

THE ANNEXATION OF LIVONIA
TO THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA:
HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTROVERSIES

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ABSTRACT. *The aim of this study is to present the most characteristic scholarly evaluations of Livonia's annexation to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania [GDL] and to discuss the most controversial issues and different interpretations of Lithuanian intentions in Livonia, contradictory opinions about the extent of influence in the country, the assumptions about the existence of the Lithuanian and Russian spheres of interest in Livonia, etc. Various causes, which determined the tactics of the political activities of the GDL in 1558-1561 as well as the factors, conditioning Livonia's decision to submit to the ruler of Lithuania-Poland, are discussed, too. The significance of Livonia's annexation to the GDL was treated variously by different investigators depending on their competence, engagement to particular conceptions and the methods used by them, as well as on their nationality or citizenship and other alternatives.*

The dynamics of the relationship between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Livonia in the middle of the sixteenth century belongs to most intricate historiographical problems of that time. The works related to these issues, however, do not specifically analyze them, dealing mostly with diverse narrow aspects, some particular facts or moments in the course of the events. At present researchers are making attempts to carry out a systematic, generalized and critical review of the work of their predecessors, however, such endeavours are rare, modest, conducted usually in the framework of their particular topics. So far there are neither comprehensive detailed descriptions of the fall of Livonia and its annexation to the GDL nor any critical analyses of the origin and development of the historiographical conceptions.

The process of the incorporation of Livonia into the GDL lasted for over a decade and a half. The first rather vague ideas about the expediency of strengthening the influence of the GDL and Poland in that region and of annexing it under favourable circumstances appeared in 1422, and on 17 March 1562 the Master of the Livonian

Order passed over his *regalia* to the GDL's commissioner. Turning into a landmark in the history of Livonia of 'before' and 'after', the dissolution of the Order, however, did not mean the ultimate implementation of the Lithuanian intentions – the further integration of the country, its administrative re-organization had yet to be solved in the 1566 Diet of Grodno.

The process of the annexation of Livonia could be divided relatively into three stages. The first period, covering the years between 1552 and 1557, was the time of the genesis of the annexation idea proper, the choice of the aims and means and the test of one's own and opponent forces. Lithuania, determined to seek Livonia's annexation, settled on a special diplomatic activity, and by signing a military treaty with the Livonian Order on 14 September 1557 it attained at least a formal confirmation of its influence. Faced with the Livonian war Lithuania had to reconsider its relations with the Livonian confederation as well as with the other states, that laid claims to the Livonian inheritance.

In the second stage (1558-1561) the political activity of the GDL was long and complicated, consisting of both a cautious observation of events and the decision to actively defend that territory by including it into its own possessions and be ready for an open confrontation with Russia, Sweden and Denmark. When the representatives of Livonia surrendered on 28 November 1561, the GDL took over both the commitments and the possible consequences.

The third stage (1562-1566) was marked by the wars, in which Lithuania was implicated and had to act simultaneously in several directions. It had to repulse Russian attacks in the Slavic lands of the Grand Duchy, to stop the Swedish intervention in northern Estonia and to deal with the defence and administration of the annexed part of Livonia. A number of essential factors – a long-term independence of the city of Riga, the separatism of its archdiocese and the self-sufficiency of the Duchy of Courland - prevented the exceptional attention to the further integration of Livonia. Nevertheless, the GDL managed to retain its control over Livonia and in 1566 began the re-organization of the region.

The theme of the present study is the second stage, covering the years from 1558 to 1561. This period is distinguished by its exceptional problems and a variety of the issues related to this theme. Beyond doubt, the other two periods are also worth a detailed analysis. However, for the time being they must be left aside not only due to the limited size of this paper but also due to some other more serious reasons. The period between 1552 and 1557 has been traditionally described as a consecutive, organized and uniform process. In the

beginning the first ideas originated in the GDL and Prussia, then followed the coordination of the various positions, and the campaign ended in the signing of the Treaties of Pasvalys in 1557. Different authors treat the same phenomena differently from the viewpoints of their own states and indicate different causes of the events, without, however, debating in essence, but supplementing each other in drawing a full picture of the successful expansion of the GDL. In dealing with the years 1562-1566 it is obvious that the central problem was the fact that with the shift of the Livonian War theatre to the GDL, the attention of historiography also transferred to Lithuania, leaving Livonia and its problems on the periphery.

Meanwhile, the start of the Livonian War, the period between 1558 and 1561 presents a situation most favourable for a historiographical study. Numerous events, the involvement of new states and the abundance of documentary materials made these issues attractive for many historians. The tense situation and the dynamics and uncertainty of the change conditioned the diversity and controversy of the opinions. Therefore intersecting and sometimes diametrically opposite conclusions related to that period encouraged the researchers for further investigations and a deeper analysis.

It is evident that due to the above-mentioned variety and copiousness of the material a detailed and comprehensive examination of all known arguments concerning Livonia's annexation to the GDL is impossible in an article. Respectively, in this study a less restricted way of presenting the problems and selecting several major historiographical controversies was preferred to a consecutive chronological survey.

Livonia's submission to Sigismund Augustus in the autumn of 1561 was the aftermath of the previous Lithuanian activities, leading to the acquisition of a large densely populated territory, military fortifications and economic resources. However, the achievements of the GDL are often considered as insufficient and ineffective. This would be the first contention – was Lithuania unable to achieve more, or did it simply not strive after 'more'?

The conclusion about the inadequate preparation of the GDL for the Livonian War is best supported by the subsequent events – the loss of Polotsk and the further course of the war before Stephen Bathory's accession. In that period two causes are usually presented in the implementation of Lithuania's policy towards Livonia – the passiveness of the gentry and limited financial resources of Sigismund Augustus.

Already Maciej Strykowski and Albertas Vijūkas-Kojelavičius noted that the reserved support of the gentry cost Sigismund Augustus

dearly, he was forced to approve certain important corrections in the Lithuanian Statute and again to grant the gentry new freedoms and privileges. It was only after those concessions that the Seimas of Vilnius agreed that new taxes be levied to pay for the war.¹

Joachim Lelewel indicates that the sovereign could rely only on the forces of the GDL proper. That was attested by the failure to win the support of the Poles in the Livonian problem in 1559.² The dissociation of the Poles was usually accounted for by their indifference to distant Livonia, and V. D. Koroliuk adds two more factors complicating the King's position – a sharp conflict between the magnates and the gentry in Poland and a rapid spread of the Reformation there.³

Stanysław Karwowski attributes the cautious political line of the GDL to the weakness of the Grand Duke's power. His belief is based on the presumption that if the ruler had violated the peace accord with Russia without the consent of the Seimas, the gentry could not have considered its duty to go to war outside the boundaries of the country without proper remuneration, and Sigismund Augustus actually had no money of his own.⁴ Anna Sucheni-Grabowska also notes that expenditures for the Livonian affair surpassed the financial possibilities of the sovereign, while the economic resources outside the boundaries of the state had already been depleted in the preparation for the Pasvalys campaign.⁵

Simas Sužiedėlis critically treats the stance of the Lithuanian gentry due to its narrow-mindedness in respect to Livonia and its exclusive attention to the direct confrontation with Muscovy. The strategic significance of Livonia was not recognised by the gentry, while the nobility, with the exception of the Radvila clan, were not interested in the Livonian War.⁶

Erik Tiberg acknowledges the necessity of the approval and support of the king's policy by the Council of Lords of the GDL. He

¹ M. Strykowski. *Kronika polska, litewska, żmódzka i wszystkiej Rusi*, t. 2 (Warszawa 1846, repr. 1985), p. 411; A. Vijūkas-Kojelavičius, *Lietuvos istorija* (Kaunas, 1989), p. 703.

