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CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE FAITH THROUGH CONTACTS WITH NON-CHRISTIANS IN THE LATE-MEDIAEVAL GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA

It goes without saying that we often define ourselves by comparison with others, whom more likely than not we regard as different and perhaps dangerous, as it suits us. Fourteenth-century Lithuania was defined by her Catholic enemies as a quintessence of Otherness, a dangerous place on the very edge of Christendom, where pagans, schismatics and Tatars abounded.* This geographical definition of Lithuania's position in the physical and spiritual worlds was accepted by Lithuanians themselves once the country officially had become Roman Catholic in 1387, and they exploited the established cliché for their own benefit. In the fifteenth century, for example, newly elected bishops of Vilnius or Žemaitija used the argument that they lived *in partibus, in confiniis christianitatis*, as lambs surrounded by ravenous wolves in the form of Mohammedan Tatars, pagans and Orthodox schismatics to obtain release from their duty to travel to Rome, *ad limina apostolorum*; ring the pagan bell and the Pavlovian Pope might grant your supplication for a spiritual privilege, or award princes the right to deflect funds owed to Rome towards pressing local needs[1]. We might therefore be justified in imagining that relations between Lithuanian

[1] S. C. Rowell, "Kaip šaukė, taip ir atsiliepė: XV a. lietuvių katalikų gyvenimas ir pagonybės liekanų mitas", in: *Lietuvos didžiosios kunigaikštystės istorijos kraštovaizdis: Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys skirtas profesorės Jūratės Kiaupienės 65-mečiui*, ed. Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2012, pp. 295–320.

Christians, Catholic, Unionist and Orthodox and the non-Christian other, in this case Rabbinical Jews, Karaites and Muslim Tatars, might be exclusively inimical, or at least limited to strictly professional spheres[2]. It may appear that an eighteenth-century manuscript Tatar *kitab*, which adapts a sixteenth-century Polish translation and adaptation of a Jewish apocryphal story of Adam and Eve from a Catholic Latin text, popular in Poland during the fifteenth century, is no more than an accident out of time and space. This is the *Vita Adae et Evae* which appeared in Krzystof Pussman's 1551 *Historyya bardzo cudna*[3].

Late mediaeval Lithuanian Catholicism was a vibrant, exoteric religion of action rather than contemplation, whose officials were incapable of maintaining as much control of popular devotions and church building as they wished[4]. Stereotypically, (in historical studies) Jews were acknowledged financial experts in government employ and physicians, while Tatars served as a loyal defence force guarding the Grand Duchy from attacks by Muscovites and Steppe Tatars. It is interesting to note another safely-defined area where the expertise of these two communities might be called upon by the grand dukes' Christian subjects. There is some evidence of theological communication between the different faith communities in Lithuania before the Reformation and Counter Reformation which introduced a sectarian requirement to consider what True Religion is in the face of Other Christians (whereby rudimentary Catholic practices were declared to be pagan[5]) and the non-Christian Other, in response to

[2] Jews (Rabbinical and Karaite) were expelled from the Grand Duchy by Grand Duke Alexander between 1495 and 1503. They were re-admitted to the realm after agreeing to provide more subventions for the on-going military conflict against Muscovy.

[3] Czesław Łapicz, "Chrześcijańsko-musułmańska interferencja religijna w rękopisach Tatarów Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego", in: *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės kalbos, kultūros ir raštijos tradicijos*, (ser. *Bibliotheca archive lithuanici*, 7), Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2009, pp. 293–310; Teresa Michałowska, *Średniowiecze*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008, pp. 594, 596, 597.

[4] S. C. Rowell, "Was Fifteenth-Century Lithuanian Catholicism as lukewarm as reformers and commentators would have us believe?", in: *Central Europe*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2010, pp. 86–106; S. C. Rowell, "Kaip šaukė, taip ir atsiliepė".

[5] Most clear perhaps in Martynas Mažvydas' fifth letter (addressed to the duke

which the great Karaite divine, Isaac ben Abraham of Trakai, wrote his defence of Judaism, making use of, *inter alia*, Christian texts to confound Christian attacks on his Faith[6].

