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At the Foundations of Narbutt's Vision of Lithuania and the Relations Between Poland and Lithuania

U podstaw Narbutowskiej wizji Litwy i stosunków polsko-litewskich

ABSTRACT

Teodor Narbutt's works on the history of Lithuania provoked ambivalent evaluations. On one hand the importance of the subject he undertook was emphasised, on the other hand, the author was reproached for deficiencies in methodology, which disqualified him as a historian. His research grew on the basis of interest in Lithuanian culture, it led to the search for autonomous properties of the Lithuanian statehood, emphasising differences proving the separateness of Lithuania and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania within the framework of the Kingdom of Poland. The theses stated within the work have not withstood the test of time, they did not meet the social expectations. They were quickly verified by the political events of the second half of the 19th century. Although Narbutt's works were criticised, they influenced the shape of Lithuanian culture.

Key words: Teodor Narbutt, history of historiography, 19th century

In this article I focus on the analysis of Polish and Lithuanian relations as seen in the works of Teodor Narbutt. They are in line with the studies on historical thought in the historiographical trend¹. T. Narbutt focused almost

¹ M.H. Serejski, *Przeszłość a teraźniejszość. Studia i szkice historiograficzne*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1965, pp. 18–33; J. Maternicki, *Historiografia i kultura historyczna. Studia i szkice*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 13–55; idem, *Myśl historyczna jako przedmiot badań historiograficznych*, in: *Metodologiczne problemy badań nad dziejami myśli historycznej. Materiały konferencji naukowej w Krynicy w 1989 r.*, ed. J. Maternicki, Warszawa 1990, pp. 9–27; idem, *Wielokształtność historii. Rozważania o kulturze historycznej i badaniach historiograficznych*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 165–191; J. Pomorski, *Myśl historyczna jako kategoria i przedmiot badań historiograficznych*, in: *Metodologiczne problemy*, pp. 28–48.

exclusively on the history of Lithuania. The relations with the Crown were secondary to him, and they were only important when they influenced the shape of the systemic transpositions of Lithuania, changes to the borders, less often their accompanying cultural transformations. The socio-political issues, which were taken into account by the historian, can be analysed in the category of processes forming both the Polish-Lithuanian state union and the arising ethnic conflicts, leading to the isolation of autonomous Lithuanian consciousness.

Teodor Narbutt (1784–1864), researcher and populariser of the history of Lithuania, amateur historian, bibliophile, translator, collector, folklorist, social activist, engineer and military man, has not been thoroughly studied in the grounds of Polish academia. Apart from the oldest biographical texts by Adam Kirkor (Jan ze Śliwina)², Julian Bartoszewicz³, the modern knowledge about Narbutt is drawn from the article by Małgorzata Stolzman published in PSB⁴. We learn some more about him from the text by Andriej Narbutt⁵, and recently, and this is the most comprehensive study to date, from a book by Maria Magdalena Blombergowa⁶. The contribution of T. Narbutt in the field of history is marginalised by Polish researchers, evaluated as one failing to meet the methodological requirements posed to historical studies in the first half of the 19th century, characterised by antiquarian approach resulting from his enthusiasm and collector's, non-reflective, attitude towards memorabilia⁷. After the war in 1812 he settled

² 'Gazeta Warszawska' 1854, 42, p. 4.

³ Assessing the output of the Lithuanian historian, he wrote: 'Narbutt is a Lithuanian through and through [...] Collecting details on the past, he developed a monument of national renown...'. J. Bartoszewicz, *Teodor Narbutt*, 'Tygodnik Ilustrowany' 1860, 26, pp. 221–222.

⁴ M. Stolzman, *Teodor Narbutt (1784–1864)*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [hereinafter: PSB], vol. 22/1, Wrocław 1977, pp. 537–539.

⁵ A. Narbutt, *Teodor Narbutt – Historyk Litwy*, 'Lithuania: Kwartalnik poświęcony problemom Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej' 1994, 2 (11) – 3 (12), pp. 73–85.

⁶ M.M. Blombergowa, *Narbutt (Ostyk-Narbutt) Teodor Mateusz z Ziemi Lidzkiej. Historyk Litwy, inżynier i badacz starożytności oraz ojciec bohaterów-powstańców*, Warszawa–Lida 2011; Special attention should be paid to the work by Katarzyna Błachowska: *Wiele historii jednego państwa. Obraz dziejów Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego do 1569 roku w ujęciu historyków polskich, rosyjskich, ukraińskich, litewskich i białoruskich w XIX w.*, Warszawa 2009, in which the author analysed the output of T. Narbutt against the background of Russian historiography (pp. 90–115).

⁷ As far as this critical approach to the output of T. Narbutt is concerned, a major role was played by Henryk Schmitt, a Lelewel supporter, who already in 1859, in the course of taking stock of Polish historiography, took note of the diligence of the author of *Dzieje narodu litewskiego*, simultaneously raising the issue of lacks in methodology, i.e. the lack of ability to differentiate reliable sources from myths and legends. However, the equally important, or even more significant to Schmitt, was the fact that Narbutt represented the Lithuanian

down in his family estate in Szawry, a village in the Vilnius Region, in the Lida District. Numerous facilities and artefacts from the past discovered when throwing up military fortifications induced his interest in the past. History became his passion in the following decades⁸. T. Narbutt cooperated with 'Atheneum' published by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, devoted, among other things, to archaeology, history, folklore and ethnography. He also published in 'Dziennik Wileński' and 'Tygodnik Wileński', 'Tygodnik Petersburski', 'Wizerunki' and many others⁹. The popularising activities of T. Narbutt were in line with the type of collecting/studies on antiquities popularised in the Romanticism era. The focus was on the nation's past, which shaped the culture and consciousness based on native traditions, and in the case of Narbutt's works led to seeking and isolation of Lithuanian ethnoses.

T. Narbutt's works developed based on interests (which have been developing since late 18th century) in the history of Lithuania, the studies of its language and culture, the search for characteristics, which could prove its separateness. T. Narbutt, listed next to the experts on the issues concerning Lithuania, such as Ksawery Bohusz, Tadeusz Czacki, Joachim Lelewel, Józef Jaroszewicz, Ignacy Żegota Onacewicz, Michał Baliński, Ignacy Daniłowicz, Simonas Daukantas, is perceived almost solely as a collector-antiquarian dealing in political history¹⁰. He is also described as *worse than a dilettante, as he is a falsifier*¹¹, a synonym of what is *marginal and bizarre, essentially insignificant, but also amazing*¹². He is credited with the publication of the so-called 'Latopis Bychowca', written down in the

point of view, which – as he wrote – 'reminds us also today this provincial separatism, so pernicious to the common concern, as one tearing the national ties developed in the course of centuries, so contrary to the common good [...] Since the annalistic composition of the work itself cannot occupy the reader, the more he must be discouraged by the spirit and the position of the author, who, enjoying the unlimited nature of power, looks at all the events of the past'. H. Schmitt, *Pogląd na rozwój ducha i kierunek dziejopisarstwa polskiego w w. XIX.*, 'Dziennik Literacki' of 29 July 1859, 60, p. 718.