² J. Lelewel, *Dzieje Litwy i Rusi do unii z Polską* (Poznań, 1844), p. 174.

³ В. Д. Корольюк, *Ливонская война* (Москва, 1954), с. 29.

⁴ S. Karwowski, *Wcielenie Inflant do Litwy i Polski 1558-1561 roku* (Poznań, 1873), p. 40.

⁵ A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Zygmunt August, król polski i wielki książę litewski 1520-1572* (Warszawa, 1996), p. 389.

⁶ S. Sužiedėlis. *Lietuvos ir Livonijos konfliktas 1556-1557* (Kaunas, 1938), p. 18.

characterizes the Treaty of Vilnius (1559) as irresolute and as a compromise and accounts for the outcome of the negotiations by the insufficient support for Sigismund Augustus on the part of the Council of Lords, which due to the lack of money and the unwillingness to break the truce with Russia refused to encourage the King's initiative.⁷

It is often emphasized that even having undertaken to protect Livonia under the Treaty of Vilnius in 1559, the GDL was not in a position to meet its military commitment and allowed the Muscovians indiscriminately to devastate and weaken Livonia. David Kirby concludes that the very stationing of the troops and their garrisoning in the castles was not a great merit, since numerically the forces sent by Sigismund Augustus to Livonia were inadequate to the scale of new Russian attacks.⁸

What was worse, the marches and stationing of the GDL troops in Livonia led to the formation of a vivid and unforgettable negative image of the Lithuanian or the Pole. The historians of both old times and of the twentieth century take delight in retelling the sad grudges of the contemporaries and on that basis formulate their conclusions.⁹ Thus, Ludewig Albrecht Gebhardi writes that the Polish garrison, sent by Gotthard Kettler to Revel, fell out with German soldiers and unleashed such a brawl and public disorder that the city council had to get rid of them.¹⁰ In his book, issued in 1954, Reinhard Wittram states that the Polish army, a motley mixture of Oriental peoples, behaved barbarously and adversely and was engaged in pillage rather than protection. In 1560 Archbishop Wilhelm wrote that the Poles behaved no less worse than the Tartars.¹¹

Walther Kirchner's work, published in the same year, presses the same opinion that the army of Sigismund Augustus was nothing less than a naked and hungry band, which, besides its brutal and loose character, differed from the Germans and Livonians in its language and customs, were often at odds with the people, whom they were

⁷ E. Tiberg, *Zur Vorgeschichte des Livländischen Krieges. Die Beziehungen zwischen Moskau und Litauen 1549-1562* (Uppsala, 1984), S. 158.

⁸ D. Kirby, *Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period. The Baltic World 1492-1772* (London, 1990), p. 110.

⁹ Carl Schirren, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Untergangs Livländischer Selbstständigkeit* (Reval, 1861-1863); Friedrich Bienemann, *Briefe und Urkunden zur Geschichte Livlands* (Riga, 1865-1876).

¹⁰ L. A. Gebhardi, *Geschichte von Liefland, Esthland, Kurland und Semgallen* (Halle, 1785), S. 522.

¹¹ R. Wittram, *Baltische Geschichte. Die Ostseelände Livland, Estland, Kurland 1180-1918* (München, 1954), S. 69.

supposed to help. Despite all the promises Sigismund Augustus, however, did not change the order in the army for many years, therefore a special mission led by Kettler's representative Salomon Hening was sent to Vilnius to seek justice.¹² The economic weakness of the GDL, the incompetence of its civilian and military leaders and the lack of the discipline in the army were the factors, which would indicate the irrationality, the absurdity and the danger of the undertaken venture. The criticism seems argumentative and justified. Nevertheless, there exists quite a different viewpoint, according to which the control and defence of the entire Livonia was never the principal aim of Lithuania. All that leads to the conclusion that in 1557-61 the contradiction between Lithuania and Russia was not as flagrant in Livonia as is considered in traditional historiography.

Already in the mid-nineteenth century Nikolai Ivanovich Kostomarov remarked that when Russia was plundering Livonia, the GDL occupied its castles without any resistance.¹³ Several decades later Alexander Bergengrün also stated that the marches of the Lithuanian army to the north of the Daugava were not efficient, their aim was merely to preserve the status quo after 1559. Strategic regions of the country were controlled and the Swedish invasion was stopped, however, no real support was offered and a chance to annex the country was awaited.¹⁴

According to Tiberg, the most famous apologist of the idea of the zones of influence, Lithuania was primarily interested in the control of the river Daugava, the city and port of Riga. He proposed to consider the northern border of the archdiocese of Riga the boundary of the interests of the GDL in Livonia, thus guaranteeing the Lithuanian protectorate of the lands along the Daugava and the city of Riga and keeping the Russians away at a safe distance from Vilnius.¹⁵ This idea was frequently reflected in many works of Lithuanian and Polish historians in relation to trade interests.¹⁶ The nationality of the

¹² W. Kirchner, *The Rise of the Baltic Question* (Newark, University of Delaware, 1954), p. 206.

¹³ Н. И. Костомаров. *Ливонская война*, ч. 3 (СПб., 1864), с. 24.

¹⁴ A. Bergengrün, *Herzog Christoph von Mecklenburg, letzter Koadjutor des Erzbistums Riga* (Reval, 1898), S. 155-156.

¹⁵ Tiberg, *Zur Vorgeschichte*, S. 233.

¹⁶ Sužiedėlis, 'Livonijos prijungimas prie Lietuvos', *Athaeneum*, IV (Kaunas, 1933), p. 90; Aleksandras Plateris, *Teisiniai Livonijos ir Kuršo santykiai su Lietuva* (Kaunas, 1938), p. 19; Jan Dąbrowski, 'Baltische Handelspolitik Polens und Litauens im XIV-XVI Jahrh.' *Conventus primus historicorum Balticorum, Rigae, 16-20. VIII. 1937. Acta et relata* (Rigae, 1938), p. 288; Stanisław Cynarski, *Zygmunt August* (Wrocław, 1988), p. 169.

investigator was irrelevant in this matter – similar statements could be found in both Russian and even German historiography.

Accepting the supposition that Lithuanian and Polish interests did not reach the north of Livonia, one would have to agree that in 1559 the plan of the domination in Livonia was actually achieved, and that subsequent activities could be treated as attempts to legalize the actual situation. Knud Rasmussen also was of the opinion that under such circumstances the Treaty of Vilnius was a significant victory, and as an evidence of the limited territorial interests of the GDL he indicated a temperate reaction of the King when Duke Magnus occupied the diocese of Saaremaa. At the same time the author raises the following question: why did the Lithuanian Council of Lords concede to the conception of Sigismund Augustus of the annexation of the whole of Livonia, if the aim of Mikalojus Radvila the Black and other Lithuanians was only Riga and the lands along the Daugava? In his opinion, the treaty signed with the representatives of Livonia meant a victory for the King rather than for Radvila.¹⁷ It should be noticed that a special research would be most appropriate to determine precisely the competence of Sigismund Augustus and the Lithuanian Council of Lords in the Livonian matters.

