

# The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386–1795

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Daniel Stone

A History of East Central Europe

VOLUME

IV

*A HISTORY OF EAST CENTRAL EUROPE*

*Volume IV*

EDITORS

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# *A HISTORY OF EAST CENTRAL EUROPE*

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# The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386–1795

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DANIEL STONE

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

*Seattle and London*

*In Memory of*  
*Mary Charal Stone, 1910–1980*  
*Adolph Stone, 1908–1998*

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## FOREWORD

The systematic study of the history of East Central Europe outside the region itself began only in the last generation or two. For the most part historians in the region have preferred to write about the past of only their own countries. Hitherto no comprehensive history of the area as a whole has appeared in any language.

This series was conceived as a means of providing the scholar who does not specialize in East Central European history and the student who is considering such specialization with an introduction to the subject and a survey of knowledge deriving from previous publications. In some cases it has been necessary to carry out new research simply to be able to survey certain topics and periods. Common objectives and the procedures appropriate to attain them have been discussed by the authors of the individual volumes and by the coeditors. It is hoped that a certain commensurability will be the result, so that the ten volumes will constitute a unit and not merely an assemblage of writings. However, matters of interpretation and point of view have remained entirely the responsibility of the individual authors.

No volume deals with a single country. The aim has been to identify geographical or political units that were significant during the period in question, rather than to interpret the past in accordance with latter-day sentiments or aspirations.

The limits of "East Central Europe," for the purposes of this series, are the eastern linguistic frontier of German- and Italian-speaking peoples on the west, and the political borders of Russia/the former USSR on the east. Those limits are not precise, even within the period covered by any given volume of the series. The appropriateness of including the Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians was considered, and it was decided not to attempt to cover them systematically, though they appear repeatedly in these books. Treated in depth are the Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, Yugoslav peoples, Albanians, Bulgarians, and Greeks.

There has been an effort to apportion attention equitably among regions and periods. The first volume is an historical atlas. Three volumes deal with the area north of the Danube-Sava line, three with the area south of it, and three with both areas. Three treat premodern history, six modern times. Each volume is

supplied with a bibliographical essay of its own, but we all have attempted to keep the scholarly apparatus at a minimum in order to make the text of the volumes more readable and accessible to the broader audience sought.

The whole undertaking has been longer in the making than originally planned. Several of the original list of projected authors died before they could finish their volumes and have been replaced. Volumes of the series are being published as the manuscripts are received. We hope that the usefulness of the series justifies the long agony of its conception and birth, that it will increase knowledge of and interest in the rich past and the many-sided present of East Central Europe among those everywhere who read English, and that it will serve to stimulate further study and research on the numerous aspects of this area's history that still await scholarly investigators.

PETER F. SUGAR

DONALD W. TREADGOLD

*Publisher's Note*

The publisher deeply regrets that neither Professor Sugar (d. 1999) nor Professor Treadgold (d. 1994) was able to see the completion of the series, *A History of East Central Europe*. We are committed to the publication of the remaining volumes as planned by the editors.

## PREFACE

The rise and fall of the Polish-Lithuanian state offers one of the great dramatic spectacles of European history. This rise and fall did not equal Rome's in chronological and geographical grandeur, but it covered a substantial period of 409 years and encompassed a major geographic region. Even if the story lacks a Brutus or a Caesar, figures such as Jogaila, Zygmunt August, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, and Stanisław August Poniatowski were complex and significant personages who deserve to be as well known in the West as they are in their home countries. At its peak, the Polish-Lithuanian state covered much of the contemporary lands of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Romania. It was linked dynastically at various times to the predecessors of the modern states of Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Slovakia, Sweden, and parts of Germany. As a result, historians of many East Central European countries have found a rich field for description and analysis in the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian state.

Until recent decades, most historians approached the subject to uncover its importance to their own nation and ignored or criticized the other players in the drama. This attitude is easily understood, since East Central European nations struggled throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to achieve the secure independence that western European nations could generally take for granted, not to mention the well-protected countries of North America. Nineteenth-century Polish historians created a morality play linking the past and present. "Pessimists" or "Realists" understood the selfishness of the Polish nobility to be the cause of the fall, and supported monarchical institutions that would maintain a strong state. In contrast, "Optimists" or "Romantics" blamed foreign powers and rallied as many citizens as possible to support an expanded Polish democracy. The stark alternatives of these schools faded after Poland gained its independence in 1918, but many of the old polemical debates remain touchy to this day. Both groups generally boasted of Polish tolerance toward minority nationalities and religions, but criticized them harshly when they sought to improve their position in society. Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Russian historians have traditionally seen the Polish-Lithuanian state as an oppressor. For them, its fall represents justice long overdue, finally permitting the Ukrainian and Lithuanian nations (or their Russian would-be protectors) to take their proper

place in the world. Jewish historians have also recognized the importance of the Polish-Lithuanian state in creating modern Jewish institutions and identity, but they often criticize it for anti-Jewish attitudes and acts. German historians confront the historical legacy of the Polish-Lithuanian state as part of their history, particularly in Prussia. Historians from the English-speaking countries often identify with the national tradition of one or another country in the region.

Communist domination of the region since World War II has both deformed and informed historical studies. At its worst, simplistic Marxism produced propagandistic attacks on the enemies of the system and their forebears; at its best, Marxism stimulated the study of economic and social history. Historians who found themselves forced into the Marxist straitjacket succeeded in loosening the strings until they wrote from a position virtually indistinguishable from late nineteenth-century liberalism. As a result, most Polish historical writing since 1956 and some writing in other Communist countries retain their position in the historical literature in the post-Communist age. East European historiography has lagged in adopting the most recent international trends of historical writing such as gender studies, but it is catching up quickly.

In the past few decades, historians have moved away from national history toward regional studies or have placed their national studies in a broad context. The editors and initiators of this series played a significant role in the process. *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Scholarship* has shown that cooperation between formerly rival national groups is possible and productive, and similarly *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* regularly includes contributions by non-Ukrainian historians. Historians from East European nations have taken part in the effort to understand the interrelated nature of their various societies, a trend that stems, in part, from their common subjugation by the Soviet Union as well as from the greater national security that Soviet domination afforded. Contemporary Polish historiography has produced many objective studies of the non-Polish inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The distinguished Polish historian and director of Cracow (Jagiellonian) University's Jewish Studies Program, Józef Andrzej Gierowski, recently reminded us that "the history of the first Republic cannot be seen entirely in the categories of Polish national history; it was rather the common history of all the nationalities which comprised the Polish-Lithuanian state."

The present volume tries to present a regional history with a broad focus. The development of the Polish state and nation is an obvious part of the task but so is the development of other nations such as the Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Prussians, and Jews. Indeed, the whole concept of "nation" is of dubious value for most of the period covered in this book, since religious, regional, estate/class, family, and personal factors generally decided an individual's or a group's course of action.

The aim of this volume, as with the series as a whole, is to provide information useful to readers who are not specialists in East European history. To assist such readers, geographical names generally appear in their year 2000 form. Readers can find alternative place names in the index of this volume and in the *Historical Atlas* that forms part of this series. Hence, for example, Vilnius (not Wilno) and Lviv (not Lwów or Lvov). I have kept some place names in the form that is most familiar to English readers: Cracow (not Kraków), Vasa (not Waza), and Königsberg (not Kaliningrad).

