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Hanna Mazheika
(National Historical Archives of Belarus)
ORCID 0000-0001-8989-6875

The Radziwiłł Cousins, Prophecies and False News in Mid-Seventeenth-Century Europe

Annotation: The article looks at how false prophecies and misinformation helped to enhance the image of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a Protestant state in contradistinction to the Kingdom of Poland, the identity of which was clearly Catholic. The 1650s was the time when the influence of the prophetic imposter Mikuláš Drabík and his visions became particularly pronounced. Moreover, fake news about the destruction of all Polish and Lithuanian Protestant churches found a targeted audience and seemed to have worked as a propagandistic device. This discourse regarding the reasons for the downfall of the Protestant churches in Poland-Lithuania fostered among western Europeans an interest in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and gave Janusz and Bogusław Radziwiłł an international reputation of saviours of the true faith, while at home they were vilified as traitors.

Keywords: Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Radziwiłłs, Protestantism, Catholicism, prophecy, 17th century.

Братья Радзивиллы, пророчества и фальшивые новости в Европе в середине XVII в.

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается, как пророчества и дезинформация помогли укрепить имидж Великого Княжества Литовского как протестантского государства на международной арене в отличие от Королевства Польского, конфессиональная идентичность которого была несомненно католической. 1650-е годы – период, когда «пророчества» Микулаша Драбика стали особенно популярны. Более того, фальшивые новости об уничтожении всех польских и литовских протестантских церквей нашли свою целевую аудиторию и, казалось, работали как удачная пропагандистская уловка. Дискурс о причинах уничтожения протестантских церквей в Речи Посполитой вызвал в Западной Европе интерес к Великому Княжеству Литовскому и позволил Янушу и Богуславу Радзивиллам завоевать международную репутацию защитников истинной веры, в то время как в своем государстве они считались предателями.

Ключевые слова: Великое Княжество Литовское, Речь Посполитая, Радзивиллы, протестантизм, католицизм, XVII век.

Bracia Radziwiłłowie, prorocтва i fałszywe wiadomości w Europie w drugiej połowie XVII w.

Streszczenie: Artykuł traktuje o tym, jak prorocтва i dezinformacja pomogły utrwalić w opinii międzynarodowej wizerunek Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego jako państwa protestanckiego, w odróżnieniu od Królestwa Polskiego, którego tożsamość konfesyjna pozostawała bez wątplenia katolicka. Lata 50. XVII wieku były okresem, w którym „prorocтва” Mikuláša Drábika cieszyły się dużą popularnością. Co więcej, fałszywe nowiny o niszczeniu polskich i litewskich zborów znalazły swoich odbiorców i jak się wydawało funkcjonowały jako pomyślny fortel propagandowy. Informacje o przyczynach rujnowania protestanckich świątyń w Rzeczypospolitej spowodowały wzrost zainteresowania Wielkim Księstwem Litewskim w Europie Zachodniej, co pomogło Januszowi i Bogusławowi Radziwiłłom zyskać międzynarodowe uznanie i opinię obrońców „prawdziwej wiary”, w chwili gdy we własnej ojczyźnie byli uważani za zdrajców.

Słowa kluczowe: Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie, Rzeczpospolita, Radziwiłłowie, protestantyzm, katolicyzm, XVII wiek.

In November 1655 the English newspaper „The Public Intelligencer” reported on the second treaty of Kiejdany, signed on 20 October 1655, the outcome of which was the creation of a state union between Lithuania and Sweden:

„his Excellecy Count Magnus de la Gardy hath concluded at Keidan the Treaty with the States of Lithuania, whereby they have submitted under the Swedish protection, which has given great content to both parties [...]; and the said Count Magnus hath been nobly entertained by Prince Razivil, and by the whole Nobility”¹.

In the perception of many Europeans the success of Charles X Gustav’s military campaign in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1655 was an omen of a fast-approaching collapse of the Catholic powers in Europe, predicted by various seventeenth-century visionaries. For the dissemination of seventeenth-century prophecies tremendous credit had to go to the pedagogue and theologian Jan Amos Comenius, an affirmed believer of their veracity, whose hopes for the improvement of the position of Protestantism in Central Europe were mainly underpinned by various contemporary revelations, especially after Frederick V’s Bohemian army was smashed by the Imperial troops at the battle of White Mountain on 8 November 1620². Comenius used to collect Anti-Habsburg prophecies; he widely discussed them in his correspondence, and even presented a collection of them to Frederick V in exile³. On 29 July 1654 Comenius sent the polymath Samuel

¹ *The Publick Intelligencer. Communicating the Chief Occurrences and Proceedings within the Dominions of England, Scotland, and Ireland; Together with an Account of Affaires from Severall Parts of Europe*, London 1655, p. 85.

² E. A. de Schweinitz, *The History of the Church Known as the Unitas Fratrum; Or, the Unity of the Brethren, Founded by the Followers of John Hus, the Bohemian Reformer and Martyr*, Bethlehem, PA 1901, p. 614.

³ G. D. Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius*, University Park 2009, p. 361. The collection of the prophecies was distributed in manuscript across Europe by Comenius in the 1640s–1650s: Jan Amos Comenius to Daniel Stolz von Stolzenberg, 28 June 1640, Leszno, [in:] *Korrespondence Jana Amose Komenského*, vol. 2, ed. by Jan Kvačala, Prague 1902, p. 47; Jan Amos Comenius to

Hartlib a manuscript of *Lux in tenebris*, a collection of the prophecies of Christoph Kotter (1585–1647), Krystyna Poniatowska (1610–1644) and Mikuláš Drabík (1588–1671) – each of whom predicted the victory of Protestant states and the downfall of the Habsburgs and the Pope – the kind of visions which were popularised in Germany during the Thirty Years' War and were often used for propagandistic purposes⁴.