Tilberg does not confine himself merely to the extent of interests of the GDL and Russia in Livonia. He offers an elaborate guess that the Russian onslaught on Livonia in 1558 was part of an agreement between Sigismund Augustus and Ivan IV – the beginning of the partition of that country. This conjecture would lead to a conclusion that Lithuania and Russia intended to annex Livonia without a mutually destructive war. Before 1559 the Russians captured Livonian castles in the north, while in the south – in the sphere of the interests of the GDL – only devastating expeditions were conducted.¹⁸ So far, in the absence of documentary support, this opinion can be treated only as a hypothesis of the author.

No matter with what degree of reservation Tiberg's assumptions should be accepted, they, nevertheless, have an old historiographical basis. Thus, for example, Alfred Dreyer considered that Sigismund Augustus cherished secret hopes that for his peace mediation between the Russians and the Livonians, Ivan IV would leave a greater part of Livonia for the Lithuanians and the Poles.¹⁹ The Russian classical authors Vladimir Sergeevich Solov'ev and Georgii Vasilievich Forsten

¹⁷ K. Rasmussen, *Die Livländische Krise*, Københavns Universitets Slaviske Institut. Studier 1 (København, 1973), S. 148, 181, 224.

¹⁸ Tiberg, *Zur Vorgeschichte*, S. 97, 233, 237.

¹⁹ A. Dreyer, 'Die lübischn-livländischen Beziehungen zur Zeit des Untergangs livländischer Selbstständigkeit 1551-1563', *Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der freien und Hansestadt Lübeck*, Bd. 1, H. 1, 1912, S. 117.

also accentuated the insidious, even Jesuitical nature of the policy of Sigismund Augustus towards Livonia.²⁰

On the basis of the documents, published by Carl Schirren, Rasmussen states that the Livonians understood early (in December 1558) that Sigismund Augustus would not fight against Russia only to defend the freedom of Livonia.²¹ Bergengrün notes that in the course of time the attitude of the GDL towards Livonia did not change – even the Lithuanian summer expedition of 1561 across the Daugava was useless, since they stopped in the lands mortgaged to Sigismund Augustus already in 1559.²² The final conclusion is drawn by the USA historian William Urban – the sovereign of Poland and Lithuania did not even intend to defend that country as long as the Livonians themselves were not going to give up their independence.²³

Only mutual Lithuanian and Russian endeavours prevented the start of a military confrontation which seemed unavoidable when after the Treaty of Vilnius in 1559 Sigismund Augustus began consolidating his position in southern Livonia. That fact is also stressed by Rasmussen: in the summer of 1560 the GDL once again postponed its decisive encounter with Muscovy and in October it obviously went on the defensive. In the opinion of the historian, ways were sought to avoid a military confrontation and reach a peaceful way of solving the problem with Muscovy. At the same time Sigismund Augustus and the Master of the Order could not find a definite form of the future relations between Lithuania, Poland and Livonia.

Rasmussen sees the GDL's undeniable avoidance to occupy and control Livonia and unwillingness to aid the Master on the basis of all kinds of pretexts. A possible explanation may be the arrival in Vilnius on 1 October of the Russian mission with the proposal of the Tsar for Sigismund Augustus to become related. However, the author failed to find any corroborative evidence. A subsidiary reason may have been the weakening ties of the GDL with the Crimea.²⁴ Even speaking about the year 1562, when practically there were no real hopes to solve the Lithuanian-Russian conflict peacefully, August Lüdewig Schlözer also begins his account of Jonas Chodkevičius' (Chodkiewicz) activity in Livonia with the attempts to reconcile with the Russians.²⁵

²⁰ Г. В. Форстен, *Балтийский вопрос в XVI-XVII столетиях*, т. 1 (СПб, 1893), с. 77.

²¹ Rasmussen, *Livländische Krise*, S. 137.

²² Bergengrün, *Herzog Christoph*, p. 156.

²³ W. Urban, 'The Origin of the Livonian War, 1558', *Lituanus*, no.3, 1983, p. 24.

²⁴ Rasmussen, *Livländische Krise*, S. 179, 183.

²⁵ A. L. Schlözer, *Geschichte von Littauen, als einem eigenen Grossfürstethume, bis zum Jahre 1569* (Halle, 1785), S. 277-278.

Thus, the ratio between Lithuania's inability and unwillingness to defend Livonia exhibits an equilibrium of opinions and a really wide spectrum of arguments 'for' and 'against', and it is not the aim of historiographical research to decide which of the two positions is more correct.

The issue of the partition of Livonia is directly related to the scale of interest of the GDL in Livonia and its geographical boundaries. A question arises: was the part of Livonia acquired by Sigismund Augustus planned booty or only a remnant left by other predators – Russia, Sweden and Denmark? To what degree was the partition determined by the objective necessity and by the lost chances of the GDL?

The most weighty argument of the authors critically treating Lithuanian gains was the fact that it managed to annex only a part of the country and not the whole of Livonia. Instead of unconditionally dominating in that territory, it had to share control with Russia, Denmark and Sweden. On the other hand, neither could the formation of the Duchy of Courland be treated as a realization of Lithuanian expectations. Even the fact that a greater part of Livonia directly surrendered to Sigismund Augustus in 1561 did not mean a victory but only an illusion in the eyes of some historians.

Describing Kettler's newly created state, Alexander Berkis argues that Lithuania-Poland only formally controlled Courland. Its new ruler officially was an obedient subject of the King, but in fact he was in possession Semigallia, the richest region, a granary of Livonia. The authority of the GDL and Poland was so insignificant that Courland was able to remain neutral in the Livonian War.²⁶ Ludewig Albrecht Gebhardi describes the foundation of the Duchy as a result of an agreement of two almost equal rulers rather than as a submission of one to the other.²⁷ In this respect Gebhardi should be compared with Johannes Renner, whose translators and interpreters, Jerry S. Smith, William Urban and J. Werd Jones, attribute practically the same views to him; according to them, Renner perceived Kettler's agreement with the King of Poland in 1561 as the submission of Livonia.²⁸ Norbert Angermann's remark, however, contradicts this conception – the actual implementation of the Prussian plan, encompassing only Courland and Semigallia (when the other parts of the country were seized by foreign

²⁶ A. Berkis, *The History of the Duchy of Courland* (Towson, Md., 1969), p. 8.

²⁷ L. A. Gebhardi, *Geschichte des Herzogtums Kurland und Semgallen* (Halle, 1789), S. 1.