Personal names of historical figures are given in the original language because anglicization creates even more contradictions and infelicities than unfamiliar forms. For example, King John Casimir sounds better in English than King Jan Kazimierz, but his predecessor's name Władysław, has no English equivalent, and using the old-fashioned Ladislaus does not help. Despite its presence in older histories of Poland, the old-fashioned and Germanic "Sigismund" is less familiar to English speakers than the Polish "Zygmunt" (which resembles the familiar name, Sigmund), and, on this side of the Atlantic at least, "Augustus" seems less plausible than "August." Slavic names such as Michał, Mikhail, Antoni, and Józef pose no barrier and provide a taste of the original cultures. English and other equivalents are given on first reference in the text and in the index.

Insofar as possible for an age of mixed identities, names are connected to the modern nationality that seems most appropriate. Hence, I use the anglicized Ukrainian form Bohdan Khmelnytsky instead of the Polish form Bogdan Chmielnicki. Again, the Latin alphabet versions of Kostiantyn Ostrozsky and Adam Kysil in their Ukrainian form seem more appropriate than the Polish versions, Konstantin Ostrogski and Adam Kysiel, because these are men who championed the Ruthenian cause within the Commonwealth. The Lithuanian name Vytautas is an easy choice over the Polish equivalent Witold, but I use Grand Duke Jogaila in the Lithuanian context and King Jagiełło in the Polish context, relying on the reader to remember that they are the same person. In contrast, I have kept the Polish form Radziwiłł instead of the Lithuanian form Radvilas, because the family seems more Polish than Lithuanian by the seventeenth century and because English-language readers are already familiar with the Polish form. The author can only beg the readers' tolerance for these decisions; I have found no fully adequate solution.

Against tradition, I identify the Polish legislature as a "parliament" instead of a "diet" in order to avoid the impression that the institution's antiquated nature doomed it to inevitable failure. Illogically, I have left the traditional term "dietine" to describe the local assemblies in Poland-Lithuania. The terms "local assembly" and "county assembly" used by some contemporary historians seem too

obscure, even though they are accurate. I also describe the noble assembly of Ducal Prussia as “Estates” in order to differentiate it from the Polish gatherings.

I would like to thank the late Professor Peter F. Sugar and the late Professor Donald W. Treadgold for inviting me to write this volume, taking a place alongside some of my undergraduate and graduate instructors who wrote earlier volumes in the series. I am particularly grateful for Professor Sugar’s patient and thoughtful editorial supervision. I wish to thank the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) for two grants that helped me do research on this topic and for others in the past; I could not have pursued my path of scholarship over the last three decades without this support. I would also like to thank the University of Winnipeg Research and Travel Committee, Dean John Hofley, and the library staff at the University of Winnipeg. Several individuals have assisted my work greatly; they bear no responsibility for the errors of fact and interpretation contained in this volume, of course. Dr. Jerzy Kowecki of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw) has provided invaluable aid for many years in staying abreast with Polish scholarly literature. Without him, I could not have completed this project. Professors Donald Bailey, Richard I. Frost, Karin Friedrich, Janusz Duzinkiewicz, Gershon Hundert, and Paul W. Knoll read portions of this book in manuscript form and corrected many embarrassing errors. Karin Friedrich kindly provided an advance copy of her forthcoming book. Robert Paul Magocsi generously gave permission for me to adapt maps from his *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*, and Weldon Hiebert of the University of Winnipeg gave me the benefit of his professional expertise in making the adaptations. This is a good place to thank the late Professor Andrzej Zahorski of Warsaw University, who took a twenty-one-year-old exchange student under his wing in 1963 and inspired him to spend his academic career studying Polish history.

I am grateful to my wife and friend, Kay, for all the usual reasons and some special ones.

D.S.  
*January 2001*



Poland-Lithuania in the 13th and 14th Centuries



Poland-Lithuania, c. 1480



Poland-Lithuania, c. 1570



Poland-Lithuania, in the 16th and 17th Centuries



The Partitions of Poland

PART ONE

The Jagiellonian Period,  
1386–1572

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## *Jogaila (Jagiello)*

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The marriage of Grand Duke Jogaila to “King” Jadwiga in 1386 linked the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in a personal union that developed into a dynastic union in the fifteenth century and finally, in 1569, became a full union of the two states that held no matter who the sovereign was. This large united state played an important role in the history of East Central Europe until the end of the eighteenth century. Within Jogaila’s reign, the combined strength of Poland and Lithuania defeated the Teutonic Knights and paved the way for Poland-Lithuania’s eventual conquest of the Baltic coast as well as for a limited intervention in the Hussite Wars of the Czech Kingdom.

### THE GRAND DUKE AND THE LITHUANIAN STATE

Grand Duke Jogaila (c. 1351–1434) was born to Grand Duke Algirdas and his second wife, Juliana. Mindaugas (c. 1200–1263) founded the Lithuanian state in the mid-thirteenth century, and Gediminas (c. 1275–1341) consolidated it, making it a regional power by absorbing most of Belarus and Ukraine through marriage alliances with the local Orthodox princes and through conquest; his son, Liubartas, took Volhynia. Algirdas (c. 1296–1377) reorganized the Grand Duchy, moving the capital a short distance from Trakai in ethnically Lithuanian territory to Vilnius on the Belarussian border. Algirdas cooperated with his brother Kestutis (c. 1297–1382) to extend Lithuanian rule to Kiev after beating the Tatars in battle in 1362. Lithuania also expanded northeast to the borders of the Moscow and Tver principalities in Russia. Enjoying good relations with the free cities of Pskov and Novgorod, the dukes began to think of Lithuania as the successor to Kievan Rus. Lithuania faced major challenges from the Muscovite Russian state in the east and the Golden Horde (Mongols) to the south, but its principal enemy was the Teutonic Knights in the west, who attacked Lithuania ceaselessly in order to conquer Samogitia (*Žmudź/Žemaitia*), the coastal region that sepa-

rated the Teutonic Knights from the Livonian Knights of modern Latvia and Estonia. Lithuania enjoyed generally good relations with Poland, despite some competition for control of Galicia and Volhynia as well as some localized border warfare. When Jogaila succeeded his father, Algirdas, as grand duke in 1377, he had to share power with his uncle Kestutis and later with Kestutis's son, Vytautas (Witold, c. 1350–1430), whose political program differed sharply from Jogaila's.

Jogaila presided over a duchy composed of two different nationalities and two political systems: Lithuania proper and the Ruthenian territories of former Kievan Rus. Lithuania proper spoke Lithuanian, an Indo-European language of the Baltic family, and worshipped nature spirits. The Lithuanian nobility was a warrior caste subject to the duke, who rewarded nobles with the use of landed estates governed by princely law; only a handful of former tribal leaders owned their estates outright. Lithuanian dukes rewarded state officials with estates in economically better developed Belarus, where they ran the danger of assimilating and losing their Lithuanian identity. Gediminas's descendants dominated the powerful Lithuanian state, but rivalries among them weakened it. Grand Duke Jogaila held extensive political, economic, and judicial power, subject only to informal control from his relatives and other Lithuanian war leaders who met in council to make important decisions.

