

THE FIRST DEMOCRACY IN MODERN EUROPE

MILLION FREE CITIZENS LIVED IN POLAND IN 1600 AD

A record in the world history of representative government. Every grown up citizen had the right to be a candidate for the throne of Poland by free and general elections. Every man and woman in Poland had the same rights to inherit property. The native legislative process shaped national culture of Poland.

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I dedicate this book to the memory of my late father Jerzy Pogonowski, Ph.D. and Dr. of Law, whose doctoral thesis of history of law at the University of Warsaw was published in 1932 (see: www.pogonowski.com) under the title:

“Project of an Organization of Monarchs by King Jiri of Podjebrady”

An International peace plan

In 1463 Polish State Records, known as Metryka Koronna, included the full text of a remarkable proposal for an international charter for peace, similar to the United Nations. It was co-sponsored by Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia. The project appears to have been at first inspired by France and then it was well received by Venice. It was **the earliest complete proposal of an international peace organization in the history of Europe similar to the United Nations but 500 years earlier.** German aggression by the Teutonic Knights caused Poland's support for the project. Poland's position was based to a considerable extent on the pioneering works on the international law of Paweł Włodkowicz (Paulus Vladimiri, c. 1370-1435), Polish ambassador at Constance (1414-1418), who proposed the first 17 thesis of the international law. The actual text was prepared at the Bohemian court of King Jiri of Podjebrady (1436-1471). It included a General Assembly or Congregatio de Nationes ruled by a simple majority, and an international force controlled by its secretariat or Sindicus. It was to follow a procedure for an international judicial arbitration; it outlawed aggression (especially by the Muslim Turks), and did away with the idea of a universal medieval empire. The project was to create a new international authority in view of declining power and the ineffectiveness of both, the fragmented Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy.

The peace project was wrecked by Papal opposition, however, it was for two years a subject of negotiations between European states (1462-1464). King Jiri of Podjebrady of Bohemia named Polish Crown Prince Wladyslaw as his successor. In 1471 the Czech diet elected Wladyslaw King of Bohemia. When Wladyslaw became King of Hungary (in 1490) the Jagiellonian realm extended from the Baltic to Black and Adriatic Seas.

Note. The University of Krakow founded in 1463 had a strong department of International Law in order to properly settle problems caused by forgeries of international acts and robberies as well as murders committed by the Order of the Teutonic Knights condemned for its Prussian Heresy.

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 - Patents: 49 United States Patents awarded to Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski.

Development in Poland of Democracy and International Law in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe

“The Golden Age of Poland” during the Renaissance occurred when Poland-Lithuania, the largest state within western Christianity was most tolerant in Europe, and had the most advanced citizen’s rights. Poland’s population of 11,000,000 included 10% or over one million free citizens within an area of over one million sq. km. In the world history of the development of representative government the Polish Commonwealth of 1600 AD had a record number of free citizens not only in comparison with ancient republics of Athens and of Rome; but, also in comparison with the United States at the time of the American Revolution in XVIII century.

The indigenous democratic process of Poland was rooted in the Old Slavic tribal meetings called “wiece” (vyets) in Polish. It was a popular assembly in ancient and medieval Slavic tribal areas, comparable and contemporary with the “ecclesia” of classical Athens. The semantic derivation yields a meaning parallel to parliament which is related to the idea of sharing information and knowledge as apparent in the Polish words “wiece” and “wiedza,” or “popular assembly” and “knowledge,” respectively.

Recent DNA dated studies reaching back 5500 years ago in the area of the steppes of Russia, Ukraine, and historical Poland are described by David W. Anthony, professor of anthropology at Hartwick College in England. He has conducted extensive archaeological and DNA fieldwork in the Ukraine, Russia, and Kazakhstan the cultural and linguistic origin of the heartland of Eurasia which shaped the modern world according to Anthony’s book “THE HORSE, THE WHEEL, AND LANGUAGE: How Bronze-Age Riders From the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World.” (Illustrated. 553 pp. Princeton University Press. 2008).

The tradition of elective system in tribal democracies was strengthened in Poland by Europe’s unique Polish national defense system, based on an alliance of the king with the landowners. In the rest of Europe national defense was based on the king’s alliance with fortified towns as was the case within all of western Christianity. In Poland there was a unique alliance between the king and the masses of landowners. This happened because foreign immigrants flooded Polish towns after the devastation caused by the Mongol invasions starting in 1241 and it took generations for the immigrants to acquire Polish national identity.

The Act of Koszyce (1374) provided for no taxation without representation 400 years before the American Revolution. The Act of Koszyce (1374) started Poland on her way to becoming the main scene for development of civil liberties in Europe - especially, when England drifted in the direction of absolutism, and the Magna Carta Libertatum (1215) became ineffectual for several centuries. In Poland due process under the law was established 250 years earlier than in Gr. Britain. The first European civil rights were enacted and enforced in Poland and in Modern Europe in the acts of 1422-1433.

Due process was the basis of the legal system in Poland when absolutism reigned in the rest of Europe. This happened because the middle nobility, allied with the royal court, won the power struggle against land-magnates. The democracy of nobility (which in Poland represented about 10 percent of the population) was led by the middle nobility, which was acting as “the middle class” of the political nation of free citizens in the Polish Commonwealth.

The beginning of the process of formation of the republic of Polish nobility started in 1454 with the Act of Nieszawa, which some call the Magna Carta of the masses of Polish nobility of citizen-soldiers. It marked the beginning of the transformation of unicameral regional legislature with an open attendance into an orderly system of representation in a bicameral national parliament by 1493. Thus, the maturity of the representative form of government was achieved in Poland. Polish State Records in 1463, known as *Metryka Koronna*, included the full text of a remarkable proposal for an international charter for peace, similar to the United Nations.

Regional Sejmiks become platforms for political emancipation and a source of information about the affairs of state for the ordinary citizen. Sejmiks created the means for mutual consultations through duly elected representatives equipped with a real and clear mandate. It was the beginning of reshaping the Polish monarchy into a republic of the nobility, which represented about 10 percent of the population (in some regions up to 20 percent). Eventually by 1634, Polish nobility numbered over one million citizens.

Poland created a unique civilization, which was in many respects more advanced than medieval and early modern Europe. It became a major center for the development of civil liberties and a pioneer of the representative form of government. The Polish Republic was by far more republican both in structure and in spirit than the constitutional monarchies of England and Sweden. She was the very opposite of the absolutist systems of Russia, France, Austria, and Spain.

Democracy was also practiced in Poland. The Representatives returning from a session of the National Sejm were obligated to attend "report-back" meetings in their regional legislation in order to give their formal report on the achievements of the national parliament. The same sessions observed by the public and students of academies, also served to shape opinions on current affairs in every constituency. In fact it was an important element in shaping the culture of Poland and as unique in Europe as the “mass culture of nobility” which included one million citizens by 1600AD.

The Act of Sejm of 1523 formulated the *Formula Processus*, a code of courts of law standardizing legal procedures throughout the Polish Commonwealth. It was the earliest standardization of legal procedures in Europe (in France for example, such a code was first instituted some 270 years later during the French Revolution). Because of this Roman letters would replace Gothic, thus, making printing more readable.

In 1532 a committee of the Sejm was formed for the codification of all Polish common and written laws. It was the earliest such legislative project in Europe; the codification procedure was based on a public debate. Printed proposals were made by the National Sejm and sent to every one of the regional legislatures for examination and evaluation. Written report from each Sejmik was to be sent back to the National Sejm to be processed by the Law Codification Committee.

The founding of the formal Polish Nobles' Republic took place in 1569 during the conclusion of the Union of Lublin. It was viewed as a necessary development in view of the approaching end of the Jagiellonian Dynasty as its last member had no male offspring. The new republic was called Rzeczpospolita (zhech-pos-po-lee-tah), in Latin Respublica and now it is often referred to as the First Polish Republic (1569-1795).

The transformation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into a formal republic by the Union of Lublin was characterized as bringing **"The Republic of Good Will ... Free Men with Free. Equals with Equal ..."** There was a pride in Polish citizenship throughout the new Republic among its political nation of free citizens, which soon numbered one million people.

During the Reformation Poland was a "haven for the heretics." The principle that no one could be persecuted for his religious belief had always been recognized in Poland. It became a law when the Toleration Act of Warsaw was passed in 1573 by the Sejm. The law now guaranteed religious freedom. Civil rights of the free citizens lay at the root of the religious toleration in Poland; the health of democracy of the masses of Polish nobility was strong. The 16th century was the Golden Age of Poland governed by the middle and lower nobility. Polish diplomacy secured the *Postulata Polonica*, or concessions in favor of Protestants persecuted in France.

Greek Philosopher Aristotle (384BC-322BC) predicted that democracy is always threatened by oligarchy. That threat materialized in Poland when the political machines of land magnates succeeded in passing Law of Entails or the seniority succession law in 1589. The Sejm passed it under the excuse that it was needed to prevent disintegration of large estates which were to be protected by their legal status as *maioratus* or ordination inherited in full as an "*ordinates*" or the senior male; the Law of Entail was to preserve economic strength and military potential of the holdings of huge landowners, who unfortunately had the potential and in the XVII century did turn the republic into an oligarchy. The fortress repair, the upkeep of garrisons, the winter quartering of troops, and maintaining a fixed quota of regiments in time of war were among the legal obligation of an "*ordinatus*."

The dynamic growth of new land potentates was accompanied by transformation of former knights who owned land into gentlemen-farmers prospering on the grain trade. The new law weakened the stabilizing effects of Polish law of succession according to which the family property was divided by all sons and daughters alike. The new law did not provide safeguards against an eventual damage to the democratic process by the political machines of huge landowners who at times accumulated more land than all of Great Britain, Belgium, Holland or Ireland. Political threat to the Polish democratic process by the political machines of huge estates, later known as *latifundia*, seriously increased with the passage of the Law of Entail. The new law helped to make the 17th century the "Golden Age" of land magnates.

Meantime democracy was practiced. The Representatives returning from a session of the National Sejm were obligated to attend "report-back" meetings in their regional legislation in order to give their formal report on the achievements of the national parliament. The same sessions observed by the public and students of academies, also served to shape opinions on current affairs in every constituency. In fact the legislative process was an important element in

shaping the culture of Poland as unique in Europe, where national cultures were shaped by the royal court and towns.

Early interest in establishing an international rule of law in Poland was caused by a forgery committed by the German Armed Brethren, who obtained a temporary fief of Chełmno from Konrad I of Mazovia (1187-1247) in 1228 in the Act of Kruszwica. The temporary fief of Chełmno was obtained by the Teutonic Knights for the time needed to convert the Balto-Slavic Prussians to Christianity.

The forgery by the Teutonic Knights consisted of changing the text of the Act of Kruszwica into a permanent grant of the fief of Chełmno. This forgery caused the successive kings of Poland to look for an international legal procedure to amend the forgery and avoid an armed conflict over Prussia in which the Teutonic Knights committed genocide of the Balto-Slavic Prussians and violated the Christian principle that the license to convert is not a license to kill.

Eventually, the military triumphs of the union of Poland and Lithuania over the Teutonic Knight were soon paralleled by successes in diplomacy. After their defeat by the Polish king, the armed monks of the Teutonic Order accused Poland of killing German missionaries and allying itself with pagans. These accusations were to be investigated at the Council of Constance, (1414-1418), one of the great diplomatic conferences of the Middle Ages.

Paweł Włodkowicz, (Paulus Vladimiri) of Brudzewo, Polish ambassador at the Council of Constance, served also as President of the University of Kraków. He was a Professor of Law. In 1415 at the Council, Włodkowicz proposed the first seventeen basic theses of international law founded on justice and toleration. His proposal was based on the natural law and the premise that the license to convert is not a license to kill or expropriate and that only voluntary conversion is valid. He defined the principle of national self-determination, the international society, its functions, organs, and laws. He began to formulate these laws for use by an international tribunal, which he proposed. He justified only purely defensive wars. Włodkowicz advocated international mediation and arbitration and an international tribunal for the peaceful solution of conflicts among nations. He argued that the Teutonic Order of armed monks lost its missionary character by committing mass murders and pillage. Therefore, in reality, the German Order constituted a "Prussian heresy." On the other hand the Christianization of Lithuania by Poland represented the greatest medieval missionary deed.

The Council of Constance accepted the arguments of the Polish Ambassador. The Establishing of due process under the law followed in Poland some 250 years earlier than in England. The due legal process guaranteed the inviolability of citizen's person (who was not caught in the act of committing a crime). It was formulated in Poland for the first time in Europe, in the acts of 1422-1433. This due process was the basis of the legal system in Poland when absolutism reigned in the rest of Europe.

Golden Age of Poland

The Renaissance

One Million Free Citizens of 1600 AD

“Golden Age of Poland” during the Renaissance occurred when Poland-Lithuania, the largest state within western Christianity was most tolerant in Europe, had the most advanced citizen’s rights. Poland’s population of 11,000,000 included 10% or over one million free citizens within an area of over one million sq. km. In the world history of the development of representative government the Polish Commonwealth of 1600 AD had a record number of free citizens not only in comparison with ancient republics of Athens and of Rome; but, also in comparison with the United States at the time of the American Revolution in XVIII century.

Ancient Roots of the Indigenous

Democratic Process of Poland

The indigenous democratic process of Poland was rooted in the Old Slavic tribal meetings called “wiece” (vyets) in Polish and “veche” in Russian, Ukrainian “viche,” Croatian vijeće, Serbian vece, Old Church Slavonic “veste.” It was a popular assembly in ancient and medieval Slavic tribal areas, comparable and contemporary with the “ecclesia” of classical Athens.

The semantic derivation yields meaning parallel to parliament related to the idea of sharing information and knowledge as apparent in the Polish words “wiece” and “wiedza,” or “popular assembly” and “knowledge,” respectively. These words are rooted in 4400 BCE according to the hypothesis of Kirgans (hipoteza Kurhanów) and recent DNA dated studies reaching back 5500 years ago in the area of the steppes of Russia, Ukraine and historical Poland. These facts are described by David W. Anthony, professor of anthropology at Hartwick College in England who has conducted extensive archaeological and DNA fieldwork in the Ukraine, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

The book “THE HORSE, THE WHEEL, AND LANGUAGE: How Bronze-Age Riders From the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World.” By David W. Anthony. (Illustrated. 553 pp. Princeton University Press. \$35, was published in 2008). These scientific arguments are in agreement with the old mythology of Poland and with existing linguistic evidence. Baltic Sea was sometimes called the Slavonic Sea or “Morze Słowiańskie.” The Balto-Slavs and their ancestors are known to have lived on the shores of the Baltic Sea as far back as 5000 years ago according to genetic evidence and carefully dated DNA studies

In proto-historical times, the Slavic homeland experienced intrusions of foreign elements. Beginning from circa 500 BCE to 200 CE, the Scythians and then the Sarmatians expanded their control into the forest steppe. A few Iranian loan words, especially relating to religious and cultural practices, have been seen as evidence of cultural influences.

In the Slavic tradition, since millennia, decisions were made “from below” by ordinary men. These men elected their military leader and called him “vo-ye-vo-da” or literally commander of tribal warriors. The traditional “wiece” led in 1182 to development of the Polish parliament the Sejm, which by 1505 acquired the supreme power in Poland, while the removal of the veche bell from Novgorod to Moscow in 1478 sealed the victory of Muscovite tyranny, learned by Muscovy in the service of the Mongol Empire over the Slavic indigenous democratic process. The “veche” was the highest legislature and judicial authority in the Republic of Novgorod until 1478, when the city was conquered by Muscovite Grand Prince Ivan III (1462-1505). In its “Little Brother”, the Republic of Pskov the “veche” continued until 1510, when that city was taken over by Grand Prince Vasili III (1505-1533). Ivan III, the Great consolidated his power by crushing the independent republic of Novgorod in 1478 and in 1480 conducted mass deportation of 10,000 Novgorodians to the Urals. It was the early maturity of Muscovy political engineering, the beginning of a 500 year tradition of empire building by coercion, deportations, and despotism learned in service of the Mongol Empire.