²⁸ *Johannes Renner's Livonian History 1556-1561*. Transl. by J. S. Smith and W. Urban with J. W. Jones. *Baltic Studies*, 1 (New York, 1997), pp. 197-198.

states) had nothing to do with Kettler's vision and could be accepted only under distressing circumstances.²⁹

The loss of northern Estonia and Saaremaa (Ösel) is justified by almost irrefutable arguments: the incompetence of the GDL to neutralize Danish and Swedish endeavours, on the one hand, and on the other, its inability to win the favour of the local gentry and, in particular the townsmen, by offering them something pleasing. According to Daniel Harnack, in 1560, when Kettler and his entourage understood that their only outcome was to let in Lithuanian-Polish garrisons, the Germans of Reval could not agree to such a decision. This kind of self-determination of the townsmen was conditioned by the greater proximity of Reval to the Kingdom of Sweden than to Riga, which, in its turn, was nearer to Lithuanian and Poland and their markets.³⁰

In Carl Cröger's interpretation the rapprochement between Reval and the Swedes is accounted for by the townsmen's understanding that Lithuania and Poland could not offer urgent aid, needed at that time, and by the superficial and less useful economic contacts, indicated by Hartnack, and also by the differences in language and religion, pointed out by many authors. Equally the same was the attitude towards Lithuania-Poland of the gentry of Harrien-Wierland, which sought Swedish protection.³¹

Paying great attention to maritime and commercial issues is characteristic of the Scandinavians, and thus Rasmussen presents two extra arguments of that type to explain why northern Estonia turned away from the King of Poland and yielded to Erik XIV. Firstly, to recover Narva from the Russians it needed a navy, which Lithuania lacked. Secondly, if the city had surrendered to the Polish King, the Swedes would have stopped supplying it the most necessary commodities from Finland, and Reval depended on Sweden in the same degree as Riga on Poland – this is the conclusion drawn by the author on the basis of the Reval instruction of 9 April 1561 to its envoys.³²

The hopelessly protracted quarrel about the subordination of the city of Riga also offers favourable conditions for merciless criticisms of Lithuania. The GDL and Poland fought for a long time in order to

²⁹ N. Angermann, *Das letzte Testament des Herzogs Gotthard von Kurland* (d. 1587). *Nordost-Archiv*, Heft 90 (Lüneburg, 1988), S. 86.

³⁰ D. Hartnack, *Kurtzer Entwurf Liefländischer Geschichte vom Anfang der Nation* (Hamburg, 1700), S. 93, 95.

³¹ C. Cröger, *Geschichte Liv-, Est-, und Kurlands*, Th. 2, (1346-1561). (St. Petersburg, 1867), S. 173.

³² Rasmussen, *Livländische Krise*, S. 205.

get the supremacy of the Polish King acknowledged by Riga at least formally. As Riga did not sign the act of 28 November 1561, the charter of the freedom of religions, proclaimed by Mikalojus Radvila the Black in September of the same year and renewed in March 1562, was valid. However, according to Herta Ramm-Helmsing, it did not serve as a basis for discussions on surrender. The relationship between the city and Poland was not defined and fixed *de jure* and in those twenty years Riga was a completely sovereign city.³³ In general, the issue of the submission of Riga is looked at differently each time depending on a particular historiographical school: for Lithuanian and Polish authors it was an obstacle to Livonia's final annexation, for Livonian Germans – the last bastion of the idea of the Livonian statehood, and for the historians of less concerned nations – a subject of the expression of purely mercantile interests.

As has been noted, the separation of northern Livonia and the stubborn refusal of Riga to submit to the GDL were conditioned not only by Swedish agitation but also by Lithuania's inability to attract northern Estonia economically by the introduction of its protectorate and to make believe the townsmen in its resolute decision to defend and consolidate the freedom of their commercial dealings. However, the fact that the greater majority of the country made up its mind to submit to Sigismund Augustus even in the presence of a certain divergence of interests between the GDL and Livonia, testified some apparent advantages which the Livonians could not find in other alternatives.

Namely such is the characteristic of the situation made by Friedrich Bienemann. If Kettler had preferred the Swedes as his partners in negotiations and co-operation, it would have been difficult to avoid the aggravation of the relations between Lithuania-Poland and Sweden, in particular due to the pro-Polish attitude of the Archbishop of Riga and his brother the Duke of Prussia. Therefore Kettler sacrificed the Order and his contacts with the Holy Roman Empire in order to establish his duchy, though it could be only a fief of Poland. Wilhelm von Fürstenberg's position in the defence of the integrity of the empire would have led to Livonia's painful weakening even though after a heroic struggle.³⁴

Livonia's choice is also drawn in optimistic tones by Karl Heinrich Busse – at a time difficult for Kettler, Sigismund Augustus

³³ H. Ramm-Helmsing, 'Das staatsrechtliche Verhältnis der Stadt Riga zu Polen-Litauen im Zeitraum zwischen 1561-1581', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Nr. 6 (Breslau, 1941), S. 173.

³⁴ F. Bienemann, 'Rigas Stellung bei der Auflösung des livländischen Ordensstaates', *Russische Revue*, Bd. 11 (St. Petersburg, 1877), S. 390-391.

seemed to him a pleasant and reliable support and thus a defence treaty was signed in Vilnius in 1559.³⁵ Denmark, as a serious candidate to offer protection for the whole of Livonia, was not proposed by anybody, the Livonian negotiations with Moscow dealt only with a temporary truce rather than with the future of the country, and therefore Lithuania, backed by Poland, unquestionably was the most trustworthy, though not ideal, choice.

The difference between Poland and Sweden would have been in that that Lithuania-Poland would have endeavoured to annex the whole of Livonia and that situation would have been more favourable for the Master, while Sweden required only Revel and some regions of Estonia.³⁶ Georg von Rauch also considers the submission to Lithuania-Poland the best decision – in that difficult political situation Kettler attempted to preserve the unity of the former Livonia, even though under the aegis of the Polish Crown.³⁷

To some researchers Lithuanian efforts in northern Livonia do not seem weak and groundless. Dreyer labels the Lithuanian-Polish claims on Livonia as a menace to Sweden and stresses the vigour of the pro-Polish attitudes in the Swedish regions – it would not have been easy for Erik XIV to exercise his control over the Livonians and in particular over the inhabitants of Reval.³⁸

Finally, it must be acknowledged that both the optimists and the sceptics are right in their own ways. On the one hand, Lithuania acquired strategically the most important lands, and on the other hand, copious documentary materials show lengthy and unsuccessful efforts to dominate in Riga, Pärnu and Revel. For quite a long time the legal position of the Archdiocese of Riga was not clear, and the regions ruled directly from the GDL required serious administrative re-organization in 1566.

On the basis of the Jakob Koit's definition of the years 1558-1561, characterizing that period as a breakdown of the old Livonian statehood (*Zusammenbruch*)³⁹, one can argue that the annexation of Livonia at the end of 1561 can be treated as an action, dictated by military necessity rather than by political considerations. In the face

³⁵ K. H. Busse, *Herzog Magnus, König von Livland. Ein fürstliches Lebensbild aus dem 16. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1871), S. 17.

³⁶ Karl Blomberg, *An Account of Livonia* (London, 1701), p. 99.

³⁷ G. Rauch, *Aus der baltischen Geschichte* (Hannover, 1980), S. 147.

³⁸ Dreyer, *Die Beziehungen*, S. 133.