More than a century of statehood created Lithuanian political, administrative, and judicial traditions that are as yet little known, although the bureaucrats were sufficiently sophisticated to correspond with the West in Latin, with the Teutonic Order in German, and with the princes of Rus in chancery Ruthenian, a medieval East Slavic language. The Lithuanian state was open to new influences early in the fourteenth century, as evidenced by political flirtations with the papacy over acquiring the title "king" through conversion, by the presence of Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches in Vilnius, and by invitations to immigrants to settle in exchange for tax relief. Inter-marriage linked the Lithuanian ducal house with other royal families, as when Gediminas's daughter Aldona married Crown Prince Kazimierz (Casimir), later King Kazimierz III the Great of Poland, in 1325.

Jogaila also presided over vast Ruthenian territories—the lands of modern Ukraine, Belarus, and western Russia—which the Lithuanian state had acquired in the fourteenth century. It secured Polotsk in 1307, Minsk in 1340, Smolensk in 1356, and Kiev in 1363. Many descendants of the house of Rurik, the founder of Kievan Rus ("Ruthenia" in medieval Latin), recognized Lithuanian sovereignty voluntarily in exchange for protection against the Mongols; and the Grand Duchy adopted their traditions, legal standards, and administrative practices, including the use of chancery Ruthenian in state documents. Ruthenians prac-

ticed Orthodox Christianity, and Lithuanian dukes boasted that they were restoring unity to Rus rather than subduing it. Four of Gediminas's eight sons converted to Orthodoxy.

Grand dukes pursued centralizing policies over their vast realm, controlling crown domains and ruling directly over noble and commoner inhabitants. They collected regular taxes, but needed council approval for additional military taxes. Regalian rights to coinage, salt, alcohol, and other resources brought in revenue. Royal stewards ran the military, judicial, and economic affairs of their districts, and noble estates supplied the grand duke with soldiers. The central offices of marshal, chancellor, and treasurer developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however. Over time, Lithuanian grand dukes took effective control over nominally autonomous Ruthenian duchies from their Slavic dukes.

### *The King and the Polish State*

Duke Mieszko's conversion to Roman Catholicism provides the symbolic date for establishing the Polish state in 966. Poland expanded and became a kingdom in 1025, but it fragmented politically in the thirteenth century. King Władysław Łokietek reunited much of the Polish Kingdom in 1320, and his son Kazimierz III the Great (1310–70) reorganized the state, bringing it prosperity and military strength at the price of surrendering Silesia to Bohemia (the Czech Kingdom) and the Baltic coast to the Teutonic Knights. The renewed Polish Kingdom pressed southeast into western Ukrainian lands and Moldavia. Kazimierz died without heirs and left the throne to his cousin, King Louis of Hungary, who was succeeded by his daughter, Jadwiga, in 1382. Raised in Hungary, Jadwiga came to Poland to be crowned “king” in 1384.

Recent dynastic changes gave many Polish nobles the sense that the state existed independently of the monarch, and they felt that they shared responsibility for running it. Having gained extensive privileges in return for their political support, Polish nobles came to regard kings as executive officers subject to supervision by the political nation composed of state officials meeting in groups such as the royal council and the *sejm*, which later became the Polish parliament. At his coronation in 1386, Jogaila swore to uphold his subjects' existing rights and privileges, as did his successors. Polish nobles enjoyed the legal right to resist if the king violated his oath, but Polish kings still held extensive powers as heads of state who directed civil and military affairs. They freely appointed royal governors to provinces and lands subject only to the limitation that local appointees must be acceptable to the region and must live there. Officials enjoyed life tenure. The king was the source of justice and the highest judge, although lower courts, while royal in name, really represented local nobles. The king commanded the army, either in person or through his appointees, and he directed

foreign policy, though custom demanded that he consult with high officials on international treaties and gain their approval.

The strength of royal authority depended on the crown's financial resources, which were substantial throughout the Jagiellonian dynasty (1386–1572). Kazimierz III's reforms had made the extensive royal domains highly profitable, even after his successors distributed estates lavishly to political supporters. Prefects administered some estates under treasury supervision; other estates were leased to nobles or clerics or lent to nobles in exchange for additional military service. Internal and external customs duties contributed to the royal treasury, as did the royal monopoly on subsoil wealth, particularly salt near Cracow. Manipulation of currency values at the royal mint also produced revenue. Taxation brought in less income than the king's direct revenues. Nobles paid a small annual tax on arable landholdings, while cities paid real-estate and road taxes, especially in wartime. Special needs led to levying special taxes.

The king made decisions with the help of a council composed of the highest dignitaries of the state: ministers (chancellor, vice-chancellor, marshal, and treasurer); palatines, or provincial governors; castellans, or governors of major castles; and Catholic bishops. The king rarely used his right to invite other advisers. The royal council lacked statutory or formal constitutional power, but custom granted it a major role in political decision-making. An inner council composed of about ten of the highest dignitaries headed by the archbishop of Gniezno (the primate of the Polish Church) met regularly with the king to advise him on political matters. Membership depended more on the king's favor than on the precise office filled.

The army consisted mainly of noble volunteers and their retainers. When summoned, most nobles served personally and brought three mounted archers, although poor nobles served alone and on foot, if necessary. Military service was generally limited to wars of defense within Poland's borders, and the monarch was obliged to ransom nobles if they were captured while taking part in a foreign war. Noble clerics owed military service for their landed estates but their secular relatives generally campaigned in their stead. The army was organized in "flags," either by region or by clan (*herb*). The king maintained a small detachment of elite shock troops at his own expense and provided a network of castles throughout the realm for defense. Peasants helped defend their own regions, and burghers defended city walls.

#### THE POLISH LANDS

Poland consisted of two provinces, Great Poland in the west (chief cities, Poznań and Gniezno) and Little Poland in the south (chief city, Cracow), which were subdivided in counties (*województwa*) and lands (*ziemie*). The two forms were

equal, and both eventually gained parliamentary representation, although the former were larger and were governed by palatines (*województwie*). Each county contained several regions (*kasztelanie*) headed by a castellan and subdivided into districts (*powiaty*). These subdivisions existed until the Third Partition in 1795 with only minor border adjustments. In each county, the royal palatine stood at the head of the dietine and presided over the royal court as the king's representative; lands also held dietines. The palatine also supervised cities and Jews in the king's name. The local function of the castellan declined in the fifteenth century as previous duties passed to central bodies, but castellans continued to attend the royal council (later, the senate). The prefect (*starosta*), or regional governor, still fulfilled important local responsibilities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, exercising many royal prerogatives such as summoning the noble levy (*levée en masse/pospolite ruszenie*) for defense.

Mazovia, one of the largest independent Polish states in the period of feudal divisions (c. 1227–1320), remained closely linked with the Polish crown, although Mazovia guarded its independence jealously and maneuvered for support among its neighbors: Poland, Lithuania, and the Teutonic Knights. Mazovian Duke Siemowit III had recognized the personal suzerainty of his cousin Kazimierz the Great, but not the suzerainty of the Polish state. Siemowit IV enjoyed substantial support from western Poland when he competed with Jogaila to marry Jadwiga and assume the Polish crown. After losing out, Siemowit IV recognized Jagiełło's suzerainty. Mazovia profited from the end to Lithuanian incursions brought about by the Polish-Lithuanian union and from Polish-Lithuanian intervention against the Teutonic Knights. It drew closer to Poland, recognizing common historical and ethnic links, but Mazovian dukes maintained their independence and Polish-Mazovian relations underwent more than one crisis. Extensive trade kept Mazovia friendly to the Teutonic Knights.