A few years ago an edition of a curious manuscript formulary of unknown parentage and provenance, now in the Czartoryski Library in Kraków, was published. In the nineteenth century it belonged briefly to the legal historian Tadeusz Czacki[7], but we do not know where or how he acquired it. The compiler of Czartoryski Ms 1399 had an interest in, among other legal and political issues, disputes with non-Christians over the nature of Christ which took place at the court of a King Casimir, who seems from circumstances to have been the fourth of that name (grand duke of Lithuania, 1440–1492, king of Poland 1447–1492). This manuscript points to a rather more elaborate development of Judaeo-Christian relations in Casimir IV's reign than the usual historians' tales of Jewish doctors and tax collectors (professionals performing specific tasks and living under particular conditions and subject to special rights discretely from other social groups) interspersed with the dullard anti-Semitism of a Capistrano, Oleśnicki or Długosz. Polish sermons on Jewish desecration of the Host are well known from the fifteenth century

of Prussia in 1551) which refers to his protestant parishioners who cross the border into idolatrous Lithuania: "parrochiani, quibus papisticae caeremoniae placent, eo proficiscuntur et abominandam ibidem idololatriam complent… ceteri… domi incesnis ad parietem candelis cereis sanctorum patrocinia implorantes more idololatrum festa eadem colunt…" (Martynas Mažvydas, *Katekizmas ir kiti raštai / Catechismus und andere Schriften*, Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1993, p. 674).

[6] Marek Waysblum, "Isaac of Troki and Christian controversy in the XVI century", in: *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 3, 1952, pp. 62–77. A new Lithuanian translation of *Hizzuq ʿEmunah* with a specialist introduction was published in 2009: Izaokas ben Abraomas Trakiškis, *Tikėjimo sutvirtinimas*, translated by Kristina Gudytė with an introduction by Jurgita Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė and Golda Achiezer, Vilnius: Aidai, 2009. On shared Jewish, Muslim and Christian patriotism in the sixteenth-century Grand Duchy see S. C. Rowell, "Lietuva, tėvyne mūsų? Tam tikrų XVI a. LDK raštijų pavyzdžiai", in: *Senoji Lietuvos literatūra*, vol. 6, 1998, pp. 123–137.

[7] Kaji Sayaka, "Research on the History of Lithuania at Vilnius University in the early nineteenth century", in: *From Kraków to Vilnius: Report of the 2nd international itinerant seminar "The Common Heritage of Eastern Borderlands of Europe" (2010)*, Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2013, pp. 47–53.

as giving grounds for pogroms[8]. Processions in honour of, and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament were particularly popular in Lithuania during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and indeed the first mention in the Vilnius Chapter Records of theoretical Jews in Vilnius also refers to desecration of the Host, but in this case the desecrator is a simple Lithuanian Catholic, apparently ignorant of his *Pater noster*, who takes Communion on Christmas Day 1523 in St John's Parish Church without having been to confession and removes the host from his mouth and puts it in his pouch[9]. He later desecrates it in front of a woman, who is suitably shocked at this sacrilege. When detained by guards, he claims that he had been paid a generous sum of 20 groats by Jews to steal the Host with the (incredible) promise of a further 1200 (*viginti sexagenas*) groats on delivery. The story makes little or no sense, since according to tradition, Jews were supposed to pay a Christian to

[8] *De expulsione Iudaeorum*, ed. Aleksander Semkowicz, (ser. *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, V), Kraków, 1878, pp. 785–9; K. Bracha, "O cudzie hostii i ekscesach antiżydowskich wokół egzemplum w kazaniu *De corpore Christi* z tzw. Kolekcji Piotra z Milosława (XVw.)", in: *Ecclesia et civitas. Kościół i życie religijne w mieście średniowiecznym*, ed. Halina Manikowska, Hanna Zaremska, (ser. *Colloquia Mediaevalia Varsaviensia*, III), Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2002, pp. 483–491.