³⁹ J. Koit, 'Esthische Bauern als Krieger während der Kämpfe in Livland 1558-1611', *Annales Societatis Litterarum Estonicae in Svecia*, vol. 4, 1960-1964 (Stockholm, 1966), S. 23.

of the inevitable disintegration of the country and the Danish and Swedish victories in Saaremaa and northern Estonia, it could have been the only outcome.

Therefore, it is important to make clear firstly, the validity of the assumption about Livonia's annexation as a decision taken at the last moment and the significance (if any) of Lithuanian purposeful activities; and secondly, whether it is possible to rationally substantiate the statement that a historical turn of such a scale could be a result of the chaotic chain of events.

The proposals of Sigismund Augustus on the further relations between the GDL and Livonia, which were proclaimed at the end of May 1561, are referred to by Rasmussen as an ultimatum. Those proposals must have been a sign of a new political line. Until then Lithuania-Poland had let their minor allies in the north and the south, in Livonia and in the Crimea, fight against Muscovy on their own. However, the secession of Revel and a lengthy inactivity of the Khan displayed the inefficiency of the union between Lithuania-Poland, the Livonian Order and the Crimea. Under those circumstances Livonia had to be annexed and its actual ruler had to be a governor appointed by the King.⁴⁰

Two Swedish authors of the second half of the nineteenth century, Johann Rudolf Pallin and Claes Annerstedt treat the annexation of Livonia on 28 November 1561 as a result of military exigency. According to them, planning a war against Sigismund Augustus, Ivan IV spared no efforts to annex Livonia and rejected the negotiations proposed by the intermediaries. The sovereign of Lithuania-Poland did not waste time, either.⁴¹ The annexation was conditioned not so much by the breakdown of Livonia, but by the approaching outbreak of the war with Russia, for which it was necessary to prepare. When Sweden occupied Revel, the Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland decided that he was no longer bound by the commitment to keep Livonia independent and did not intend to get involved into a conflict and a possible war with Russia and Sweden over the country, which would not be a part of his possessions.⁴²

Lithuanian historiography categorically rejects the view that Livonia's annexation to Lithuania was a hasty action, conditioned by the circumstances, an attempt to get at least a part of the disintegrating

⁴⁰ Rasmussen, *Livländische Krise*, S. 215-216.

⁴¹ R. J. Pallin, *Underhandlingar mellan Sverige och Lifland, 1554-1560*. Doctoral thesis (Uppsala, 1860), p. 23.

⁴² C. Annerstedt, *Grundlaggen af svenska väldet i Livland 1558-1563 samt deraf allstrade strider inom Vasahuset* (Uppsala, 1868), p. 40.

state and opposes these views with the idea of a deliberate plan and an integral activity. In the interpretation of Simas Sužiedėlis all the three treaties of Pasvalys constitute an entire complex, which re-instituted the status of a pro-Lithuanian party in Livonia, dealt with the issues of the borders and transit and made attempts to curb Russia's influence in Livonia and to create preconditions for the future rule of the GDL there.⁴³

The above-mentioned acts were only the first stage, a basis for the development of the relations in order to acquire, albeit in a forceful way, an ally which the further course of events would naturally drive closer to Lithuania. This viewpoint is supported by Brunonas Bušackis.⁴⁴ Bronius Dundulis states that Lithuania thus established a juridical basis for its claims to Livonia in its competition for it with Muscovy.⁴⁵ The ultimate aim of Lithuania's policy was the annexation of Livonia,⁴⁶ therefore the Treaties of Pasvalys (1557) and Vilnius (1559) should be treated as stages of Lithuania's gaining a foothold in Livonia, as a basis and precedent for the act of the annexation in 1561.

Precedent plays an important role in the historiography of other countries as well. Tiberg indicates that the Treaty of Pasvalys was worded in such a way that Sigismund Augustus formally had no right to help Livonia as long as it did not submit itself to him as a whole or in part.⁴⁷ Such a formulation could have far-reaching benefits for the GDL. On the basis of that treaty both Fürstenberg⁴⁸ and Kettler⁴⁹ sought the support of the ruler of the GDL. Recalling earlier times Angermann argues that in his search for aid Kettler saw the only outcome, which had already been realized in 1525 in the breakdown of the Prussian branch of the Order. Additionally, that variant seemed to him attractive because Albrecht von Brandenburg had not had a single conflict with his suzerain for several decades.⁵⁰

Rassmusen, always cautious and seeking a middle ground, speaks about the Treaties of Pasvalys (1557), of Vilnius (1559) and of the '*Pacta subjectionis*' (1561) as of a consecutive chain of

⁴³ Sužiedėlis, *Lietuvos ir Livonijos konfliktas*, p. 31.

⁴⁴ B. Bušackis, *Radvila Juodasis* (Chicago, 1977).

⁴⁵ B. Dundulis, *Lietuvos užsienio politika XVI a.* (Vilnius, 1971), pp. 169-170.

⁴⁶ Rokas Varakauskas, *Lietuvos ir Livonijos santykiai XIII-XVI a.* (Vilnius, 1982), pp. 156-157.

⁴⁷ Tiberg, *Zur Vorgeschichte*, S. 97, 233, 237.

⁴⁸ Kirchner, *The Rise*, p. 207.

⁴⁹ Schlözer, *Geschichte*, S. 271.

⁵⁰ Angermann, 'Das letzte Testament', S. 84.

compromises. The Treaty of Pasvalys enabled the Master to protect his independence and Sigismund Augustus to save his prestige. The establishment of close contacts with the Order and especially with the military force of Livonia could have strengthened the positions of the GDL in its rivalry with Russia; however, it would be too early to speak about the domination of Lithuania-Poland and their protectorate in Livonia, because the policy of the GDL was only partially successful in that region. The Treaty of Vilnius (1559) was a compromise between Sigismund Augustus and the Council of Lords of the GDL, aiming at the domination in Livonia and the Livonians, defending their independence, and a compromise between the King and the Council of Lords, whose goal was an effective resistance to Russian expansion and the Lithuanian gentry, evading a war with Muscovy.⁵¹

One more aspect worth a detailed discussion is the discrepancy between the reported great concern of the Livonians about the future Lithuanian rule and the quiet description of the aftermath of that domination. A number of historians, especially those of older times, accentuate the cultural, religious and lifestyle differences between Lithuania-Poland and Livonia. Those apprehensions are characteristic mostly of the German or radical Protestant authors. The Livonian distrust of the Lithuanians and the Poles seemed quite natural, understandable and well-grounded. Livonia decided to get rid of the Master and join a country with different customs, language and, most importantly, a different religion – in this way Gustav Bergmann characterized the complexity of the situation in the late eighteenth century.⁵² A hundred years later a similar characteristic was reiterated by Carl Cröger.⁵³

The concerns of Livonian Lutherans about possible Catholic expansion and the restriction of religious freedom, or potential friction doubtless are a subject of research. Thure Annerstedt, however, excessively dramatizes the contemporary situation by directly linking the support offered by Lithuania-Poland with the export of Catholicism.⁵⁴ Carl Annerstedt speaks about the consequences ensuing from the desire to protect the achievements of the Reformation and the fear for a possible religious persecution – namely that drew Livonia towards Protestant countries.⁵⁵ It should be noted that this viewpoint

⁵¹ Rasmussen, *Die Livländische Krise*, S. 85-86, 146-147.

