MPC*, 29 May 1651; 27 May 1652; 16 September 1652. It was even (falsely) reported that 30,000 noblemen took to arms against the king, supposing he was united with the Cossacks to make himself absolute – *MPC*, 12 February 1652.

sittings of the parliament and of the role of the primate during the interregnum.¹⁷² In addition, the strong position of the *szlachta* was repeatedly confirmed through their description, for though the king and the states had to work in agreement it was the latter, whose voice was presented as pivotal in the decision-making process, as reflected in phrases like “the States decided”, “the States had mind to” etc.¹⁷³ Similar impression could be gathered from the stories such as the one about the speaker whom the king tried to impeach and who reacted to the king’s decision with the statement that “he as well helped to make him the king, as the king did to make him marshal” (a direct reference to the country’s election).¹⁷⁴

Such representations reinforced the impression of Poland-Lithuania as a limited monarchy, but they also increased the ambiguity about its nature, as the cited anecdote illustrates. For who was truly in power: the nobility, who supported the speaker against the king, or the king who eventually made a new appointment against their wishes? Nonetheless, while contemporary events in the *Rzeczpospolita* possibly affected Britons, they were rarely invoked by those who reflected on Poland-Lithuania in their discourses. It is unlikely that they were unfamiliar with contemporary events there as reported in the press, but their indifference towards newsbooks could result from seeing such sources as lacking intellectual authority. Notwithstanding, enthusiasts and critics alike appear to have preferred to cast the *Rzeczpospolita*’s government as a model, clearly located in the past, not unlike that of ancient Rome or Sparta.

The English Commonwealth seemed to have no use of Poland-Lithuania. However, if the words of the Venetian ambassador in England were to be trusted, there was a time when Cromwell favoured the *Rzeczpospolita*’s political solutions and considered fashioning the English Commonwealth after its Polish-Lithuanian counterpart. This was supposed to be done with a view to Cromwell’s own supremacy, that is, of an elective king with certain prerogatives for his descendants.¹⁷⁵ Later scholarship suggested that Cromwell was dissuaded from emulating the Polish constitution by a Polish Vice-Chancellor in exile,

¹⁷² MPC, 29 January 1649; MI, 6 July 1648.

¹⁷³ MI, 4 February 1647; DB, 27 January 1647.

¹⁷⁴ MPC, 29 May 1651.

¹⁷⁵ Lorenzo Paulucci, Venetian Secretary in England, to Giovanni Sagredo, the Ambassador in France, 25 June 1653 – CSPV, 1653-1654, 90.

Hieronim Radziejowski, who held a series of meetings with Cromwell in the summer of 1653.¹⁷⁶ Tempting as it is to imagine that Cromwell was interested in the *Rzeczpospolita's* constitution, this should be approached with caution as Cromwell's writings do not corroborate such a suggestion. On the other hand, Cromwell's correspondence confirms his interest in the *Rzeczpospolita* with regards to its geopolitical role, as we will see in Chapter 4.¹⁷⁷

Although there is no direct evidence to demonstrate Cromwell's personal interest in Polish-Lithuanian government, the latter was intriguingly used by the anonymous author of *A copy of a letter concerning the election of a Lord Protector* (1654), which advocated the election of Cromwell as a hereditary ruler. The author believed that among different governments hereditary monarchy was both preferable and the most profitable, and, more particularly, he proposed establishing Cromwell and his family.¹⁷⁸ Aware of potential opposition, which such an idea might provoke, he set out to dispel any doubts about such dangers as the new ruler's tyranny.

But how could Poland-Lithuania, the exemplar of elective monarchy, be of use to a supporter of hereditary monarchy? According to the author of *A Copy*, Poland and Germany were the only places with a sovereign magistrate elected with any competent power.¹⁷⁹ Importantly, both countries had elected their rulers from a limited number of families. It was emphasised that in that respect Poland was truly exceptional and with forty rulers of the same family in succession excelled

¹⁷⁶ *Jasnowski*, 52. Additionally, Jasnowski points out the financial support for Charles Stuart arranged by the Polish-Lithuanian king as a source of Cromwell's change of heart.

Radziejowski fled Poland-Lithuania in 1652 after being persecuted for the lese majesty and consequently being sentenced to death. His consequent peregrinations through the courts of Sweden, France and Holland were public knowledge (*PD*, 4 July 1653) and his steps were closely followed by the Protectorate's intelligence network both before and after Radziejowski's arrival in England – *Thurloe*, I, 244, 626; II, 62; V, 703, 707, 716.

¹⁷⁷ Radziejowski came highly recommended by Christina, Queen of Sweden, what probably contributed to his warm reception in England – *JHC*, VII, 299. This is further confirmed by referring Radziejowski's propositions to the Committee for Foreign Affairs – *CSPD*, 1653-1654, 99. Furthermore, other sources indicate that the Protector was beguiled by Radziejowski's plans of diverting the conflict between Venice and the Porte and directing the Ottoman forces against Poland-Lithuania; a scheme, which would accord with Cromwell's self-perception as a mediator and a champion of the Protestant cause – Paulucci to Sagredo, 26 July 1653; 3 August 1653; 26 August 1653 – *CSPV*, 1653-1654, 103, 107, 134; Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, our chief of men* (London, 1973), 545.

¹⁷⁸ *A Copy of a Letter Concerning the Election of a Lord Protector* (London, 1654), 13-15. Jason Peacy suggested that it was written by John Lambert – *idem*, *Politicians and pamphleteers: propaganda during the English civil wars and interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004), 250.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

any hereditary monarchy. Clearly, the author endeavoured to build on the positive association between the act of lawful election and its outcome, that is, the practice of choosing within the same family. This was further endorsed by pointing out the tendency of northern people – those lovers of liberty – to reward and heighten the position of their leaders.¹⁸⁰ Yet, the aim of the author was not to praise Poland-Lithuania, but to promote the cause of hereditary monarchy and as soon as this exemplar ceased to fit his purposes, he easily turned from commendation to criticism. Whilst initially he found it convenient to point out the peaceful circumstances of establishing commonwealths by Poles (and Greeks, Romans and Germans), as this suggested that the same is possible in contemporary England, later he accentuated the dangers of civil unrest and factionalism arising from one party's victory and the defeat of another during elections.¹⁸¹ He appreciated Poland's way of avoiding this mischief by having a third estate to control the king's actions. However, this came at a price. What followed was the general toleration, and increase, of opinions and religions, and the very strong position of the nobility, as Poland bore witness. On the other hand, the elective king's commitment to the whole country could be doubted; he would be rather inclined to please his electors from whom the commons were excluded both in Poland and Germany.¹⁸² To parallel those two countries in this context was a striking operation since in Germany the emperor was chosen by seven electors, whilst in Poland-Lithuania thousands of the *szlachta* had the right to elect their king. But the incongruity of the comparison appeared irrelevant to the author, who promoted hereditary over elective succession. Unwittingly, it betrayed the author's ignorance. This was farther evident from his misconstruction of the position of the senate of the *Rzeczpospolita*, which he saw as a supreme standing council made up of hereditary members.¹⁸³ Arguably, accuracy of detail was of secondary importance; what counted more was communicating via marked, commonly recognizable generalities.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 11, 27ff. NB, his classification of the Poles and the German with the Romans and the Greeks is suggestive of treating them all as classical examples.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 28, 24.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 32. It is possible that the practice of choosing fourteen senate's members, so-called senators-residents, whose role was to advise and guide the king outwith the parliament's sessions, was at the foundation of the author's misconception.

As mentioned earlier, the authorship of the pamphlet is unknown and there is no evidence that it was commissioned by Cromwell. However, it is highly suggestive that the *Copy* was printed by Thomas Newcombe, a prominent publisher of newsbooks and periodicals, notably of those official governmental ones such as *Mercurius Politicus* and *Public Intelligencer*.¹⁸⁴ The printer's background gives one pause. Moreover, the tone of the pamphlet, its dedication to "a member of parliament" and its strong appeal for presenting the case on the forum of the parliament indicated eagerness to promote the case of Cromwell. The use of Poland-Lithuania throughout the *Copy* corresponded with the account of the Venetian ambassador, written when the constitutional order was in flux after the dissolution of the Rump. All in all, this encourages us to look afresh at the possibility of Cromwell's interest in Poland-Lithuania's government.

There is a certain irony in the fact that the elective, mixed government of Poland-Lithuania, frequently compared to that of Venice, was discussed in greater depth by an anonymous supporter of hereditary monarchy than by an enthusiast for a republican system. Yet, republicans' change of attitude towards the *Rzeczpospolita* was not caused by their negative perception of political developments in that country, but rather by a change in English republicanism itself. It was notably commented that republican doctrines were articulated not out of a desire to have a republic, but out of a necessity to deal with the reality after the collapse of the historical constitution in England.¹⁸⁵ If there was indeed both a parliamentarian and a republican reading to the idea of mixed government,¹⁸⁶ existing evidence shows that using Poland-Lithuania as its exemplar was not favoured by any sort of post-civil war republicans, as also reflected in the resurfacing of the Polish-Lithuanian example only at the time of the crisis and remodelling of the English Commonwealth. To the republicans the *Rzeczpospolita's* model was no longer adequate. Needham made this point abundantly clear, but a similar dismissive tone can be detected in the writings of the chief republican of the period, James

¹⁸⁴ John Barnard, 'London publishing, 1640-1660. Crisis, Continuity and Innovation', *Book History*, 4 (2001), 13.

¹⁸⁵ *The Political Works of James Harrington*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1977), henceforth *Harrington* (1977), 15.

¹⁸⁶ J.G.A. Pocock, *The ancient constitution and the feudal law* (Cambridge, 1987), 343.

Harrington.¹⁸⁷ Much of what Harrington knew and thought about Poland-Lithuania he conveyed indirectly, but the analogies he drew are illuminating.

According to Harrington, Poland-Lithuania was an aristocratic monarchy. The *raison d'être* of such governments was the preservation of counterpoise between the king and the estates. In Poland-Lithuania, Harrington claimed, there were two estates only: the clergy and the nobility.¹⁸⁸ On this occasion, Harrington did not mention the gentry in the Polish context, though he clearly distinguished this estate from the nobility as apparent from his examination of other countries, such as Sweden.¹⁸⁹ Yet, when discussing the government of Poland-Lithuania elsewhere, Harrington used the terms “nobility/noblemen” and “gentry/gentlemen” interchangeably.¹⁹⁰ Apparently, like many of his compatriots, Harrington found the foundation, structure and standing of the *szlachta* difficult to grasp and transposed it to a native conceptual and linguistic framework. More importantly, the political structure he described lacked an estate of commons and this, as will become clear, constituted one of the biggest shortcomings of the *Rzeczpospolita's* political system.

How did Harrington picture the *Rzeczpospolita's* political system? One of the regions of his imagined Commonwealth of Oceana, Marpesia, was to be governed much after the manner of Poland with the exception of not having an elective king.¹⁹¹ Since Marpesia was supposed to represent contemporaneous Scotland, this suggests that Harrington saw resemblances between the Scottish and Polish-Lithuanian governments. The reasons behind his comparison remain obscure, nor is there data which allow the reader to identify Harrington's sources of information on Poland-Lithuania. However, it transpires that an element those

¹⁸⁷ This is not to suggest that differences between Needham and Harrington and the context of their writings should be ignored, but rather to point that republicanism was a category capable enough to encompass political thought of both of them. See Caroline Robbins, *Two English republican tracts* (Cambridge, 1969), 40-60.

¹⁸⁸ James Harrington, 'A system of politics' in *Harrington* (1977), 852. This division does not correspond with the parliament's structure (both clergymen and secular officials sat in the senate and the ecclesiastical senators were noblemen), nor social strata (which included the *szlachta*, the clergy, the burghers and the peasants). Positions higher than canons were reserved for noblemen; the name “ecclesiastical nobility” reflected the position of the higher clergy, as well as their wealth and conduct, similar to that of noblemen, magnates in particular – Augustyniak, *Historia*, 253; 269.

¹⁸⁹ *Harrington* (1977), 852.

¹⁹⁰ James Harrington, *The Prerogative of Popular Government* (London, 1657), 52.

¹⁹¹ James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (London, 1656), f. B2r. Out of two simultaneously published 1656-editions of the *Oceana*, one printed for Livewell Chapman, the other printed for D. Pakeman, the former is quoted throughout this study as Harrington, *Oceana*.

two kingdoms allegedly shared was the power wielded by the nobility, so enormous as to be oppressive. In the case of Marpesia/Scotland the breaking of the nobility's yoke and, consequently, the liberation of their people, were secured by the intervention of Oceana/England.¹⁹² The English intervention was of great importance as it has changed the pattern of land ownership in Scotland; it freed the tenants and allowed more people to become landowners.

The link between land holding and power was crucial in Harrington's thinking as he believed that a commonwealth could emerge only if the people were land owners.¹⁹³ A popular distribution of property was a *sine qua non* of the proper social and political order; proper because a republic, unlike a monarchy, guaranteed stability. Harrington saw the land-holding reform as an essential first stage in establishing this desired form of government; to complete it, a popular government had to be introduced (consequently, a substantial part of the *Oceana* proposed how this government should operate). Notably, Harrington developed the Machiavellian hypothesis that arms were the foundation of citizenship by adding the hypothesis that land was the foundation of arms.¹⁹⁴ Thus, his ideal commonwealth was not only based on popular participation in government and regular rotation of office holders, but also relied on a militia of free-holders.

Poland-Lithuania did not fit well into such an imagined commonwealth. Firstly, it had not undergone the re-organization of landholding like Scotland and England, and its land remained predominantly in the hands of the nobility. Secondly (presumably consequently), in the absence of a militia of free commoners the nobility acted as the sword of the monarchy.¹⁹⁵ In Harrington's normative classification of "ancient prudence" (that is an ordered government of citizens) and "modern prudence" (a degenerated government of unequal, competing individuals), Poland-Lithuania clearly belonged with the latter.¹⁹⁶ Modern prudence, called also the Gothic balance, denoted the perpetual and inherent instability, which was characteristic of every feudal monarchy and

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁹⁴ See Pocock's Introduction in *Harrington* (1977), 43ff.

¹⁹⁵ Harrington, 'A system of politics', 847.

¹⁹⁶ Harrington's association was influential as testified by Defoe's description of the *Rzeczpospolita* as the country of the old, less noble Gothic institutions, where commons enjoyed limited freedom – Daniel Defoe, *An argument showing, that a standing army, with consent of Parliament, is not inconsistent with a free government* (London, 1698), 15, 16.

which came from an unavoidable power struggle between the ruler and noblemen. The remedy was in having an equal commonwealth, namely “a government established upon an equal agrarian [i.e. balanced land distribution], arising into the superstructures or three orders, the senate debating and proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing by an equal rotation through the suffrage of the people given by the ballot.”¹⁹⁷ Only such a polity could successfully withstand the dangers of decay and defeat. A relationship between the few and the many in Harrington’s programme was important, but the suggested balance was conceptually and qualitatively different from that of a mixed monarchy, most obviously but not exclusively because of the absence of the king.¹⁹⁸ New balance was to rely on equal landowners and, consequently, equal citizens. In contrast, a mixed monarchy, that is a monarchy of the Gothic balance, was a hierarchical order of dependant people, who constantly competed for wealth and power. Thus, a mixed monarchy was an order of civil unrest, corruption and limited liberty. The late Oceana had once been a mixed monarchy, but it was not so any longer. Following the recent wars, Oceana/England (together with liberated Marpesia/Scotland) had outgrown (freed itself from?) *monarchia mixta* and Harrington petitioned for the completion of the republicanisation of the country and thus for setting the foundations for its permanent peace, welfare and freedom.¹⁹⁹

Critically, no such social and political deconstruction happened in Poland-Lithuania. With its mixed government, strong position of the nobility (originators of the monarchy) and impotent commons, the *Rzeczpospolita* no longer served as a model worth emulation, but instead was one among many governments of modern prudence/Gothic balance. Furthermore, in comparison with Britain, it was behind in the process of political advancement. However, like any other successors of the Gothic balance it retained the capacity to recover the true balance of ancient prudence as the Goths’ successors could not entirely forget or be deprived of their freedom.

¹⁹⁷ Harrington, *Oceana*, 23.

¹⁹⁸ Suffice to say that Harrington envisages having an assembly of over 1,000 representatives as the supreme legislature and all executives were to be elected and held their positions for pre-determined terms – Harrington, *Oceana*, 55ff.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

Unlike Needham, Harrington did not castigate Poland-Lithuania. But neither, like the author of the *The case of the Common-Wealth*, and contrary to so many republican-inclined Britons before, did Harrington find the *Rzeczpospolita's* constitution praiseworthy. The only contemporary example of commendable practices he saw in Venice, with which, however, Poland-Lithuania was no longer associated. Tellingly, when Harrington engaged in polemics with Matthew Wren, a royalist of the Oxford circle, who claimed the Polish-Lithuanian constitution vicious on account of the nobility's great sovereignty, it is to defend himself rather than defend the *Rzeczpospolita*.²⁰⁰ Harrington refuted Wren's position that Poland-Lithuania was a monarchy formed by the king and claimed it instead to be "a monarchy by the nobility". By doing this he defended his own methodology, as the latter category was introduced in his earlier writings as a part of his argument about improving the government. This was what Harrington focused on; Wren's comment on Poland-Lithuania's "vicious constitution" went unchallenged.²⁰¹

The restoration of Poland-Lithuania

Needham's and Harrington's reflections introduced a new level of ambivalence in handling Poland-Lithuania's political system – among the ranks of republicans themselves. The restoration of monarchy brought the rehabilitation of the idea of mixed government, but there was no corresponding "rehabilitation" of the Polish-Lithuanian example. The new publication of Goślicki's treatise (1660) was detrimental to rather than supportive of this process, for the *Sage Senator* issued under the name of J.G. was a vulgar, selective plagiarisation of *De optimo senatore*.²⁰² Not only did it omit most of references to Polonia, but it also distorted Goślicki's ideas of *monarchia mixta* to promote absolute monarchy.²⁰³

It took another constitutional crisis to reintroduce the *Rzeczpospolita* to British political debates. The Exclusion Bill (1678) which aimed to eliminate James, the Duke of York, the heir presumptive, from the succession to the thrones of the

²⁰⁰ [Matthew Wren], *Considerations on Mr Harrington's Commonwealth of Oceana* (London, 1657), 47.

²⁰¹ Harrington, *The Prerogative*, 53ff.

²⁰² For a detailed comparative analysis of both texts see *Batuk-Ulewiczowa*, 217-222.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 216.

three kingdoms on the grounds of his Catholicism, polarised the political beliefs of Britons.²⁰⁴ Their loyalties were tested, for the national aversion to Catholicism and its association with arbitrary government conflicted with their attachment to laws of hereditary succession. Subsequent discussions on the nature of government facilitated a come-back of Poland-Lithuania as a relevant frame of reference. However, the explanation of this revival would not be complete without considering the impact of literature in circulation. Popular sources that positively described the kingdom, such as Parsons's *Conference* and Brutus's *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, were republished in 1681 and 1689 respectively. For all its criticism and lack of clarity, new editions of Filmer's writings also popularised the image of the *Rzeczpospolita* as a *monarchia mixta*.²⁰⁵

Importantly, the earlier positive association of Poland-Lithuania with Venice was fostered. It appears that much credit for this evolution should be ascribed to Abraham Nicolas Amelot La Houssaye. This French historian gained European-wide fame with his *History of government of Venice*, which went through 22 editions within three years of its original publication in 1676, including an English translation in 1677. Amelot believed that the Venetian state was in decline, but it still retained some of its majesty. Greatly impressed by its government, which he considered a masterpiece of policy, Amelot analysed its constitution and history, and tried to identify the origin of the republic's decline. For all its faults, Venice remained to him the model government and, pertinently for the current discussion, Amelot saw a great resemblance between the governments of Venice and Poland-Lithuania, both being governed by a senate and an elective prince. This positive association was farther enhanced by likening Poland-Lithuania to one of the "classical republican" governments, for, "despite carrying the name of the kingdom, Poland is nothing but an aristocracy mixed with a monarchy, according to the old model of Sparta".²⁰⁶ Furthermore, Amelot emphasised the attachment of the *Rzeczpospolita's* nobility to liberty and their king's subordination to the kingdom.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis, 1677-1683* (Cambridge, 1991), 14.

²⁰⁵ Both *The free-holders grand inquest touching our Sovereign Lord the King and his Parliament* (London, 1679) and *Observations concerning the original and various forms of government* (London, 1696) included Filmer's original discussion on the Polish-Lithuanian government.

²⁰⁶ Abraham Nicolas Amelot La Houssaie, *The history of government of Venice* (London, 1677), 97.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 99, 115.

This was a classical exposition of *monarchia mixta*. Yet Britons did not have to turn to the French for affirmative opinions about Poland-Lithuania's government, but could rely on their native authors, including one of the greatest republican authorities of the time, Algernon Sidney. Sidney's magnum opus, *Discourses concerning government*, written between 1681 and 1683, was a polemical response to Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680), while its practical purpose was to argue for armed resistance to oppression.²⁰⁸ Nothing in the text of the *Discourses* suggested Sidney's familiarity with Filmer's opinions about Poland-Lithuania nonetheless Sidney frequently referred to the *Rzeczpospolita's* constitution to counter Filmer's argument that the king ruled by right of birth and was subject to no law, but he himself was the source of law. Appalled by Filmer's perverse treatment of liberty, Sidney rejected Filmer's ideas and instead asserted the power of the people and the king's subjection to the law.²⁰⁹

Significantly, while arguing his case, Sidney recast Harrington's Gothic constitution. Denounced by the author of the *Oceana*, in Sidney's hands it came to denote a positive form of government, characterised by mutual checks and balances between the government's components. According to Sidney, popular government was less subject to civil disorders than monarchies, but the combination of both of them with an aristocratic element was believed to constitute an optimal government. The role of the nobility was crucial as they were the best defence against encroachments of kings and exorbitances of commons.²¹⁰ The position of Polish-Lithuanian noblemen, who elected their king, who were as noble as their king and among whom any could be chosen to be king, was highly appreciated and illustrated with the choice of Sobieski - a private man among them, elevated to the royal office as a result of his patriotic services, not the advantage of birth or wealth.²¹¹ Unlike Harrington, Sidney

²⁰⁸ Algernon Sidney, *Discourses concerning government*, ed. Thomas G. West (Indianapolis, 1996), xvii-xviii; Jonathan Scott, 'Sidney, Algernon' - *ODNB* (accessed 15 December 2012).

²⁰⁹ Filmer's phrase "liberty with mischief", referring to the people's power to hold the magistrates account for their abuses, met with Sidney's particular disapprobation and was systematically mocked by him - *Discourses*, 451ff.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 384. This positive attitude towards the aristocratic element was characteristic for republicans of the Restoration period - Blair Worden, 'English Republicanism' in J.H. Burns (ed.) with the assistance of Mark Goldie, *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, vol. III (Cambridge, 1991), 452.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 386. Sobieski's case is also discussed to argue that the coronation, not the sheer fact of being a successor, makes one a king. Unknowingly, Sidney relied on a problematic example - in truth, Sobieski had no relation in blood to the former kings, or any title until he was chosen, as

appreciated the nobility's role as the country's sword. This was not only because he acknowledged military valour as one of the characteristics of the Northern nations, but because he considered it in conjunction with another characteristic of the group – its size. Instructively, Sidney recounted Charles Gustavus, the king of Sweden's recollection of more than 300,000 gentlemen in arms who resisted him when he invaded the *Rzeczpospolita* in 1655. Importantly, by pointing to the high number of Northern noblemen, almost *multitudo infinita*, Sidney could justifiably present them as the provinces' representatives, comparable to the true baronage of England.²¹² Historically, they stood behind national general assemblies, whether diets, parliaments or others, where the nobility's representatives sat. The development and role of such general assemblies was crucial, as constitutional frameworks of all nations living under the Gothic polity were set by them; they determined countries' laws, including the order of succession.²¹³ The assemblies' right to convene independently of the king's will was an important mark of their sovereignty.

Sidney claims (*Discourses*, 332). However, Sobieski was not crowned until two years after his election (the delay being caused by his engagement in the on-going war). Thus, following Sidney's argument, technically Sobieski should not be considered the king prior to his coronation and, consequently, any decision made by him in the after-election – pre-coronation period lacked legitimization.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 131, 246, 378.