[9] On devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in late-medieval Lithuania see: S. C. Rowell, "XV a. LDK vyskupų atlaidos raštai Vilniaus katedrai bei miestui: Tekstas ir kontekstas", in: *Lietuvos pilys*, vol. 3, Vilnius, 2008, pp. 94–104; the 1523 desecration – *Manuscript Departament of the Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences*, f. 43, b. 210/1, fol. 66v: "sacriligium Eucharistie venerabilis Sacramenti in parrochiali Sancti Joannis Vilne commissum. Eodem die Natalis Domini [1523 m.] quidem homo simplex Lythuanus veniens ad ecclesiam parrochialem Sancti Joannis Vilne infra missarum sollennia et inter ceteros Christifideles communicans, non premissa confessione nec sciens *Pater noster* divinissimum Sacramentum Eucharistie suscepit eoque suscepto exiens de ecclesia manu propria ipsum Sacramentum de ore exemit et in marsubium posuit ut demum per denunciationem cuiusdem mulieris, cui horridum sacrilegium aperi... et in carcerem coniectus. Postmodum feria tercia extunc immediate sequente, facta inquisitione contra eum, post multos errores, quibus pauper sacrilegus implicitus fuit, dudum se esse corruptum a Judeis et habuisset viginti grossorum pro quovis ab eis et adhuc expectare viginti sexagenas pecuniarum ... "; summary in: Jan Kurczewski, *Kościół zamkowy czyli katedra wileński w jej dziejowym, liturgicznym, architektonicznym i ekonomicznym rozwoju*, Część III, Wilno: Drukiem Józefa Zawadzkiego, 1916, p. 17, 1912, p. 17.

provide a Host, which they would desecrate themselves in synagogue. Perhaps the court scribe inferred Jewish connivance in the incident, or the criminal attempted to excuse his actions on the basis of nonsense he had heard in an anti-Semitic sermon.

The Czartoryski story, for want of a better definition, presents us with an exemplum-cum-anecdote, which, although not free from violence, is hardly (or at least not brazenly) anti-Semitic. It is unclear whether this evidence comes from the court in Kraków or Vilnius and it may even be fictional, but even if it is, it presumes that such an association between Casimir and non-Christian divines was credible[10].

The main episode, which is related in almost dramatic form, involves a learned Jew, named Zub, whom Casimir endowed with favours, an equally learned Tatar named Tymyrza and a Catholic canon called Stanisław. The names are all stereotypical to the point of bordering on nicknames (such as "Toothy" – *Zub*) and we know no more about these men than the details given in the manuscript. However, Casimir's sons had a chamber servant named Zub, who is recorded as the recipient of gifts from Casimir in the royal accounts for 1476; but he is unlikely to have been Jewish[11]. Records of fifteenth-century Kraków Jewry, as published by Bożena Wyrozumska, record no one of this name[12]. In Lithuania there was a "Trakai Jew" (*scilicet* Karaite) named Zubets, with a business later in Kaunas, who received favours from the grand duke, according to the *kniga danin,* and it seems more likely that a Jew would encounter a Tatar at court in Lithuania rather than Poland, a pre-figuration of the confessional debates fired by Isaac ben Abraham of Trakai in the next century[13]. The Muslim name Timur is so common that

[10] On the problem of reality and fiction in formulary texts see Maria Koczerska, "Rzeczywistość i fikcja w formularach polskich XV wieku", in: *Literatura i kultura polskiego średniowiecza. Człowiek wobec świata znaków i symbol*, ed. Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa and Janusz Pelc, Warszawa: Instytut Historii Sztuki,1995, pp. 23–38.

[11] *Rachunki królewskie z lat 1471–1472 i 1476–1478*, ed. Stanisław Gawęda et al., Wrocław-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1960, pp. 132, 196, 208.

[12] Bożena Wyrozumska, *Żydzi w średniowiecznym Krakowie. Wpisy zródłowe y ksiąg miejskich krakowskich*, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1995.

[13] "Zubets of Trakai", in: *Lietuvos Metrika: Knyga Nr. 4 (1479–1491). Užrašymų*

it is impossible to track our disputant down. As for Canon Stanisław, this is a name which is also almost generic, although we know of three Vilnius canons from the second half of the fifteenth century bearing that name, not to mention clerics in Kraków[14]. Queen Elisabeth's chaplain was named Stanisław.