Resisting the Muscovite oppression, the government of Novgorod sought an alliance with Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania. Most Novgorodian boyars were trying to maintain the Republic's independence, because if Novgorod were to be conquered, the boyars' wealth would be confiscated by the grand prince and his Muscovite boyars.

The Unification of East Slavs under Moscow's strong hand rule

The “veche” bell was a symbol of republican sovereignty and independence and for this reason Ivan III carted it off to Moscow, when he took control of the city Novgorod in 1478, to show that the Mongol style tyranny was replacing the old way of doing things by voting in the assembly (the “veche”) and using the word “volnost” (“free will”) later substituted with the word “svoboda.” Liberty Bell which arrived in Philadelphia on September 1, 1753 six hundred years later represented a similar symbol to the “veche bell” of Novgorod of 1136.

The unification of Russia with the capital in Moscow started about 400 years earlier than the unification of Germany in the 1870 with the capital in Berlin, made possible by acquisition of provinces of Poland during the XVIII century partitions of Polish Parliamentary Commonwealth.

German initiative in the destruction in the First Republic of Poland led to the growth of reckless German megalomania, such as the starting of both world wars in a hope to build a colonial empire from Rhine to Vladivostock and a pure German ethnic area from Rhine to the Dnepr River. Hitler's defeat left Germany without an atomic arsenal on the threshold of the nuclear age and deprived the Germans of aspirations for the domination of the world.

The formation of the indigenous democratic process of Poland

The tradition of elective system in tribal democracies was strengthened in Poland by Europe's unique Polish national defense system, based on an alliance of the king with landowners. In the rest of Europe national defense was based on the king's alliance with fortified towns as it happened within all of western Christianity. In Poland there was a unique alliance between the king and the masses of landowners. This happened because foreign immigrants flooded Polish towns after the devastation by Mongol invasions starting in 1241 and it took generations for the immigrants to acquire Polish national identity – Jewish immigrants, with a few exceptions, never did assimilate because of the clear mandate of the Talmudic laws.

The ideas introduced in Poland the middle ground of Europe by the development of the indigenous Polish democratic process, which matured in the 16th century. It was created by citizens of the First Polish Republic using ideas that were modern even by the standards of the 21st century. These ideas are fundamental also in contemporary political theory according to Norman Davies of Oxford University:

**general elections by all citizens
(called viritim)*

**the social contract between government
and the citizens*

**the principle of government by consent*

**the personal freedom*

**civil rights of the individual*

**the freedom of religion*

**the value of self-reliance*

**the prevention of the growth
of authoritarian power of the state*

**the prevention of the rule by any form
of oligarchy*

These ideas were spread as the first printing press was set up in Kraków in 1473. It is estimated that between the years 1561 through 1600 seventeen printing houses in Poland published over 120 titles per year, with the average edition size of 500 copies. The first complete translation of the Bible into Polish, was done in 1561, by Jan Leopolita. Around that time the first Polish orthography dictionary was published (by Stanisław Murzynowski in 1551); grammar books and dictionaries also proliferated. Polish renaissance was bi-lingual, with the masses of the noble citizens speaking a mixture of Polish and Latin, and various authors oscillating between Polish, Latin and a mixture of those two languages. Latin was the language of science and diplomacy in all of Western Christianity.

The first university in Poland where law and international law was the principal subject

In 1364 the first Polish university was founded in Kraków by the last king of the first Polish dynasty, Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great, 1310-1370). It followed the Italian model, where law was the principal subject. It included colleges of liberal arts, medicine, and law, which had three chairs in Canon Law, and five in Roman Law - the Law School was to be especially strong because of the legal entanglements with Germany.

German Armed Brethren, obtained a temporary fief of Chełmno from Konrad I of Mazovia (1187-1247) in 1228 in the Act of Kruszwica. The temporary fief was obtained by the Teutonic Knights for the time needed to convert the Balto-Slavic Prussians to Christianity. The forgery by the Teutonic Knights consisted of changing the text of the Act of Kruszwica into a permanent grant of the fief of Chełmno. This forgery caused the successive kings of Poland to look for an international legal procedure to amend the forgery and avoid an armed conflict over Prussia.

Reforms of the university of Kraków in 1400 followed the models of the universities of Paris and Prague and the study of theology was added. The school of astronomy and mathematics was added in the middle of the 15th century. Many illustrious Polish scholars acquired European recognition. Wieliczka salt mines were to provide a quarterly income for the new university. The statute on salt mines was issued by the King in 1368. The University of Kraków is one of the oldest in central Europe it was founded one year before the University of Vienna (1365), and twenty one years before the University of Heidelberg (1385), which was the oldest in the German ethnic area. The oldest in central Europe was the University of Prague founded in 1348. Latin was the international language of law and science and it influenced Polish legal and scientific vocabulary. Czech literary language was more advanced at the time; it also influenced Polish literary expressions. Generally people spoke Polish, however, German and Yiddish were spoken in enclaves. Some borrowed German terms were used in trade.

The five hundred years of the rule by the Piast dynasty ended, "...the Kingdom of Poland was set fair to found one of the most original civilizations of early modern Europe, which, in union with Lithuania, spread out from sea to sea, and lasted for more than four hundred years." (Norman Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, Columbia University Press, New York 1982, p.105)

EVOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY IN POLAND (1370-1493)

An electoral monarchy was formed after the death of King Casimir the Great, thus ended the period of hereditary monarchy in Poland under the Piast Dynasty (c.840-1370). Over two hundred years of negotiated royal succession followed and Poland became an electoral monarchy (1370-1572). The constitutional monarchy evolved in Poland (1370-1493). During this evolution due legal process was established in Poland, about 250 years earlier than in Britain. Polish became a language of elegance and civility in east central Europe as Poland acquired for centuries a civilizing role between the Baltic and the Black Seas (1400-1800). Often, Polish was used as a language of diplomacy.

Christianization of Lithuania The greatest medieval missionary deed

The leadership in Kraków perceived a great historic opportunity in peaceful Christianization of Lithuania and joining of Polish and Lithuanian forces in order to put an end to the invasions and pillage by the Teutonic Order, which conducted the predatory wars under the cover of missionary activity. Poles were about to achieve the greatest missionary deed of the late Middle Ages by peaceful means and adroit diplomacy. Thus, as the relations with Lithuania became closer, the foreign policy of Poland had to focus on the problems in the North and East. This was facilitated by the improvement of Poland's strategic position on the borders with Western Pomerania and Brandenburg.

The Act of Koszyce 1374

No Taxation without Representation

400 years before American Revolution

The first personal union between Poland and Hungary lasted for twelve years (1370-1382). It happened during the reign of King Ludwik I or Louis I of Anjou, (1326-1382) the successor and nephew of King Casimir the Great. In 1374 Louis I of Anjou King of Hungary and Poland issued the Act of Koszyce, which limited further the royal power by bestowing taxing authority on regional legislatures by reducing taxes and promising to nominate local people to territorial offices. The act of 1374 limited the obligation of military service and provided for paying compensation to soldiers for injuries suffered outside of the national territory. It also guaranteed the inviolability of the territory of Corona Regni Poloniae, as the Kingdom of Poland was known in Latin. All this was granted by King Louis in return for the right of succession to the Polish throne. The Act of Koszyce (1374) started Poland on her way to becoming the main scene of development of civil liberties in Europe - especially, when England drifted in the direction of absolutism, and Magna Carta Libertatum (1215) became ineffectual for several centuries.

The power of regional legislatures called "Sejmiki" (sey-mee-kee) was strengthened, the noble estate of about 10 percent of population was defined and estates system in Poland was crystallized. Thus, the Polish parliamentary system was reconfirmed in form of regional legislatures based on the indigenous democratic process. Noble immunities were granted in exchange for military service in defense of Poland. Crystallization of class (or estate) structure of the Polish society into nobility, clergy, burghers, and peasants was finalized.

Louis I of Anjou, King of Hungary and Poland, signed in 1381 the Act of Kraków, in which he reduced Church land taxes in return for acceptance of succession of his daughter Jadwiga to the Polish throne as a "ruling king." The reign of Jadwiga d'Anjou, Queen of Poland followed in 1374-1399.

German aggression caused two defensive unions of states: Poland and Lithuania in the South and Denmark, Sweden and Norway in the North

German aggression on the Baltic coast caused the formation of two unions of states. In the south, Poland and Lithuania united at Krewo in 1385. In the north all of Scandinavia united twelve years later at Kalmar in 1397.

In the Union Act of Krewo, Jogaila or Jagiello, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, committed himself to convert Lithuania to Latin Christianity and to unite with Poland all Lithuanian and Ruthenian lands as well as to recover Polish territories lost to the Germans, in exchange for marriage to Polish Queen Jadwiga of Anjou and his coronation as a Catholic King of Poland. Before his coronation in 1386, Wladyslaw Jagiello, Ladislav Jogaila (1350-1434), confirmed the Act of Koszyce (1374). During the reign of King Wladyslaw Jagiello (1386-1434), Polish missionaries converted Lithuania to Roman Catholicism. In 1387 the Act of Wilno followed. In it the King Wladyslaw Jagiello bestowed hereditary ownership of land and freedom from taxation by the local princes of the newly converted Catholic Lithuanian nobles, the boyars. Moldavia became a fief of Poland. In 1388 in the Act of Piotrkow, King Wladyslaw Jagiello increased the civil rights of nobility and clergy, further limiting the royal power in Poland.

The tyrannical rule of the German monastic orders resulted in the founding of the "Salamander Society" or "Reptile Association" in 1397. It was a forerunner of the Prussian Union, which was organized for the overthrow of the rule of the Teutonic Order and for the unification in freedom of Prussia with Poland.

In 1401 in the Union Act of Wilno and Radom the Lithuanian knighthood received the same civil rights as were enjoyed by Polish knights. Poland guaranteed the safety of Lithuania against the aggression by the Armed Brethren of the Teutonic Order in 1409.

Victory and a new union act of Poland and Lithuania in 1410 in the largest medieval battle

The Great War against the Teutonic Order by Poland and Lithuania lasted two years (1409-1411). On June 30, 1410 the decisive victory in the battle of Tannenberg-Grunwald was won by the Polish and Lithuanian forces assisted by Czech Hussites and auxiliaries from Smoleńsk. The chief of the Teutonic Order Eric von Jungingen was killed on the battlefield. Second victory on October 10, 1410 at Koronowo led to peace negotiations. The terms of the Peace Treaty of Toruń included the return of the province of Dobrzyń to Poland and of the province of Żmudź to Lithuania and payment to Poland of money in the amount of 6,000,000 groszes by the Teutonic Order. The victory transformed the Polish-Lithuanian union into a great power and put an end to the expansionist plans of the Teutonic Order and the Luxemburgers; it put an end to German aggression in the Baltic area.

In the Union Act of Horodło (1413) was concluded by the King Władysław Jagiełło, following the victory over German Monastic State of the Teutonic Knights in 1410. It was a personal union of Poland and Lithuania, which were to remain two separate states. The King established the territorial office of wojewoda (vo-ye-vo-da) or provincial governor, and initiated a new administrative and defensive organizational model, which was followed in central and eastern Europe. (The ancient term wojewoda, meaning one who leads warriors, is still in use as an administrative title.) Polish families extended the use and privileges of their coats of arms to the Lithuanian and Ruthenian clans.

The frontiers of Western civilization were shifted considerably to the northeast and Polish social and political institutions penetrated Lithuania, Belrus, and Kievian Ruthenia. New towns were founded and were granted a wide measure of self-government. Considerable prosperity was achieved by Polish towns in the 14th and 15th centuries. Those that were members in the Hanseatic League shared in the profitable Baltic and Levantine trade.

European balance of power changed as a result of the union of Poland and Lithuania which became the largest territory in Europe. Bohemia started to cooperate with Poland. Moldavia became a Polish Fief as the Turkish Empire became a threat to Balkan Slavs and Byzantium. Poland had to reorient itself to the problems of the Lithuanian- Ruthenian Empire such as the control of the Dnepr River valley and the growing threat of the autocratic Muscovite state.

The Unifying Force of Love in the spirit of Brotherly Love

The preamble of 1413 Union of Horodło of Poland and Lithuania was written in the spirit of brotherly love. It states the noble ideas which are echoed throughout the documents of the then evolving democracy of the citizen-soldiers of Poland-Lithuania “...its foundation upon Love. For Love alone diminishes not, but shines with its own light, makes an end of discord, softens the fires of hate, restores peace to the world, brings together the sundered, redresses the wrongs, aids all and injures none... For by Love laws are made, kingdoms governed, cities ordered, and the state of the commonweal is brought to its proper goal...”

This remarkable text reflects the Polish self-perception and patriotism, which was the unifying force that formed Poles into a nation. It has been steeped in the remote past when the Polish ethnic character and culture started to evolve. This unifying love, so essential to the very existence of any national identity, acquired a unique character throughout Poland's history, beginning with the maturity of the Polish monarchy by the end of the 10th century through the next one thousand years of the quest for a representative government, democracy, and freedom for all.

The license to convert is not a license to kill and expropriate; genocide of native Prussians; “Prussian Heresy” by the Teutonic Knights

The military triumphs of the union of Poland and Lithuania were soon paralleled by successes in diplomacy. After their defeat by the Polish king the armed monks of the Teutonic Order accused Poland of killing German missionaries and allying itself with pagans. These accusations were to be investigated at the Council of Constance, during 1414-1418 as one of the great diplomatic conferences of the Middle Ages. Paweł Włodkowicz, (Paulus Vladimiri) of Brudzewo, Polish ambassador at the Council of Constance, served also as the President of the University of Kraków, he was a professor of law.

The First Seventeen Basic Theses of International Law in Europe

In 1415 at Paweł Włodkowicz at the Council of Constance proposed the first seventeen basic theses of international law founded on justice and toleration. His proposal was based on the natural law and the premise that the license to convert is not a license to kill or expropriate and that only voluntary conversion is valid. He defined the principle of national self-determination, the international society, its functions, organs, and laws. These laws he started to formulate for the use by an international tribunal, which he proposed. He justified only purely defensive wars. Włodkowicz advocated international mediation and arbitration and an international tribunal for the peaceful solution of conflicts among nations. He argued that the Teutonic Order of armed monks lost its missionary character by committing genocide of Balto-Slavic Prussians, mass murders and pillage. Therefore, in reality the German Order constituted a “Prussian heresy.” While the Council of Constance accepted the arguments of the Polish Ambassador, the Germans did not honor these conclusions.

Establishing in Poland of the due process under the law - 250 years earlier than in Gr. Britain

King Władysław Jagiełło issued in 1422 the Act of Czerwińsk, which provided for a permanent ban against confiscation of private property, known in Latin: *Nec Bona Recipiantur*. This act promised not to allow the confiscation of privately held property without a court sentence based on a written law. It excluded officials of the crown from judgeships. The refusal to answer a call to arms was to be punished by confiscation of property. The Act of 1422 was the beginning of formulation of the due process under the law in Poland. In 1423 in the Statute of Warka, King Władysław Jagiełło enlarged the Act of Czerwińsk of 1422 by inclusion of burghers and free peasants; he also abrogated the hereditary rights of bailiffs or sołtys (sow-tis) (Schultheiss in German). King Władysław Jagiełło spread to all provinces uniform civil rights in the Act of Brześć of Kujawy (1425) in return for recognition of succession right of his sons to be elected to the Polish Crown.

A fundamental law of 1430 in the Act of Jedlno, was known as *Neminem captivabimus nisi iure victum*. It was a guarantee against an illegal imprisonment equivalent to the English act of Habeas Corpus of 1679 and preceded it by 249 years. King Władysław Jagiełło strengthened the civil rights of nobility and clergy in return for a promise to elect one of his sons as King of Poland and incorporation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania into the Polish Commonwealth. The provincial government of Podolia was organized at Kamieniec.

In 1432 the Union Act of Grodno was concluded. Grand Duke of Zygmunt Kiejstutowicz was recognized for life as the ruler of Lithuania. After his death Lithuania (with Belrus and Ukraine) was to be incorporated into Poland.

