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Legal and Constitutional Aspects of the Triple Union: On the History of Federalism in East-Central Europe in the Modern Era*

Aspekty prawno-ustrojowe unii troistej. Z dziejów federalizmu w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w epoce nowożytnej

ABSTRACT

The history of European federalism, including associations of union in which the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth participated, has recently become particularly topical. Quite a lot was written about it, in particular the Polish-Lithuanian Union linking the two states over several centuries. Whereas relatively little is known about the history of attempts made in the early modern era to create a power in Central and Eastern Europe based on a union of states that were particularly important in the region at the time. This idea of a union was to unite three states: Poland, Lithuania and Russia, hence the name Triple Union (Pol. *unia troista*), was first outlined in 1572. It was then renewed at three successive elections until 1587. It was also current during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa, until 1613, when Mikhail Romanov ascended the Moscow throne, starting a new dynasty. With the election of Romanov as Tsar, the project of the Triple Union was abandoned, although Vladislav IV still laid claim to the Moscow throne for a dozen or so years (until 1634), but these claims no longer had any great practical significance and were finally abandoned. Plans for a union advanced by the Polish side often referred to the solutions applied in the earlier acts of union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This testifies to a strongly developed federalist practice which was characteristic of the Commonwealth, and was at the same time implemented in its own peculiar way. Undoubtedly, the greatest impact on the negotiations was exerted by the Union of Lublin,

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which at that time was still quite recent. Its provisions, and at the same time the positive effects that is provided for both nations, likely shaped the consciousness of the nobility during the preparation of subsequent diplomatic missions to Moscow. The idea of a Triple Union was undoubtedly one of the boldest political projects of the era. Although it is true, that the concept of the Triple Union remained only in the sphere of projects, it was nevertheless of great importance in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, no dedicated study has yet appeared that would comprehensively present its development, content and significance. This article is an attempt to even partially fill this gap in Polish historiography.

Keywords: Triple Union; federalism; Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; personal union

INTRODUCTION

The history of European federalism, including associations of union in which the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth participated, has recently become particularly topical in the context of the expansion of common European structures.[1] Attempts have been made to assess this phenomenon from various points of view and perspectives: political history, economic history, social history, cultural affairs, language, art, etc. For a legal historian, the problem of the evolution of solutions that shape the legal and political models of complex states is particularly interesting.

One should begin by recalling the basic issues of terminology, including the concept of union itself, and in particular its juridical and constitutional connotation. Scholars distinguish between two terms to describe union in a historical sense: "personal union" and "real union". The former is based primarily on the person of a common monarch and comes into being in an incidental manner (through election, dynastic law, marriage), while the latter is based on union through other bodies as well and originates in a treaty. This corresponds in principle to the typology that distinguishes between a confederation and a federation, in the sense of an association of states, i.e. two or more sovereign entities joined together relatively loosely, and a federal state, i.e. a form limiting the sovereignty of the individual members of this association in favour of one common entity, acting externally as the representative of the whole (*confédération d'États*, *l'État federal*; *Staatenbund*, *Bundesstaat*).

The best-known and important union in our history, that between Poland and Lithuania, was in the Jagiellonian era in principle – despite attempts to tighten it – limited to a union through a common dynasty and in the person of the ruler. Only at the end of the Jagiellonian era did it transform into a more enduring and

[1] See S. Schepers, *Le droit fédéral en Europe. Un essai historique*, Bruxelles 1991. Recent works on the tradition of the Jagiellonian Union in the context of integration processes in Europe include: J. Kłoczowski, P. Kras, H. Łaszkiewicz (eds.), *Unia lubelska i tradycje integracyjne w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Lublin 1999; P. Nowina-Konopka, *Od Unii Jagiellońskiej do Unii Europejskiej*, [in:] *Europa Środkowa. Nowy wymiar dziedzictwa*, ed. J. Purchla, Kraków 2002, pp. 51–56; M. Sielski, *Unia lubelska jako projekt integracji w Europie*, [in:] *Europa Środkowa – nowy wymiar…*, pp. 57–71.

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united structure, assuming the character of a real union, and after 1791, even that of a federal state.[2] Attempts to unite Poland with Hungary in the 14th and 15th centuries, or Poland with Saxony at the end of the 17th century and in the first half of the 18th century ended at the stage of personal union.

Relatively little is known about the history of attempts made in the early modern era to create a power in Central and Eastern Europe based on a union of states that were particularly important in the region at the time.

This idea of a union was to unite three states: Poland, Lithuania and Russia, hence the name Triple Union (Pol. *unia troista*), was first outlined in 1572. It was then renewed at three successive elections until 1587. It was also current during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa, until 1613, when Mikhail Romanov ascended the Moscow throne, starting a new dynasty.

With the election of Romanov as tsar, the project of the Triple Union was abandoned, although Vladislav IV still laid claim to the Moscow throne for a dozen or so years (until 1634), but these claims no longer had any great practical significance and were finally abandoned.

Although, admittedly, the concept of the Triple Union manifested itself only in the realm of plans which were never realised, it was nevertheless of great importance in the 16th and 17th centuries. Nevertheless, no dedicated study has yet appeared that would comprehensively present its development, content and significance.[3]

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[2] Cf. J. Malec, *Szkice z dziejów federalizmu…*, p. 136 ff.

[3] The only works devoted to the Triple Union – K. Tyszkowski, *Plany unii polsko-moskiewskiej na przełomie XVI i XVII wieku*, "Przegląd Współczesny" 1928, vol. 24, pp. 392–402 and S. Gruszecki, *Idea unii polsko-rosyjskiej na przełomie XVI i XVII wieku*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce" 1970, vol. 15, pp. 89–99 – presented this issue briefly and in a fragmentary way, without taking into account the content of individual union plans. In addition, Polish and Russian literature contains mentions of individual legations, during which the concept of a troika union was raised, as well as a presentation of some of the drafts advanced by both sides, by both the Grand Duchy of Moscow and by Poland. The following Russian studies in particular should be mentioned: A. Traczewski, *Polskoje bezkorolewie*, Moskva 1869 and A. Turgieniew, *Historica Russiae Monumenta*, vol. 1, Petropoli 1841, pp. 232–233, as well as reference works *Sobranije gosudarstwiennych gramot i dogoworow chraniaszczychsia w Gos. Kołłegi inostrannych dieł*, vol. 2, Moskva 1819, and more recently: L.A. Derbow, *K woprosu o kandidaturie Iwana IV na polskij prestoł (1572–1576)*, Saratow 1954; B. Floria, *Rosyjska kandydatura na tron polski u schyłku XVI wieku*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce" 1971, vol. 16, pp. 85–95. Polish works that directly address the topic are W. Sobieski, *Zabiegi Dymitra Samozwańca o tron polski*, Kraków 1908; idem, *Żółkiewski na Kremlu*, Warszawa (n.d.); K. Tyszkowski, *Poselstwo Lwa Sapiehy do Moskwy*, Lwów 1927, as well as the reference work W. Meysztowicz (ed.), *Elementa ad fontium editiones*, vol. 15, part 4, Romae 1966. A substantial contribution to the topic is made by the works of J. Maciszewski, in particular: *Polska a Moskwa 1603–1618. Opinie i stanowiska szlachty polskiej*, Warszawa 1968 and *Szlachecka opinia publiczna w Polsce wobec interwencji w Moskwie 1604–1609*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" 1963, vol. 72, pp. 363–383, although they do not discuss the nobility's concept of a Polish-Russian union. The first source information on the Triple Union project can be fund in the work of Świętosław z Bożejowic Orzelski titled *Bezkrólewia ksiąg ośmioro czyli dzieje Polski od zgonu Zygmunta Augusta*, Peters-

