Jan Tęgowski. *Pierwsze pokolenia Gedyminowiczów* [The First Gediminid Generations] (Biblioteka Genealogiczna, tom 2). Poznań–Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Historyczne, 1999. Pp. 320. ISSN 1509–8702. ISBN 83-913563-1-0

The family was one of the most important social structures in the Middle Ages. In a society in which power functioned on the basis of interpersonal relations relatives were natural partners who were invited to help in resolving problems of management, and they were also expected to provide assistance during times of conflicts, and so forth. Therefore, genealogical studies revealing kinship relations are always highly useful since they help better to understand the circumstances behind historic events and their main participants. This is especially important in studying the periods that are poorly reflected in the sources, when even laconic information about the circle of people surrounding a certain historic figure can reveal obscure motives of his or her activity.

During recent decades a large number of studies have been devoted to the families of the Lithuanian noblemen (works of M. Malczewska, K. Pietkiewicz, W. Peltz, E. Kelma and others). It should be noted that the latest more detailed genealogical studies of the dukes carried out by Józef Wolff are over a hundred years old.¹ New sources appeared during that time, but the majority of the conclusions drawn by Jan Tęgowski about the first generations of the Gediminids in his book are based on the information available in the new sources.

Jan Tęgowski is a pupil of a famous historian Kazimierz Jasiński² and a representative of the Polish genealogical school, which has flourished of late and has worked out its research methods and criticism of the sources. The book is devoted to the first three generations of the Gediminids, and offers biograms of 130 persons who lived in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The reader is impressed by the author's erudition. Alongside the works of the Lithuanian historians, Czech, Hungarian and Romanian historiography and sources, which have already become the norm in modern Polish historiography, are used. Quite often Tęgowski refers to his own studies published in scholarly literature and

¹ J. Wolff, *Ród Gedimina* (Cracow, 1886); idem, *Kniazowie litewsko-ruscy od końca czternastego wieku*, (Warsaw, 1895).

² This scholar's work on the Mazovian Piasts (K. Jasiński, *Rodowód Piastów mazowieckich*, Poznań–Wrocław, 1998), opened the series *Biblioteka Genealogiczna* of which the current monograph is a part.

occasionally refers the reader to them for broader argumentation (for example, the dates of birth of Gediminas' children, concerning the issues of the wives of Patrick and Vytautas). This somewhat diminishes the value of the book because in such a synthetic study one would like to find at least all the basic arguments.

The author tried to compensate for the lack of sources, which made the investigation into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries quite difficult, with a new research methodology. One of its main features is a strict application of the chronological factor, which enables one to determine the dates of the intense political activity of the personalities and the dates of birth of the children more or less exactly. With the help of that methodology the Polish historian in essence adjusted the genealogy of the Gediminids. Finally he succeeded in finding the adequate place for the dukes' daughters who were often left in the last place by the earlier historians as though the girls were born only after the boys. This is how the sequence of Gediminas' children looks like according to Jan Tęgowski: Narimantas-Gleb, Elżbieta, Vytautas, Algirdas, Maria, Karijotas-Mikhail, Jaunutis-Ivan, Kęstutis, Aldona-Ona, Liubartas Dmitriy, Manvydas, Eufemia, Helena, Augustė-Anastazia (p. 19).

The dates of birth of the children were adjusted in Algirdas' family as well, including a son from his first marriage that was never mentioned in historical studies and whose name was unknown, was found (pp. 52, 73). However, Konstantin is not regarded as Algirdas' son, and Konstantin Karijotaitis is called the ancestor of Czartoryskis (pp. 95–96, 177–182). Though Tęgowski, entering into polemics with the works of T. Wasilewski, agrees to the date of birth of Jogaila established by Wasilewski (around 1361–1363), Tęgowski makes this duke only the fourth rather than the first son of Algirdas and Yuliana. Biograms of Kęstutis and his descendants in particular contain much new data. The author showed quite convincingly that Birutė could have been Kęstutis only wife (pp. 196–200), however, his guess that Jaunutis was against that marriage, which caused the coup against him, is nothing more than the supposition that has not been substantiated by any sources and was based exclusively on the coincidence of the dates. Tęgowski, once again returned to the issue of Vytautas' wife maintaining that Vytautas' first wife Ona was a daughter of the grand duke of Smolensk, and his second wife Yuliana was a daughter of Mykolas Jonaitis Alšėniškis (earlier she was thought to be a daughter of Jonas Algimantaitis Alšėniškis) (pp. 208–210). In both cases this is only a hypothesis because simultaneous sources do not specify the parents of Vytautas' wives, however, in one way or another they are more substantiated than the statement made by I. Jonynas, who studied the origin of Vytautas' wives and who maintained that Vytautas' first wife was a sister