Although formally part of the Bohemian Kingdom after 1339, Silesia remained linked to Poland by the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the archbishop of Gniezno, and Polish officials considered it part of the Polish Kingdom. The region, originally a single duchy, had been subdivided in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries into twenty smaller duchies, each ruled by a collateral line of the Piast family. Nevertheless, ethnic Germans increasingly dominated the nobility and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the urban patriciate. Similarly, the duchy of western Pomerania retained its Slavic dukes, who owed allegiance to the elector of Brandenburg in Berlin, while the Pomeranian population became largely German.

#### THE DYNASTIC UNION OF JADWIGA AND JOGAILA

The Piast dynasty, which had ruled Poland since about 900 A.D., virtually ended with the death of Kazimierz III (the Great) in 1370. He was succeeded by his

nephew, Louis the Great of Hungary, who died in 1382 after a largely absentee reign. Great nobles from Little Poland dominated Poland's regency council and arranged for Louis's second daughter, twelve-year-old Jadwiga, who grew up in Hungary, to succeed instead of rival claimants. Jadwiga was crowned "king," or legal ruler in her own right, but her future husband was expected to exercise power. The Polish regency council overruled her family's plans for Jadwiga to marry Wilhelm Habsburg of Austria. Several factors dictated that decision. First, Poland and Hungary were rivals for control of southeastern lands, particularly Galicia (Red Russia) and Moldavia; severing the dynastic connection with Hungary would prevent a joint ruler from subordinating Polish interests to Hungary's. Second, Poland and Lithuania had undergone increasing strife over the borders, particularly in the Ukrainian lands of Galicia and Volhynia, which might be eased through a closer relationship. Third, and most important, Poland and Lithuania faced a common enemy in the Teutonic Knights of Prussia.

The Little Polish nobles who "advised" Jadwiga met Grand Duke Jogaila at Kriavas/Krewo (now Krevo, Belarus), southeast of Vilnius, and concluded an agreement on August 14, 1385. The grand duke agreed to convert to Roman Catholicism along with all his subjects, to cede lands captured from Poland, and to unite the Grand Duchy with Poland in exchange for marrying Jadwiga and assuming the Polish crown. The exact intent of this union has been hotly debated by historians, but it seems likely that Jogaila and the Poles both intended to unite the realms fully. However, Jogaila's influential first cousin Vytautas (Witold) successfully kept the two states distinct within his lifetime, and indeed until 1791 (significant differences continued until 1795).

Polish fears that Jogaila (who reigned with the Polish name Władysław II Jagiełło, Władysław being his baptismal name) would try to govern the Kingdom of Poland in an authoritarian manner proved groundless; some medieval chroniclers dogmatically ascribed Jogaila's good behavior to his conversion. As ruler, he followed Polish political traditions and accepted direction from Polish lords so fully that even the critically inclined mid-fifteenth-century chronicler Jan Długosz acknowledged that the king was "sincere and honest, [and without] double-dealing." Jogaila gained much of his popularity by distributing landed estates to noble supporters, usually as leaseholds with little or no payment. Short and slightly built, Jogaila was physically strong and showed great endurance on campaigns and hunts. He dressed unassumingly in a robe covered by a sheepskin coat instead of royal sable and wore a plain velvet gown on state occasions. His habits were good. He drank no alcohol and ate lightly except at occasional banquets. Hunting was his favorite activity and he also liked music, especially by Ruthenian fiddlers.

## JAGIEŁŁO (JOGAILA) AS KING OF POLAND

Władysław Jagiełło (Jogaila) came to Poland a stranger and followed the policies recommended to him by the royal advisers who arranged for his accession to the Polish throne, mostly great lords from Little Poland, and Queen Jadwiga. After gaining confirmation as king of Poland in his own right when Jadwiga died in 1399, Jagiełło built his own core of advisers slowly, starting with a chancellery of several secretaries that increased to a dozen after 1417 because the number of documents handled by the chancellery approximately doubled in Jagiełło's long reign. Jagiełło gradually freed himself from control of the Little Poland magnates by promoting well-educated clerics from the lesser nobility or burgher class who owed their rise solely to him, but the magnates remained influential and sometimes followed their own policies, particularly in Lithuania.

Royal policy constantly aimed at establishing royal power within the state and ensuring the succession of Jagiełło's heirs to the Polish throne. Much of his power came from personal supervision and decision-making during lengthy annual inspection tours on which he and his ministers met with local officials. While traveling, Jagiełło and his large entourage stayed mostly on his own far-flung estates, spending the winter months hunting in Lithuania. He spent little time in Cracow, the Polish capital, a practice that slowed urbanization and inhibited political centralization. His journeys also laid the groundwork for the parliament (*sejm*). With members of his inner council, the king met local officials in groups to discuss problems or settle legal disputes, and local nobles or city officials also came to petition him on personal matters and voiced their opinion on policy questions that were raised. These gatherings became known as dietines (*sejmiki*), and custom dictated that they approve all new taxes and legislation. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Polish kings generally preferred meeting provincial gatherings to convening national ones. The practice led to the decline of "confederations," or leagues of nobles (sometimes cities) that had gathered in the past for specific purposes such as military defense or protection of noble interests. Confederations were revived during the interregnum of 1573, and nobles used them extensively in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In practice, much authority rested in the hands of the royal chancellery, which regarded itself as responsible to the realm and not solely to the king. Bishops invariably filled high office such as chancellor and vice-chancellor (whose authority was equal). About one-third of higher officials had studied at a university, mostly in Cracow. In contrast, the Lithuanian chancellery consisted mainly of secular nobles who worked under the grand duke's direct supervision.

Lesser nobles succeeded in securing their position in the state. Taking advan-

tage of Jagiełło's need for troops to pursue war against the Teutonic Knights, they forced him to issue the Czerwińsk Privilege in 1422 (confirmed by the 1423 parliament at Warta) granting nobles a court trial before their property could be confiscated and also preventing individuals from serving as both prefect and local judge. Succession problems allowed the lesser nobles to gain further concessions. Jagiełło had no male heir until his fourth marriage in 1422 to a young Lithuanian noble woman, Zofia Holsztyńska, and some courtiers accused the queen of infidelity because they doubted Jagiełło's ability to sire children at his advanced age. To secure popular support for the dynasty, he agreed at the Jedlnia (1430) and Cracow (1433) parliaments to guarantee court trials for nobles accused of crimes.

#### LITHUANIA IN THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN UNION

Union with Poland forced the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to make major adjustments that affected the structure of the Grand Duchy and the nature of Lithuanian government. Lithuanian-Polish relations remained difficult for centuries, and Lithuanian-Ruthenian relations required redefinition.