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PLANS FOR THE TRIPLE UNION IN THE 16TH CENTURY (UNTIL THE JAGIELLONIAN DYNASTY EXTINCTION)

The possibility of concluding a union between the Polish-Lithuanian state and the Grand Duchy of Moscow was first raised during the free election of 1572. Mentioned among the candidates for the Polish throne was the ruler of Moscow, Ivan IV, whose person was associated with the proposal to unite both states under a single ruler.

Ivan the Terrible had come to be known earlier as a despot; nevertheless, it was him that a considerable part of the nobility looked to as their candidate for the crown. This position was dictated by two considerations. Firstly, Ivan was the only one who could limit the political hegemony of the magnates, which had already grown strong at that time, and by centralising power in the Commonwealth, protect the order and rights of the wider ranks of the nobility.[4] Secondly, securing peace on the eastern borders of the Commonwealth by such means was also a consideration.

As a result, during the first interregnum, until Ivan IV's war for Livonia in late 1572, his candidacy was the most popular.[5] This is confirmed by the rich pre-election opinion writings, which is dominated not only by the prospect of a significant shift of the borders to the east and a removal of the threat from the Tartars, but even by the

burg 1858, pp. 90, 154–157, 178–179. This author, an eyewitness to the events connected with the interregnum following the death of Sigismund Augustus, and a participant in the election of 1573, mentioned, among other things, the Haraburda and Taranowski legations to Moscow, during which there were talks held on the union of the two states. Another source, this time only concerning the Haraburda legation, is an account by R. Heidenstein, secretary to Sigismund III Vasa, also a witness to and participant in the events of 1572/73, included in *Rerum Polonicarum ab excessu Sigismundi Augusti* (Francoforti ad Moenum 1672) and the Polish edition titled *Dzieje Polski* (Petersburg 1857). These are the only more complete accounts presenting the first draft of the Triple Union. They were the basis for the 19th-century academic literature, above all the first researcher of this problem, the previously mentioned K. Tyszkowski, as well as W. Smoleński in *Dzieje narodu polskiego* (Kraków 1921, p. 130 ff.). The plan for the union advanced in 1585 is discussed extensively in the "Diariusz sejmowy" of the same year (session of 22 February, pp. 256–257), while another from 1587 was published in full by W. Meysztowicz in his reference work *Elementa ad fontium editiones* (no. 172, pp. 200–201). Later drafts, from the period of the Time of Troubles, are presented more extensively in the rich body of literature devoted to this period. The attitude of the nobility to the concept of the Triple Union is best illustrated by J. Czubek's publications: *Pisma polityczne z czasów pierwszego bezkrólewia* (Kraków 1906) and *Pisma rokoszowe* (Kraków 1918).

[4] After all, "he does not turn such a tyrant against his virtuous subjects, though they are lawless, but only against traitors to himself and his rule, and also against those who transgress against his commands". Nor did the voice of the nobility go unheeded, who, fighting the influence of the magnates in the judiciary, said: "If only the violence, incidents, murders, killings and other various shameless acts and acts of mischief would soon cease", because Ivan would pronounce just verdicts, disregarding wealth, and in governing the state would rely on the Sejm, not on the will of the magnates. Cited in S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 92.

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hope of recovery of lost territories in the west, since apart from Livonia, Pomerania and Prussia, "now would be a good time for us [to recover] the Silesians as well".[6] Characteristic of these sentiments is a statement by an anonymous polemicist: "There is no need to doubt that if the Muscovite or his son were the Polish king, and in time there would be this one monarchy, if Poland united with Lithuania and Moscow, one could compare it to the old Persian, Assyrian and Roman states and monarchies, because the hope was that the Tartar hordes would follow such a ruler, either willingly or through compulsion".[7]

Arguments raised in favour of supporting Moscow's candidacy had to do with bringing an end to the troublesome wars with the eastern neighbour and curbing the arbitrariness of the magnates. Finally, it was said to be significant that the new ruler "may bring Moscow toward union with Poland, in the course of time following the example of Jagiełło",[8] at the same time strengthening the union of Poland and Lithuania.[9]

Arguments were also made against Ivan's candidacy. To its opponents, the prospect of a union with Russia appeared to be an incorporation of Poland, because "the good land of the Muscovites haughtily envisions that they want not Moscow to join the kingdom, but the kingdom to be joined to the Russian tsardom, its capital placed in Kiev, and to be crowned not by our bishops but by their own metropolitan".[10] Other reasons also spoke against it: "War with the Turks, with the Tartars,

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[6] W. Broel-Plater (ed.), *Zbiór pamiętników do dziejów polskich*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1859, p. 42 (cited in S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 92).

[7] He assuages his fear of the tyranny of the Muscovite ruler by stating that "after all, it would be easier for a lord to conform to our customs than for us to conform to the customs of a lord, and it seems to me that it would be easier for Wasyl to agree to everything than to agree with Hanus, our natural enemy". He also whets the appetites of the nobility with the prospect of new acquisitions, writing: "It would be that just as the Poles first achieved much in Lithuania, so it might also be good fortune for the Pole and the Lithuanian to go to Moscow; (…) for we would surely enrapt and shield the Muscovite nation with our humanity and customs" (J. Czubek, *Pisma polityczne z czasów pierwszego bezkrólewia…*, p. 356 ff., no. XXIV: *Sententia de eligendo novo rege ex duce Moschorum*). Another author added: "And then the spilling of Christian blood, which is going on between the Muscovite and Lithuanian peoples, were halted, the sword would then turned toward the Tartar and the Turk" (*ibidem*, p. 362, no. 25).