The First European Civil Rights Enacted and Enforced In Modern Europe in Poland

King Władysław Jagiełło guaranteed personal freedom of the citizens under protection of the courts of law in 1433 Act of Kraków; it was a reconfirmation of the law *Neminem captivabimus nisi iure victum*, the protection against illegal imprisonment.

The due legal process guaranteed the inviolability of citizen's person (who was not caught in the act of committing a crime). It was formulated in Poland for the first time in Europe, in the acts of 1422-1433. This due process was the basis of the legal system in Poland when absolutism reigned in the rest of Europe. This happened because the middle nobility, allied with the royal court, won the power struggle against land-magnates. The democracy of nobility (which in Poland represented about 10 percent of the population) was led by the middle nobility, which was acting as “the middle class” of the political nation of free citizens in the Polish Commonwealth.

In 1434 in the Act of Troki, Zygmunt, Grand Duke of Lithuania (?-1440), included within Polish civil rights the gentry of Halicia (Galicia) and Podolia, which further spread the due process under the law.

Defense of Christianity and the Prussian Union with Poland

The King Władysław III (1424-1444) was crowned at the age of ten. He was crowned as King of Hungary in 1440. The power of the Polish-Lithuanian union was reflected in the fact that the Hungarian and Czech crowns were offered to the King of Poland. Important political events faced the court of the young King. An alliance of Poland and Hungary with the Pope Eugenius IV (1431-1447) against the Turkish Empire was signed. In 1440 the Act of Confederation of Prussian nobility and towns was concluded in protest against the yoke of the German Monastic State of the Teutonic Knights. Its purpose was the incorporation of Prussia in freedom into the Polish Commonwealth. The confederation was known as the Prussian Union (it was condemned by papal anathema, which was issued as a result of intrigues of the Armed Brethren of the Teutonic order at the Vatican). The Polish-Lithuanian Union was terminated (for six years) in 1440 by an Act of Wilno. It was a short lived victory of Lithuanian aristocracy which wanted to establish an

oligarchy in Lithuania. At the same time a personal union of Poland and Hungary (1440-1444) was again established under the King Władysław III. The union was concluded in the face of the threat of the invasion by the Turkish Empire. King Władysław III won a brilliant victory over the Turks in Bulgaria and signed a highly favorable truce. Year later, the Pope Eugenius IV fearful about the possibility of the fall of the Byzantine Empire pressed King Władysław III to brake the truce and without a proper preparation to attack the Turks. The Pope was anxious to consolidate the merger of Eastern and Western Christianity as agreed to in Florence (1439). Had King Władysław III succeeded, freed Constantinople and driven the Turks into Asia Minor, the Union of Florance might have succeeded. Unfortunately, the King of both Poland and Hungary was killed when leading the Hungarian army and Polish knights in the battle of Varna (1444). The victorious Turks now were on their way to conquer Constantinople in 1453, solidified their rule over the Balkan Slavs, and became a threat to central Europe.

Incorporation of Prussia into Poland

The interruption of the Union of Poland and Lithuania ended in 1446. The Grand Duke of Lithuania was crowned in 1446 as the King of Poland Kazimierz IV Jagiellończyk (1427-1492) and issued a new Act of Wilno. In it he agreed to reign in Poland and Lithuania as two equal countries (in a "brotherly union") and confirmed the existing civil rights and the due process under the law in both countries. In 1447 in the Act of Grodno, King Kazimierz Jagiellończyk further insisted on enforcing Polish type of civil rights among the Lithuanian and Ruthenian nobility in order to limit the political power of Lithuanian aristocracy. The King signed in 1453 the Act of Confirmation of Jewish Liberties, which was first issued in 1264. King Kazimierz Jagiellończyk proclaimed in 1454 the Act of Incorporation of Prussia into the Polish Crown during a revolution against the yoke of the German Monastic State of the Teutonic Knights. The insurrection broke out after the failure of negotiation regarding taxes between the brethren of the Teutonic Order and the Prussian Confederation of the knights and burghers of Prussia. The repression of the Confederation by the Order caused the insurrection during the time of growing prosperity of the Polish State and Polish progress in matters of civil rights was in stark contrast with the oppressive rule of the Teutonic Order.

The Thirteen Year's War: Poland Defeated the Teutonic Order

**Surrendered to Poland
the Castle of Malbork
on the Vistula delta,
the largest Gothic
Fortification in Europe**

The Thirteen Year War fought by Poland with the Teutonic Order ended in 1466 with the treaty of Toruń. Malbork with the province of Warmia became a part of Poland while Królewiec or Koenigsberg became the new capital of the Polish Fief of Prussia. The Grand Master of the Teutonic order was obligated to pay homage and taxes to the King of Poland. Ulyk Czerwonka, Czech mercenary commander of the Malbork garrison, surrendered the main castle and capital of the Teutonic Order to Poland. In the Act of Gdansk (1457), King Kazimierz Jagiellończyk bestowed self-government and trading privileges on Gdańsk, Elbląg (Elbing), and Toruń - cities recently freed from domination by the German Monastic State of the Teutonic Knights (or German Armed Brethren). Lithuania was not involved in the Thirteen Year War.

THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL BICAMERAL PARLIAMENT (1454-1493)

Indigenous Democratic Process in Poland Act of Nieszawa 1454

An original Polish civilization was maturing in early modern Europe. The beginning of the process of formation of the republic of Polish nobility started in 1454 with the Act of Nieszawa, which some call the Magna Carta of the masses of Polish nobility of citizen-soldiers. King Kazimierz IV Jagiellończyk (1427-1492) officially confirmed the legal power of each Sejmik (sey-meek) or regional legislature in each district. The regional Sejmiks had the power to approve every military mobilization and the right to name four candidates for local judiciary of which, one would be nominated by the King to a vacant post. This limited power of aristocracy in favor of the middle nobility. It marked the beginning of the transformation of unicameral regional legislature with an open attendance into an orderly system of representation in a bicameral national parliament. Thus, the maturity of representative form of government was achieved in Poland.

The indigenous Polish democratic process was based on Sejmiks or regional legislatures where ordinary citizens had a dominant voice. The Sejmiks themselves evolved from the prehistoric Slavic institution of wiec (vyets), in Russian vieche (vyeche), which were the basis of Slavic military democracies and the organization of Slavic volunteer armies (see p. 1). In AD 740 these Slavic armies dominated central Europe from the frontiers of the empire of Charles the Great in the west to Byzantium in the east, as illustrated on the first map at the beginning of this book.

Seymiks become platforms for political emancipation and a source of information about the affairs of state for the ordinary citizen. Seymiks created the means for mutual consultations through duly elected representatives equipped with a real and clear mandate. It was the beginning of reshaping the Polish monarchy into a republic of the nobility, which represented about 10 percent of the population (in some regions up to 20 percent). Eventually by 1634, Polish nobility numbered over one million citizens. Polish democratic process was successful as long as the lower and middle nobilities were winning the power struggle against aristocracy.

Economic expansion

In the middle of the 15th century the density of the population of Poland was estimated at 10 persons per square kilometer or about two and a half to three millions. The three-field system of field rotation was generally used in Polish agriculture and cattle was reared for sale. Peasants paid rent for the fields they cultivated. From 1466 the Vistula River carried Polish grain export through Gdańsk. Grain was produced in Poland for new and expanding markets, while western Europe suffered an agrarian crisis. Cereal prices were high and the land became more valuable. New deposits of iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, sulphur, and rock salt were discovered and mined. Hundreds of towns were granted municipal charters. Money was in general use in trade involving manufactured goods and farm products. During the 14th and 15th century trade and the use of money reached the highest level of activity during the feudal period in Poland. A large number of craft guilds were formed among leather and metal workers covering all kinds of specialties.

Fortifications and Art

The towns in Poland were surrounded with defense walls. The multi-story artillery bastion (the largest in Europe) called barbican (in Arabic architectural style) in front of St. Florian's Gate in Kraków was built by the end of the 15th century. Gothic style prevailed in architecture; monumental cathedrals, huge ecclesiastical buildings, ornate town halls were built in Poland as well as some of the largest fortified complexes in Europe. Art works such as stained glass windows, murals, and plaques, paintings, sculptures in stone and wood, gold jewelry and textiles attained perfection of form and design. The monumental wooden altar of St. Mary's Basilica in Karków was constructed in 1477-1485 in the Late Gothic style. The Volhynian school of Ruthenian mural painting flourished. The royal capital of Kraków became an important cultural and political center in Europe.

Literature, Grammar, Orthography

One of the oldest relics of Polish prose known as The Bible of Queen Zofia (the wife of King Władysław Jagiełło) was the translation of the Old Testament into Polish (1455). Latin texts of statutes were translated into Polish. The first book on Polish orthography was published in 1440. Poetry was written in Polish. Secular music was written for one voice and songs were composed in Polish. The song Bogurodzica (The Mother of God) was sung in battles against the Teutonic Order in 1410. Stanisław of Skalbmierz (?-1431), professor at the University of Kraków, developed the doctrine of the just war *de bellis iustis* in 1411. The history of Poland entitled Historia Polonica was written in 1455-1480 by Jan Długosz (1415-1480), his work represented an outstanding example of European historical studies of that period. The twelve volume Polish history up to 1480 written by Jan Długosz is a literary monument to the early Polish Renaissance. In 1473 the first printing and publishing firms were established in Kraków. The same year Nicolas Copernicus(1473-1543), the founder of modern astronomy was born in Toruń, Poland to Nicolas Copeernicus Sr. who moved in 1458 to Toruń from Kraków as an envoy of Poland nominated by Zbigniew Cardinal Oleśnicki, the Primate of Poland, for the negotiations with Prussian Estates the terms of the union of Prussia with Poland.

Pro Republicae Ordinatione

In 1474 the wojewoda (governor) of Poznań and doctor of law, Jan Ostroróg (c.1436-1501) published c.1474 a political program entitled *Pro Republicae Ordinatione* or On An Orderly Republic (Commonwealth). The author defended the sovereignty of Poland against the power of the Pope. He was for the right to appeal sentences of local Church courts and advocated taxing the Church for the national defense. Ostroróg also advocated improvement of the civil rights of the burghers and peasants, he insisted on the limitation of the power of aristocracy and he hoped to strengthen the alliance of the throne with the middle nobility.

Already by the end of the 15th century, national and regional parliaments became catalysts of social and cultural life in Poland, a role played in the rest of Europe by the royal court and the town. The Act of Kraków of 1485 regulated the standing of Jewish craftsmen in the guilds (organized Jewish communities, the Kakhals attacked separate Jewish guilds in an effort to enforce their own rigid control). The first Digest of Polish Law was printed in Kraków in 1488, one of the earliest in Europe.

Social consciousness was strengthened by the expressions of Polish nationalism in the Renaissance writings by Poles. In addition to works in Latin alphabet books

were also printed in Kraków in the Cyrillic alphabet for the first time anywhere. Polish Commonwealth was a social and political union of many ethnic groups among whom 40% were Polish speakers who occupied 20% of the area. There was a broad support for the Polish State. Turkish and Tartar danger produced solidarity among all the ethnic groups of the Commonwealth and the belief in the mission of Poland was to serve as a shield of Christianity.

Early International Peace Plan in Polska Metryka Koronna of 1464 similar to the United Nations but 500 years earlier

Polish State Records, known as Metryka Koronna, included in 1463 the full text of a remarkable proposal for an international charter for peace, similar to the United Nations. It was co-sponsored by Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia. It was at first well received by France and Venice, it was the earliest proposal of an international peace organization in the history of Europe. The project was based to a considerable extent on the works of Paweł Włodkowicz, (Paulus Vladimiri), Polish ambassador at Constance (1414-1418). The actual text was prepared at the Bohemian court of King Jiri of Podjebrady (1420-1471), included a General Assembly or *Congregatio de Nationes* ruled by a simple majority and an international force controlled by its secretariat or *Sindicus*. It was to follow a procedure for an international judicial arbitration: outlawed aggression (especially by the Muslim Turks) and did away with the idea of a universal medieval empire. The project was to create a new international authority in view of declining power and effectiveness of both, the fragmented Holy Roman Empire and Papacy. Wrecked by Papal opposition, however, it was for two years a subject of negotiations between European states (1462-1464). King Jiri of Podjebrady of Bohemia named Polish Crown Prince Władysław as his successor. In 1471 the Czech diet elected Władysław King of Bohemia. When in 1490 Władysław became King of Hungary the Jagiellonian realm extended from the Baltic to Black and Adriatic Seas.

“The hornet’s nest”

Western Pomerania was unified in 1478 under Duke Bogusław X, an ally of Poland. Szczecin (Stettin) served as the capital of Western Pomerania. Thus, northwestern borders of Poland became secure. The situation was different in the southeast. There the "Hornet's nest" of the Crimean Tartars staged yearly raids in the Ukraine and Red Ruthenia in order to rob and kidnap people for ransom. Their activity was turning the southern Ukraine into "Wild Plains." Southeastern border of the Polish Commonwealth obtained a special defense force in 1479 and was named Obrona Potoczna (ob-ro-na po-toch-na) or the Current Defence of 2000 to 4000 men. It was a mobile force used against the Crimean Tartars who were acting as a terrorist vanguard of the Turkish Moslem Empire since 1475. Their raids into the Polish Commonwealth earned the Crimean Tartars the name of the "hornet's nest."

The fall of the Republic of Novgorod

During the last years of the Republic of Novgorod, according to this legend, Boretskaya invited the Lithuanian prince to marry her, become the ruler of Novgorod and preserve the traditional legislature. She also concluded an alliance with Casimir, Grand Duke of Lithuania. The prospects of changing allegiance from Moscow in favor of the allied Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania caused major commotion among the commoners. Janet Martin and Gail Lenhoff have recently argued that Boretskaya was scape-goated, probably by Archbishop Feofil (1470-1480) in order to shift the blame from him for his betrayal of the terms of the Treaty of submission of Novgorod to Moscow at Jazebica (February 1456); which, forbade Novgorod from conducting foreign affairs without grand princely approval of Moscow that took control over the Republic of Novgorod (1478) and destroyed its representative form of government.

While the extent of Boretskaya's role in the Lithuanian party is probably exaggerated, Novgorod did indeed try to turn to the King of Poland. A draft treaty, allegedly found among the loot after the Battle of Shelon River, was drawn up between Casimir and the Novgorodians.

Muscovite authorities saw Novgorod's behavior as an attempt to preserve its parliamentary form of government and a repudiation of the Treaty of Jazebica and went to war against the city. The army of Moscow won a decisive victory in the Battle of Shelon River (July 1471), which severely limited Novgorod's freedom to act thereafter, although the city maintained its formal independence for the next seven years. In 1478, Ivan III sent his army to take the city. He massacred the population and destroyed the "veche", including the library and archives of legislative activity, at which point the history of the Republic of Novgorod can be said to have ended as part of the authoritarian Muscovy state which was on its way to build an autocratic empire patterned after the Mongol Empire.

POLAND

A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

(1493-1569)

The Bicameral Parliament

During the reign (1492-1501) of King Jan Olbracht (1459-1501), son of King Kazimierz IV, the Polish parliament became bicameral in 1493. Thus, the year 1493 marked the maturity of Polish Constitutional Monarchy. The Bicameral National Parliament the Sejm Walny (sejm val-ni) was composed of Izba Poselska (eez-ba po-sel-skah) or the Chamber of Deputies, which was presided over by a speaker called the Marshal, while the Senate was presided over by the King. It was an important step in the indigenous Polish development of the representative form of government, which lasted uninterrupted 300 years until 1795. The period of Polish Constitutional Monarchy (1493-1569), was followed by the First Polish Republic (1569-1795) up till the day when the international crime of destruction of the Polish state was committed.

The year 1493 marked the beginning of 160 years of successful parliamentary activity of the Sejm. During this period a proverb was coined: **“Polska nie rządem stoi ale cnotą,”** meaning that Poland stands not by government but by the virtue of its citizens. Each deputy to the Sejm represented his own region and theoretically was obliged to veto legislative proposals that violated his mandate. When unanimity was not achieved, the less important matters were postponed while urgent matter was attended to by persuasion or by forming a confederation in which majority ruled. Polish parliamentary success lasted until the formation of political machines of the oligarchy of magnates and a crisis was caused by the first use of a veto power (*Liberum veto*) by a deputy (in 1652) who was allowed to break the rules of Polish parliamentary procedure by an anarchistic speaker.