Grand Duke Jogaila (Jagiełło) probably expected the Union of Kriavas (Krewo) to unify the two realms under his control, while Polish nobles expected it to give them unlimited access to the Grand Duchy, but Duke Vytautas led Lithuanian resisters who maintained Lithuanian legal distinctiveness, reserving offices and landed estates for Lithuanians. Just as Vytautas's father had contested Jogaila's father's rule, Vytautas vied with Jagiełło, now king of Poland, for his position as grand duke of Lithuania. He revolted in 1389 against Jagiełło's brother and deputy in Lithuania, Skirgaila, allying himself with the Teutonic Knights after early military reversals. A destructive civil war ensued that devastated Lithuania and left Samogitia under the Teutonic Order's control.

Jagiełło and Vytautas ended their differences with the Astravas (Ostrowo) Agreement of 1392 that recognized Vytautas as grand duke in Lithuania and recognized Jagiełło, who lived in Cracow, as supreme duke. Vytautas repudiated his alliance with the Teutonic Order, and Skirgaila relinquished the duchy of Trakai to become prince of Kiev. This left Vytautas free to direct Lithuania's internal affairs and pursue the traditional Lithuanian drive to expand in Ruthenian lands as far as Novgorod and Smolensk until he lost the important battle of the river Vorskla, near the Don River, against the Tatars in 1399 despite three years of preparation and the assistance of Polish, Muscovite, and Teutonic Order troops. Vytautas suffered such heavy losses in that battle that he could no longer pursue an eastern empire. His weakened position made him abandon dreams of breaking the union with Poland and becoming king in his own right, but he retained control over Lithuania. A 1401 agreement largely restated the Astravas

Agreement of 1392. It also made provisions for the future. Jogaila would inherit Lithuania if Vytautas died first, and Vytautas was to be consulted on the election of a Polish king if Jagiełło died first. Lithuanian boyars confirmed the arrangement at Vilnius, as did Polish nobles at Radom. The new agreement gave Vytautas the freedom to launch a campaign against his former allies, the Teutonic Order. He reclaimed Samogitia in 1401 after encouraging a popular uprising against the Order, handed it over to them again in 1404, and retook it again in 1409 in conjunction with another popular uprising. The border was finally set in 1422, giving Lithuania the province of Samogitia with the port of Palanga (Poląga) but leaving the city of Klaipėda (Kłajpeda, Memel) to the Order.

After the victorious campaign of 1410 by Lithuania and Poland against the Teutonic Knights, the Union of Horodło (1413) cemented the two realms more closely. This act changed the personal union of the two states under Jagiełło into a permanent dynastic union between Poland and Lithuania, united in the person of the grand duke, who would also be king of Poland. Future grand dukes would inherit their position while the Polish crown remained electoral. However, Polish nobles were required to choose a member of the Lithuanian ruling family, and they also pledged to consult Vytautas and the Lithuanian boyars when they elected the next Polish king. Joint meetings of the Lithuanian and Polish officials were discussed but did not take place until the sixteenth century.

Lithuanian separatism persisted nonetheless. Vytautas accepted Emperor Sigismund's offer of a royal crown in 1429, apparently with Jagiełło's agreement, but Polish forces intercepted the crown in transit and the coronation was canceled. When Vytautas died in 1430, a struggle for succession broke out. As supreme duke, Jogaila (Jagiełło) named his brother Švitrigaila (Świdrygiełło, c. 1370–1452) as grand duke but ran into serious opposition from Poles, who wanted to name Vytautas's successor themselves. When Švitrigaila sought additional support by allying himself with the Teutonic Knights, Poland seized Podolia, which Jogaila had awarded to Lithuania in 1411, and Volhynia. Švitrigaila sought to bolster his position by promising Ruthenian nobles a greater role within the Lithuanian state, arousing serious resistance from some Lithuanian nobles. Jogaila then attempted to replace Švitrigaila on the ducal throne with a more tractable relative, Vytautas's brother Žygimantas (Zygmunt Kiejstutowicz). Civil war between supporters of the two claimants and foreign intervention took almost a decade to resolve.

#### ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA

Despite the danger of a Polish takeover, union with Poland strengthened the Lithuanian element in the Grand Duchy and protected it against absorption into the much larger and better educated Ruthenian nobility. Bolstered by the rela-

tionship with Poland, the grand dukes of Lithuania issued legal privileges in 1387 and 1413 that restricted high state offices to ethnic Lithuanian nobles. The custom of treating Poles as foreigners, ineligible for such positions, became written law in 1447 and continued until 1795, with the exception (enacted in 1566) of nobles who served in the Lithuanian army. Polish nobles could apply for naturalization after marriage or military service in Lithuania. Native-born Ruthenians counted as citizens, but Ruthenian nobles in the Grand Duchy did not gain political rights until 1434. Separate legal privileges defined Tatars and Jews as free persons without political rights.

Lithuanian identity was stressed in Ruthenian, Polish, German, and Latin language chronicles such as the *Genealogy of Lithuanian Princes* (c. 1398) and *Eulogy of Vytautas* (c. 1428). The grand duke's council used the Lithuanian language in its discussions and even in international negotiations, although secretaries recorded discussions in Ruthenian or Polish; only judicial oaths have survived in written Lithuanian. Lithuanian must have been spoken extensively at court, since more than four hundred words entered Ruthenian and Polish chancery language after 1400. However, because the Grand Duchy lacked educated officials, Vytautas used former members of the Teutonic Order as chancery officials at first and then recruited Poles.

The Orthodox Ruthenian component of Lithuania played an important but secondary role in the affairs of the Grand Duchy as their demographic, economic, and cultural weight made itself felt. Population figures are inexact and subject to wide disagreement. Lithuanian historians tend to think that Ruthenians (persons speaking East Slavic languages and professing the Orthodox religion) outnumbered Lithuanians approximately 2:1, while Russian and Ukrainian historians think that a relationship of 3:1 or even 4:1 is more accurate. The difference is significant because a higher percentage of Ruthenians implies a greater role in running the Lithuanian state. Ruthenian Orthodox nobles clung to their traditional identities and privileges granted by the Kievan Rus state without distinction on a national or ethnic basis among the inhabitants of modern Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. Originally seen as second-class citizens by the dominant Lithuanian dynasty, Orthodox nobles gradually achieved equal status.

The grand dukes gained control of their Ruthenian territories by replacing hereditary princes with their appointees (some of whom were Ruthenian in origin), but they also adopted many state traditions from Kievan Rus and the Galician-Volhynian principalities, including the form of consultation between the grand duke and his boyar council. Orthodox magnates formed part of the ducal council, although Orthodox clerics did not. Lithuania adopted the Ruthenian law code, and Orthodox clerics provided the educated bureaucracy that held the state together. State officials used the chancery Ruthenian language

(distinct from Moscow usage) for state documents. Ruthenian military expertise was also utilized, particularly in constructing fortifications and attacking them.