⁵² G. Bergmann, *Geschichte von Livland, nach Bossuetischer Art entworfen* (Leipzig, 1776), S. 50.

⁵³ Cröger, *Geschichte*, S. 174.

⁵⁴ T. Annerstedt, *Svenska väldet i Livland 1564-1570* (Göteborg, 1877), p. 3.

⁵⁵ C. Annerstedt, *Grundläggningen*, p. 15.

can sometimes be detected in the twentieth-century historiography of Sweden as well – Riga and Estonia were afraid of Lithuanian-Polish rule nearly as much as of the Russians, and that fear was caused by a possibility of the Catholic reaction.⁵⁶

Mistrust of the GDL was conditioned not only by the attitudes of the Livonians themselves but also by some external factors. Bergengrün notes that even the Archbishop of Riga sought the King's protection every year paying for the defence expenses or respectively passing over some lands, and at the same time insisting that he and his possessions belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. The situation was still more complicated by the negative attitude of Christoph von Mecklenburg towards the submission of Livonia to Lithuania-Poland.⁵⁷ At the beginning of 1559 even Albrecht von Brandenburg warned the Livonians about the arrogance of the Poles and the hazards for the old freedoms and privileges, arising from their plans.⁵⁸

Apart from such statements, more or less based on documentary material, even openly nationalistic manifestations can be found, such as the postulate of Ramm-Helmsing, in which Livonia is referred to not only as a Lithuanian-Polish bastion of defence, but also as a citadel of European culture, saving uncultured Lithuania from Eastern pressure.⁵⁹

However, the analysis of the cultural and religious policy of the GDL in Livonia shows that those apprehensions were baseless. Kazimierz Tyszkowski writes that at first glance the issue of religion seemed to have been topical, as soon as Protestant Livonia was annexed to Catholic Lithuania-Poland.⁶⁰ That idea of the GDL as a defender of Catholicism in Livonia had already been entrenched in historiography by Maciej Strykowski and his follower Vijūkas-Kojelavičius.⁶¹ Nevertheless, that supposition proved wrong, because Sigismund Augustus was not personally interested in that issue. The King's charter granted the freedom of religion to the new subjects. That could be accounted for by the Reformation in Poland itself and by the tolerance of the sovereign who was a true son of the Renaissance and humanism.

⁵⁶ *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*. Ed. Wilhelm Tham, t. 1:2, 1560-1648 (Stockholm, 1960), p. 15.

⁵⁷ Bergengrün, *Herzog Christoph*, S. 128, 155.

⁵⁸ Kirchner, *The Rise*, p. 209.

⁵⁹ Ramm-Helmsing, *Das staatliche Verhältnis*, p. 173.

⁶⁰ K. Tyszkowski, 'Die Gegenreformation in Livland zur polnischen Zeit (1561-1621)'. *Conventus primus*, S. 358.

⁶¹ Strykowski, *Kronika polska*, p. 410; Vijūkas-Kojelavičius, *Lietuvos istorija*, p. 696-697.

According to Jan Nepomucen Romanowski, the King could not and willed not to influence in any way the confessional changes in that country.⁶² Those events could have been influenced only by Mikalojus Radvila the Red, a driving force of the Lithuanian policy in Livonia, a negotiator and the King's representative, a zealous Calvinist and defender of all religious reform. Furthermore, the impending danger from Russia put off the issues of religion, and the first two decades of Livonia's existence within Lithuania-Poland passed without any religious friction.⁶³

Besides, it can be concluded that for some time the status quo in the policy of non-interference was maintained in relation to both the Reformation and Catholicism in Livonia. Although the intention to secularize Livonia was often demonstrated among the principal aims of the Livonian policy of Sigismund Augustus, the first real step in that direction was taken not by Lithuania but by Denmark. Already in 1701 Blomberg rightly stated that the transfer of Courland, Piltene and Saaremaa to Magnus was the first act of secularization.⁶⁴ Thus, taking into account the process of secularization as an indicator of the political activity in the country it can be maintained that Lithuania was not the first to take that step.

Before passing to generalized assessments it is worthwhile to compare Lithuania's intentions in Livonia with the actual achievements and the results of state interrelationship. The very fact that the greater part of Livonia was annexed to the GDL would suggest that the political programme of Lithuania-Poland was accomplished as a result of the treaties of 28 November 1561 and that conditions were created for the next programme – the assimilation and effective exploitation of the country. The new stage, however, clearly was not marked by the spirit of any exceptional energy and innovations.

As regards the cultural and ideological aspects, the changes were far fewer than could be expected. One must not forget that the plans of infiltrating into Livonia very often were directly associated with the hopes of the Lithuanian and Polish Protestants. It is sufficient to recall the supposition of Bušackis that in Protestant Livonia Mikalojus Radvila the Black saw support for the spread of the Reformation in Lithuania and a chance to increase the number of his adherents in the domains of Sigismund Augustus.⁶⁵ Forsten considers

⁶² J. N. Romanowski, 'Wojna Zygmunta Augusta z Zakonem Inflanckiem roku 1557', *Rocznik Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk Poznańskiego*, t. 1 (Poznań, 1860), p. 339.

⁶³ Tyszkowski, 'Die Gegenreformation', pp. 358-359.

⁶⁴ Blomberg, *An Account*, p. 97.

⁶⁵ Bušackis, *Radvila Juodasis*, p. 155.

that that could have dealt Catholicism a blow from which it would not have easily recovered.⁶⁶ Alas, not much can be said about a significant contribution of the Livonian Protestants to the Reformation movement in the GDL and Poland.

Speaking about the consequences of the annexation for Livonia itself, one should begin with Arnold Spekke's characteristic of that territory inhabited by the Latvians and Estonians as about an area attacked aggressively on all sides. Spekke conceives the history of Livonia as a subject of the history of international law.⁶⁷ The statehood of Livonia as such was not of local origin, it was imported. For centuries the fate of this country was moulded in the papal chancery, the Emperor's court, or the palace of the king of Denmark, and the Livonians could only resign themselves to it. After the collapse of the Order, one ruler was again succeeded by another who brought his own conceptions of politics, economy and culture, and one can only guess to what degree he managed to realize his intentions under local circumstances.

The traditional view that the GDL was not a beneficent ruler of Livonia can be discarded by the fact that those years were a critical period of the Livonian War, Lithuanian rule itself was short-lived and ended in the wars with Sweden in the early seventeenth century. Nevertheless, Kirchner's criticisms about the poor management of the economy, the absence of modern conceptions and progressive views and the inability to exploit the victory⁶⁸ are well-grounded. On the eve of the Livonian War there was much talk about the economic interests of Lithuania-Poland in Livonia, however after the annexation no basis was found for the reforms. When Lithuania became firmly established in Livonia, in Kirchner's words, nothing new was organized as regards national economy. On the contrary, particular attention was paid to only military matters, defence outposts against Russia were established and even predatory expeditions were organized.⁶⁹ Works, conceptually close to Kirchner, indicate that already during the negotiations on the submission of Riga, even Estonia was worried that the rule of the GDL might negatively affect the trade of the cities.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Форстен, *Балтийский вопрос*, с. 77.

