

## East of Stockholm, North of Warsaw: Finland, Estonia and the Early Modern Composite States in the Baltic Region

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### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Östlich von Stockholm, nördlich von Warschau: Finnland, Estland und die frühneuzeitlichen *composite states* im Ostseeraum

In diesem Beitrag wird untersucht, wie Schweden und Polen-Litauen in ihrer Eigenschaft als *composite states* in der Frühen Neuzeit ihre Länder verwalteten. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird den Territorien des modernen Estland und Finnland geschenkt, da die Herrschaft über diese Länder im Zuge des Konflikts zwischen Sigismund Vasa als dem König von Polen-Litauen (1587-1632) und Schweden (1593-1599), und seinem Onkel Karl von Södermanland, dem späteren König Karl XII. (1604-1611), umstritten war. Während in der bisherigen Forschung Schweden und Polen-Litauen als in politischer und religiöser Hinsicht sehr unterschiedlich gegolten haben, soll hier möglichen Gemeinsamkeiten aufgrund ihres Charakters als *composite states* nachgegangen werden. Beide Staaten strebten danach, ihre Territorien sowohl politisch als auch kulturell zu vereinheitlichen. Die finnischen und estnischen Gebiete lagen von Stockholm und Warschau aus gesehen in der Peripherie, waren aber für diese Machtzentren von strategischer Bedeutung. Obwohl Finnland und Estland in geografischer Hinsicht nicht weit voneinander entfernt lagen, erlauben sie in ihrer Funktion als zusammengesetzte Monarchien unterschiedliche Perspektiven für die Erforschung frühneuzeitlicher Reiche und königlicher Machtansprüche. Obwohl die Bezeichnung als „Großherzog von Finnland“ in die königlichen Titel Schwedens Eingang fand, war Finnland ein integraler Bestandteil des schwedischen Königreichs und genoss zu keinem Zeitpunkt Autonomie innerhalb des Reiches. Estland hingegen sah sich mehrfach Einverleibungsversuchen seitens Polen-Litauens und Schwedens ausgesetzt, die jedoch stets nur eingeschränkt erfolgreich waren.

KEYWORDS: Baltic Sea region, composite/conglomerate state, early modern period, Estonia, Finland, Poland-Lithuania, Sweden.

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\* This article was mainly written during my research visit to the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg in September—November 2017. I wish to thank Professor Ronald G. Asch and the research colloquium of early modern history for their comments and interest in my work. I also wish to thank the Finnish Cultural Foundation for my scholarship enabling this research visit.

## Introduction

The political map of early modern Europe looked very different from what it is today. Instead of nation states, early modern states and polities were composed of different territories that had various relationships with each other and central authority. This article scrutinizes how early modern Sweden and Poland-Lithuania managed their lands as composite states. The main focus is on the territories of modern Estonia and Finland and on the issue of how Sweden and Poland-Lithuania started to compete against each other over the dominion of the Baltic Sea coastal regions in the late sixteenth century. Despite their geographical proximity, Finland and Estonia offer two different perspectives to study early modern composite states in the Baltic. Firstly, Finland was an integral part of the Swedish kingdom, but in its competition against neighboring powers, the young Vasa dynasty, especially John III and his son Sigismund, could use Finland and the realm's eastern provinces to elevate their status as king and grand duke, to match with the royal titles of other Baltic powers. Secondly, as a consequence of the fall of the Teutonic Order and the start of the Livonian war, Estonia, as part of Livonia, became a disputed land between greater powers, who aimed at securing the newly conquered areas to the motherland in various ways. Here I will study the differences and similarities of Sweden and Poland-Lithuania as composite states by comparing their practices, as well as shared or conflicting interests, with regard to the coastal regions of Finland and Estonia.

The concept of early modern states as composite or conglomerate states and/or monarchies developed slowly among historians up until the 1990s but has more recently entered into everyday use in studies of early modern history. The first introduction of the concept "composite state" is often traced back to the work of H. G. Koenigsberger, who includes it almost as a side note in his analysis on early modern state formation and the relation between monarchy and parliamentary rule. Koenigsberger notes that early modern monarchs were not absolute rulers—at least not in all their dominions—as they usually had to negotiate with several parliaments and national assemblies. This was because "most states in the early modern period were composite states, including more than one country under the sovereignty of one ruler."<sup>1</sup> Such composite states could consist of separate or contiguous countries under one ruler or a dynasty. John H. Elliott takes the idea of composite monarchy but uses it to study the formation of unions.<sup>2</sup> Yet union historians also express criticism of the idea of using the concept of composite state as a synonym for a union or a multiple kingdom. As Conrad Russell notes, "all

<sup>1</sup> H. G. KOENIGSBERGER: *Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern Europe*. "Dominium Regale" or "Dominium Politicum et Regale," in: *Theory and Society* 5 (1978), 2, pp. 191-217, here p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. ELLIOTT: *A Europe of Composite Monarchies*, in: *Past & Present* 137 (1992), pp. 48-71.

multiple kingdoms are composite monarchies, but not all composite monarchies are multiple kingdoms.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1998, Harald Gustafsson formulated a definition for the concept of composite state, though he prefers to use the concept “conglomerate” (state). According to Gustafsson, an early modern state was

“a state area consisting of several territories, usually brought together by a ruling house but kept together by a few other factors. Each territory—or rather the social elite of each territory—had its distinctive relation to the ruler, its privileges, its own law code, its administrative system staffed by that same local elite, and often its own estate assembly. In questions of taxation or conscription, the ruler had to negotiate with each territory separately.”<sup>4</sup>

Gustafsson expands on the ideas of Koenigsberger and Elliott by emphasizing that early modern rulers had to negotiate with different communities and elites, and they had to adjust their administration according to local conditions. Yet Gustafsson makes the important difference in that he defines early modern states as conglomerates of different *territories*, not (necessarily) *countries*. The perspective of composite/conglomerate states such as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth has lately become widespread within international scholarly discussion.<sup>5</sup> The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth included the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the “incorporated lands” of Ukraine (Ukraine transferred from Lithuania to Poland in

<sup>3</sup> CONRAD RUSSELL: Composite Monarchies in Early Modern Europe, in: ALEXANDER GRANT, KEITH STRINGER (eds.): *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History*, London 1995, pp. 133-146, here p. 133. See also ROBERT FROST: *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania. Vol. 1: The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, 1385-1569*, Oxford 2015, pp. 40-41.