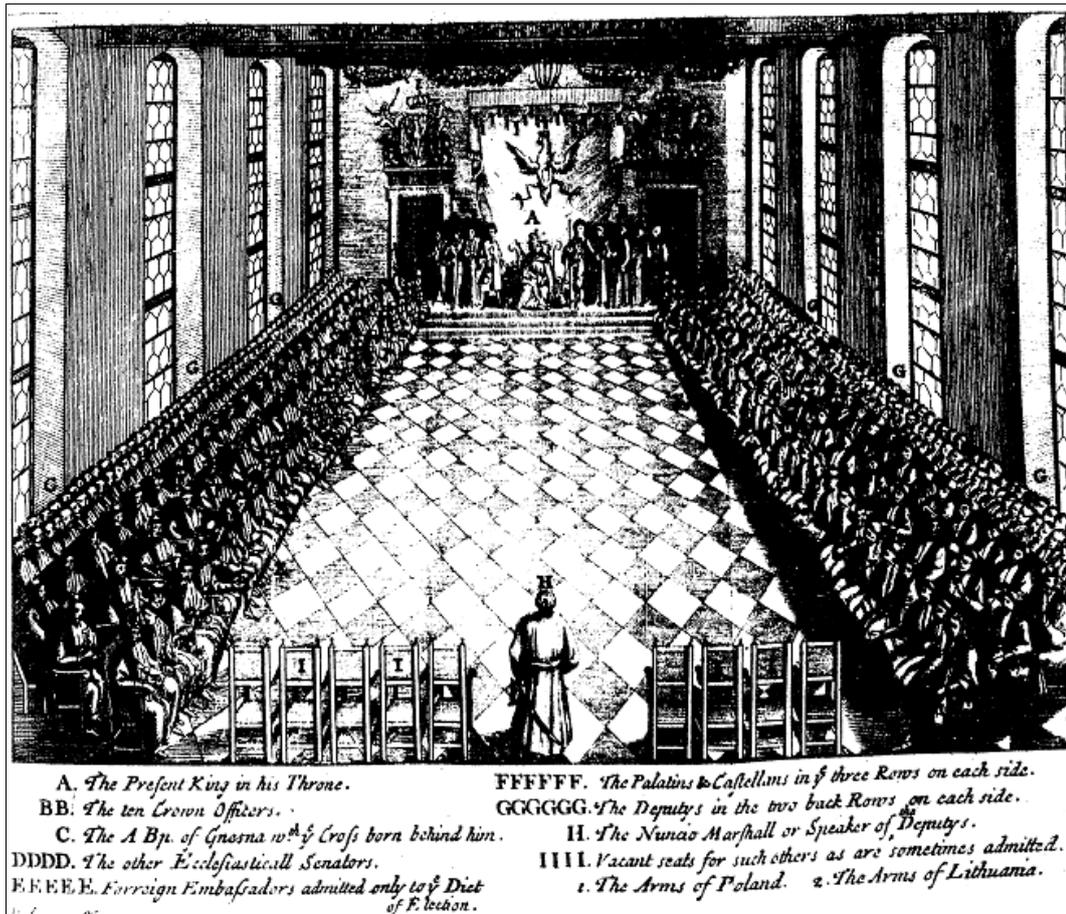


Figure 3.1 Illustration of the parliament's sitting from Bernard Connor's *History of Poland* (1698).

In truth, Sidney's analysis of Poland-Lithuania was hardly profound, but he consistently presented the kingdom as a positive model of limited government. But Harringtonian understanding of Gothic polity and, consequently, of Poland-Lithuania, cast a long shadow, as testified by Henry Neville's *Plato Redivivus* (1681). Like Sidney, Neville ignored the succession issue, for he believed that the exclusion of James Stuart would not solve the constitutional crisis.²¹⁴ Instead he proposed to adapt Harringtonian republicanism to remodel the existing political structure.²¹⁵ The *Rzeczpospolita* featured in Neville's reflections, but it was of little value, for he saw Poland-Lithuania as dominated by a small group of "potentates", who controlled both the king and the numerous gentry.²¹⁶ While the size of the *Rzeczpospolita's* nobility was appreciated by Sidney, Neville

²¹⁴ Robbins, *Two tracts*, 16.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Henry Neville, *Plato Redivivus* (London, 1681), 164.

objected to the exclusion of non-noble freemen from land-holding and government.²¹⁷

Yet, evidence suggests that Neville's objections to Poland-Lithuania were not commonly shared. Particular popularisation of Poland-Lithuania as a limited, elective government came from Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury. One of the main instigators of the Exclusion Bill, Shaftesbury gained a reputation as a great sympathiser with Poland-Lithuania's constitution and a proponent of reproducing it in England, which earned him the nickname "king of Poland", aka "king Tapsky".²¹⁸ The reason behind this affiliation remains unclear, for nothing in Shaftesbury's writings hints at his familiarity with, still less support for, the *Rzeczpospolita*. An alternative explanation points to the alleged election of Shaftesbury as the king of Poland-Lithuania in 1681, apparently rumoured by the Earl himself.²¹⁹ There is insufficient evidence to corroborate either story, but it is clear that the nickname took hold. Adopted by Shaftesbury's opponents, the soubriquet was used in the first place to mock him, not to disparage Poland-Lithuania, which was referred to only in three pamphlets of the "King of Poland" series (1681-83). Tellingly, this small sample shows a significant evolution of attitude towards the *Rzeczpospolita*. The first pamphlet, *A modest vindication* (1681) conveyed a positive impression of the kingdom. The last interregnum, Sobieski's victory, the practice of unanimous vote were recollected not to criticise these practices of elective Poland-Lithuania, but to ridicule Shaftesbury's ambitions – to think himself better than esteemed Sobieski, to imagine himself pursued by the Polish nobility who could choose among the princes of all Europe, to claim himself chosen by them – so unanimously that the event remained unknown to anybody apart from Shaftesbury.²²⁰ In contrast, images of Poland-Lithuania presented in two pamphlets published in 1683 were dramatically different.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

²¹⁸ K.H.D. Haley, *The first Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford, 1968), 689.

²¹⁹ John Spurr (ed.) *Anthony Ashley Cooper, First Earl of Shaftesbury, 1621-1683* (Farnham, 2011), 212.

²²⁰ Cf. *A modest Vindication of the Earl of S...y: In a Letter to a Friend concerning his being Elected King of Poland* (London, 1681), 1-2; *The Whiggs lamentation for the death of their dear brother Cooledge, the Protestant joyner* (London, 1681); *The King of Poland's last speech to his country-men* (London, 1682); *Great news from the King of Poland* (London, 1682); *The Last will and testament of Anthony King of Poland* (London, 1682); *Dagon's fall, or, The whigs lamentation for the death of Anthony, King of Poland* (London, 1683); *The Case is alter'd now, or, The conversion of Anthony, King of Poland* (London, 1683); *A Congratulation of the Protestant-joyner to Anthony, King of Poland upon his arrival in the lower world* (London, 1683); *Shaftesbury's farewel, or, The new association* (London, 1683); *A Supplement to the last will and testament of Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury* (London, 1683); *An Elegy on the death of (the much to be lamented) Anthony K. of Poland* (London, 1683).

Although both *Good News from Poland* and *Dr. B---t's farewell, Confessor to the late King of Poland* described "Tapsky's Kingdom of Poland", not the *Rzeczpospolita*, the reputation of the latter was tarnished. Poland-Lithuania's nobility was presented as haughty and indulging in perpetual and prolonged elections, whilst the popular adage that "he who lost religion, may find it in Poland" was recalled to caricature the kingdom's multi-confessional character.²²¹ Poland-Lithuania served as an instrument of criticism of on-going developments in England, as obvious from the condemnation of the proceeding of the last "Dyets of Poland", which under pretence of religion tried to break the succession – a clear reference to the efforts to exclude the Duke of York.²²² This change of tone of Tory pamphlets from neutral/sympathetic to hostile suggests that they came to consider Poland-Lithuania as an inconvenient frame of reference. A glimpse at other writings produced during the Exclusion Crisis helps to explain why.

The analysis of pamphlets discussing the position of the Duke of York shows that the historical precedent of Sigismund Vasa, the elective king of Poland-Lithuania and the hereditary king of Sweden, was much favoured. For example, this case was presented by the anonymous author writing as a "Gentleman in the city", who reminded his readers that Sigismund was admitted to the throne of Sweden upon conditions of keeping the liberty of religion and refraining himself from introducing Catholicism to this Protestant (Lutheran) country.²²³ After the king broke this promise, the people of Sweden took up arms against him to defend their rights. Subsequently, they not only deposed Sigismund, but also passed the law excluding Catholics from being chosen kings of Sweden in the future. The author saw no reason why this prudent example could not be emulated in England and urged excluding James Stuart from "all capacity of mounting the throne and destroying England's nation and the reformed religion".²²⁴

Similarly, John Philips in *The character of a popish successor* (1681) saw the case of Sigismund as "the very exact parallel of our present state of England".²²⁵

²²¹ *Dr. B---t's Farewell, Confessor to the late King of Poland* (London, 1683), 2; *Great News from Poland* (London, 1683), 1.

²²² *Dr. B---t's Farewell*, 1.

²²³ *A letter from a gentleman in the city to one in the country concerning the bill for disabling the Duke of York to inherit the imperial crown of this realm* (London, 1680), 6.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

²²⁵ John Philips, *The character of a popish successor* (London, 1681), 16.

Phillips's main purpose was to refute the views presented by Sir Roger L'Estrange, whom he accused of downplaying the danger of Catholicism and casting the opponents of the popish successor as fanatics.²²⁶ Was he "who values the safety of himself and his Posterity, he that thinks he has an Estate and Liberty worth preserving, a Country worth saving, a Religion worth defending, and indeed a God worth serving, a fanatic?" Phillips abhorred L'Estrange's perverse rhetoric and argued otherwise. Notably, Phillips rejected the Duke of York on account of his religion, but he did not deny him personal qualities. Those made the case of James Stuart and Sigismund Vasa more alike as the latter was just as much heroic, magnanimous and just. The true testimony of Sigismund Vasa's excellent character lay in the fact that he was elected king of Poland, "a nation which we all know make their choice for a king out of the gallant, famous and illustrious worthies of all the princes and nobility through the whole Christian world".²²⁷ Nonetheless, neither Sigismund's accomplishments, nor the legal restrictions prevented this king from imposing his religion on the subjects; likewise, the Duke of York could abuse his royal position, thus he should not be trusted with government. The example of Sigismund Vasa led Sir William Jones to the same conclusion, although his opinion about James Stuart's character was much harsher than Phillips's.²²⁸

In contrast, Jones's opponent, Edmund Bohun, found the example of Poland-Lithuania ill-suited to the situation in England, where no act of parliament could extinguish the Duke of York's right to the throne, given to him by God and nature, unlike in elective monarchies.²²⁹ The enthusiasm for the Polish-Lithuanian example was farther dampened by Tory pamphleteers, such as John Northleigh, who reminded his readers of the true nature of hereditary monarchy. Thus, he argued, the Duke of York was not merely heir presumptive whose hereditary right might be annulled by parliament, but an heir, whose right could not be freely disposed of. If a prince needed votes to be admitted to the throne,

²²⁶ Cf. Sir Roger L'Estrange, *The character of a papist in masquerade* (London, 1681).

²²⁷ Phillips, *The Character*, 16.

²²⁸ Sir William Jones, *A just and modest vindication of the proceedings of the two last parliaments* (London, 1682), 30-31.

²²⁹ Edmund Bohun, *Reflections on a pamphlet stiled A just and modest vindication of the proceedings of the two last parliaments* (London, 1683), 95.

this meant, in fact, an elective monarchy; turning “Old England into a New Poland”.²³⁰

All the same, Old England was undergoing transformation. More importantly, the example of Poland-Lithuania, including the case of Sigismund Vasa, was continuously found relevant, as testified by the speech of Mr Somers, the future Lord Keeper, in the House of Commons in January 1689. According to Somers, this case was “parallel to ours”, although admittedly, its resolution was more straightforward in the case of King Sigismund, who withdrew to the *Rzeczpospolita*, his other kingdom, after he failed to settle his affairs with Sweden.²³¹ In contrast, James VII & II fled to France, where he sought protection and practically made himself the hostage of a monarch hostile towards England. Hence, it was evident to Mr Somers that “the King's going to a foreign Power, and casting himself into his hands, absolved the People from their Allegiance”.²³²

Yet, the situation was hardly that simple; King James VII & II's departure left Britain with a burning constitutional issue. The Convention's heated debate in January 1689 revealed conflicting interpretations of the state of affairs and, consequently, of possible courses of action. The latter included a vote on the vacancy of the throne. However, first the nature of the king's leaving had to be determined, for there was no agreement whether the king deserted or abdicated the crown and, if the latter, what was the nature of this abdication. For instance, the Bishop of Ely emphasized the difference between the exercise of the government and the right of governing. Consequently, he saw the abdication of both power and right as a complete forfeiture of the whole right, that is, the cutting off of hereditary succession. Tellingly, he considered Poland-Lithuania as the only country where such full abdication took place. Recollected as a historical reference, the *Rzeczpospolita* was not to be followed, for Ely argued that in England only the abdication of a person took place and he hoped to discourage the parliament from breaking the line of succession and making the crown elective.²³³

²³⁰ John Northleigh, *A gentle reflection on the modest account and a vindication of the loyal abhorres from the calumnies of a factious pen by the author of the Parallel* (London, 1682), 16.

²³¹ *Grey's Debates of the House of Commons* (London, 1769), IX, 16-17.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *The history and proceedings of the House of Commons*, ed. Richard Chandler (London, 1742), II, 216.

A parallel discussion took place in the Scottish Estates. Yet, unlike the English, the Scottish Convention rejected the notion that James VII (II) had abdicated, but they concluded that the king had forfeited his right to the crown. More relevantly, the Scots also differed from the English in their use of Poland-Lithuania, which they completely overlooked.²³⁴

In contrast, Englishmen often reached for the Polish-Lithuanian example. Richard Kingston in his *Tyranny detected* (1699) explored particular historical cases of the *Rzeczpospolita*. Drawing on Kromer, he pointed out that both kings Lesko and Henry Valois lost the throne after they had left the country without permission. Significantly, he saw that as illustrations of the kings' deposition, not their abdication.²³⁵ Following Bodin, Kingston elucidated that the Poles were not obliged to obey the king, who had broken his coronation oath and violated the laws, and he argued the close resemblance of these cases with the late King James's who "deserted the kingdom of England".²³⁶ Consequently, this association of England with the *Rzeczpospolita* allowed Kingston to explain the recent developments in England on account of the regular practices of limited government.

There was a fine line between deposition and abdication that was critical since it determined the position of the king – towards the law and other political agencies alike. Crucially, deposition meant the king's accountability to a body of a higher constitutional standing. This was fully comprehended by the anonymous author of *Some remarks upon the government of Poland* (1698) who examined in detail the abdication of John Casimir (1668) and the position of the *szlachta*, so the steps taken by the parliament of England after the departure of King James "might not seem a novelty".²³⁷ The author had nothing but praise for the nobility and gentry of Poland-Lithuania, whom he saw as "the keepers

²³⁴ This could possibly be better understood in the light of the revival of Buchanan's writings and the Buchananite version of Scottish identity, and also by hostile contacts with the English "whig" tradition. For Scots' use of history prior to the union of 1707 see Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's past: Scottish whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 16890c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993), 26-50.

²³⁵ Richard Kingston, *Tyranny detected* (London, 1699), 220-221.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ This text is attached to the English translation of de Tende's *The present state of Poland*; the format of this publication was already discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Preservers and Defenders of the Liberty and Laws of the Country".²³⁸ He was impressed with the principle of *nemine contradicente*, which required the unanimous assent to the king's election, thus protecting the nobility's freedom and preventing the country from turning into an absolute monarchy. Particular stories of the reigns of Stephan Bathory and Władysław IV illustrated the strong position of noblemen – electors of kings and deponers of tyrants.²³⁹ Any royal effort to introduce an arbitrary government or an action against the country's religion or laws resulted in immediate deposition or enforcement to abdicate the throne. The author gave much attention to the proceedings of John Casimir's abdication, which were presented as a model for England. Importantly, both the king's form of abdication and the senate's declaration (which were quoted in detail) testified to the role of the country's estates in the process, for the king abdicated "by the consent of all orders of the State" and "restore[d] his regal dignity and all ancient rights into the hands of the Senate, the Marshals and of the State". In turn, the state's senate, officers and marshals released the king from his coronation oath and the subjects from their oath of allegiance, which was interpreted as irrefutable proof of the mutual dependence between the king's authority and the liberty of the senate and the people.²⁴⁰

Tellingly, the author commented on the Poles' reverence for and commitment to their king – as long as he followed the law and depended on the advice of the senate. Moreover, he presented the case of John Casimir as if the king failed to fulfil his duty and his abdication was the result of the senate's immediate check on him.²⁴¹ Correspondingly, this re-enforced the legality of the actions of the English parliament; it suggested that its members – loyal and loving subjects as

²³⁸ 'Some remarks upon the government of Poland' in de Tende, *The present state*, 223. The cited phrase (and also his understanding of Poland-Lithuania's constitution) suggests familiarity with Goślicki, who referred to the counsellors as "defenders of law, moderators of liberty, conservators of commonwealth" – cf. Goślicki, *The Counsellor*, 65.

In contrast, the anonymous author of the brochure *The ancient and present state of Poland* (London, 1697) believed that the *szlachta's* readiness to sacrifice everything to their own opinions and the fact that they "own no sovereign, but liberty" adversely affected the *Rzeczpospolita's* political system – *ibid.*, 3, 13. Most likely the author's criticism was provoked by the developments at the recent double election, of which he seemed to have first-hand information. NB, this familiarity with the subject would support the EEBO's identification of the writer with John Savage, the secretary of Bernard Connor, the author of *History of Poland*. However, the opinions presented by Savage in the second volume of the *History*, which he compiled after Connor's death, differ considerably from those presented in *The ancient and present state of Poland*, thus making his authorship of this brochure doubtful.

²³⁹ 'Some remarks', 224-225.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 226, 228.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 225, 229.

they were – had right and duty to act as they had; by law they could and should have declared King James’s abdication.

Naturally, such expressions of deep admiration for the Polish-Lithuanian system were accompanied by dissenting voices. Whilst an anonymous author praised the principle of unanimity, for it eliminated the danger of factionalism, another commentator judged this rule inconvenient and blamed it for the government’s ineffectiveness.²⁴² In turn, approval of the conditional obedience proviso was followed by a reminder that Poland-Lithuania was the only country which allowed lawful resistance.²⁴³ Furthermore, the Whig propagandist, Samuel Johnson’s argument that the king of Poland-Lithuania enjoyed sovereignty as any hereditary monarch (and yet, he could be deposed) was refuted by William Hopkins, who relied on legal authorities such as Sir Orlando Bridgman to argue that the king of the *Rzeczpospolita* was not “a proper, complete and imperial sovereign”, unlike England’s, thus dismissing any possible comparisons between the two countries.²⁴⁴ Indeed, with the Restoration, the traditional dual approach to Poland-Lithuania’s limited government was restored as well.

As we have seen, Britons keenly discussed the Polish-Lithuanian government and invoked it in their own constitutional debates. There was no consensus about the exact nature of the limited monarchy of Poland-Lithuania, therefore not only Britons’ reactions to, but also their interpretations of the *Rzeczpospolita*’s government varied. Similarly, the nature of the structure of Poland-Lithuania elicited a wide range of responses among Britons.

The union of 1603

Most early modern monarchies were composite units, though the nature of their composition varied and the contemporaneous distinction between “accessory” and “*aeque principaliter*” described the ends of the union spectrum rather than its

²⁴² Cf. M.R. *Three great questions concerning the succession and the dangers of popery fully examin'd in a letter to a Member of this present Parliament* (Edinburgh, 1681), 11 and *Their present majesties government* (London, 1691), 13.

²⁴³ Cf. William Denton, *Jus regiminis* (London, 1689), 24, 27 and James Welwood, *A vindication of the present great revolution in England* (London, 1689), 30.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Samuel Johnson, *Remarks upon Dr Sherlock’s book intituled [sic] The case of resistance* (London, 1688), 11-12 and William Hopkins, *Animadversions on Mr Johnson’s answer to Jovian* (London, 1691), 96-97.

main forms.²⁴⁵ The practice of union was not foreign to Britain, where England had incorporated Wales and on several occasions had tried to impose union on Scotland.²⁴⁶ The experiment of joining Scotland and England took a new turn with King James VI's accession to the throne of England and it was continued throughout the long seventeenth century. While renegotiating their union, Britons studied the experiences of other countries, including that of the *Rzeczpospolita*, and the purpose of this section is to examine how Poland-Lithuania was discussed in their union debates. The British unions of 1603, 1643 and 1707 were products of different times: all projects with distinct ambitions and ideals, and the results of specific compromises and the chapter will inspect both the context and manner of using the Polish-Lithuanian exemplar. This was affected by the level of available information, thus the sources that could have informed Britons will be inspected. But then, the *Rzeczpospolita's* structure has been developing over a number of centuries and when discussing references to this country's union it is necessary to ask – which manifestation of the union?

The foundations for the union between Poland and Lithuania were laid in 1385 when, by the terms of the agreement of Krewo the marriage between Jadwiga (Hedwig), Queen of Poland, and Jagiełło (Jogaila), Grand Duke of Lithuania, and his subsequent coronation as the King of Poland was contracted. This move, primarily motivated by the need of protection against the common enemy, the Teutonic Knights, created a personal union between Poland and Lithuania. The personal nature of this link was emphasised by the Acts of 1401 signed in Wilno. Although the subsequent union of Horodło (1413) confirmed the independence of the position of the Grand Duke, it extended the limits of the existing union by granting Polish noble coats of arms to Lithuanian families and establishing a Lithuanian administrative structure based on the Polish model. Moreover, joint Polish-Lithuanian meetings for resolving matters of shared interest were planned.²⁴⁷ Yet, the realisation of the consolidation plans proved problematic and the rest of the century saw the intermittent dissolution and restoration of the

²⁴⁵ According to the Spanish jurist Juan de Solórzano Pereira, following the accessory union its composite parts enjoyed the same rights and were subject to the same laws, while after the *aeque principaliter* union the constituent kingdoms continued to be treated as distinct entities - J.H. Elliott, 'Europe of composite monarchies', *Past & Present* 137 (1992), 52-53.

²⁴⁶ This is not to say that the Scots were averse to the idea of union with England - Colin Kidd, *Union and unionism: political thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge, 2008), 42-53.

²⁴⁷ *Akta unji*, 60-72.

personal union and acts of alliance. The new agreement of Mielnik (1501) envisaged that in the future Poland and Lithuania would be an undivided body of “one nation, one people, one brotherhood and a common council” and proposed how this aim was to be achieved (including details regarding the election, decision making process and formation of the joint council); however, this union treaty was never implemented. It was not until the mid-sixteenth century that the pressures from supporters of the Execution Movement and, later, the problem of succession gave fresh momentum to the union.²⁴⁸ As a result, the closer relationship between Poland and Lithuania, variously described by historians as a real/ semi-real union or a federation, developed.²⁴⁹ Its conditions were finalised at the diet of Lublin in 1569, which foresaw the union of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the creation of the *Rzeczpospolita* with a shared monarch and parliament, coat of arms and coinage, foreign policy and defence. At the same time, the two main parts of the *Rzeczpospolita* retained separate offices, judiciaries, treasuries and armies.

Although, according to recent scholarship, the union of Lublin was based on the premise of partnership between Poland and Lithuania, this was not how most popular pre-1603 publications in Britain presented it. As already discussed in Chapter 2, the united *Rzeczpospolita* was predominantly referred to as Poland, without recognising the position or even the existence of Lithuania. If the latter was identified, it was given the status of a province of Poland, similar to Podolia or Masovia. Alternatively, Lithuania was discussed as a separate unit, with only vague references to the country’s links with Poland.²⁵⁰ Among atlases and compendia in circulation, Botero’s *Traveller’s Breviat* (1601) was exceptional in its

²⁴⁸ The Execution Movement (*ruch egzekucyjny*) was a political movement which opposed the abuse of laws by magnates and sought to reform the country. Among others, the movement demanded revindication of lands illegally held by the magnates and actual implementation of already existing laws.

King Sigismund Augustus remained childless despite three marriages. Aware of the difficulty his death would bring (he was the last of the Jagiellon dynasty – the King of Poland by election, but the Grand Duke of Lithuania by succession), the king ceded his hereditary rights to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the Crown of Poland (1564) to make the future election of the ruler of both territories easier.

²⁴⁹ For an informative overview of opinions about the union of Lublin see Natalia Jakowenko, ‘Ilu historyków – tyle unii. Uwagi z okazji 440-lecia unii lubelskiej’ in Andrzej Gil (ed.), *Unia lubelska – dziedzictwo wielu narodów* (Lublin, 2010), 35-60. See also Frost, ‘Union as Process’.

²⁵⁰ While discussing the chief cities of Poland, Hakluyt observed that the king resided one year in Poland and another year in Lithuania, however, without giving an explanation of the situation. Elsewhere, he mentioned King Sigismund and “his great dukedom of Lithuania” – *The principal navigations*, 197, 375. Notably, the official style of the *Rzeczpospolita*’ rulers – *Dei gratia rex Poloniae, magnus dux Lithuaniae* etc. could be suggestive of the countries’ separation.

direct mention of the Polish-Lithuanian union. Botero did not discuss the nature of the recent union, but saw it as a completion of the union of Krowo, which, as he reminded his readers, had expected Jagiełło to unite his principalities to Poland.²⁵¹ We may remember that Botero's main source of information was Marcin Kromer. Kromer's *De origine* discussed unions of Poland with Lithuania prior to 1506, whereas *Polonia* (1575/77) mentioned the recent union of Lublin, stating generally that Lithuania had voluntarily entered the union with Poland as its equal partner. In turn, Goślicki's *De optimo senatore* (1568) reflected on Poland's political system without a hint about its structure – past or present. Nor was the matter addressed in *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, whilst Bodin remarked upon the unfavourable effects the unions of 1385 and 1569 had had on sovereignty.²⁵² In contrast, *A Relation of the State of Polonia* described both the history of Polish-Lithuanian unions and their latest creation – the *Rzeczpospolita*. Moreover, evidence strongly suggests that the copy of the manuscript was presented to King James in 1603.²⁵³ We may appreciate the irony of this situation: while the greatest advocate of a closer British union acquired the crucial evidence supporting his argument, he did not utilise it, whereas those who discussed Poland-Lithuania relied on outdated Latin sources, when they had the most detailed, updated description of the 1569 union that existed within their reach.

²⁵¹ Botero, 78.

²⁵² Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République* (Lyon, 1579), 376.