⁸ M.M. Blombergowa, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21; J. Jedlicki, *Błędne koło 1832–1864*, vol. 2. *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do 1918 r.*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 157–158.

⁹ M.M. Blombergowa, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 et seq.; J. Kowal, *Literackie oblicze 'Dziennika Wileńskiego' (1805–1806 i 1815–1830)*, Rzeszów 2017, p. 32.

¹⁰ J. Maternicki, *Warszawskie środowisko historyczne 1832–1869*, Warszawa 1970, pp. 29–30; J. Michalski, *Warunki rozwoju nauki polskiej*, in: *Historia nauki polskiej*, ed. B. Suchodolski, vol. III, 1795–1862. ed. vol. J. Michalski, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1977, pp. 201–202, 204; M.H. Serejski, *Historiografia*, in: *ibidem*, p. 673; A. Wierzbicki, *Historiografia polska doby romantyzmu*, Wrocław 1999, pp. 302–303.

¹¹ J. Michalski, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

¹² M. Litwinowicz-Drożdźiel, *O starożytnościach litewskich. Mitologizacja historii w XIX-wiecznym piśmiennictwie byłego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, Kraków 2008, p. 77.

16th century, published in 1846. Forgeries turned out to be, i.a. 'Rękopis Raudański', or *Obwarowanie miasta Wilna murem obronnym* published in 'Atheneum' (1848, 3, pp. 107–119)¹³. Then, however, i.e. basically almost until the end of the 19th century, he was perceived as a researcher with significant academic output¹⁴, which does not mean that he was written about without criticism¹⁵. J.I. Kraszewski, appreciating the advantages of the history of Lithuania elaborated by Narbutt, at the same time drew attention to the dubious origins of the sources used by the historian and uncritical reaching for studies, which made him more of a dilettante than a historian. In the introduction to the second volume: *Litwa. Starożytne dzieje*, Kraszewski, summarising Narbutt's output, wrote: *The best intentions, most kind-hearted feelings come out of this work, which is, after all, nothing more than a chunk of materials collected from many sources with highly varied authority; a formless heap of rubble and stone glued together*¹⁶. At the beginning of the 20th century Aleksander Brückner treated Narbutt's output within the scope of Lithuanian mythology as full of nonsense, constructed according to the *Greek-Roman recipe, and there was not a word of truth in all of it*¹⁷. His achievements can be summarised by quoting these words of Małgorzata

¹³ K. Chodynicki, *Ze studiów nad dziejopisarstwem rusko-litewskim*. (T.z. *Rękopis Raudański*), 'Ateneum Wileńskie' 1926, 10–11, pp. 387–401; H. Łowmiański, *Sfałszowany opis obwarowania m. Wilna*, 'Ateneum Wileńskie' 1925–1926, 3, pp. 82–94; M. Kosman, *Badania nad reformacją w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim (1919–1969)*, 'Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce' 1971, 16, pp. 43–44; J. Tazbir, *Z dziejów fałszerstw historycznych w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku*, 'Przegląd Historyczny' 1966, 57, 4, pp. 90–91.

¹⁴ K. Błachowska, *op. cit.*, 42; J. Wyrozumski, *Twórcy krakowskiej mediewistyki*, in: *Krakowskie środowisko historyczne XV–XX wieku. Ludzie–idee–dzieła*, eds. T. Gąsowski and J. Smołucha, Kraków 2018, pp. 12–13.

¹⁵ Michał Baliński (1794–1864), a historian and a publicist, emphasised the lacks in methodology of Narbutt, his credulousness and succumbing to sources. Cf. R. Naruniec, *Michał Baliński jako mecenas polsko-litewskich więzi kulturowych*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 172–176.

¹⁶ J.I. Kraszewski, *Litwa. Starożytne dzieje, ustawy, język, wiara, obyczaje, pieśni, przysłowia, podania...*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1850, p. V. To Narbutt's credit, however, was that 'he corrected many erroneous years, designated many locations in greater detail' (*ibidem*, p. VI), he gathered a significant collection of sources, which could be useful to the future researchers. The comprehensive view on the history of Lithuania presented by Narbutt was in Kraszewski's opinion soaked through 'with love for the country up to the point of being blinded to the facts and their proper nature' (*ibidem*). In a nutshell, we see in Mr. Narbutt a merited chronicler, a diligent collector of materials, but not a historian. His judgements and concepts of matters are common, often based on speculations, more often repelling due to some modern point of view directed at the past. He does not stand in the past to judge it through itself, but rather judges it from his current position, imagines in modern terms, paints its false image' (*ibidem*, p. VII).

¹⁷ A. Brückner, *Polacy a Litwini. Język i literatura*, in: *Polska i Litwa w dziejowym stosunku*, Warszawa–Lublin–Łódź–Kraków 1914, p. 372; Cf. also W. Wielhorski, *Polska a Litwa. Stosunki wzajemne u biegu dziejów*, Londyn 1947, pp. 31–32.

Stolzman: *In his historical concepts Narbutt was, however, solely a Lithuanian, and although he wrote in Polish and did not know Lithuanian almost at all, he subjected to the sense of Lithuanian patriotism not only his opinions, but also facts and documents*¹⁸. The works of T. Narbutt that should be recognised as the most significant include: *Rys historyczny ludu cygańskiego* (1830), *Dzieje starożytne narodu litewskiego* (vol. 1–9, 1835–1841)¹⁹, *Pomniki do dziejów litewskich* (1846), *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości zebrane z dołączeniem potoku pochodzeń ludów narodu litewskiego* (1847), *Teodora Narbutta pomniejsze pisma historyczne szczególnie do historii Litwy odnoszące się* (1856).