<sup>4</sup> HARALD GUSTAFSSON: The Conglomerate State: A Perspective on State Formation in Early Modern Europe, in: *Scandinavian Journal of History* 23 (1998), 3-4, pp. 189-213, here p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> Among the latest works, see e. g. R. J. W. EVANS, PETER H. WILSON (eds.): *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495-1806: A European Perspective*, Leiden—Boston 2012; GÁBOR KÁRMÁN, LOVRO KUNČEVIĆ (eds.): *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Leiden—Boston 2013. On Poland-Lithuania, see e. g. RICHARD BUTTERWICK (ed.): *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context, c. 1500-1795*, New York 2001; BOGUSŁAW DYBAŚ, PAWEŁ HANCZEWSKI et al. (eds.): *Rzeczpospolita w XVI-XVIII wieku: Państwo czy wspólnota? Zbiór studiów [The Commonwealth in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries: A State or a Community? Collection of Studies]*, Toruń 2007; KARIN FRIEDRICH, BARBARA M. PENDZICH (eds.): *Citizenship and Identity in a Multinational Commonwealth: Poland-Lithuania in Context, 1550-1772*, Leiden—Boston 2009; FROST, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania* (as in footnote 3); TOMASZ KEMPA, KRZYSZTOF MIKULSKI (eds.): *Unia lubelska z 1569 roku: Z tradycji unifikacyjnych I Rzeczypospolitej [The Union of Lublin in 1569: Unification Traditions in the First Republic]*, Toruń 2011; KOLJA LICHY: Vom dynastischen Unionsreich zur parlamentarischen Union von 1569, in: HANS-JÜRGEN BÖMELBURG (ed.): *Polen in der europäischen Geschichte. Ein Handbuch in vier Bänden. Vol. 2: Frühe Neuzeit*, Stuttgart 2011, pp. 169-203.

1569), as well as Royal Prussia, the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia and parts of Livonia (the last from 1560s-1620s). In Scandinavian scholarship, the perspective of composite states has remained relatively marginal until recently.<sup>6</sup> Yet current historians, especially those focusing on the newly annexed territories of the early modern Swedish realm, have started to include Sweden and Scandinavia in this scholarly discussion.<sup>7</sup>

Sweden became a typical composite state of its time with the annexation of northern Estonia in 1561.<sup>8</sup> During its great power era, Sweden expanded around the Gulf of Finland, conquering areas such as Karelia, Ingria, the rest of Estonia and Livonia. It also annexed small territories in northern Germany such as Western Pomerania and Bremen-Verden. From Denmark, Sweden was able to take control of Scania (Skåne) and important islands in the Baltic such as Gotland. For a few years (1629-1635), Sweden also had control over certain ports in Poland-Lithuania, such as Elbląg, Pillau (Baltiysk) and Klaipėda. Unlike Scania in the seventeenth century, Sweden's new territories around the Gulf of Finland and in Germany were not incorporated into Sweden proper: they did not have seats in the Swedish Diet (*riksdag*), but they kept their own laws, privileges and constitutional arrangements in agreement with the king.<sup>9</sup> Sweden's great power status ended in the Great Northern War (1700-1721) as it lost most of its dominions in Karelia and on the southern side of the Baltic.

Lately, historians have accepted the idea of the composite state as a starting point for their studies on early modern political and social history. As Matthew Romaniello puts it, "the existence of regional differences inside the borders of the early-modern state was the standard rather than the exception."<sup>10</sup> For Romaniello, composite monarchies are "loosely affiliated and administered territories unified by a single head of state, where political, military, economic, religious, and social structures could vary widely."<sup>11</sup> A monarch and the administrative elite close to the royal court would often share a

<sup>6</sup> The most notable exception is the work of Harald Gustafsson, see e. g. GUSTAFSSON (as in footnote 4).

<sup>7</sup> See e. g. KASPER KEPSU: The Unruly Buffer Zone. The Swedish Province of Ingria in the Late 17th Century, in: *Scandinavian Journal of History* 42 (2017), 4, pp. 414-438; KARI TARKIAINEN: Tallinna ja Harju-Viru rüütelkonna alistumine Rootsile 1561: Vormid ja põhjused [The Capitulation of the Town of Tallinn and the Harju-Viru Knight-hood to Sweden in 1561: Forms and Causes], in: *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 159 (2017), 1, pp. 39-77. Concerning Denmark as a composite state, see e. g. GUNNER LIND: Elites of the Danish Composite State, 1460-1864, in: ALMUT BUES (ed.): *Zones of Fracture in Modern Europe: The Baltic Countries, the Balkans, and Northern Italy*, Wiesbaden 2005, pp. 111-136.

<sup>8</sup> GUSTAFSSON (as in footnote 4), p. 198; TARKIAINEN (as in footnote 7).

<sup>9</sup> GUSTAFSSON (as in footnote 4), pp. 198, 204; KEPSU (as in footnote 7), p. 417.

<sup>10</sup> MATTHEW P. ROMANIELLO: *The Elusive Empire: Kazan and the Creation of Russia 1552-1671*, Madison 2012, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

common image of the state, but “local administrators developed a large number of variations in regional governance adapted to local conditions,” and this image could frequently neglect the image that the monarch and state center tried to impose.<sup>12</sup> According to Romaniello, the general “compositeness” of an early modern state was created by the difficulties in managing time and distance. All states fell under the unification projects led by their monarch, church and state administration, but states were—in Romaniello’s terms—“elusive” because they were continually conditioned by compromises and accommodations with local interests.<sup>13</sup>

The “compositeness” of the Swedish state is not explained by the condition that the Swedish crown ruled the territory of modern Finland, but rather by the development that Sweden received new dominions around the Baltic. Still, the challenges of time and distance created practical difficulties for state administration, also in Sweden proper (including Finland). Ulla Koskinen emphasizes in her work, how sixteenth-century local administrators in the Finnish parts of the Swedish realm often had to deal with situations and conditions of which their monarch had incomplete knowledge, or where their instructions were late and unsuitable for a given situation. This set a demand for “creative reaction” by local administrators. As office holders they represented the crown but managed their posts with the help of their personal qualities, resources and networks.<sup>14</sup> As such, the sixteenth-century Swedish kingdom was an elusive state, especially toward its perimeters where distances were long and population scarce.