[8] *Ibidem*, pp. 372–381, no. 26. The author also repeats arguments about new estates for the nobility on the eastern border, the recovery of lands in the west and ensuring external security. Another publicist adds that, following the example of Jagiełło "Ivan the Muscovite should join his lands to the Polish Crown in perpetuity, (…) should bring his treasures to the Crown, should swear to uphold all Polish rights and liberties, and should be the most severe tyrant possible, along with his lands should embrace the Christian faith and religion, and, being a widower, should take a Polish princess as his wife (…) and should join his sons to the Crown in perpetuity" (*ibidem*, p. 403, no. 28).

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 396, no. 27. Further, votes in favour of Muscovite candidacy on p. 32, 353 ff. (suport for Fyodor), 361 ff., 368, 395 ff., 405 (arguments for and against), 454.

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 649, no. LXIV.

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with Germany, with Wallachia, for he would not sit in peace; we would not have the sea, because the port of Narew is his great jewel; tyranny and inborn bestiality; he would regard his will as the law; infamy and our eternal shame above all".[11] Initially, however, such opinions did not constitute the majority.

The first step taken to come to an agreement with Ivan was to send a legation to Moscow, headed by the Lithuanian writer and veteran envoy to Moscow, Michał Haraburda.[12] The Tsar accepted his proposal to be a candidate for the Polish throne and to unite the two countries by means of a union. However, he did list some conditions, which Haraburda submitted to the Senate on his return. These included, in particular, the matter of the preservation of Orthodoxy by the new ruler, the preservation of the privileges of the nobility but in exchange for the hereditary status of the Polish-Lithuanian throne, the cession of Kiev and Livonia up to the Dvina River to Moscow, and finally coronation by the metropolitan of Moscow.

In the event that the Grand Duke of Moscow was not elected, he advised the Poles to elect the Habsburg Ernest of Austria as king. If the Poles were to disregard this advice, he threatened war.

Ivan IV did not send a legation to Poland in support of his candidacy for the throne. According to Haraburda, he supported his decision as follows. Other candidates, who were much more desirous of the crown, could make efforts, but he himself would not go so far as to ask for it. He could only accept the crown offered to him as an act of mercy. In return, however, he demanded the territorial concessions mentioned above.

Due to all the demands and reservations made by Ivan, and as a result of his disregard for the requirement to send a legation, this candidature did not enjoy much popularity at that time. Apart from some noblemen, mainly from the Krakow-Sandomierz and Kalisz regions, only some Lithuanian lords still supported Ivan. Therefore, during the first election, Ivan the Terrible's candidacy collapsed.

This did not mean that earlier plans were altogether abandoned. The idea of uniting the two states was too tempting. It would open the way to mutual trade and make the Polish-Lithuanian state one of the greatest powers in Europe. Finally, an important factor which led the Grand Duke of Moscow to preserve the hope of obtaining the throne was the desire to protect himself from potential war between Poland and Russia. Therefore, the main topic of the next legation sent soon after the election of Henry of Valois was extension of the truce.

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 492 ff., no. XLI. Voices against the candidacy of Ivan, also in writing, on p. 46, 52 ff., 349 ff., 425 (but stating conditions for consent), 432, 444 ff., 448, 454, 480 ff., 485.

[12] S. Orzelski, *Bezkrólewia ksiąg ośmioro czyli dzieje Polski od zgonu Zygmunta Augusta*, Petersburg 1858, p. 92 ff.

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This time the General Sejm appointed Taranowski as its emissary. He was received quite warmly in Moscow.[13] However, when it turned out that the king had already been chosen, Ivan, offended in his ambitions and plans, fell into a rage. Only thanks to the outstanding diplomatic skill of Taranowski did this not lead to the truce being broken. Aware of Ivan's exaggerated ambitions, he decided to appease the Tsar, citing as the reason for his defeat in the election not any dislike of him on the part of the Poles, but the fact that no legation had been sent for the election, but which had supposedly been expected near Warsaw for a whole six weeks. When asked about the omission of Fyodor's possible candidacy, Taranowski replied that, apart from the above-mentioned reasons, the young prince was not yet mature enough for this role. He used one more trick. Asking for a truce, he justified it by the fact that the chosen Henry of Valois might not come to Poland or might reject the crown. The Poles would then be forced to elect a new king. Therefore, it was in the Grand Duke's interest to send a legation to Poland during the truce, as only then could he hope to gain the Polish crown. Taranowski achieved his goal, obtaining the prolongation of the truce for a year, until 15 August 1574.[14]

The hopes of linking Poland with Moscow under the Rurikids were revived soon afterwards, in 1574, after Henry's departure, when the throne was once again empty. However, in contrast to the situation before the first election, this time Ivan IV was not so keen on entering the electoral contest.

However, a noticeable change occurred in the attitude of the Polish nobility towards Ivan. After Henry's departure, the Grand Duke of Moscow became the most desirable candidate for the throne. When his envoy Teodor finally arrived in Poland, everyone expected to hear proposals favourable to Poland concerning the efforts for the crown, "and they desired such proposals more from the Grand Duke of Moscow than from any of the candidates".[15] Ivan's letter, however, contained nothing to suggest that the Grand Duke intended to make any effort to gain the crown. In spite of this, as Świętosław Orzelski reports, "no message was ever listened to in greater silence and with greater attention, so that not a single voice rose the dense crowds listening".[16] On the arrival of the second message from Moscow, the nobility made clear through their behaviour that Ivan the Terrible could easily be chosen during

[13] Ivan "believed the words of many of his lords (whom he later had had killed as poor advisors) that the Poles would prefer him to any other candidate for the crown, namely, because other contenders gave evidence of greed by sending envoys to Poland in order to obtain it, while he, not having demanded the crown through emissaries, was free from any accusation of greed. On this basis, he trusted that Poles, taking into account his dignity and grandeur, would judge him to be the most worthy of the throne, and concluded that Taranowski was the herald of his election" (cited in *ibidem*, p. 154 ff.).

[14] *Ibidem*, p. 156.

[15] *Ibidem*, p. 95.

[16] *Ibidem*.

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the election if he only wished to accept the crown offered to him. In his speech in the Sejm, Jan Sierakowski stated clearly that Poland needed an experienced ruler who would enjoy the respect and esteem of the nation. He claimed that "the best suited to be king would be the Grand Duke of Moscow, but because of his silence, he must be bypassed, and no mention made of him".[17] In this way, the candidacy of the ruler of Moscow for the Polish throne failed for the second time, and so did the possibility of a union between the neighbouring powers.

It was revived during the political crisis in Russia after the death of Ivan IV, in April 1584, when a diplomatic mission headed by Lew Sapieha was sent to Moscow to examine the possibility of concluding a personal union, or at least an "eternal" peace.[18] The talks continued in Poland the following year from the Russian side, led by emissary of the tsar, Troyekurov.