The prophecies of the Moravian prophet Mikuláš Drabík are of particular interest for this study. The 1650s was the period when his influence on Comenius became especially pronounced, in spite of all the warnings Comenius received from Bohemian and Polish ministers who considered Drabík an imposter and swindler⁵. In the letter attached to the manuscript of *Lux in tenebris* sent to Hartlib, Comenius cited one of Drabík's revelations of 9 February 1654:

„The fire of my [God's] anger will roll down on all the nations of the Earth; but first of all upon the Poles, an unreasonable, treacherous and censorious nation, more deserving than all others to be sent out into the desert. Radziwiłł will labour to stem the flood, but he will not succeed, except in select places”⁶.

The prediction of Radziwiłł's partial success in some places was left out from the printed edition of 1657, nor did it appear in the later editions⁷. It can be inferred that every time

Samuel Hartlib, 29 July 1654, Leszno, Sheffield University Library, The Hartlib Papers (hereafter: THP), 7/72/2A; Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, 9 September 1654, Leszno, [in:] *Korrespondence Jana Komenského*, vol. 1, ed. by Jan Kvačala, Prague 1898, p. 189; John Beale to Jan Amos Comenius, 8 March 1657, [s.l.], *ibid.*, pp. 133–134; Jan Amos Comenius to George II Rákóczi and Samuel Hartlib, June 1657, Amsterdam, THP, 7/100/1A–2B; [s.n.] to Jan Amos Comenius, 30 March 1658, [s.l.], *Korrespondence Jana Komenského...*, vol. 2, pp. 134–135; Nicholas Arnold to Jan Amos Comenius, 18 March 1659, Franeker, [in:] *Jana Amosa Komenského korrespondence*, ed. by Adolf Patera, Prague 1892, p. 209; Jan Amos Comenius to the brothers in Púchov, 28 September 1660, Amsterdam, [in:] *ibid.*, p. 215; Johann Ludwig Fabricius to Jan Amos Comenius, 6 November 1667, Heidelberg, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 271–272; F. Murat to Jan Amos Comenius, 28 February 1668, [s.l.], [in:] *Korrespondence Jana Komenského...*, vol. 1, p. 330; C. Gantet, *Der Traum in der Frühen Neuzeit: Ansätze zu einer kulturellen Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, Berlin–New York 2010, pp. 257–258; J. Just, *Die Beziehungen der böhmisch-mährischen und polnischen Brüderunität zu den schlesischen Reformierten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, [in:] *Die Reformierten in Schlesien: Vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Altpreußischen Union von 1817*, ed. by Joachim Bahlcke and Irene Dingel, Göttingen 2016, p. 173.

⁴ *Revelationes Nicolao Drabicio, 1654–1655* [in] J. A. Comenius, *Lux in tenebris: hoc est Prophetiae domini, quo Deus ecclesiam Evangelicam (in regno Bohemiae et incorporatis provinciis) sub tempus horrendae eius pro evangelio persecutionis, extremaeque dissipationis ornare, ac paterne solari dignatus est; Submissis de statu ecclesiae in terris, praesenti et mox futuro, per Christophorum Cotterum Silesium, Christianam Poniatoviam Bohemam, revelationibus vere divinis, ab anno 1616 usque ad annum 1656 continuatis*, [s.l.] 1657, p. 7; H. Röhrs, *Die Studienzeit de Comenius in Heidelberg*, [in:] *Comenius in Heidelberg: Student in Heidelberg – Lehrer der Menschheit*, ed. by F. DuBois, H. P. Gerstner and K. H. Pistel, Heidelberg 2014, p. 53; J. Müller, *Between Nationalism and European Pan-Protestantism: Palatine Propaganda in Jacobean England and the Holy Roman Empire*, [in:] *The Palatine Wedding of 1613: Protestant Alliance and Court Festival*, ed. by S. Smart and M. R. Wade, Wiesbaden 2013, p. 75.

⁵ E. A. de Schweinitz, *The History of the Church...*, pp. 589–590; M. Kintzinger, *Trösten, hoffen, rächen. Traumdiskurse im Alltag. Träume und Offenbarungen des Nicolaus Drabicius und ihre Verbreitung durch Amos Comenius*, [in:] *Traum und res publica: Traumkulturen und Deutungen sozialer Wirklichkeiten im Europa von Renaissance und Barock*, ed. by P. Schmidt and G. Weber, Berlin 2008, p. 301.

⁶ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin original, 29 July 1654, Leszno, THP, 7/72/2B.

⁷ *Revelationes Nicolao Drabicio...*, [in:] *Lux in tenebris...*, p. 7; J. A. Comenius, *Lux e tenebris, novis radiis*

when Drabík referred in the prophecies to the territorial spheres of Radziwiłł's influence he implied the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the same letter Comenius continued to cite the prophecies dated 22 and 24 February 1654:

„Woe, woe to the Poles; foreign nations will devour them. This year will my judgement and decree overtake them, like as the House of Austria [...] I have hung a millstone around the neck of the Poles, so that I may cast their land with all its inhabitants into the depths of the sea of my anger, which is now blazing against that people. And I have prayed for those true worshippers of his which God has there”⁸.

Despite the questionability of the view of some historians that Comenius was hostile towards Poles and Poland, his clearly well-disposed approach to the Radziwiłłs indicates his favourable attitude towards the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, represented by the most powerful Protestant leaders – the cousins Janusz and Bogusław.

While a range of studies on Drabík's life and visions is quite vast⁹, his prophecies concerning the Radziwiłłs and the role allocated to the magnates in fighting against the Catholic Church have not been exposed to proper examination. According to the prevailing view in historiography, in the prophecies the Transylvanian princes from the Rákóczi family were presented as God's agents. It is true that firstly Drabík foresaw the expulsion of the Habsburgs from Bohemia to be completed by Prince Zsigmond Rákóczi in the 1650s, and after his death in 1652 by George II Rákóczi, who would extend his victorious march over Austria and Poland. What has persistently eluded historians is that at the same time Drabík considered the Radziwiłłs as potential leaders who would help Rákóczi to fulfil the prophecies¹⁰. From 1651 onwards Drabík placed great hope in the Lithuanian magnates, very often failing to indicate the first name of the two cousins; as a result some of the visions appear applicable to both Janusz and Bogusław. This ambiguity opened some latitude for the interpretation of the prophecies, especially after the death of Janusz Radziwiłł on the night between 30 and 31 December 1655, before the first printed edition of the prophecies appeared. Only in one instance in the printed version do we find a specific reference to Janusz Radziwiłł – the

aucta: Hoc est: Solemnissimae divinae revelationes, in usum seculi nostri factae; Quibus I. De populi Christiani extrema corruptione lamentabiles querelae instituuntur...; Per immixtas visiones, et angelica divinae alloquia, facta I. Christophoro Kottero Silesio, ab A. 1616 ad 1624. II. Christianae Poniatoviae Bohemae, annis 1627, 1628, 1629. III. Nicolao Drabicio Moravo, ab A. 1638–1664, Amsterdam 1665, p. 191.