It can thus be argued that the general lack of infrastructure and resources made any sixteenth-century state “elusive” and “composite” by its nature. In such (composite) states, the issue of integration was a key interest of state formation. Integration, however, seldom meant immediate unification, as states and their developing central governments lacked the means and methods for such actions. Different historians have emphasized that a working relationship between central administration and a local elite was often enough. Therefore, limited but practical integration could be secured by allowing a territory and its local administrative elite a certain level of separation. According to Gustafsson, as long as provincial elites did not act independently concerning foreign policy, they could enjoy far-reaching internal autonomy.<sup>15</sup> The necessary resource to create a more unified system of government was

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<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, pp. 11-12.

<sup>14</sup> ULLA KOSKINEN: *Hyvien miesten valtakunta: Arvid Henrikinpoika Tawast ja aatelin toimintakulttuuri 1500-luvun lopun Suomessa* [A Kingdom of Good Men: Arvid Henriksson Tawast and the Culture of Agency Among Noblemen in Late Sixteenth-Century Finland], Helsinki 2011.

<sup>15</sup> GUSTAFSSON (as in footnote 4), p. 200. On integration see also ELLIOTT (as in footnote 2), pp. 54-55; KEPSU (as in footnote 7), pp. 417-418; ROMANIELLO (as in footnote 10), pp. 8-18.

time, but in the era of continuous border changes, states could run out of time. Especially when it came to their Baltic provinces in Estonia and Livonia, both Poland-Lithuania and Sweden lacked time to create unified state systems. Nevertheless, they tried.

The position of Finland within the Swedish realm has been interpreted differently at different times, and differently by Finnish and Swedish speaking (Finnish) historians. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, historians wanted to write national history for the newborn Finnish nation-state, emphasizing moments and periods in history that could be interpreted as showing any level of separateness of Finland from Sweden (and Russia from 1809-1917). Especially historians such as Jalmari Jaakkola (1885-1964) and Pentti Renvall (1907-1974), who focused on the medieval and early modern periods, contributed to the myth of “Sweden-Finland” as they interpreted the status of Finland as a politically and culturally autonomous part of a larger composite state, to use a concept from modern scholarship. The myth was more common within the Finnish speaking academia of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than among their Swedish speaking peers, who criticized Finnish speaking compatriots who took this stance.<sup>16</sup> The modern perspective is to emphasize that Finland was an integral part of the Swedish realm and that the people of those lands did not have a separate national culture or identity from Sweden.<sup>17</sup> To completely ignore the pre-modern past of modern nations would, however, also be false and too simple a solution. As Finnish historian Nils Erik Villstrand states, in the early modern period “there was no Finland, there was a Finland, there were two [Finlands], and there were many [Finlands].”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For the myth of “Sweden-Finland” and Finnish nationalist historiography in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see esp. OSMO JUSSILA: *Suomen historian suuret myytit* [The Great Myths in Finnish History], Helsinki 2007. The history of the English Pale in Ireland offers an interesting case in national and nationalist minded historiography that can be compared to Finnish historiography. During the late medieval and early modern period, the English Pale in the eastern part of Ireland was an integral part of England, though situated on the realm’s periphery and a frontier region facing Irish-ruled areas. After 1920 the region, including the city of Dublin, became an integral part of Ireland, now emphasizing the region’s “Irishness” and forgetting its English past and identity. See STEVEN G. ELLIS: Ireland’s “Lost” English Region: The English Pale in Early Tudor Times, in: RAINGARD ESSER, IDEM (eds.): *Frontier and Border Regions in Early Modern Europe*, Hannover 2013, pp. 59-78, esp. pp. 64-66.

<sup>17</sup> PETRI KARONEN: *Pohjoinen suurvalta: Ruotsi ja Suomi 1521-1809* [The Northern Great Power: Sweden and Finland 1521-1809], 2nd ed., Helsinki 2014 (1999); NILS ERIK VILLSTRAND: *Valtakunnanosa: Suurvalta ja valtakunnanosa 1560-1812. Suomen ruotsalainen historia 2* [A Part of the Realm: The Great Power and its Part 1560-1812. A History of Finland in Sweden 2], Helsinki 2012.

<sup>18</sup> NILS ERIK VILLSTRAND: *Stormaktstiden 1617-1721* [Time of the Great Power 1617-1721], in: RAINER FAGERLUND et al. (eds.): *Finlands historia* [History of Finland], vol. II, Esbo 1996, p. 130, as cited in JASON LAVERY: *The History of Finland*, Westport/CT—London 2006, pp. 31-32.

“Finland” as a territorial concept was first used in Swedish sources in the 1440s. Another common term for the Finnish lands in Swedish sources was Eastland (*Österland* in Swedish, *Itämaa* in Finnish), which was used to describe the lands east of Stockholm and the Swedish mainland. During the medieval and early modern periods, the lower classes, especially the peasants, were mainly ethnic Finns with their own language, but the nobility was mainly Swedish speaking and with a Swedish identity. In addition to Swedes, the nobility included families of Danish and (Baltic) German descent.<sup>19</sup> In comparison, Estonia was recognized by contemporaries both as a geographical area (as part of Livonia) and as a community of Estonian speaking inhabitants, albeit living alongside Baltic Germans. Ethnicity was also related to social status in Livonia: ethnic Estonians and Latvians were mostly peasants whereas the ruling social elite was Baltic German.<sup>20</sup>

This article focuses on Sweden and Poland-Lithuania as composite states. Following this concept, I will ask the questions of how Sweden and Poland-Lithuania managed their territories around the Finnish Gulf. Were their actions different or similar as territorial overlords? And what did it mean for their lands to be part of one composite state or another? I will focus especially on the negotiations and conflict over the rule of the Estonian lands and, to a lesser extent, Finland as part of the 1590s crisis. I argue that, although Finland cannot be considered as an autonomous part of the Swedish realm and needs to be considered within “Sweden proper,” there were practices and situations that could occasionally elevate Finland’s separateness or special status. As states, early modern Sweden and Poland-Lithuania are traditionally seen as very different from each other. Michał Kopczyński, for example, characterizes them respectively as a *Machtstaat* or power state and a renaissance monarchy.<sup>21</sup> However, when both Sweden and Poland-Lithuania are viewed as composite states, it raises an interesting question regarding their potential similarities.