The nine-volume history of Lithuania published by a lawyer, publisher and entrepreneur associated with Vilnius, Adam Marcinkowski²⁰, with its additions amounts to a total of almost four-and-a-half thousand pages. Regardless of a collection of a significant amount of sources and studies, it is difficult to call it a thorough and exhaustive study. The author's main attention was focused on the political events, military efforts and diplomacy, in which a significant role was played by the representatives of the authorities. Narbutt notices the complex processes occurring in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but pays little attention to them. The second of the works in turn, i.e., the single-volume work *Dzieje narodu litewskiego*, completed – as indicated by the introduction – in December 1844, was published by a bookseller and publisher of works in the field of literature, popular science and school textbooks, Ruben Rafałowicz²¹. This study constituted, according to the intentions of the author, a popular and synthetic view of the nine-volume work²². *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości zebrane*, analogically to the previous work, concentrate on

¹⁸ M. Stolzman, *Nigdy od ciebie miasto... Dzieje kultury wileńskiej lat międzypowstaniowych (1832–1863)*, Olsztyn 1987, p. 45

¹⁹ They are composed of, published in Vilnius and given a single title, vol. I–III *Dzieje starożytne narodu litewskiego* and vol. IV–IX *dzieje narodu litewskiego*: I: *Mitologia litewska* (1935), II: *Śledzenia początków narodu litewskiego i początki jego dziejów* (1837); III: *Pamiętki i wypadki historyczne od wieku szóstego po wiek trzynasty, tudzież rzeczy odnoszące się do Prussyi, Łotwy, Zakonów Rycerskich* (1838); IV (1838); V: *Od śmierci Gedymina do bitwy nad Worskłą* (1839); VI: *Panowanie Witolda w wieku piętnastym* (1839); VII: *Panowanie Świdrygełły i Zygmunta* (1840); VIII: *Panowanie Kazimierza i Aleksandra* (1840); IX: *Panowania Zygmunatów* (1841).

²⁰ A. Śnieżko, J. Tynecki, Marcinkowski Antoni, in: *Słownik pracowników książki polskiej*, Warszawa–Łódź 1972, pp. 566–567.

²¹ A. Śnieżko, Rafałowicz Ruben, in: *ibidem*, p. 743.

²² It was divided into six periods. The first one covered the history of origins and separation of the tribes of the Lithuanian nation until the 5th century, the second was devoted to the formation of the Lithuanian statehood until the end of the 12th century, the third one covered the period until mid-12th century, the fourth one the reign of Mindaugas and it ended on 1285, the fifth one reached the rule overtaken by Władysław Jagiełło, and the final one ended with the death of Sigismund II Augustus in 1572.

military rivalry, determining borders and preventing internal conflicts. Their explanation, due to the lack of a broader outline of diplomacy, is almost exclusively limited to military issues. In both cases, this is idiographic history, descriptive, avoiding comparative studies and the search for the facts leading to deeper conclusions. The relations with the Polish state constitute a clear background for the political history of the separating Lithuanian statehood. The axis of the studies established by the author were almost exclusively the conflicts with the Teutonic Order, Rus', Muscovy and the Tartars. The history of the system, culture and economy was treated in a marginal manner. The factors that seem to be significant to the development of the culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are almost exclusively the religious factors, determining the political and socio-cultural modernisation of the state. However, it should be emphasised that the undisputed merit of Narbutt was the very undertaking of the matter, previously neglected, fully deserving a study.

At the beginning of his work on the history of Lithuania, T. Narbutt was aware of himself being a forerunner in this field of research. In the pages of introduction to his most extensive work, i.e. *Dzieje starożytne narodu litewskiego*, he also presented a general view on history, which is worth quoting – a specific credo on methodology and technique. He aimed at – as he wrote himself – maintaining *truthfulness*, believing that to the reader, *enthusiast of wisdom and friend to the human race*, the first volume will reveal *the events in the progress of civilisation*²³. He indicated the complexity of historical cognition, the necessity of taking into account new categories of sources, using historiographic legacy and continuous search for new materials. He was aware that the past he recreated was based on sources which do not grant a full insight into the history of Lithuania²⁴. He often had fragmentary material at his disposal. As far as the heuristics are concerned, he argued about his critical approach to source materials, reliability of the conducted inquiries, honest research conduct and reliability of the findings. At the same time, Narbutt treated these findings not in the categories of *infallible* truths, but rather recognised them as a narration constructed on the basis of his own practice and research experience²⁵. Coherence was meant to be guaranteed by the 'faith' in the factual value of the quoted sources and the works of the recognised authors-researchers referred to, deserving 'seriousness'. Should this prove insufficient, the final argument

²³ T. Narbutt, *Dzieje starożytne*, vol. 1, pp. I–XV.

²⁴ Idem, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 6, pp. IX–XI.

²⁵ Idem, *Dzieje starożytne*, vol. 2, p. 12.

was trusting – he wrote – *our love for the truth and national honour*²⁶. His main goal was to write down the history of Lithuania, whereas he was aware that the work he presented was in fact concentrated on political history. Although it was supposed to be rationalised history, as a believer in providentialism, he did not avoid embedding supernatural elements into the narration²⁷. In the view of this historiographer, religion was a significant element of culture, it even determined the shape of the national community. Numerous times, he indicated that with the baptism of Lithuania it found itself in the circle of West-European civilisation. Seeking a political model, Narbutt declared for a system based on strong and stable power. This was the axis for organisation of the state, formed a basis for its development and determined its international position. *Inconsistency, lack of perseverance, disobedience to the king, striving for superiority, greed for profit*²⁸, *were condemned by the historian many times*. He was very strict and critical in his assessment of the quality of rule in Poland. He thought that it had undesired influence on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He wrote: *Lithuania, having united with Poland, made a voluntary offering of its independence, fell into the confusion of Polish chaos, which extorted its external defence and significance for the neighbours and made it prey to destructive wars. The fortified strongholds fell, the capital itself was set on fire several times or looted; the public archives deteriorated, or were damaged by means of incorrect preservation, the churches and sanctuaries of Christian thoughts about God failed to preserve their treasures*²⁹. In another place, expressing judgements of more general nature, he stated in a more arbitrary manner: *The beginning of the 14th century was a witness to disturbances and chaos in Poland, as if to confirm the statement that Poland and chaos were almost always tantamount expressions*³⁰.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

²⁷ For example, when reporting on the Lithuanian expedition to Poland in 1370, he mentioned the sacking of the Benedictine monastery on Łysa Góra, plundering the relics containing a fragment of wood from the True Cross. The reliquary – he wrote: ‘stood at the very border, as if graven, and he could not be moved by any means, indeed, the cattle and the people forced to pull fell dead to the ground’, which resulted in a return of the valuables, and the event was supposed to prove the respect of the Lithuanians for holy sites. Vol. 5, pp. 195–196.; In another place, distancing himself from all the prophecies and legends, writing about the year of death of Vytautas (1430), which was crucial to Lithuania, he saturated narration with information – forecasting changes – about ‘strange’ phenomena, ‘contrary to the natural course’: hairless wolves of immense size ambushing people, or Lake Galvė tinged with the colour of blood. Vol. 6, p. 526; T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 182.

²⁸ T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 32.

²⁹ *Idem*, *Dzieje starożytne*, vol. 2, p. 7.

³⁰ *Idem*, vol. 4, p. 393.

