



The sign of Knight-in-pursuit
by the sign of Eagle



Conferment of the official status
on the Polish language
in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1697

Where the cross which was thrown
to the river reached the river bank



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Dear Readers,



This is a subsequent issue of our publication "My Little Europe". In our authors' texts the history interweaves with "the here and now" in the area which is located on the junction of Poland, Lithuania and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast). The idea which motivates us is introducing the diversity of cultures, religions and traditions in these regions.

In the history of this area, we are talking about, borders were practically uniting, not dividing countries, nations, cultures. About them writes – in the article "Close to the Eagle sign of Pahonia..." – professor Józef Maroszek from Białystok University. And about consequences of imparting the Polish language an official status in Grand Duchy of Lithuania, writes doctor Gintautas Sliesoriūnas from Vilnius University. But what is the value of history without references to the present moment. About coexistence of Polish, Russian and Baltic culture – supplemented by the Jewish ethos – writes Dorota Misiejuk in her article "Churches, Orthodox churches and Synagogues". Krzysztof Wolfram is describing the beauty of nature of the Polish – Lithuanian – Russian borderland, and Andrzej Fiedoruk is encouraging us to a culinary trip. Its main taste motive this time are kolduns and zeppelins.

I wish you nice reading and I am inviting you to the next issues of "My Little Europe".

*Chairman of Amicus Society
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The role of the border in shaping the culture borderland

The sign of Knight-in-pursuit by the sign of Eagle

In the history of today's Poland and Belarus political borders, joining but not dividing states, nations and cultures, existed. It happened in years 1385-1795 when the border between Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Polish Crown was only a symbolic line. The valley of the Brzozówka River where between 1358 and 1795 two different state structures met can serve as an example. Different ethnicity created uniform culture and coexisted in unison with each other.

A legacy of Jagiellon Dynasty

Dialectic and spiritual differences have remained till the present day and it shows us peaceful coexistence of two societies and the integration role of unified Rzeczpospolita (commonwealth) consisting of two organisms. This area in modern times was not touched by fratricidal cataclysms. As an effect the State inhabited by different nationalities was a phenomenon in the European scale and to all intents and purposes it does not have other contemporary references.

Cultural flow was enormous. The culture which came into being from the 14-th to the 18-th century was common and now equally Polish, Belarusian and Lithuanian admit to the same heritage. This is true of architecture and monuments, urban and landscape planning and of literature, historical tradition and music culture. The rule of accommodating coexistence of different ethnic and re-

ligious groups in the area of the present Białystok region, the Hrodna Region and the Aukštota (Aukštaitija) Region it is the Jagiellonian heritage. They took care in a special way of this borderland by colonizing, establishing manor houses, constructing castles, founding churches and Orthodox churches, establishing schools, hospitals for cripples. Acts of Union 1569 was at the same time the foundation of this frontier harmony. These esthetic rules which were propagated in artistic programmes and this harmony Jagiellons and their servitors, courtiers and dignitaries who had possessions in these regions were able to enact in social life. The harmony of social co-existence emerging in accommodated neighbourly existence, common material and spiritual culture belongs to one of the biggest Renaissance monuments in the area of the historical Rzeczpospolita.

Distraction of Renaissance harmony

Over the years this cultural area was cut by political borders in years: 1795, 1807, 1815 and 1944. These borders did not join but, on the contrary, made deep divisions, devastated monuments, removed cultural heritage, eliminated social harmony. Destruction which was brought by absolutism of Prussian kings, autocracy of Russian tsars, finally all totalitarian systems which in the 20-th century built in this area power and ignored the needs of societies living in the river basin



Zygmunt Augustus

Wirgilius Soli. The portrait of Zygmunt Augustus, year 1554. I. Kraszewski, Vilnius from the beginning till 1750, volume I, Vilnius 1840

of the Niemen River, the Narew River and the Biebrza River.

Taking away temples and handing them to other confessions, deportations and exiles, so called repatriations – all these factors in a tragic way influenced perdition of the Renaissance harmony created by Jagiellon monarchies (mostly Aleksander Jagiellończyk, Zygmunt Stary, his wife Bona and Zygmunt August) and continued in a special way by Stefan Batory who actually married into this dynasty. The tragic image of the destroyed cultural environment is especially visible at so called "Eastern wall" – the part of Białystok Region stretching from the state border with Belarus with disappearing settlements, abandoned agriculture, recurred afforestation of fields. On both sides of the border, landown-

er's residences, palaces, manors, parks and collected in them cultural achievements were destroyed. In Belarus and Lithuania, in the Soviet Union period, they tried to eliminate achievements of the Christian architecture, interiors of temples, necropolises. There was a pressure on the mind of the society to tear people away from their own tradition and replaced it by cosmopolitan atheism, antitheism and foreign national culture.