⁸ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin original, 29 July 1654, Leszno, THP, 7/72/2B.

⁹ Among the works are V. Urbánek, *Revelace Mikuláše Drábíka a válečné akce proní poloviny 40. let 17. století*, [in:] *Morava a Brno na sklonku třicetileté války.*, ed. by Jan Skutil, Praha–Brno 1995, pp. 70–75; F. Hýbl, *Jan Amos Komenský a Mikuláš Drabík*, [in:] *Duchovní odkaz Jana Amosa Komenského Slovansku: zborník materiálův z mezinárodního komeniologického kolokvia konaného v Púchove-Belušských Slatinách v dňoch 10.-11. novembra 1998*, ed. by J. Pšenák, Púchov 1998, pp. 165–169; L. Bernát, *K eschatologickým prokom v diele Jána Amosa Komenského a Mikuláša Drábíka*, „*Studia Comeniana et historica: časopis Muzea J. A. Komenského v Uherském Brodě pro komeniologii, historii 16., 17. a 18. století a regionální dějepis moravsko-slovenského pomezí Uherský Brod: Muzeum J. A. Komenského*”, 2002, vol. 32, pp. 70–76; *ibid.*, *Historiografické bádání o Mikuláši Drábíkovi*, „*Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost v Brně Roč. 43*”, 2007, vol. 46, pp. 49–70.

¹⁰ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, 9 September 1654, Leszno, [in:] *Korrespondence Jana Amosa Komenského...*, vol. 1, p. 192.

prediction of 15 February 1652 that he would join the others for „the glory of God”¹¹.

In May 1655 among the countries destined to become the saviours of the Protestant nations Drabik listed Sweden, England and Muscovy, joined by Radziwiłł,

„whose father and uncle were in charge of conducting and revealing God’s will aiming to expel idol worshippers from that country”¹².

On 19 June 1654 Drabik foresaw that Radziwiłł would effectively facilitate God’s plan and therefore the Protestant cause in order to fulfil the prophecies¹³. And it was Radziwiłł who was supposed to reveal God’s plan to the Muscovites and Swedes and for that to be honoured by those nations, followed by the Turks¹⁴. Janusz almost met the expectations when in August 1655 he signed the first Treaty of Kiejdany that placed the Grand Duchy of Lithuania under Swedish power. The union with Sweden, viewed as a betrayal of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Polish Crown in particular, clearly became a manifestation of resistance to the Catholic authorities for the Protestants abroad. Not only was it promised by Drabik in May 1655 that Radziwiłł would rise among the Poles, but after his signing the treaty Drabik prophesied that God would pay Radziwiłł for his loyalty¹⁵. A year earlier, on 27 March 1654, the prophet went as far as to promise that Radziwiłł would become the king of Poland¹⁶.

In a number of his letters Comenius anticipated an alliance between Lithuania, Sweden and Muscovy in liberating Europe from the Catholic Church, despite Polish-Muscovite hostilities and the conflict that broke out between Muscovy and Sweden with the incursion of the former’s forces into Livonia, resulting in the siege of Riga. While Comenius awaited a settlement for the Russo-Swedish conflict, the relationship between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy as well as Janusz Radziwiłł’s negative attitude towards the Muscovites and his desire of cooperation with Sweden, Transylvania and Brandenburg in order to defeat the eastern neighbour clearly tarnished the prospects for achieving the predicted cause.

In all likelihood, Comenius conceived of a coalition with the Eastern Orthodox Church, rather than with Muscovite state power. As early as the 1630s, when there took place negotiations between the Reformed communities in Poland and Lithuania as well as the Bohemian Brethren in Małopolska, Comenius was proactive in enticing the reluctant Lithuanian ministers into accepting the arrangements for the changes in order to achieve liturgical unity with the Reformed Church in Poland¹⁷. After attending the Włodawa convocation of 1634, which finalised the alterations, he gave an enthusiastic endorsement of the results, believing that the doctrinal matters had been resolved. Comenius wrote to Samuel Hartlib in raptures about the „recent agreement of minds, through which the spirit of Christ had bound” the Protestants of the Commonwealth, urging Hartlib to pray that

¹¹ *Revelationes Nicolao Drabicio...*, [in:] *Lux in tenebris...*, p. 90.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 128.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁷ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, 17 October 1634, Thorn, THP, 7/103A; John Jonston to Samuel Hartlib, 22 October [1634?], Antwerp, THP, 44/1/8A-B.

„this may also be an example for settling disputes in churches elsewhere”¹⁸.

Furthermore, he expressed the hope of bringing in the Orthodox Church to discussions of unity. A similar idea regarding the inclusion of the Orthodox came from another advocate of Christian unity John Durie who sent Krzysztof Radziwiłł „Christianographie, or The Description of the Multitude and Sundry Sorts of Christians” by Ephraim Pagitt, asking to inquire with which Protestant concepts the Orthodox and Armenian Churches concurred, and attached to the letter a Greek translation of English liturgy for their review¹⁹.

Notwithstanding the position of Janusz Radziwiłł in relation to Muscovy, the Union of Kiejdany reinforced Comenius’s convictions that Drabík’s visions were true revelations from God. He sincerely believed that the plan would be realised with the involvement of the two Lithuanian magnates. In one of his letters to Samuel Hartlib he claimed: „Radziwiłł is ours and God’s”²⁰. Captivated by Drabík’s visions Comenius sent Janusz Radziwiłł a manuscript copy of the prophecies in order to encourage Janusz for further actions in that direction²¹. He later wrote to England:

„it is not merely a prophecy, for there are commands to the Chief Persons of the world, which they must not ignore”²².