The Poles demanded the return of Smolensk and the Siewierz strongholds and proposed the two states be joined.[19] A relatively complete picture of the negotiations can be found in the Sejm register from 1585,[20] when a proposal was put forward to the deputies that the union be concluded after the death of Ivan's son Fyodor, who then reigned in Moscow. As Fyodor did not enjoy the best of health, it was somewhat hypocritically emphasised that the idea was not motivated "as if we wished the death of your lord, may your *hospodar* remain alive and well", but if fate "should death befall him as a man, we ask you, would you not think of joining us in Christian love in such a way, as are we Poles and Lithuanians, that we would be one". The emissaries from Moscow, however, did not want to consider this subject, adding: "May our *hospodar* long be and healthy and alive; we do not want to talk about these things, and to do so would be beneath us".[21] As further negotiations with Moscow emissaries were impossible, the talks were postponed until a separate Polish legation was sent to Moscow.

In 1586, Michał Haraburda, already known for his diplomatic mission at the time of the first election, set off to Moscow on Stefan Batory's orders. He presented the boyars with another proposal for uniting the two states through a personal union.

As no agreement was reached, further talks were to be held in Grodno. Sent from Moscow again was Troyekurov. The situation from the previous year repeated itself as well; the Russian emissaries were afraid to take more decisive steps,

[17] *Ibidem*.

[18] K. Tyszkowski, *Poselstwo Lwa Sapiehy do Moskwy w r. 1584*, "Przewodnik Naukowy i Literacki" 1920 and offprint; S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 92 ff.

[19] K. Tyszkowski, *Poselstwo Lwa Sapiehy do Moskwy*, Lwów 1927, p. 10.

[20] E. Barwiński (ed.), *Diariusze sejmowe R. 1585*, vol. 20, Kraków 1907, pp. 256–257.

[21] "*In summa* it was visible that they listened to this *anguis auribus*, nor would it come to H.M., the only thing that would be announced there in Moscow was in their disagreement; because the Muscovite prince was ill, his death seemed likely, so that it would be their *in memoria a recordatione*" (*ibidem*).

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contenting themselves only with general promises, and they rejected in advance any proposals connected with the death of the Tsar. As before, they were afraid to even speak of it. The only thing they decided on, after long efforts of persuasion, was to unite in the fight against the common enemy. They found it impossible to unite under a single ruler. Lew Sapieha wrote about the negotiations conducted in Grodno in a letter to Krzysztof Radziwiłł: "When it came to writing the articles that were to be discussed there, we wanted to write openly about it, so that they would talk about it, that they would join with us and unite into one state and one commonwealth, and this after the death of their present lord, (…) they did not want to say a word about it or did not dare. (…) We hardly forced these words upon them so that it was written this way, but they interpreted the word *sojedzinienie*, which is unification, as meaning that we are to unite, not fight each other, and be one against any enemy, but have our own separate lords".[22] The fiasco of the negotiations in Grodno prompted Batory to abandon his thoughts of union and take military action. His plans of conquest were thwarted by his premature death.[23]

Meanwhile, Fyodor, whose death was expected at any moment, outlived Stefan Batory, and thus plans for a Moscow candidacy for the Polish throne resumed. It was put forward at the election convened in 1587. The boyars, led by Boris Godunov, at the same time took up the plan for a union proposed by Haraburda. However, they said that form of this union "is to be a union like body and soul, the Tsar will preserve the freedom of Poles and Lithuania, he will let them buy property in Moscow, but he will not give these freedoms to his own subjects, and he will rule Poland from Moscow".[24] These plans were preceded by numerous inquiries by the Russian side on the mood prevailing in Poland towards Moscow's candidacy.[25] The first emissaries to Poland, Elizarius Rzhevsky and Zacharias Sviaziev, met with a friendly reception as soon as they crossed the border.[26] Numerous similar declarations made by Lithuanians confirmed Fyodor's strong position on the eve of the election. The emissaries' knowledge of the situation in the Crown was much less precise due to the fact that their diplomatic activity was limited to the territory of the Grand Duchy. Nevertheless, they assessed it as favourable for the Tsar, emphasising in a register given to the *Polsolski Prikaz*

[22] Letter from Lew Sapieha to Krzysztof Mikołaj Radziwiłł, Grodno, 6 and 10 September 1586, [in:] *Archiwum domu Sapiehów*, vol. 1: *1575–1600*, ed. A. Prochaska, Lwów 1892, no. 23–24.

[23] S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

[24] W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1936, p. 176.

[25] These were most fully presented by Borys Floria in the work cited above. See also the sources and literature cited in his bibliography.

[26] The local nobility clearly articulated their wishes: "God, let it be so, that the three great realms, the Polish Crown, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, be in unity with Muscovy for ever, and we, Christians all, pray to God and ask for this" (Centralnyj Gosudarstwiennyj Archiw Driewnich Aktow, Moskwa, fond 79: *Otnoszenija Rossii s Polszej*, kn. 17, fol. 176 verso. – all cited in B. Floria, *op. cit.*, p. 86 ff.).

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(foreign office) that "many Poles and Volhynia, as well as Podolia and Ruthenia (…) want a ruler, a tsar and great prince".[27] The emissaries sent for the election in June 1587 added that "More than half of the Poles (…) want to choose the Tsar".[28] This opinion is confirmed by Polish sources.[29] The main arguments put forward during the election were "accord, adjacency, an eternal bond, peace". Jan Zborowski, castellan of Gniezno, added: "With a clear conscience and feeling myself a nobleman, I see no one better and more useful to our Commonwealth than the Prince of Moscow".[30] The attractiveness of the Russian candidacy is illustrated clearly by the inscription on the cross erected in the middle of the electoral field: "That Fyodor would be like Jagiełło / We would do well with him".[31]

However, the Poles, for their part, put forward a number of conditions, the acceptance of which they made a condition for their support of Moscow's candidacy. These "Conditions for the Grand Duke of Moscow" (Pol. *Warunki dla Wielkiego Księcia Moskiewskiego*)[32] contained the following provisions:

1. Conversion of the ruler of Moscow to the faith of the Catholic Church.
2. Preservation of the existing liberties and their possible expansion.
3. Improvement of the law.
4. Permanent union of the Grand Duchy of Moscow with the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania without any hope of succession to the Polish throne by Rurikid heirs.
5. The common fight against the enemy.
6. Payment of one million Moscow coins for the defence of the Polish Crown.
7. Building, at their own expense, 30 castles on the borders of the country and providing for their defence.
8. The return of all lands taken from the Commonwealth.
9. Maintenance of the tenth part of his court at his own expense.
10. Partial withdrawal from Livonia.
11. Redemption at his own expense the cost of the Crown lands given as a security.
12. Opening the ports in the East and the Baltic Sea to general navigation.
13. Organisation of trade between Moscow and Vilnius.