Knyszyn – the capital of Rzeczpospolita

Here the king Zymunt August saw possibilities of creating his central residence. Who knows where the capital of Rzeczpospolita would be located if his plans were not foiled because of his death without descendants. The manor house in Knyszyn was created at king's request. It was supposed to fulfil his needs of comfortable, cosy life, far from urban bustle of Vilnius, Cracow or even Warsaw. When we research the history of the royal demesnes concentrated around Knyszyn and Tykocin we can see the last Jaggiellon as a host, a master of its properties, which were under his personal administration, realizing his plans.

For people who surrounded the monarch in his Podlasie manors the contact with the king was the beginning of the future state career. Both the Tykocin fortress and the Knyszyn residence stayed under the careful eye of the king and only he and trusted people had access in his Podlasie investment and the royal goods and chattels. The silence of the sources and lack of precise information was actually intention of the king himself.

He surrounded both Knyszyn and Tykocin with discretion and silence. The mystery of the Podlasie residence caused that in Rzeczpospolita strange messages were circulating – about innumerable treasure so called Tykocin deposit or the size of the Knyszyn Stud. It was known that the king lived in the manor with hags, witches, folk healers and *little falcons* as king's mistresses were called. Rumour has it to be known during the first interregnum.

August – the lord of these lands

The reason of building the central monarch's residence in Podlasie was the fact of possessing in the Knyszyn region – precisely in the Bielsk District, the Łomża district, the Wizna District and in the Grodno County – own estates and numerous possessions where Zygmunt August acted as *dominus et haeres*.

These territories the ruler treated as hereditary property and alienated them from royal land. At the beginning it was a donation of Knyszyn lands by the Bishop of Żmudź Mikołaj Radziwił on 18-th December 1528. In the neighbourhood of this property there were other escheats and gifts. Soon on 23-rd April 1529 Zygmunt I gave to his son forests, meadows, fields and wilderness around Goniądz possessions which spread along Goniądz borders taken from Bielsk and Hrodna leases.

On 18-th December 1542 Stanisław Gasztołd, the Troki Voievode, died heirless. His estate in accordance with escheat law with other Gasztołd properties passed to Zygmunt August. When in

1556 mother – the Queen left the country her estates enlarged domains of Zygmunt – in Lithuania the Hrodna Starosty and lands of Przełomska Forest and Perstuńska Forest. In Masovia it was the heritage from Masovian Dukes among others Łomża Starosty and Wizna Starosty. From the north, the territory of own estates of Zygmunt August neighboured with Royal Prussia. There were real perspectives of inheriting it after Hohenzollerns and lands of Duchy of Prussia was the monarch's property. They were supposed to fund king's own lands in the future. After 1525 this border, in fact, joined not divide Prussia, Lithuania and Polish Crown.

Tykocin and Wasilków were permanently found in the set of Zygmunt August's own lands. They neighboured with the Knyszyn property. In 1544 Zygmunt Stary and Lithuanian parliament sitting in Brześć gave the king Zygmunt August to manage Grand Duchy of Lithuania.



The border post at the junction of Lithuania, Poland and Prussia, in the neighbourhood of Prostki and Bogusze, near the ford on the Elk River, traditionally called the Stone Ford. Here coat of arms of three countries and the sign with the inscription from year 1545

The residence blended in the nature

“He usually lives in Lithuania, most often in Knyszyn, a small castle of this province, on the border of Masovia, where he has stables with a lot of beautiful horses, some of them Napolitain, other Turkish, other Spanish, other from Mantua, and the most of them Polish. This predilection for horses was the reason the king likes to live here and also the fact that this place staying almost in the middle of his country is more convenient from the administrative point of view for the king and people who have business to him than Cracow situated on the edge of Poland. Moreover the king having more power in Lithuania than in the Crown has more easiness maintaining his court which is managed on public expenses and he finds living in Lithuania more pleasant. In recent years it has been necessary for him to monitor, from close up, intentions, preparations and progress of Russians, his enemies and at the same time he can estimate war needs.” It was written by a papal nuncio Juliusz Ruggieri in his relation to the Pope in 1568. Historical sources note 22 king’s stays in Knyszyn, which is together 495 days.