Under Drabík’s pressure Comenius translated into Latin and edited his visions and printed them in Amsterdam in 1657. After its publication *Lux in tenebris* quickly found its way to European intellectuals and gained popularity among the ecclesiastical and secular officials in England. In the first half of the seventeenth century prophetic literature was especially popular among Englishmen, and ancient and contemporary prophecies were often used by both royalists and parliamentarians as a medium of propaganda to prove the righteousness of the upheavals of the time, although by the middle of the century the number of these publications decreased²³. John Beale, Church of England clergyman and writer on agriculture and natural philosophy, praised the book, and this encouraged Comenius to send more copies to England²⁴. In 1658 Beale wrote to Hartlib:

¹⁸ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin original, 17 October 1634, Thorn, THP 7/103A.

¹⁹ S. Kot, *Anglo-Polonica. Angielskie źródła rękopiśmienne do dziejów stosunków kulturalnych Polski z Anglią*, „Nauka Polska: jej potrzeby, organizacja i rozwój”, 1935, vol. 20, pp. 102–103. For information on a possible alliance between the Orthodox Church and Protestants in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth see, T. Kempa, *Wobec kontrreformacji: protestanci i prawosławni w obronie swobod wyznaniowych w Rzeczypospolitej w końcu XVI i w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, Toruń 2007.

²⁰ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, 9 September 1654, Leszno, [in:] *Korrespondence Jana Amosa Komenského...*, vol. 1, p. 191.

²¹ P. Špička, *Po stopách Drabíkových prorokův. Příspěvek k dějinám české emigrace*, „Sborník historického kroužku”, 1895, vol. 4, p. 40.

²² Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin original, 18 July 1657, Amsterdam, THP, 7/111/21B.

²³ H. Rusche, *Prophecies and Propaganda, 1641 to 1651*, „The English Historical Review”, October 1969, vol. 84, no. 333, pp. 752–770; K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-century England*, London 1991, pp. 489–492; E. Jennings, *Prophetic Rhetoric in the Early Stuart Period*, Oxford 2015, (unpublished PhD thesis), pp. 212–282.

²⁴ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin and German original, 14 December 1657, Amsterdam, THP, 7/111/4B.

„there is very much of the future purposes of God in the Revelations of Drabicius, neither is it possible that they should be ordinary dreames”²⁵.

The Brandenburg scholar Joachim Hubner, who had settled in Oxford in the 1630s and was an assistant of Hartlib, expressed his admiration for the book, about which Comenius immediately told Hartlib:

„after the Holy Scriptures he [Hubner] has no greater esteem for any book and that he cannot be sated in the reading of it”²⁶.

Thomas Mackworth, member of the House of Commons for Shropshire, having heard from his cousin John Beale about the edition, asked Hartlib to help with the acquisition of its copy²⁷.

In June 1657 Comenius dispatched ten copies to György II Rákóczi and the same number of copies to Charles X Gustav with the hope that the copies would be delivered to „Kings, Princes to Princes, and Lords to Lords, even to Moscow, to Tartary and to Turkey”²⁸. In July Comenius sent twelve copies to England: two of them were intended for Hartlib and John Durie with the rest to be delivered through Hartlib to Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell and his counsellors²⁹. Initially Samuel Hartlib was sceptical about any prophecies but seemed to have a favourable attitude towards their printed version. With the help of Hartlib a copy of *Lux in tenebris* was presented to the Protector in the same year³⁰. In May 1658 Hartlib sent copies of the book to Mackworth and the academic John Worthington³¹. In 1662 the ejected minister Thomas Gilbert sent a copy of the work to the politician Philip Wharton³².

Such an interest in the prophecies concerning East-Central Europe from English officials and intellectuals is surprising in the sense that in the late 1650s in England there was some degree of ambivalence in public opinion about the Swedish invasion of Poland. At first, the campaign of Charles X Gustav met with a favourable response. It should be remembered that in England Poland was an „unpopular” country due to the financial support King Jan Kazimierz had provided for the Catholic Stuart cause, which was backed by the Sejm that imposed a tax on Scottish and English merchants to help the Stuarts in exile³³. The Swedish ambassador in London, describing the sentiments of

²⁵ John Beale to Samuel Hartlib, 2 March 1658, Hereford, [in:] *Korrespondence Jana Amosa Komenského. Listy Komenského a vrstevníků jeho. Nová sbírka*, ed. by Jan Kvačala, Prague 1896 (hereafter: *Listy Komenského a vrstevníků jeho*), p. 234.

²⁶ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin and German original, 14 December 1657, Amsterdam, THP, 7/111/5A.

²⁷ Thomas Mackworth to Samuel Hartlib, 26 April 1658, Salop, THP, 15/8/17A.

²⁸ Jan Amos Comenius to György II Rákóczi, [June 1657], Amsterdam, THP, 7/61/2B.

²⁹ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin original, 18 July 1657, Amsterdam, THP, 7/111/21A.

³⁰ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin and German original, 14 December 1657, Amsterdam, THP, 7/111/5A.

³¹ Samuel Hartlib to John Pell, from 15 May 1658 to 31 May 1658, London, British Library, MS Add 4279, fol. 53r.

³² Thomas Gilbert to Philip Wharton, 17 February 1662, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. letters 53, fol. 8.

³³ Cited in: M. Roberts, „Cromwell and the Baltic”, „The English Historical Review”, July 1961, vol. 76, no. 300, p. 410.

Englishmen in 1655, noted in his letter to the Swedish king dated 23 August:

„The common folk speak openly [...] that all learned men have shown from the prophecies of Daniel and by other reasons, that a King of Sweden, with England, shall overturn the seat of the Pope, and give to the service of God its right prosperity and use again, which time is now at hand, and the occasion fit to be embraced”³⁴.