In short, the Muslim Tatar strikes the Jew in the king's presence for referring to Christ as the carpenter's son. When asked to explain his action, Tymyrza explains that his religion does not tolerate blasphemy against Jesus Christ. The canon laughs because this debate has been going on between the most learned Christians and Jews "for more than two hundred years" and the Tatar thinks he will find an answer "quickly by breaking a pate". The person recalling this event clearly has some acquaintance with both Jewish and Muslim worlds and the varying degrees of respect owed to Jesus. The period of time mentioned, "for more than two centuries" may refer back to the Council of Lyons in 1274, when Pope Gregory X called upon the head of the Dominicans to propagate greater devotion to the Holy Name and recognition of the Divinity of Christ[15]. The cult of the Holy Name was certainly popular in fifteenth-century Catholic Europe. The reference to *filius carpentarii* may be based on the Gospel text – Matthew xiii.55, where Our Lord is referred to by Jews offended by his teaching in synagogue as *fabri filius*. St Joseph is not mentioned in the Koran, which respects the Virginity of Mary (surah 3: 38–48); however, the popular fifteenth-century Persian

knyga 4, ed. Lina Anužytė, Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2004, pp. 36, 79; *Akty Litovskoi metriki*, ed. F. I. Leontovich, vol. 1, Warsaw, 1897, no. 5 dated 1495-09-24; Isaac ben Abraham – see above, note 5.

[14] Jerzy Ochmański, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu. Ustrój i uposażenie*, Poznań: UAM, 1972, p. 35.

[15] Gregory X to John of Vercelli, on 20th September 1274 (xii kal oct 1274): "We have also judged it proper to persuade the faithful to demonstrate more reverence for that name above all names, the only name in which we claim salvation- the name of Jesus Christ, Who has redeemed us from the bondage of sin. Consequently, in view of obeying that apostolic precept, in the Name of Jesus let every knee be bent; we wish that at the Holy Sacrifice, everyone would bow his head in token that interiorly he bends the knee of his heart." Quoted from: http://www.willingshepherds.net/Dominican%20Confraternities.html

general history refers to St Joseph as a carpenter and kinsman (but not the betrothed or husband) of Mary (Mir-khvand (d.1498), Rawzat-as-safa, Gardens of Purity).

Devotion to the Holy Name was promoted in late-mediaeval Lithuania by the Bernardines; other Christological devotions can be glimpsed occasionally in ecclesiastical endowments – such as the ordering of regular masses *de quinque vulneribus*, *de passione Christi* at Zelva, Dory and Vilnius cathedral in 1508, 1511 and 1505[16]. Most visible and longest-lasting is the cult of Our Lord as the Man of Sorrows[17].

What interests Casimir's court is the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. This in itself is a key to the anti-Trinitarian views alleged to have been rampant in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, leading to the Judaizing Heresy in Novgorod, whose origins are attributed by tradition to the Lithuanian prince of that city, Mikhail Olelkovich (to whom we shall return later)[18]. The mystery of the Sacred Name is discussed in the Czartoryski manuscript by Bishop Jan Lubrański (of Poznań)[19] with two Jews, or perhaps one Jew and one Converso. Lubrański offers the traditional Christian interpretation of Psalm 109 verse 1, *dixit Dominus Domino meo*, whereby The L*RD (Jahweh) speaks to Our Lord (Adonai, understood her to mean Jesus Christ). The Jew Ezechiel finds it difficult to discuss this verse because of the prohibition on speaking the L*RD's

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[16] Alicja Szulc, *Homo religiosus późnego średniowiecza. Bernardyński model religijności masowej*, Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza: Wydział Teologiczny, 2007; Rūta Janonienė, *Bernardinų bažnyčia ir konventas Vilniuje. Pranciškoniškojo dvasingumo atspindžiai ansamblio įrangoje ir puošyboje*, Vilnius: Aidai, 2010.

[17] Grażyna Jurkowlaniec, *Chrystus Umęczony. Ikonografia w Polsce od XIII do XVI wieku*, Warsaw: Wydawn. DiG, 2001; Gabija Surdokaitė, "Rūpintojėlio kultas Lietuvoje", in: *LDK sakralinė dailė: Atodangos ir naujieji kontekstai*, (ser. *Acta academiae artium Vilnensis*, vol. 51), Vilnius, 2008, pp. 155–65. The image is desecrated by modern Lithuanians as a topos of folk art and used in alcohol advertisements.