²⁵³ Sobecki, 'John Peyton's *A Relation*', 11ff. Also, Dr Sobecki argues that the text was edited to draw the king's attention to Poland-Lithuania's union ("Kingdom" [ms38902] was emended to "State" [Royal 18 B I]) to point to the composite character of the *Rzeczpospolita*. There are several problems with this interpretation. First, Peyton's original identification of the *Rzeczpospolita* is unknown; since Royal 18 B I was written before ms38902 it is equally possible that it was the scribe of ms38902 who had changed "State" into "Kingdom" (not the other way around). Second, despite Dr Sobecki's claim, the word "state" was often referred to non-composite units in the seventeenth century; Peyton himself discussed Poland and Lithuania in the post-1569 context as two states. Additionally, the equation of "state" with the composite monarchy does not agree with the reading of *A Relation's* title.

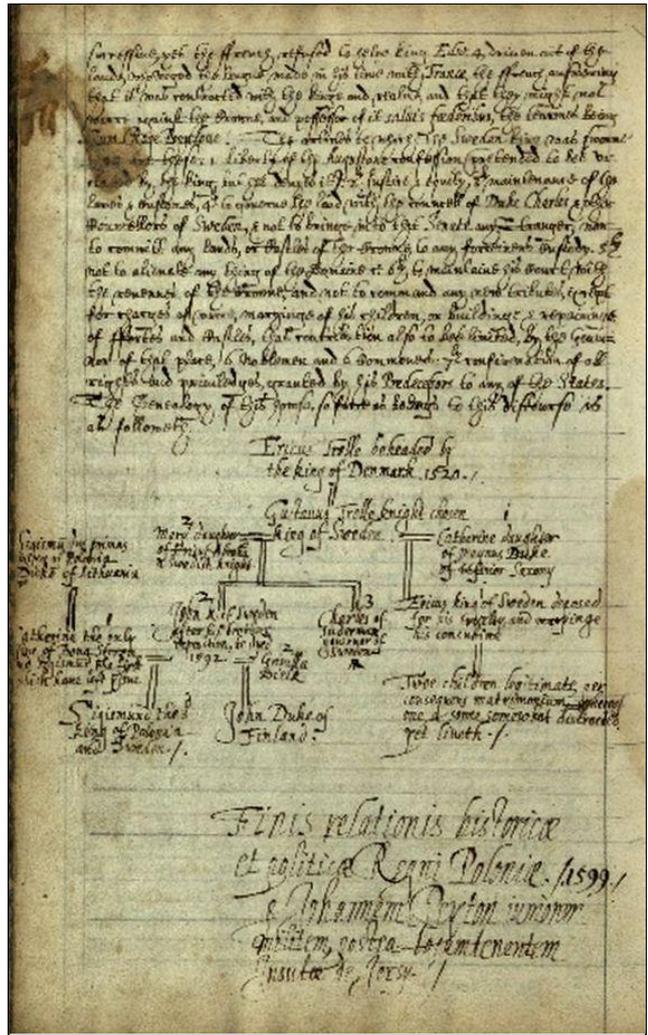


Figure 3.2 Last page of [Peyton's] *A Relation of the Kingdome of Polonia* [1599].

This limited information available on the union of Lublin (*A Relation* notwithstanding) was reflected in Scottish and English tracts related to the 1603 union. This was a short-lived genre, with the great majority of them being written in 1604, the year of the first parliament of King James I.²⁵⁴ The King himself actively promoted his vision of Britain of “*unus Rex, unus Grex, una Lex*” by adopting the style of king of Great Britain, changing the coinage and setting up a commission for exploring the possibility of a more perfect union.²⁵⁵ His efforts met with limited enthusiasm from his subjects, whose apprehension showed also in the tracts. Short on practicalities of how the union should work,

²⁵⁴ Jenny Wormald, “‘A Union of Hearts and Minds?’ The Making of the Union between Scotland and England, 1603” in Jon Arrieta and John H. Elliott (eds), *Forms of Union: the British and Spanish Monarchies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Donostia, 2009), 110.

²⁵⁵ James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations* (Oxford, 1973), I, 97; Ian Halley Stewart, *The Scottish Coinage* (London, 1955), 102.

they were nonetheless scholarly reflections on the subject of union.²⁵⁶ As we will see, their authors considered Poland-Lithuania a relevant point of reference and keenly explored the countries' earlier unions.

The most vivid expression of this interest is the anonymous manuscript: "Occasions and means of uniting the great Dukedom of Lithuania to the Kingdom of Poland" [1604], which focused exclusively on the unions between those countries. Its tone and format (it contained no date, act or source name, nor references to the Scottish-English union) suggests a brief rather than a tract. Following the introductory description of circumstances of the marriage of Jadwiga and Jagiełło, the document turned to a bullet point-like account of the union conditions. These were discussed as the terms of a single union, but the text analysis makes it clear that the author conflated the conditions of the acts of Krewo, Wilno and Horodło.²⁵⁷ The omission of Mielnik indicates that he did not rely on Kromer, who, as mentioned earlier, discussed this union of 1501 in detail. Instead, the author seemed to have consulted *Commune incliti Regni Poloniae privilegium*, that is, the 1501 collection of Polish constitutions and other legal acts by Jan Łaski. Printed in 1506 with royal approval, this edition was used later in other law collections, including *Statuta Regni Poloniae* by Jan Herburt.

The author's choice of source determined his presentation of the union, which appeared as the incorporation of a weaker unit (Lithuania) by a stronger one (Poland). Whereas the "Occasions" mentioned the Poles' duty to consult the Lithuanians about the king's election, it concentrated on the Lithuanians' position - their obligations and the privileges they had received, consequently presenting them as a main beneficiary of the union.²⁵⁸ The language enhanced this impression, for the text described Lithuania as "incorporated and perpetually united (...) to that imperial crown of the kingdom of Poland". Nothing in the text suggested further developments of the countries' relations. On the contrary, the author's conclusion that these were "the principal points", which "seemed to have been constituted in auld tyme, yet they were not put in execution, but by track of tyme and by successive approbation of them" implied

²⁵⁶ Wormald, 'A Union', 110.

²⁵⁷ "Occasions and means of uniting the great Dukedom of Lithuania to the kingdom of Poland; with the conditions", [1604] - SP 14/7, ff. 192-193.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., f. 192v.

that his was a description of the contemporaneous Polish-Lithuanian union.²⁵⁹ If the text was meant to inform policy makers, as its format and the existence of another copy suggest, this one-sided and outdated description could have had a considerable effect on Britons' understanding of Poland-Lithuania.²⁶⁰ Characteristically, it favoured the Polish interpretation of union as incorporation and failed to take into account the recent evolution of the union.

The Polish-Lithuanian union received also an extensive treatment at the hands of Sir Henry Savile. This well-established classical scholar and mathematician gathered historical examples of various unions, which he conceived as an aid for consideration "for the better perfecting of the intended union". His 'Historical collections', written in 1604, though only recently published, started with considerations about various kinds of union, but with a particular attention to "the consolidation union", where two absolute and sovereign states were merged together, either by the extinction of the prince of one state or by marriage. Significantly, Savile typecast the merger of Lithuania and Poland "first under Yagello (...) about the year 1384 and so continu[ing] ever since without any notable interruption" as the example of such union.²⁶¹

Yet, the relevance of this example seemed to be uncertain since, by Savile's own admission, there was a difficulty in categorising the union between Scotland and England.²⁶² Savile argued that the former had paid homage to the kings of England in the past, thus it could not be seen as a sovereign state (unlike, as he assumed, Lithuania).²⁶³ However, he conceded that if "these allegations be not receivable" both Scotland and England should be seen as independent countries and their case classified as that of a consolidating union.²⁶⁴ Directions for achieving such a union were to be found in Virgil, whom Savile cited in order to identify the community of name, language, apparel, religion and laws and customs as markers of the union.²⁶⁵ Savile favoured keeping the original names as the most universal practice, illustrated also by the example of Poland-

²⁵⁹ Ibid., f. 193v.

²⁶⁰ "A Copy of Occasions and means ...", [1604] - SP 14/7, ff. 194-196.

²⁶¹ 'Historical collections', 189.

²⁶² Ibid., 190.

²⁶³ "The great ducty of Lithuania for ought I know to the contrary was always and is an absolute state" - ibid., 189.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 192, 198.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 198ff.

Lithuania, but, like with the status of Scotland, he was flexible and allowed a possibility of acquiring a new common name for a united Scotland and England. His favourable attitude towards the union was also shown in his positive comments on the existing uniformity of language, apparel and religion between these countries.²⁶⁶

In contrast, the uniformity of laws and customs remained a moot point. Problematically, as according to Savile, the conformity of laws and customs was “the most important point of our union”. Notably, Poland-Lithuania was the first non-ancient example discussed in this section. Drawing on Kromer’s *De origine*, Savile cited at length agreements between Poland and Lithuania and found the agreement of 1501 (viz. the Act of Mielnik) the most straightforward union between these countries.²⁶⁷ The analysis of this case led him to admit that elective states could be perpetually united. While this judgement was hardly relevant for the union of the hereditary monarchies of Scotland and England, the conclusion he reached with regard to the coinage (with the support of the Polish-Lithuanian example), namely that keeping one or several was indifferent for the union as long as they were of equal goodness, was a clear comment on the then current discussion; bearing in mind the disproportion in value between Scottish and English coin, Savile appeared as an opponent of the idea of a common coinage.²⁶⁸ For him such an operation would be detrimental to the economies of both kingdoms as, for that matter, would lifting existing customs and burdens of each nation.²⁶⁹

Crucially, Savile considered Poland-Lithuania the clearest illustration of his argument for the separation of laws. What made this example all the more complicated, but also potentially stronger, was Savile’s interpretation of the Act of Mielnik, which had assumed the creation of one council for both nations (“*concilium unum sit duabus populis*”). This, according to Savile’s interpretation, meant that “in a union there can conveniently be an unity in parliament”, which he fully agreed with.²⁷⁰ Notwithstanding, this arduous task would be impossible to achieve in Scotland and England, whose laws were “in all things different”.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 211-216.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 221.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 232.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 232-239.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 234.

Interestingly, this assessment was followed by a reference to article nine of the Act of Mielnik, which stated that Poland and Lithuania should follow their own laws. In this Savile emphasised how difficult the convergence of laws was – even the supporters of the common council/parliament like the Poles and the Lithuanians decided to preserve their own laws.

In contrast, the anonymous author of “Discourse on the Union of kingdoms as fourfold: by marriage, by election, by gift or purchase, by conquest” [1604] believed that following the marriage of Jagiełło and Jadwiga, the Crown of Poland had incorporated the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and that laws of the latter had been brought into conformity with that of the Poles.²⁷¹ He emphasised how unique this was in order to oppose the union of laws between England and Scotland. Clearly familiar with the history of Poland, among numerous examples of all types of union, he included royal marriages of Polish princesses as illustrations of a union by marriage.

His and Savile’s reservations about legal union was not unique; both English and Scottish writers opposed it, although, allegedly, for different reasons. Whereas the English believed their law to be “superior, immortal and quasi-immutable” and expected the Scots’ submission to the common law, the Scots deplored this condescending attitude and defended their law on grounds of patriotism.²⁷² Unsurprisingly, also the Scottish perspective on the status of the two kingdoms and, consequently, on the typology of unions differed considerably. In contrast to some English writers, the Scots emphasised their independence and sovereignty seeing the union as a union of two equals. This was strongly argued in the most detailed presentation of the Scottish position, Thomas Craig’s *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus*, written in 1605. Craig, lawyer and jurist, was appointed by James VI & I in 1604 one of the Scottish commissioners to discuss possibilities of a closer union. Accordingly, his treatise was written from the perspective of a strong supporter of a perfect union and presented arguments that closely coincide with the king’s agenda.

²⁷¹ “Discourse on the Union of kingdoms as fourfold: by marriage by election, by gift or purchase, by conquest”, [1604] – SP 14/7 f. 170v. Cf. “Copy of Discourse...”, [1604] – SP 14/7 f. 180.

²⁷² *Jacobean Union*, xxxvi.

Craig's argument was built around historical and legal evidence. Following Livy and Polybius, Craig pointed to "uniformity of religion, laws, customs, and language, common rights, a single government pursuing a consistent and impartial policy, identical discipline, the same coinage, weights and measures, and, above all, the same name" as the essentials of a complete and perfect union.²⁷³ According to Craig, some of those conditions were already fulfilled and the remaining differences could be relatively easily overcome. Thus, he underlined the shared language and the common essentials of doctrine, which made a solid foundation for the conformity of religion. As to the coinage, weights and measures, Craig supported its uniformity, though he did not think the matter vital for forming the union.²⁷⁴ Also, he tried to diminish differences between the Scottish and English legal systems.

However, crucial as Craig's voice was in the union debate, his importance in the context of the current discussion lies in the fact that unlike many Scottish writers, such as John Gordon, David Hume, Robert Pont and John Maxwell, Craig invoked the example of the *Rzeczpospolita* in his discourse. Craig first referred to this kingdom's union while discussing the meaning of the union. The "union" was meant as a fusion of two states into a single realm; a fusion which resulted in two kingdoms, peoples or states becoming one.²⁷⁵ The linguistic-legal analysis, in which Craig emphasised that the union of two parts brings out a new, whole and distinct entity, was followed by the example of the vocabulary used by the Poles in their union with the Lithuanians and Massagetaens, namely "incorporation" and "invisceration" with their purpose "of more distinctly defin[ing] the meaning of the word 'union' and the force of it".²⁷⁶ The implication that Poland-Lithuania was an example of such perfect union was, however, undermined by subsequent references. For example, in the chapter discussing the issue of laws, Craig used the case of the *Rzeczpospolita* as an illustration of the union between

²⁷³ Craig, 285.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 297.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 282, 283.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 283. Neither Kromer, nor, to my knowledge, other contemporaneous Polish historian mentioned the Massagetaens. Craig's reference to this ancient tribe suggests his familiarity with Herodotus, who described both the Massagetaens and the Sarmatians, although without mentioning any alliance between these tribes - Herodotus, *Dzieje, Ks. IV Melpomene*, transl. Seweryn Hammer (Warszawa, 2008), 232, 235. Craig did not name his source of information about the Poles' unions, but the analysed vocabulary is evocative of the union of Horodło, which uses the words "incorporamus & invisceramus" to describe the linking of Lithuania to Poland - *Akta unji*, 65. Moreover, some union conditions cited by Craig come from the same act.

kingdoms which kept their own independent legal systems. As he stated, Poland and Lithuania had become irrevocably united under the same ruler as a result of the marriage of Jadwiga and Jagiełło, but this had been made under the condition that both countries should maintain their own courts of appeal, there should be no right of appeal from the courts of the Duchy to that of the Crown and that Lithuania should enjoy its ancient laws and customs.²⁷⁷ Also, it was stipulated that Cracow and Vilna should be kept as the capitals in each respective part. In addition, Craig pointed to the preservation of the original names (the Great Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland) and separate public offices, and the retention of the countries' own laws, customs and institutions, which was also supported by the union of the Poles and the Massagatae (as a distinct union from the one between the Poles and the Lithuanians).²⁷⁸ Elsewhere, Craig described the use of common seals in Poland-Lithuania to put at ease those who feared that the adoption of a new style would bring about the unification of public offices.²⁷⁹

Although the abovementioned characteristics seemingly indicated the existence of a federation rather than “a new whole and distinct entity”, Craig's use of Poland-Lithuania was by no means negative, as he employed these examples to argue that the submission to identical laws and systems was not a *sine qua non* of the planned Anglo-Scottish union.²⁸⁰ It has been argued that a recently developed nationalistic reflex could sway Craig to this position.²⁸¹ In truth, Craig seemed to be conscious of his countrymen's feelings and we could read his attention to Lithuania's guarantees as Craig's endeavours to abate Scots concerns about being swallowed by a bigger partner. More generally, his presentation of the *Rzeczpospolita's* case could be instrumental in diminishing popular fears – on both sides – about losing the countries' distinctiveness. Though the description of Poland-Lithuania was only a small part of the 300 page-long treatise, which was

²⁷⁷ *Craig*, 300-301. In fact, it was Jagiełło's coronation and the fulfillment of his promise to join Poland and Lithuania, not the marriage itself, that bound both countries.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 391, 408, 303.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 408.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.* Nevertheless, he tried to convince his readers that the laws of Scotland and England were already in great harmony and he was at pains to demonstrate their common traits – an easily excused attempt considering his employer's plans.

²⁸¹ *Jacobean Union*, xxxvii.

published only in the 20th century, Craig's manuscript circulated widely and it can be imagined that the relevance of this example was noticed by its readers.

But Craig was not the only Scot familiar with the unions of Poland and Lithuania. Several examples of the Polish unions were discussed also by the anonymous author of *A treatise about the union of England and Scotland* [1604]. Although its missing front page makes the identification of the author impossible, his use of Scots spelling and words together with his consistent opposition against English claims to primacy clearly indicate his Scottish nationality.²⁸² Similarly to Savile's, the first part of the tract discussed various types of union and their durability. Among the union by election, by marriage or succession, by annexation and subjection, the first two models were deemed particularly unstable. In contrast, a union by uniformity and "mutual participation of differences" (a form of annexing and incorporating union) guaranteed permanency, as illustrated by the example of the Romans with the Sabins and Antemnates, which were perfectly incorporated.²⁸³ However, the Roman Empire provided also an example of a less perfect, yet equally proper union between Rome and other peoples, where the latter were permitted to keep their own laws and privileges. According to the author, such partial incorporation prevailed in Europe since the decay of the Roman Empire and, more importantly, as more befitting for the union between free monarchies, was the type of union recommended by him for Scotland and England.²⁸⁴ Thus, while both kingdoms should enjoy "equal communication of the habilities and freedoms of denization", each should reserve their unique laws, privileges and judicatory.²⁸⁵ Although it was the French case that the author of *The Union* discussed in detail as an example of possible union restrictions, Poland and Lithuania were placed within the same category, thus the analysis of the French example provides an insight into the author's interpretation of the Polish-Lithuanian case.

The reader was reminded that the union of Toulouse, which united the Earldom of Toulouse and the country of Languedoc to the house of France, had allowed

²⁸² Ibid., li.

²⁸³ 'A treatise about the union of England and Scotland' in *Jacobean Union*, 43.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 45-46, 51.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 51.

only the princes of royal blood to be governors in the joined territories; no tolls could be imposed without the consent of the parliament or estates of the country, which should keep its ancient laws and privileges and judicatory. Moreover, the people of Languedoc should be exempted from the law governing inheritance of land by aliens, but being denized on the grounds of their place of residence, without any need of naturalisation procedure.²⁸⁶

However, although the author's claim that the like reservations had been granted to Lithuania, "annexed to the Kingdom of Poleland by the election of Jagello (...), Duce of Lithuanie, to be King of Poleland" was in essence true, the conditions and developments of the Polish-Lithuanian union were more complex. Firstly, the original union of 1385 (Union of Krewo) projected the perpetual attachment of Lithuania to Poland²⁸⁷ with Jagiello's intention to rule both and passing that power to his successors.²⁸⁸ However, his plans were disrupted by Vitold, his cousin and an actual ruler in Lithuania, whose position was soon formally recognised by granting him a title of grand duke. The latter agreement of Horodlo (1413) established the legal separation of the titles of the Grand Duke of Lithuania and the King of Poland,²⁸⁹ and confirmed that Vitold's successors (were they to be elected) should be named by the king of Poland with the consent of both the Lithuanians and the Poles.²⁹⁰ However, in practice, most of the grand dukes subsequently became the kings of Poland, thus preserving the personal union between the countries.

Yet, those were details of secondary significance as the author's intention was clearly to demonstrate that the differences of laws and customs did not hinder a happy and profitable union. Interestingly, the union with Lithuania was not the only example of Polish unions, but the author also supported his argument on the preservation of individual laws and customs with the example of Poland's annexation of Borussia under Casimir I.²⁹¹ Furthermore, he referred to the union of Poland and Hungary under Louis, "King of Hungary by birth and Poland by

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

²⁸⁷ "Demum etiam Jagalo dux saepedictus promittit terras suas Lituaniae at Russiae coronae regni Poloniae perpetuo applicare" - *Akta unji*, 2.

²⁸⁸ *Dembkowski*, 24.

²⁸⁹ However, Jagiello and his successors as kings of Poland retained the title of supreme dukes of Lithuania.

²⁹⁰ *Akta unji*, 67.

²⁹¹ *Jacobean Union*, 46.

election”, and Poland and Sweden under then reigning Sigismund as the examples of the union in person by election, while the annexation of Livonia by Sigismund II illustrated the union by conquest.²⁹²

The range of examples of Poland’s unions used by this anonymous author set him apart from most of the unionist writers, who largely limited themselves to discussion on Poland-Lithuania. But he was not the only one. The short manuscript treatise titled “Concerning three different kinds of Union, viz. Head, in Lawes, & Privileges” (n.d.) also considered the union of Poland and Sweden, although its anonymous author admitted that this union came about “with some controversy” and it was not commonly recognised, but rather these two countries “were by some esteemed to be united”.²⁹³ Most remarkably, his opening example of the union in the head, that is, under one king, was the union of France and Poland under Henry Valois as he rightly pointed out that “the throne of France fell to Henry III when he was before actually the king of Poland”.²⁹⁴ Without elaborating on this particular example, he described such a personal union as used usually for the purpose of defence or invasion; a comment characteristic of the tract’s style, for the author, though clearly well-informed, was not interested in scholarly analyses of unions, but focused on their practical effects.

In turn, far-reaching consequences characterised the union of laws, which touched relations between the prince and his subjects (“laws of state” viz. public law) and between people themselves (“laws of controversies” viz. civil law). Poland-Lithuania was given as an example of the union of laws of state, together with the Holy Roman Empire. These laws expressed the interdependence between the king’s prerogatives and the people’s liberties and were sometimes kept as a written constitution, though more often they were shaped by tradition, consequently being subject to constant alterations. The author did not specify which model applied to Poland-Lithuania and nothing reveals whether he was aware of the *Articuli Henriciani* and of the *pacta conventa*, written down for the

²⁹² Ibid., 46, 39, 42.

²⁹³ “Concerning three different kinds of Union, viz. Head, in Lawes, & Privileges”, (n.d.) – BL Harley 292, f.135. Cf. “Speech on the Union of Kingdoms as being threefold – in head, in laws and in privileges”, [1604] – SP 14/7 f. 157 and “Copy of Speech...”, [1604] – SP 14/7 f. 159.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. It is impossible to assess how familiar with the constitutional niceties of the case the author was, but his statement stands closer scrutiny. See Note 93.

first time in 1573. However, the analysis of his description of the union of privilege shows that he was unfamiliar with the conditions of the 1569 union.²⁹⁵

As the author explained, the union of privilege could concern either person or place. The marks of the former included subjects' free intercourse in either kingdom, but also the communication in parliament, admittance to offices, freedom, possessions and inheritance of land, while the latter denoted "freedom for transportation by sea or land without custom; as from shire to shire, and from port to port". No example of the union of privilege of place was given, and while the Empire was distinguished as the complete example of the union of privilege of person, Poland-Lithuania was marked only for the communication of parliament.²⁹⁶ Since the union of Lublin guaranteed the Poles and the Lithuanians admittance to offices and allowed inheritance of land,²⁹⁷ it transpires that the author was unaware of its conditions, and by "parliament" he meant the council, introduced in earlier union acts.

Such interpretation was not unusual, as already testified by Savile's tract, but also by the writing of Alberico Gentili, a jurist of Italian origin, who settled in England in 1580s, where he soon rose to academic and political prominence.²⁹⁸ A supporter of the close English-Scottish union, in his 'De unione regnorum Britanniae' (1605) Gentili accentuated the unity between Poland and Lithuania. After the latter has been "united, appropriated and incorporated" into the Crown of Poland, the peoples of both Lithuania and Poland together decided on the kingdom's affairs and unified coinage, coordinated alliances, shared freedoms and joined parliaments testified to their close union.²⁹⁹ Unlike so many other authors, Gentili named his source, which was *Statuta regni Poloniae*.³⁰⁰ Tellingly, the only relevant edition of this statute collection by Herbut did not contain acts of the 1569 union and it is clear that Gentili, like Savile, referred to the act of Mielnik.³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ "Concerning three different kinds of Union", f. 135v.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., f. 135r.

²⁹⁷ Dembkowski, 188.

²⁹⁸ Artemis Gause, 'Gentili, Alberico' - ODNB (accessed 28 March 2013).

²⁹⁹ Alberico Gentili, 'De Unione Regnorum Britanniae' in idem, *Regales disputationes tres* (London, 1605), 78.

³⁰⁰ I would like to thank Prof. Jolanta Chojińska-Mika for helping me to decipher this annotation.

³⁰¹ Cf. Jan Herbut, *Statuta Regni Poloniae* (Zamość, 1597). Earlier Latin editions were published in 1563 and 1567.

As mentioned earlier, sources discussing the union of Lublin were scarce. For that matter, its terms, unlike the acts of earlier unions, were written in Polish, not Latin, which hindered its wider dissemination. The limited access to information explains Britons' reliance on earlier Polish unions (whether with Lithuania or other countries), in which they were clearly very interested. Another striking feature of the 1604-1607 debates is the variety of interpretations the *Rzeczpospolita* gave rise to. Whereas some took it for a model of the perfect union, others were willing to be guided by its restrictions.³⁰² Naturally, readings depended on the source used, but as the example of Savile and Gentili shows, the same source could yield different interpretations. Many of the union tracts were written anonymously, but it transpires that the *Rzeczpospolita* was discussed predominantly by Englishmen; the apparent trend of British treatment of Poland-Lithuania, as already signalled. As we will see, this pattern was to change dramatically at the end of the century.