The initial relations between Poland and Lithuania, which the author wrote about, can be specified as difficult neighbourhood, dominated by mutual raids and raiding expeditions. These intensified after the unification of the tribal states by Mindaugas in 1240, with the creation and increase in power of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. However, in his works he did not pay particular attention to them. He mentioned the aid provided by the Lithuanian forces to Konrad I of Masovia in his fight for the throne, and the raids to Masovia and Sandomierz Land occurring after his death (1247)³¹. In the 13th century, as a result of relations with the neighbours, particularly the well-used periods of peace, Lithuania supposedly achieved a clear civilisational progress, as it gained *Russian writing, enlightenment, industry, learning true faith... the life of people became lively, news more available, trade more certain and beneficial, military forces more numerous and strengthened with a variety of weapons*³². With the death of Mindaugas (1253), Lithuania lost a *great man and hope for Christian education for many years*³³, *which was emphasized clearly*. This was a period of increasing conflicts with Poland, abounding in an increasing number of expeditions and raids of the Lithuanians to Masovia, Greater Poland and Lesser Poland³⁴. They dominated the relations between Poland and Lithuania, practically until the death of Vytenis in 1316. The turning point was the period of reign of Gediminas (1316–1341). Narbutt perceived him through the prism of political relations, struggles with the Teutonic order, territorial growth of the Lithuanian state in the south-east, contact with the papacy and seeking new alliances. It is worth mentioning that in the works of T. Narbutt the development of the Lithuanian state – based on political and military factors – included also the significance of cultural transformations, in which religious belief played a particular role. Providence, he wrote – *watched over Lithuania and prepared strong alliances for it, followed in turn by the influence on the fall of its fierce enemies*³⁵. In such message the outlined relationship with Poland, reinforced by the supernatural element, seemed to be a sort of destiny. Poland and Lithuania were to some extent, stuck with each other. Weakening one of the states threatened the identity of

³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 106–107, 113.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 121. Mindaugas – in Narbutt's opinion – was a ruler, who through christening stabilised the power in Lithuania, which created an opportunity for new opening in international relations. He became a Christian monarch, beginning a cultural turn, leading to the weakening of the old religion 'until the time of its gradual fall and the extinction of obsolete superstitions from the memory of the people'. Cf. T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 86.

³³ Idem, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 4, p. 220; idem, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 101.

³⁴ Idem, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 4, pp. 256, 269, 272, 357, 394, 409, 412–3, 416, 423, 484.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 562.

the other. This was supposed to be an alliance directed not only against the military power of the Teutonic Order, but also weakening the political influences of the Order. Narbutt emphasised that at the foundations of the alliance between Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania lied the interest of the community, of the state. The utterers of conducting such policy were both Gediminas and Władysław I the Elbow-high, who in 1325 led to the marriage of Casimir and Aldona³⁶. The relations were tightened in the period of the reign of Casimir the Great (1333–1370), which – as the historian emphasised – resulted in even closer military cooperation against the Order³⁷.

New opening in the relations with Lithuania was the incorporation of Red Ruthenia by Casimir the Great and coming closer to the southern borders of the GDL, and then taking over Volhynia and Brest Polesia. From that time, the conflicts about the Kingdom of Ruthenia (Galicia–Volhynia), will recur in Narbutt's work over the entire period of reign of Casimir the Great, as well as after his death, when the Lithuanian forces invaded Volhynia and Sandomierz Land³⁸. The reason for military successes of the Lithuanians were – according to his reference to Jan Długosz – not so much their innate valour, but rather the lack of unanimity and the period of interregnum in Poland³⁹.

Fundamental changes in the relations with Poland occurred with Jogaila succeeding as Grand Duke in 1377. In the eyes of Narbutt the new Duke, however, is a figure who was no match in terms of position in the state to Algirdas nor Kęstutis. In Jogaila, he saw a ruler unprepared for reigning – good, humane, merciful, generous, but also lazy, not believing in *the power of arms*, inexperienced and failing to use the experience of the elders, failing to choose his advisers well, succumbing to the influence of the favourites, and finally, 'slow and dull' at the decline of his power⁴⁰. The years 1381–1384 were according to Narbutt's description a period dominated by the internal war for power in Lithuania. The historian returned to the Polish-Lithuanian matters by characterising the retaliatory raid on Poland in 1384. The said raid destroyed the Masovian region and reached Wiślica. Therefore, the vastness was shown – he wrote – *of its power*, which was supposed to be a warning against putting Lithuania among the ranks of

³⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 565–566, 585–590; T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 150.

³⁷ *Idem*, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 4, p. 604.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, vol. 5. pp. 5, 50, 52–53, 71, 164–166, 194–195.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 220.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, vol. 5, pp. 251–252; vol. 6, p. 481; T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 186.

potential enemies⁴¹. Narbutt argued that Lithuania not only established its political position in the region, but it was also growing as a neighbour with a major military potential. The almost exclusive obstacle to the normalisation of the relations with the West was the factor of religion, granting pretence to meddling in its internal affairs and weakening the international position in the relations with the Christian states of Central-Eastern Europe.

The clear rapprochement between Lithuania and Poland, which occurred after the death of Louis I of Hungary, i.e. the dissolution of the personal union between Poland and Hungary, was presented by the historian as a success of Lithuanian diplomacy. The enthronement of Jadwiga in Kraków created an opportunity for the GDL to form an alliance directed against the Teutonic Order. The ambassadorial missions sent by the Lithuanians to Kraków and to Hungary to Elisabeth of Bosnia on the matter of marriage between Jadwiga and Jogaila were successful⁴². Without a doubt, the most important factor determining the support for the candidacy of Jogaila, as Narbutt argued, was his strong political position in this part of Europe, which, along with the declaration on christening and the guarantee that *His Lithuanian Duchy and the Ruthenian states he will unite with the Polish Crown forever*⁴³, put him in a privileged role. The Union of Krewo of 1385 was, according to Narbutt, very important from the point of view of relations between Poland and Lithuania, as that was the first time that the *Lithuanian nation gave a word of agreement to the union with the Polish nation*⁴⁴. The crowning of Jogaila in 1386, by creating *a holy alliance of two independent nations*, created a personal union. Narbutt emphasised at the same time that Jogaila remained a hereditary lord of the GDL, which retained a range of prerogatives and enjoyed considerable independence. Therefore, in accordance with the point of view he adopted, he consequently resigned from taking into account the history of Poland in his exposition. Jagiełło's reign was of interest to him almost exclusively from the point of view of the history of Lithuania. The eponymous *Dzieje starożytne narodu litewskiego* [Ancient history of the Lithuanian nation] obliged the historian to focus on the GDL, and the events related directly to the Kingdom of Poland he saw as *the property of history of Polish nation*⁴⁵ and he abandoned them consciously.

⁴¹ Idem, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 5, pp. 347–349.

⁴² *Ibidem*, pp. 364–365.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 367.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 387.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 396.