[18] John L. I. Fennell, *Ivan the Great of Moscow*, London: Macmillan, 1961, pp. 324–25, 329.

[19] Zbigniew Zyglewski, "Jan Lubrański biskup płocki, 1497–1498", in: *Nasza Przeszłość*, 1994, vol. 82, pp. 97–112; *Kronika miasta Poznania*, vol. 2: *Jan Lubrański i jego dzieło*, Poznań, 1999. Lubrański was probably bishop of Poznań (1498) when this text was written rather than when the events took place. He served Casimir from 1489 and took part in various missions.

Name, while another announces to the Cardinal of Santa Croce di Gerusalemme (probably the Spanish archbishop Bernardino Lopez de Carvajal) that the Sacred Name (Ieusus, understood by Christians to signify "salus Jahveh"), which is not obvious from the Hebrew text of the psalm of course, has been misunderstood here. In the mid-sixteenth century Isaac ben Abraham of Trakai refers to a dispute over this text in the fortieth chapter of the First Part of *Hizzuq 'emunah*, where he cites the Anti-Trinitarian Simon Budny in support of the Jewish interpretation of the text as a reference to King David[20].

The fifteenth-century sermons published by Karl Heinrich Meyer in 1931 refer to Polish Catholics who are Sabbatarian and fear accusations of Judaizing[21]. We might imagine that there was a certain amount of dialogue between Jews and Gentiles. However, this "curiosity" is listed alongside such other grievous errors as refusing to wash one's hair or bathe on a Friday out of respect for Christ's suffering. Could such devotional sensitivities be the result of the growing interest in private religious practice encouraged in the fifteenth century as part of the so-called *devotio moderna*?

There is further evidence of direct or indirect influence by Jews on Christian Lithuanians, both Catholic and Orthodox, from mid-fifteenth-century Kiev. These have been discussed in great detail by the Israeli scholar Moshe Taube and the Lithuanian, Dr Sergey Temchin[22].

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[20] Izaokas ben Abraomas Trakiškis, *Tikėjimo sutvirtinimas*, pp. 194–197.

[21] *Sermones polonici saeculi decimi quinti* in *Fontes historiae religionis slavicae*, ed. K. H. Meyer, Berlin, 1931, p. 74.

[22] Sergey Temchin, "Skharia i Skorina: ob istochnikakh vilenskogo vetkhozavetnogo svoda (f 19-262)", in: *Senoji Lietuvos Literatūra*, 2006, vol. 21, pp. 289–314; Sergejus Temčinas, "Bažnytinės knygos rusėnų kalba ir religiniai identitetai slaviškose Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos žemėse XIV–XVIIIa. Stačiatikių tradicija", in: *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaik ttijos tradicija ir paveldo „dalybos"*, ed. Alfredas Bumblauskas et al., Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2008, pp. 149–155; Sergey Temchin, "Kirillicheskii rukopisnyi uchebnik drevneevreiskogo iazyka (XVI v.) i vilenskii vetkhozavednyi svod", in: *Knygotyra*, 2011, vol. 57, pp. 86–99; Moshe Taube, "The fifteenth-century Ruthenian translations from Hebrew and the Heresy of the Judaizers. Is there a connection?", in: *Speculum Slaviae orientalis: Muscovy, Ruthenia and Lithuania in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Vyacheslav V. Ivanov, Julia Verkholantsev, Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo, 2005, pp. 185–208.