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[27] *Ibidem*, kn. 17, fol. 561 v.

[28] *Ibidem*, kn. 18, fol. 206 v.

[29] P. Piasecki, *Kronika*, Kraków 1870, p. 70. Por. S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 93 ff.

[30] *Diariusz elekcji*, Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu, ms. 7, pp. 3–4. (cited in J. Maciszewski, *Polska a Moskwa 1603–1618…*, p. 39).

[31] K. Tyszkowski, *Plany unii…*, p. 393, citing as a source T. Wierzbowski, *Otnoszenija Rossii i Polszi w 1574–1578 g.*, "Żurn. Min. Nar. Prośw." CCXXII (222). S. Gruszecki (*op. cit.*, p. 94), based on the work by W. Sobieski titled *Zabiegi Dymitra Samozwańca o koronę polską* (Kraków 1908, p. 5), provides the following quotation: "If Fyodor wanted to be like Jagiełło, we would do well with him".

[32] *Elementa ad fontium editions…*, pp. 200–201 (original Latin text).

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14. Relinquishing the title of Grand Duke of Moscow and accepting the title of King of Poland.
15. Provision of an army of 50,000 for the defence of the Kingdom of Poland.

These conditions Fyodor did not accept. The Poles, for their part, did not agree to accept the proposals from Moscow. As before, so this time too, each side wanted to extract as much as possible for its own benefit from the proposed union.

The problem of the union was then raised in numerous instructions and letters sent to Poland and Lithuania through the emissaries Rzhevsky and Sviaziev.[33] However, no agreement was reached. The influence exerted by the grouping opposing Fyodor's election and headed by Hetman Jan Zamoyski was certainly significant. As is well-known, this group eventually pushed through the election of Catherine Jagiellon's son, Sigismund Vasa.[34] But even then, after the electoral defeat, the nobility's favourable attitude towards Fyodor was apparent at Lithuanian regional assemblies until the beginning of 1588.[35]

Awareness of the renewed chance to seek the Polish throne prompted Fyodor's advisors to act on the news of the King's conflict with the nobility and Sigismund's alleged intention to leave for Sweden and relinquish the crown. The *Posolski Prikaz* commented on these rumours (in November 1589) as a political fact, sending a message to the Tsar that Sigismund "will go to his father in Kolyvan (Talinn) and does not wish to go forward to the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania".[36] This provoked an immediate reaction, which resulted in the dispatch to Poland of the Tsar's courier Andrei Ivanov equipped with a letter of boyar pride, in which it was hoped that in the future the two states would enter into "love and unity against all enemies". In practice, this was to indicate an informal submission of the Tsar's candidacy for the Polish throne, addressed to the Senate. As Ivanov had already received information in Orsha about the falsity of rumours of an interregnum in Poland, he returned to Moscow.[37]

The next dispute between Sigismund III Vasa and the estates at the turn of 1591/1592 resulted in new attempts to push through the Moscow candidacy. When the envoy Afanasy Riezanov, sent on 10 July 1596, reached Warsaw in October, it turned out that this time as well, the information available to the Russian side was far removed from reality.[38]

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[33] K. Tyszkowski, *Poselstwo Lwa Sapiehy…*, p. 12.

[34] K. Tyszkowski (*Plany unii…*, p. 396) believes that Zamoyski's support for Sigismund Vasa's candidature was due to the intent for combined Polish-Swedish forces to capture Moscow.

[35] B. Floria, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[36] *Ibidem*, p. 89.

[37] More on this mission and the agitation led by Ivanov among the Lithuanian nobility, see *ibidem*, p. 90 ff.

[38] He was to, in case of confirmation of the information about the king's dethronement, "converse with royal courtiers" on the subject of the election of the Tsar, who "will not violate their rights and

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Since, as Gruszecki correctly observed, "the orphaning of the throne in one or another country intensified unionist tendencies",[39] Fyodor's death in 1598 brought on a revival of ideas about unification. The closing of the Russian border by Boris Godunov hindered the Polish efforts. However, in March of the following year, a legation led by Radziejowski and Korsak-Hołubicki was sent to Moscow to present Sigismund III's candidature for the tsar's throne. This mission turned out to be belated, as on 17 February (old style) Boris was elected tsar.[40] As a result, the plans for marriage between Sigismund III, who was a widower at that time, and Xenia, daughter of Tsar Boris, were abandoned.[41]

ATTEMPTS OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE UNION DURING THE REIGN OF THE VASA DYNASTY

The diplomatic mission sent by the Sejm in 1600 was of much greater significance. It was one of the most serious attempts to conclude a Polish-Russian union, with a good chance of success, and at the same time it is quite interesting because of the precise definition of mutual demands and conditions, expressed in such detail in writing for the first time. The idea of sending a legation to Moscow was approved by the General Sejm of 1600, and instructions for the envoys were composed. The most trusted statesmen, such as Jan Zamoyski, Mikołaj Radziwiłł and Lew Sapieha, particularly wanted to send a legation as soon as possible. They wanted to conclude peace with Moscow, linking this matter with the plan for a union, which was also referred to in the aforementioned instructions. On 10 April 1600, Bartłomiej Berdowski was sent to Moscow with a royal letter. In June, he was given diplomatic letters of transit, after which he returned to Poland at the end of July.[42]

As envoys, the king appointed the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania Lew Sapieha, the Castellan of Warsaw Stanisław Warszycki, and the secretary of the legation Eliasz Pielgrzymowski, whose work was the detailed description of the progress of the diplomatic mission.[43]

The legation was led by Lew Sapieha, a superb diplomat and one of the brightest men of his time, who had been an emissary to Moscow on several occasions. He

liberties, (…) will take care of all things according to their rights (…) and will not want anything of theirs for himself, and they will want to complain and make a fuss in all things, the knightly people in particular" (*ibidem*, p. 93).

[39] S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[40] K. Tyszkowski, *Poselstwo Lwa Sapiehy do Moskwy*, Lwów 1927, p. 34 ff.

[41] E. Rykaczewski (ed.), *Relacje nuncjuszów apostolskich*, vol. 2, Berlin 1864, p. 97, cited in S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[42] K. Tyszkowski, *Poselstwo Lwa Sapiehy do Moskwy*, Lwów 1927, p. 37 ff.

[43] E. Pielgrzymowski, *Wiersze historyczne*, "Biblioteka Warszawska" 1896, vol. 9.

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also played a key role in the talks concerning the Triple Union, a draft of which he was to draw up later.