The Lithuanian dukes needed help from Orthodox nobles in order to govern. An aristocracy developed from descendants of the Lithuanian ducal house (Gedyminovichi) and the royal house of Kievan Rus (Rurikovichi) as well as some lesser princes, all of whom received equality with Polish nobles by the Unions of Krewo and Horodło. Lithuanian grand dukes rewarded Lithuanian and Ruthenian supporters with land grants in the west (Volhynia) and northeast which were, however, subject to central control. Volhynia was a particular center of Ruthenian noble families such as the Chartoryskis, Vishnevetsys, and Zbarazhskys. The Mstislavl and Zaslavsky families dominated eastern Belarus and enjoyed extensive economic rights, particularly after the 1430s. Local nobles remained on the land and jealously protected their traditional rights, resenting appointment of Lithuanians to local offices, and they supported local Orthodox churches with grants of land and money. Many lesser nobles enjoyed secure tenure on their estates, while others held land in exchange for service to the state, as in Muscovite Russia, although they could travel freely. Traditional noble privileges confirmed by charter in the Grand Duchy included: secure ownership of estates, military service in one's district, and local trials.

Reliance on the Orthodox element in the Grand Duchy led Lithuanian grand dukes to maintain a strong Orthodox Church under their political control even though Roman Catholicism was the state religion. Throughout the fourteenth century, Orthodox metropolitans in Ruthenian lands struggled to claim successor status to the metropolitanate of Kiev and deny the claims of the metropolitan who had moved to Vladimir and then to Moscow. Grand Duke Vytautas set up a "Metropolitanate of Kiev and All Rus" in 1415 as a religious instrument of Lithuanian state power that failed to gain the recognition of the patriarch of Constantinople and faded from the scene after 1421. There was a brief revival in the 1430s. Vytautas supported a literary revival in Smolensk, and founded cathedral schools in Vilnius (1397) and Trakai (1409). Orthodox clerics rewarded him with a panegyric, the *Chronicle of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, written in 1420–40, which portrayed Vytautas as the successor to the princes of Rus. Despite his occasional use of the title "grand prince" (*vieliki kniaz*), borrowed from Kievan Rus, Vytautas did not plan to create a large Ruthenian state. He intended to subordinate Ruthenian lands to Lithuania.

Lithuanian campaigns in Ukrainian lands brought frequent contact with Tatars and led to the establishment of a small Tatar community in the Grand Duchy that lasted into the twentieth century. Lithuanian grand dukes settled captured Tatar and Mongol warriors on their lands as early as the 1320s, and offered them lands and self-governing rights that attracted refugees from the internecine war-

fare within the declining Mongol state. Vytautas organized the Tatars into regiments (hordes or flags) and used them frequently in battles such as the great battle of Grunwald (1410). In 1400, more than one thousand Tatars lived on lands granted by grand dukes in exchange for military service.

#### THE TEUTONIC ORDER STATE

The coordination provided by their union allowed the Polish and Lithuanian states to withstand pressure from the Teutonic Knights. The Teutonic Knights originated near Acre in Palestine in 1191 as the crusading “Order of the Hospital of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the German House of Jerusalem.” Reconstituted in 1198 as a military religious order, it derived its rules from the Templars and Hospitalers. The pope authorized the Teutonic Order to convert pagans, and it took control of the Chełmno region in 1228 by agreement with Duke Konrad of Mazovia, who wanted protection against border raids by pagan tribes of Prussians, a Baltic people related to the Lithuanians. The Order enthusiastically realized the provisions of Emperor Friedrich II’s Golden Bull of 1226 that authorized them to keep other lands by building a strong regional state after conquering and subjugating the Prussian tribes. The Teutonic Order then captured the major port city of Gdańsk (Danzig) with its surrounding region in the course of multiparty warfare in 1309 and established a new capital at nearby Malbork (Marienburg), where it built an impregnable castle-fortress. By the fifteenth century, colonization and assimilation had changed the primary meaning of the term “Prussian” from an ethnic to a territorial identification.

The grand master of the Teutonic Order, chosen by thirteen electors including eight knights-brothers, served as commander in chief and presided over annual “general chapters” at which representatives from different provinces of the Order made statutes, elected senior officers, received postulants, and resolved economic issues. A council of the grand master composed of five senior officers and the commanders of Gdańsk and Toruń (Thorn) administered day-to-day affairs. Prussian bishops and learned jurists joined the council in the fifteenth century. Grand masters tried to maintain their independence by choosing advisers and subordinates from the Germanies, where the Order also owned large estates, rather than from Prussia. Authority was essentially secular and military, but the knights-brothers accepted religious regulations as well. Most knights were younger sons of poor noble families in western and central Germany, and they reserved the top jobs in the Order for themselves, excluding even Prussian-born subjects of German ethnicity. Councils of brothers and half-brothers exercised local authority from regional palaces and forts. Prussian residents did not gain admittance as brothers until the early fourteenth century. Prussian burghers provided most of the personnel for the commercial bureau of the highly centralized state struc-

ture, which controlled outlying regions by correspondence delivered by an efficient system of relay runners and post riders. The central treasury of the Order in Malbork supervised the separate treasuries of the grand master and the regional masters. Monastic brethren proved to be ideal administrative personnel, working without material reward or family. They made frequent inspections and produced precise inventories of offices. The confessional, informing, and harsh punishment provided control over less idealistic workers. The Order also ran twenty-four alms houses and good medical facilities for brothers.

Excluded from playing a leading role in the Teutonic Order, the Prussian gentry became highly integrated with the urban patriciate. Nobles often came from urban families and held small estates. They generally resented the Teutonic Order's practice of recruiting new brothers from the Germanies rather than from Prussia; celibate brother-knights did not intermarry with local families, of course. As professional soldiers supplanted local gentry in the fifteenth century, local opportunities for advancement declined further. Dissatisfied nobles formed the Lizard Union in 1397 to prevent exploitation by the Order. That society was headed by four "elders," and its members pledged to observe absolute obedience and secrecy. A public arm of the society gained permission to set up a church brotherhood in Toruń in 1408. The Order suspected that members aimed to join Poland.

The commercialized Order state was well organized for war under the command of the grand master. Mercenaries and volunteer foreign knights constituted a powerful heavy cavalry that no eastern European country could challenge before 1400. They adopted the latest in western European technology, modifying heavy plate armor with chain mail so that their knights could fight Lithuanian light cavalry more effectively. Infantry supplemented these formations. The Order stationed professional troops in regional fortresses and added local militia when necessary. Nobles served as heavy or light cavalry depending on their wealth. Free peasants also served. Cities provided heavy cavalry, supplies, and infantry. The Order introduced artillery in the 1370s, although it did not become a significant force until the fifteenth century.

#### POLISH-LITHUANIAN STRUGGLES WITH THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

The expansionist Teutonic Order state collided with Poland and Lithuania. Pagan Lithuania was most threatened, for the Order state sought to conquer the Baltic coast and may have considered moving inland as well. The danger became greater after the Prussian-based Knights merged with the Riga-based Livonian Knights in 1237 and tried to link the two states by taking Lithuania's coastal region and converting the pagan inhabitants to Christianity. Disputes with Poland centered on control of areas that had once belonged to the Polish crown, especially the

valuable port of Gdańsk at the mouth of the Vistula River and its surrounding region. Similarly, both Poland and the Teutonic Order claimed the territories of New March and Dobrzyń that separated Great Poland from Pomerania. The Teutonic Order tried to bolster its territorial claims before European public opinion by refusing to recognize Jagiełło's conversion to Christianity and the conversion of Lithuania that threatened to end the Order's reason for existence. Grand Master Konrad Zollner von Rottenstein rejected Jagiełło's invitation to act as godfather at his christening and declined to attend his wedding. The grand master challenged the sincerity of Jagiełło's conversion at the papal court, supported by Sigismund of Luxemburg, the Hungarian king who was fighting against Poland for control of Moldavia and Galicia.