It seems to be agreed that the author of the fifteenth-century translations of books of the Old Testament (Job, Ruth, Song of Songs, Proverbs, Daniel, Ecclesiasticus, Jeremiah, Esther) from Hebrew into Ruthenian was a Kievan Jew named Zacharias ben Aaron ha-Cohen, associated with the Orthodox Lithuanian prince of Kiev, Mikhail Olelkovich. He also translated astrological and philosophical texts by John of Holywood, Maimonides, and Al-Ghazali. These translations appeared from 1454 onwards. In 1470 Zacharias may have travelled to Novgorod with Olelkovich, who had been invited by the citizens to become their military defender. According to accepted tradition, Olelkovich's arrival in the city coincided with the spread of the Unitarian Judaizing (*zhidovstvuyushchie*) heresy. Dr Taube considers the translation work to have been intended from the beginning to convert Muscovy to Judaism before the end of the world – in AM 7000 for millenarian-minded Rus'ians, 5525 for Jews (prophesied by another Kievan exile rabbi, Moses ben Jacob II, as the year of the Messiah), or AD 1492 for the rest of us. It seems highly unlikely that a Jewish scholar (or anyone else for that matter) in 1454 would have known that Olelkovich would become prince of Novgorod in 1470, or perhaps he made the most of his chance to start a Rus'ian heresy, when it arose. It is particularly strange that he would translate his conversion texts into a language, Ruthenian, spoken in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but barely understood in north-eastern Rus' and that he would choose Muscovy of all places as the focus of the end of the world – why not try to convert the inhabitants of Lithuania and Poland instead? Muscovy was on the make in European politics in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, but it was insignificant in comparison with the Jagiellonian realms. If the Judaizers are to be understood as closet Jews (new Jewish arrivals from Lithuania allegedly warned them not to become circumcised, lest they be detected), why are they also accused of anti-Semitism? It would surely make more sense (not that sense must necessarily have anything to do with the matter) to view Zacharias as a servant of Olelkovich, who sought to help his master deepen his Christian faith and cultural prestige with a vernacular Bible (like his kinswoman, Dowager Grand Duchess – Queen Sofia Alšėniškė [Sofia Holszańska]) and popular astronomical

and philosophical treatises (John of Holywood's *De Sphaera*, which was taught to students at Kraków as in other universities, Pseudo-Aristotle (the *Secreta Secretorum*) and Maimonides (Logical Vocabulary). It is logical to accept Dr Temchin's suggestion that Olelkovich was the patron of Zacharias' work. A similar range of books was owned by the Lithuanian statesman and palatine of Vilnius Albertas Goštautas in the early sixteenth century (although they were not translations from the Hebrew)[23]. However, whether the translator intended it or not, Zacharias' Old Testament texts did come to be used by Christians – in Orthodox Muscovy and Lithuania: *habent sua fata libelli*. They survive in a manuscript from the Orthodox monastery in Supraśl, now held in the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius, dated between 1517 and 1532. The first part of the manuscript contains Franciscus Skorina's introduction to his printed edition of the Psalms (Vilnius, 1525) and the eight Zacharias' translations along with Old Church Slavonic translations of the Psalms and part of the Book of Proverbs done not from the Hebrew[24]. Part two of the manuscript is an anti-Judaic (and anti-Muslim) tract, the biblical compilation known as *Tolkovaia Paleia*. The use of Ruthenian in Lithuania was not restricted to the grand ducal chancery or Orthodox Christians. It was used in the Catholic Church, where convenient, for recording endowments (as in the official record, the Lithuanian Metrica), fraternity financial business and even texts of the Mass could be recorded in joined-up Latin in Cyrillic transcription[25].

[23] Kęstutis Gudmantas, "Alberto Goštauto biblioteka ir Lietuvos metraščiai", in: *Knygotyra*, 2003, vol. 41, pp. 1–16.

[24] Sergejus Temčinas, "Bažnytinės knygos"; Sergejus Temčinas, "Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystijos rusėniškoji literatūra kaip kultūrinės integracijos modelis", in: *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos tradicija ir tautiniai naratyvai*, ed. Alfredas Bumblauskas, Grigorijus Potašenko, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2009, pp. 53–85.

[25] Catholic documents in Ruthenian e. g. the sale of land at Alsėdžiai to Bishop Martin III (II) of Medininkai in 1510 by Vitko Stankovič, in: *Codex Mednicensis seu Samogithiae Dioecesis, Pars I (1416.II.13–1609.IV.2)*, ed. Paulius Jatulis, Rome: Academia Lituana Catholica Scientiarum, 1984, no. 120, pp. 188–89 (under false date of 1515); on Latin Liturgical texts in Cyrillic script, see e. g.: Julia Verkholantseva,