The members of Hartlib’s circle envisioned a prompt success of the Swedish army and expected England to ally itself more closely with Charles X Gustav in resistance to the Emperor and the Jesuits, should they provide support to King Jan Kazimierz³⁵. As soon as the Swedish occupation forces encroached on the territories of Royal Prussia in the summer of 1655, a delegation of the Bohemian Brethren, including Comenius, travelled to Poznań to gain securities from the Swedes. In 1655 Comenius’s panegyric on the Swedish king was anonymously published in Leszno, written after Comenius and Martin Gertich, superintendent of the Reformed Church of Poland, received false news from one of Bogusław Leszczyński’s clients about the imminent coronation of Charles X as King of Poland³⁶. In the following year, with the assistance of Hartlib, this work was reprinted in London under Comenius’s name with the foreword to the reader written by Hartlib³⁷. In February 1658 Comenius asked Hartlib:

„please send me that first Panegyric reprinted in your country; there must be more to come, but I cannot find them with anybody here”³⁸.

In the panegyric Comenius praised the Swedish king as a ruler who was able to retain and aggrandise the Protestant religion. Comenius was excited about the progress of the Swedish army, anticipating a swift downfall of the Polish Catholics and Jesuits, as it is evident from his letter to Petr Figulus Jablonský, amanuensis for and son-in-law of Comenius³⁹.

Such pro-Swedish propaganda adversely affected the image and reputation of Janusz and Bogusław Radziwiłł and other Protestants within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, who were singled out for treason, even though they entered into the union with Sweden together with the nobles of other confessional affiliations, facing immediate occupation by both Muscovites and Swedes after the Polish army had been

³⁴ Ibid., p. 406.

³⁵ John Robertson [John Durie] to Samuel Hartlib, 29 April 1656, [s.l.], THP, 4/3/159A.

³⁶ D. Rott, *Bracia czeszy w dawnej Polsce: działalność literacka – teksty – recepcja*, Katowice 2002, pp. 115–117; J. Dworzaczkowa, „Panegyricus Carolo Gustavo” i jego tło polityczne, „Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce” (hereafter: OiRwP), 1982, vol. 27, p. 94.

³⁷ J. A. Comenius, *Panegyricus Carolo Gustavo Magno Suecorum, Gothorum, Vandalorumque Regi, incruento Sarmatiae victori, & quaquâ venit liberatori, pio, felici, augusto. Heroi afflictis in solatia, regibus in exemplum, nato*, London 1656.

³⁸ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin original, 22 February 1658, [s.l.], THP, 7/111/10A.

³⁹ Jan Amos Comenius to Petr Figulus, 22 May, 1656, Silesia [s.l.], British Library, MS Add 4280, fols. 6r-7v.

pulled out of the Grand Duchy and subsequently surrendered to Charles X Gustav⁴⁰. Pamphlets negatively labelling the Radziwiłłs and their Reformed faction, e.g. „Janusius Radziwil monstrum Lithuaniae”, were produced and started circulating together with the existing ones, such as „Kalwińska z Chrystusem woyna” [Calvinist war with Christ]⁴¹.

Comenius intently followed all the negotiations between the Protestant states, informing Hartlib about the state of affairs in Poland-Lithuania. He expected that the Protestant nations would be bound together after he received in 1658 news that the English Protector and the Swedish king were „making an immense offer to the King of Denmark”, on condition that the latter revoked the Austrian and Polish treaties⁴². Comenius’s influence in England was quite strong, and many Englishmen believed in the righteousness of the cause of the Swedish king. In 1658, John Beale wrote to Hartlib:

„Noe wonder at Mr. Com. joy’s et triumph by the King(s) of Sweden passing into Fuenen by a bridge of Ice, but true wonder at the high and just cause of it. If God makes bridges over the sea for his people, and they have so much zeale in his cause as cannot be frozen by those winds which can bind up the sea, ‘tis true, that the abettors of Idolators begin to tremble: their mountains will shortly be shaken, et their rocks dashed asunder”⁴³.

Concurrently English astrologists produced similar chiliastic prophecies predicting Sweden’s conquest of Muscovy, the Spanish Netherlands, the Habsburgs and finally Rome, while Lithuania was to „suffer great punishment”⁴⁴.

Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell himself had an opinion similar to Comenius, pinning his hopes of defeating the Catholic power on the Continent on the Swedish king⁴⁵. From the very beginning of the war of 1655–1660 between Sweden and Poland-Lithuania Sweden was reliant at least on England’s neutrality. Following some pragmatic considerations Cromwell avoided creating an Anglo-Swedish alliance; otherwise, it could have forced the Dutch, with whom Cromwell had entered into agreement in 1654 for the protection of England’s trade interests, to forge a league with either Denmark or Spain, which would have upset the balance in the Baltic⁴⁶. Only when Denmark launched an attack on Sweden in 1657, and falsely believing that the Dutch stood behind the Danish operation, Cromwell became a mediator to reconcile the two states in order

⁴⁰ For the discussions of Janusz Radziwiłł’s motives to sign a treaty with Sweden, see: H. Wisner, *Dysydenci litewscy wobec wybuchu wojny polsko-szwedzkiej (1655–1660)*, OiRwP, 1970, vol. 15, pp. 101–142; T. Wasilewski, *Zdrada Janusza Radziwiłła w 1655 r. i jej wyznaniowe motywy*, OiRwP, 1973, vol. 18, pp. 125–147; H. Wisner, *Rok 1655 w Litwie: pertraktacje ze Szwecją i kwestia wyznaniowa*, OiRwP, 1981, vol. 16, pp. 83–102.

⁴¹ Kalwińska z Chrystusem woyna, Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich, mnc. 373, fols. 581–585.

⁴² Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin and German original, 25 January 1658, London, THP, 7/111/8A–B.

⁴³ John Beale to Samuel Hartlib, 2 March 1658, Hereford, [in:] *Listy Komenského a vrstevníků jeho*, p. 234.