In 1494 an act of the Seym ratified the incorporation into Poland of the Duchy of Zator and Oswięcim. It also confirmed the local laws of Prussia. King Jan Olbracht (1491-1501) issued the Act of Piotrków in 1496. In it he enlarged the rights of nobility at the expense of burghers and peasants. The King signed the Union Act of Wilno (1499) further uniting Poland and Lithuania at the request of Lithuania, which was faced with a war against Russia.

The First Polish Constitutional Law Chamber of Deputies the Supreme Power in Poland – Act: “Nihil Novi”

Early, during the short reign (1501-1506) of King Aleksander Jagiellończyk (1461-1506), the brother of the King Jan Olbracht, in 1501 the King issued the Union Act of Mielnik, in which he yielded to aristocracy and assigned to the Senate the exclusive right to elect and control the king. If the king should try to establish a "tyrannical rule" in violation the will of the Senate he would be legally disobeyed and could be impeached; also an election ordinance was established in the Act of Mielnik. Vigorous action by the members of the Seym of Piotrków (1504) led to the abrogation of the Union Act of Mielnik. It was a victory of the middle nobility in the power struggle with the aristocracy. The Seym placed crown estates and properties under a partial control of the Chamber of Deputies. Anyone person was prohibited to hold more than one office. The office of the grand hetman was defined as that of the defense minister and the administrator of the armed forces who also was to serve as the head of the military court.

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The indigenous Polish democratic process was based on Seymiks or regional legislatures where ordinary citizens had a dominant voice. The Seymiks themselves

evolved from the prehistoric Slavic institution of *wiec* (*vyets*), in Russian *vieche* (*vyeche*), which were the basis of Slavic military democracies and the organization of Slavic volunteer armies (see p. 1). In AD 740 these Slavic armies dominated central Europe from the frontiers of the empire of Charles the Great in the west to Byzantium in the east, as illustrated on the first map at the beginning of this book.

The First Prussian Homage in Kraków, 1525

Mikołaj Kopernik Sr. was registered as copper wholesaler in Kraków for the trade with Gdańsk. He befriended the first born in Poland Cardinal, Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki (1389-1455), who as primate of Poland acted also as chancellor and chief of diplomacy. Oleśnicki nominated Mikołaj Kopernik Sr. To be the envoy of Poland for negotiations with the Prussian estates for the unification of Prussia with Poland. For this purpose Mikołaj Kopernik Sr. moved from Kraków to Toruń in 1458, where fourteen years later was born Mikołaj Kopernik Jr. the father of modern astronomy.

The Hohenzollerns of Berlin conspired with the Muscovites against Poland. However, the situation changed adversely for the Hohenzollerns when the Muscovy soldiers fared badly in war against Poland-Lithuania. Thus, starting in 1512, for three years, during the siege of Smoleńsk, they suffered ten thousand dead each season. Russian bloodiest losses of 30,000 dead, including 1500 boyars occurred in the battle of Orsza on the upper Dnieper River in 1514. There, the Muscovy cavalry army of 80,000 fought 20,000 Polish regulars and 15,000 Lithuanians. Konstanty Ostrogski (1460-1530) won the battle by a skillful use of artillery and cavalry, which included Husaria (later known as Polish winged knights – the wings mounted on the backs of the armor of cavalry men, were used as psychological weapon to scare enemy horses not familiar with the wings and their clatter). However, in 1514 the Muscovite troops took Smoleńsk.

King of Poland Sigismund I the Old, brother of King Aleksander I, met in Vienna in 1515 with King of Bohemia and Hungary Władysław II Jagiełło and Emperor Maximilian Hapsburg. The Hapsburgs received the guarantee to succeed to the Bohemian and Hungarian throne in case of the extinction of the Jagiellonian Dynasty in exchange for Hapsburgs' acceptance of Poland's ownership of the Fief of Prussia. Facing also the loss of Muscovy support Albrecht von Hohezollern former Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, recently converted to Lutheranism, paid homage to the Catholic King of Poland out of the Polish Fief of Prussia in 1525.

In 1525 the Sejm accepted the secularization of the Monastic State of the Teutonic Order, committing a political blunder by not evicting from Prussia the remnants of the Teutonic Order. In 1525 started one hundred and sixteen years long series of homage's to Poland (1525-1641) paid out of the Polish fief of Prussia by the Hohenzollerns, who delivered their payment kneeling before the Polish throne (among the homage payers were ancestors of the future

emperors of Germany in 1871-1918). Thus, Albrecht von Hohenzollern (1490-1568) paid the first act of homage to Poland in the market of Kraków and recognized the suzerainty of the Polish king over Prussia; it was the first pact in Europe, torn by religious conflicts, between a Catholic king and a Protestant vassal duke.

Copernican revolution

Mikołaj Kopernik Jr. was among the native leaders of that period. Known as Nicolas Copernicus (1472-1543), in Polish Mikołaj Kopernik (mee-ko-wahy ko-per-ñeek), he was the father of the modern astronomy. His alma mater, the University of Kraków, Poland, had an excellent college of astronomy, then the best in Europe. 44% of its students were foreigners. At that time Poland was the most tolerant and free country on the European continent. There, Copernicus discovered the structure of the solar system. Nicolaus Copernicus conceived his heliocentric astronomical theory about 1504. The Copernican calendar was proven to be accurate within two minutes of the correct year's length - an amazing accuracy considering the condition of European science in early 16th century. [Wojciech of Brudzewo (1445-1497), Copernicus' professor of astronomy at the University of Kraków was the first to question Earth's central location in the solar system.]

Copernican heliocentric theory was circulated in his *Commentariolus* in 1510 and published in 1543 in *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* stating that earth rotates daily on its axis and that planets revolve in orbits around the sun. [In 1613, seventy years later, Galileo (1564-1642) repeated and confirmed the Copernican theory.]

Polish Renaissance was the Golden Age of Poland. Among the native leaders of that period was Nicolas Copernicus (1472-1543), in Polish Mikołaj Kopernik (mee-ko-way ko-per-ñeek), the father of the modern astronomy. His alma mater, the University of Kraków, Poland, had an excellent college of astronomy, then the best in Europe. At that time Poland was the most tolerant and free country on the European continent. There, Copernicus discovered the structure of the solar system. Nicolaus Copernicus conceived his heliocentric astronomical theory about 1504. The Copernican calendar was proven to be accurate within two minutes of the correct year's length - an amazing accuracy considering the condition of European science in early 16th century. [Wojciech of Brudzewo (1445-1497), Copernicus' professor of astronomy at the University of Kraków was the first to question Earth's central location in the solar system.]

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Copernicus ordered world first epidemiological survey and initiated the buttering of bread

During the German siege of the Mazurian fortress of Olsztyn (1519-1521), while serving as a commanding officer, Copernicus successfully combated an epidemic by designing the world's first epidemiological study which found that bread was the vector. He ordered that all loaves of bread be coated with butter at bakeries so that foreign matter, accumulated during delivery, could be readily detected and discarded. The plague was checked. This event is known in the history of medicine as the inception of bread-buttering by Nicolas Copernicus.

In 1523 Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) impressed by Polish achievements wrote about Poland: "I congratulate this nation ... which now, in sciences, jurisprudence, morals, and religion, and in all that separates us from barbarism, is so flourishing that it can rival the first and most glorious of nations."

De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium

In 1543 Nicolaus Copernicus (Mikołaj Kopernik 1473-1543) published his astronomical theory in *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*. It was approved by the Catholic Church, while Luther and Calvin condemned the Copernican theory. The Catholic Church encouraged the publication of the Copernican Theory of Astronomy in 1536 after studying it since 1533, however, eighty six years later the Church placed Copernican works on the index of forbidden books in (1616-1828), while making an uninterrupted use of the Copernican calendar. Copernicus moved the leadership of philosophical thought of the western civilization from the Mediterranean basin into the northern middle ground of Europe. The philosophical implications of the great Copernican discoveries were fundamental. The idea that the Earth is a stationary and flat central area in the universe, on which the human drama of personal

salvation goes on without privacy under the eyes of God and his angels, was shaken irreparably. Eventually it became apparent that life on earth is a thin surface-effect on a minor celestial body traveling through cosmic space at a high speed.

The age-old human yearning for safety and stability was destroyed by the realization that the Earth is not immovable or the largest celestial body, central in the cosmos. The Copernican universe brought home, as no other idea in the history of the human thought, the frightening realization that all existence is in a permanent flux of ever-changing and ever-becoming

Copernican Monetary Reform of 1526

the złoty as basic unit of currency

Copernican Law of Currency

“Bad money chases good money out of circulation”

Copernicus, a true Renaissance man, served in many capacities. He was an administrator of Warmia on the Baltic in northern Poland, a military commander, and a finance minister; he was a trained astronomer, mathematician, economist, lawyer, and medical doctor. Copernicus published in 1526 the *Monetae Cudende Ratio* on monetary reform and stabilization of currency. There he stated the law of currency that “the bad money drives the good money out of circulation.” At that time Thomas Gresham (1519-1579) was even years old. Copernicus was then combating fraudulent schemes by the German House of Hohenzollerns, who were minting debased Polish currency, and tampering with the Vistula River grain trade. Copernicus was acting as Poland’s finance minister and served on the legislative committee for the reform of Polish currency.

Copernican Act of Monetary Reform in Poland (1526) introduced a system based on the Polish unit złoty (zwo-ti) meaning golden coin; red złoty or dukat equaled 3.5 grams of gold; regular Polish złoty equaled 30 grosz, each grosz equaled .77 grams of silver; also each złoty equaled 5 szostaks equaled 10 troyaks; each grosz equaled two half groszes, equaled 3 szelings, equaled 6 ternars, equaled 18 denars. The Polish monetary system was adopted in Prussia in 1528 and in Lithuania in 1569 (at the time of the founding of the Noble Republic of Poland-Lithuania at the Sejm of Lublin). The same year the Sejm ratified the incorporation of Mazovia into Poland.

The export prices for Polish wheat were falling as the Muscovites subsidized their exports. This resulted in 1520 in the passing of Statutes of Toruń and Bydgoszcz, which obligated the peasants to work one day a week without pay as a form of rent for the use of land. It was the beginning of the return of serfdom to Poland soon accompanied with a drop in agricultural efficiency. European price

revolution reached Poland, bringing towns to the peak of their importance, while inflation grew to 300 percent and wages doubled over the next 100 years.

Further serious drop in the grain prices resulted in 1543 in the passage of the Act of the Sejm attaching the serfs to the land and denying their rights to free themselves from servitude by cash payments. The serfs were proscribed to the land of their origin as *glebae adscriptus*, which was a form of slavery.

Złoty and Coins of 1526:

The Act of Monetary Reform in Poland (1526) introduced a system based on the Polish unit złoty (zwo-ti) meaning golden coin; red złoty or dukat equaled 3.5 grams of gold; regular Polish złoty equaled 30 grosz, each grosz equaled .77 grams of silver; also each złoty equals 5 szostaks equaled 10 troyaks; each grosz equaled two half groszes, equaled 3 szelig, equald 6 ternars, equaled 18 denars. The Polish monetary system was adopted in Prussia in 1528 and in Lithuania in 1569 (at the time of the founding of the Republic of Poland-Lithuania at the Sejm of Lublin). The same year the Sejm ratified the incorporation of Mazovia into Poland.

Formula Processus Act of 1523 Standardization of All Legal Procedures in the Entire Polish Commonwealth The First in Europe 270 years before France

The codification of electoral functions of the regional legislatures, the Sejmiks was accomplished; a joint artillery and military engineering command was established. In 1521 the Act of Sejm approved for Prussia a Code of Law.

The Act of Sejm of 1523 formulated the Formula Processus, a code of courts of law standardizing legal procedures throughout the Polish Commonwealth. It was the earliest standardization of legal procedures in Europe

(in France, for example, such a code was first instituted some 270 years later during the French Revolution), Roman letters were to replace Gothic, thus, making printing more readable. In 1524 an Act of Sejm revised the instructions for tax collection and in 1525 it established courts for the mining industry.

Defeat at Mohacz

The Jagiellonian realm was diminished and suffered a serious decline in 1526. The battlefield death of Ludwik II Jagiellończyk (1506-1526), King of Hungary and Bohemia at Mohacz, in Hungary, was the second death of a Polish Jagiellonian king in a battle against Muslim Turkish Empire. This time the victor was Sulejman the Magnificent (c.1496-1566), who expanded the Ottoman Empire by including in its territories the Hungarian capital Budapest, as well as Belgrade, Rhodes, Tabriz, Baghdad, Aden and Algiers. Poland had to face a threat of Muslim invasion, while all of central Europe was thrown into turmoil. The second king of the Jagiellonian Dynasty was killed in defense of Europe after King Władysław was killed at Varna in 1444 in vain attempt to prevent the Turks from conquering Constantinople-Byzantium.

In 1527 the reorganization of the Polish defense establishment was started by the Decree on Subordination of Hetman Polny, or the field commander, to the Grand Hetman, or the defense minister; separate appropriations were provided for the artillery; mass production of gun barrels was organized in foundries of Kraków, Lwów, and, after 1540, in Wilno.

Poland saving European Jews from extinction Jewish autonomy in Poland 1264-1764

Jewish immigrants, persecuted in the west were permitted to continue to settle and prosper in all parts of Poland since 1264. They were allowed to elect their own elders and to administer their own affairs. It was the rebirth of Jewish people in Polish Commonwealth. Thus, Poland saved Jews from extinction, while Polish parliamentary life flourished. The autonomy of the Jews was strengthened when the Jewish Supreme Tribunal was established in 1530 in Lublin. It had jurisdiction over the entire European Jewry. The Royal Decree (1549) gave to the Jewish autonomy the authority to assess and to collect their poll tax, which was determined in bargaining sessions with officials of Polish treasury. Maturity was reached by the autonomous

Jewish legislative institutions in Poland. The Congressus Judaicus (1592-1764) or Jewish national parliament in Lublin, Poland, was patterned after the Polish parliament. It was unique in the history of Jewish Diaspora. The 16th and 17th centuries were the period of spiritual hegemony of Polish Jews in world Jewry.

Codification of common laws based on public debate in Poland, the earliest in Europe

In 1532 a committee of the Sejm was formed for the codification of all Polish common and written laws. It was the earliest such legislative project in Europe; the codification procedure was based on a public debate. Printed proposals were made by the National Sejm and sent to every one of the regional legislatures for examination and evaluation. Written report from each Sejmik was to be sent back to the National Sejm to be processed by the Law Codification Committee. An act of the Sejm prohibited the peasants serfs from moving without consent of their landlord; prohibition included the employment of runaway serfs and giving them citizenship in towns; penalties for runaway serfs were specified. The runaway serf were able to escape to join Ukrainian Cossacks. The possibility of the escape to Ukraine was one of limiting factors in the exploitation of the peasant serfs. The status of the free peasants remained unchanged.

“Respect of the Law” a Political Program (known as the “execution-of-the-law” movement) was organized (1535-1538) for strict execution of the laws and for reforms and modernization of the government; a law was passed on the return of illegally held crown lands by the lords; again, the holding of more than one office by one person was prohibited; a closer union with Lithuania was encouraged and various additional proposals were made including the establishing of a national church.

In 1537 a Protest Sejm was in session during mobilization for war with Moldavia; demands were made for adoption of Respect of the Law Program by the King's government. An Act of the Sejm (1538) ordered the sale of farming properties by the Burghers and passed taxes for the expenses of the war against Moldavia. In 1540 an act of the Sejm revised electoral apportionment. In 1544 Sejm Act codified the ordinance for courts.

Banning the Inquisition, 1552 Impeachment Tribunal, 1553 Post Office Established, 1558 Negotiated Incorporation of the Fief of Livonia into Poland, 1561

The reign of the last Jagiellonian king was to bring the final shaping of the republican system of the government of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The King Zygmunt August Jagiełło (1520-1572) was a Renaissance man and one of the founding fathers of the Polish Nobles' Republic.