After his arrival in Moscow in October 1600, the deputies submitted to the Grand Duke the principles on which the union was to be based. The main purpose of the union, they claimed, was to ensure security in the face of the danger from Turkey. The idea of union with the neighbour to the East was still popular among the ranks of the nobility, who, having thus joined Lithuania and Poland, wished to continue this process and thus avert the threat to the Ruthenian lands from the east. The religious missionary aspect of these plans was also significant.

The emissaries presented a plan for the union, which included, in bullet points, the following conditions:

1. The aim of the union was to be "peace and fellowship everlasting, friendship and unity everlasting".
2. Mutual aid.
3. The sharing of the acquisitions of a common war or their joint administration.
4. The freedom to serve as subjects under both rulers, as well as the ability to "acquire property, marry, serve, buy and hold property", and the freedom of movement from one country to another.
5. Mutual extradition of fugitives and criminals.
6. The freedom to build Orthodox churches in Poland, and Latin churches and colleges in Russia.
7. The ability to educate Russian youth in schools in Poland and Lithuania.
8. Introduction of free trade.
9. Establishment of the institution of joint permanent diplomatic missions to unify diplomatic actions vis-à-vis foreign states.
10. Joint dispatch of the most important emissaries.
11. Joint treasury in Kiev and a common mint.
12. Joint dominion over Narva and Ivanogorod.
13. Joint fleet on the Baltic and the Black Sea.
14. Introduction of two crowns as a symbol of the union.
15. Presence of emissaries of the tsar at each election and taking an oath of union of the two states by the newly elected ruler.
16. In the event of death of the Polish king without an heir, election to the throne of the Grand Duke of Moscow, who would live two years in Poland and Lithuania, and one year in Moscow, the rule in the latter then being transferred to his son, with the addition of three men to counsel him.
17. In the event of the death of the Grand Duke without an heir, transfer of the Russian throne to the Polish king.
18. Maintaining the borders in their present state. Should a dispute arise, a special commission composed of Poles and Russians will be appointed to reach a settlement.

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19. Taking an oath of union.
20. If the unification enters into effect, consent to the title of Tsar for the Grand Duke. In addition, granting the Grand Duke the title of Royal Brother.
21. In the event that a perpetual peace is not concluded, measures are to be taken leading to the signing of a longer truce.

This project therefore postulated the conclusion of a union based on a kind of "contract for survival" between Sigismund III and Tsar Boris Godunov. Such a concept first appeared at that time.

After having read the draft of the union presented by the Polish deputation, the Tsar gave his answer to the emissaries, in which he expressed his attitude to particular points. The Grand Duke's response concerned the following Polish proposals:

1. The Tsar expressed his consent to the conclusion of a perpetual peace.
2. The Tsar had reservations about the use by the Polish King of the title of Lord of Livonia.
3. The Tsar did not object to the migration of people, but for religious reasons was against mixed marriages.
4. He did not agree to the purchase of land by citizens of one country in another.
5. The Tsar firmly rejected the point of building Roman churches in Russia and the expression of the Catholic religion. He only allowed Poles in Russia to practice their faith in private.
6. The Tsar advised that the defence against the Tatars be postponed until the peace has been signed.
7. Concerning the common fleet, the Tsar requested further details.
8. The Tsar did not agree to a common mint.
9. The tsar agreed to include a paragraph in the treaty on the extradition of fugitives and criminals.
10. He did not agree, however, to the symbol of the union in the form of two crowns.
11. The proposal of the Grand Duke's candidacy in the election was accepted, but the boyars, who presented the Tsar's answer to the Polish envoys, did not wish to discuss the succession to the throne in case of his death. The Polish report commented that "the boyars are afraid of losing their freedom". After all, earlier negotiations (especially those in 1585 and 1586) were characterised by a similar position by the Russians.

The Tsar's answer dampened the hopes of the Poles for a prompt conclusion of the union. Nevertheless, there were still attempts to negotiate. Accordingly, a diplomatic reply was sent to the Tsar, which stated: "We want our great lords and the peoples they so happily rule to be joined together in a brotherly bond, so that it can never be moved or broken, but lasts for ever and only grows stronger in time". As a result of the Tsar's refusal to accept nearly all the proposals made

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earlier, the emissaries asked: "With what then shall this unification and eternal peace be sealed – a baptismal kiss alone?".

The culminating point of the response was the issue of church union. The emissaries believed that the greatest obstacle to unification were religious conflicts. An indication of this might be the Grand Duke's response, in which he firmly refused to allow the free exercise of the Catholic religion in Russia.

At the same time, the Poles, wishing to save the union, submitted proposals in their reply which, by their attractiveness, were meant to encourage the Tsar to enter join with the Polish-Lithuanian state. They claimed that, upon the election of the Grand Duke as king, election within the dynasty would be preserved. However, a draft alliance is needed to facilitate this election. The emissaries also responded to the Tsar's objections about the borders with their own objections. They stated that since Moscow claimed Livonia, Poland was ready to lay claim to Smolensk, Siewierz and other lands belonging to Lithuania. They further argued that the demand for the recognition of the title of tsar by the Commonwealth was a premature demand on the part of the Grand Duke, which could be accepted only upon the conclusion of the union.

The response ended by stating the purpose of the proposed union, which was to be eternal friendship and the unification of the two nations.

Unfortunately, the reasoning and arguments of the Polish envoys had no effect. A significant influence on this was the distrust and xenophobia that was apparent on the Russian side at that time.[44]

Lew Sapieha wrote about the atmosphere and conditions prevailing during his mission in a letter of 23 December 1600, addressed to Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł: "The proud boyars who have been sent to make treaties with us do not wish to proceed to anything of substance, but waste their time with vacuous things, and what is to be known as long as they keep us in prison; so as I see it, we do not need to lower ourselves to befriending them, but rather be cautious and ready *in utramque partem* (to argue both sides)".[45]

In the end, the only result of the talks was the signing, on 4 March 1601, of a twenty-year truce.[46] This truce implemented only one point from the earlier talks, as it agreed to the mutual extradition of "fugitives and criminals".

On 6 August 1601, Boris Godunov sent an envoy to Poland, consisting of the boyars Soltykov, Vlasov and Pleshchayev, in order to have the truce approved and

[44] An extensive description of the progress of the diplomatic mission can be found in the work by K. Tyszkowski cited above, especially pp. 39–59.

[45] A. Sokołowski (ed.), *Archiwum domu Radziwiłłów*, Kraków 1881, *Scriptores Rerum Polonicarum*, vol. 8.

[46] T. Mostowski, *Życia sławnych Polaków*, Warszawa 1805, pp. 200–205.