In conclusion, we may assert that there seems to be some, albeit not entirely unambiguous evidence that in the second half of the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century the various Christian communities of the Grand Duchy were capable of debating theological issues with non-Christians or making use of the learning of Jews to improve their religious and secular education and that the language of this written cultural communication was Ruthenian into which the work of Latin, Jewish and Arabic authors was translated. Be that as it may, it would be mistaken to regard the Grand Duchy as a generally tolerant state in modern terms. Jews could be regarded with suspicion (as we saw in the appearance of a theoretical Jew in the Vilnius Consistory Court's record of the Lithuanian Host-seller-cum-desecrator) and Jews were expelled from the Grand Duchy for a short period by Grand Duke Alexander between 1495 and 1503. Fifteenth-century western European anti-Judaic incunabula survive in Lithuanian collections but their provenance is almost completely unknown, as is the date of their accession by readers in the Grand Duchy (inscriptions often point to owners no earlier than the post-Reformation period)[26]. In 1499 the Karaite convert, Stanislav Ozheiko of Trakai, was ennobled by King John Albert of Poland at the request of his brother, Grand Duke Alexander of Lithuania. On this occasion the new Christian was adopted by the family of Bishop Martin III of Medininkai (who was descended from German merchants in Vilnius) and given the bishop's family crest, Merawa, a coat of arms which was not of local origin. The man, like the bishop, seems to have been rewarded for his services to the monarch but left still as *not quite U*[27]. In 1503 the royal decree was annulled.

"Kirillicheskaia zapis' latinskikh molitv I otryvka china Messy iz rukopisi Sinodal'nogo sobrania GIM No. 558", in: *Drevniaia Rus'. Voprosy medievistiki*, 2010, vol. 2, pp. 74–90.

[26] Nojus Feigelmanas, *Lietuvos inkunabulai*, Vilnius: Vaga, 1975, p. 77; Alexander de Nevo, *Consilia contra Judaeos foenerantes*, Venice: Franciscus Renner, de Heilbronn, 1482; *Pharetra fidei Catholicae contra Judaeos*, Leipzig: Arnold von Köln, 1494, no. 358, p. 258, no. 385, p. 273; Rabi Samuel, *Epistola contra Judaeorum errores*, Cologne: Heinrich Quentell, 1499 (1497?).

[27] Jerzy Michta, "Nobilitacje Żydów litewskich w XV–XVIII wieku", in: *Miasta, ludzie, instytucje, znaki*: *Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesor Bożnie Wyrozumskiej*

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries anti-Muslim tracts were published in Vilnius such as the *Alfurkan* of Piotr Czyżewicz. This duplicitous treatment of the ideological Other is reflected in Catholic relations with the Orthodox. On the one hand, Orthodox Christians in Vilnius adopted Catholic trappings (compare the late Gothic architecture of Bernardine friary church with that of the nearby Orthodox Church of the Most Pure Mother of God which contained chantry altars founded by the building's patron Konstantin Ostrogsky) and institutions (such as parish fraternities), while local Catholics came to venerate icons (at Aušros Vartai or Our Lady of Trakai); schismatic kin were expected to protect the ecclesiastical foundations of childless Catholic benefactors and Catholic landowners could build or endow both Catholic and Orthodox churches side by side in Lithuanian towns (such as Anykščiai or Drohiczyn). Even so, to prove his ideological zeal Bishop Tabor commissioned an anti-Ruthenian treatise from his university idol, Jan Sakran, while theoretically encouraging the Unionist community in the Grand Duchy. The duality is illustrated best perhaps by a dispute in 1512 between Stanislovas Kiška (Stanisław Kiszka), lord lieutenant of Hrodna, and the starosta of Žemaitija, Stanislovas Kęsgaila (Stanisław Kiezgajlo) over the right of advowson to the parish church at Deltuva. During the appeal case, heard before the Gniezno metropolitan consistory court, lawyers on both sides agreed to send a messenger back to Vilnius to bring materials from the Vilnius consistory court. When Frederick (hardly an Orthodox name!) of Betygala returned to Gniezno with the sealed documents, the papers were acknowledged as genuine and submitted to the court. However, when the unsealed evidence ran contrary to the arguments of Kiška's case, his lawyer demanded the material be dismissed, since the messenger was a Ruthenian and therefore (sic!) excommunicate. The court authorities responded that whether the messenger were a Ruthenian or any other pagan, the seals on the documents had been recognised by both sides as genuine, and so remained admissible[28].

w 75. Rocznicę urodzin, ed. Zenon Piech, Kraków: Tow. Nauk. Societas Vistulana: Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2008, pp. 380, 387–389.