The union of 1707

The use of the *Rzeczpospolita* by about a quarter of the 1604-1607 union writers testified to Britons' great interest in its structure.³⁰³ In contrast, there was no comment on Poland-Lithuania in tracts preceding the 1643 union agreement (the Solemn League and Covenant), despite the growing number of sources specifying the relationship between Poland and Lithuania. This should not surprise us for the Anglo-Scottish commission established in 1642 was interested primarily in doctrinal and ecclesiastical alignment and for their purpose the multi-confessional *Rzeczpospolita* with its legally guaranteed toleration and ruled by a Catholic king was hardly a model worthy of emulation. Although Britons were reminded of the Polish-Lithuanian example in 1643 through the reprint of the 1604 tract by John Thornborough, the impact it had was probably limited since its main purpose was to praise unity as a principle rather than to discuss unions in details and it only mentioned briefly the union of Jadwiga and

³⁰² 30 April 1607 - *JHC*, I, 14.

³⁰³ *Jacobean Union* estimated the number of tracts on twenty eight.

Jagiello.³⁰⁴ Casually remarked upon in the 1670-discussions, Poland-Lithuania attracted serious attention again only in the years preceding the union of 1707.

Indeed, the analogy between Poland-Lithuania and Britain's circumstances appeared obvious. The problem of succession that stimulated the union of Lublin, seemingly paralleled Britons' trouble with securing the succession after the anticipated childless death of Queen Anne, whilst the history of the Polish-Lithuanian union, which started as a dynastic union, but "was perfected under King Sigismund Augustus",³⁰⁵ echoed experiences and expectations of Britons, who in their majority sought not the dissolution, but the renegotiation of the union of crowns.³⁰⁶

Also, for once, detailed information on the practices of the Polish-Lithuanian union was widely available. The most obvious source was Bernard Connor's *History of Poland* (1698), but the subject was examined even more closely by Moses Pitt in his *English Atlas* (1680) and discussed also by de Tende in *An Account of State of Poland* (1700) and La Bizardiere in *An historical account of the divisions in Poland* (1700), not to mention newspapers' coverage. Furthermore, the relatively recent successes of King John III Sobieski over the Turk increased interest in Poland-Lithuania and this high profile was further endorsed by the election of Friedrich August, the elector of Saxony, as the king of the *Rzeczpospolita* (1697). However, his was a double election, which had to be finally decided by combat and which laid bare flaws in the country's political system and its abuses by the nobility.³⁰⁷ The country's weakness was further exposed during the Great Northern War (1700-21), when Poland-Lithuania became a theatre of war. This included a serious civil conflict amid a kaleidoscopic series of events: the dethronement of August II and the election of Stanisław Leszczyński (1704), followed by the abdication (1706) and reclamation of the crown by Augustus II (1709). Such events hardly testified to the system's effectiveness and

³⁰⁴ Cf. John Thornborough, *The Joiefull and Blessed reuniting the two mighty and famous kingdomes, England and Scotland* (London, 1604), 21-2 and idem, *A discourse showing the great happiness* (London, 1641), 141.

³⁰⁵ Pufendorf, *An introduction*, 339-340.

³⁰⁶ John Robertson, 'Conceptual Framework of Anglo-Scottish Union' in Arrieta & Elliott (eds), *Forms of Union*, 133.

³⁰⁷ Both Augustus and Prince of Conti were proclaimed kings by different authorities, but whereas the latter remained in France for two months after the election, Augustus immediately rushed with the army to Poland-Lithuania. When Prince of Conti finally arrived to the *Rzeczpospolita*, he was defeated by the forces faithful to Augustus and forced to leave the country.

the country's stability. Consequently, whilst at the turn of the century access to information on Poland-Lithuania was wider than before, because of the country's developments it cast a shadow on Britons' perception of the *Rzeczpospolita*. While none of the 1603-1607 treatises criticised Poland-Lithuania, even when this example was not to be imitated, Britons discussing the Anglo-Scottish union at the beginning of the eighteenth century were more critical of the *Rzeczpospolita*.

This change of attitude is easily detected in *A discourse upon the uniting Scotland with England* (1702) by Blackerby Fairfax. Although this English physician of rigorously regalist views neutrally introduced Poland-Lithuania as the example of a union of elective kingdoms and in a matter-of-fact manner referred to the period between the union of Jagiełło (ie. the union of Krewo, 1385) to that of Sigismund Augustus (ie. the union of Lublin, 1569) to argue that unions in elective kingdoms were less durable and required a long time to bring to perfection, later in the text he bluntly declared the *Rzeczpospolita* the worst government in Europe.³⁰⁸ The reason for such a harsh judgment lay supposedly in the excessive power of the nobility, who put their personal betterment over the common good and who abused the right of *liberum veto* if parliamentary resolutions endangered their own interests. Consequently, Fairfax approvingly commented on kings' efforts to curtail the noblemen's privileges. The nobility of Poland-Lithuania, who divided people into tyrants and slaves, served also as a warning lesson of dangers that could befall a numerous Scottish nobility with similar disparities of wealth. To prevent this, but also specifically to prepare for the union with England, some grants of the nobility should be revoked and the laws of inheritance adapted to those of England.³⁰⁹ This was not the only concession the Scots should make. Crucially, although throughout his tract Fairfax assumed the identity of a Scot, his position was particularly favourable towards England. A strong supporter of the union, which he saw as highly recommendable and mutually advantageous, Fairfax argued that all that was good about Scotland – including its law and church government – had originated from its southern neighbour and “a man curious to know what England was, he with great measure find it in observing what Scotland is”.³¹⁰ Although later he

³⁰⁸ Blackerby Fairfax, *A discourse upon the uniting Scotland and England* (London, 1702), 21-2, 41.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 38ff.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

moderated his views and claimed that the legal conformity should result from both nations studying each other's laws and altering them to the common benefit, or even that Scotland should maintain its legal independence if the pace of change proved too fast, there was no doubt that the burden of adjustment rested mainly on Scotland – in this and other areas.³¹¹ Fairfax appealed to Scotland “to forget [its] name, cancel the imaginary bounds of each kingdom, as our constitutions and customs, show us plainly to be originally the same people; not to scruple the calling ourselves English, than we do the calling our language so, in any part beyond the sea”. Notably, to ensure the durability of the union of the crowns he proposed to make it via an act of state “like that of Poland and Lithuania at the diet of Lublin”.³¹² Apparently, Fairfax approved of the form of introducing the Polish-Lithuanian union rather than its substance, for the extension of privileges he was so critical of had been one of the key arguments in the pre-union debates in Poland and Lithuania.³¹³

Undoubtedly, many Scots feared an incorporating merger based on such a scenario and countered it with proposals for an Anglo-Scottish federation. One of the chief proponents of the idea, James Hodges, denied that a total coalition between two countries would result in their one common interest. On the contrary, disagreements were unavoidable and, perceiving the danger of England outvoting Scotland as an inherent feature of a shared parliament, he opposed its creation. However, if such a perfect coalition was possible, nothing could prevent the whole representations of Scotland and England sitting together after the model of Lithuania and Poland.³¹⁴ Tellingly, Hodges did not explore this union, though its particular conditions, such as separate judiciaries, offices and treasuries, could support his project of Anglo-Scottish federation. It is difficult to determine whether he did not know the details of the Polish-Lithuanian arrangement or whether the presence of the common parliament induced him to identify it as an incorporating union rather than a federation.

Poland-Lithuania received an equally obscure treatment from the hands of another federalist, George Ridpath. His *Discourse upon the union of Scotland and*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 62.

³¹³ See *Dembkowski*, esp. 49ff.

³¹⁴ [James Hodges], *The rights & interest of the British monarchies* (n.p., 1706), 4.

England (1702) drew heavily on former union debates and treatises (for example, the parliamentary debate of 1670 and Thomas Craig's *De Unione*) to mount an argument against the union with England. An opponent of the creation of one parliament, which he considered destructive to the Scottish government, Ridpath nonetheless invoked the example of Poland-Lithuania to point out the mutual preservation of their sovereignty.³¹⁵

Other Scottish opponents of the incorporating union with England focused on the origin rather than the form of Polish unions. Thus George Mackenzie, Earl of Cromartie, in *A Second letter on the British union* (1706) recalled the Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-Swedish unions to argue that historically two peoples were joined together and their laws changed only as a result of conquest.³¹⁶ Let us notice that although he intended to reassure his countrymen that if "we joined with England [they] can have no concern to alter our particular laws", an alternative reading was also possible. Namely, this passage could play well (or rather badly) with Scots' worries of becoming a province of England and although the use of force was unthinkable, the circumstance of the union had many signs of a conquest – economic and political alike.³¹⁷ And Mackenzie another tract, *A letter from E.C. to E.W. concerning the union* (1706), where he commended an incorporating union, arguing that it would make England stronger and remove the root of contention between two kingdoms, though reassuring to the English, could only fuel the fears of his countrymen.³¹⁸ Furthermore, Mackenzie maintained that England should not be afraid of a separation as Poland was from Sweden. Significantly, he named the latter a weaker nation, thus it follows that, by comparison, he considered Scotland a weaker nation too.³¹⁹

³¹⁵ [George Ridpath], *A Discourse upon the union of Scotland and England Humbly submitted to the Parliament, by a lover of his Country* (n.p., 1702), 46-7.

³¹⁶ [George Mackenzie, Earl of Cromartie], *A Second letter on the British union* (Edinburgh, 1706), 4.

³¹⁷ John Robertson, 'Union, State and Empire. The Britain of 1707 in its European setting' in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial state at war* (London, 1994), 237-246.

³¹⁸ [George Mackenzie, Earl of Cromartie], *A letter from E.C. to E.W. concerning the union* [Edinburgh, 1706], 13-14.

³¹⁹ However, it is unclear why Mackenzie was so confident that a similar separation would not happen between England and Scotland since he was aware that ultimately the Swede – this "weaker nation" – had deposed Sigismund Vasa and thus had broken the dynastic union between Sweden and Poland-Lithuania.

In contrast, William Seton of Pitmedden was interested in neither the history nor the structure of Poland-Lithuania, but its practices. In his speech in the parliament in November 1706 he reminded his listeners that the Scottish government was not “a Polish aristocracy, founded on *pacta conventa* whereby all the gentry were empowered in their particular meetings to prescribe rules to their representatives in a general diet”, neither was it “a common democracy, whereby every subject of Scotland may claim in a vote in the legislature”.³²⁰ Seton was clearly familiar with the constitution of the *Rzeczpospolita*, but he used this as an unquestionably negative example to juxtapose it with the limited government of Scotland, which was agreeable “to reason, our laws and our history”.³²¹

Neither did Seton, nor other Protestant Britons, approve of the election of Friedrich August, the Lutheran duke of Saxony, who converted to Catholicism to secure the throne of the *Rzeczpospolita*, where he ruled as August II. Seton castigated the king as an apostate who intended to force the Saxons to Catholicism and who was “made a Tool to embroil all the Protestant Powers of Europe”, while Richard Burridge sarcastically commented on August II’s eagerness to satisfy his ambitions at the cost of salvation and implored the king to leave the throne to “one purposely bred up [to lose] his Soul”.³²² But those reluctant to enter the union with England and open to the renewal of the alliance with France downplayed the importance of religion. For example, Patrick Abercromby, a Jacobite, argued in *The advantages of the act of security compar’ed with these of the intended union* (1706) that when mutual interest were at stake, Protestant and Catholic states could be closely joined. He illustrated his conviction with the particular situation of Poland-Lithuania namely the alliance

³²⁰ ‘A Speech in Parliament spoken by Mr Seton jr of Pitmedden, November 16, 1706, upon the subject of the third article then being in debate in the House’ – Daniel Defoe, *The history of the Union of Great Britain. Part Two*, ed. D.W. Hayton (London, 2002), VIII, 75.

³²¹ Ibid. In comparison, the anonymous author of *A Discourse of the Necessity and Seasonableness of an unanimous Address for Dissolving the union* (s.p., 1715) saw the role of *pacta conventa* and the political system of Poland-Lithuania in a very different light. Namely, to him *pacta conventa* were an equivalent of the Claim of Right; they were amended and renewed on the accession of each king to the throne, thus allowed the people to express their expectations and shape constitutional arrangements of Poland-Lithuania. Correspondingly, the privilege of petitioning played such role in Britain. The right of petitioning (secured specifically by the Claim of Right and generally by law of nation) was vital for the Scot’s survival because in the absence of the Scottish parliament it was the only means that allowed the people to voice their political frustrations and initiate necessary changes. This in particular concerned the 1707 union, which the author considered the most destructive to the interest of Scotland. To him there was only one way to readdress this “Grand National Mischief” and prevent the utter ruin of the country – to dissolve the union – *ibid.*, 2, 7.

³²² Sir William Seton, *A short speech prepared to be spoken by a worthy member in Parliament concerning the present state of the nation* (n.p., 1700), 16, Burridge, *The apostate prince*, 8.

between the King of Sweden and King Stanisław Leszczyński against King Augustus II, which he aptly described as “a joint war of the Protestant king and a Popish Pretender against a Popish king or a Protestant duke”.³²³ On the other hand, James Hodges argued that the Scots did not have to be ruled by the Prince of Wales, but could opt for another candidate – just as the Poles found themselves a Stanislaus (i.e. Stanisław Leszczyński) or in the past the Scots chose Robert Bruce.³²⁴ The strength of this argument was twofold. Firstly and generally, it validated the people’s right to choose their own ruler, thus reaffirmed that both Scotland and Poland-Lithuania were limited monarchies. Secondly and more specifically, it suggested that existing personal unions could be terminated. Hodges provided no details about the union of Poland-Lithuania with Saxony, but a closer reading of other examples he discussed, such as of a Duke of Braganza, the first king of the independent Portugal, makes it clear that Hodges valued the election of Stanislaus also because it disunited the *Rzeczpospolita* and Saxony.³²⁵

The use of Polish unions in British pre-1707 union debates stood in a stark contrast with the situation in the 1604-1607. Generally, when the latter had been neutral and descriptive, the former was biased and argumentative. What is more, most writers were critical of Poland-Lithuania, while its few exponents failed to explore its potential. Though most of the eighteenth-century authors seemed to be familiar with the union of Lublin, they were significantly less thorough in their discussions and also the range of their examples was narrower. Whereas Jacobean writers studied Poland’s unions with Lithuania, Hungary, Sweden, Prussia, Livonia and France, those debating around 1707 relied predominantly on the Polish-Lithuanian union.³²⁶ It is possible that this most recent and the fullest union was considered the most relevant and so familiar as not to require elaborate elucidation. On the other hand, the union of Lublin had been a reality for over a century, with which an averagely informed person would be familiar without much effort, whereas obtaining the detailed knowledge of historical precedents would require an erudite’s drive. Thus, the use of the *Rzeczpospolita*’s

³²³ [Patrick Abercromby], *The advantages of the Act of Security, compar’d with these of the intended union: founded on the revolution principles publish’ed by Mr. Daniel De Foe* (n.p., 1706), 34.

³²⁴ [Hodges], *The rights and interest*, 28.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ Only Mackenzie mentions the union of Poland and Hungary – [George Mackenzie, Earl of Cromarty], *Parainesis Pacifica; or, a persuasive to the Union of Britain* (Edinburgh & London, 1702), vii.

example is suggestive of a shift in using historical sources and, as a result, in constructing arguments.

Another difference in discussing Poland-Lithuania was the limited use of it made by the English. England's chief unionist writer, Daniel Defoe, did not discuss Poland-Lithuania in this context, though he may have affected Britons' perception of Poland-Lithuania through his disparaging remarks about the kingdom, of which his satire the *Dyett of Poland* (1705) was a classic illustration. Moreover, the overall proportion of tracts treating the example of Poland-Lithuania was much lower than in the 1604-1607. Perhaps the relevance of Poland-Lithuania to Britain's circumstances was after all illusory: the novelty of the union of 1603 that made the reliance on historical, particularly continental, precedents all the more attractive³²⁷ has worn off by 1707, addressing the issue of succession in hereditary monarchies differed from choosing a new prince in an elective kingdom, and solutions to balancing economies of associated states could hardly be found in the economically crippled *Rzeczpospolita*.

Conclusion

As we have seen, not only Kromer, but also popular Polish and international authors, exposed Britons to an idealised image of the *Rzeczpospolita's* constitution. Notably, the rationales behind such idealisations varied greatly. This capacity to accommodate incongruous visions was also demonstrated by multiple uses of the Polish-Lithuanian government in Britons' political debates throughout the century. The coexistence of two different mindsets deserves our particular attention. First, we should note the ambivalence Britons expressed towards Poland-Lithuania's government; widely accepted as a limited monarchy, it had its enthusiasts as well as critics. However, those factions did not correspond exactly with the groups of "republicans" and "royalists". This was in part due to the ambiguity surrounding the *Rzeczpospolita's* constitution, which was plastic enough to elicit "royalist" appreciation and "republican" criticism, as illustrated most clearly by Needham's treatment. Those attitudes brought forth a broad spectrum of reactions and interpretations, which should caution against the

³²⁷ *Jacobean Union*, xli.

exclusive association of the *Rzeczpospolita* exclusively with republican traditions. Instead they should draw attention to the subtleties of Britons' contextualization of the Polish-Lithuanian constitution.

Such diverse responses resulted in part from the paucity of information about Poland-Lithuania, for the prevalent generalisations made it easier to mold this example to fit one's purpose. Paradoxically, the increase of information about Poland-Lithuania's government, particularly at the end of the seventeenth century, adversely affected the country's prestige, for it coincided with negative political developments in the country. Also, the existence of more up-to-date information did not correlate with a more in-depth discussion, as testified by the union debates.

Finally, evidence shows that Englishmen consistently chose the Polish-Lithuanian example more often than Scots. A striking exception to this trend was the 1707 union debates, when Scots evoked the *Rzeczpospolita* with a much higher frequency. Whereas it may be presumed (though not corroborated by evidence) that this was due to a supposed affinity between the English and Polish governments, the reason may be more prosaic. Namely, it could have stemmed from the crucial role of London as an information centre and, consequently, the easier access of Englishmen to publications about Poland-Lithuania. However, both English and Scots were unified in expediently using the example of the *Rzeczpospolita*. We now turn to examine the principles which guided Britons' treatment of Poland-Lithuania in the context of geopolitics.

Chapter 4

Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom

Introduction

As we have seen, Britons continued to be interested in the political system of Poland-Lithuania throughout the long seventeenth century. What is more, the *Rzeczpospolita's* international position was an object of their concern as well, in particular its ability to stand against the Ottoman Empire. Britons followed closely Poland-Lithuania's diplomatic relations with the Habsburg Empire and France and paid considerable attention to transactions with Sweden, and also to the conflicts with Muscovy and the Cossacks. Yet, it was the *Rzeczpospolita's* relationship with the Ottomans that provoked most reactions and dominated the press and, as far as it is possible to gauge, other media coverage. The *Rzeczpospolita* has long been known as a bulwark of Christendom and the aim of this chapter is to inspect how this idea was received in Britain and how it developed during the seventeenth century. Following a brief overview of Poland-Lithuania's geopolitical situation, this chapter begins by looking at the origin of the idea of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom and its import to Britain, which is clearly linked with Ossoliński's embassy to King James in 1621. The section also signals how problematic this idea could be and points to the complex dynamics of Catholic-Protestant-Christian-barbarian identities. This matter is further explored in the section that discusses the period between the 1630s and the early 1660s, when the idea of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark clearly weakened. This part examines also the Polish-Swedish conflict and tries to establish how it affected the perception of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark. The last section discusses the rebirth and the reconfiguration of the idea, clearly connecting this revival with John Sobieski, the hetman and later the king of the *Rzeczpospolita*. The chapter not only discusses how the idea of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom fluctuated in Britain, but it also highlights diverse responses of Protestant Britons to Poland-Lithuania's religious status in its broader geopolitical setting. Thus, in the context of this study, the chapter serves as another illustration of the flexibility and multiplicity of Britons' perceptions of the *Rzeczpospolita*.

Poland-Lithuania in geopolitical context

Traditional historiography sees seventeenth-century Poland-Lithuania as a kingdom in decline, torn by domestic troubles, manipulated by foreign powers and almost constantly at war.¹ Indeed, aggressive, ambitious and dynamic neighbours posed a serious danger to the kingdom. However, it was the *Rzeczpospolita's* political structure that encouraged foreign intrusion and made it difficult to mount a united defence against it, just as the kingdom's inept diplomacy and domestic unrest largely contributed to the successful outcome of attacks.² Moreover, whether in pursuit of aggrandisement or security, Poland-Lithuania was the aggressor as much as the prey. Notably, not only public welfare but often individual interests – whether royal or noble – were the motive for the kingdom's military engagements. Thus, for instance, the war to recover the Swedish crown was often seen by noblemen as the king's private quest, while involvement in the dynastic affairs of Muscovy during the Great Troubles originated from the personal ambitions of the Mniszech family.³

Even so, these private motives were often instrumental in sparking or rekindling latent national rivalries. In the struggle for control over the region alliances shifted frequently, and throughout the century Poland-Lithuania was intermittently fighting and negotiating with the Swedes, the Muscovites, the Cossacks, the Tartars and the Turks. Whereas Sweden dreamt of *dominum Maris Baltici* and saw the conquest of Poland-Lithuania as a convenient method for financing its other enterprises and as a defensive strategy against Muscovy, the latter was determined to regain access to the Baltic Sea and claimed rights over some territories held by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Crown.⁴ Divided by territorial conflicts, the Muscovites and the Poles were, nonetheless,

¹ Oskar Halecki, *A history of Poland* (London, 1955), 145ff. Adam Zamoyski, *The Polish way* (London, 1987), 175-179, 189, 207; Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A history of Poland* (Oxford, 1981), I, 321ff.

² Orest Subtelny's *Domination of Eastern Europe. Native nobilities and foreign absolutism, 1500-1715* (Gloucester, 1986), esp. 14-22, 96-108, presents interesting thoughts on the importance of Poland-Lithuania's political system alongside a controversial notion of Eastern Europe.

³ Davies, *God's Playground*, I, 447ff. Reports from Poland-Lithuania made those views known to London – n.n., *Ad negata Sigismundo III a nobilibus Poloniae assistientia contra Suecos*, n.p., n.d., 1622 – *EFE*, VI, 255; Halecki, *A history*, 145-146.

⁴ Muscovy claimed its right to Ukraine, that is, the Ruthenian palatinates of Lithuania which were incorporated into Poland in 1569 and also to Smolensk and Chernigov, which belonged to Lithuania – Henryk Wisner, *Król i car. Rzeczpospolita i Moskwa w XVI I XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1995), 91.

occasionally united in their fights against the Tartars and the Turks. However, Muscovy, and the Turks and Sweden alike supported the centrifugal movement of the Cossacks (who, dissatisfied with their political and social conditions, rose against the Poles in 1648) until, characteristically, soon afterwards the Ottoman Empire withdrew its support, fearing that the increasing position of Muscovy would endanger the balance of power. Both a principle of preventing another party from gaining a dominant position and a tendency to use a neighbour's vulnerability for one's own advantage made alliances short-lived.

Since in the region yesterday's allies quickly became today's enemies, Poland-Lithuania looked for firmer friendships elsewhere. Western partners appeared to be more reliable as their interests in the region seemed less immediate. Seventeenth-century Polish diplomacy oscillated between the rival Habsburg Empire and France. It was the allegedly shared Ottoman threat that drew the *Rzeczpospolita* and the Habsburgs together. On the other side, Vienna was determined to ensure Poland-Lithuania's participation in anti-Ottoman leagues but also sought to secure its detachment from the Empire's domestic affairs, fearing Polish influences in the former Jagiellonian dominions.⁵ The Polish-Habsburg collaboration had a long tradition but, when disappointed with its forms and results, Polish rulers turned to another historical ally, France, whose anti-Polish schemes concocted with Muscovy and Sweden were then opportunely forgotten. Although the credibility of the Most Christian king was potentially undermined by his frequent cooperation with the Sultan, the Poles' wariness of the Habsburgs' overbearing influence made them willing to counterbalance it. This inclination was skilfully capitalised on by the French, whose key interest in Poland-Lithuania lay in weakening the position of their main continental rival.⁶

The *Rzeczpospolita's* close relationship with the Habsburgs was, however, less firm than it seemed. Notably, although tied by royal marriages (half of the brides of the Polish kings in this century came from the House of Habsburg) and regularly renewed treaties of friendship and mutual aid, the realms never shared rulers; despite candidates put forward on numerous occasions, no Habsburg ever

⁵ Augustyniak, *Historia*, 596.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 625.

became the king of Poland-Lithuania.⁷ Similarly, neither several instances of diplomatic volte-face towards France nor the influence of Polish queens of French origin and of France's ambassadors were sufficient to facilitate the election of a French candidate to the Polish throne; the choice of Henri Valois (1573) remained a singular event and his reign lasted only a few months. It was argued that the Polish-Lithuanian nobility feared the import of absolutism too much to be seduced by foreign claimants to the Polish throne.⁸ Be that as it may, noblemen were tempted constantly by the prospect of fortune and power by foreigners and, frequently enough, gave in. However, cooperation with foreign powers was not only a matter of personal advancement but also a means of pursuing alternative politics and, as a tool used by the nobility to prevail upon the king (and *vice versa*) as well as magnates against each other, diplomacy was an important regulator of the *Rzeczpospolita's* internal relationships.