⁴⁴ Cited in: F. Persson, *From Vanguard to Rearguard: The Swedish Court as a Motor of Change in the Seventeenth Century*, „The Court Historian”, 2016, vol. 21, No. 2, p. 109.

⁴⁵ T. Venning, *Cromwellian Foreign Policy*, New York 1996, p. 190.

⁴⁶ M. Roberts, *Cromwell and the Baltic...*, pp. 417–422.

to create an alliance against the Habsburgs, hoping to attract also the United Provinces and France⁴⁷.

As soon as Leszno in Wielkopolska was destroyed by the Polish troops in April 1656, right after the Swedish forces left the town, Martin Gertich received advice from his nephew Kaspar Gertich that the clergy and laymen of the Bohemian Brethren should solicit help from Cromwell by asking him to protect their religion and should also write to the Swedish king so that Charles X started to treat the Brethren equally with Lutherans. In the letter among those who could pose as the protectors of the Brethren on the Continent Kaspar Gertich listed the Elector of Brandenburg, George II Rákóczi and Bogusław Radziwiłł, because the latter was „favoured by the Elector of Brandenburg as well as by the Swedish king”⁴⁸. Comenius’s son-in-law Petr Figulus was also concerned about the Reformed in Royal Prussia where the Reformed community was undergoing persecution from the side of the Swedish Lutherans, while having been deprived of all liberties. He did not see any other options for their relief other than to seek help from Cromwell, whom he considered „the chiefe Nursing father of all the Protestants” and therefore he believed Cromwell could intervene and free the Reformed from Lutheran oppression by reconciling them⁴⁹. He later bewailed the death of Cromwell „when the affaires of Religion and Protestant cause euey where are in the worst termes”, complementing Hartlib and Durie on their ecumenical endeavours and calling them „the chiefest pillars of the upholding of Protestant affaires”⁵⁰.

In contrast, Comenius blamed the Polish Catholics for getting the Reformed Church into trouble and even spread „fake news” about the complete downfall of the Protestant Churches of Poland-Lithuania. In 1657, he wrote to Hartlib:

„Throughout the whole of Poland and Lithuania not one single Evangelical, Reformed or Lutheran Church remains; they have all been destroyed, and those Pastors who have not escaped in flight have all been slaughtered”⁵¹.

He himself lamented that people were deluded by false reports, especially those coming from Danzig.⁵² In one of these letters he noted:

„If we had bene undone by the Swedes perhaps our lamentations might more easily haue bin receiued, and belieued, that the Polanders should persecute the Church they cannot and will not imagine, being carried away with prejudices and befooled with false reports (especially of the Dantzickers)”⁵³.

Comenius was devastated by the denouement of the Swedish invasion. On 9 May 1658, he wrote to John Beale:

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 424–426, 433.

⁴⁸ Kaspar Gertich to Martin Gertich, 5 May 1657, Elbing, [in:] *Korrespondence Jana Amosa Komeniského...*, vol. 2, p. 118.

⁴⁹ Petr Figulus to Samuel Hartlib, 3 April 1658, Danzig, THP, 9/17/5A.

⁵⁰ Petr Figulus to Samuel Hartlib, 4 October 1658, Amsterdam, THP, 9/17/31A-31B.

⁵¹ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, English translation of Latin original, 5 February [1657?], Amsterdam, THP, 7/111/18A.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 7/111/18A–B.

⁵³ Jan Amos Comenius to Samuel Hartlib, 5 February 1657, Amsterdam, THP, 39/4/8A.

„We were greatly disturbed by an outcome so contrary to our hopes, with the East and the North, joined in alliance the year before, but soon separated, it appeared, by so great a disaster”⁵⁴.

He seemed to console himself, however, believing that this had been a warning against disobedience, designed to spur on people and predispose them to the things prophesied, and concluding:

„The people of the East do acknowledge this and promise to amend”⁵⁵.

Likewise, many English printed texts ascribed culpability for attacks on the Reformed of the Commonwealth to the Catholics only:

„by suddain Massacres and exposing to cold, nakedness, hunger, and all extremities. This is the new way of the Papists, a proof of which we have in those three successive Instances, First, in that of Ireland, and then divers years after, in that of Poland, and that of Piedmont”⁵⁶.

Similarly, an anonymous publication of 1658, while paying homage to Cromwell as a defender of faith, blamed the Jesuits for their violence against those professing the Reformed faith, and particularly for forcing the members of the Bohemian Brethren to flee for the safety of their lives to other countries in the hope of securing some assistance for their churches⁵⁷. Additionally, the publication contained the description of the destruction of various churches and persecutions and tortures of Protestants in Poland, accompanied by a series of illustrations.

By the late 1650s, the attitude of Englishmen towards the Swedish invasion of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth turned more negative. English opinion started to accuse the Swedes of using religion as a pretext to impose control over the Baltic⁵⁸. Instead of liberators of the oppressed Protestants, the Swedes were depicted as more evil than the Catholics. One pamphlet, „The Promotion of the Protestant Cause in

⁵⁴ Jan Amos Comenius to John Beale, English translation of Latin original, 9 May 1658, Amsterdam, THP, 7/111/11A.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7/111/12B.

⁵⁶ *The Agreement of the Associated Ministers of the County of Essex: Proposed to their Particular Congregations, and to All such of the County that Love the Churches Peace; with a Word of Exhortation to Brotherly Union*, London 1658, p. 37.

⁵⁷ *A Further Narrative of the Passages of these Times in the Common-wealth of England an Act for Renouncing and Disanulling the Pretended Title of Charls Stuart, and for the Taking away of the Court of Wards and Liveries, the Judgment ... against James Naylor the Quaker: with the Triall of Miles Sundercombe*, [London] 1658, pp. 39–42.

⁵⁸ *The Swedish Cloak of Religion: or, A Politick Discourse between Two Citizens of Elbing. Occasioned by the Publishing of a Proclamation, by the Swedish Governour of that City. Wherein is Laid Open to the View of the World, how the Whole Palatinate of Marienburgh in Prussia is Made Desolate, and Brought into Slavery, by the Swedish Religious Pretexts, and Introduction of a New Church-government. And Consequently, the Grand Mistake of all such as Have Conceived an Impression that the Present King of Swedens Martial Undertakings were Really Intended for or towards the Propagation and Defence of the Protestant Cause. First Printed in the German language, and now Faithfully Englished*, London 1659.