The number of days he spent in Knyszyn is huge when we take into consideration a fact that there were actually multiplied arrivals and not permanent living. Numerous nominations issued in Knyszyn prove that preferences of Zygmunt August to distribute the offices and chairs of senators in the least embarrassing conditions.

Indirectly the aim for residing there was vthe cosiness of the place and independence.



Renaissance stove tile found in the hearth of the former royal mansion in Knyszyn (57 Bialostocka Street)

Aleksander Gwagnin in his chronicle *Sarmatiae* describes the residence in Knyszyn in the following way.” Knyszyn - a wooden town, 4 miles from Tykocin, on the plain between lakes and muddy paddles. There is the royal court here and the garden very wide which is commonly called “Zwierzyniec”. There are many pools and animals because all hunting is performed most often here. And it is situated 12 miles from Bielsk. The composition consisted of: the residence complex, basins and zoological gardens We should also mention the stud, a manor farm and a camp. Very important element of interior was the collection of tapestries, which were deposited in the Tykocin castle. Gobelins were hung during the monarch’s stayings in Knyszyn.

...and a stronghold in Tykocin

What is amazing of the residence in Knyszyn is the total lack of any defensive qualities. The monarch of the biggest contemporary country lived there surrounded by zoological gardens for hunting, forests, and horse wagons without any protection. It is especially amazing when we compare it with other monarchs who at the same time actively built their empires. Zygmunt August by its living in Knyszyn manor realized the Renaissance ideal of harmonious coexistence with the nature.

However he was not a reckless ruler. 15 kilometres from Knyszyn he established a stronghold in Tykocin which complemented functions of the Knyszyn residence. The king was aware of the safe location of the Tykocin for-

tress almost in the middle of all his governed countries. From here he could send the artillery for defending all borders of Rzeczpospolita. Tykocin, together with neighbouring residence in Knyszyn was a buckle fastening unified states - Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Polish Crown.

In the letter from 17 March 1550 addressed to Mikołaj Radziwił Rudy the king wrote: *We need Tykocin for many reasons because thinking of future anxieties or wars we would not find a place such safe in which spouses can stay than in Tykocin. Because it is situated on such a border, where from everywhere it is safe and we want to build there and for this building we want to give all income.* Tykocin was undoubtedly the biggest fortress in ethnically Polish regions. At the moment of the death of the last Jagiellon in the Tykocin castle an army unit of 200 infantrymen was stationed under cavalry captain Klimunt Bileński's command. Transferring the monarch's treasures to Tykocin involved not only jewels, jewellery collections and costly palace furniture but also the Royal library.

Polish elites in Podlasie Region

Establishing the central residence of the ruler in Knyszyn-Tykocin had a great significance for spreading in the Podlasie area Renaissance patterns of developing urban spaces (Knyszyn, Tykocin, Augustów, Wasilków, Zabłudów, Suraż, Nowy Dwór, Lipsk and others), long village streets, church settlements, manor farms, court-garden units and manor farms-garden units.

Patterns which were first acquired in king's own proper-

ties were then popularized in all Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a part of agriculture reform called "pomiaru włóczna". The north of Podlasie filled with people of Renaissance who were closely connected with the lord and the court. In a town Knyszyn sat a big group of "serwitor" (craftsman) working for the king. We can list: Scipion Campo, Daniel and Bartłomiej Moreto - horse trainers, Nowicki - a groom, Jan - a stud locksmith, Hieronim Korycki, Kasper Kłodziński, Jakub Piasecki - a stud superintendent, Angelo Caborto - a pharmacist, Grzegorz Kaczik - a servant, Wojciech Rozwadowski - a country home guard, Mikołaj Konarski and Stanisław Trojanowski - supervisor of soldiers of king's bodyguards, Jan - a fisherman, Marcin Żydek - a lackey, Stanisław

Mężyk - a furrier, Klimunt Rozdam - a locksmith, Sebastian - a saddleman and a leatherworker and others.

They sometimes got during their stay in Knyszyn only a country inn designated by a starost. A large group got manors in a town in perpetuity.

Inventories mentioned manors in Knyszyn belonging to: Wawrzyniec Wojna - an office writer and Treasurer of Lithuania, Jan Dulski - Suraż and Brańsk Starost, Ostafi Wołłowicz - a treasurer, a marshal and a writer and a Deputy Chancellor (Polish: Podkanclerz), Jakub Zaleski - a writer of Polish Court Treasure, Maciej Żaliński - a writer of Polish Court Treasure, a person responsible for king's bedroom (łożniczy).