Much previous research on the events of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries follows traditional national historiography. Research that gives both realms of Sigismund Vasa—Poland-Lithuania and Sweden—equal

<sup>19</sup> For international readers, a useful synthesis on the “Swedish period” of Finnish history is provided by LAVERY, *The History of Finland* (as in footnote 18), pp. 31-49.

<sup>20</sup> See e. g. DENNIS HORMUTH: *Border Region and Propaganda: Livonia as a Bulwark of Christianity in the Sixteenth Century*, in: ESSER/ELLIS (as in footnote 16), pp. 139-155. The fifteenth and sixteenth-century Pale in Ireland bears comparison in that the ruling upper class was English but the rest of its society was mostly Irish. See ELLIS (as in footnote 16).

<sup>21</sup> MICHAŁ KOPCZYŃSKI: *Between the Machtstaat (Power State) and the Renaissance Monarchy: the Vasas in Sweden and in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania*, in: EUGENIJUS SAVIŠČEVAS, MARIJUS UZORKA (eds.): *Lithuania—Poland—Sweden. European Dynastic Unions and Historical-Cultural Ties*, Vilnius 2014, pp. 315-325.

consideration and takes note of the Estonian and Finnish question is scarce.<sup>22</sup> Although this article will tackle the issues of competition and rivalry, I wish to emphasize also the shared history in the Baltic Sea region. My focus is on the connections and similarities between Sweden and Poland-Lithuania as they managed their territories in modern Finland and Estonia. The main documentary sources used in this study are those related to the early reign of King Sigismund Vasa in both his realms (Poland-Lithuania and Sweden), the conflict between Sigismund and his uncle Duke Charles, and its repercussions concerning Finland and Estonia. As the relations in the Baltic were heavily influenced by the religious situation of the Reformation period, I have also used the nunciature reports by the papal envoy Germanico Malaspina, who, as a close adviser to Sigismund Vasa and an architect of the Catholic Reformation in the Baltic, took a central position in the negotiations and events, reporting his observations to Rome.

### Benchmarking in the Baltic

The first of the Vasa kings in Sweden, Gustav I (r. 1523-1560) instituted several reforms to unify the country and state administration, mostly for the purposes of more efficient tax collection. Still, for much of the sixteenth century, the position of Sweden remained unstable and uncertain, both internally and in its relations with foreign powers.<sup>23</sup> Even the religious question was not definitively settled until 1593. Toward the end of his reign, Gustav Vasa gave his four sons duchies that they could manage by themselves. Though early modern Sweden has often been considered as developing quickly towards a modern unitary state, the administrative system of the duchies was typical of early modern composite states. Internally, the main motivation to establish duchies within the realm was to secure territorial loyalty towards the new Vasa dynasty, as well as to enhance the administrative system and use of resources—tax collection, the military levy—in different parts of the realm. Nevertheless, foreign policy was to remain in the hands of the monarch, first Gustav Vasa and then his oldest son Erik XIV (r. 1560-1568).<sup>24</sup> Gustav's se-

<sup>22</sup> Interesting examples of recent historiography include e. g. WALTER LEITSCH: *Sigismund III. von Polen und Jan Zamoyski. Die Rolle Estlands in der Rivalität zwischen König und Hetman*, Wien 2006; PRZEMYSŁAW PIOTR SZPACZYŃSKI: *Mocarstwowe dążenia Zygmunta III w latach 1587-1618* [The Pursuit of Power by Sigismund III in the Years 1587-1618], Kraków 2013. Though both works primarily emphasize Sigismund Vasa's role as a Polish-Lithuanian monarch, they give well-deserved attention to the Baltic question.

<sup>23</sup> The Swedish bureaucratic state system that would serve as an administrative model for Europe was in large part a creation of Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (1583-1654) in the seventeenth century. See e. g. KARONEN (as in footnote 17), pp. 185-190.

<sup>24</sup> On the development of the Swedish realm during Gustav Vasa's reign and for further reading, see IVAN SVALENIUS: *Gustav I*, in: *Svenskt biografiskt lexicon*, URL: <https://>

cond son John was made duke of Finland, not Finland as we know it now, but the province “Finland Proper,” in the southwestern corner of the modern land. Here Turku (Åbo) Castle served as the main ducal residence. The strength of the ducal power is shown especially by the youngest son, Charles: during his long wait to ascend the throne as king in Stockholm, Duke Charles was able to make his Duchy of Södermanland a state within a state. The political and economic strength of his duchy gave Charles important support at the end of the sixteenth century, when he would battle for power in Stockholm against his nephew, Sigismund Vasa.<sup>25</sup>

For the Swedish crown, the use of the Finnish language in the eastern part of the realm was not an obstacle and it could even be supported, as happened after the Protestant Reformation. There was no contradiction between Swedish state formation, or loyalty to the Swedish crown, and the use and promotion of the Finnish language. This is evident, for example, in the case of Mikael Agricola. He was a Lutheran bishop of Turku in 1554-1557, royal diplomat to King Gustav I and the “father of the Finnish language” as he was the first to translate the New Testament into Finnish (1548).<sup>26</sup> Finland was an integral part of Sweden, but with some local characteristics. Internationally this could be compared to the so-called perfect union of Wales and England, in which Wales was fully incorporated into England by the sixteenth century. Wales was able to keep its language and local identity alongside Englishness. Unlike Finland, however, much of Wales had comprised sovereign prince-dom with their own laws and administrations until the late thirteenth century, after which it was only slowly incorporated into the English crown until the composition of the Laws in Wales Acts in 1535/1542.<sup>27</sup> Finland had never been a sovereign polity (or polities) before Swedish rule, and very little is known about its society and communal life before the establishment of Swedish administration.