The historian was ambivalent in his evaluation of the rule of Władysław Jagiełło. Although he praised the policy leading to the strengthening of the position of Lithuania in the international arena and the development of Lithuanian education, he criticised the king for weakening the power within the state. He made him the person solely responsible for the competence conflicts and disputes with the participation of Skirgaila and Vytautas. He treated the title of the Grand Duke of Lithuania offered to the latter one as unconsidered, leading to political rivalry, weakening the king's rule, the source of divisions within the GDL and a factor exposing the relations with the Crown⁴⁶. New opportunities did not arise in the matters of internal policy until the end of the 14th century, which was caused by the loss of political importance of Vytautas in Lithuania (the defeat in the Battle of the Vorskla River with the Tatars of the Golden Horde in 1399), as well as the death of Jadwiga. The negotiations initiated then between Jagiełło and Vytautas were finalised with an agreement leading – as the historian concluded – to *more permanent union of the two nations*⁴⁷. The basis for the new foundations of the Polish-Lithuanian union were the decisions of the Lithuanian nobles made in Vilnius in 1401. Narbutt emphasised that the adopted regulations, by recognising the lifelong independence of Vytautas as the Grand Duke of Lithuania, guaranteed that after his death Lithuania would return under the rule of Jagiełło. In addition, he informed that in the case of the king's death the decision regarding the future monarch would be made together by Poland and Lithuania, who were united in the choice by the commonly conducted foreign policy. For the historian from Szawry the decisions of the noblemen made in Vilnius were primarily a political blow directed at the Teutonic Order, and the tightening of the Polish-Lithuanian union directly weakened the position of the State of the Teutonic Order in competition with the Crown.

The historian valued the political skills of the Grand Master Konrad von Jungingen, his dislike for war, and the pursue to settle disputes in a diplomatic manner. He particularly emphasised his seeking closer

⁴⁶ He wrote: 'Władysław, having almost absolute power over the vast Duchy of Lithuania, could rule this state to the benefit of his own and of the Polish Crown, simply by keeping governors in it; whereas when he created the Grand Duke, he threw the apple of discord and jealousy between the Duke brothers, he shed the support for his own interests, and he created the seed of misfortunes for his homeland, which almost meant its doom, whereas to himself he created so many troubles that he often must have regretted this decision with bitterness, until his final days; for in the end he was forced to see the fear in tearing the unity between the two nations, which could have only been interfered with by the death of Vytautas'. Vol. 5, p. 416.; *ibidem*, p. 461; *ibidem*, pp. 593–594; Similarly, cf. T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 202.

⁴⁷ *Idem*, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 6, p. 10.

relations with Władysław II at the beginning of the 14th century. In his 'observations' he emphasised that the years of peace with the order would be more durable if it wasn't for the Polish side – *This image considered in the monk-warrior assembly, the infinite attempts of the Polish authorities to pluck from rich acquisitions of the order, and finally this mistrust in the nature of king Władysław forecast terrible storms that were to arise in the horizon of our history*⁴⁸. The previous results of the conducted wars, deaths of thousands of people, destruction, increasing mutual distrust, seemed to lead Narbutt in the direction of a broader reflection on the pernicious nature of military conflicts. As far as feeding them is concerned, he ultimately blamed the Order and the newly elected Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen – an 'enlightened' and efficient ruler, but a man who was relentless, stubborn and 'hateful towards non-German people'⁴⁹. The Polish-Teutonic War, initiated after the loss of Samogitia and the attack on Dobrzyń Land in 1409, and then a defeat of the Order, did not achieve the expected benefits according to Narbutt – Jagiełło, *due to his own lack of skill to take advantage of fortunate circumstances, lost almost all the benefits from the Battle of Grunwald*⁵⁰. The historian mentioned that the decisions of the Peace of Thorn of 1411, in particular the Order giving up on Samogitia for the period of life of Władysław II and Vytautas, raised serious doubts in the Grand Duke of Lithuania, and he did not believe they would be honoured. The real benefit was, on the other hand, the agreement between Jagiełło and Sigismund of Luxembourg, the previous ally of the Order. They both signed the Treaty of Lubowla in 1412, creating new, favourable political conditions for the Kingdom of Poland.

An important step on the way to Polish-Lithuanian unity was the Union of Horodło of 1413. Narbutt, praising the concluded agreement, at the same time indicated the arising conflicts between the Lithuanian nobles bearing coats of arms ('the old Roman nobles'), and the Polish nobles. The closer unity became possible – he argued – once it was explained that it is not about new ennoblements, but rather their recognition and association in the knighthood. It was only then that – he added – *the unification of Lithuania and Lithuanian Ruthenia with Poland forever was cemented*⁵¹. The union created foundations for the implementation of administrative reforms, equalised the Catholic Lithuanian nobles with the Polish nobles, guaranteed the election of the grand duke of Lithuania by the king of

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 119.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 152; T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 212.

⁵⁰ *Idem*, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 6, p. 263.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 300.

Poland with the approval of the Lithuanian boyars and the Polish lords and joint sejms. In the opinion of the historian, the decisions made in Horodło led over longer term to the recognition of equality of the nobles of Orthodox – Greek Catholic faith⁵².

His opinion was negative, however, which he expressed numerous times as a supporter of strong rule, on the diminishing authority of Władysław II. He drew attention to the dynastic crisis related to the recognition of Władysław (the later Władysław III of Varna) as a successor to the Polish throne. He emphasised that the authority in Poland was becoming illusory. The nobles were growing in strength, demanding increasing privileges and independences, which was the beginning of destructive processes – *future misfortunes of the nations of both sides. If it was another potentate – he continued with regard to Jagiełło – he would not be thinking about that: he would rather create law, heritage of the throne ensured for future ages, without these drops in power of his following increasingly weakening successors*⁵³.

The Polish-Lithuanian unification was especially difficult as Vytautas remained a silent contestant, with strong influence in Lithuania. Due to his pursue to retain independence of the GDL, as well as despotic inclinations, as Narbutt argued, his submission to Jagiełło's plans regarding the union was only illusory. At the same time, the historian noted that even the possibility of overtaking the throne of Poland (in the case of Jagiełło dying not leaving offsprings) did not keep the Grand Duke of Lithuania from distancing himself from the idea of unification. The reason was, among other things, the critical attitude to the Poles, especially their national character, expressed in misunderstood *civil liberty*, based on *chaos*, leading straight to the fall of the state. In the opinion of the historian, Vytautas did not want them to permeate to the Lithuanian grounds, leading to a serious crisis of authority⁵⁴. The Grand Duke also never gave up on the attempts to gain full independence and make Lithuania a sovereign kingdom. The final act aimed at bringing into effect the politics conducted in such manner was the acceptance of the crowning proposal by Vytautas (at the Congress of Lutsk). The project proposed by Sigismund of Luxemburg in Narbutt's opinion led to a dynastic crisis and breaking with the policy of Polish-Lithuanian unity, which were not ended until the death of Vytautas in 1430. According to the historian, the ruler who passed away was one of the architects of power of Lithuania⁵⁵, who deserved a special

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 303.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 466.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 502.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 550, 553; *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 7, pp. 1–2.

place in the memory of the Lithuanians. The didacticism arising from Narbut's characteristic of the figure corresponded both to the models of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Vytautas was a ruler with both feet on the ground, consequential in his actions, focused on the matters of the Lithuanian state, *a genius of fame and greatness of his country*, accessible to the people, but *tough* for the magnates and dukes. Both reason and persistence made him one of the greatest European rulers. He was a duke – he thought – who did not always win his battles, but he could use them to level the incurred losses. At the same time, he was a man who valued learning, who knew languages, but he always prioritised the Lithuanian language⁵⁶. During his rule – Narbut argued – the GDL not only enjoyed the development of trade, science and education, but it was also distinguished by care for popularisation of Catholic religion and was famous for tolerance⁵⁷.