of the Lithuanian duke of Sudimantas (this opinion was reasonably criticized by S. C. Rowell³). Contradictory notes of Jan Długosz and Petrus Wolfram, Vytautas' secretary, interfere with the ultimate determination of the origin of Yuliana. The study of the biography of Ringailė-Ona, Kęstutis' daughter, provided even more interesting results. It turned out that after the death of her first husband, Duke Henryk of Mazovia, she was married three times to the grand dukes of Moldavia and Wallachia (pp. 228–231). These and other cases of marriages of the grand dukes that have been revealed are not only a simple supplement to the genealogical table of the representatives of the dynasty of the rulers. They allow us to understand the projects of the new unions and new political trends behind those marriages.

One of the most interesting parts of the work is devoted to Karijotas and the Karijotids. Tęgowski has not only succeeded in identifying several unknown sons and daughters of Karijotas but has also given a new look at the history of his family (pp. 164–189). In the second half of the fourteenth century the Karijotids ruled Podolia independently and were related to the kings of Hungary and Poland. The fact that the Karijotids appeared in the documents in pairs, allowed Tęgowski to suppose that diarchal rule prevailed in Podolia that was similar to the distribution of power among the grand dukes of Lithuania studied by E. Gudavičius⁴. The fact that after Podolia was taken away from them, the young Karijotids found refuge in lands belonging to the king of Hungary clearly reveal wide contacts of the Gediminids and their active role in the political life of Central Eastern Europe.

Dynastic marriages to the German and Czech grand dukes that Tęgowski had studied are worth mentioning within this context. A list of the Lithuanian princesses who were married to Polish or Mazovian grand dukes has been supplemented, which also throws some light on the careers of some of the Lithuanian noblemen in Poland and Mazovia (pp. 63–64, 89–90).

Without going deeper into the new conclusions drawn by Tęgowski, a hypothetical nature of the majority of these conclusions should be mentioned. This was due to the lack of sources, as well as their laconicism or discrepancy. Nearly all information about pagan Lithuania is available in the chronicles of the neighbouring countries, whose authors took little interest in the inside life of the country. Furthermore, little attention was paid to the exact age of man in the Middle Ages, such vague definitions as 'young', 'old', etc., were used, children that were earlier dead as well as single daughters were not mentioned at all. Therefore the author's

³ S. C. Rowell, 'Gediminaičių dinastinė politika Žemaitijoje 1350–1430 m.', *Žemaičių praeitis*, 1994, t. 3, pp. 133–134.

⁴ E. Gudavičius, 'Po pavidu tak nazyvaemoi "diarkhii" v Velikom Kniazhestve Litovskom', *Feodalisms Baltijas regiona* (Riga, 1985), pp. 35–45.

courage and 'risky' hypotheses can be regarded as the merit of the work. Nevertheless, the desire to attribute the Grand Dukes of the unknown origin to the famous families of the noblemen cannot be ignored. For example, 'Jorge Kasusna' who was a witness in the agreement concluded by Jogaila and Kęstutis with the German Order in 1379 could be other than a son of Ivan Patrikaitis (he is referred to only in one of the descriptions of the Routes of the Order) (p. 31). Another document mentions Jurgis' patronymic 'Ivanovič'. Knowing that this name was especially popular at that time, it cannot be regarded as convincing evidence. One should remember the statement of K. Jasiński, which is cited by our authors too, that the use of the most popular name is an insufficient criterion to prove the genealogical link.⁵ Besides, arguments can also be found, which could show that this grand duke most probably did not belong to the ruling dynasty. In the above-mentioned agreement of 1379 'Jorge Kasusna' is mentioned alongside the noblemen of the Grand Duke among which there was not a single Gediminid.⁶ In his oath taken in 1388 to Jogaila Dmitriy Algirdaitis testified after nobleman Minigaila without specifying any kinship to the issuers of the document.⁷ Here he also was listed together with 'bajare brata', and this allows one to suppose that he was a service duke of Jogaila. The case of duke Jurgis Taločka is similar to that. In no documents is he referred to as a relative of Jogaila or Vytautas. The text of Vytautas' document would be especially surprising⁸ because according to Tęgowski, Jurgis Taločka was a nephew of the Grand Duke, a son of Vaidotas, Vytautas' brother (pp. 202–203). Most probably Jurgis, the supposed son of Vaidotas and Jurgis Taločka are two different persons. By the way, the agreement of 1384 on which Tęgowski bases himself, was witnessed by another Jurgis⁹ who could be identified with Jurgis Taločka. Judging by the evidence available he was just a service duke, a representative of Vytautas' group and was not of Gediminid origin¹⁰.