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sok.riksarkivet.se/Sbl/Presentation.aspx?id=13315 (2018-05-15). See also HELGE POH-JOLAN-PIRHONEN: *Suomen historia 1523-1617 [A History of Finland 1523-1617]*, Porvoo—Helsinki 1960, pp. 428-433.

<sup>25</sup> For John III, see BIRGITTA LAGER-KROMNOW: Johan III, in: *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, URL: <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/Sbl/Presentation.aspx?id=12099> (2018-05-15). For Charles IX (Duke Charles of Södermanland), see SVEN ULRIC PALME: Karl IX, in: *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, URL: <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/Sbl/Presentation.aspx?id=12354> (2018-05-15).

<sup>26</sup> See esp. JASON LAVERY: Mikael Agricola: Father of the Finnish Language, Builder of the Swedish State, in: SARI KATAJALA-PELTOMAA, RAISA MARIA TOIVO (eds.): *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation in Northern Europe, c. 1300-1700*, Leiden—Boston 2017, pp. 207-229.

<sup>27</sup> Regarding Wales, the development of the English monarchy and Britain, see e. g. NICHOLAS CANNY: *Irish, Scottish and Welsh Responses to Centralisation, c. 1530—c. 1640: A Comparative Perspective*, in: GRANT/STRINGER (as in footnote 3), pp. 147-169; JOHN MORRILL: *Three Kingdoms and One Commonwealth? The Enigma of Mid-Seventeenth-Century Britain and Ireland*, *ibidem*, pp. 170-192.

In foreign policy terms, the appointment of John Vasa as the Duke of Finland has usually been seen as part of Gustav Vasa's eastern policy. In his negotiations with Muscovy, King Gustav had to interact primarily with the governor of Novgorod, and to do so directly would have demeaned the king's royal status. As a proper counterpart to the governor in these negotiations, the duke of Finland would solve the problem. At the same time, an established ducal power in Finland would secure loyalty and efficient use of resources in the lands east of Stockholm. Later, when he was the monarch, John (III, r. 1568-1592) has been considered by Finnish historians as having a "special interest" in Finland, as he was more aware of the conditions in the land and had personal contacts with the people.<sup>28</sup> As a king, John Vasa adopted a different foreign policy attitude towards Moscow than his brother and predecessor Erik. After the war against Russia in 1555-1557, Erik tried to preserve peace and cooperate with Muscovy, adopting an aggressive stance, primarily towards Denmark and secondly Poland-Lithuania. John, on the other hand, saw Muscovy as the main foreign enemy. Already as a duke, John had allied with Poland-Lithuania, the most visible proof of the alliance being his marriage with Catherine Jagiellon.<sup>29</sup>

After his military victories against Muscovy in the 1580s, John added "Grand Duke of Finland" to his royal titles. Although the Swedish royal titles were not very established at the time, it is noteworthy that John's son and successor Sigismund Vasa adopted the royal titles of his father, including the title of Finnish grand duke.<sup>30</sup> The title of grand duke was appropriate for "eastern" administration, being used especially in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in the Russian principalities such as the Grand Duchy of Muscovy. Therefore, it is likely that the Swedish royals who had especially close ties to Poland-Lithuania, John III and Sigismund Vasa, aimed at creating an image of the Swedish monarchy and its territories that would match the Polish-Lith-

<sup>28</sup> See e. g. EINO JUTIKKALA, KAUKO PIRINEN: *Suomen historia* [History of Finland], Helsinki 1966, pp. 92-94; EINAR W. JUVA: *Suomen suuriruhtinaskunta Ruotsin vallan aikana* [The Grand Duchy of Finland during the Era of Swedish Rule], Helsinki 1951, pp. 22, 50-53; POHJOLAN-PIRHONEN (as in footnote 24), pp. 228-229.

<sup>29</sup> On the Polish-Lithuanian-Swedish relations and military cooperation between John III and Sigismund August (r. 1548-1572), later Stefan Batory (r. 1576-1586), see e. g. KARL HILDEBRAND: *Johan III och Europas katolska makter 1568-1580* [John III and Europe's Catholic Powers 1568-1580], Uppsala 1898; MIIA IJÄS: *Res publica Redefined? The Polish-Lithuanian Transition Period of the 1560s and 1570s in the Context of European State Formation Processes*, Frankfurt am Main 2016, pp. 141-147, 257-263; EADEM: *Katarzyna Jagiellonka (1526-1583) and the Keys to a New Diplomacy*, in: ALMUT BUES (ed.): *Frictions and Failures: Cultural Encounters in Crisis*, Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 91-102; K. I. KARTTUNEN: *Jean III et Stefan Batory. Études sur les relations politiques entre la Suède et la Pologne de 1576 a 1583*, Genève 1911.

<sup>30</sup> This was a common practice also in Polish-Lithuania documents, see e. g.: *Confirmatio pactorum conventorum* (1587), in: STANISŁAW GRODZISKI (ed.): *Volumina constitutionum*. Vol. 2: 1587-1609, Warszawa 2008, pp. 55-58. See also JUVA (as in footnote 28), pp. 18-24.

uanian example and counterpart. Their aim was to present the Swedish kingdom as equal to Poland-Lithuania and entitled to lands east of its old borders. During the so-called Swedish period of Finnish history (from the twelfth century to 1809), however, there was no autonomous administrative unit known as the “grand duchy of Finland.” The title of a grand duke was merely a royal title. Even the duchy of Finland—or the province of “Finland Proper”—under Duke John was, in practice, short-lived, lasting from 1556 to 1563. Thus, it can be argued that the title of a grand duke of Finland was intended primarily for foreign audiences, meaning other European royal houses, and not to represent the actual administrative conditions inside the Swedish realm.<sup>31</sup>