The new reason for Polish-Lithuanian feuds was the transfer of power of the Grand Duke to Švitrigaila. In the opinion of the historian, Jagiełło was not able to separate personal interests from interests of the state. His decision, arising from the 'goodness of a brother's heart'⁵⁸ weakened the king's position, it was a seed of new disputes with regard to competences. It led to the aggravation of conflicts and animation of rivalry for Podole and Volhynia and the choice of the duke – he summed up – 'was not right, unfavourable to both nations, may it not be calamitous'⁵⁹. The civil war started in 1431, and then the diplomatic war, were finalised by the coup d'état in 1432 and the takeover of the position of the Grand Duke by Sigismund Kęstutaitis (1432–1440). The fall of Švitrigaila, succumbing to the influences of the Teutonic Order, brought a change in the political course and a restoration in the agreements connecting Lithuania with the Crown. The act signed in Grodno in 1432 was presented by Narbut as a natural continuation of the political plans of Jagiełło. The swearing-in of Sigismund – 'by grace and gift of Władysław' was hedged around with the promise of submission and service to the king and the Kingdom of Poland. The historian noted that they were confirmed several times by the Grand

⁵⁶ *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 6, pp. 551–557.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 563–566.

⁵⁸ Narbut wrote about Władysław Jagiełło – 'He loved Poland, he did not begrudge it any sacrifices; he loved Lithuania, his homeland, for which he sacrificed everything; but, apart from that, he was so tied to his family, he was so strongly inclined towards brotherly love, that he almost forgot: who was that Švitrigaila, how much trouble, shame and disgrace he caused to him from the days of his youth. Such a prejudice is a sign of a great weakness in the heart, which is particularly reflected in the nature of this best man'. Vol. 7, pp. 155–156; Similarly, cf. T. Narbut, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 217.

⁵⁹ *Idem*, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 7, pp. 3, 24.

Duke, also after the death of Jagiełło and the crowning of Władysław III. Therefore, the period of independent policy of Lithuania, following the model of Vytautas or Švitrigaila, was ending.

A significant strengthening of the position of Sigismund Kęstutaitis in Lithuania occurred due to the equalisations of rights of the Russian boyars, which, as emphasised by Narbutt, was a major factor in the development of unity between the nobles⁶⁰. The joint Polish-Lithuanian military campaign against Švitrigaila and the Livonian Order, finalised by the victory in the Battle of Wilkomierz, contributed positively to the said process⁶¹. The final one, compared by the historian to the defeat in the Battle of Grunwald, forced the Teutonic Order to conclude peace in Brześć Kujawski (1345), break the alliance with Švitrigaila, recognise the power of the Grand Duke in Lithuania established by the Polish king and stay away from meddling in the internal affairs of Lithuania. Regardless of the indisputable successes, the period of rule of Sigismund Kęstutaitis was evaluated by Narbutt in a critical manner. The Grand Duke – as the historian emphasised – *wished the good of his homeland very much* – but did not know how to use the power. The outlined image of the rule was characterised by ‘incoherence and chaos’. The ruler – he explained – *was not capable of restoring the rickety internal orders [...] overtly vengeful, hard, even cruel, and most of all failing to trust anyone...*, which ultimately led to a plot, a coup and his death in 1440⁶².

In Narbutt's opinion, the real golden age of the GDL occurred in the second half of the 15th century. The stabilisation of internal politics, lack of wars in the territory of proper Lithuania, entering the period of culture of Renaissance, the economic bloom determined the prosperity and the growing position of the state. The prologue to the occurring changes was the announcement of Casimir Jagiellon (1440–1492) as the Grand Duke of Lithuania. The historian clarified that the choice made contrary to the previous Polish-Lithuanian acts, therefore without the required approval of the king and sejm, resulted from the fear of destabilisation of power in Lithuania⁶³. This way, the GDL made another step on the way to political freedom: it gained a ruler, who – as Narbutt wrote – *became tied to his homeland with his whole soul, he was learning Lithuanian and Russian, he adopted the customs, the national way of life and really applied to learning the difficult art*

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 161; T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 225.

⁶¹ *Idem*, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 7, pp. 169–177.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 201; pp. 224–228; Cf. also T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu litewskiego w krótkości*, p. 225.

⁶³ *Idem*, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 8, p. 8.

of reigning over people⁶⁴. The proof of the increasing attachment of Casimir Jagiellon to Lithuania was putting off the acceptance of the Polish throne after the death of Władysław III of Varna. The historian argued that *Poles with even importunate fervour, due to their attachment to the favourite reigning dynasty and due to the laws of succession established for it*⁶⁵, asked the Grand Duke to accept the crown. In Narbutt's opinion the sluggishness of Casimir arose from the care for Lithuanian affairs, but he also did not exclude the influence of the Lithuanian families, fearing the loss of the previous significance. Finally, after long negotiations, the restoration of the personal union took place in 1447. The period of long-term discussions, in which the Polish side, referring to the provisions of Władysław Jagiełło, was trying to convince the Lithuanians not only about the need for union, but also their superiority over them⁶⁶. The additional disputes over Volhynia and Podole were a manifestation of the increasing conflict and aggravation of Polish-Lithuanian relations. This has not quieted down until the eve of the Thirteen Years' War. Ultimately, the period of reign of Casimir IV Jagiellon was favourable for the GDL. In Narbutt's opinion, Lithuania was not ruled as well as in the times of Vytautas, but *unequally more populated, happy and free*. The king who died in 1492 deserved being remembered, for, as the historian argued – *he loved Lithuania and the Lithuanians [...] in the final seven years of his life, he lived in Lithuania almost all the time, and his destiny was to end his days in Lithuania*⁶⁷.