Poland by the Ármes of His Majesty the King of Sweden", pointed out the destructive nature of the Swedish war:

„For although the Papists had retained their Power in all the said parts, and had proceeded against the Reformed Protestants even by the Spanish Inquisition, they could not possibly, in so short a time, have streightned, famished and destroyed (no not by the sword and fire it self) so many of the Reformed Protestant Christians, both young and old, men and women, Nobility and Commonalty, as have perished during this pretended Swedish Protestant warre.⁵⁹”

Ultimately, all the published prophecies, including Drabík's visions, for the most part proved to be false. Nevertheless, some of them were translated into English and appeared in print in 1664, followed by another full Latin edition of 1665 published under a slightly different title – *Lux e tenebris* – and incorporated the visions Drabík had had since the first edition was issued⁶⁰. Even before the first issuance of the prophecies by Comenius in 1657 they came in for severe criticism. In 1656, Jan Fekinus, consenior of the Bohemian Brethren and Drabík's opponent, laid the blame for the destruction of Leszno on Drabík who had predicted that Leszno would be destroyed unless the Bohemian Brethren asked help from Radziwiłł⁶¹. Fekinus sought to demonstrate that the destruction of the town had been inevitable from both a political and geographical point of view⁶². A similar view was shared by Nicholas Arnold, a native of Leszno and

⁵⁹ *The Promotion of the Protestant Cause in Poland by the Ármes of His Majesty the King of Sweden*, London 1659, p. 3.

⁶⁰ It was also included in some French and German publications of the second half of the seventeenth century and was printed in English in London in 1664, which was the translation of *Historia revelationum Christophori Kotteri, Christinae Poniatoviae, Nicolai Drabicii*, edited by Jan Amos Comenius and printed in 1659; and brief accounts of their visions in English were printed in 1670. *Bibliografia Staropolska* <https://www.estreicher.uj.edu.pl/skany/?dir=dane_indeks|25> [accessed 06 October 2016]; J. A. Comenius, *The School of Infancy. An Essay on the Education of Youth, during their First Six Years. To which is Prefixed a Sketch of the Life of the Author*, ed. by Daniel Benham, London 1858, pp. 140–142; J. A. Comenius, Ch. Kotter, K. Poniatowska, N. Drabicius, *Historia revelationum Christophori Kotteri, Christinae Poniatoviae, Nicolai Drabicii*, [Amsterdam] 1659, pp. 31–137; *Prophecies of Christopher Kotterus, Christiana Poniatovia, Nicholas Drabicius, Three Famous German Prophets Foretelling Forty Years agoe this Present Invasion of the Turks into the Empire of Germany, and the Events that will Ensue: the Miraculous Conversion of the Great Turk, and the Translating of the Bible into the Turkish Language: Predictions Concerning the Pope, Emperor, and King of France, with the Sudden Destruction of the Popish Religion in the Year 1666: Presaging also the Uniting of all Religions into One Visible Church, and how that Church shall be Governed by Bishops, etc.: Many of the Prophecies were Very Much Desired by the Late King of Bohemia, and were Presented to him by the Learned and Eminent Protestant Divine Comenius, and by him Made Publick / Translated out of the Latine by R.C. Gent*, London 1664, pp. 56–91; J. A. Comenius, *A Generall Table of Europe, Representing the Present and Future State thereof viz. the Present Governments, Languages, Religions, Foundations, and Revolutions both of Governments and Religions, the Future Mutations, Revolutions, Government, and Religion of Christendom and of the World etc. / from the Prophecies of the Three Late German prophets, Kotterus, Christina, and Drabricius, etc., all Collected out of the Originals, for the Common Use and Information of the English*, [London] 1670, pp. 268–270.

⁶¹ *Revelationes Nicolao Drabicio...*, [in:] *Lux in tenebris...*, p. 60.

⁶² *Felin o Drabíkově vině při pádā Lešna 1656*, [in:] *Korrespondence Jana Amosa Komenského. Listy Komenského a vrstevníků jeho II. Zprávy o životě jeho ze současných pramenů. Menší latinské spisky některé*, ed. by Jan Kvačala, Praha 1902, p. 197.

former pupil of Comenius. Arnold vigorously criticized Drabik's prophecies, believing that Comenius's assiduous promulgation of the message of an inevitable victory over Catholic Poland had expedited the downfall of the Protestants of Leszno⁶³.

In 1660, Nicholas Arnold published „Discursus theologicus contra D. Joh. Amos Comenii” severely attacking Comenius for his prophetic delusions. Arnold devoted an entire chapter to questioning every one of Drabik's predictions regarding the Radziwiłłs⁶⁴. As a member of the ambassadorial corpus of the United Provinces, sent in 1656 to negotiate with the King of Sweden, the Elector of Brandenburg and the Polish king, he knew at first-hand the political situation in East-Central Europe. By that time Janusz Radziwiłł was already dead and all the visions concerning him were obsolete. Arnold pointed out the repercussions the Reformed led by the Radziwiłłs had faced for their cooperation with the Swedes. In one of his letters Arnold bluntly accused Comenius of inducing Janusz Radziwiłł to follow the prophecies, leading to the treaties of Kiejdany which was seen by Arnold as a miserable event, although there is no convincing evidence of a direct influence of Comenius on Janusz⁶⁵. In 1659, in his correspondence Arnold remonstrated with Comenius about the riddle of the proofs Comenius found in the prophecies which had forced Radziwiłł and Rákóczi to take up arms against the Poles „in hope of freeing the Church from the Papal tyranny”⁶⁶. Attacking one of the prophecies Arnold reproached the Swedes for deceiving Janusz's expectations and thrusting him into misery⁶⁷. Such an attitude of Arnold towards Radziwiłł can be explained by the sentiments the author had for the magnate. He even dedicated to him one of his first treatises published in Franeker in 1654.