[28] *Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Gnieźnie, Acta Consistorii A (Acta Acticantium)*, 78, ff. 140v, 147, 155, 165, 169, 172, 173, 174. *Ibid., Acta Consistorii A (Acta Acticantium)*,

Relations between Christians and the Non-Christian Other in late-mediaeval and early-modern Lithuania may be summed up as an openness to learn useful knowledge from Others who were safely boxed into their categories and traditions so long as these boundaries were accepted by both sides. Breaking the boundaries, even legally (when a Jew gave in to compulsion and converted to escape banishment and was ennobled as a result, or an Orthodox Christian accepted the jurisdiction of the Pope and the decrees of the Council of Ferrara-Florence and became a Unionist), was not socially acceptable.

APPENDIX

1

Anecdote containing a discussion between Christians, Jews and a Tatar at the court of King Casimir (Jagiellończyk) concerning the Divine and Human Nature of Jesus Christ

A: Ms Biblioteka Czartoryskich, Kraków, Ms 1399, p. 8;
E: S. C. Rowell, "Fifteenth-century Poland-Lithuania in the light of an anonymous Kraków notebook", in: *Quaestiones medii aevi novae* vol. 8, 2003, p. 322.

Et Zub erat Judeus sapiens, quem rex Kazimirus prosequitur favoribus. Item eciam erat Tartarus nomine Tymyrcza, scilicet sapiens valde. Iste Timyrcza coram rege stans dedit alapam Judeo Zub, quia Cristo, dixit, 'o filius erat carpentarij'.

Rex commotus, "cur fecisti?", "O rex", dixit ille Tartarus, "si sederet ad latus tuum ego ei facerem, quia hoc habemus in nostra lege, si quis blasfamaverit Christum Ihesum non debemus pati.

Quod canonicus dominus Stanislaus incepit ridere. Rex "cur rides?" Iste, "quod errat et facit tale etc." Ille Tartarus dixit: "Quare dicit, quod

79, fol. 3: "Jeremias procurator Grodnensis patroni et collatoris parrochialis ecclesie in Dziewolthowa … allegans illa omnia non valere neque illis fidem adhiberi quia idem Fredericus mentita fide existens Rutenus et propter hoc excommunicates… Andreas [lawyer for Stanislovas of Žemaitija] respondit generaliter nec obstat quod allegat procurator exadverso, quam Rutenus vel alter paganus sit portitor literarum, cum ipse rotulus sit sigillatus et clauses, quem habuit pro recognito Jeremias". [Date of session 1513-01-14].

errarem?”. “Tot et tot anni sunt, a ducentis annis et plus agitatur ista questio inter sapientissimos doctores nostros et Judeos et Christianos et tu cum perumto capite velis cito concludere. Hoc nil facis.”

2

A dispute between Bishop Jan Lubrański and Jewish scholars over the interpretation of Psalm 109:1.

A: Ms Biblioteka Czartoryskich, Kraków, Ms 1399, p. 17;
E: Rowell, “Fifteenth-century Poland-Lithuania”, pp. 325–26.

Iste interfuit dominus episcopus Poznaniensis dominus Johannes Lubransky omnibus[29], idem dominus episcopus locutus est cum uno Judeo doctissimo nomine Ezechielis, qui dixit “nos habemus nomen ineffabile, hic in isto versu ‘dixit Dominus Domino meo’. Vero vos dicitis dominus illic nos habemus Iehus, vos dicitis Ihus, et hic silemus propter reverenciam, Illius nomen non audemus proferre”.

Item alter Judeus ad gardinalem sancte crucis ikoma[30] Christiana doctissimus, sed iam cristianus, qui dixit quod Sanctus Ieusus aculeatus non bene interpretatus est etc

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[29] *Omnibus* seems to refer back to the dispute on p. 8 of the manuscript.

[30] This word is uncertain; it may be *iconisma*, ‘icon’, and refer to sacred images, but this is unclear.