The separatist efforts of Lithuania were shown in the election of Alexander Jagiellon to the position of the Grand Duke. According to Narbutt, this election leading to the break of personal union, conducted against the previously binding Polish-Lithuanian acts, was not the final act to set the two nations at variance. This was determined by the education at the court of Queen Elisabeth, conducted according to the principles of *strict morality*, which resulted in mutual respect, kindness and brotherly love between Alexander and the elected King of Poland, John I Albert⁶⁸. The political tensions between the parties in Lithuania and the Kingdom, accompanying the elections of the Polish ruler became for the historian

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 57.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 73–80, 90–92; 103–104. The Lithuanians who demanded changes in the relations with Poland postulated: 'The Lithuanian nation wants to have its relation with Poland recognised as free and equal with equal alliance, not as submission and subordination. For they have never been nor they wish to be incorporated to the Kingdom of Poland; in such case they would rather prefer to die, every single one of them, than to have a shadow of being subjected at all'. *Ibidem*, p. 119.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 256–257.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 262–264.

an opportunity to reflect on the faults of the system of the Polish state. Appreciating the privileges of the nobles with regard to the election of the king, as a sign of *civic prerogative that could be achieved by a free nation*, at the same time he drew attention to its imperfections. He wrote: *Indeed, a beautiful glory, if it did not conceal the seed of misfortunes, discordant in the order of political European matters; the source of abuses pernicious to the country and the liberty itself*⁶⁹. Coming back to the internal policy of Alexander, the historian emphasised his contribution to the development of the Lithuanian towns, especially Vilnius⁷⁰. He appreciated the way the Grand Duke conducted foreign policy, the wars with the Grand Duchy of Moscow. He also noted that the growing threat of Moscow in the east, as well as the failures in the war with Moldavia in the Battle of the Cosmin Forest (1497) led to renewed tightening of cooperation between Poland and Lithuania. In the acts of the Sejm of Piotrków (according to the historian in 1499) Narbutt saw a predecessor of the Union of 1569. These were the decisions which not only confirmed the Acts of Horodło of 1413, but were affirming a union based on *formal unity* of Lithuania and the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland. These words were supposed to be confirmed by a fragment of a document quoted by the historian: *Since then the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania would create a single nation and a single state. Next, they should have a common government and a common Monarch, elected at a convention of both of these nations, i.e. election sejm, with the title of the King of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania. All the Lithuanian officials will swear loyalty to the King of Poland. Sejms, councils, alliances with foreign states, as well as war, coin minting, in other words, everything will be shared by these two nations*⁷¹. A serious step on the way to the unification of the Kingdom of Poland and the GDL was the Act of Mielnik of 1501, signed by Alexander I Jagiellon, elected as the King of Poland after the death of John Albert. The tightening of the Polish-Lithuanian relation was in Narbutt's opinion primarily based on the resignation from the right to elect the Grand Duke of Lithuania. The adopted agreement was bound by the principle that since then each King of Poland elected jointly by the two nations would simultaneously become the Grand Duke of Lithuania⁷². Summarising the period of rule of Alexander I, Narbutt reproached the king with a lack of political sense – *There would neither be Tatars in the Crimea nor the Russian partitions* – he wrote – *if Alexander was any more capable to rule the sceptre*

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 264–265.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 346, 462.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 349–350.

⁷² *Ibidem*, pp. 401–402.

of the two nations⁷³. The 'sluggishness of nature' attributed to the ruler by Narbutt, the persistence, conceit, wastefulness, cast a shadow on his achievements. The King, – he wrote – *was never, not once, in a battle with the enemies of the homeland, yet he died as a victor*⁷⁴ (victory against the Crimean Tatars in the Battle of Kletsk in 1506), *he did not enjoy learning, but he became a legislator* (approval of the statutes prepared by Jan Łaski at the sejm in Radom in 1505), *neutral in the religious affairs* – however, a benefactor of the Vilnius Cathedral⁷⁵. The historian had the greatest number of reservations against the *Nihil novi* constitution enacted in 1505, limiting the king's authority, perceiving it as a source of *liberum veto*. The remaining indisputable success of the monarch was, however, the policy exercised to the advantage of Polish-Lithuanian unity⁷⁶.

In the prologue to volume IX of *Dzieje narodu litewskiego*, covering the reign of Sigismund, Narbutt drew the readers' attention to a yet again formulated thesis on the different systemic inclinations of the Lithuanians, which translated directly to the development of the GDL. Admittedly, he described the 15th century as the *blissful age of Lithuania*, but he immediately added: *as far as it was allowed by its unfortunate union with the patrician and chaotic Poland, the unity poisoning our wise institutions and the relations between the highest authority and the nation*⁷⁷. Following the solutions that they knew earlier, the Lithuanians did not wait for the election sejm, which, as Narbutt argued, did not lead to breaking with the sejm acts, they enthroned Sigismund, son of Casimir IV, as the Grand Duke in October 1506⁷⁸. Soon afterwards, i.e. in December 1506, he was elected the King of Poland, and then crowned in January 1507. The historian paid most attention to the foreign policy of Sigismund I. He presented in detail the threat to Lithuania resulting from the wars with the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the Baltic matters. He returned to the systemic issues when discussing the late 1520s. He drew attention to the dynastic policy of the Jagiellons, the enthroning of Sigismund Augustus as the Grand Duke in 1529, and a year later the *vivente rege* crowning as the King of Poland. Behind the politics conducted in such way, according to the historian, there was exclusively Bona Sforza, a woman *greedy of*

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 488.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 489.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 490.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 492.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, vol. 9, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Narbutt wrote: 'When with the Polish states it was not possible to establish a joint election sejm; it was deemed necessary to make an exception from the adopted acts, and Sigismund Kazimierzowicz'. Vol. 9, pp. 5–6.

*significance, delights and fortunes*⁷⁹, who in the case of death of Sigismund I would not be able to cope with the loss of political influences. The choice of Lithuania was supposed to be a result of the Queen's conviction that in the GDL there was no such strong opposition as in the Crown and, in addition – as the historian emphasised – *the authority was stronger*. The greatest achievement of Sigismund II August, who took over the rule in the Kingdom of Poland after Sigismund I the Old, who died in 1548 and was highly valued by the historian, was the act of the Union of Lublin. Narbutt noted that serious discussions on the concepts – he wrote – *of uniting the nations as a single body*, were initiated in the 1560s. Relevant in this case were the propositions of the sejm from the years 1563–4, when Sigismund Augustus initiated the efforts for unification of the principles of election of authorities in the Kingdom of Poland. Unity of the state understood as the national *community of the Commonwealth* based on two different ruler election procedures, was since then supposed to go in the direction of development of systemic ruler election solutions. Narbutt stated directly that they led to the resignation of Sigismund Augustus from the dynastic rights to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He wrote: *the Polish nation gave itself the right to elect the Kings, and Lithuania is a hereditary state of the reigning family, therefore such heritage, to compare the unity of the body of the Commonwealth, it cedes to the Crown of Poland, legally, so that each following King of Poland elected in the manner developed by both nations, would also be the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Ruthenia, Prussia, Livonie, etc.*⁸⁰ The historian assessed in real terms that the need for legal solutions, modernising the system of the state, arose on one hand from the childlessness of Sigismund Augustus and the therefore arising care for preserving the Polish-Lithuanian unity, on the other hand the increasing threat of the Tsardom of Russia and Sweden, which in turn enforced the initiative of deepened military cooperation. They were to lead to a union that would be *final, total and unbreakable*⁸¹. The subsequent sejms in the second half of the 1560s, however, revealed a range of bilateral divergences, which ultimately did not lead to a compromise and concluded agreements. Narbutt emphasised that in the case of death of Sigismund Augustus the GDL would find itself in a particularly troublesome situation, as there was no descendant from the Jagiellonian line who could unite the power in Poland and Lithuania. Lithuania itself in turn did not have much of a chance for independence, due to its geopolitical position and the increasing power of Moscow.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 179.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 378.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 410.