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sworn to by the Polish king. During Godunov's lifetime, the project of the union of both countries was not raised again.

It was only after his death, during the Russian Time of Troubles, when the usurper Dmitri sat on the desolate throne of the tsars of Moscow, that the concept was revisited.

The first False Dmitri considered the possibility of uniting Poland with Moscow under his sceptre. The situation in the Polish state at that time favoured his plans. The rebels (Pol. *rokoszanie*) led by Zebrzydowski threatened to renounce their obedience to King Sigismund, preparing even for a new election.[47] Dmitri took advantage of the antagonism between the king and the nobility; as the Jesuit Sawicki, who was part of his entourage, wrote "not only made threats against King Sigismund III, but in fact intended to deprive him of his kingdom".[48] Therefore, wishing to increase the number of his supporters in Poland, Dmitri began to stir up the Polish nobility who were Orthodox against the King. To this end, he sent his closest advisor, Jan Buczyński, to Poland to agitate among the nobles of Krakow. Buczyński was clearly satisfied with the results of the mission, writing to his master in a letter sent from Krakow in the second half of January 1606: "And it was also given me to know, as I have spoken myself with someone in Poland that H.M. the Tsar will soon be our king, as I have also proceeded in this".[49]

The effectiveness of Buczyński's agitation among the nobility of Krakow is confirmed by Lew Sapieha's statement at the Sejm of 1606: "Thus we are uncertain of peace, but still at the same time there are some people who have some agreement with him [Dmitri]. And I shall name one: a member of the Krakow academy wrote to him that he is now favoured for the crown. Well, if such messages are flying to him from the Crown, one can hardly expect anything good".[50]

Many rebels (e.g. Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, Stanisław Stadnicki, Janusz Radziwiłł and others) were also suspected of having contacts with Dmitri, which was not unfounded, especially as the idea of dethroning Sigismund III originated among the rebels. The Mniszechs were also associated with the False Dmitri's plans.[51]

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[47] W. Sobieski, *Zabiegi Dymitra Samozwańca o tron…*, p. 2. The candidacy of Gabriel Batory, grandson of King Stephen's brother, was submitted at the time.

[48] J. Wielewicki, *Dziennik spraw domu zakonnego oo. Jezuitów w. Barbary w Krakowie*, SSRP, vol. 10, p. 185: "Demetrius regem Poloniae Sigismundum (…) non modo verbis praescindebat, sed et Regno exuere moliebatur [Dmitri strove not only to prescind the King of Poland with words, but to extract him from his kingdom]".

[49] *Sobranije gosudarstwiennych…*, no. 121.

[50] Krasiński Estate Library in Warsaw, Ms 453, fond 18.

[51] This is confirmed by a letter from Hetman Żółkiewski's wife, Regina, of 24 September 1609 to Barbara Zamoyska, and by the storm caused by charges being brought against Jerzy Mniszch at the Sejm in 1611 for attempting to bring his son-in-law to the throne. See Czartoryski Library in Krakow, Ms. 106, no. 54 (cited in S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 96).

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The writings of the rebellion clearly show "not only a desire for an alliance or league with the Russian state, but also for a union".[52] The anonymous author of *Discourse of a Polish Nobleman* (Pol. *Dyskurs szlachcica polskiego*) wrote about Dmitri that "they see the great *commoda* (advantages) of the Commonwealth, especially the union of its states with the Crown, which would be a great power and terrible for any enemy".[53] He added that he knew the Polish language and customs well, and was "wise, prudent, knowledgeable in many things and a great wit". As *Votum of a Polish Nobleman Written for the Sejmiks and the Sejm of the Year of Our Lord 1606* (Pol. *Votum szlachcica polskiego pisane na sejmiki i sejm roku pańskiego 1606*) adds, "in many things (…) this gentleman could be useful and necessary to us, only we do not wish to exhaust his affability and willing spirit toward us".[54]

In the years that followed, the same rebellious element that wished to offer the throne to the False Dmitri caused a rift in the army during the Moscow expedition, and even entertained the idea of offering the crown to another False Dmitri, or, worse, to Vasili Shuisky, a fierce enemy of Poland. The split in the Polish army into two camps – rebel and royal – was largely responsible for the failure of the Moscow expedition, and made it impossible to obtain the crown of tsar for Sigismund or his son Vladislav. The efforts made by the Vasa family for this crown were the last serious, though also unfulfilled, plan for a Triple Union.

The Russians offered the tsar's crown to Prince Vladislav after their defeat at Klushino in 1610.[55] The boyars dethroned Tsar Vasili Shuisky and turned him and his brother Dmitri over to the Poles. They then placed in the hands of Żółkiewski the written conditions for Prince Vladislav, on the acceptance of which they made his election to the throne as tsar dependent. In particular, they demanded that his coronation be celebrated in the Orthodox rite, a ban on introducing the Catholic religion to Moscow and building Latin churches and colleges, a ban on appointing Poles to offices, that customs and traditions be preserved, that no boyars' properties be violated, that wars be fought jointly, and that the number of Poles coming to Russia with Prince Vladislav be limited, that decisions by the future ruler be made with the

[52] S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

[53] J. Czubek (ed.), *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoszu Zebrzydowskiego 1606–1608*, vol. 2, Kraków 1918, p. 445 ff.

[54] *Ibidem*, p. 226. Another opinion said: "Where the overbearing, cruel and by nature always harsh and unfriendly to us lords of Moscow lived, you now see *beneficiarum nostrum*, happily in that capital with our friendship and help, placed there with the willingness and happiness of our Lord" (*ibidem*, pp. 381–382). A different opinion is offered by J. Maciszewski, who claims that the thesis on the alleged plans to install Dmitri on the throne was trumped up. It was spread by W. Sobieski in his works and is not confirmed by sources. It is difficult to fully agree with this. Cf. J. Maciszewski, *Wojna domowa w Polsce 1606–1609*, part 1: *Od Stężycy do Janowca*, Wrocław 1960, p. 34, 136, 256.

[55] T. Mostowski, *op. cit.*, p. 205 ff. S. Gruszecki (*op. cit.*, p. 97) reports that the proposal of the crown of tsar for Prince Vladislav was first unofficially advanced as early as mid-January 1606, during Ivan Bezobrazhov's mission to Poland.