British newspapers were filled with reports on military and diplomatic developments in Poland-Lithuania, which were observed with growing apprehension, particularly between 1648 and 1655 when, following the Cossacks' uprising, the country plunged into war. It was predicted that the kingdom afflicted by "miserable distractions"⁹ and "threatened by sudden ruine"¹⁰ would suffer greatly at the hands of the foreign army but also because of its own internal divisions.¹¹ Britons were not only aware of the situation in the *Rzeczpospolita* but surviving evidence clearly testifies to their unfailing conviction about that kingdom's strong alliance with the Habsburgs throughout the century.¹² Their financial, tactical and military cooperation was discussed in detail, as well as their periodic difficulties.¹³ Frequent news reports gave the impression of a strong relationship with the Habsburgs, but it was also deduced

⁷ Habsburg candidates were never crowned, but they were elected on a few occasions – there was a double election in 1575, when Stephan Bathory and the Emperor Maximilian II Habsburg were announced kings by different factions of nobility. Similarly, in 1587 Prince Maximilian Habsburg was elected the king along with Sigismund Vasa; defeated by the troops of the Great Chancellor Zamoyski at Byczyna, Habsburg withdrew his pretensions to the Polish throne.

⁸ Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, 'Native nobilities and foreign absolutism a Polish-Ottoman case', *Studia Caroliensia*, 3-4 (2004), 303ff.

⁹ *MI*, 23 November 1648.

¹⁰ *MPC*, 19 August 1652.

¹¹ *MPC*, 20 April 1654.

¹² See, for instance, *The continuation of our weekly newes out of Italy, Hungary, Bohemia, Silesia, Austria, July 1622*; Fowler, *The history*, 206; *The Continuation of Our Weekly Avisoes from Forraine Parts*, 18 April 1631; *Exact Coranto from Most Parts of Christendom*, 20 July 1642; *MPC*, 25 November 1652.

¹³ For instance, the Habsburgs' refusal to help the Poles against the Muscovites – *Several Proceedings of State Affaires*, 11 August 1653.

from the fact that, as discussed in Chapter 1, the substantial amount of intelligence about Poland-Lithuania published in British newspapers was gathered at the court of Vienna and other cities in the Habsburg dominions. Also, Britons had no illusion regarding the true intentions of the French towards the *Rzeczpospolita*, who wished “to renew the ancient amity between the Crown of France and that of Poland and to dissuade the King of Poland from aiding the Emperor”,¹⁴ and who would profit from free trade with Poland-Lithuania.¹⁵

Depending on Britain’s current relations with the Emperor and the Most Christian Prince, the *Rzeczpospolita*’s affiliation with the Habsburgs or France could provoke reactions of various kinds. More pointedly, both allies were Catholic and, in the eyes of Britons, cooperation with either of them, and also the pope, clearly placed Poland-Lithuania – predominantly Catholic itself – within the Catholic camp. This affiliation was usually recognised in a matter-of-fact manner, but the perception could change, depending on circumstances. Thus, the *Rzeczpospolita*’s Catholicism could be castigated, especially in the case of a conflict with a Protestant power, yet, it could be equally easily attenuated in the broader context of Christendom’s conflict with the Turks.

¹⁴ *MI*, 4 June 1645.

¹⁵ *MI*, 14 January 1647.

The birth of the idea

We here defy the trembling Ottoman,
Whose Crescent Moon's Eclipsd, put in the wane,
By this bright Northern Star, whose just Renown,
O're Christendom and all the world is [shown] (...)

Be it then known to all the World abroad,
He that Lauds Sobietzki praises God.¹⁶

In this panegyric, published shortly after the battle of Vienna (1683), Sobieski appears as a God-sent avenger who liberated Christendom from the yoke of the Turk, the Great Enemy – both religious and political. The author, Alexander Tyler, a Scottish clergyman and an occasional poet (whom we have already met in Chapter 2), was not alone in his admiration for the Polish king: John III Sobieski was widely praised as “the most heroic and victorious”, “brave” leader whose “valour and prowess matched heroes described in romances” while Poland’s actions were compared with those of Caesar.¹⁷

The great victory over the Ottoman army in 1683 widely promoted Poland-Lithuania as the defender of Christianity. However, this identification was not born at the fields of Vienna. Long before 1683 Poland had been known as the force opposing the infidel; as the bulwark of Christendom. Originally it was a position assumed by the Poles rather than a consciously formulated idea but this “frontier mentality with the sense of mission on behalf of Christendom” started to develop as early as the Middle Ages.¹⁸ It became an important element of the Poles’ self-perception but the notion was also soon voiced by others. Francesco Filelfo, an Italian humanist expressed it distinctly in 1444 in wishing King Władysław III and I good luck in his struggle with the Turks: “All the nations

¹⁶ Tyler, *Memoires*, 5, 7.

¹⁷ [H.G.], *Scanderbeg*, n.p.; David Jones, *A compleat history of Europe* (London, 1699), 580; Platina, *The lives of the popes* (London, 1685), 369; *The bloody siege of Vienna a song* (London, [1688]), n.p. respectively.

¹⁸ Paul W. Knoll, ‘Poland as “Antemurale Christianitatis” in the Late Middle Ages’, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 60/3 (Oct. 1974), 394. However, the Lithuanians converted to Christianity only in the 14th century. Because of Britons’ convention of referring to Poland-Lithuania as Poland, it is difficult to establish Britons’ perception of Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom, but it appears that they extrapolated their views of Poland onto Poland-Lithuania also in this context.

and kings of Christendom pray God this day for your health and victory.... Thou art a bulwark for the whole Christian Commonwealth".¹⁹ The king was about to lead the united forces of both his dominions, Poland and Hungary, against the Turks, but unlike this crusade, which ended in failure, the idea endured.²⁰ A series of narratives of the Poles fighting against various enemies of Christianity, whether pagans, Muslims or schismatics, presented by several generations of Polish historians such as Długosz, Kromer and Kalimach, were instrumental in enhancing the perception of Poland as the last bastion of Christianity.²¹

Hence, when in March 1621, Jerzy Ossoliński, the ambassador of King Sigismund III, arrived in London to implore James VI and I to help "Poland, the strongest bulwark of the Christian world" he was speaking the language of a well-established convention.²² However, despite being deeply embedded in Poland and recognised by, for instance, France, this tradition seemed less popular in Britain.²³ None of the standard compendia and breviats available in Britain before 1621 characterised Poland-Lithuania as the leading force opposing the Turks. According to Botero, Polish-Ottoman history was on occasion turbulent but he pointed to the lack of bellicosity as a distinctive feature of their relationship. Whereas the Turks' unwillingness to fight was ascribed to their fear of the Poles, the conduct of the latter was partially explained by the anti-war inclinations of some of the Polish kings.²⁴ While Botero's opinion was repeated almost verbatim by D'Avity (as was often the case), Moryson scarcely touched on the problem in his *Itinerary*.²⁵ They made no remark on the Poles' claim to importance in the struggle with the Empire, although they did assert the significance of various other Christian kingdoms. Thus, Botero saw the House of Austria as the bulwark against the Turks and infidels and D'Avity assigned this role to Malta. At the

¹⁹ Ibid., 381.

²⁰ Władysław, the oldest son of Władysław Jagiełło and Sophia of Holshtany ruled Poland as Władysław III from 1434. In 1440 he was chosen the king of Hungary, which he ruled as Władysław I/ I. Ulászló. After his death at Varna (1444) he became known as Władysław of Varna/ Władysław Warneńczyk – Rafał Karpiński, 'Władysław III Warneńczyk' in Andrzej Garlicki (ed.), *Poczet królów i książąt polskich* (Warszawa, 1991), 290-291.

²¹ Cf. *Jana Długosza kanonika krakowskiego dzieła wszystkie*, ed. Aleksander Przeździecki (Kraków, 1863-1878), V, 207; *De origine*, 982ff.

²² *A true copy of the Latine oration of the Excellent Lord George Ossolinsky* (London, 1621), 9.

²³ As demonstrated by the inscription on the *arc de triomphe*, set up in Paris to commemorate the election of Henri Valois to the Polish throne, which reads: "To Poland, Most Steadfast Fortress for the whole of Europe against the barbarian peoples" – Davies, *God's Playground*, I, 159.

²⁴ Botero, 50-51.

²⁵ D'Avity, 1063.

same time Moryson sided with those who thought of Corfu as one of the chief keys of Christendom.²⁶ In addition, the image of Poland-Lithuania presented by the first British authority on the Ottomans, Richard Knolles, was indicative. Although Knolles gave a detailed account of the campaigns led by Władysław III and I, and spoke highly of the Poles – equally praising the courage they had demonstrated in fighting the Turks and their prudence in keeping the peace with the Empire – he did not list Poland-Lithuania as the *antemurale Christianitatis*.²⁷ The epithet “the bulwark of Christendom” was bestowed upon many, for instance, Rhodes, Malta, Raab, Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia and Hungary, but not Poland-Lithuania.²⁸ Nonetheless, the kingdom’s role as an ally of Hungary and Moldavia was emphasised and the importance of the military assistance given to its neighbours appreciated.

As it happened, it was Polish involvement in the affairs of its neighbours that impinged on the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the *Rzeczpospolita* most seriously. In the competition for control over Moldavia and Wallachia – the gates to the Black Sea shores – Poles did not hold back from installing favourable rulers in the principalities at the end of the sixteenth century.²⁹ These actions met with strong opposition from the Ottomans and only subsequent negotiations between them and the Poles, and the internal problems experienced by both sides, prevented the looming war. It is true that the borderlands between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire were never quiet: the hordes of the Tartars in the service of the Porte³⁰ frequently plundered the lands of the *Rzeczpospolita*, while the Polish Cossacks staged numerous raids into the Ottomans’ territory.³¹ Mutual harassments provoked frequent diplomatic interventions but such

²⁶ Botero, 66, D’Avity, 1158, Moryson, 269.

²⁷ Richard Knolles, *The general historie of the Turkes* (London, 1603), 276ff, 692ff. Unlike Ralph Carr, the author of *The Mahumetane of the Turkish Historie* (London, 1600), 43, Knolles correctly spoke about Władysław Warneńczyk not only as the king of Hungary but also of Poland. Carr’s mistake was repeated few decades later by William Habington, who in his *Observations upon historie* (London, 1641) discussed the battle of Varna extensively (49-79) but referred to King Władysław only in his capacity of the king of Hungary.

²⁸ Knolles, *The general historie*, 595 and 1010, 713, 793, 1040, 1122 respectively.

²⁹ Following the efforts of the Polish grand chancellor, Jan Zamoyski, the members of the Mohyla family were established as the rulers in Moldavia in 1595 (Jeremy Mohyla) and in Wallachia in 1600 (Simon Mohyla) – Augustyniak, *Historia*, 603.

³⁰ The Crimean Tartars should be clearly distinguished from the so-called Polish Tartars. The latter, who mostly lived around Vilna, were very loyal to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and later to the *Rzeczpospolita* where they enjoyed almost all civic rights – L. Bohdanowicz, “The Polish Tartars”, *Man*, 44 (Sept.-Oct. 1944), 117.

³¹ Occasionally, they reached as far as Adrianople – Dorothy M. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk. A Pattern of Alliances 1350-1700* (Liverpool, 1954), 183.

incidents never led to open war; instead friendship treaties were regularly renewed and until 1617 Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire remained formally at peace.³²

According to Ossoliński, this “maske of many years feigned friendship [with Poland] was now laid aside” and “the long concealed poison in the brest of the Ottomans hath now at length broke forth”.³³ As he argued before James VI and I, the Turks posed a danger not only to the Poles but to all Christian kingdoms since the defeat of Poland-Lithuania would open the way to the conquest of other European realms. Access to the Baltic Sea would equip the Turks, aggressive and expansionist by nature, with the opportunity to invade the rest of Europe.³⁴ The mercantile and political arguments, although skilfully weaved into the speech, were auxiliary to the religious core of the appeal: all Christians were called upon to defend Poland on whose safety the welfare of all Europe relied.³⁵ The invocation of James Stuart as the *Fidei Defensor*, and an ardent pursuer of the common good of Christians, was no doubt pleasing to the ear of the king, known for his ambitions to lead a united Christendom.³⁶ But its use went beyond sheer flattery. The Polish ambassador represented his Catholic sovereign before the Protestant king in the context of a European religious conflict (now known as The Thirty Years’ war) in which Poland-Lithuania and Britain supported opposite sides.³⁷ Notably, such denominational differences were glossed over in Ossoliński’s speech where he entreated James VI and I to prevent “our common [i.e. Christian] Deity” from being blasphemed.³⁸

This careful wording seems merited for the understanding of what Christendom was became highly problematic after the Reformation. In the previous centuries, Christendom signified the area inhabited by Christians – more specifically,

³² Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish diplomatic relations (15th-18th Century)* (Leiden, Boston & Köln, 2000), esp. 111ff. However, the problem returned and the intervention of the Polish magnates in Moldavia became a *casus belli* in 1617.

³³ *A true copy*, 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ The range of King James’s ecumenical initiatives is discussed in W.B. Patterson, *James VI and I and the reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997).

³⁷ Formally, Poland-Lithuania was not involved in the Thirty Years’ War, however, unofficial military support was sent to help the Habsburgs in 1619 – Kołodziejczyk, *Relations*, 129.

³⁸ *A true copy*, 15.

Roman Catholics – united through the medium of their religion.³⁹ Despite conflicting ideas about the relationship between secular and religious authorities, and the hierarchy of power within the Church itself, the existence of a single catholic community with the pope as its leader (whether political or purely spiritual) remained a powerful idea until the Reformation. Afterwards the references to the “Christian territories” and “*Respublica Christiana*” remained in use, but it became less obvious what entities constituted “the common corps of Christendom”.⁴⁰ Correspondingly, it became more problematic to determine its enemy for the traditional dichotomy between religious adversaries, Christian and non-Christian, lost its strength once the Antichrist was believed to exist within the ranks of the Church itself.

However, despite the rejection of papal authority, Protestants on the continent and in the British Isles alike continued to subscribe to the idea of a Christian community. Whereas most clergymen in Britain believed that a true communion – both territorial and spiritual – could be comprised of only Protestant kingdoms, there were also a few ready to admit other churches – including the Church of Rome – to that circle.⁴¹ Crucially, divines and laymen alike still regarded a defensive war against the infidel as a common obligation.⁴²

The existence of such responsibility was also recognised by King James VI and I.⁴³ Even prior to the Polish embassy, both in his correspondence with King Sigismund III (spring 1620) and through his deputation of Captain Thomas Buck, King James VI and I declared his wish to be “more than a spectator” of the

³⁹ Franklin L. Baumer, ‘The Conception of Christendom in Renaissance England’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 6/2 (Apr. 1945), 132. NB, The Eastern Orthodox church was either considered as a “spin-off” or was excluded entirely – *ibid.*, 135-136.

The problem of the emergence of Europe as a more than geographical but rather a cultural and civilizational concept and its relation to Christendom is beyond the scope of this thesis. For interesting reflections on the subject see: Denys Hay, *Europe: the emergence of an idea* (Edinburgh, 1967), M.E. Yapp, ‘In the Turkish Mirror’, *Past & Present*, 137 (Nov. 1992), 134-155, Norman Davies, *Europe: a history* (Oxford, 1996), 1-46; Heikkki Mikkeli, *Europe as an Idea and an Identity* (New York, 1998).

⁴⁰ Franklin L. Baumer, ‘England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom’, *The American Historical Review*, 50/1 (Oct. 1944), 28ff.

⁴¹ Franklin L. Baumer, ‘The Church of England and the Common Corps of Christendom’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 16/1 (Mar. 1944), 5.

⁴² Baumer, ‘The Conception of Christendom’, 139.

⁴³ Writing a poem celebrating the battle of Lepanto was only a small demonstration of King James’s enmity towards the Turks, whom professedly he was eager to fight in person – Paweł Rutkowski, ‘Poland and Britain against the Ottoman Turks’ in Unger, *Britain and Poland-Lithuania*, 188.

Rzeczpospolita's troubles.⁴⁴ He welcomed the Polish ambassador cordially and not only commissioned the translation and publication of Ossoliński's speech, but also promised to provide financial and military assistance to Poland-Lithuania. This was more than a gesture of Christian charity as King James intended to secure King Sigismund III's intercession of the Habsburg Emperor for his son-in-law, Frederick V. Nonetheless, it testified to King James VI and I's commitment to the cause of a united Christendom that he funded the troops without obtaining a firm assurance of the Polish-Lithuanian king's compliance. Yet in the end, the troops levied by Captain Arthur Ashton missed the chance to join the Poles in the confrontation with the Turks, as King Christian IV, concerned that the British regiment could be used in other contemporary conflicts, stopped them in the Sund.⁴⁵

It appears that the King of Denmark, himself involved in the Thirty Years' War, decided that certain precautions had to be taken. In contrast, many contemporaries faced with the Great Enemy's preparations to wage a war against Christian princes, deemed their quarrels and wars as irresponsible folly. It was broadly accepted that unity was the virtue most called for at that time and an anonymous author of the brochure *Newes from Poland* (1621) did not deviate from this stand. In his opinion, Ossoliński's embassy to King James VI and I and similar assignments to other European rulers testified to the wisdom of the Polish King, who had rightly recognised the importance of repelling the common enemy of Christendom.⁴⁶ A comprehensive account of the actions of Sigismund III and his son, those "sonnes of Marse", and the king's intervention in Moldavia was provided along with a detailed overview of the recent history of the Turks. Poland-Lithuania was presented as an innocent victim of the ambition of the Ottoman Emperor's counsellors and the belligerence of the janissaries; as the blameless kingdom, which was being punished for helping its neighbours. On

⁴⁴ King James to King Sigismund III, 19 May 1620; Idem, 16 October 1620 – Jerzy Ossoliński, *Pamiętnik, 1595-1621* (Wrocław, 1952), 102-103.

⁴⁵ As reported by Ashton, some troops were also detained by the Dutch – Ashton to King James, Gdańsk, 12 March 162[2] – *EFE*, VI, 259. Out of 2,000 levied soldiers only 500 reached Poland-Lithuania, where they later became engaged in the war with Sweden – Frost, 'Scottish soldiers', 205-207. Furthermore, the matter of money provided by King James (£10,000) led to the dispute and mutual accusations between Ossoliński and the Ashtons (both the father and the son were engaged in the levy) – Ossoliński to the Chief Secretary of Poland (n.p., n.d.) – *EFE*, VI, 268-269; Arthur Ashton [senior] to Sigismund III, King of Poland (n.p., n.d.), *ibid.*, 269-272.

⁴⁶ *Newes from Poland* (London, 1621), f. D3r.

the other hand, the Poles, highly applauded and found worthy of praise for their courage, triumphs and piety, were not treated wholly uncritically and their overconfidence in military affairs was pointed out.⁴⁷ But these observations served to emphasize the critical state of affairs in the region rather than to downplay the Poles' achievements. Great as the Poles' victories were, however, they came at a cost and the weakened Polish army had to withdraw under the recent furious attack of the cruel Tartars. The future was gloomy: with Poland – the bastion against the barbarians – in retreat, there remained nobody else to help Christian Europe but God. The final remark about the Almighty's power to prevent the disaster or to allow it to happen as a form of punishment seemed to be intended both as a reminder and a warning. Thus, it reminded readers that the warring Christian princes' ambitions could be a tool in the hands of God, a final cause of events, and it warned them against the consequences of Christians' sins, particularly, the great sin of their disunity.⁴⁸

The argument of the author of the *Newes* seems so independent from Ossoliński's that it is not immediately obvious whether he was familiar with the content of the speech delivered by the Polish ambassador. Nonetheless, a specific reference leaves no doubt that the person who wrote the *Newes* was well aware of the speech and its effect on James VI and I.⁴⁹ The author also hinted at knowledge of "the published insolent letters of the Turkes".⁵⁰ Most likely this referred to the *True copies of the insolent, cruell, barbarous, and blasphemous Letter lately written by the Great Turke, for denouncing of Warre against the King of Poland and Of the Magnanimous, and most Christian Answer made by the said King thereunto* published in London in 1621 for William Lee. Intriguingly, this was a reprint of another pamphlet that had originally appeared in London in 1613: *The Great Turkes defiance: Or his Letter denuntiatorie to Sigismond the third, now King of Polonia, as it hath beene truly advertised out of Germany, this present yeere, 1613. With the King of Poland his replie, englished according to the French copie*. The change of the title was

⁴⁷ Ibid., f. [C4r].

⁴⁸ Ibid., ff. [A4r] and [D4].

⁴⁹ "Thus was the Lord George Ossolinski, Count Palatine [of] Sendomiria, sent as Embassadour to the Majesty of Great Britaine, and with him Sir Arthur Ashton Knight and Colonell, an English man, dwelling in Poland, who had audience about the 11. Of May 1621 and gracious admission of his Embassy, delivered in the Latine tongue, both in a high phrase, and so noble a demeanour, that the King with extraordinary willingnesse accorded to afford him a certaine summe of money (...)" – ibid., f. D3r.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

but one of the text's small yet significant revisions. Both the title and content of the 1621 version were craftily built up to sound more dramatic than the original, capturing the reader's attention by presenting the Sultan and the Christian King of Poland-Lithuania in starkly antagonistic terms. Notably, the Sultan was styled more grandiosely and his tone grew more insolent: thus he was now not only a keeper of "Lower Hungary" (1613) but "the prince of all warlike Hungary" and, in addition, "the commander of all things that are to be commanded" who spoke of "the confederate petty Kings" (1621) who in 1613 had only been "confederate".⁵¹ By updating the Sultan's name to include his recent conquests and by removing the original date of the letters to suggest that they were produced recently, the reader was induced to believe that the correspondence related to the current conflict. As to the content of King Sigismund's letter, which on the whole remained unaltered, it likened the Poles to the army of Emperor Constantine the Great, proud of their faith and ready to fight the fury of the enemy under the standard of the cross.⁵² Moreover, on the mission to liberate Christians suffering under the tyrannous yoke of the Turks, the Poles were to be led and protected by Christ himself.

The letters, in content and tone so far removed from the conventions of official diplomatic correspondence, were, obviously, fake.⁵³ Such pamphlets, aiming to mobilise the public against the Turks, circulated widely on the Continent throughout the century.⁵⁴ Yet, the publishing of the letters in 1613 was intriguing as Polish-Ottoman relations at that time were peaceful. However, in the same year King Sigismund III entered a mutual aid treaty with the Habsburgs and it is likely that the letters, allegedly originally printed in Germany, were part of a propaganda campaign in support of this alliance.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Cf. *The Great Turkes defiance* (London, 1613), 6, 7; *True copies* (London, 1621), 1, 2.

⁵² *True copies*, 8-9.

⁵³ I would like to thank Professor Dariusz Kołodziejczyk from Warsaw University for sharing his expert knowledge on the subject.

⁵⁴ In addition, monarchs relied on them to raise money for other than anti-Ottoman campaign, whereas citizens used the image of an oriental tyrant to criticise their own government – Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Obraz sułtana tureckiego w publicystyce staropolskiej" in Filip Wolański and Robert Kołodziej (eds), *Rzeczpospolita między okcydentalizmem a orientalizacją. Przestrzeń kontaktów* (Toruń, 2009), 8.

⁵⁵ The pamphlet's provenance is hinted at the title page although the verification through German resources was unsuccessful.

It seems that an organised anti-Ottoman campaign also took place in Britain in the early 1620s. Although there is no direct evidence to link Ossoliński's speech, the *True copies* and the *Newes from Poland*, circumstantial evidence is highly indicative of their interconnection and of James VI & I's involvement. Among the pamphlets, only the Polish ambassador's speech was commissioned by King James. Interestingly though, it was not published by the royal printers, but by William Lee (an associate of Bartholomew Downes) who also published both the *True copies* and the *Newes from Poland*. Pointedly, the *True copies* were purposefully constructed as an enhanced propaganda piece. As it happened, the author of the *Newes* linked the publication of those letters with Ossoliński's embassy and stated that it was their publication that prompted many people to support the war against the Turk.⁵⁶ Though the pamphlet was written anonymously, certain details suggest that the author of the *Newes* had connections with King James's diplomats; he hinted at acquaintance with Thomas Glover, an ambassador to Constantinople in 1606-11, and also referred to Lord Digby, an ambassador to Vienna in 1621. Notably, Lord Digby was mentioned in the context of the Polish delegation seeking anti-Ottoman support at Vienna.⁵⁷ The position of the pamphlet's author remains unclear, but it is evident that he had direct experience of Constantinople and background knowledge of the Polish-Ottoman conflict.

In turn, nothing reveals the identity of the editor of the *True copies*, which has only a brief preface. Yet this author also appeared to know the context of the Polish-Ottoman conflict well. He described its origin and justified the Polish intervention in Moldavia on legal grounds. Condemning the Turk's conduct and threat to Poland, "that most noble and the most Christian kingdom", he concluded his preface with summons to join forces against the Ottoman army of 400,000 men, which he believed to be "sufficient to satisfy the most covetous or religious Christian soldier with riches, or glory".⁵⁸ As mentioned earlier, this appeal was thought to have been successful. Similarly, Captain Ashton recognised that through Ossoliński's speech, published at King James's

⁵⁶ *Newes from Poland*, f. D3r.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, f. Br, f. D3v.