It is not at all clear what territory the assumed “Grand Duchy of Finland” comprised. Before the nineteenth century, “Finland” meant different areas in different contexts, having originally referred merely to the areas in the province of Finland Proper and perhaps Satakunta. As a geographical concept Finland was only slowly extended to include other parts of today’s country, becoming an administrative unit only in 1809. The province of Ostrobothnia (Swedish Österbotten, Finnish Pohjanmaa), for example, was considered an integral part of “mainland Sweden” until late in the Swedish era, although in the ecclesiastical administrative system Ostrobothnia belonged to the bishopric of Turku.<sup>32</sup> Even though the concept “Sweden-Finland” has been discarded in modern historiography, scholars still agree that at various stages and for short periods Finland had a special status or interest within the Swedish state and its administration. One such period is considered to have occurred in the late 1500s, when the long Russo-Swedish war (1570-1595) meant that the Finnish territory was a key area of support for the war effort. The war also required that state administration and officials were put into place closer to the front line, that is, in parts of Finland where they had previously been unknown. Even though this meant a tighter control of modern Finland as part of the Swedish realm, there was no systematic or straightforward development of administration towards centralization in the early modern era. State administration in the sixteenth century was still loose and decentralized, depending to a large extent on the local administrators themselves.<sup>33</sup>

In documentary sources dealing with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, references to Finland and the duke of Finland are relatively common, especially concerning John and Sigismund Vasa. When John Vasa arrived in Vilnius in 1562 to propose a marriage with Catherine Jagiellon, the groom

<sup>31</sup> Also JUVA (as in footnote 28), pp. 91-92, 97.

<sup>32</sup> See e. g. JUSSILA (as in footnote 16), p. 228; KARONEN (as in footnote 17), pp. 25-30.

<sup>33</sup> KARONEN (as in footnote 17), pp. 101-102; KOSKINEN (as in footnote 14); POHJOLAN-PIRHONEN (as in footnote 24), pp. 362-363.

was commonly referred to as the duke of Finland by his hosts.<sup>34</sup> It can be fairly assumed that the title of a duke was easy to adopt in Poland-Lithuania, where the monarch was officially called the king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania. During the personal union of Poland-Lithuania under the Jagiellon dynasty (1385-1569), the monarch did not even need to be the same person in Poland and Lithuania, though they represented the same ruling dynasty. The situation changed in the Lublin Union in 1569, when the two states were joined into a union under one monarch. The title of Duke John sounded familiar in Poland-Lithuania and John most likely used this to his advantage, to emphasize his status as an assumed (semi-)autonomous ruler next to his half-brother, King Erik, with whom the Polish-Lithuanian army had clashed in Livonia. The events of 1562/63—the marriage between John Vasa and Catherine Jagiellon, their trip to Turku, the open conflict between the Vasa brothers and, finally, the imprisonment of the duke and duchess of Finland by King Erik XIV—caused confusion and disappointment in Poland-Lithuania, as John's position turned out to be much weaker in the Swedish realm than King Sigismund August and his advisors in Poland-Lithuania had believed and hoped.<sup>35</sup>

In the contemporary political environment of Poland-Lithuania it had been suitable, and possible, to draw false comparisons between Poland-Lithuania and “Sweden-Finland.” These comparisons, or so-called benchmarking, in the Baltic did not, however, resonate with the reality of the two (composite) states. There were clear differences between early modern Finland and Lithuania in historical, cultural and political terms. The most important difference was that, unlike Finland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had been a sovereign polity before its alliance with Poland through the personal/dynastic union in 1385. The wording of the Lublin Union preserved the notion of the Lithuanian nobility as its own nation, which joined with Polish peers in the Commonwealth and created one people: “The Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania form one indivisible body and thus one, not separated but joint *Res publica*, which has been founded and created from two nations into one people.”<sup>36</sup> In the Commonwealth, Poland and Lithuania had their own

<sup>34</sup> IJÄS, *Res publica Redefined* (as in footnote 29), pp. 143-145; EADEM: *Varjoista valtaistuimelle: Anna Jagellonica ja Itämeren valtaapiiri 1500-luvulla* [From Shadows to the Throne: Anna Jagiellon and the Baltic Power Circle in the Sixteenth Century], Helsinki 2016, pp. 81-88.

<sup>35</sup> IJÄS, *Varjoista valtaistuimelle* (as in footnote 34), pp. 83-92; EADEM, *Res publica Redefined* (as in footnote 29), pp. 143-147.

<sup>36</sup> *Przywilej około Uniey Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego z Koroną, 1569* [Privilege about the Union of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Crown, 1569], in: *Constitutie, Statuta y Przywileie na walnych Seymiech Koronnych od Roku Pańskiego 1550 aż do Roku 1581 uchwalone*, Kraków 1581, ff. 97r-101v, here f. 99r: “Iż iuż Korona Polska y wielkie Księstwo Litewskie iest iedno nierozdzielne y nierozne ciało a także nierozna ale iedna spolna Rzeczpospolita: ktora sie ze dwu Państw y Narodow w ieden lud zniosła y spoila.”

treasuries and economic policies, but foreign policy was to be uniform. In practice, the Polish and Lithuanian estates had differences in their foreign policy interests, as the Lithuanians were more concerned about and active in the Commonwealth's eastern relations, whereas the Poles focused their attention more on the Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans. In addition, both established diplomatic relations with western Europe.<sup>37</sup>

Finland had not been a sovereign polity before its integration into the lands belonging to the Swedish crown, and never had autonomous status within the Swedish realm, even if parts of the modern territory of Finland were sometimes referred to as a duchy. In administrative terms, the bishopric of Turku (founded in 1276 and in 1554 divided into Turku and Viipuri) was of great importance in establishing state administration. At times, the highest secular official within the wider Finnish territory was a governor-general, but this did not represent a permanent office. From the seventeenth century onward, Finland had more established state administration: Turku got its own court of appeal (1623) and university (1640), but this occurred in line with the administrative reforms and developments throughout Sweden. It is estimated that during Sweden's great power era in the seventeenth century, about one quarter—sometimes even one third—of the realm's soldiers were recruited from Finland. At the same time, tax revenue from Finland was about 20 per cent of the realm's tax revenue. This proportion was lower than it had been in Finland in the earlier Vasa period of the sixteenth century.<sup>38</sup> Due to their geopolitical position, both Finland and Lithuania were key areas in the war efforts of their respective realms against Muscovy/Russia. Both lands also occasionally suffered from the fact that their partners focused their foreign policy attention elsewhere: in the sixteenth century, the Swedish nobility was greatly concerned about the continuing conflict with Denmark, whereas the Polish foreign policy interest was concentrated mainly on the Commonwealth's southern and western border zones.