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participation of the boyar council, the release of prisoners of war, the maintenance of existing revenues and tributes, the introduction of free trade, the maintenance of the ban on the emigration of peasants, the return of towns occupied by Poles, the final removal of Dmitri, and finally that the new ruler convert to Orthodoxy.[56]

After these demands were accepted, first by Żółkiewski and later also by Vladislav himself, crowds of many thousands took an oath of allegiance to the new ruler. The only thing remaining was for Vladislav to arrive. This arrival, as we know, did not take place, due to a change in the dynastic plans of Sigismund III himself, which ended in a complete fiasco. As a result, Mikhail Romanov, son of Metropolitan Filaret, was elected tsar.[57]

However, the Vasas did not intend to give up the Moscow capital. In 1616, the Sejm passed taxes to finish the war with Russia. The expedition was to be led by Prince Vladislav, who undertook to regain Smolensk for the Commonwealth, the Sverdlovsk area, Polotsk and Velizh and to bring about the conclusion of a perpetual union.

The expedition began on 6 April 1617. Soon Drogobuzh and Vyazma surrendered without a fight, recognising Vladislav as tsar. However, subsequent skirmishes ended in defeat for the Poles. In addition, the constant unrest in the Polish camp made it much more difficult to continue fighting. An attempt to capture Moscow also failed. In a critical situation for the Poles, the commissioners started to make deals with boyars. In the end, after long negotiations, peace was made in Dywilno in 1618 for fourteen and a half years.[58]

Although Vladislav never sat on the Moscow throne, he nonetheless used the title of tsar. He renounced it only two years after his accession to the Polish throne. In 1634, a perpetual peace was concluded in Polyanovka. In return for Vladislav renouncing his claims to the throne of the tsar, Moscow gave up its claims to Livonia and the lands ceded by the Peace of Dywilno and paid the costs of the war.

The last time the concept of the Triple Union was considered was during the Polish-Muscovite negotiations in 1656–1658, when the Tsar advanced a proposal to conclude a peace treaty with the Commonwealth at the price of his elevation to the Polish throne (along with his own progeny). The Great Crown Chancellor, Stefan Koryciński, in a letter to the commissioners leading the negotiations with Moscow assessed this proposal as unacceptable, adding that its implementation would not bring peace, but an even greater threat to the Commonwealth (from the Emperor, *rakocz* rebels, the Turks, the Tatars and the Cossacks).[59] A more flexible

[56] The full, original text of the draft in Russian in *Sobranije gosudarstwiennych…*, no. 200, pp. 399–405.

[57] A. Śliwiński, *Król Władysław IV*, Warszawa 1931, p. 18.

[58] T. Mostowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 230–236.

[59] Czartoryski Library in Krakow, Ms. 149, pp. 361–365: letter from 14 September 1656.

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stance was taken by the Senate, which ordered the Tsar's deputies to reply orally that in exchange for the return of Lithuania and Livonia proposed by Moscow, the succession to the Polish throne could be considered for the Tsar's son, but not for the Tsar himself. To this end, he would have to convert to Catholicism, live in Poland and not claim the succession to the Polish throne.[60] The Muscovite side did not give up its project for a long time. On 8 September 1658, the Senate passed a resolution that the commissioners conducting negotiations with emissaries from the Tsar could not engage in the question of the succession of a Muscovite candidate to the Polish throne as long as Russia had not returned all that it had taken from Lithuania and the Crown.[61]

CONCLUSIONS

The process, which had been ongoing since 1572 and was aimed at creating a state covering almost half of Europe, thus came to a close. Although the plans for the Triple Union were one of the most important issues in Polish-Russian politics for more than half a century, they were soon forgotten both in Poland and in Moscow. The idea of uniting Russia with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was revived a century later, in the otherwise unrealistic plans of Stanisław August Poniatowski, who intended to achieve this through his marriage to Tsaritsa Catherine II.

Plans for a union advanced by the Polish side often referred to the solutions applied in the earlier acts of union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This testifies to a strongly developed federalist practice which was characteristic of the Commonwealth and was at the same time implemented in its own peculiar way. Undoubtedly, the greatest impact on the negotiations was exerted by the Union of Lublin, which at that time was still quite recent. Its provisions, and at the same time the positive effects that is provided for both nations, likely shaped the consciousness of the nobility during the preparation of subsequent diplomatic missions to Moscow. The idea of a Triple Union was undoubtedly one of the boldest political projects of the age.

[60] *Ibidem*, pp. 347–353: resolution of 14 September 1656.
[61] *Ibidem*, Ms. 401, p. 146.

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ABSTRAKT

Dzieje europejskiego federalizmu, w tym związków unijnych, w których uczestniczyła Rzeczpospolita szlachecka, nabrały w ostatnim czasie szczególnej aktualności. Sporo napisano zwłaszcza na temat unii polsko-litewskiej, łączącej oba te państwa na przestrzeni kilku stuleci. Stosunkowo mało natomiast znane są dzieje, podejmowanych w epoce wczesnonowożytnej, prób stworzenia w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej mocarstwa opartego na związku szczególnie znaczących wówczas w tym regionie państw. Owa idea unii mającej połączyć trzy państwa: Polskę, Litwę i Rosję, stąd nazwanej unią troistą, zarysowała się po raz pierwszy w 1572 r. Ponawiano ją następnie na trzech kolejnych elekcjach, aż po rok 1587. Aktualna była także za panowania Zygmunta III Wazy, do 1613 r., kiedy to na tron moskiewski wstąpił Michał Romanow, zapoczątkowując nową dynastię. Z chwilą wyboru Romanowa na cara projekt unii troistej został zarzucony, choć Władysław IV jeszcze przez kilkanaście lat (do 1634 r.) rościł sobie pretensje do tronu moskiewskiego, jednak roszczenia te nie miały już większego, praktycznego znaczenia i zostały ostatecznie zaniechane. Projekty unijne wysuwane przez stronę polską nawiązywały często do rozwiązań stosowanych we wcześniejszych aktach unii Królestwa Polskiego z Wielkim Księstwem Litewskim. Świadczy to o silnie rozwiniętej, charakterystycznej dla Rzeczypospolitej, jednocześnie realizowanej w swoisty sposób, praktyce federalistycznej. Bez wątpienia największy wpływ na prowadzone rokowania musiała wywierać, całkiem jeszcze świeżej daty, unia lubelska. Jej postanowienia, a zarazem pozytywne skutki, jakie niosła za sobą dla obu narodów, zapewne kształtowały świadomość szlachty podczas przygotowywania kolejnych poselstw do Moskwy. Idea unii troistej bez wątpienia stanowiła jedno z najśmielszych zamierzeń politycznych epoki. Mimo że koncepcja unii troistej pozostała jedynie w sferze projektów, miała ona w XVI i XVII w. duże znaczenie. Nie doczekała się jednak dotychczas osobnego opracowania, które całościowo przedstawiałoby jej rozwój, treść i znaczenie. Niniejszy artykuł stanowi próbę choćby częściowego zapełnienia tej luki w polskiej historiografii.

Słowa kluczowe: unia troista; federalizm; Rzeczpospolita szlachecka; unia personalna