In 1410, warfare finally decided who would control the Baltic coast. The more numerous but more lightly armed Polish-Lithuanian force brought the war into Prussian territory. King Jagiełło commanded a Polish army of 20,000 mounted nobles, 15,000 armed commoners, and 2,000 professional cavalry, mostly hired from Bohemia. The Lithuanian army, commanded by Vytautas but under Jagiełło's overall command, consisted of about 11,000 light cavalry drawn from both the Lithuanian and the Ruthenian areas of the Grand Duchy; Tatars also fought under the Lithuanian flag. The army of the Teutonic Knights numbered 16,000 cavalry supported by 5,000 infantry. German, Slavic, and Prussian subjects of the Order fought in both the cavalry and the infantry. A heavily armed group of 500 Knights of the Cross, supplemented with a modest number of foreign guests drawn from as far away as Burgundy, provided a powerful, professional shock force that had won many battles for the Order in previous decades.

The decisive battle took place at the Prussian village of Grunwald on July 15, 1410, starting about noon and lasting until dusk. The lightly armed Lithuanian force attacked first and was driven back after heavy fighting. Several hours of fierce combat ensued as both commanders sent in reserve units. Grand Master Ulrich von Junginen resolved to break the deadlock by leading his elite troops in a flanking maneuver that unintentionally uncovered Jagiełło's command post; a single knight attacked the king and might have killed him except for the intervention of the king's secretary, Zbigniew Oleśnicki, a noble who later became the bishop of Cracow and one of the most powerful personages of the realm. Polish and Lithuanian troops exploited the division of the Order's forces and overwhelmed the Knights' elite troops, sparing no one for ransom. Grand Master von Junginen and Grand Marshal Friedrich von Wallenrode died, among other key personnel. The victorious Polish-Lithuanian army then stormed the Knights' fortified camp and slaughtered its defenders. Most of the surviving Teutonic Knights of high rank were captured and eventually ransomed. Contemporary figures of dubious reliability reported that several thousand soldiers died on either side.

The Polish-Lithuanian army emerged completely victorious on the battlefield but failed to win the campaign decisively. Key to the Prussian realm was the heavily fortified capital of the Teutonic Knights, Malbork, which Jagiełło might have captured if he had attacked immediately. But he took ten days to move his victorious army, by which time a new grand master, Heinrich von Plauen, had made preparations. Jagiełło lacked the artillery and infantry needed to storm the castle. During the ensuing siege, major Prussian cities such as Gdańsk, Toruń, and Elbląg (Elbing) acknowledged Polish sovereignty in exchange for generous economic privileges. However, the Order had powerful allies in Vaclav IV of Bohemia and Sigismund of Hungary, who supported the Order diplomatically and allowed it to raise troops; Sigismund also sent troops into Little Poland as a brief armed demonstration. In addition, the Livonian Knights attacked Prussia from the east to wrest it from Poland. More important, the majority of Polish and Lithuanian noble levies insisted on returning home, forcing Jagiełło to withdraw the Polish-Lithuanian army in mid-August. Poland-Lithuania and the Teutonic Order signed a peace agreement on February 1, 1411. The Peace of Toruń granted the Teutonic Knights most of their possessions, including Prussia. However, the Order surrendered the Dobrzyń and Samogitia regions, and paid substantial reparations for the return of prisoners and castles taken in the fighting. The settlement accurately reflected the overall military and economic balance of the two sides.

#### DECLINE OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER STATE

The Teutonic Order never recovered from its unsuccessful 1409–11 war against Poland, and its aggressive efforts to rebuild alienated its Prussian subjects, leading ultimately to revolt and unification with Poland. Destructive hostilities between the Teutonic Order and the Polish Kingdom continued for another fifty-five years on a smaller scale. Polish forces ravaged the region again in 1414, 1422, and 1431–33. To spite Sigismund for supporting the Order (Sigismund also claimed the Czech throne and was crowned Holy Roman emperor in 1433), Jagiełło hired Czech Hussite mercenaries in 1433 who despoiled Prussia with a ferocity learned in their war-torn homeland. By 1419, 20 percent of Order land lay abandoned. In areas such as southern Pomerelia, more than 50 percent of landholdings were abandoned, and in the Schwetz (Świecie) region, 80 percent. Crops failed and plague broke out. There was a shortage of human and draft labor. The Prussian mark declined by 80 percent in the fifteenth century, most sharply after the 1410 war as the Order debased the currency to meet expenses. Institutional decline accompanied economic decline, and reform efforts failed. The number of monastic brothers fell after 1410 from seven hundred to four hundred as members sought private property instead of a religious life. Warmia

peasants resisted tax increases in 1440–42, and two hundred Pomeranian villages refused to pay tithes in the 1450s. Six village priests were killed in 1452.

Agricultural depression kept German bailiwicks from sending the embattled Order money, supplies, and troops for the wars that dragged through the 1420s and 1430s, and its efforts to collect more money in Prussia made it increasingly unpopular. The Order continued to favor German knights over Prussian knights for appointments, and it arbitrarily interfered with sales of private property, claiming lands where ownership was not fully documented and expropriating the inheritance of orphaned daughters because they could not serve in the army. Estates created in this manner were settled with rent-paying peasants, who were subjected to such extreme demands that they could not even afford the time to attend church, and monks complained that pagan customs were reviving in the countryside. Needless to say, peasants had trouble cultivating their own fields to feed themselves and pay their rent. The need to rebuild forced the Order to colonize abandoned villages with Polish peasants.

Changing trade patterns weakened the Order's hold over the Prussian economy and led it into conflict with Prussian merchants. The Hanseatic League declined while trade grew with English and Dutch customers, whose increasing demands for timber and grain could not be satisfied without greater participation by Prussian merchants and even Polish merchants, who settled in Prussian cities. The transit trade also brought Polish and Prussian merchants together. The Order's efforts to regain its commercial dominance led it into deepening conflicts with local merchants. The Order regulated Baltic trade more stringently, reserving low Hanse duties for its own use and imposing new regulations, licenses, taxes, and fees. The unpopular cargo tax was even applied to ships that put into Gdańsk to find shelter during storms. City officials resented the Order's practice of settling nonguild artisans on its suburban properties to compete with Prussian city guilds. The Order's first general taxation in 1411 provoked a rising in Gdańsk that was harshly suppressed. Three city councillors were executed.