Although these two persons are far from being the main characters of the monograph, their examples show the problematic nature of a too sure

⁵ K. Jasiński, 'Problemy identyfikacji osób w badaniach mediewistycznych', *Genealogia: problemy metodyczne w badaniach nad polskim społeczeństwem średniowieczym na tle porównawczym*, ed. J. Hertla, (Toruń, 1982), pp. 9–26.

⁶ *Codex diplomaticus Lithuaniae*, ed. E. Raczyński, (Wrocław, 1845), p. 55.

⁷ *Akta unji Polski z Litwą 1385–1791*, ed. S. Kitzzeba i W. Semkowicz, (Cracow, 1932), p. 22.

⁸ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny katedry i diecezji wileńskiej*, ed. J. Fijalek i W. Semkowicz, (Cracow, 1932–1948), p. 66

⁹ *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi magni ducis lithuaniae 1376–1430*, ed. A. Prochaska, (Cracow, 1882), p. 4.

¹⁰ See R. Petrauskas, 'Gediminaičiai ir pavaldiniai: Lietuvos bajorų grupės XIV a. pabaigoje – XV a. pirm. pusėje', *Lietuva ir kaimynai. Nuo normanų iki Napoleono. Prof. Broniaus Dundulio atminimui* (Vilnius, 2001), pp. 108–112.

identification of the individuals bearing the same name. Assignment of some other Gediminids is not convincing either. The 'discovery' of Skirgaila's daughter is most doubtful (pp. 104–105). The sources contain no evidence that Skirgaila was a married man. The text cited by Tęgowski mentions only the 'princess' without specifying either her name or her origin. The same source also mentions some more 'nameless' princesses. More than one of them lived in Jogaila's residence at that time (including 'domina ducissa filiastris ducis Witoldi'¹¹ which could perhaps be identified with Tautvilas' daughter Jadvyga). It is not clear if, following some Russian chronicles, Minigaila's attribution to Algirdas sons was well-substantiated (pp. 147–148). It is possible that close relations between influential nobleman Minigaila and Jogaila's family at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries misled the authors of Russian chronicles.

Genealogical tables constitute an important element of genealogical works. They are compiled very well and are easily understood. Unfortunately, the value of these tables as an auxiliary means is diminished by the fact that some genealogical links that are not too reliable, which is admitted by the author himself, are included into these tables without any reservations. There is a typing error in Table III: Kroshinskiy dukes are derived from Mykolas Andriejaitis Algirdaitis (pp. 71–72) in the text, whereas in the table they are derived from his brother Teodoras (p. 308).

It is obvious that Tęgowski's study is a new step in historiography of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Each genealogist should use his research methods. Tęgowski's verified numerous statements that are common in historiography and that travel from one monograph to another. Most of the hypotheses arouse the desire to discuss, which is, without doubt, a great achievement of the book. However, at the same time the question about the boundaries of genealogical studies arises. They can provide a lot of new data, open unexpected research perspectives, however, they acquire the meaning within the context of social history only. The chapter of Tęgowski's book on the Karijotids, his considerations about the problem of succession to the grand duke's throne (his studies confirmed the statement found in literature that no principle of primogeniture was adhered to in pagan Lithuania), the evolution of grand-ducal power allow one to expect new studies devoted to political history of the Dukes of Lithuania, which is insufficiently studied, as well as to land ownership and the confessional activity.

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¹¹ *Rachunki dworu króla Władysława Jagielly i królowej Jadwigi z lat 1388 do 1420*, ed. F. Piekosinski, (Cracow, 1896), p. 285.