Therefore, there was only one solution. He asked rhetorically: *Wouldn't it have been better, taking advantage of the circumstances, to unite a free nation with another free one, so as to keep what was a particular property of the nation? Freedom*⁸².

The Sejm of Lublin of July 1569 r – *a voluntary unification of two nations*, went down in history – commented the historian – *as one of the greatest and most memorable in history, a rare political phenomenon in the history of the world*⁸³. However, he emphasised that its signing was accompanied by the boyars' fear of the loss of political influences in Lithuania, which was additionally reinforced by the conceit of the Polish magnates, *who valued themselves more than the Lithuanian ones*⁸⁴. The historian avoided the assessment of the historical significance of the concluded real union. He only stated that *the fates of the nations lie in the turns of political changes that are unexamined by the human mind*⁸⁵. However, he emphasised that it was a result of attempts and efforts of Sigismund II Augustus, the King who approached the matters of the GDL with great care. The act of the Lithuanian union crowned the nine-volume work by Narbutt. He led the history of Lithuania to the age, in which – he stated – *the autonomy of the nation ceased*. Since then the history of Lithuania was to be analysed as an integral part of the history of Poland. He did not want to undertake the work on its further fate. He considered himself to be a historian of Lithuania. In the final sentence, crowning the work, he wrote with emphasis: *Sigismund Augustus died... and I crush my pen against his tomb*⁸⁶.

Narbutt's concept of the history of Lithuania aimed to prove the thesis of its historical subjectivity and political independence⁸⁷. The historian repeatedly noted on the cultural distinction of the GDL, he emphasised the state-building elements essential to its identity, based on strong individuals, the guarantees of stable power, and religion determining the inclusion of Lithuania in the circle of West-European civilisations. Narbutt's works, especially the monumental *Dzieje starożytne narodu litewskiego*, did not remain without influence on the development of Lithuanian culture in the 19th century⁸⁸. Taking upon oneself to write the history of Lithuania constituted a difficult research challenge. According to Narbutt's intention, the synthesis was not only supposed to fill a severe gap in the academic stud-

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 442.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 445.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 449.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 450–451.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 492.

⁸⁷ K. Błachowska, *Wiele historii jednego państwa*, p. 113.

⁸⁸ M. Jackiewicz, *Dzieje literatury litewskiej do 1917 r.*, vol. I, Warszawa 2003, p. 62.

ies, but also, which is equally significant, respond to the social demand of the Lithuanians. The thirty years of work on collecting, completing and analysing the sources for the history of Lithuania, the sheets of which were supposed to shine with *Truth, Fairness, Neutrality, History*, were simultaneously a call to discover the Lithuanian identity, threatened by indifference towards its own history⁸⁹. It was supposed to constitute a significant element in the shaping of culture and historical awareness of the residents of Lithuania. This is best shown by a quote used by Narbutt and included in the introduction to volume VIII of *Dzieje narodu litewskiego* (p. VI), from Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz: *The national memories, the most precious heritage of the people, are a work that cannot be replaced by anything; for if a nation feels in its own eyes ennobled, by means of past and glorious memories, by this itself it places itself higher in the opinion of the entire world*⁹⁰. The historian, repeatedly raising the issue of the role of the Lithuanian language in the formation of the national identity, spoke himself in Polish, which resulted in his work being available primarily to the intelligence from the Polish cultural circle. Narbutt's works should be analysed in the context of political efforts of the Lithuanian nobles, who in the period of Romanticism stood in the face of a choice between a tradition of state union with Poland or an alliance with Russia, which in the latter case was related to a loss of its own capacity⁹¹. *Dzieje starożytne narodu litewskiego* proves that the analysed historian was in line with the concept imposing the search for Lithuanian separateness in close ties with the former Polish state. The history of Lithuania, designated by subsequent Polish-Lithuanian unions, regardless of the emphasis on the differences between the GDL and the Crown within the framework of the Kingdom of Poland, repeatedly referred to the shared historical, national and cultural tradition. Narbutt's work did not raise concerns of the Tsarist censorship. It did not bring Lithuania closer to Russia, but neither did it make Lithuania a homogeneous state structure with Poland. When the Russification tightened after the January Uprising, Narbutt's concepts were no longer acceptable to the official Russian historiography. They also did not survive the period of restoration of the Lithuanian history at the turn of the 19th century, as they indicated excessively strong ties between Lithuania and the tradition of the former Polish state.

⁸⁹ T. Narbutt, *Dzieje narodu*, vol. 9, pp. VII–VIII.

⁹⁰ *Zagajenie posiedzenia publicznego Towarzystwa Królewskiego Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk dnia 9 grudnia 1829 przez Juliana Ursyna Niemcewicza*, 'Roczniki Towarzystwa Królewskiego Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk', vol. 21, Warszawa 1830, p. 233.

⁹¹ E. Aleksandravičius, A. Kulakauskas, *Pod władzą carów. Litwa w XIX wieku*, Kraków 2003, p. 16.

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STRESZCZENIE

Prace Teodora Narbutta poświęcone dziejom Litwy prowokowały do ambiwalentnych ocen. Z jednej strony podkreślano wagę podjętego tematu, z drugiej zarzucano autorowi braki warsztatowe, dyskwalifikujące go jako historyka. Jego badania wyrosłe na gruncie zainteresowań kulturą litewską, prowadziły do poszukiwania autonomicznych cech państwowości litewskiej, akcentowania różnic dowodzących odrębności Litwy i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w ramach Królestwa Polskiego. Tezy pracy, nie przetrwały próby czasu, nie spełniały oczekiwań społecznych. Szybko zostały zweryfikowane przez wydarzenia polityczne drugiej połowy XIX w. Mimo, że prace Narbutta były krytykowane, nie pozostały bez wpływu na kształt kultury litewskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Teodor Narbutt; historia historiografii, XIX wiek

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