In a Starost's Court in Knyszyn lived tenants, prominent economists, activists of "pomiaru włóczna": Stefan Bielawski, Aleksander Chodkiewicz, Piotr Chwalczewski, Andrzej Dybowski, Hieronim Korycki, Stanisław Włoszek, and also Adam Pilchowski, the Podlasie Referendary and Stanisław Piotraszewicz the bee-keeping Starost and Knyszyn gamekeeper.

It was the same in Tykocin. Zygmunt August's craftsmen lived here: Augustyn - a castle woodworker, Łukasz Brajer - a carpenter, Jan Bukowski - craftsman preserving tapestries and other fabrics, Mikołaj Bystro - a carriage - builder, Łukasz Górnicki - a librarian, Hibrol Handzel - an artillery officer, Stanisław Herart - a gunsmith, Jan Hermanowski - an armourer, Jakub - a rope maker, Herkules Jurczyński - an architect, Ambroży Kraus - a gunsmith and a carpenter, Piotr - a chimney



The tapestry which was hung in the Knyszyn residence by 1572. Otter, swans, herons and fantastic reptiles, verdure tapestry with animals. Photo: Photogravure De Schutter, Antwerp. Flemish tapastries in the Royal Castle in Wawel, editor J. Szablowski, Warsaw 1975, page 203.

sweeper, Franciszek Rosocha - a castle gunsmith, Wojciech Zakrzewski - a bricklayer and a writer during construction in Tykocin. In the fortress lived: Klimunt Bileński - a chief and cavalry captain of Tykocin, Marcin Podgórski - a servant in Lithuanian Court Treasure, Stanisław Broniewski - the Przemyśl head groom, Zygmunt Zebrzydowski - a courtier and a castle cavalry captain. In a new royal court in a town lived tenants: Stanisław Kieżgajło, Job Preytfus, Jan Szymkowicz and Łukasz Górnicki, and also Paweł Kotowicz a courtier, a supervisor of surveyors (mierniczy włóczni). Their properties in a town kept also; Hieronim Sieniawski the Kamieniec chamberlain, Mikołaj Korycki - a Judge of Bielsk Region, Jerzy Chodkiewicz - Troki Castellan, Jakub Uchański - Polish Primate, Franciszek Wolski - a pharmasist. Mint administrator - Stanisław Myszkowski stayed in a grange Pilniki near Tykocin.

In 50 kilometres radius from Tykocin lived Aleksander Chodk-



The view of Knyszyn on the map from 1536, supplemented after 1561 showing the location of the Great Road from Lithuania to the Crown, Old and New Causeway through Jaskranka valley, the big fence around the pond near the mansion, ponds, the deer zoological garden, the stud and the horse communal pasture

iewicz (Choroszcz and Gródek), Grzegorz Chodkiewicz, Great Lithuanian Hetman (Choroszcz), Jan Dzierżanowski, the Knyszyn forester (Borsukówka), Piotr Gabrielowicz, a surveyor (Gniła), Jan Gąsiorowski, a soldier bodyguard, a guard of the body of Zygmunt August (Augustów), Marcin Grajewski, a courtier (Dolistowo), Piotr Grajewski (Grajewo), Stanisław Grajewski, a courtier (Grajewo), Krzysztof Grzymowski, a cook (Dolistowo), Józef Jasiński, Vil-

nius Archdeacon, Suraż parson, a royal secretary, (Uhowo), Wojciech Jasiński, a head cook (Krzywa), Jan and Józef Jaskiewiczowie doorkeepers (Woroszyłowszczyzna vel Księżyno), Maciej Kalecki, Kalinowo parson, a royal secretary (Kalinówka Kościelna), Iwan Kurzeniecki - Queen Bona's courtier (Kalinówka), Jerzy Kurzeniecki, a courtier (Sokołdka vel Jurowce), Mikołaj Kurzeniecki, a courtier (Jasionówka), Jan Lisowski, a courtier (Krzywa),



August Pond near Czechowizna Village built in 1558-1561 by Piotr Chwalczewski, The Knyszyn Starost in the Nereśl River Valley near Knyszyn

Maciej from Krajna called Lis, a doctor (Buzuny), Piotr Fizyk from Poznań, Suraż parson and a doctor (Uhowo), Jan Janowicz Radziwiłł - Lithuanian cutter (Goniądz), Stanisław Skoczek Dziewałtowski, a surveyer (Kundzin), Maciej Strubicz, a cartographer (Brzeziny), Jan Wiesiołowski, a courtier (Białystok), Piotr Wiesiołowski (older), Camp Leader, Piotr Wiesiołowski (younger), a courtier, Bartłomiej Wlewski, a supervisor of forest works in Knyszyn Starosty (Jaświły).