The Order attempted to respond constructively to growing discontent by creating the Prussian Estates, where representatives could voice their grievances, but the gap proved too large to bridge. Representatives of the six largest Prussian cities (Braunsberg, Chelmno, Elbląg, Gdańsk, Königsberg, and Toruń) started meeting with the grand master in the 1370s to discuss commerce, mutual relations, and external relations. The addition of noble representatives made the Prussian Estates more formal but stimulated a sense of common interest within the nobility, which asserted a growing sense of historical commonality by claiming to be the primary settlers and Christianizers of Prussia rather than the Teutonic Order. The Estates were not satisfied by the creation in 1412 of a council composed of thirty-two knights and fifteen city representatives, and they refused to

attack Polish lands in 1413 as merchants developed closer links with Poland. In 1422, the Estates demanded that the Order release them from their oath of service if the Order launched an aggressive war, and in 1433 it forced the grand master to sign a truce with Poland ending a destructive war. Both cities and nobles gave clear signals that they would refuse to support future wars with Poland. The Estates found procedural excuses to avoid paying war taxes while acknowledging their obligation to pay. A head-on collision between the Estates and the Order was imminent.

The Order's international position weakened, as well. Representatives of the Teutonic Knights, especially Jan Wallenrode, archbishop of Riga, made strong presentations at the Council of Constance (1414–18) to ask for help against Polish attacks claiming once again that Poland-Lithuania was not a true Christian nation. Paweł Włodkowic (Paulus Vladimiri), rector of the Jagiellonian University, defended Poland's Christianity at the council, showing that both sides had used pagan allies in the recent war, and he also demonstrated Poland's Christian sincerity by bringing sixty newly converted Samogitians to the conference. This argument impressed the council more than Włodkowic's theoretical proposition that pagans had a right to remain pagan if they chose. More telling yet was Vytautas's creation of an Orthodox Metropolitanate of Galicia and Kiev in 1415, which kindled hopes of reconciliation or even union between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The Council of Constance condemned a satirical pamphlet attacking Jagiełło but refused to imprison its author, a Dominican priest. Polish representatives took part in the general work of the council as full members of the European community for the first time.

#### POLAND-LITHUANIA AND THE HUSSITE WARS

One of the major issues confronting the Council of Constance was the influence of Jan Hus, reformist Czech preacher and rector of Prague's Charles University, who was declared a heretic and burned at the stake in 1415. Polish cleric-diplomats helped establish their legitimacy by condemning Hus, but Polish state policy remained hesitant and ambiguous. Factors leading to Polish support for Hussitism include the resentment of papal and imperial assistance for the Teutonic Knights, the dislike of papal centralization (particularly strong among Orthodox nobles in Galicia and Lithuania), and the hope of acquiring the Bohemian crown. Factors acting against Polish support for Hussitism included Jagiełło's need as a recent convert to avoid the appearance of heretical sympathies and his concern that his realm might fall prey to civil war between Hus's sympathizers and opponents. As a result, the king reluctantly declined an invitation from the Bohemian estates in 1418 to become king; he took three years to think it over. Nevertheless, Jagiełło refused to participate in military expeditions against the

Hussites and made no effort to stop Polish enthusiasts and mercenary soldiers from joining the Hussite armies in their fight against Holy Roman emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg. Jagiełło even hired Czech Hussite mercenaries for his 1433 campaign against the Teutonic Order. Acting independently, Vytautas sent his nephew Zygmunt Korybut to Prague as his representative in 1422 and again in 1423 with an eye to assuming the throne himself, but papal and imperial pressure forced Vytautas to withdraw.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Jagiello's Successors: Władysław III, Kazimierz IV, Jan Olbracht, and Aleksander*

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**W**ładysław II Jagiełło's long reign established the Jagiellonian dynasty firmly on the Polish and Lithuanian thrones, but the transition to his successors was not entirely smooth, owing to the youth of the sons he fathered late in life. Jagiełło placed his oldest son, Władysław, on the Polish, Czech, and Hungarian thrones, a development that increased the dynasty's prestige but did little for Poland and Lithuania. Władysław was succeeded by Kazimierz IV Jagiellończyk (Casimir IV the Jagiellonian), who reigned for half a century and established economic prosperity, good administration, cultural enrichment, and military strength. However, he secured his position by granting further privileges to the nobility. Although he continued a process that led ultimately to the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian state, Kazimierz cannot be held responsible for the excessive growth of noble power, because the consequences of his actions were not obvious until a century later, and the worst consequences emerged only after two hundred years. The short reigns of two sons provided a bridge to the next generation.

#### THE REIGN OF WŁADYSŁAW III

The short reign of Władysław III was filled with conflicts that had been brewing at the end of his father's long reign. Opposition to the dominant faction rallied behind Władysław's younger brother, Kazimierz, over the issue of dynastic expansion.

When Jagiełło died in 1434, a regency council headed by Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki of Cracow (1389–1455), Jagiełło's principal adviser and perhaps the real power behind the throne in his last years, ran the Polish state for Władysław III (1425–44). Oleśnicki followed a policy of expanding the Jagiellonian dynasty to the south, extending Polish influence in Lithuania, and asserting Catholic hos-

tility against Hussitism; he distributed landed estates lavishly to the Little Poland magnates who supported him. Anti-Oleśnicki forces drawn primarily from Great Poland but headed by a Little Poland magnate, Spytek of Melsztyn, unsuccessfully challenged Oleśnicki's dominance and voiced opposition to the growing wealth and political influence of the Catholic Church in Poland, expressing some sympathy with Czech Hussitism. Their influence waned, however, after a Polish army unsuccessfully invaded Silesia in 1438 in order to place young Prince Kazimierz on the Bohemian throne at the invitation of Bohemian Hussites. Spytek rebelled the following year to prevent Władysław from assuming the throne as he approached the age of majority, but Spytek died in battle against pro-Oleśnicki forces and the rebellion petered out. Despite his failure, Spytek and Polish Hussitism left some traces in Kazimierz IV's policy of asserting control over the Catholic Church and relying on the lesser nobility to check the strength of the great Polish lords.

The regency council's aggressive policies in Lithuania prolonged the civil war that had broken out after Vytautas died in 1430. Jagiełło's death in 1434 ended the personal union between the two realms, and it was not clear what would take its place. Polish military intervention assured Žygimantas's victory in his struggle with nativist Prince Švitrigaila in 1435, but Žygimantas did not enjoy the fruits of victory for long; he was assassinated in 1440. Švitrigaila ruled Volhynia with the support of the Ruthenian nobles, abandoning his wider aspirations. Lithuanian magnates turned instead to Władysław's younger brother, Kazimierz, and made him grand duke in order to maintain their independence from Poland.

Oleśnicki was more successful in his dealings with Hungary, at least in the short run. After the death of Albert Habsburg, nephew of Sigismund of Luxemburg, Oleśnicki arranged for Władysław's election to the Hungarian throne in 1440 in exchange for promises of Polish military assistance against Turkish encroachment. A second election organized by Hungarian magnates favored Albert's posthumously born son. An inconclusive two-year civil war was resolved by Pope Eugene IV in favor of Władysław in exchange for his agreement to lead a crusade against the Turks. Eighteen-year-old Władysław won a great victory over the Turks in 1442 with the help of the experienced Hungarian general, János (John) Hunyadi. The Turks and Hungarians signed a ten-year peace that protected Hungary against attack and assured it some influence in the Balkans. However, Władysław promptly violated the agreement at the urging of the papal legate, Julian Cesarini, who insisted that an oath taken to Muslims was not binding. The ensuing campaign led to a crushing defeat at the battle of Varna, in present-day Bulgaria, on November 10, 1444. Władysław III died, but Hunyadi escaped with part of the army.