Arnold did not believe that Drabik's prophecies directly concerned Bogusław Radziwiłł, but he depicted the magnate in the best possible way – as a person who committed himself to restoring destroyed Protestant property after being granted pardon by the Polish king. He assumed that the Reformed Church was now facing a very uncertain future, and there was little hope that a full recovery would be possible despite all of Bogusław's efforts, basing his argument on false information that no single Reformed envoy was presented at the Sejm⁶⁸. From 1657, reconciled with royal power due to the mediation of the Elector of Brandenburg, Bogusław Radziwiłł, as governor of Ducal Prussia in his service to the Elector, was now waging war against Sweden in Prussia and Courland⁶⁹.

Arnold's publication written in Latin was available to intellectuals in England and became one of the informative sources on the position of the Reformed Church of Lithuanian. Hartlib commented on the book in a letter to John Worthington:

⁶³ D. Murphy, *Comenius: A Critical Reassessment of His Life and Work*, Dublin 1995, p. 41.

⁶⁴ N. Arnold, *Discursus theologicus, contra D. Joh. Amos Comenii praetensam Lucem in tenebris, seu prophetias Cotteri, Poniatowiae, et Drabicii, vulgatas, et nupero scripto virulento commendatas*, Franeker 1660, pp. 40–41. For Arnold's biography, see: M. Sipayłłówna, Arnold Mikołaj (1618–1680), „Polski Słownik Biograficzny”, 1935, vol. 1, Kraków 1935, pp. 164–165.

⁶⁵ Nicholas Arnold to Jan Amos Comenius, 8 March 1659, Franeker, [in:] *Jana Amosa Komenského korespondence...*, p. 208.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ M. Arnold, *Discursus theologicus...*, p. 40.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

„One Arnoldus Professor of Franeker, once one of Mr. Comenius scholars, hath written a great Book against *Lux in Tenebris*”⁷⁰.

It appears that it was well-known in Western Europe that the Protestants in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were suffering discrimination triggered by the mid-century wars, which resulted in substantial material losses. Arnold specified that much of the hereditary property of the Protestants had been assigned to the Treasury of the Polish Kingdom, a large part had been distributed between those in royal military service, all possessions of the Reformed churches had been transferred into Jesuit ownership, and even Kiejdany had experienced the ravages to the extent that „Jesuits could build a nest” there⁷¹.

Nevertheless, in the 1660s Bogusław Radziwiłł was not discarded as a potential ally. In 1663 Drabik still claimed that the magnate would take important part in the prosperous destiny of Protestantism in Poland⁷². Until the death of Bogusław in December 1669 there prevailed in England a somewhat romanticised view of the magnate – that of a zealous Protestant willing to sacrifice the possibility of getting political power to his faith. Describing the preparations for the election of the Polish king, the English agent Francis Sanderson reported to Joseph Williamson, *de facto* head of the Restoration government’s intelligence system:

„Prince Radziuil was also in nomination and had the votes of 18 counties to bee King: upon condition he would turne roman catholic: for w[hi]ch he should have a yeares time to consider. But he wholly refused it”⁷³.

Robert Yard, a secretary to Ambassador Extraordinary in Poland, sent Williamson „the geneology of Pr[in]ce Radzeuil of Lithuania” with the Calvinist line annotated in detail, considering himself rewarded enough in case it was of interest for Williamson⁷⁴. Bogusław’s untimely death from a stroke was a profound blow to the English officials, as seen from Sanderson’s report:

„Two days agoe an express from Königsberg passed thorough here for Berlin: wi[ch] brought the sorrowfull newes: That prince Bogislaus Radziuil died there the first instant not without great Suspicion of Poison: hee being well and dead in a few houres. His death is a greater loss to the Protestants in Poland”⁷⁵.

⁷⁰ Samuel Hartlib to John Worthington, 30 January 1660, London, [in:] *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, Etc., Etc: From the Baker Mss. in the British Museum and the Cambridge University Library and Other Sources*, vol. 1, ed. by J. Worthington, J. Crossley and R. Copley Christie, Manchester 1847, p. 173.

⁷¹ M. Arnold, *Discursus theologicus...*, p. 41.

⁷² *Lux e tenebris...*, p. 453.

⁷³ For the biography of Joseph Williamson, see: A. Marshall, *Williamson, Sir Joseph*, [in:] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29571?rskey=C8C6DE&result=1>> [accessed 04 March 2017]; Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, 26 June 1669, Danzig, The National Archives, Kew, (hereafter TNA) SP 88/12, fol. 37r.

⁷⁴ Robert Yard to Joseph Williamson, 13 April 1669, Danzig, *ibid.*, fol. 21v; TNA, SP 88/10, fols. 208v–209r. The document with the pedigree of the Radziwiłłs kept at the National Archives in Kew, United Kingdom, is dated 1645 or later, but Yard’s letter proves that it was compiled by him in 1669.

⁷⁵ Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, 4 January 1670, Danzig, TNA, SP 88/12, fol. 85r.

The exegetical opinions about seventeenth-century prophecies reflected attitudes towards Janusz and Bogusław Radziwiłł, confirming the status of the cousins as protectors of European Protestantism akin to that of other influential Protestant leaders. Even though the role of the Lithuanian magnates were often exaggerated by different interpretations, while in reality they played a passive part in the events matching the prophecies, they helped to bring the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to prominence within the international Protestant networks. Moreover, false news about the destruction of all Polish and Lithuanian Protestant churches found a targeted audience and seemed to have worked as a successful propagandistic device. The examination to which the prophecies were subjected by Nicholas Arnold leads to the conclusion that the active involvement of the Radziwiłłs into well-developed international Reformed networks foreshadowed the failure of the Reformed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Nevertheless, this discourse regarding the reasons for the downfall of the Protestant churches in the Commonwealth had a positive impact, reinforcing the reputation of Janusz and Bogusław Radziwiłł as defenders of the true faith: while in the Commonwealth they were vilified as traitors, for parts of Protestant Europe fighting against Catholic dominance the cousins were saviours of the true faith.

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