In 1552 the Act of Sejm suspended for a year the execution of Church court sentences by the county chiefs, the starostas; a resolutions against heresy was passed and the Holy Inquisition was banned out of Poland in all its form. There was no burning at a stake, Poland was free from the activities of the Inquisition. In 1553 the Act Sejm Act established the ordinance for Impeachment Tribunals of the Sejm. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction was further constrained by the Act of the Sejm (1556).

In 1558 the Sejm established the Post Office. In 1560 the Act of Gdańsk founded a privateer navy for the blockade of Russian Narva River grain trade (In 1571 the Danes destroyed this fleet).

The Act of Wilno (1561) ratified the treaty with Livonia which made Kurland Poland's fief in exchange for protection against Russia of Ivan the Terrible. The secularization of the German Armed Brethren of the Sword, formerly a part of the Monastic State of the Teutonic Brethren (or Knights) followed. The incorporation of Livonia into the Polish Commonwealth was accomplished. It was a choice of the Livonian leadership to unite in freedom with Poland. The income of royal estates (demesnes) was earmarked for the defense.

Literature – Architecture – Philosophy

A political program, republican in nature and advanced for its time, was published in 1551 under the title of *De Republica Emendada* by Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (1503-72). It called for the legal equality of all; for ending the oppression of the serfs and the inadequate laws to protect them; it was pacifist; it opposed all wars and schemes of aggression. Modrzewski advocated a strong central government, strictly controlled by laws; an efficient administration, and an independent court system to guarantee social justice and a high quality education independent from the Church. He was one of the pioneers of the European science of government and laws. (His works were translated into German, French, Spanish, and Russian and were reprinted throughout Europe).

The University of Królewiec (Koenigsberg) was founded by an act of the King of Poland, Zygmunt August in 1544. It played an important role in the Polish culture. Twenty years after the Copernican revolution the rationalist philosophy was founded in Poland in 1562.

Printing was done on a large scale. It helped gradual Polonization of the leadership community of Lithuania, Latvia, Belrus, and Ukraine. Polish continued to be the language of civility, elegance, and diplomacy in Poland and the rest of Slavic Europe. The number of schools increased. New academies and universities were founded. Progress was made in geography and cartography. A map of Poland was prepared by Bernard Wapowski (c.1450-1535) in 1526 using the scale of 1:1,000,000. Wacław Grodecki (Grodecius) (c.1535-1591) published a map of Poland in 1558; it was included in the *Atlas of Ortelius* of 1570.

Printing houses were also opened in provincial areas. Widespread polemics on religious questions, often resounded all over Europe. Protestants contributed to wider use of the Polish language. Mikołaj Rey (1505-1569), was called the father of the literature in the Polish language. The level of financial sophistication in Poland c. 1540 is shown on an engraving, on the opposite page, entitled “The Lament Over The Death of Credit.” It also shows a letter of credit

and a traveler's check as well as the clothing of the population in 16th century Poland.

Polish literature was flowering. Some of the greatest poetry of all times was created by Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584). Polish literary prose was written by Łukasz Górnicki (1527-1603). Republican political writings in Latin continued.

Wawrzyniec Goślicki (1530 - 1607) published in 1568 *De Optimo Senatore* a program for the Polish republican system based on a pluralistic society with perfect equilibrium between power and liberty. He defined the responsibility of the King as a head of state and a chief executive officer. His work was translated and published three times in England starting in 1568. Its English title was "The Counselor Exactly Portraited". Each printing was banned and confiscated; William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616) gave the name of Polonius (a Pole in Latin) to the chief counsellor of Hamlet, a man who tried very ineptly to follow Goślicki's program. 150 years later The Counselor was highly praised by Sir Robert Walpole (1676 - 1745).

Marcin Gorblicz (1530-1610) apparently adopted the acoustic box of 15th century Italian seven string *lira da braccio* to the Polish four string *gêœle* and created in Kraków the first modern violin. Gorblicz made a new type of head with four pegs for his instrument. The head itself was sculptured in shape of a lion head. This happened during the lively Polish-Italian contacts which resulted from the fact that Bona Sforza (1494-1557), originally from Milan, Italy, married the King of Poland Sigismund I the Elder. Today, Gorblicz's violin sell for more than \$50,000. Giovanni Maggini (1580-1632) of Milan, the oldest Italian violin maker was born fifty years after Gorblicz.

Renaissance architecture blossomed. Calvinism spread among the gentry and Lutheranism among burghers. Perfecting of Latin poetry continued as a long tradition in Poland. Plebeian humanist comedy about soldiers, beggars, etc. was popular. A unifying "low brow" Sarmatian myth explained that all of the people of the Polish Commonwealth descended from the Sarmatians the legendary invaders of Slavic lands in antiquity.

1568 the Act of Gdańsk founded the Maritime Commission The 1569 offer of emancipation rejected by Jews who preferred to live under the Talmudic Law

In 1562 the Act of Seym made the Respect for the Law Program into a law; all the lands illegally held since 1504 were returned to the state. The gentry was exempted from the jurisdiction of the Church courts; the execution of the sentences of the bishop's court by the territorial officers was prohibited.

Laws were passed in 1563 on control of town administration and prices by territorial officers of the king's government; defense treasury was separated from the royal government's treasury; the Seym compelled the Church and peasantry to pay the land tax and to contribute to the costs of the national defenses.

A major political blunder was committed by the King of Poland, when he granted by an executive decision the right of succession in Prussia to the Brandenburgian branch of the Hohenzollerns. It was done in return for promises of support in the war against Muscovy. It was one of the most unfortunate executive decisions in Polish history as the Hohenzollerns of Berlin eventually initiated the crime of partitions and the destruction of Poland.

The Seym passed an act in 1565 on the codification of commerce regulations; it exempted the gentry from custom duties, terminated the towns' privileges to store goods and prohibited to export freely goods from Poland by local merchants, while no limitation of imports was enforced. This was exactly contrary to the European policies of mercantilism of the time when exports were

encouraged and custom duties were imposed on imports. The large land owners who also owned private towns were in conflict with Polish burghers and operated their business in alliance with Jewish financiers who benefitted from the sale of imports, alcoholic beverages, land leases, etc. The landowners had a monopoly on alcohol production and marketed vodka through Jewish agents, who in turn were accused of encouraging drunkenness.

In 1568 the Act of Gdańsk was passed. It founded the Maritime Commission under the authority of the central government. It was to control the maritime commerce, shipbuilding, coastal defenses and enforce the maritime blockade of Russia. Soon, the first Polish warship was launched.

A royal decree on incorporation of Ukraine to Poland was confirmed in 1569 by the Act of the Sejm convened in Lublin (Ukraine was previously a part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). The admission of Prussian senators and deputies into Polish parliament was accompanied by an offer of emancipation to the Armenian, Moslem, and Jewish minorities without obligation to convert to Western Christianity; the offer was accepted by the Armenians and Moslems.

The offer of emancipation was rejected by the Jews, who were satisfied with their autonomy, which was governed by the Talmudic Law. The 16th century brought the final Polonization of the urban population of the Polish Commonwealth including immigrants from Germany, Armenia, Scotland, and other countries. Jewish population, however, preferred to continue to speak Yiddish and to preserve its separate Judeo-Germanic subculture based on a Germanic language and Jewish ethnic and religious tradition. Thus, modern Jewish legal, governmental, and educational system as well as philosophical concepts and religious beliefs evolved in Poland between the 16th through 18th centuries.

THE FIRST POLISH REPUBLIC

(1569-1795)

The founding of the formal Polish Nobles' Republic took place in 1569 during the conclusion of the Union of Lublin. It was viewed as a necessary development in view of the approaching end of the Jagiellonian Dynasty as its last member had no male offspring. The new republic was called Rzeczpospolita (zhech-pos-po-lee-tah), in Latin Respublica and now it is often referred to as the First Polish Republic (1569-1795).

The new ideas introduced in the middle ground of Europe in the 16th century by citizens of the Polish Republic were modern even by the standards of the 20th century. They are fundamental to contemporary political theory according to Norman Davies, Oxford University (see p. 8).

Making one out of two states:

The Union Act by the Sejm of Lublin (1569), made Poland and Lithuania formally one country, which was to elect one head of state and chief executive with the title of the king crowned in Kraków; the supreme political power was to reside in one national parliament, the Sejm Walny, meeting in Warsaw. The role of the Sejm's became that of a “guardian of freedom” supervising the actions of the King. The united country was to have one currency and one foreign policy; the Poles, Ruthenians, and Lithuanians were to be free to settle anywhere in the Republic. However, identical but separate territorial offices, treasury, and army would remain.

On July 1, 1569, the formal proclamation of the Union Act was made by the King Zygmunt August Jagiellończyk (1520-72). The First Polish Republic had the most numerous citizen soldiers in Europe. The conclusion of the union represented a unique act on the European scene. It resulted in peaceful and voluntary federation, which made one out of two separate states. The role of the Sejm's became that of a “guardian of freedom” supervising the actions of the King, who was to be elected to serve as the chief executive of the Republic. Warsaw became the permanent seat of the national parliament, the Sejm Walny. The burghers of Wilno obtained representation in the national parliament and the rights to own land.

Reaction by Ivan the Terrible:

Muscovy Tsar Ivan IV “Grozny” or “Threatening,” known in English as “The Terrible,” earned his nickname because of his reaction to the news of the founding of the Republic of Poland-Lithuania. In 1569 in Novgorod, the most civilized city of Russia, he ordered the torture of suspected sympathizers of the Polish Republic, and then systematically had them killed daily in batches of 500 to 1000 men for five weeks. Ivan’s atrocities engulfed also hundreds of Moscovites for the same reason. In one of his rages he tortured and killed his own son. Ivan IV created his own terror apparatus out of a force of his own bodyguards. In the tradition of the Mongol Empire he enforced the principle that all forms of property within his domain belonged to him and therefore that any of it could be used conditional on state service. Ivan’s bouts of insanity might have been caused by him taking of mercury as a pain killer. Even though the Muscovy Tsar Ivan IV was defeated by Poland in the war over Livonia, he was a candidate in the general elections for the King of Poland-Lithuania in 1573. No one in Poland took his candidacy seriously.

Religious freedom, general elections, and the social contract

The founding in Sandomierz of a Protestant Church of Poland by Lutherans, Calvinists, and Czech Husite Brethern took place in 1570. Anti-Trinitarians or Arians were excluded, however, an anti-Trinitarian translation of the Bible of Nieciewicz was published in Polish. In 1572 Emergency (hooded) Courts, to maintain law and order during preparation of the elections were founded. The Senate was to call for the Convocation Sejm to conduct the elections.

The Convocation of Sejm in Warsaw passed the constitutional amendment, which established general elections called viritim, the first in Europe. The title of a king was preserved, while king’s official function was that of the head of state and chief executive for life of the Polish Nobles’ Republic. The Primate Bishop of Poland was appointed as a temporary head of state for the period after death of an elective king and until the election of the next. The Primate Bishop of Poland was to call for the new session of the parliament, to preside over the Senate, to establish who were the candidates approved by the Sejm for the next royal election, to name the king elect and to perform the act of coronation. The formal public statement naming the King Elect was made by the Grand Marshal of the Crown. Warsaw was to be the election site, where each member of the political nation of free citizens could cast his vote. Elections were to be decided by a simple majority.

The Social Contract between the royal candidates and the electorate was formulated in the Articles of Agreement, which was accompanied by the Articles of Impeachment. The “watchdog” senatorial committee was confirmed.

The Harm of Allowing Foreign candidates for the Polish throne

The parliamentary motion of the Chancellor Jan Zamoyski (1542-1605) to limit the general elections to the native citizens of the Polish Commonwealth was unfortunately tabled and never acted upon. The acceptance of the foreign candidates for the Polish throne eventually proved to be disastrous for the Polish-Lithuanian State. Polish Commonwealth was the largest territory in Western Christianity. It faced the rest of Europe with a possibility of a sudden switch in military alliances depending on the unpredictable outcome of Polish general elections. This possibility generated anxiety in some of the major powers of Europe. They feared an adverse change in the European balance of power. Soon government lawyers in such capitals as Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, etc. had to become expert in Polish constitutional law in order to organize effective and well paid campaigns in Polish elections. This caused the penetration of the open government of Poland by the foreign financed subversion and corruption, and eventually led to the destruction of the First Polish Republic. The admission of foreign candidates legalized foreign contribution to their election expenses. This had also demoralizing effects on those Polish citizens who wanted to run for an office but did not have enough money for the election campaign. Naturally some would look to foreign contributors for the campaign contributions, which could be given in exchange for support of the interest of foreign powers. (When the Founding Fathers restricted the office of the president to people born in United States they did not repeat the same mistake in America, - perhaps because of the familiarity of some of them with the experience of the Polish Nobles' Republic. Poland, by the time they were writing the American constitution, was treacherously assaulted and dismembered by the greedy absolute monarchies which surrounded her).

“The Republic of Good Will, Equals with Equal”

The transformation the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into a formal republic by the Union of Lublin was characterized as bringing **“The Republic of Good Will ... Free Men with Free. Equals with Equal ...”** There was a pride in Polish citizenship throughout the new Republic among its political nation of free citizens, which soon numbered one million people. After the incorporation of Lithuania the republic had 815 sq. km and a population of 7.5 million in 1569.

The General Election Law was accompanied by judicial reform. Elected judges were independent of the executive branch. Courts of Appeal were established. The Sejm was elected on a two-year schedule.

A law was passed abolishing nobility titles and giving equal rights to all the nobles, including the large number of citizen-soldiers, who lived in fortified villages called “zaścianki”. Throughout the huge territory of Poland-Lithuania, every Polish noble, no matter how small his holdings, was proclaimed equal to a provincial governor - “szlachcic na zagrodzie równy wojewodzie”. Among the founding fathers of Polish Nobles' Republic was Jan Zamoyski (1542-1605), who served as the chancellor of Poland since 1578, also as a defense minister (or the Grand Hetman). He was one of the most important and talented political leaders of Polish Renaissance. In 1595 he founded the Academy of Zamość.

Poland created a unique civilization, which was in many respects in advance of medieval and early modern Europe. It became a major center of development of civil liberties and a pioneer of the representative form of government. The Polish Republic was by far more republican both in structure and in spirit than the constitutional monarchies of England and Sweden. She was the very opposite of the absolutist systems of Russia, France, Austria, and Spain.

No Religious Wars in Poland

The Toleration Act of 1573

During the Reformation Poland was a “haven for the heretics.” The principle that no one could be persecuted for his religious belief had always been recognized in Poland. It became a law when the Toleration Act of Warsaw was passed in 1573 by the Sejm. The law guaranteed religious freedom. Civil rights of the free citizens lay at the root of the religious toleration in Poland; the health of democracy of the masses of Polish nobility was strong. The 16th century was the Golden Age of Poland governed by the middle and lower nobility. Polish diplomacy secured the *Postulata Polonica*, or concessions in favor of Protestants persecuted in France. The article on religious toleration represented an important element in the Polish political culture of the period. It was based on the belief that an honest agreement and mutual respect were fundamental for successful political action. The Sejm continued to be the main forum for political dialogue in the Polish Republic. This dialogue included confrontation of views between Catholics and Protestants. Unlike in western Europe, the law in Poland did not allow the landlords to force their own religion on their serfs.

A new republican era and the social contract of 1573

Upon the death of King Zygmunt August, the Jagiellonian Dynasty came to an end in 1572. The 1573 election of Henryk de Valois, Henri Valois, Duke of Anjou (1551-1598) as the king, head of state, and chief executive of the Republic started a new republican era. Under the oath he was to uphold the Social Contract composed of the *Pacta Conventa* and Henrician Articles guaranteeing preservation and enforcement of the Polish Bill of Rights and Constitution. It was the first formal conclusion of a comprehensive Social Contract in Europe. The terms of the Social Contract were as follows: calling parliament into session every two years; maintaining a continuous supervisory council of sixteen senators as a “watchdog” commission over government activities; declaring of war only after approval by the Senate; new taxation and mobilization for war only after approval by the Chamber of Deputies. In case of a breach of the Social Contract by the King, the Impeachment Procedures were to be started with the release from civil obedience (*de non prestanda obediencia*) of the political nation of free citizens (nearly one million people). Another part of the Social Contract called *Pacta Conventa* included

specific agreements with each king elect; in case of Henry de Valois an "eternal alliance with France," construction of the Polish navy on the Baltic, payment of the debts of the previous administration. However, in 1574 Henry de Valois secretly departed for Paris to succeed the deceased King of France, Charles IX(1560-1574). Henri de Valois became Henri III, King of France (1574-1589), the last of house of the Valois Dynasty.