⁶⁷ A. Spekke, 'Point de vue letton sur la question Baltique au 16. siècle', *Conventus primus*, p. 342.

⁶⁸ Kirchner, *The Rise*, p. 197.

⁶⁹ W. Kirchner, '*Neues*' zum Thema *Livland und Moskau im 16. Jahrhundert* (Köln, 1977).

⁷⁰ *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*, p. 15.

Enn Tarvel, without indulging into criticism, presents facts and conclusions which show that the GDL simply preserved the situation in the Livonian territory under its control and did not introduce anything radically new. Sigismund Augustus closely observed the letter and spirit of the privilege of 1561. There was no Counter-Reformation in Livonia until 1582, only in the administrative policy some terms of the Treaty of Vilnius were not observed – the principle of indigeneity was violated by appointing the Lithuanian Jonas Chodkevičius the administrator of Livonia, and the rights of the gentry were restricted, since the administrator was given much power.

In general, the spirit of the Treaties of Vilnius dominated in the policy in 1561-1569: the self-government of the Livonian gentry and towns was preserved under the Lithuanian supreme rule. Tarvel rejects the opinion that in his fief policy Sigismund Augustus infringed on the interests of the German feudal lords in favour of the Poles and Lithuanians. In actual fact, the state lands were often (80 per cent of them) given in fee or mortgaged to the Germans on the basis of the alodial right. Thus Livonia's annexation to Lithuania-Poland did not at all affect the interests of the German feudal lords. The former privileges of the subjects of the Order and the Archdiocese of Riga were preserved intact. Estate self-government and law courts remained unchanged in Livonian towns, though excessive protection of the gentry on the part of the King could present a threat to the interests of the towns, in particular in the sphere of commerce.⁷¹

The changes in the geopolitical situation on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea also exhibit an evident discrepancy between the aims advanced and the final results, and the search for the balance between the gains and the losses would be futile. The ardent critic of Sigismund Augustus Eugeniusz Gołębiowski, contradicting himself, quite unexpectedly declares that the treaties turned out to be unpredictably beneficial – what could not be done by a large army at Pasvalys was performed by several thousand troops, and the GDL gained a wide maritime exit on the Baltic coast.⁷² That access and the territorial expansion in general were practically all the gains of the campaign.

In Stewart Oakley's opinion, the plans to use Livonia as a means of preventing Ivan IV expanding his possessions⁷³ and isolating him

⁷¹ E. Tarvel, 'Kuidas Liimaa Poola omaks sai (1557-1569)', *Ajaloo järskundel radadel* (Tallinn, 1966), p. 219.

⁷² E. Gołębiowski, *Zygmunt August. Żywot ostatniego z Jagiellonów* (Warszawa, 1962), p. 275.

⁷³ S. Oakley, *War and Peace in the Baltic 1560-1790* (London – New York, 1993), p. 20.

from European markets and strategically important technologies were not realized.⁷⁴ In this respect only Tiberg's viewpoint is different. He rejects the commonly accepted conception that until 1557 Russia had no access to the Baltic Sea by mentioning Ivangorod and the Ladoga water way.⁷⁵ Thus, he draws a conclusion about a purely formal nature of free commerce requirements, peculiar to Russian diplomacy.⁷⁶

In any case, the increasing confrontation with Russia soon grew into an open war, in the course of which the losses were great and the country's economy was ruined. That the two-decade-long Livonian War destroyed the power of the state and became an unbearable financial burden for Lithuania and Poland has been stated often since the times of Joachim Lelewel, and since then that statement has been confirmed and increasingly vindicated. An important Lithuanian contribution into the study of that problem was the research of the tax collection for the war purposes.⁷⁷ A conclusion inevitably comes to mind that Lithuania was not able to cope with such enormous hardships and found itself in a really difficult situation.

Therefore, one can seriously consider the supposition that Livonia, instead of elevating the status of Lithuania,⁷⁸ to a certain degree damaged its statehood. The war for Livonia was one of those factors, which contributed to the appearance of the Union of Lublin between the GDL and Poland. Many Lithuanian and Polish historians and the Englishman David Kirby agree that the loss of Polotsk and the threat to Lithuania itself could have induced its gentry to become disposed more favourably to the union,⁷⁹ and that led to the development of a new specific state, capable of preventing the invasions of Russia and Turkey.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Н. М. Карамзин. *История государства Российского*, т. VIII (Москва, 1903), с. 125; Г. В. Форстен, *Борьба из-за господство на балтийском море в XVI-XVII столетиях* (СПб., 1884), с. 241; Plateris, *Teisiniai santykiai*, p. 15.

⁷⁵ E. Tiberg, *Moscow, Livonia and the Hanseatic League: 1487-1550, Studia Baltica Stockholmiensa*, 15 (Stockholm, 1995), p. 136.

⁷⁶ E. Tiberg, 'Kritische Bemerkungen zu einigen Quellen über den Anfang des Livländischen Krieges 1558', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 25 (1976), S. 475.

⁷⁷ Antanas Tyla, *Lietuva ir Livonija XVI a. pabaigoje - XVII a. pradžioje* (Vilnius, 1986).

⁷⁸ Plateris, *Teisiniai santykiai*, p. 17; Dundulis, *Lietuvos politika*, p. 159; Tyla, *Lietuva ir Livonija*, p. 28.

⁷⁹ Kirby, *Northern Europe*, p. 112.

⁸⁰ Edgars Dunsdorfs and Arnolds Spekke, *Latvijas vēsture 1500-1600* (Stockholm, 1964), p. 153.

The rise of Sweden and the clash of the interests between it and the GDL in Livonia created a new focus of tension, no less dangerous in perspective. Though Kirby speaks critically about the Swedish potential to achieve not much more than to establish a bridgehead in northern Estonia in 1561,⁸¹ the warfare specialist Ingvar Andersson, in a typically Swedish manner, draws the attention of his readers to the maritime problems and at the same time to a weak point of Lithuania-Poland. Erik XIV was safe in the case of a conflict with Lithuania-Poland because he was sure that without a navy Sweden could not be blocked.⁸²

The preparation for the matrimonial union between the Vasas and the Jagiellonians in 1561-62 could be only a diplomatic means to suppress the rising tension between the two states. Swedish diplomacy saw a chance for prince Juhan (Johann von Finland), as an alleged supporter of the Lithuanian-Polish interests, to have a duchy created for himself in the south of the Order's state. That did not contradict Erik's interests, and preparations for Juhan's marriage started in the summer of 1561.⁸³ In their turn, the envoys of Sigismund Augustus, visiting Erik XIV, proposed a union against Russia and promised to give some lands in northern Estonia, leaving Revel and its environs for themselves.⁸⁴

The ensuing friction between Sweden and Poland over the region of Pärnu and the surrounding area to which both states laid claims, the adventurous policy of the Danish prince Magnus, the conviction of Sigismund Augustus that having the larger part of Livonia he was entitled to the rest of that territory – all that was fraught with serious problems in the future.⁸⁵

Though directly not experiencing a threat of war, Poland itself, nevertheless, encountered problems. According to Marian Biskup, the protraction of the north-eastern border of Lithuania-Poland for about 1,200 kilometres presented a great new danger not only to the north-western areas of the country but to Poland as well. Already in the first stage of the war between the GDL and Russia, weakened Polish control over Prussia created conditions for the solution of the inheritance of that dukedom not in Poland's favour.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Kirby, *Northern Europe*, p. 47.