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<sup>37</sup> See e. g. FROST, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania* (as in footnote 3), *passim*; IJÄS, *Res publica Redefined* (as in footnote 29), pp. 128-136; TOMASZ KEMPA: *Plany separatycznej elekcji w Wielkim Księstwie litewskim w okresie trzech pierwszych bezkrólewí po wygaśnięciu dynastii jagiellonów (1572-1587)* [Separatist election plans in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the first three interregna after the end of the Jagiellon dynasty (1572-1587)], in: *Zapiski Historyczne* 69 (2004), 1, pp. 23-61; ARTURAS TEREŠKINAS: *Imperfect Communities. Identity, Discourse and Nation in the Seventeenth-Century Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, Vilnius 2005, *passim*.

<sup>38</sup> KARONEN (as in footnote 17), pp. 248-252; KIMMO KATAJALA: *Suomalainen kapina: Talonpoikaislevottomuudet ja poliittinen kulttuuri Suomessa Ruotsin ajalla (n. 1150-1800)* [Finnish Revolt: Peasant Unrest and Political Culture in Finland during Swedish Rule (c. 1150-1800)], Helsinki 2002, p. 181.

## Estonia in Between

Outside the Swedish realm, imagined similarities between early modern Finland and Lithuania created unrealistic expectations and assumptions about the territory and conditions on the northern side of the Finnish Gulf. Finland—whatever geographical unity the term was used for—still remained an area of peripheral interest in international relations during the sixteenth century, whereas Estonia became a battleground for competing interests in the Livonian conflict. This was a result of sixteenth-century developments: the Protestant Reformation, followed by the grave weakening of the old Livonian Teutonic Order, and finally the outbreak of the Livonian war in 1558, created a power vacuum in Livonia and a situation in which rule over Livonia, including Estonia, could be claimed by the surrounding powers, namely Muscovy, Sweden, Denmark and Poland-Lithuania. All of these powers wished to strengthen their status in the Baltic and secure their hold over ports and trade routes between eastern and western Europe.<sup>39</sup>

Despite occasional cooperation and alliance between Sweden and Poland-Lithuania, rule over the Estonian lands remained in constant dispute between the realms. From the late 1570s onwards, the Swedish and Polish-Lithuanian forces were able to push the Danes and Muscovites out of the Estonian lands. Sweden obtained northern Estonia, including the town of Tallinn (Reval), while Poland-Lithuania ruled in southern Estonia, including the town of Tartu (Dorpat), and the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia in the northern part of modern Latvia. Livonia, including the archbishopric of Riga, was of great importance for Lithuania as it aimed to improve its economic status by acquiring a foothold and ports in the Baltic. With the inclusion of Courland and Semigallia in the Commonwealth, Riga became the most important port in Lithuanian hands.<sup>40</sup> The situation was hardly settled, however, as Sweden and Poland-Lithuania each wanted to unite the Estonian lands and, if possible, the whole of Livonia under its own rulership.<sup>41</sup>

The privileges guaranteed to northern Estonia and Tallinn in 1561 by the Swedish king were practical yet said very little about Estonia's position within the Swedish kingdom, or how its administration and relation to the

<sup>39</sup> See e. g. ROBERT FROST: *Polen-Litauen, Moskau und Schweden: Am Anfang einer "Epoche der Nordischen Kriege"*, in: BÖMELBURG (as in footnote 5), pp. 219-237, here pp. 219-221; JÜRATĖ KIAUPIENĖ: *The Baltic Sea World in the Early Modern Period. A Specific Feature of Economic Development in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, in: BUES, *Zones of Fracture* (as in footnote 7), pp. 167-176; KARI TARKIAINEN, ÜLLE TARKIAINEN: *Provinsien bortom havet: Estlands svenska historia 1561-1710* [The Province Beyond the Sea: Estonia's Swedish History 1561-1710], Stockholm 2013, pp. 38-41.

<sup>40</sup> KIAUPIENĖ (as in footnote 39), p. 171.

<sup>41</sup> MARGUS LAIDRE: *Põhjamaade saja-aastane sõda Liivimaal* [The Northern One Hundred Year War in Livonia], in: ENN KÜNG, MARTEN SEPPEL (eds.): *Eesti ajalugu III. Vene-Liivimaa sõjast Põhjasõjani*, Tartu 2013, pp. 23-100, here pp. 42-53; TARKIAINEN/TARKIAINEN (as in footnote 39), p. 62.

motherland should be handled. The core of the agreement was to confirm the old privileges of the local nobility, and to initiate tax collection from Estonia to the Swedish crown. In return, Sweden promised to defend the country and the Protestant church. A governor-general would represent the crown and oversee the organization of the army and tax collection. This position was often held by the aristocratic families in Sweden, such as Fleming, Horn, Banér, Oxenstierna and so forth. Any closer integration of Estonia to the Swedish administration and judiciary was opposed by the Baltic nobility. On the one hand, Estonia was able to keep its separate status and estate system, including serfs, from Sweden proper. On the other hand, failure of closer integration kept Estonia out from the Swedish Diet. Although northern Estonia experienced a break from active warfare in late sixteenth century (c. 1583-1600), reconstruction of the devastated land was hindered by famine and epidemics.<sup>42</sup>

The history of the (southern) Estonian lands under Polish-Lithuanian rule has received less attention than the history of the Swedish dominion. This is mainly because of the short duration of the Polish-Lithuanian rule, lasting from the 1580s to the 1620s. Regardless of the unstable military situation, Poland-Lithuania aimed at faster unification of Livonia and southern Estonia to the motherland than its opponent Sweden in the north. Starting in 1582, the Polish-Lithuanian administrative structure was introduced in Livonia and southern Estonia. The Commonwealth gave Livonian nobility access to the Polish-Lithuanian Diet (*sejm*) and civil service. Unlike the Swedish *riksdag*, the *sejm* was a noble assembly and thus did not require reforms in the Livonian estate society. Even if the *Constitutiones Livoniae* in 1582 confirmed the freedom of religion for both Catholics and Protestants (following the Commonwealth's own system of religious freedom)<sup>43</sup>, Poland-Lithuania promoted actively the Catholic (Counter-)Reformation in the Baltic. In 1583, a Jesuit College in Tartu was founded for both religious and educational purposes.<sup>44</sup>

The intention to unite the Estonian lands under Polish-Lithuanian rule was a key question in the election of Sigismund Vasa as the Polish-Lithuanian monarch in 1587. The Swedish envoys, speaking on behalf of the Vasa prince's candidacy, made loose promises in Warsaw to give up the Swedish part of Estonia to the Commonwealth, following similar promises during John

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<sup>42</sup> TARKIAINEN/TARKIAINEN (as in footnote 39), pp. 43-45, 57, 61-62, 74-75, 90-95.