Renaissance patterns

One of the curiosities of Podlasie was popularizing of Renaissance surveying of court residences and gardens. In the sixteenth century many people connected mostly with the royal court established court residences (Orla, Zabłudów, Jasionówka, Kalinówka, Buzuny, Białystok, Strabla and others) which has such an aesthetic appearance. The patterns for them were the royal courts: Knyszyn, Tykocin, Bonowo vel Bujnowo, Krynki, Hołowiesk near Bielsk. There were many foreigners closely involved in constructing and maintaining the Knyszyn residence and the stud and the Tykocin fortress. There were Italians, Portuguese, Dutch, Russians, and Tartars.

At that time the earliest plans in accordance with modern convention of urban planning appeared. It involved Zabłudów (1553), Augustów (1557 r.) and Wasilków (1566 r.) and many other towns.

Their plans are different than the earlier ones, streets had regular, chequered pattern, there is an integration with garden lands and

farmlands - the clear popularization of antique, Roman urban patterns. Growing vegetables and fruit forced people to plan a plot for a house and corresponding plot for a garden.

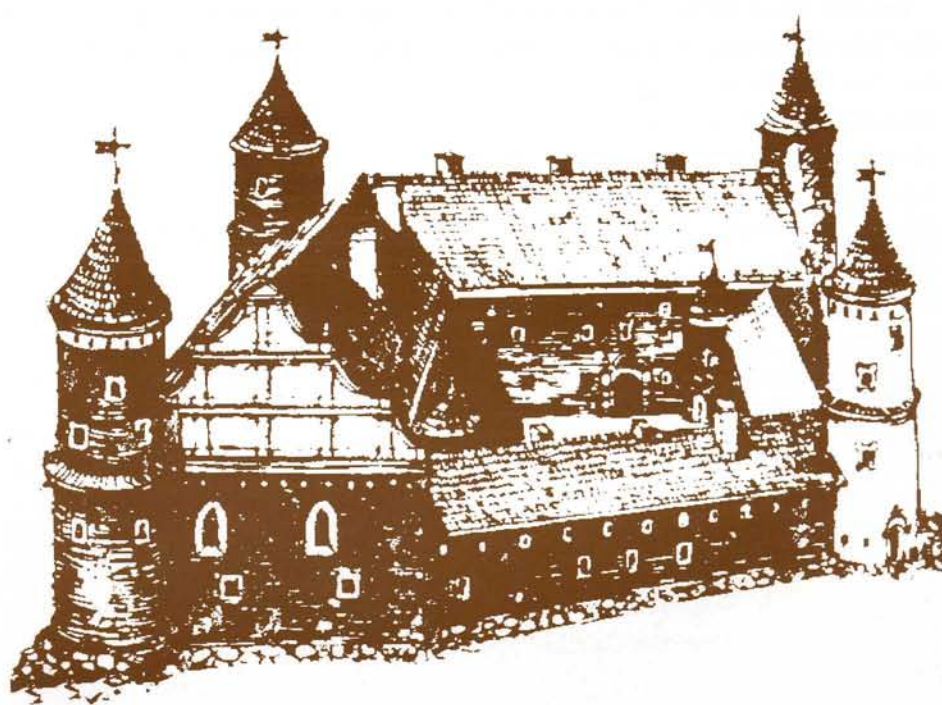
The towns did not have any defensive qualities and it caused extensive arrangement of spacious, wide market squares and widened streets in spite of the small number of population of new - established towns.

Building development was loosened and garden areas were established. It was caused by humanistic trend towards the nature, the need for staying around the green areas, the need for possessing a lawn, a cloister garth and wooden garden houses. There was a large number of plots in projects of Wasilków or Augustów. It proves that they were not all developed immediately but they were a reserve of building ar-

reas serving temporary as gardens. There were towns which were established during activities connected with "pomiar włóczna". Augustów and Wasilków were located inside Zygmunt August's lands. However Zabłudów belonged to Grzegorz Chodkiewicz and this proves how fast pattern from the royal estates moved to lordly towns.

This reminder of common cultural qualities which integrated the society living here is necessary because of the fact of occurring emancipation of national groups exemplifying and publicizing problems of alleged unfair and injustice that were done by neighbours. At the age of creating new values which join all nations living here within European Union structures it is worth to remind here this remote but extraordinary history.

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The Tykocin Castle. The drawing by Henryk Wilk.