⁸² I. Andersson, *Erik XIV* (Stockholm, 1951), p. 9.

⁸³ *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia*, p. 22.

⁸⁴ Dreyer, *Die Beziehungen*, S. 124.

⁸⁵ Blomberg, *An Account*, p. 103.

⁸⁶ M. Biskup, 'Polen an der Ostsee im 16. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschungen*, Bd. 5, H. 3 1978, S. 312.

It could be stated that such strict and heedful assessments of Livonia's annexation to the GDL were conditioned not by an allegedly limited scope and success of the campaign but by exceptionally complex international circumstances of that period and, though indirectly, by the course of the war between the GDL and Russia. That would be the only way to account for the paradox that the Treaties of Pasvalys, based on a precedent and, as a matter of fact concluded formally, though in the calmer and safer times for Lithuania, received more favourable estimates than the very incorporation of Livonia.

Irrespective of whether researchers treat the annexation of Livonia to the GDL favourably or critically, it is unanimously agreed that that grandiose project, implemented in a short time, was of particular importance both for the history of Lithuania and for the entire region. However, when the whole is ignored and the analysis is focused on the details – concrete actions, their sequences and solutions, the variety of interpretations becomes enormous.

Different assessments and the ensuing conceptions are conditioned by numerous factors ranging from subjective irrational bias to excellent flawless research. The necessity to acknowledge a possible partiality of the primary sources should not be overlooked either – the evidence of the contemporaries or earlier investigators are often open to doubt. The objectivity of the conclusions can be affected by the unwillingness or inability of some authors to dissociate themselves from their national identity, and in some works of the twentieth century from their political considerations.

The different interpretations of the Lithuanian slow and cautious actions in Livonia in 1558-1561 are conditioned by a controversial difficult situation in the GDL: the gentry and nobility did not support the ruler, the treasury lacked the means for the organization of an efficient army, and the state as a whole was incapable of offering adequate resistance to Russia. Other researchers presume that the GDL defended not the whole of Livonia but only the zone of its influence – the southern part along the Daugava and the port of Riga and that the measures applied were sufficient to achieve that aim. This opinion is supported by economic and military factors; however, it is much more difficult to prove a hypothesis about the 'mutual agreement' between the GDL and Russia on annexing different parts of Livonia.

The other controversy about Lithuania's intention to occupy the whole of Livonia or only a part of it relates to the different understanding of the interests of the GDL and Poland and to the different interpretation of the potential of the state to realize those interests. Livonia's partition among several states and the approach of Sweden, Russia and Denmark to the northern boundaries of the GDL and to the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea could in no way be profitable to the

policy of Sigismund Augustus. The establishment of a semi-independent Duchy of Courland, the separatism of the city of Riga, preventing the appropriation of the intended economic resources, also were not in the interests of Lithuania-Poland. At the same time one must not ignore the possibility of the zones of influence and a great remoteness of northern Estonia from the Lithuanian-Polish markets. Successful activities of the GDL in creating a buffer territory in the greater part of Livonia to protect the Lithuanian ethnic lands from the threat of direct Russian intervention should be taken into consideration as well.

The controversies between the GDL and Livonia which historians usually emphasize and their cultural and religious differences are inadequate to the final result of the development of the relations between the two countries – Livonia's joining Lithuania. The difference in the economic development, the conflict between Lutheranism and Catholicism, the attempts of the Livonians to preserve their contacts with the Holy Roman Empire and the endeavours for a rapprochement with Scandinavian countries – all of these factors are treated in many works as more influential in comparison to those positive Lithuanian-Polish traits really existing and evident, if one takes into account the decision of both the Livonian Order and the gentry of the country to agree to the amalgamation of the states. Only the GDL was that power which was willing and capable of giving an effective military support, of assuring access to a vast market for Livonian merchants, of preserving the former gentry privileges intact and also of tolerating the Reformation – such were the arguments of the 'pro-Lithuanian' authors. The most convincing proof is the very submission of the Livonian Order and of the gentry to Sigismund Augustus.

The opinions concerning the results of Livonia's annexation for Lithuania have also varied since the time of the appearance of this problem in historical scholarship. However, in contrast to the aforementioned controversies, the rapprochement of the stances is noticeable in the course of time. Optimistic assessments, both current and previous, are not well-founded, being based on the increase of Lithuanian lands at the expense of the incorporation of the formerly adverse Livonian Order into the conglomerate of the GDL, Poland and Prussia. However, from the very beginning such conclusions were confronted with strong opposition – the aggravation of the relations with Russia, Lithuania's involvement in the war, the failures and losses sustained in it and the start of the confrontation with Sweden – all these events made the majority of the authors adhere to a more critical attitude towards Lithuanian achievements or at least be more modest in enumerating its victories.

In summary it can be said that the issues of the political development of the relationship between the GDL and Livonia and of

the entire region of the eastern Baltic leaves much space for further investigations. Many aspects of this problem require deeper additional analysis and assessment based on modern methodology, and at the same time there is a need for a comprehensive study to systematize the so far dispersed results of the research.

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LIVONIJOS PRIJUNGIMO PRIE LIETUVOS DIDŽIOSIOS KUNIGAİKŠTYSTĖS ISTORIOGRAFINIAI PRIEŠTARAVIMAI

Santrauka

VIGINTAS STANCELIS

Straipsnio tikslas – pristatyti būdingiausius Livonijos prijungimo prie LDK istoriografinius vertinimus ir aptarti daugiausiai prieštaravimų sukėlusias problemas. Darbe pristatomi tokie diskusiniai momentai, kaip skirtingas Lietuvos tikslų Livonijoje suvokimas, nesutampančios nuomonės apie krašte turėtos įtakos stiprumą, prielaidos apie Lietuvos ir Rusijos interesų sferų Livonijoje egzistavimą. Taip pat aptariama priešasčių, lėmusių LDK politinių veiksmų taktiką 1559–61 m. įvairovė, Livonijos apsisprendimą pasiduoti Lietuvos–Lenkijos valdovui lėmę faktoriai.

Livonijos prijungimo prie LDK reikšmė vertinama priklausomai nuo autorių naudotų tyrimo metodų ir kompetencijos, tautinės ir valstybinės priklausomybės bei kitų faktorių. Amžininkams būdingas polinkis į aprašinėjimą bei bandymą viską prijungti jiems aktualiai koncepcijai (Solomon Henning, Maciej Strykowski, A. Vijūkas-Kojelavičius). XIX–XX a. pirmos pusės istorikų darbuose ryškus tautinis arba valstybinis angažuotumas (Adam Szelągowski, Nikolaj Karamzin, Ernest Seraphim), tuo tarpu šiuolaikiniai tyrinėtojai (E. Tiberger, K. Rassmusen) siekia atitolti nuo tradicinės linijos keldami, ir naujas problemas, stengdamiesi matyti visumą.

Received 30 March 2000