⁵⁸ *The true copies*, f. [A4v].

command, “thousands became more desirous of that [King Sigismund III’s] employment then otherwise would have been”.⁵⁹

In truth, there is no definitive evidence that the king’s propaganda initiative went beyond commissioning the publication of that speech. However, the clear propagandist angle of Ossoliński’s speech, the *True copies* and the *Newes*, the texts’ cross-referencing and their publication by the same publishing house point to synchronised efforts to induce help for Poland-Lithuania. The originator of this campaign remains unknown, although considering King James’s support for Poland-Lithuania, his involvement in publicising the cause is not unlikely. On the other hand, it is possible that William Lee, recognising the king’s interest, decided to capitalise on it in the hope of royal patronage. At any rate, the subject seemed to be worth pursuing, for Lee and his associate, Downes, with whom he had published *Newes from Poland*, released also *Newes from Germany and Poland* (1621) and, furthermore, Downes published the relation of events in Constantinople, written by Ambassador Thomas Roe (1622).⁶⁰

These initiatives clearly indicated an organised campaign for the common cause of Christendom centred on Poland-Lithuania – a bulwark of Christendom. The use of Lee’s publications suggests that this dedication to the cause, or a desire to promote it, was widely shared. Thus, the *True copies* were referred to in the pamphlet published in 1622, *The strangling and death of the Great Turke, and his two sonnes*. Its author was also familiar with Ossoliński’s “well delivered discourse” and he did not fail to remark on the impact it had had on James VI and I. Although the author primarily concentrated on events at the Ottoman court, a substantial part of the text discussed the role of the Poles, “reputed as the bulwarke of Christianity”, in the struggles with the Turks.⁶¹ The context of the conflict was explained and the events of the subsequent war recounted. The

⁵⁹ Ashton to King Sigismund – *EFE*, VI, 271.

⁶⁰ *The certaine and true newes, from all the parts of Germany and Poland* (London, 1621); [Sir Thomas Roe], *A true and faithfull relation, presented to his Majestie and the prince, of what hath lately happened in Constantinople, concerning the death of Sultan Osman, and the setting up of Mustafa his uncle* (London, 1622). The pamphlet bears no signature, but its content – when compared with Roe’s original report – confirms his authorship – cf. ‘Relatio e bello turcico contra Poloniam’ – *EFE*, VI, 301-302. NB, Roe was instructed by King James to be of all possible service to the king of Poland-Lithuania; he acted as a mediator in signing the Polish-Ottoman treaty and was instrumental in releasing Polish prisoners in Constantinople, whom he also helped financially – Michael Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe: 1581-1644. A life* (Salisbury, 1989), 136, 151-152.

⁶¹ *The strangling and death of the Great Turke, and his two sonnes* (London, 1622), f. B3r.

outstanding manner of the Poles' conduct – their diplomatic initiatives, military preparation for the war, fortitude and bravery shown in combat with the much more numerous army of the enemy – was contrasted with the conduct of the Turks, presented as the people driven to war by personal ambition, disrespectful towards the law of nations and lacking personal courage.⁶² The author of the pamphlet strongly rebuked those responsible for spreading false news, such as information about the Polish king's defeat and his son's death, accounts of non-existent battles and rumours about thousands of victims and the Tartars' incursions into Poland (for that matter, the latter charges could apply to the author of the *Newes from Poland*). The author of the *The strangling* believed that the Poles' sacrifice had been so great that it did not need to be embellished to fill the public with awe. In turn, he contrasted the exaggeration of news with the truthfulness of his own accounts of the military proceedings. Consequently, the troubles and losses the Poles suffered during the siege of Chocim (Hotin/Khotyn) were related and the impact of their united army, which had driven back the twenty times bigger forces “with the fury of courageous hearts”, was described.⁶³

The battle of Chocim was a key point in the 1620-21 war. Here, the Polish-Lithuanian-Cossack army, entrenched near the city fortress, resisted the Ottoman army for over a month. The detailed day-by-day account of the siege, including a dramatic report of the death of the army's commander, Jan Chodkiewicz, the Great Hetman of Lithuania, became available to British readers soon after the battle through the eye-witness account presented as *Newes from Turkie and Poland* along with the text of the treaty agreed upon at the end of the war. The editor of the *Newes* not only appreciated the victory of the Poles that upset the Ottomans' plans to make way into Europe and the Northern Sea but also saw the occurrence as a providential act; a way to pull down the proud and advance the humble.⁶⁴ In addition, like the author of *The strangling and death of the Great Turke*, he was dissatisfied with the inaccuracy of information and his “true and compendious declaration” aimed to rectify the problem.

⁶² *Ibid.*, f. [A4r], ff. B2-B3.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Newes From Turkie and Poland* ([London], 1622), 38.

Was it really a problem? A look at corantos in circulation explains what provoked such criticism. They were full of dramatic, yet often exaggerated or false news, such as information of the Turkish army within a few miles of Lublin and the evacuation of regalia from Cracovia,⁶⁵ followed by alarming accounts of the Ottomans entering the territory of the *Rzeczpospolita* and the fighting that ensued.⁶⁶ The public imagination was easily fed with images of the magnitude of both the enemy's army and his financial resources. Whereas the former was counted in hundreds of thousands of soldiers, the latter was reported to consist of tonnes of gold carried with the army.⁶⁷ Such exaggerated reports appealed to contemporary Britons possessed by an "itch for news", for dramatic international occurrences in particular and interested in *turcica*. It is difficult to assess how abreast of developments in Poland-Lithuania Britons were but the frequency with which the matter featured in corantos and broadsheets testifies to their high exposure to information about the Polish-Ottoman war. Moreover, the topic was hotly discussed as a poet John Taylor's satirical declaration of his *désintéressement* in "the forces that the Turke doeth bring/ Against the Poland Kingdome and their King" indicates.⁶⁸

However, more important was the variety of reactions this war could provoke. The anonymity of most of the pamphlets and news published in the 1620s makes it difficult to assert beyond any doubt their authors' intentions, yet, what seemed to prevail was a genuine sense of the danger posed by the Ottoman Empire and an urgent need for Christendom to stand united against it. The Polish ambassador's elegant and impassioned plea played a significant role in publicising the cause.

On the other hand, from the perspective of British Protestants, the Polish-Ottoman conflict occurred at a convenient time as it prevented the Polish forces from more serious engagement in the Thirty Years' War. This may explain why the Swedish attack on Poland-Lithuania in 1621 passed without a word of public

⁶⁵ *Courant newes out of Italy, Germany, Bohemia, Poland &c, printed in Amsterdam, the 5. Of July [1621].*

⁶⁶ *Corante, or weekly newes from Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, France and the Low Countreys printed in London, the 30. Of Septem. 1621.*

⁶⁷ *Coranto, or news from Italy, Germany, Hungarie, Poland, Bohemia and France, printed at Amsterdam, the 20th July 1621.*

⁶⁸ John Taylor, *Taylor's motto Et habeo, et careo, et curo* (London, 1621), n.p.

condemnation from Britons.⁶⁹ The welfare of Christendom was a matter close enough to their hearts to lament Christians' disunity, yet not so close as to induce them to criticise Protestants who stood against Catholics. Intriguingly, the extant evidence shows that, when tested, the Britons decided not to support the common cause of Christendom over the common cause of Protestants (or *vice versa*) but, as far as possible, to be loyal to both. In steering between the Scylla of "the strongest bulwark of Christendom" and Charybdis or "the northern bulwark of Evangelics"⁷⁰ the king himself was a model navigator. His commitment to the common cause of Christendom and the support he had offered to the Poles did not stop him from helping the Swedes as well. Thus, following his warrant (March 1624), the Scottish Royal Council empowered James Spence to levy 1,200 men in Scotland to be employed in service as "the king of Sweden shall direct and appoint".⁷¹ The Polish-Ottoman war had ended in 1621, thus King James might have felt justified in his actions. Yet evidence shows that even during that conflict Britons coped well with the schizophrenia caused by contradictory loyalties. This was illustrated well by the *Newes from Turkie and Poland*, which after pages filled with praise of Poland-Lithuania and the promotion of the cause of Christendom, closed with the opinion that "the same God, which hath delivered Christendom from the Turke's excursions (...) will also deliver the Protestant Princes from the Pope's curses and Antichristian threatenings".⁷²

Clearly, one should be careful not to overemphasize the impact of Ossoliński's rhetoric. Nonetheless, it is evident that his embassy was crucial for the introduction to Britain of the notion of Poland-Lithuania as the bulwark of Christendom. This particular phrase was quickly taken up by contemporaries and remained in use. Long after the war with the Ottomans was over, Poland-Lithuania was referred to as the "*munitissimum orbis Christiani Antemurale*", "the bulwark of Christendom against the Turks' tyranny", "the bulwark of Christendome against the encroaching Turk and Tartar" and "propugnacle and

⁶⁹ Voices such as Ashton's, who thought that "the king of Sweden and the Emperor of Russia most unchristianly have taken advantage of the tyme now that the Turke was in Podolia" (Ashton to King James, 22 March 1622 - *EFE*, VI, 259) were rare and hardly typical, for Ashton served the Polish king.

⁷⁰ King Gustaphus Adolphus to the Scottish Council, 23 September 1623 - *RPCS*, XIII, 364.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 478.

⁷² *Newes from Turkie and Poland*, 51.

rampart" against enemies of Christianity.⁷³ Moreover, newspapers and pamphlets provided frequent information about the preparations for the war (by both the Turks and the Poles) and about the war's context and proceedings. It is evident that all this information, of a different level of accuracy, presented in a range of contexts and employed for various purposes, contributed to the emergence of a very positive image of the Poles as a warlike nation dedicated to the cause of Christendom.

The idea contested?

This image faded and changed between the 1630s and 1660s. It was not a matter of the limited provision of information. On the contrary, the rapid growth of the British press facilitated fuller coverage of the *Rzeczpospolita's* conflicts with the Turks' vassals, the Tartars, who after a short period of peace undertook their raids across the borders. However, reports of the Tartars' raidings lacked the urgency of the earlier accounts. A more subdued tone was coupled with a drastic decrease in the number of pamphlets. *A Vaunting, Daring, and a Menacing Letter, sent from Sultan Morat the great Turke, from his Court at Constantinople, by his Embassadour Gobam, to Vladislaus King of Poland* (London, 1638) or *A True and Fearfull pronouncing of Warre against the Roman Imperiall Majesty and withall against the King of Poland, by the late Emperour of Turkey, Soloma Hometh* (London, 1640) were rare examples of publications discussing Poland-Lithuania in this context. It is evident that after 1622 Poland-Lithuania lost much of its previous interest although the follow up on its engagements in the anti-Ottoman campaigns of others (for instance Venice, who entered the war with the Ottoman Empire in 1643) continued. As it happened, Polish assistance to the Venetians' military efforts divided the kingdom, since King Władysław IV, who entertained an idea of a new crusade, committed the Poles without the assent of the nobility.⁷⁴ British commentators clearly demonstrated greater foresight than the Polish king when they saw the help of the Polish (and also Wallachian and Muscovite) troops as in

⁷³ *Querimonia Europae divisa in libros duos* (London, 1625), 5; Fowler, *The history*, 181, 243; William Sanderson, *A compleat history of the life and raigne of King Charles* (London, 1658), 178; Sanderson's account of Ossoliński's embassy was cited in Thomas Frankland, *The annals of King James and King Charles the First* (London, 1681), 405; Fage, *Cosmography*, 65; Howell, *A German Diet*, 5.

⁷⁴ MI, 25 June 1646.

reality an attempt by Venice to ensure that “the Turk find work enough in those parts and forget the Venetians”.⁷⁵ Yet, it was not the potential danger posed by the Ottomans that shook Poland-Lithuania’s position as the bulwark in the mid-century but a different kind of assault, from inside.

As discussed, the public was mobilised against the Ottoman Empire chiefly by the argument of faith. However, the “unchristianity” of the Turks was not limited to religion; their government was also deemed ungodly, hence they were to be fought not only as infidels but also as tyrants. On the other hand, some contemporaries dismissed altogether the difference in religion as the main reason for fighting the Turks. Thus, for instance, law theorists Alberico Gentili (whom we have encountered before as a writer on the union) claimed this argument invalid as nobody, he believed, had the right to impose religion on another person.⁷⁶ Instead, he justified the wars against the Turks on the grounds of self-preservation and safety – they were natural responses to the threats and attacks on Christian possessions; if the Turks kept the peace and refrained from aggression, the reasons for wars would cease to exist. Others, however, did not discard religious and political arguments but discussed reasons for fighting the Turks in broader terms, and maintained that Christians were to stand against the Turks as civilised people against barbarians. The latter term was particularly often ascribed to the Tartars, considered wild, cruel and bloodthirsty.

The Poles also explained the war with the Turks on the grounds of their barbarism.⁷⁷ What is more, opposing the Tartars was of the utmost significance for the Poles and their notion of the defence of Christendom, which, as they believed, was not restricted to the immediate fighting with the Turks. Already in the fifteenth century the Poles refused to join the crusade against the Ottomans, claiming that wars at home with the Tartars were of no less importance.⁷⁸ Such wars, a well-established element of the Polish-Ottoman conflict, continued in the 1630s and 1640s and received considerable news coverage in Britain, where the public was well aware of the Tartars’ affiliation with the Ottomans.⁷⁹ However, there is no immediate evidence that fights with the Tartars were perceived as a

⁷⁵ *MI*, 28 January 1647.

⁷⁶ *De jure belli libri tres* by Alberico Gentili, transl. John C. Rolfe (Buffalo, 1995), 56-57.

⁷⁷ *A true copy*, 10, 12.

⁷⁸ Długosz, *Dzieła*, 207.

⁷⁹ For instance, *MI*, 18 March 1647; *MI*, 20 July 1648; *MI*, 12 October 1648; *MPC*, 6 March 1651.

part of the general struggle of Christendom against the Turks, even after Britons were introduced to that concept by Thomas Fuller, the author of the highly praised *Historie of the holly warre* (1639). Fuller's interest in Poland-Lithuania was limited and he did not discuss the kingdom's present standing against the Ottomans at all, seeing Hungary as the contemporary bulwark of Christendom. Yet while discussing the past he acknowledged that by "defending Europe against foreign invaders [the Tartars] Poland [had] deserved the honour of the war in Palestine".⁸⁰

Nevertheless, this interpretation of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom was not deeply ingrained in Britain. In addition, the association between the Poles' fights and the common cause of Christendom became even less clear after the Cossacks, the main force assigned the task of the borders' protection against the Tartars' incursions, rose against the Polish government and joined forces with the Tartars (1648). As the Cossacks were subjects of the *Rzeczpospolita*, the fights with them had the appearance of a civil war rather than a conflict related to the whole of Christendom. Furthermore, though Britons condemned the Cossacks as rebels, they were not entirely unsympathetic to their cause. While there was a strong sense that in this struggle the Poles stood against the "barbarians" this term no longer seemed to identify a common Christian enemy; it was the Poles, not Christendom, who were in trouble because of the presence of the barbarians.⁸¹ Significantly, in contrast to the situation in 1620-21, in 1648 the subject of prayers generated by "the most miserable perplexed condition" of the *Rzeczpospolita* was not the unity of Christendom but a safeguard against similar bloodshed in England, Scotland and Ireland.⁸²

The turn of the 1640s and 1650s clearly demonstrated the ambivalence of the notion of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom. While, according to the Poles, the Tartars constituted a significant part of the general problem, Britons tended to be seriously alarmed only when the Ottomans were a direct aggressor. The Cossack-Tartar alliance did nothing to convince them to think otherwise. The Porte's protection of either the Tartars or the Cossacks was of secondary

⁸⁰ Fuller, *The Historie*, 276.

⁸¹ See, for instance, *MPC*, 31 October 1650: "the Tartars, Cossacks and other barbarians"; "those creatures" and *Several Proceedings in Parliament*, 5 August 1652, where the Tartars and the Cossacks are referred to as "those barbarious people".

⁸² *MI*, 12 October 1648.

importance to the Britons and the problems of Poland-Lithuania seemed to concern “every good Christian” only when the kingdom was in danger of a direct attack of the Ottoman forces.⁸³

Importantly, the conflict of the 1640-50s took place in a geopolitical situation distinctively different from that of the early 1620s. Firstly, Europe was free from immediate danger from the Turks as the Ottoman Empire looked towards Persia and remained engrossed in its domestic crisis; its war against Venice was more a matter of chance rather than a consciously pursued strategy.⁸⁴ Secondly, Europe itself had just emerged from the exhausting long war that had transformed its social, religious and political bearings.⁸⁵ Moreover, Britain also went through significant civil wars and constitutional changes. In short, neither the developments in Poland-Lithuania nor the international situation were conducive to the enhancement of the *Rzeczpospolita* as a defender of the common cause of Christendom.

The Cossacks’ uprising revealed the difference in perceiving Poland-Lithuania as the bulwark of Christendom. What is more, the events that followed the uprising led to the radical shift of the *Rzeczpospolita*’s international position. The leader of the Cossacks, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, unable to reach an agreement with the new king of Poland-Lithuania, John Casimir Vasa, and defeated by the Poles at Beresteczko (1651), turned to Muscovy for protection. The tsar kindly obliged and invaded Poland-Lithuania a few months after he had accepted Khmelnytsky’s oath of allegiance (January 1654). In turn, the successful Muscovite offensive alerted Sweden, anxious to prevent the rise of Muscovy but also eager to exploit the situation to its own advantage and settle old disputes with Poland-Lithuania. Let us discuss briefly how Britons viewed the *Rzeczpospolita*’s conflict with Protestant Sweden, for it provides an interesting counterpoint to the perception of Poland-Lithuania as the bulwark of Christendom. Was there a shift of rhetoric from Christian-non Christian, around which the *Rzeczpospolita*’s fighting with the Turks oscillated, to the Catholic-Protestant, when Poland-Lithuania faced Sweden?

⁸³ Jerome Nicholas, *News certain and terrible from the Kingdom of Poland* (London, 1642), 3.

⁸⁴ Ivan Parev, *Habsburgs and Ottomans between Vienna and Belgrade (1683-1739)* (New York, 1995), 22.

⁸⁵ Ronald G. Asch, *The Thirty Years War: the Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618-1648* (Basingstoke, 1997), 185-194.

The interests of the kingdoms began to clash in the 1570s around the issue of access to the Baltic Sea, tactically set in fights over Livonia. The ideological framework for the conflict was soon provided by dynastic issues. The royal houses became connected in 1562 by the marriage of Catherine, the king of Poland, Sigismund Augustus's sister, to Johan Vasa, the future king of Sweden. In 1587 that couple's son, Sigismund III, was elected the king of the *Rzeczpospolita* and in 1592 he succeeded to the hereditary throne of Sweden. Both Sigismund III's Catholicism and his land disposition (he promised to join Estonia to Poland-Lithuania once he had become the ruler of his fatherland) led to his conflict with the Swedes, who eventually deprived King Sigismund of the throne and chose his uncle, Karl of Södermanland, as their ruler.⁸⁶ The recovery of the throne of Sweden remained an important objective of the Polish Vasas' diplomacy. On the other hand, the relinquishment of the claim to the Swedish crown was a leitmotiv of the Swedes' justification for the series of wars waged against Poland-Lithuania.

As mentioned earlier, in the circumstances of the 1620s the Swedish attack on Poland-Lithuania was not condemned. But it was not praised either. The development of Polish-Swedish relations continued to be closely followed by Britons in the next years, but typically remarked on dispassionately.⁸⁷ The Britons welcomed the treaty of Stuhmsdorf (1635), which they had helped to negotiate, but they were aware that its arrangements were falling through. The failure of the commission gathered in Lübeck in 1651 to settle the issue met with a detached comment that "Poland and Sweden [could not] understand each other".⁸⁸ Since works of another commission called in 1653 were equally fruitless, the state of affairs in the *Rzeczpospolita* in 1654 appeared suitable for the final resolution.

The Swedish dilemma, whether bigger gains could come from siding with Poland-Lithuania against Muscovy or Muscovy against Poland-Lithuania, was

⁸⁶ Civil war broke out in 1597. With Sigismund being absent (he returned to Poland-Lithuania in 1598), Karl persuaded Riksdag to depose the young Vasa (1599). Karl himself officially took the royal title in 1604 when he adopted the name of Karl IX – Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars. War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558-1721* (Harlow & New York, 2000), 45.

⁸⁷ See for example *A true report of all special passages...* (London, 1627), 9-11; *The causes for which (...) Lord Gustavus Adolphus (...) is at length constrained to move with an armie into Germany* (London, 1631), 1-5; Anders Bure, *A short survey or history of the kingdome of Sveden* (London, 1632), 80-85.

⁸⁸ MPC, 27 November 1651.

resolved in favour of the latter option.⁸⁹ Sweden's attack on Poland-Lithuania in 1655 was quick, efficient and – with the cooperation of the Poles – highly successful. Within a few months, the Swedish army captured Poznań, Warsaw and Cracow.⁹⁰ London newspapers provided almost daily accounts of the progress of King Karl X Gustav's army. However, we can sense a shift from the more neutral tone of the 1620-30s. Whilst the 1655 reports did not approve of the attack *expressis verbis*, both their format and language clearly favoured the Swedes. It is impossible to establish the nationality of the news' providers, but it is evident that the Swedish correspondents far outnumbered the Poles. Moreover, direct narratives of events, such as letters, were a genre monopolized by the Swedes.⁹¹ As signalled in Chapter 1, this could be explained by the Swedish domination over the communication channels. Yet significantly, even allegedly impartial communications reported "another great victory" of the Swedes, referred to the Poles as "the enemy" and those resisting as "the revolted Poles", who should be brought to "true obedience".⁹²

Unsurprisingly, the government-controlled newspapers followed the tone of Oliver Cromwell, whose reaction to the Swedish king's attack on the *Rzeczpospolita* was described by historians as "benevolent neutrality".⁹³ In truth, the Lord Protector had no reason to think warmly about Poland-Lithuania; he did not forget that its king had given support to Charles Stuart (1651).⁹⁴ His approval of Karl X Gustav's aggression lined up with Cromwell's negative stance towards Poland-Lithuania, which he had recently shown in praising

⁸⁹ Minutes of the Swedish council meetings provide fascinating insights into the way of and arguments for reaching this decision – available in Michael Roberts (ed.), *Sweden as a Great Power 1611-1697. Government: Society: Foreign Policy* (London, 1968), 163-169.

⁹⁰ Paul Douglas Lockhart, *Sweden in the seventeenth century* (Basingstoke, 2004), 95.

⁹¹ See, for instance, the letter of Count Magnus de la Gard and the letter of the unnamed Swedish commander from Bromberg – *PI*, 1 October 1655.

⁹² *PI*, 15 October 1655; *PI*, 1 October 1655 and *PI*, 22 October 1655 respectively. In truth, the scale of the Poles' "revolt" was exceptionally small and the kingdom was disintegrating fast. While most of its chief cities were controlled by the Swedes, the treaty of Kiejdany separated Lithuania from the Commonwealth and joined it in the union with Sweden. The king of Poland-Lithuania, deserted by most of the nobility, fled to Silesia. However, the conquest proved to be short-lived. From 1657 the Polish army started to gather around John Casimir who had returned to the kingdom. Moreover, Karl X Gustav's successes mobilised European powers. Thus, Muscovy suspended its anti-Polish campaign and turned against Sweden, while Denmark started military preparation to the western front. Consequently, the Swedes gradually withdrew their forces from the *Rzeczpospolita* to confront the Danes – Lockhart, *Sweden*, 97.

⁹³ Pernal and Gasse, 'The 1651 Polish subsidy', 18.

⁹⁴ Paulucci to Sagredo, 17 April 1655 – *CSPV*, 1655-1656, 46. NB, Charles Stuart's endeavours to obtain help in Poland-Lithuania were reported by newspapers – *MPC*, 13 February 1651; 19 June 1651; 27 November 1651.

Khmelnysky as “the Scourge of the Poles” and “the destroyer of Papist Errors”, and taking interest in schemes for inducing the Turks to attack Poland-Lithuania.⁹⁵ Whereas newspaper comments, though favouring Sweden, gave no indication that they were religiously motivated, Cromwell’s interest in the Polish-Swedish conflict had clear anti-Catholic connotations. Moreover, the identification with the Protestant Swedes permeated agents’ reports sent to the Secretary of the State, John Thurloe and various correspondences among Britons.⁹⁶

Poignantly, the strongest public approval of the Swedish attack came from a resident of Poland-Lithuania – Johannes Amos Comenius, an influential scholar and theologian, and a close associate of Hartlib. This leader of the Czech exiles, who had settled in Leszno in Greater Poland, welcomed the invasion of the Lutheran king of Sweden hoping that it would advance the progress of Protestantism. In his *Panegyricus*, published anonymously in London in 1656, Comenius glorified Karl X Gustav, whom he saw as another Joshua and Moses, a warrior-leader of Protestants.⁹⁷ Diagnosing the *Rzeczpospolita*’s condition as

⁹⁵ Cromwell to King Karl X Gustav, 7 February 165[6] – *Abbott*, III, 94-95; Cromwell was considered “an intimat [sic] colleague, if not contriver, of the King of Sweden’s expedition for Poland” – Longlond to Thurloe – *Thurloe*, IV, 92; *Przeździecki, Diplomatic Ventures*, 98; Paulucci to Sagredo, 26 July 1653 – *CSPV, 1653-1654*, 102.

But earlier contacts between Sweden and England were more complicated. Despite the mediation between Charles I’s son and the Scots, Queen Kristina was not inclined to support the Stuart’s case further and refused to give audience to his agents. On the other hand, having reservations towards Cromwell, she was interested in improving the relationship with England, severed by continuous naval troubles. Soon official diplomatic relations between two kingdoms were restored and Karl X Gustav, who became king after Kristina’s abdication in 1654, sought a close alliance with England – Alexia Grosjean, *An unofficial alliance: Scotland and Sweden 1569-1654* (Leiden & Boston, 2003), 227-233, 241ff. One of the aims of the Swedish mission to Cromwell in 1655 was to decide on the exact nature of the alliance, which was formed by the treaty of Uppsala (1654); King Karl X Gustav hoped that Cromwell would assist him militarily – Michael Roberts (ed.), *Swedish diplomats at Cromwell’s court, 1655-1656, the missions of Peter Julius Coyet and Christer Bonde* (London, 1988), 5ff.