The general elections and victory of the Counter-Reformation

The general elections (or viritim) of 1575 was the first in Europe. King Stefan Batory (1522-86) of Transylvania was elected as the head of state and chief executive of the Polish Nobles' Republic. Sejm's ratification of royal election was followed in 1576 by the act of renewal of the rights and laws of the Jews. The victory of counter-reformation in Poland was secured by the Catholic clergy's acceptance of the limitation of income of each priest to one source.

A rebellion in Gdańsk was put down by hetman Jan Zborowski in 1577 and penalty of 200,000 zlotys was collected from the city. The same year an Act of Sejm created the peasant elite infantry, one man was selected per 823 acres. It was known as Piechota Wybraniecka (pye-kho-ta vi-bra-ñets-ka). It soon became known for its patriotism.

The independent judicial system

The Supreme Court of Appeals was created by the Sejm, independent from the executive branch of the government; freely elected judges pronounced final decisions in civil and criminal cases previously tried in lower courts; a unique development in generally absolutist Europe where a king was the supreme judge, whose authority could not be challenged; an important step in the division of power in Poland into legislative, executive, and an independent judiciary. (This development in Poland preceded similar proposals in France and in the United States by 200 years.) The territorial branches of the Supreme Court of Appeals were established by the Sejm in 1581. Lithuania's branch held sittings, at first in Nowogrodek and Minsk, and then in Wilno and Grodno. An additional branch of the Supreme Court of Appeals for Prussia was created in 1585. It was known as the Supreme Tribunal of Civil Law of Prussia.

The supreme parliamentary court of the Sejm was convened for dealing with high treason. It was punishable by deprivation of civil rights and honor as well as eviction from Poland. The new Jesuit University in Wilno helped train the needed lawyers.

The last years of the Golden Age

A Muscovy aggression against Polish Fief of Inflanty (Latvia) was defeated by Poland with three Polish invasions of Russia, in 1579-1581 under the leadership of the King Stefan Batory (1533-1586). After the loss of 300,000 soldiers Ivan the Terrible sued for peace. A ten year truce, favorable to Poland, was signed at Jam Zapolski. Unfortunately, King Batory's death marked the end of Poland's Golden Age in politics and at war. It was close to the end of the era of the prevailing influence of the masses of Polish middle nobility which produced striking cultural achievement.

Poland was, in every respect, far ahead of northern and eastern Europe and equaled the West not only in economic development and political power but also in scholarship, arts, and literature. The West simultaneously broadened its horizon by discovery of the New World and of Poland, a powerful and cultural country, which contributed to European science by the splendid discoveries of Copernicus and others.

Polish writers were among the leading European political ideologists. Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584), the greatest poet of the Polish Renaissance is considered equal to Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585) the father of lyric poetry in France. Kochanowski is recognized to be as good as the best poets of the Elizabethan period in England. Poland, the largest territory in the Western Christianity, was perceived as powerful and cultured country, impressive by its wealth and size.

The negative change brought by the second general election

The next General Elections in Warsaw was won in 1587 by King Zygmunt III Vasa (1566-1632), the Swedish candidate, who turned out to be one of the worst monarchs on the throne of Poland. He was sponsored by the Chancellor Jan Zamoyski, who at first advocated to limit elections to natives of the Commonwealth only, but then the Chancellor supported the nephew of the last Jagiellonian king with a vain hope that a union with Sweden would work on the basis of the Polish constitution in the Jagiellonian tradition of a voluntary union for peaceful cooperation and security. Instead Poland became entangled in the wars of Swedish succession. In fact Poland became exposed "to hit, rob, and run" invasions by the Swedish opponents of the Polish branch of the Vasa dynasty. The Swedes could do extensive damage to Poland without exposing their own country to similar devastation.

During the elections the Church gave secret support to the Habsburgs, and successfully opposed Zamoyski's plans for the elimination of the Habsburgs as future candidates for the

Polish throne in favor of native Poles or Slavs. Chancellor Zamoyski foresaw that an unrestricted access of foreign candidates would legalize foreign campaign contributions and turn the general elections into a vehicle of foreign subversion and corruption of the Polish Nobles' Republic. Ironically, the Chancellor brought to Poland the very problems he was

warning about.

The new and anti-democratic law of seniority

Polish laws did not restrict the size of land ownership, however, traditionally Slavic custom of dividing the inheritance equally among all children resulted in the majority of landed property being of small or medium size and the nobles who owned it represented in the parliament an equivalent of modern “middle class.” During the Golden Age of Poland in the 16th century this relatively moderate “middle class” was in control of the politics of Poland. There was a feeling of stability and security that the upward mobility was encouraged in the Polish society. An example of the upward mobility in Poland was the opportunity of sons of the peasants to study at universities and seminaries to become a part of the top echelons of ruling Polish elite.

A major blow to this state of affairs occurred when the political machines of land magnates succeeded in passing Law of Entails or the seniority succession law in 1589. The Sejm passed it under the excuse that it was needed to prevent disintegration of large estates which were to be protected by their legal status as *maioratus* or ordination inherited in full as an “*ordinates*” or the senior male; the Law of Entail was to preserve economic strength and military potential of the holdings of huge landowners, who unfortunately had the potential and in the XVII century did turn the republic into an oligarchy. The fortress repair, the upkeep of garrisons, the winter quartering of troops, and maintaining a fixed quota of regiments in time of war were among the legal obligation of an “*ordinatus*.”

The dynamic growth of new land potentates was accompanied by transformation of former knights who owned land into gentlemen-farmers prospering on the grain trade. The new law weakened the stabilizing effects of Polish law of succession according to which the family property was divided by all sons and daughters alike. The new law did not provide safeguards against an eventual damage to the democratic process by the political machines of huge landowners who at times accumulated more land than all of Great Britain, Belgium, Holland or Ireland. While the Act of Sejm of 1510 prohibited bequests of property to the Church in last wills and testaments in order to limit the political and economical power of the clergy, no similar law was passed to limit the power the size of estates of land magnates. Political threat to the Polish democratic process by the political machines of huge estates, later known as *latifundia*, seriously increased with the passage of the Law of Entail. The new law helped to make the 17th century the “Golden Age” of land magnates.

Meantime democracy was practiced. The Representatives returning from a session of the National Sejm were obligated to attend “report-back” meetings in their regional legislation in order to give their formal report on the achievements of the national parliament. The same sessions observed by the public and students of academies, also served to shape opinions on current affairs in every constituency. In fact it was an important element in shaping the culture of Poland as unique in Europe “mass culture of nobility.” An important religious event was the first Catholic translation of the Bible into Polish by Jesuit Fr. Jakub Wujek in 1599.

The union of the Greek and Catholic Churches

The Synod of Brest of 1595-1596 created a union of the Catholic and Greek Churches. The Greek Uniates were adhering to the Eastern rite and discipline but submitted to papal authority. Creation of the Uniate Church was an attempt to heal the schism and bring equality to the Orthodox citizens of the Republic, but, instead it produced bitter controversy between Uniates and Dis-Uniates. However, it tied the Ukrainian people to the western civilization and to the shared Polish political tradition based on the government from below and the opposition to all forms of autocracy. The Union gave roots to the Ukrainian nationalism under the leadership of the Uniate clergy (tsarist and Soviet Russia later treated the Ukrainian nationalism as a "Polish invention"). The sustained and bitter railing and condemnation by Moscow Patriarchate (created 1586) soon resulted in violence. The ethnic cleansing in the Ukraine involving the Uniates, resulted first in 1648 in murders of some 200,000 Catholic and Jews. These atrocities were repeated on the same scale in 1768-72 during the Koliischczyzna uprising. More recently, in 1942 in Volhynia, under the German occupation the Uniate Fascists allied with the Nazis murdered about 100,000 unarmed Polish civilians and some 20,000 Ukrainians who opposed the murders of Poles.

Political and military developments 1600-1605

In 1596 King Zygmunt III, Sigismundus Vasa, moved the capital of Poland from Kraków to Warsaw after the Sejm reformed the State Treasury and established a separate Royal Treasury for the upkeep of the court in Warsaw.

The war theater stayed busy.

Vasa succession struggle brought the Swedish invasion of the Polish Fief of Inflanty (in Latvia) in 1600. The Poles invaded Valachia (Romania) in order to strengthen the southern border and establish there a Polish fief in competition with the Turkish Muslim Empire.

The Sejm passed taxes for the war with Sweden in 1601. Polish victories over Sweden were won in the battle of Kochenhausen and, then in 1604 at Biały Kamień.

In 1605 Polish victory over the Swedes in the battle for Riga at Kirchholm resulted in a complete recovery of Inflanty, Latvia. Polish forces took the town of Parnawa. Polish warships destroyed a squadron of Swedish Navy in the Baltic port of Salis.

Meanwhile Polish-Ukrainian magnates interfered in the Russian succession in 1604-1606 and conducted the first, short lived, Polish occupation of the Kremlin in Moscow. It ended in a disaster and the proclamation by the boyars of Vasili Shuiski as Tsar of Russia.

Polish commanders displayed tactical brilliance using relatively small forces they were successful on the battlefield. Funding of the army was inadequate because of the fear that the armed forces could help the king to assume an absolute power and destroy the democracy of the masses of Polish nobility.

Arguments about reforms

The Sejm issued the Act of General Amnesty (1609) for those who in 1606 rose to protest violations of the Social Contract and lack of reforms. They were lead by the Governor of Kraków Mikołaj Zebrzydowski. Their government reform project included an increase and reorganization of the armed forces and a definite abandonment of the principle of unanimity in favor of a majority rule; also it included a general confirmation of the civil rights of the citizens and inviolability of the general elections. They justifiably complained that the principle of unanimity resulted in delays and postponement of motions, which did not have unanimous support of all representatives. However, so far no one dared single-handedly to veto any decision of the Sejm Walny. Such action would have been considered irresponsible and verging on treason. There was a procedural rule that canceled any motion if its initiator was not present throughout the resulting debate. Thus, the very absence of the representative who would introduce a debated motion would cause such motion to be declared null and void. Unfortunately the opposition to reforms grew as the electorate feared that any strengthening of the machinery of the government would bring absolutism to Poland. The opponents of reforms cited the fact that if the Sejm formally became a “confederation” it would then observe the simple majority rule.

The First and Second Polish Occupation of the Kremlin

Both the first and the second Polish occupation of the Kremlin had ended tragically for the Poles and for the Russians. Both times opportunity was lost to build a solid foundation for the united Slavic power based on the common tradition of representative government and common ancient roots base on the tradition of the public assemblies, in Polish “wiec.” Instead both times through negligence and lack of understanding and care by Zygmunt Waza, a Swedish king elected as a chief executive of Nobles’ Republic in Warsaw obstructed rather than helping to bring about the great reconciliation and permanent alliance between Poles and Russians – instead the potential alliance was squandered and Mongol style rule became Russian tradition propagated by Moscow.

The first Polish occupation of the Kremlin in Moscow occurred during the rule of tsar Dimitry from July 21, 1605 until his death on 17 may 1606. Known as False Dimitry he was recognized as the youngest son of Ivan the Terrible by Ivan’s widow Maria Nagaya. Russian troops began to defect to his side and was helped by the death of tsar Boris Godunov on April 13, 1605 and in June 20 Dimitry made his triumphal entry into Moscow and on July 21 he was crowned in Moscow by patriarch Ignatius. Dimitry had with him some 3500 soldiers from private armies of Commonwealth magnates, who agreed to give him in marriage Marina Miniszech after promise to return to the Poles the towns of Pskov, Novgorod, Smolensk and Novhorod Siverskyi. Tsar Dimitry granted permission to return to Moscow of families exiled by Godunov including the Szujsky’s, Golitsins and Romanovs. He improved the conditions of the peasants and planned political and economic reforms. He sought for alliance with Polish-Lithuanian Cpmmonwealth and with the Pope of Rome. He planned a war against Ottoman Empire and ordered the mass production of firearms. He referred to himself as “Emperor of Russia.”

On May 8, 1606 Dimitry, guarded by Polish forces stationed in the Ktremlin, married Mariana Mniszech, who did not convert to the Orthodox faith, a fact that angered the Moscovites and caused them to attack on May 17, 1606. They killed Dimitry whose body was cremated and whose ashes were shot out of a canon toward Poland. The first Polish occupation of the Kremlin soon ended in a disaster.

The second Polish occupation of the Kremlin in Moscow (1610-12) followed Polish victory at Kluszyń near Moscow under the command of hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski, who helped the Crown Prince of Poland Władysław be accepted in 1610 as the new Tsar of Russia. Russian boyars were eager to acquire the civil rights

of the very numerous Polish nobility. Tsar Władysław was to rule as an orthodox tsar, allied with Poland against the Ottoman Empire and willing to bring to Russian boyars the freedoms enjoyed by the noble citizens of Poland.

Hetman Żółkiewski's plans were ruined by objections by King of Poland and pretender to the throne of Sweden, King Zygmunt III Waza, who wanted the Russian crown for himself, and intended to convert Russia to Roman Catholicism. Hetman Żółkiewski was ordered back to Poland. Polish garrison occupied the Kremlin for two years and was abandoned by King Sigismund III Vasa. The occupation ended in surrender after a long siege.

Mikhail Romanov was proclaimed the new Tsar of Russia. His rule started the Romanov Dynasty. The alliance between the Pope and the Hapsburgs took advantage of Church's freedom in Poland to press for an alliance with Austria and for missionary expeditions in Russia.

The ineptness and negligence of the King Vasa in dealing with Moscow led the Sejm to further specify in 1611 the conditions for impeachment and legal refusal of obedience to the King's government; it also banned purchases of landed estates by the burghers. In 1613 the Sejm established the Tax Court of the Treasury. The same year Polish forces took the town of Smoleńsk after a siege. The Sejm authorized an agreement with the Cossacks and ratified the armistice with Russia - this ended Polish plans to conquer Russia. The territory of the Polish Nobles' Republic of 1,060,000 sq. km. (1618) with population of over 11 million included fiefs of Livonia and Prussia. At that time the population of Poland was twice larger than population of England. The peace treaty of Polanowo (1634) recognized the new borders.

Evolution of an Indigenous Democratic Process Among Slavs Mainly in Poland

740 A.D. Success of Slavic Tribal Military Democracies each led by an elective leader called “Wojewoda.”

880 A.D. Construction of fortifications:

LIMES SORABICUS and LIMES SAXONIAE

On the eastern shores of the Rhine River from the Mark of Avaria to Danish Mark before the beginning of the Germanic Push to the East or the

Drang nach dem Slavischen Osten
or

**1000 years of German conquest of Slavic populated
lands as evidenced by the names of localities.**

Note: Turkmen populated Mark of Avaria which eventually became the Mark of Bavaria.

Proposal of an alliance of Poland with Vatican in the document “Dagome Iudex” of 991

991 Poland offered to be an ally of Vatican against Roman Emperor of German Nation; “Dagome Iudex” included the listing of all his territorial assets as evidence of power of Mieszko I of Poland

**The “veche bell” of Novgorod of 1136 was similar to the
Liberty Bell
which arrived in Philadelphia on September 1, 1753
six hundred years later.**

Act of Cienia of 1228 was contemporary with the Act of the Magna Carta Libertatum of 1215 also limited the power of the throne but never was classified as a “privilege” as were similar acts called in Poland

1228 Act of Cienia Duke Władysław III (1161-1231) to preserve “just nad noble laws according to the council of bishops and barons” in exchange to succession to the throne.

1345-47 King Kazimierz III the Great (1310-1370) the first in Europe codified Common Laws and founded the University of Kraków in 1364.