⁹⁶ H. Cromwell to Thurloe, 19 November 1656: “The last account you gave of the Swedish affairs in Poland was very welcome to us here” – *Thurloe*, V, 612. It is most likely the reference to Thurloe’s letter to H. Cromwell of 11 November 1656, where he wrote about the Swedes’ “very considerable victory against the Poles and Tartars” – *ibid.*, 584; “The success of the king of Sweden in Poland will contribute much to unite the catholic princes, who grew jealous of the greatness and power of the protestants” – Anonymous letter of intelligence from Paris, 30 October 1655 – *Thurloe*, IV, 100. The Polish counterattack was lamented by Thurloe, who wrote about “the most difficult Swedish affairs in Prussia and Poland” (Thurloe to H. Cromwell, 29 September 1657 – *Thurloe*, VI, 539) and “their very bad condition” (Thurloe to Lockhard, 5 November 1657 – *ibid.*, 606). An unidentified correspondent of Hartlib clearly linked the Lord Protector and Karl X Gustav and recognised their services for the case of “the true Protestant religion” – Unknown to Hartlib, 25 May 1655.

⁹⁷ [Johann Amos Comenius], *Panegyricus Carolo Gustavo Magno Svecorum, Gothorum, Vandalorumque Regi, incruento Sarmatiae victori, & quaquâ venit liberatori, pio, felici, augusto* (London, 1656), 23. It was originally published in Breslau in 1655 – Zbigniew Ogonowski, *Filozofia i myśl społeczna XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1979), 282.

critical, Comenius saw the invasion of the Swedish “*incruentus Sarmatiae victor*” as a providential opportunity for reanimation and recovery of “the corpse of the *Rzeczpospolita*”.⁹⁸

The impact of Comenius’s message on Britons is difficult to gauge, though as shown in Chapter 1, Hartlib and his associates had circulated the pamphlet among Britons even before it was printed. On the other hand, the Poles deemed Comenius’s support for the Swedes as treason, like other citizens’ voluntarily cooperation with the Swedes, and as a result Leszno – considered a hotbed of traitors – was burnt down. This action was condemned in Britain and presented as evidence that Protestants were being persecuted in Poland-Lithuania. Consequently, this led to widely advertised and government-supported initiatives such as a collection towards their relief (1658).⁹⁹

And yet, the anti-Polish propaganda was surprisingly moderate and that of specifically anti-Catholic character hardly existed. One of the most distinctive comments on the ongoing war was Fowler’s *The history of the troubles of Svethland and Poland* in 1656. The author was a secretary to Sir George Douglas, the English ambassador who, with other international representatives, participated in the Polish-Swedish negotiations leading to the treaty of Stuhmsdorf. Fowler’s account of the Polish-Swedish conflict ended with the events of the year 1635, yet through references to current monarchs (including their pictures) Fowler’s argument was clearly connected with the ongoing conflict. More pointedly, the book was dedicated to Oliver Cromwell, whose glorious actions were likened to those of Swedish princes.¹⁰⁰

Fowler’s book was an exceptionally detailed history of the conflict and surprisingly objective, even sympathetic towards the Poles, account of the consultations in Stuhmsdorf. Simultaneously, Fowler believed that the Swedes were justified in their opposition to Sigismund III as by his actions the king had renounced his rights to the throne of Sweden.¹⁰¹ The foundation of the argument was a constitutional breach though it was Sigismund III’s Catholicism that was

⁹⁸ *Panegyricus*, 1-2.

⁹⁹ *A declaration of His Highness, for a collection towards the relief of divers Protestant Churches driven out of Poland; and Twenty Protestant Families driven out of the Confines of Bohemia* (London, 1658); CSPD, 1657-1658, 149, 229, 257, 324-344, 557; CSPD, 1658-1659, 33, 76; CSPD, 1659-1660, 161.

¹⁰⁰ Fowler, *The history* f. [Ar].

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 34ff.

often indicated as a source of problems.¹⁰² This argumentation was in line with earlier pamphlets commenting on the continuous Polish-Swedish conflict such as the 1633 booklet by William Watt, who pointed to King Sigismund III's violation of the oath as the reason of his rejection and deposition.¹⁰³ The king, who had sworn to admit no other religion than Lutheranism and maintain Sweden's privileges, instead tried to alter the religion and endeavoured to enslave Sweden by making it a province of Poland.¹⁰⁴ Notably, it was King Sigismund's dishonesty, supposedly prompted by his Catholicism, but not Poland-Lithuania's "Papist" profile itself that provoked the authors' criticism.

Legal reasons (truce breach and continuous claims to the Swedish throne) were also given by King Karl X Gustav in official justification of his attack on Poland-Lithuania in 1655.¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, it was Cromwell who proposed that Sweden presented its actions in religious terms, but the idea of promoting the war with Poland-Lithuania as religious was rejected by the Swedish ambassador for fear of alienating Sweden's supporters in Poland-Lithuania.¹⁰⁶ In truth, King Karl X Gustav secured support among the Poles by promising to protect religious toleration, though, in fact, it mostly favoured Protestants of the *Rzeczpospolita* who had felt discriminated against Catholics.

However, the sincerity of King Karl X Gustav's motivation did not go unchallenged. The anonymous author of *The Swedish Cloak of Religion* (1659) argued that the king's support for the Lutheran congregation was a "Machiavellan trap" that aimed not to propagate the reformed doctrine, but rather to secure the Swedish government over Poland-Lithuania.¹⁰⁷ One of the speakers, allegedly a native, reminded his interlocutor (revealingly called Simplicius) that free worship of all people, regardless of their creed, was never hindered by the lawful king of Poland-Lithuania. He regretted bitterly

¹⁰² Ibid., 106, 109, 118.

¹⁰³ William Watt, *The Swedish Intelligencer* (London, 1633), 41.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. The alleged arbitrariness of Sigismund III's actions was criticised particularly strongly by Anthony Nixon. The author of *The warres of Swethland* put the king's conduct in a stark contrast with that of the Duke of Södermanland, whom he presented as a true defender of Sweden; a faithful servant of the crown, who had raised arms against his nephew only to avoid the kingdom's destruction – Anthony Nixon, *The warres of Swethland With the ground and originall of the said warres* (London, 1609), unpaginated.

¹⁰⁵ MP, 27 September, 1655. See also [Hermann Conring], *Brevis ac praeliminaris enumeratio causarum, ob quas serenissimus et potentissimus princeps ac dominus, D. Carolus Gustavus* (Helmstadt, 1656).

¹⁰⁶ Christer Bonde's report, London, 23 August 1655 – Roberts, *Swedish diplomats*, 136.

¹⁰⁷ *The Swedish Cloak of Religion* (London, 1659), 2, 9.

renouncing his lawful superior and losing the liberty and peace, and feared the slavery under the Swedes persecuting everybody who dared to resist them, including Lutherans.¹⁰⁸ A similar stand was taken by the anonymous author of *The Promotion of the Protestant cause in Poland by the arms of His Majesty the king of Sweden* (1659). He pointed out that the promotion of the Protestant religion was never Karl X Gustav's intention; he used it as a pretext to gather political support.¹⁰⁹ In reality, the Protestant cause was impeded as never before and the Swedes harmed non-Lutheran Protestants much more than the Poles.¹¹⁰ The particular use of the phrase "under the cloak of [liberty and] religion" with regards to Sweden in *A true relation of the severall negotiations* (1659) suggests that it was possibly produced by the same source as the other two pamphlets. It concentrated on relations between Sweden and Brandenburg, which also became a participant in this war, but it is relevant for our discussion because of the way it characterised two initial protagonists of the war:

Poland, that famous kingdom, which so often, and so gloriously stood in stead of a bulwark and defence to all Christendom; being on all sides at once set upon by an infinite number of strangers, craved the aid and assistance of all the world; whereas, this present King of Sweden, took his time to fall upon its back, whiles it was involved in a warre with all those other barbarians.¹¹¹

Like other pamphlets, it was a propaganda piece, possibly of continental origin, though aimed at a British audience. Understandably, none of these pamphlets was anti-Protestant, nevertheless they questioned the sincerity of Karl X Gustav and emphasised his lack of legitimization. Thus, they seemed to urge faithful, law minded Britons to refuse to support such a religiously indifferent usurper. What is more, they defended Poland-Lithuania on account of its services as a bulwark of Christendom in contrast to Sweden, condemned for its attack on this shield against barbarians, and they demonstrated that also the Catholic-Protestant conflict could be presented within the Christian-non Christian rhetoric.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 4-12.

¹⁰⁹ *The Promotion of the Protestant cause in Poland by the arms of His Majesty the king of Sweden* (London, 1659), 2, 6.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 3-4, 7.

¹¹¹ *A true relation of the severall negotiations which have pass'd between his Majesty the King of Sweden* (London, 1659), 2.

Despite associating Poland-Lithuania with the Habsburg camp, there is no evidence of a particular anti-Catholic campaign against it in its war with Protestant Sweden. As discussed, it was the governmental sources that took the strongest position on the Polish-Swedish war. Yet even they adopted a moderate tone – first, as it seems, to accommodate Sweden’s wishes, but later, to react to the progress of war, which started to endanger England’s interest. The limited public response that the Polish-Swedish conflict elicited among Britons may come as a surprise, but indeed, it was overshadowed by the Anglo-Spanish war (1654-60). Secondly, the identification with either side of the Polish-Swedish war was problematic; England’s amity with Sweden was a recent development whereas the Scots, despite having strong links with this country, were reluctant to support Sweden for the fear of thus supporting England.¹¹² In addition, many Scots might not have considered Poland-Lithuania an enemy, whether because it hosted a considerable Scottish diaspora or because it supported Charles Stuart. Crucially, even those disapproving of Poland-Lithuania’s religious practices did not wish it to be conquered by Sweden, as is clear from a comment of Robert Baillie. Writing to his cousin in Winter 1655 this Scottish minister envisaged that the Swedes’ attack would be disapproved of by most Christians, “for albeit that proud kingdome of Pole, for their grosse poperie and other foule heresies (...) be highly sinfull, yet they were a good barr for Christendome on that side against the Turks and Tarters incroachments; and if they be ruined, a great gap will opened for these Scythian barbarians to fall on us all”.¹¹³ It is clear that Britons had no difficulty in both condemning Catholic Poland-Lithuania and appreciating Christian Poland-Lithuania.

The Polish-Swedish war was concluded with the peace of Oliwa (1660), which with John Casimir’s abandonment of his hereditary rights to the crown of Sweden finally settled the Vasa’s dynastic conflict.¹¹⁴ As we have seen, although the 1640s and 1650s exposed the perception of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom, there was no anti-Catholic outburst, despite the potentially favourable circumstances of the Polish-Swedish war. However, the idea of

¹¹² Robert Baillie, *The letters and journals of Robert Baillie*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh, 1842), III, 370.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 293.

¹¹⁴ Importantly, the Oliwa treaty confirmed the sovereignty of the Hohenzollern in Ducal Prussia, a decision that – arguably – was unnecessary and weakened the *Rzeczpospolita* – Frost, *After the Deluge*, 97ff.

Poland-Lithuania as the bulwark of Christendom was to be revived and reshaped in the next decades. This was achieved chiefly through the actions of one person – John Sobieski.

The revival of the idea

Sobieski's name featured for the first time in the press in Britain in 1666, but more systematic reports appeared in 1668 in the context of preparations for the election after the throne was vacated by the abdication of King John Casimir.¹¹⁵ Following the election Sobieski, disappointed with the choice of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, opposed the new king with the backing of the army. The fate of the army confederation and Sobieski's role in domestic politics were often commented on but it was his military campaigns against the Turks and Tartars that brought him into the limelight.¹¹⁶ Approximately every other issue of the *London Gazette* between 1667 and 1676 contained information about developments in the south-eastern borderlands and Sobieski, who was deeply engaged in the defence operations in his capacity as the Polish field hetman (1666) and later the great hetman (1668), was frequently mentioned.

Sobieski became greatly alarmed by the actions of the Cossacks led by General Doroshenko who had put themselves under the protection of the Ottoman Empire (1669). Consequently, the hetman – recently reconciled with the court – beseeched the king to undertake suitable preparations, in particular strengthening Kamieniec, Podolia's main stronghold.¹¹⁷ Both his early advice and a similar recommendation of the bishop of Kamieniec in August 1672 fell on deaf ears.¹¹⁸ Further news reported that the fortress was taken in September 1672 by the Ottoman forces, who continued their march into Poland-Lithuania and a month later laid siege to Leopoldis.¹¹⁹ The Britons, so far presented with mixed information about the secret military preparation of Constantinople on the one

¹¹⁵ *LG*, 9 November 1668; 10 December 1668.

¹¹⁶ *LG*, 4 August, 1670. The ways of presenting Sobieski by the *London Gazette* are discussed in detail in Kalinowska and Mirecka, 'Bohater czy malkontent?'

¹¹⁷ *LG*, 6 February 1670.

¹¹⁸ *LG*, 1 August 1672.

¹¹⁹ *LG*, 24 October 1672.

hand and the unlikelihood of war on the other, were left with no more doubts.¹²⁰ Soon they also became familiar with the shameful resolutions of the truce of Buczacz, which ceded Podolia to the Ottomans and made the *Rzeczpospolita* a tribute payer.¹²¹ This gloomy state of affairs was brightened up by Sobieski's actions. Thousands of Christians were set free as result of the successful operation of the small cavalry troops led by the hetman against the Tartars plundering the country.¹²² A year later the Polish army under his command defeated the Ottoman forces at Chocim (1673).¹²³

Despite signing the peace treaty in Żurawno, which ended the 1672-76 war, the Poles remained apprehensive, particularly when substantial Ottoman forces were discharged after their conflict with Muscovy had ended (1681). Fearing a new attack, Sobieski, king of Poland-Lithuania since 1674, turned from his earlier pro-French stance and began negotiations with the court of Vienna. The Habsburgs in turn had grounds to suspect that resolutions of their recent pact with the Ottoman Empire (1664) would prove insufficient defence against the grand vizier Kara Mustapha Pasha's ambitious plans to capture Vienna. Thus, in March 1683, the King and the Emperor signed a treaty, which obliged both rulers to recruit armies of 40,000 and 60,000 soldiers respectively and bound them to help each other in case of Cracovia or Vienna being attacked.¹²⁴ A few months later the Ottoman army reached Buda and joined forces with the anti-Habsburgs troops of Magyars led by Count Thököly.¹²⁵ Europe held its breath when Vienna, left by its emperor, was stormed and, cut off from aid, suffered hunger and exhaustion; the impatiently anticipated arrival of allies, the duke of Bavaria, the king of Poland-Lithuania and Count Waldeck, was welcomed with a great sense of relief.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ *LG*, 22 July 1672; 12 August 1672; 29 August 1672.

¹²¹ Cf. *LG*, 28 October 1672; 21 November 1672; 25 November 1672.

¹²² *LG*, 31 October and 11 November 1672.

¹²³ *LG*, 8 and 11 December 1672.

¹²⁴ Pev, *Habsburgs and Ottomans*, 31. The treaty, and also domestic turmoil caused by it in Poland-Lithuania, where the French fraction (NB supported by the royal consort) expressed their dissatisfaction with the alliance with the court of Vienna, was commented in Britain – *LG*, 5, 12 and 16 April 1683.

¹²⁵ Count Imre Thököly was a leader of the fraction of Hungarian noblemen dissatisfied with the conversion to Catholicism enforced by the court of Vienna and who in 1678 raise against the Emperor. Leopold I's endeavours to reconcile with them were belated and thus unsuccessful and in 1682 Thököly commenced negotiations with the grand vizier, Kara Mustapha, who promised the Hungarians military assistance – Pev, *Habsburgs and Ottomans*, 27.

¹²⁶ For an animated, though probably over-dramatic description of the siege see Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Enemy at the Gate. Habsburgs, Ottomans and the Battle for Europe* (London, 2008), esp. 145-161.

Eventually, “after so many toils”,¹²⁷ the victorious battle of the united Christian forces over the Ottoman army caused the termination of the siege and a hasty withdrawal of the Ottomans from Vienna. All people were called upon to rejoice at the deliverance of Christendom from being overrun by “the insolent infidels”.¹²⁸

Was the battle of Vienna so critical? Not from a purely strategic perspective; the united forces had the advantage of both the number of soldiers and the element of surprise. More importantly, the battle of Vienna did not diminish the Ottomans’ ability to continue their military operations in Europe – it simply delayed them.¹²⁹ Yet, its propaganda value was enormous, as for many years Vienna, which did not yield even to Suleiman the Magnificent himself (1529), represented the logistical limit of the Ottoman conquest in the west.¹³⁰ Whereas the Ottomans’ defeat in September 1683 did not mean their decline, the conquest of the city would definitely have signalled their dominance in Europe. For that reason even unlikely supporters of the Habsburgs welcomed the victory of the Christian army.

Comparatively low Christian losses (2,000 people against 10,000 casualties on the Ottoman side)¹³¹ as well as the substantial booty found in the abandoned camp of the enemy, made the victory even more spectacular. News, pamphlets, letters, memoirs describing the conduct of the siege and the subsequent campaigns flooded both the Continent and Britain.¹³² They proclaimed Sobieski an international hero and applauded his valour and honour.¹³³ Named “le plus honeste homme”, the King of Poland-Lithuania was counted among the few in the world truly worthy of the royal title¹³⁴ and considered “one of the greatest

¹²⁷ *A True and exact relation of the raising of siege of Vienna and the victory obtained over the Ottoman army, the 12th of September 1683* (London, 1683), 2.

¹²⁸ *The Christian conquest* (n.p., n.d.).

¹²⁹ Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the world around it* (London & New York, 2004), 37-38.

¹³⁰ Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and early modern Europe* (Cambridge & New York, 2002), 150.

¹³¹ Párev, *Habsburgs and Ottomans*, 40.

¹³² See, among many, *True news of another bloody battle of the King of Poland with the Turks* (London, 1683); *A relation of the victory gain'd by the Imperialists and Polanders near Burkan* (London, 1683); John Shirley, *A true account of the heroick actions and enterprises of the confederate princes against the Turks and Hungarian rebels* (London, 1686).

¹³³ [B.W.], *A true copy of a letter sent from Vienna, September the 2nd 1683* (London, 1683), unpaginated; LG, 24 September, 1683.

¹³⁴ Francis Taaffe, *Count Taaffe's letters from the imperial camp, to his brother the Earl of Carlingford here in London*, (London, 1684), 16.

kings of Christendom and the most valiant".¹³⁵ It is characteristic that it was courage and dauntlessness which was so much exalted; as the fight with the Turks was an occasion to gain military distinction (both by recognised leaders and young soldiers) such qualities were particularly noticed. It was not only Sobieski's prompt response to honour his obligations towards Emperor Leopold I, but also his willingness to lead the army in person that were repeatedly complimented.¹³⁶ The royal leadership against "the infidel" brought recollections of the crusades and this aura of romantic heroism and adventure was also adorned with the glimpse of Oriental lavishness. Numerous accounts offered descriptions of findings in the grand vizier's camp such as rich tents, beautiful horses and exotic animals together with remnants of considerable amounts of money and munitions. Among the reports was Sobieski's letter to his wife, containing the particulars about "the rarities".¹³⁷ The sacred standard of the Ottomans was seen as a particularly prestigious gain; its donation to the pope was yet another echo of the crusades.

Tellingly, at the mass celebrating the victory of Vienna Sobieski was welcomed by Fra Marco D'Aviano with the words from the apocalypse of John: "Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joannes",¹³⁸ which presented Sobieski as God-sent and were suggestive of this battle as a watershed in Christian history. Indeed, Sobieski's role in the preservation of Christendom (whether whole or only a great part of it) was unanimously recognised.¹³⁹ But there is some indication that his fights against the Ottomans were appreciated prior to the victory at Vienna. The statue erected in London on 29 May 1672 to commemorate the victory of Charles II over Cromwell is believed to be a remodelled monument that originally represented Sobieski fighting the Turk.¹⁴⁰ A closer examination shows this to be

¹³⁵ *True and exact relation*, 5.

¹³⁶ *LG*, 7 July 1683; *A particular relation of the raising of the siege of Vienna* (Edinburgh, 1683). Sobieski emphasised his personal commandership to demonstrate his determination and dedication to the cause – *Copia literarum Serenissimi Regis Poloniae Ad Summum Pontificem* (London, 1685).

¹³⁷ [John III Sobieski], *A letter from the King of Poland to His Queen* (London, 1683).

¹³⁸ Janusz J. Tomiak, 'A British Poet's Account of the Rising of the Siege of Vienna in 1683', *Polish Review*, 4 (1966), 68.

¹³⁹ For instance, *A true copy of a letter*, unpaginated; John Evelyn's comment in his diary "the welcome tidings of the King of Poland raising the siege of Vienna" – 23 September 1683, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 340.

¹⁴⁰ Mierzwa, *Polska a Anglia*, 395; Walter Thornbury, *Old and New London* (London, 1872), I, 435-6; S. Perks, *The History of the Mansion House* (Cambridge, 1922), 138.

highly unlikely.¹⁴¹ Although the original figure being trampled on was described as “the Turk or enemy”, contemporaneous sources made no reference to Sobieski, who was identified with the mounted soldier only at the beginning of the eighteenth century.¹⁴²

Despite its appearance, this attribution seems to be yet another testimony to Sobieski’s post-Vienna fame. But as early as 1673, Thomas Shadwell, in his comedy *Epsom-Wells*, commented on the high frequency of newspaper reports on Sobieski and “other brave and pretty men” of Poland-Lithuania.¹⁴³ Referring to the on-going war with the Ottomans, the play’s characters pointed to the danger Poland-Lithuania was in. They were not indifferent to the possible loss of this country, but interestingly, they considered the impact it could have on trade, while ignoring entirely the matter of religion.¹⁴⁴

In contrast, a religious-civilizational issue was the main concern for Edward Brown, who explained the timing of his translation and publication of Pierre Chevalier’s history of the Cossacks (1672) in the context of the Polish-Ottoman war. Brown considered this conflict of vital importance and hoped for the *Rzeczpospolita*’s victory in its confrontation with “the greatest enemy of Christendom”.¹⁴⁵ Others commented on the main events of the war, noting also the bravery of Sobieski, whose achievements were acknowledged in the letters proclaiming his election as the king of Poland-Lithuania.¹⁴⁶ Its translation is commonly attributed to John Milton, whose motivation continues to baffle historians, for nothing in Milton’s work suggests that he took a particular interest in Poland-Lithuania. But most vital for the current discussion is the translation itself, which summarised the new king’s military career, providing details about his conduct, especially during the siege of Chocim, where he had truly demonstrated commitment to God and his country, without care for his own

¹⁴¹ For details see Kalinowska and Mirecka, ‘Bohater czy malkontent?’

¹⁴² *LG*, 27 May 1672. See the anonymous poem of 1734 in Robert Chambers (ed.), *The Book of Days. A Miscellany of Popular Antiquities* (London & Edinburg, 1832), II, 485.

¹⁴³ Shadwell, *Epsom-Wells*, 57-8.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Chevalier, *A discourse*, f. A4.

¹⁴⁶ James Heath, *A chronicle of the late intestine war in the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland with the intervening affairs of treaties and other occurrences relating thereunto* (London, 1676), 568, 596; [John Milton], *A Declaration, or, Letters patents of the election of this present King of Poland, John the Third, elected on the 22d of May last past, Anno Dom. 1674* (London, 1674).

life.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, it was claimed that to reward such valour with the crown was an action most natural, akin to the choice of Godfrey of Bullion for his recovery of Jerusalem.

The tone of mediaeval crusades can also be detected in the 40-page panegyric lauding Sobieski's life and actions that was published in London in 1679, *Pio, invicto, faelici principi Johanni Poloniae regi*. Little is known of its author, William Smith, who was a poet active in 1660-86.¹⁴⁸ An Englishman by his own admission, he revealed himself to be a knowledgeable classicist. Indeed, Smith's narrative evoked the greatness of classical antiquity and drew from it potent symbols. He compared Sobieski's leadership and talents to those of Scipio the Great, Marcus Furius Camillus and Fabius Maximus; he celebrated Sobieski's victories against the barbarian hordes – the Turks and the Tartars, and commended the ancient laws of the Polish-Lithuanian Republic that recommended electing rulers among virtuous and courageous men, not delicate boys, unfit for combat.¹⁴⁹ Smith was not only impressed with the resistance Sobieski had mounted against the Tartars and the Turks; he hoped for other Christian princes to follow the Polish king's example and for Sobieski – the mightiest king and the greatest commander – to liberate Europe and to lead its forces against the barbarian Turks to deprive them of their power.¹⁵⁰ Smith exercised his privilege to *licentia poetica* as some of his dates clearly showed, but ultimately the poet's aim was to share his admiration for Sobieski's virtues and his vision of a united Christian Europe. It is difficult to account for the panegyric's publication in 1679, three years after the war with the Ottomans had ended; it was perhaps provoked by the news circulating in the summer 1679 about a forthcoming Ottoman attack on Poland-Lithuania.¹⁵¹ Notwithstanding, it testifies to the interest taken in Sobieski and Poland-Lithuania, and their role in fighting against the Ottomans.

As indicated, this attention intensified greatly after the battle of Vienna. Sobieski became the epitome of a Christian knight whose actions were narrated and lauded in songs. Moreover, his portraits were sought after as attested by Count

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴⁸ Frans Korsten, *A catalogue of the library of Thomas Baker* (Cambridge, 1990), 214.

¹⁴⁹ Smith, *Pio, invicto, faelici*, 5, 17, 25-26.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁵¹ *LG*, 28 August 1679.