1370 Act on:

**“no taxation without representation,”
400 years before the American Revolution**

1355 and in 1370 King of Poland and Hungary Louis I (1326-1382) confirmed the rights of regional legislatures in the Acts of Buda 1355 and the Act of Koszyce.

**Act of Habeas Corpus
250 years earlier in Poland than in England**

1422-30 King Władysław Jagiełło issued laws equivalent to the Act of Habeas Corpus of 1679 in England, which became absolute monarchy and where the Magna Carta Libertatum became ineffectual for several centuries. 1422-39 acts were a permanent ban against the confiscation of private property as the law “Nec Bona Recipiantur” started the due process under law in Poland after 1422-30 the King issued a fundamental law “Neminem capitivabimus nisi iure victim” - Arrests only after legal procedure.

1454 The Act of Nieszawa issued by King Kazimierz IV Jagiellończyk. It was called the “Magna Carta” of the masses of Polish noble citizens.

**Poland became a Constitutional Monarchy
Maturity of Representative Government
in Poland in 1468**

1468 Maturity of representative government in Poland was achieved - regional legislatures established political emancipation and were a source of information for ordinary citizens who sent annually their representatives to the national Sejm.

Bicameral National Parliament 1493

1493 Sejm Walny became Bicameral National Parliament composed of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

Constitutional Act “Nihil Novi 1505

1505 Constitutional Act of “Nihil Novi” passed by the Constitution Sejm of Radom formalized the Polish indigenous democratic process by words: “nothing new about us without us.”

Nothing new would be decided in Poland without the concurrence of the Chamber of Deputies, which thus became the supreme power in Poland presided by the Marshal of the Sejm while the King presided over the Senate.

Constitutional Monarchy in Poland 1501 - 1569

King Aleksander Jagiellończyk and his successors were to be elected for life and became successive heads of state and chiefs of the executive branch of the government of Poland, which thus became a constitutional monarchy.

Monetary Reform by Copernicus of 1526 “Polish Złoty”

1526 Copernican Act of Monetary Reform in Poland introduced a system based on the Polish unit: the złoty (zwo-ti) meaning golden coin.

**Formation of an indigenous culture of the
“Noble Nation” in Poland
by a legislative process – unique in Europe**

Representative government in Poland matured in 1468

“Magna Carta” of the masses Polish nobles” by King Kazimierz IV Jagiellończyk in the Act of Nieszawa in 1454. Maturity of representative government achieved in

1468 – regional legislatures, political emancipation, source of information for ordinary citizen sent annually their representatives in national Sejm
The indigenous democratic process of Poland was formalized in the Act of “Nihil Novi” which was passed in 1505 by the Constitution Sejm of Radom stating “nothing new about us without us,” meaning that nothing new would be decided in Poland without the concurrence of the Chamber of Deputies which then became the supreme power in Poland presided by Marshal of The Sejm while the king presided over the Senate.

King Aleksander Jagiellończyk and his successors were to be elected for life and became successive heads of state and chiefs of the executive branch of the government of Poland, which became a constitutional monarchy.

**Evolution of an Indigenous Democratic
Process in
Poland produced a culture unique in Europe
A culture of the Noble Nation of Poland of about
one million free citizens of approximately:
45% Poles, 35% Ukrainians, 10% Belorussians,
7% Lithuanians, 3% Baltic Germans,
Tartars, and others.**

Post-Soviet national commemoration of the events of 1612 in Russia

After the fall of Soviet Union the most important state holy day commemorating October Revolution of 1917 was replaced by the November 7 celebration of the liberation of Moscow from Polish-Lithuanian occupation in 1612, an event of four centuries ago. It is celebrated as National Unity Day. It is a new and most important state holiday in Russia, a return to the tradition of the strong hand rule in the tradition of the Mongol Empire: to cope with problems of enforcing the control of the central government of the Russian Federation of some 150 different languages at a time of growing Muslim suicidal terrorism. For example, on March 30, 2010 in a Moscow subway died a 28-year-old Chechen school teacher, Maryam Sharilova and a 17-year-old widow of a slain Islamic militant both from Dagestan. The two women killed 40 rush-hour commuters and wounded at least 121 according to an Antiwar Newswire.

“Unity Day” was first celebrated on November 4, 2005, commemorates the popular uprising led by Kuźma Minin and Dmitry Pożarsky. It ejected the Polish invaders from Moscow in November of 1612. It was and more generally the end of the Times of Troubles and Polish intervention, which could have restored in Russia the Slavic tradition of representative government and legalized again such words as “veche” and “volnost” (free assembly and free will). The event was marked by a public holiday, which was held in Russia on October 22 (Old Style) from 1649 till 1917.

In 1612 Poland was a peak of its power. It had over one million free citizens and had the largest territory in Europe, over one million sq. km. and population of over 11 million people - more than twice as much as England had at that time.

The name of Unity Day pretends that all the classes of Russian society willingly united to preserve Russian statehood ruled in the tradition of the Mongol Empire as continued by Kremlin. Most observers view this as an attempted replacement of the Communist holyday and demonstrations on November 7, which marked the anniversary of the October Revolution. National Unity Day is also known as Consolidation Day (as an alternative translation), which people in Russia celebrate on November 3 - November 4.

Appendix:
“THE HORSE, THE WHEEL, AND
LANGUAGE:
How Bronze-Age Riders From the Eurasian
Steppes Shaped the Modern World”
Reviewed by
Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski

The Horse, the Wheel, and Language
in the light of DNA precise dating studies
**“THE HORSE, THE WHEEL, AND
LANGUAGE:
How Bronze-Age Riders From the Eurasian
Steppes Shaped the Modern World”**

Reviewed by Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski

The national memory stored in Poland does not include arrivals of the forefathers of the Poles from some faraway lands because apparently the national identity of the Poles was formed in the basin of the Vistula River, in the great central European lowlands in the vicinity of the steppes of Ukraine and of Russia where the original Proto Indo-European language was developed and used already some 5500 years ago. This development is described by David W. Anthony, professor of anthropology at Hartwick College in England. This author has conducted extensive archaeological and DNA fieldwork in the Ukraine, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

The book “THE HORSE, THE WHEEL, AND LANGUAGE: How Bronze-Age Riders From the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World.” By David W. Anthony. (Illustrated. 553 pp. Princeton University Press. \$35, published in 2008). It gives good scientific arguments, which are in agreement with the old mythology of Poland and with existing linguistic evidence. Baltic Sea was sometimes called the Slavonic Sea or “Morze Słowiańskie.” The Balto-Slavs are known to have lived on the shores of the Baltic Sea as far back as nearly 4000

years ago according to genetic evidence and carefully time-dated DNA studies.

According to linguists, some 3500 years ago the Balto-Slavic language separated from the Arian language in which Sanscrit texts were written in India, 500 years later it divided itself into the Baltic and the Slavic family of languages. During the next 1500 years the Slavic family of languages was developing in parallel with other families of related languages such as Baltic, Celtic, Germanic Hellenic, Iranian, Kurdish, Latin, and Sanskrit among other families of Indo-European languages.

Therefore, Lithuanian, Polish, (old) Prussian, English, Welsh, French, Greek, Kurdish and Punjabi belong to the Indo-European family of languages. Some 1500 years ago Polish language separated from the old Slavic or the old Savonic language and started its own development, which is still in progress.

The turning point in the spreading of Indo-European languages came with the domestication of horses, which was first accomplished around 4,800 years ago, or at least some 2,000 years after cattle, sheep, pigs and goats had been domesticated in other parts of the world. Initially, horses were most likely used as a source of meat. Some centuries later the horses were ridden and had the markings of the bits left on their teeth. Eventually horses were used to pull carts first with solid wheels and later on wheels with spokes.

Proto-Indo-European speakers became mobile herders who spread their language through the steppes. Then they became skilled warriors and were equipped with battle chariots on wheels with spokes. They spread their language farther and

farther so that now nearly three billion people use languages, which originated from the Proto-Indo-European language. Today, some 90% of the world scientific and technological knowledge, has been discovered by people speaking languages derived from the Proto Indo-European language.

Today linguistic studies give information, for example, about the cross influence between European languages. Old Slavic word for the wind “wetr” in antiquity and “wiatr” in modern Polish, serves as a borrowed word, adapted to English as “weather” and to German as “Wetter.” English “fist” and German “Faust” end with letters “st” because of the ancient Slavic ending of the word “pięść” based on “five fingers in a fist” from the word “pięć” meaning “five.” Slavic word “plug” meaning “horizontal cutting tool” similar to the word meaning a “skid” or “płoza” became “plow” in English and “phlug” in German. Slavic - Western Lechitic word “bierka” or “birka” became Fench “biere,” German “bier” and English “beer.”

St. Cyril or Constantine (827-869) and St. Methody or Michael (815-885), Greek brothers of a Slavic mother, were born in Thessaloniki and were “Apostles to the Slavs” in the IX century and Pope John Paul II declared them co-patrons of Europe with Saint Benedict of Nursia. They created the Glagolitic alphabet, which included Slavic nasal vowels “ą” and “ę” preserved uniquely in Polish language among all other modern Slavic languages. This fact contributes an additional proof of the fact established by DNA studies, that the Poles and their ancestors for millennia lived in the basin of the Vistula River first as members of the Balto-Slavic family and then as members of the Slavic family of nations.

For several hundred years the Polish language served eastern Slavs as a conduit to learn about the western Latin culture. The Russian dynasty, the Romanovs, used Polish as the language of the court. For centuries Polish language served as the language of diplomacy and civility between the Baltic and the Black Sea.

The antiquity of the Polish expressions is evident in the fact that the word “wall” in Polish is “ściana” meaning vertically cut dirt wall cut, below ground level, in dugout dwellings. Similarly the floor in Polish is “podłoga” or lower surface and the ceiling is “powała” or the roofing thrown over the dugout. The name of stairs in Polish indicates going down or “schody.” Since ground water could accumulate below the floors of ancient dugouts, in the crawling the space there could be a source of ground water. In Polish the verb “łazić” or “to crawl” possibly gave the origin for the word “washroom” or in Polish “łazienka.”

The structure of the Polish language is similar to classical Latin and Greek. The adaptation of the Latin alphabet to Polish sounds consisted of one definite process, rather than, as is the case, with the English language, which is a mixed language with simplified grammar inherited from the adaptation of the Latin alphabet to Anglo-Saxon and to French, which was used by the Norman conquerors of Britain. While the structure of English is Germanic, the modern English inherited two separate adaptations of sounds to the Latin alphabet: one from the Anglo-Saxon language, the other from the French language, which was brought to England by the French speaking people from Normandy.

The French language started to develop as a result of the Roman conquest of the Gaul and the obligation of Burgund and Frank slaves to learn Latin, these slaves were sold to work on Roman plantations in Gaul, where Roman Legions were stationed. The resulting French language today is pronounced in a way much less similar to the Latin language, than is the Spanish language. In the Germanic family of languages only the Germans borrowed the Slavic diminutive and augmentative forms during the 1000 years of the German conquest of western Slavic lands. Diminutives and augmentatives do not commonly occur in the other Germanic languages.

The historic role of the horse and the wheel, in the formation of Proto-Indo-Europen languages as shown in linguistic and DNA studies, and is described in the book “THE HORSE, THE WHEEL, AND LANGUAGE: How Bronze-Age Riders From the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World.” By David W. Anthony, possibly explains the great cavalry tradition in the Slavic half of Europe.

MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

SLAVS AND AVARS – EUROPE	- A.D.740..... FIG. 1
SLAVS AND MARK OF AVARIA LATER BECOMING BAVARIA THE FORTIFICATIONS LINES: LIMES SORABICUS & LIMES SAXONIAE	- A.D. 880..... FIG. 1
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MAP OF EUROPE	- A.D. 1464..... FIG. 3
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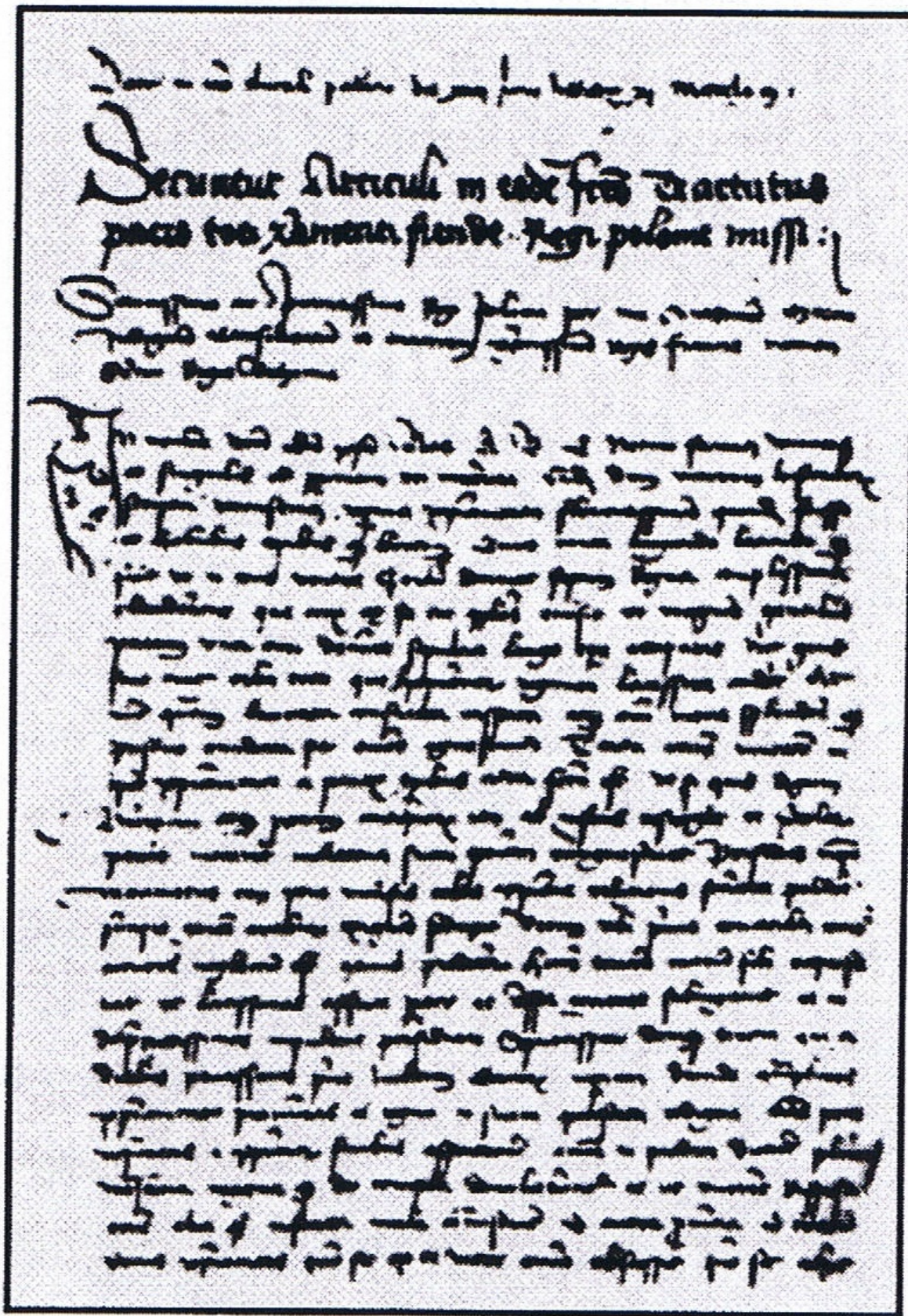


FIG. 2

Metryka Koronna 1463; Projekt Związku
Władców podobny do Organizacji Narodów
Zjednoczonych założonej 500 lat później

Official State Records of the Kingdom of Poland of
1463: Project for the Organization of States similar
to the United Nations

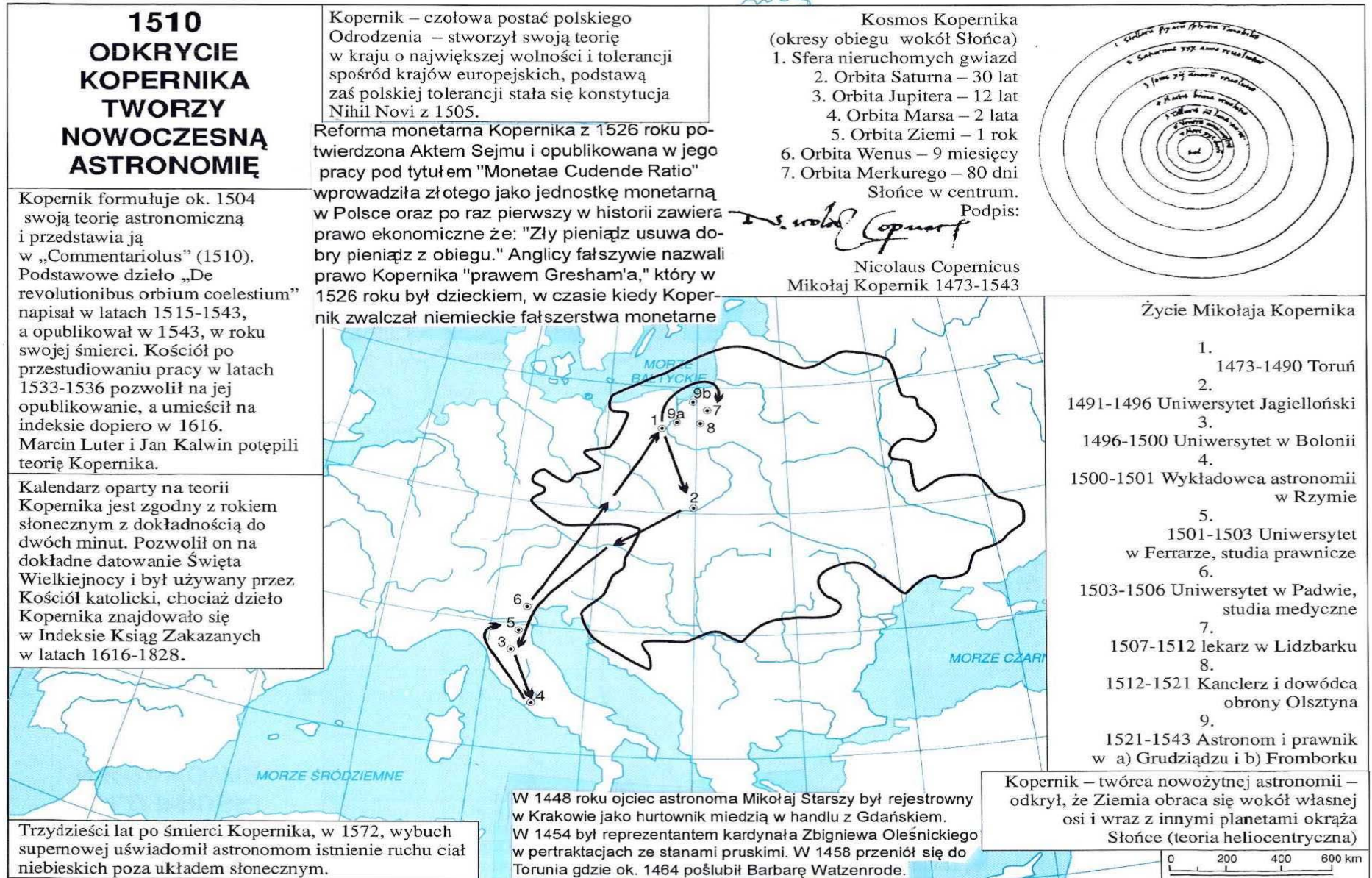


Fig. 4A POLISH MAP

Mikołaj Kopernik (1473-1534)

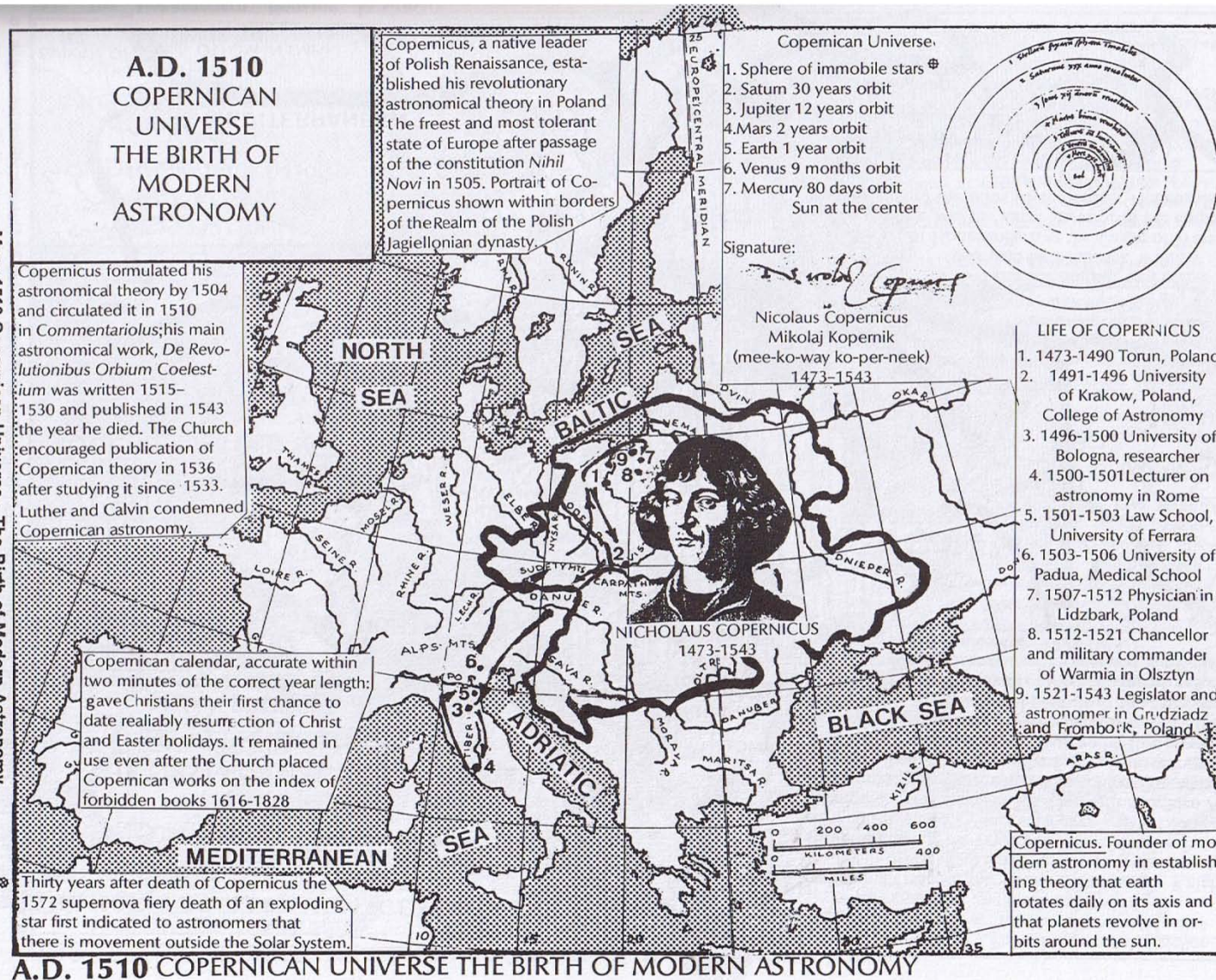


Fig. 4B

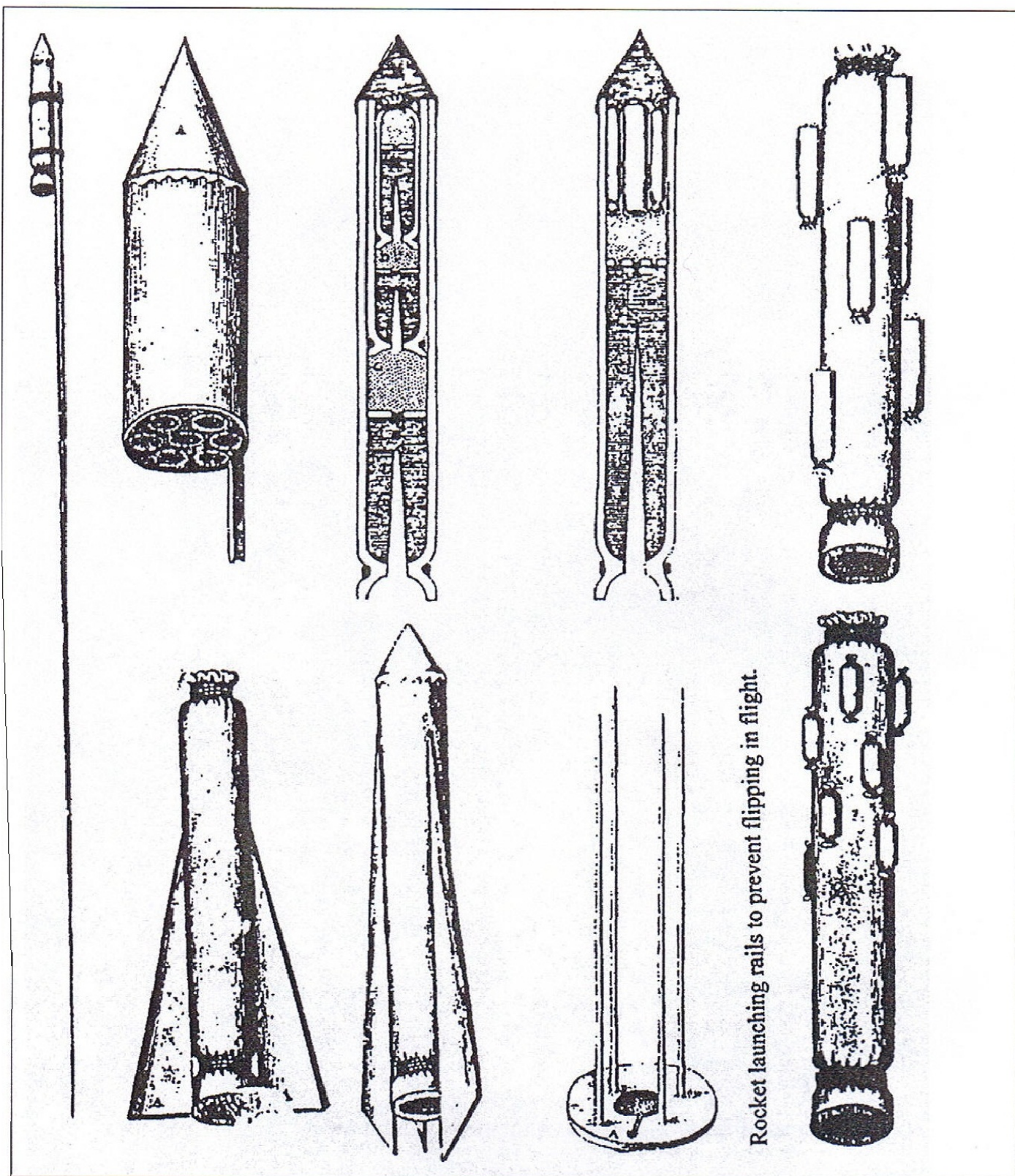


FIG. 5

General artylerii Kazimierz Ostoja-Siemienowicz (1600-1651), autor podstawowego dzieła pod tytułem: *Artis Magnae Afrilleriae* w 1650 r po raz pierwszy w historii opisał wielostopniowe i wielogłowicowe rakiety. Była to praca podstawowa w Europie przez 200 lat.

Artillery general Kazimierz Ostoja Semienowicz (1600-1651), author of the standard text in Europe for next 200 years, published in 1650 A.D. the handbook on rocketry for the first time in history with launching guides, fins, multiple stages with multiple warheads.



Fig. 6

Wielka bitwa pod Grunwaldem 1410

- Największa bitwa średniowiecza -

Król Polski Władysław II Jagiełło (1350-1434) pokonał Zakon Krzyżacki w wielkiej wojnie (1409-1411) oraz w roku 1413 zawarł Unię w Horodle jako unię personalną między Polską i Litwą jako osobnymi państwami. Nowy administracyjny i obronny model został wprowadzony w centralnej i wschodniej Europie. Europejska równowaga sił uległa zmianie na korzyść Polski.

The Decisive Battle of Grunwald 1410

- By far the largest medieval battle –

King of Poland Władysław II Jagiełło (1350-1434) won the Great War against the Teutonic Order (1409- 1411) and in 1413 concluded The Union Act of Horodło. It was a personal of Poland and Lithuania in which the two were to remain separate states. New administrative and defensive organizational models were initiated in central and eastern Europe. The European balance of power changed in favor of Poland as a result of the union.



Fig. 7

Hold Pruski, Kraków 1525

Albrecht von Hohenzollern, były Wielki Mistrz zakonu Krzyżackiego i niedawny konwertyta luterński, złożył na kolanach hołd lenny królowi Polski w 1525 r. Był to pierwszy akt w Europie hołdu protestanta-wasala przed królem katolickim w czasie wojen religijnych. Prusy stały się na 116 lat polskim lennem. Protoplasci cesarzy niemieckich składali Polsce hołd i przysięgali wierność królowi polskiemu.

Prussian Homage to Poland 1525

In 1525 started one hundred and sixteen years long series of homage's to Poland (1525-1641) paid out of the Polish fief of Prussia by the Hohenzollerns, who delivered their payment kneeling before the Polish throne (among the homage payers were ancestors of the future emperors of Germany in 1871-1918). Thus, Albrecht von Hohenzollern (1490-1568) paid the first act of homage to Poland in the market of Kraków.



Fig. 8

Unia Lubelska 1569 (Jan Matejko)

- Polska Litwa Jednym Państwem –
- Pierwsza Rzeczpospolita Polska -

**Akt Unii zawarty przez Sejm w Lublinie - Sejm
władzą najwyższą w państwie Polski i Litwy.**

**The First Republic of Poland - The Union of
Poland and Lithuania 1569 (by Jan Matejko) .
The Sejm Supreme Power in Poland-Lithuania
The Voluntary Union Act concluded in 1569
by the Sejm of Lublin**



Król Polski Stefan Batory pod Pskowem, 1582
Oblężenie Pskowa – decydujący element III wyprawy
inflanckiej Stefana Batorego. Car rosyjski Iwan IV Groźny
został zmuszony do oddania Polsce Inflant na Łotwie.

Fig. 9

King of Poland, Stefan Batory at Pskov in 1582:
Siege of Pskov – decisive moment of the third campaign of
the war for Inflanty. Tsar Iwan The Terrible had to
surrender Inflanty in Latvia to Poland. (Jan Matejko)



Fig. 10

Bitwa pod Wiedniem, 1683-Juliusz Kossak;
Król Polski Jan III Sobieski, dowódca naczelny wojsk polskich, niemieckich i austriackich pokonał w decydującej bitwie wojska tureckie atakiem husarii. Tym samym zapobiegł narzuceniu Europie władzy i religii muzułmańskiej.

The Crucial Battle of Vienna, 1683 – Julius Kossak
King of Poland, Jan III Sobieski, commander-in-chief of united Christian Army, defeated Turkish army, mainly by an attack of Polish cavalry and saved Christian civilization in Europe from imposition of Islam and Muslim trule.



Fig. 11

Odkrycie tlenu w Polsce w 1604 roku. Pod koniec złotego wieku Polski, szlachcic herbu Ostoja, filozof, dyplomata i alchemik, Michał Sędziwój, był odkrywcą tlenu według książki autora Nick'a Lane'a pod tytułem: „Tlen. Molekuła która stworzyła świat” Stało się to 170 lat przed odkryciem tlenu przez: Scheele'a, Prestley'a and Lavoisier'a, których opis tego pierwiastka nie był tak dokładny jak opis Sędziwoja.

Discovery of oxygen in Poland in 1604 AD. By the end of the Golden Age of Poland, nobleman Michał Ostoja- Sędziwój, philosopher, diplomat and alchemist discovered oxygen according to Nick Lane, author of „Oxygen. The Molecule that made the World.” Oxford University Press 2002, ISBN 978-0-19-860783-0) 170 years before Scheele, Prestley and Lavoisier and gave more precise description than they did.