Taffee's letters to his brother (1683), where he communicated dispatching the picture of the duke of Lorraine and promised to procure a portrait of Sobieski.¹⁵² For that matter, there are indications of images of Sobieski in circulation in Britain although the exact time of their origination often remains unknown. An etching by Paul van Somer is dated 1675-94.¹⁵³ Also, a 1691 auction catalogue recorded a portrait of "the King of Poland finely painted".¹⁵⁴

These images were suffused with intriguing details. For instance, Somer's etching (see Figure 4.1, p. 224) represented John III Sobieski as "the King of Poland, Great Duke of Lithuania and Ukraina", which was an unusual caption as the Ukraine was not a part of the kings of the *Rzeczpospolita's* style that traditionally read "the King of Poland, Great Duke of Lithuania, Ruthenia, Prussia, Masovia, Samogitia, Livonia". Truly unique, this insertion of the Ukraine is highly suggestive of this province being associated with the anti-Ottoman campaigns. In turn, a broadsheet portrait of Sobieski (Figure 4.2, below) presented him with a haircut popular among European noblemen, including Count Waldeck and the duke of Lorraine, making him unrecognizable from his usual, Sarmatian self.



Figure 4.2 Portrait of Sobieski from *A description of Vienna in its ancient and present state* (1683).

¹⁵² *Count Taaffe's letters*, 33.

¹⁵³ Considering that it was a companion piece to the portrait of Imre Thököly, who came into light in 1678, it is very likely that Sobieski's portrait was created later than 1678; probably after the battle of Vienna, but no later than 1684, when it was used in the book title page <http://www.bpi1700.org.uk/jsp/> (accessed 30 May 2011).

¹⁵⁴ *At the Kings-Arms tavern over-against St. Clements Church in the Strand* [London, 1691], 7.

This was probably not the result of a sinister intent to “westernize” the Polish king, but rather of a printer’s limited stock of images. Nonetheless, this inadvertently revealed how Britons might have expected Sobieski to be and how culturally different he was. But was he really? In truth, a portrait by John Smith, who presented Sobieski very much after the Sarmatian fashion, attired in a characteristic Turkish hat decorated with jewellery seemed to accentuate the cultural differences between the peoples of Britain and Poland-Lithuania (see Figure 4.3, below). Be that as it may, a Briton who looked at this king in his exotic apparel would have been reassured of their shared heritage by the inscription that pronounced Sobieski the “Great Champion of the Cross whose glorious Name/ outshines all Hereos in the Bookes of Fame/When Future Ages shall thy Picture See/And read the wonders of thy Gallantry/On bended knees they must thy shrine adore/When baffled Mahomet shall be no more”.



Figure 4.3 *John III, King of Poland* by John Smith

Indeed, Sobieski was presented within universally understood cultural frames of references. Pointedly, he was thought to be a Scanderbeg reborn. It was a powerful comparison as George Castriot, surnamed Scanderbeg, was a fifteenth-century defender of Albania against the Ottomans who had achieved European fame, and was well known also to Britons.¹⁵⁵ Already mentioned by William

¹⁵⁵ Marin Barleti, *Historie of George Castriot, surnamed Scanderbeg, King of Albinie* (London, 1596).

Smith in his panegyric, this analogy was developed by the author of the *Scanderbeg Redivivus*, writing under the initials H.G. His identity remains unknown, but the dedicatory letter linked him with Charles Greenville, son of the Earl of Bath. Greenville himself was made a count by Emperor Leopold for his services in the war of Hungary and, as hinted in the dedication, personally knew Sobieski.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, the author could rightly hope that his account would be a welcome sample of the “acknowledgments which the whole Christian world owes to [Sobieski’s] merit”.¹⁵⁷ The scope and sources of this book have been discussed already in Chapter 2, but let us here examine its portrayal of Sobieski and Poland-Lithuania’s fights against the Ottomans.

The book’s main focus, Sobieski’s anti-Ottoman campaigns, was preceded with details about Sobieski’s ancestors and his earlier life. The reader was reminded that Sobieski’s father was an ambassador and plenipotentiary for a treaty of peace that ended the Polish-Ottoman war in 1621, whereas his mother was a daughter of Żółkiewski, the great general who had fought at this war’s great battle, Cecora, where he had lost his life.¹⁵⁸ His family’s past, as his brother’s death at the hands of the Ottomans, was clearly supposed to highlight Sobieski’s determination and almost hereditary commitment to handling the Turks. His education and travels had prepared Sobieski to become a person of quality, whose merits were soon revealed in his political and military actions. A victor from Podhajce (1667) and Chocim (1673), Sobieski was praised not only for his skilful leadership, but also for his undaunted spirit that demanded fighting for the revision of the shameful treaty of Buczacz (1672). Rewarded for his achievements with the crown of the *Rzeczpospolita*, Sobieski continued to show his dedication, charisma and “natural courage” – in paying the troops from his private resources, in motivating his scarce and exhausted army, in fighting against all odds at Leopolis in 1675.¹⁵⁹ Notably, this battle was considered by the author of *Scanderbeg redivivus* “the most memorable victory that had been achieved in our age, or indeed, almost in any other”, for he considered the defeat of the Ottoman’s numerous army by a handful of Polish soldiers truly prodigious

¹⁵⁶ Peter Heylyn, *A Help to English History* (London, 1773), 163-164; [H.G.], *Scanderbeg redivivus*, n.p. Jerzy Śliżiński attributes its authorship to Lord Greenville himself – idem, *Jan III Sobieski w literaturze narodów Europy* (Warszawa, 1979), 376.

¹⁵⁷ [H.G.], *Scanderbeg redivivus*, n.p.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 5-6.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 110-116.

and miraculous. With Sobieski's name being the terror to "the infidels", the latter had no other option, but to sign peace with the king of Poland-Lithuania. The book's author was impressed with the fact that this did not hold back Sobieski; resolved to venture all to defend his country as well as Christendom, he prudently set out to form alliances, which could be advantageous for advancing the common cause. Consequently, in this narrative, the victory at Vienna, which secured Christendom from "the most eminent danger in had been for years", appeared as a natural consequence of Sobieski's character, genius and experience.

This detailed, well-written account not only testifies to Sobieski's great popularity in Britain, but it also shows us how the potential tension between perceiving Poland-Lithuania as a Catholic country on one hand and as a bulwark of Christendom on the other was dealt with. There is no doubt that the author of *Scanderbeg redioivus* was a Protestant with little sympathy for "the papists". According to him, the good seed of reformation fell on dry ground in Poland-Lithuania. He considered the Catholics guilty of ignorance, as well as of rebellious tendencies, which he illustrated with the example of Hungary, whose peace was recently disturbed by a group of Catholic noblemen pretending, as he claimed, to defend their liberties.¹⁶⁰ And yet, the king of Poland-Lithuania – a devout Catholic – appeared as a shining example of wisdom, honesty and love for the common good. Apart from emphasising the dichotomy between Christendom and Islam, this representation was achieved by a skilful application of convenient understatements. Nowhere in the text was Sobieski's Catholicism pointed out. In contrast, his religious acts, while proving his piety, were presented as a-Catholic. The invocation of the name of Jesus before the battle of Leopoldis could not offend Protestant sensibilities, whereas only those well-versed in the history of the country would be suspicious of Sobieski's performance of devotions at Częstochowa on his way to Vienna.¹⁶¹ Evidently, inconvenient details could be recast so as to present this great hero of Christendom without a flaw.

¹⁶⁰ See Note 125.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 115, 140. Częstochowa was the centre of Marian cult and a famous pilgrimage destination.

Such romanticised portrayals of Sobieski were omnipresent. In particular, H.G.'s description enjoyed a wider circulation, for its rhymed version by Alexander Tyler, *Memoires of the life and actions of the most invincible and triumphant prince, John the Great, third of that name, present king of Poland*, was also published in Edinburgh in 1685. This Scottish minister greatly esteemed Sobieski, whom he saw as the executor of God's will, as evident from the opening quote of this chapter. By no means a novice admirer, before he put *Scanderbeg redivivus* in verse (with the addition of his own panegyric), Tyler had applauded Sobieski in a poem, which was published twice in Edinburgh.¹⁶²

However, it was not only the efforts of the king but also leaders such as Prince Lubomirski and Hetman Jabłonowski, and the soldiers of the *Rzeczpospolita's* army, particularly its cavalry (*husaria*), which endorsed the image of the Poles as the fearless defenders of Christendom.¹⁶³ However, they fought on the foreign sold and it was, quite naturally, Vienna that reinforced its position as the bulwark of Christendom.¹⁶⁴ Even those spellbound with the "Northern Star" continued to describe Raab, Comorra and Pressburg as the bulwarks, but not Poland-Lithuania.¹⁶⁵ Also Dalairac, the author of the *Polish manuscripts* pointed to Hungary, but, interestingly, he thought of the bulwark as the people rather than a place and it was Hungarian generals and commanders he believed to be the bulwark against the infidels.¹⁶⁶ A similar view was suggested by Sobieski, who had recalled in his speech that it was their ancestors' achievements that had led the Poles to be considered as "the bulwark of Christianity against the arms of the Ottomans".¹⁶⁷ It appears that this concept, although not the words, described the perception of the Poles in the 1680s most accurately: of the fearless soldiers

¹⁶² No copy of the first edition of *The Siege and Battle of Vienna* has survived, but it was republished with another of Tyler's poem as *Signal dangers and deliverances both by land and sea* ([Edinburgh], 1685). Śliziński supposes that the first edition was published as a broadsheet – idem, *Jan III Sobieski*, 375.

¹⁶³ E.g.: "This so notable a Victory, must of necessity be totally ascribed to the Polish Army; but in particular, to the Conduct of their Superiors, who used great moderation in Opposing the Enemy" – *A Full and True account of the great battel fought betwixt the Turks, Hungarian rebels, and Polish army before the city of Presburg* (London, 1683), 7.

¹⁶⁴ "Vienna, the key of Germany and the bulwark of Christendom" – *A True and exact description of the city of Vienna* (London, 1683).

¹⁶⁵ [H.G.], *Scanderbeg redivivus*, 136; Tyler, *Memoires*, 134.

¹⁶⁶ Dalairac, *Polish manuscripts*, 132.

¹⁶⁷ [John III Sobieski], *A speech delivered by the King of Poland to his army before the battle, September 12th, 1683* (London, 1683), n.p.

whole-heartedly committed to the cause of Christendom led by their most valiant king, Alexander the Great incarnated.¹⁶⁸



Figure 4.1 *John III Sobieski, King of Poland* by Paul van Somer.

¹⁶⁸ [H.G.], *Scanderbeg redivivus*, 4.

Though generally unchallenged in the forthcoming years, this perception of the Poles as a bulwark of Christendom started to fade away. It was believed that with the victory at Vienna “the holy war” had been resumed; military operations undertaken by Poland-Lithuania, the Habsburgs, and Venice, who had joined their forces under the auspices of the pope and had formed the Holy League, were closely followed by the Britons.¹⁶⁹ Yet the *Rzeczpospolita*’s war effort, which included a long siege of Kamieniec, the Moldavia campaign led personally by Sobieski, and several triumphs of outnumbered Polish troops over the enemy, were commented on in detail, though without great exhilaration.¹⁷⁰ Revealingly, the Polish front involved no spectacular battles, like that of Zenta (1697).¹⁷¹ Moreover, by and large, the Poles were not fighting the Turks, but the Tartars, which, as discussed, traditionally were of less interest to the Britons. Furthermore, with Sobieski’s death (1696), the *Rzeczpospolita* lost a great symbol of its commitment to the common cause of Christendom. Valiant as he was, the new king, Augustus of Saxony, could not fill Sobieski’s shoes. While Sobieski’s creed was not held against him, King Augustus was castigated for his conversion to Catholicism as a means of securing Poland-Lithuania’s throne.¹⁷² This contested election was damaging to the perception of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom also because it had thrown its subjects into a civil war and thus had deterred them from fighting the common enemy.¹⁷³ Significantly, the need for bulwarks of Christendom could be obviated since the terms of the treaty of Karlowitz (1699) confirmed the Ottomans’ substantial territorial losses (including Podolia with Kamieniec, returned to Poland-Lithuania) and the Empire itself entered into a phase of stagnation.¹⁷⁴ Simultaneously, developments in Poland-Lithuania cast doubts on the country’s capability to act as a bulwark of Christendom, had a need arisen. In contrast, the legend of Sobieski lived on; the victor from Podhajce, Chocim and Vienna continued to be celebrated for his

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Mills, *The history of the holy war* (London, 1685), 90-91.

¹⁷⁰ For example, *LG*, 17 September 1691; 22 October 1691; 7 October 1697; 29 November 1697; 1 September 1698; 3 October 1698; Captain David Kennedy, *The late history of Europe* (Edinburgh, 1698), 36-43, 58, 72, 108.

¹⁷¹ This significant victory of the Habsburg army over the Ottomans led to their loss of Bosnia and, in long terms, to the treaty of Karlowitz that confirmed the Ottomans’ forfeiture of the parts of their territories in Europe.

¹⁷² Burrige, *The apostate prince*, 3.

¹⁷³ *LG*, 9 December 1697.

¹⁷⁴ Rifa’at A. Abou-El-Haj, ‘Ottoman Diplomacy at Karlowitz’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 87/4 (Oct.-Dec., 1967), 510.

valour, and also his talents and love of knowledge, even by the severe critics of Poland-Lithuania.¹⁷⁵

Conclusion

It is evident that Ossoliński's embassy and, more broadly, the 1620-21 Polish-Ottoman war were instrumental in implanting the idea of Poland-Lithuania as a bulwark of Christendom in Britain. What is more, a systematic campaign that promoted this perception was conducted by Britons. Whereas the *Rzeczpospolita's* case was employed to mobilise the Britons' support for the common cause of Christendom, there is little doubt that their respective understandings of what constituted being a bulwark of Christendom differed greatly. The wars in Poland-Lithuania in the 1640s and 1650s clearly showed that the Britons did not consider opposing the Tartars as important and defining as fighting the Turks. All in all, the latter had the power to shape individuals' careers, as testified by Sobieski's raise to fame. Highly and widely praised for the liberation of Vienna, the king of Poland-Lithuania established his position as a symbol of Christian heroism and zeal. Consequently, he played a crucial role in renewing the concept of Poland-Lithuania as the bulwark of Christendom which, reconfigured in the circumstances of the 1680s, came to denote the people rather than the country. Crucially, though identified – and criticised – as a member of the Catholic camp, it was Poland-Lithuania's Christianity, not its Catholicism, which in the context of geopolitics impinged on the Britons' consciousness of the *Rzeczpospolita* more strongly.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. [Savage], *An Ancient and Present State of Poland*, 10; Dalairac, *Polish manuscripts*, 7.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this study has been to provide a systematic analysis of British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania in the long seventeenth century, in particular different interpretations generated by the country's constitutional arrangement. As we have seen, throughout this period Britons frequently discussed and employed the *Rzeczpospolita* in their arguments, whether debating domestic or international issues. Extrapolations based on this range of uses, or attempts to construct an ultimate portrayal of British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania, should be approached with caution; however, if this thesis has proved Britons' interest in the *Rzeczpospolita*, it will have achieved its main objective. Drawing on previously neglected sources and re-evaluating known references, the aim has been to demonstrate that Britons were not only aware of, but also actively made use of, the Polish-Lithuanian example. It is hoped that this thesis has gone some way towards refashioning our approach to studying Polish-British relations. Thus, it has been argued that not only the comparison of Britain's and Poland-Lithuania's constitutions, but also the examination of how they inspired and influenced each other yield fruitful results. In addition, this study has sought to show that the adaptation of the broader categories of "the *Rzeczpospolita*" and "Britain" reveals patterns of perceptions otherwise hidden. Finally, it has offered a systematic analysis of various applications of the Polish-Lithuanian example in Britain that transcends associations with particular republican/democratic traditions.

The most striking features of British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania in the seventeenth century are their multiplicity and plasticity. We have seen how cartographic representations and chorographic descriptions resulted in various delineations of the *Rzeczpospolita*, which was defined by shifting geographical and political, as well as economic and cultural, boundaries. In a similar way, the country's political practices elicited wide-ranging reactions, from the highest praise to the most severe criticism. More importantly, despite Britons' exposure to a broadly uniform historiography of Poland-Lithuania, its constitution was subject to diverse interpretations and invoked in a variety of sometimes contradictory arguments. This plurality of opinions also stemmed from a compartmentalised way of appraising the *Rzeczpospolita*. Thus, for instance,

Britons' appreciation of the geopolitical role of Poland-Lithuania went hand in hand with their criticism of its government, just as, within a different frame of reference, Britons considered Poland-Lithuania geographically remote, and yet of central importance. Britons had no difficulty in juggling mixed, inconsistent, even contradictory views of Poland-Lithuania. Thus, for instance, Britons simultaneously disapproved of Poland-Lithuania for its Catholicism and valued its Christian profile or, alternatively, downplayed the latter and emphasised the importance of the former. This "redeeming" of supposedly negative traits with more positive characteristics was a popular practice, as also testified by Britons' reactions to Poland-Lithuania's resources and its industry.

Such paradoxical responses pose a challenge for scholars; however despite the desire to provide complete and coherent explanations, we should resist the temptation of filling the gaps and of imposing regular patterns on Britons' views. Despite this, it does not follow that a structural characterisation of British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania in the long seventeenth century cannot be offered. A key feature of Britons' access to information about the *Rzeczpospolita* was their dependence on the mediation of non-Britons. Few British travellers visited the *Rzeczpospolita* and even fewer made their impressions widely available to others. Whereas printed atlases and compendia provided overviews of Poland-Lithuania, more systematic descriptions of the country written by Britons became available only at the end of the seventeenth century. The process of disseminating information about Poland-Lithuania was determined by the conditions of the press market, such as the import of Latin books and the availability of map production technology. Consequently, Britons relied on history books by Polish, and also other European authors, and the maps provided by continental cartographers. As we have seen, these presentations and representations of Poland-Lithuania were ideologically charged, their perspective, bias and prejudice contingent upon the authors' methodological principles, personal attachments and national interests. In turn, the esteem accorded to the author was an additional factor that decided the source's popularity, which was otherwise determined by the publication's genre, language, print run and price. These factors, combined with the reader's education, social and financial situation, location and interests, were crucial in

constructing various audiences. However, while it is true that particular audiences were acquainted with different aspects of the *Rzeczpospolita's* life (as we have seen, information provided by newspapers and pamphlets differed in focus, scope and accuracy from more systematic publications), the impact of fragmented and scattered comments should not be ignored. Thus, newspapers, criticised for their sensationalism, were nonetheless an important medium for popularising Poland-Lithuania among Britons, and though preoccupied with passing military and political events, they also provided details about more permanent aspects of the *Rzeczpospolita's* geography, history and constitution. Furthermore, publications in different genres had the potential to inform and shape perceptions of the issues beyond their ostensible subject matter; the maps and overviews of Poland and Lithuania as separate countries found in atlases implied their constitutional separation, just as histories were instrumental in Britons' understanding of the *Rzeczpospolita's* current political practices.

The limited information about Poland-Lithuania available to Britons has often been taken as evidence of their limited interest in the country. In response, this study has advocated a greater appreciation of the mechanics of communication and has tried to identify the factors which were integral to the dissemination of information about Poland-Lithuania. More importantly, taking as a starting point a basic assumption that Britons could not react to information unavailable to them, this thesis has investigated how Britons utilized the information they did have access to. Seen from this perspective, numerous references to Poland-Lithuania in British constitutional debates, contrasted with the lack of systematic, up-to-date sources in English, prove rather than negate Britons' interest in Poland-Lithuania.

The mechanics of information transmission are also helpful in explaining a considerable discrepancy between English and Scottish treatments of the Polish-Lithuanian example. While there is some indication that Englishmen discussed Poland-Lithuania much more frequently than Scots because they were more inclined to see the affinity between the Polish-Lithuanian *monarchia mixta* and their own government, this might have possibly resulted from their privileged position of being close to London – a centre of politics and an information hub.

In truth, Britons' understanding of Poland-Lithuania was influenced by this country's position and the available information. However, this process was also affected by Britons' changing circumstances, principles and expectations.

It is hoped that the discoveries offered by this study not only shed new light on the position of Poland-Lithuania in British consciousness, but that they also contribute to understanding of Britons' self-image. Presentations of others often act as mirrors to people's perceptions of themselves and by employing the example of Poland-Lithuania in their debates Britons revealed their own identities and loyalties, on both a group and individual level. Some Britons' comments regarding Poland-Lithuania support what we already know about their dispositions and fears: English legalism, permeating the discussion about the abdication of the Polish king, or Scots' concerns about their independence, as testified by their references to the *Rzeczpospolita* during the union debates. Others challenge our assumptions as, for instance, reactions to Poland-Lithuania as an *antemurale Christianitatis* that reflected the complexity of Britons' religious-political loyalties.

This thesis has concentrated on how Britons imagined, transformed and used Poland-Lithuania as a rhetorical device. It is hoped that this examination of the applications of the *Rzeczpospolita* in various historical and political contexts is helpful in broadening our knowledge of the early modern rhetorical repertoire and, in addition, that it has provided new insights into the modes of constructing arguments and their change over time. More broadly, this thesis is a small yet hopefully valuable contribution to the complex and multi-layered problem of the diffusion of information in early modern Europe.

Drawing on a variety of sources and explaining its uses in numerous contexts, this study has offered a critical examination of Britons' understanding of the *Rzeczpospolita*, particularly in a political context. However, several aspects of the extensive and multifaceted debate about British perceptions of Poland-Lithuania have been merely touched upon or entirely omitted for reasons of space. Accepted to provide a balanced and coherent analysis within the given scope, this thesis' limitations suggest possible directions for future research. These

might include expansion of the source base, linguistic analysis of texts and exploration of the related issues, such as readership, which would allow a fuller evaluation of the exposure to and impact of information about Poland-Lithuania. In addition, linking discoveries offered by this thesis with studies of perceptions of the *Rzeczpospolita* elsewhere in Europe could provide a deepened understanding of the position of Poland-Lithuania, both as a point of reference and a channel of communication.

Was Poland-Lithuania “monarchy as it should be”? Expressed by a character in a comedy, this opinion held true for many contemporaneous Britons. On the other hand, many of them were highly critical of the *Rzeczpospolita*. Far more than what Poland-Lithuania was, what it was taken for, and fashioned into, proved to be of critical importance. A malleable concept in Britons’ hands, it became either monarchy as it should be or must not be. Poland-Lithuania was a monarchy Britons wished it to be.

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Bibliotheca excellentissima: composed of the libraries of two persons of great quality Containing an extraordinary collection of books in divinity (particularly the Fathers, both Greek and Latin) history, antiquity, and all manner of philological learning, in Greek, Latin, Italian, French and English, in all volumes, most of them curiously bound.: To which is adjoyn'd, an almost compleat set of common and statute law-books, also a gaeat [sic] number of very curious and valuable manuscripts ... will be sold by auction at Toms Coffee-House ... on Thursday the 6th of December, at three in the afternoon [London, 1694].

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- The strangling and death of the Great Turke, and his two sonnes With the strange preservation and deliverance of his Vncle Mustapha from perishing in prison, with hunger and thirst, the young emperour now three dayes before having so commanded. A wonderfull story, and the like never heard of in our moderne times, and yet all to manifest the glory and providence of God, in the preservation of Christendome in these troublesome times* (London, 1622).
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- True copies of the insolent, cruell, barbarous, and blasphemous letter lately written by the Great Turke, for denouncing of warre against the King of Poland: and of the magnanimous, and most christian answeere made by the said king thereunto. With a short preface, declaring the unjust cause on which this Turkish tyrant, and faithlesse enemy of Christendome, now layeth hold to invade it* (London, 1621).
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- A true relation of the severall negotiations which have pass'd between his Majesty the King of Sweden and His Highness the Elector of Brandenburgh. Translated out of French* (London, 1659).
- A true report of all the speciall passages of note lately happened in the Ile of Ree betwixt the Lord Duke of Buckingh am his Grace, Generall for the King of England, and Monsieur Thorax, Governour of the Fort in the said Ile, as also betwixt the Duke and the French King, likewise the present state of the Rochellers, and of the Kings Armie lying before it. [Novemb. I.] Numb. 40. The continuation of our weekly newes from*

- the 24. of October to the 2. of Nouember. Containing among the rest these speciall particulars following. Unto which is added newes from Germany, France, and diuers parts of Christendome. The warlike proceedings of the imperialists, and Danish. The treatie of peace betwixt Poland and Sweden. The Emperours journey towarde Prage. Besides diuers other matters of moment (London, 1627).*
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- Signal dangers and deliverances both by land and sea comprehending a short account of the siege of Vienna, one of the most memorable in this last age; together with a description of a violent tempest on the Forth/ in two small poems by the same hand ([Edinburgh], 1685).*
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- The Joiefull and Blessed reuniting the two mighty and famous kingdomes, England and Scotland into their ancient name of great Brittain (London, 1604).*
- A vaunting, daring, and a menacing letter, sent from Sultan Morat the great Turke, from his court at Constantinople, by his embassadour Gobam, to Vladislaus King of Poland, &c. Which letter was sent to the Christian King, since the truce concluded betweene the Turke and the Persian in March last; as by many copies whereof, may appeare, as it was sent out of Poland. Wherein he declares himselfe a mortall enemy to the said Christian King, threatning to invade his kingdomes and territories, with all manner of hostility. Whereunto is annexed a briefe relation of the Turkish present strength, both of horse and foote: with al the victories the Turkes have prevailed against the Christians these last three hundred yeares. As also what glorious victories the Christians have wonne against the Turkes, till this present yeare. 1638 (London, 1638).*
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