<sup>43</sup> *Constitutiones Livoniae*, 1582, in: Rahvusarhiiv Tartus [National Archive in Tartu], Tartu Magistraat [Tartu City Council] (RA, TM), EAA.995.2.16.

<sup>44</sup> ENN TARVEL: Lõuna-Eesti Poola-Leedi valduses 1561-1625 [Southern Estonia under the Rule of Poland-Lithuania 1561-1625], in: KÜNG/SEPPEL (as in footnote 41), pp. 133-184, here pp. 143-184. See also TARKIAINEN/TARKIAINEN (as in footnote 39), p. 82.

III's candidacy in 1573 and 1575<sup>45</sup>, whereas in Stockholm King John III, his brother Duke Charles and the *riksråd* (council of the realm) agreed that no territories—meaning particularly Estonia—would be surrendered without acceptance by the *riksråd* and Duke Charles. The Protestant nobility in the Swedish Estonia were offended that such an idea as to hand over Estonia to Poland-Lithuania had even occurred.<sup>46</sup> Still, the Polish-Lithuanian nobility considered promises made at the election assembly to be final and binding to all parties. The dispute over the Estonian lands was heating up between Poland-Lithuania and Sweden, and between the Polish-Lithuanian estates and their new monarch, Sigismund Vasa.<sup>47</sup>

The Polish-Lithuanian estates wished to resolve the problem as part of the negotiations in Tallinn in late summer 1589, where Sigismund Vasa and his father, John III of Sweden, met to hold talks with each other. Officially, the meeting was supposed to concentrate on drafting a common policy between the realms against Muscovy, as the truce between Sweden and Muscovy was coming to an end. Unofficially, John III's plan was to get his son back to Stockholm, as he was growing uncertain about his bloodline's position on the Swedish throne. The plan would have included the surrender of the Polish-Lithuanian throne to Archduke Ernest of Habsburg, who had previously been a candidate for the Polish-Lithuanian crown in 1573 and briefly also in 1575.<sup>48</sup> Once in Tallinn, the unofficial plan of the meeting became public knowledge, causing confusion and fury for all parties present. The delegations, consisting of nobility and military troops from Poland-Lithuania and Sweden alike, opposed the royal scheme of Sigismund's return to Stockholm. The Swedish representatives demanded that the two monarchs should not abandon the alliance with Poland-Lithuania, as such a turn of events would leave Sweden alone against Muscovy. The troops were short of resources and approaching exhaustion, so they wanted to secure peace with Muscovy now that there seemed to be a good chance for peace talks and a positive solution from the Swedish perspective.<sup>49</sup> Especially the troops responsible for the

<sup>45</sup> MIIA IJÄS: The Rejected Candidate: John III Vasa, the Polish-Lithuanian Royal Elections (1573/75) and Early Modern Political Decision-Making, in: *Scandinavian Journal of History* 39 (2014), 4, pp. 403-424.

<sup>46</sup> TARKIAINEN/TARKIAINEN (as in footnote 39), pp. 68-69.

<sup>47</sup> LAGER-KROMNOW (as in footnote 25); LEITSCH (as in footnote 22), pp. 116-122; POHJOLAN-PIRHONEN (as in footnote 24), pp. 398-400; HENRYK WISNER: *Zygmunt III Waza*, 2nd ed., Wrocław 2006 (1991), pp. 26-27.

<sup>48</sup> KAZIMIERZ LEPSZY: *Rzeczpospolita Polska w dobie sejmu inkwizycyjnego (1589-1592)* [The Polish Commonwealth during the Era of the Inquisition Parliament, 1589-1592], 2nd edition, Oświęcim 2015, pp. 55-60.

<sup>49</sup> Anteckning om meniga krigsfolkets i Narva förening och memorial till konung Johan 1589 den 24 september [Memorandum and Annotation from the Military Troops in Narva to King John, 1589-09-24], in: EMIL HILDEBRAND (ed.): *Svenska riksdagsakter jämte andra handlingar som höra till statsförfattningens historia under tidehvarvet 1521-1718. Andra delen III: 1571-1592* [Swedish Parliamentary Acts and Other

Swedish defense in Narva—among whom there were many nobles originating from Finland—told the Vasa kings that if Sigismund were to return to Stockholm and the alliance with Poland-Lithuania were broken, they would drop their weapons and abandon their loyalty to King John and his successor.<sup>50</sup>

Both the *riksråd* and the Swedish military agreed that Sweden could not afford to make an enemy of Poland-Lithuania, as this might encourage the Commonwealth to ally more closely with Muscovy. They reminded the king and his advisors that an unwanted war on two fronts, against Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania, would have immediate negative effects on the security situation, especially in Livonia and Finland.<sup>51</sup> The Polish-Lithuanian delegation declared that if their king were to return to Stockholm, he would lose the Polish-Lithuanian throne and the Commonwealth would face another interregnum and royal election, in which the Vasa monarchy would have no say. The events of 1574/75, when the French-born king Henry Valois had left the Commonwealth for Paris four months after his coronation, served as a sad reminder that no-one would want to repeat. For the Polish-Lithuanian nobility, the negotiations over Estonia were now superseded by discussion about whether they still had a king or not.<sup>52</sup>

As this miserable scene took place in Tallinn, neither the delegation of Sweden nor Poland-Lithuania had any interest in listening to the Estonians over the issue of which composite state they should belong to. In both war and diplomacy, Estonia had strategic importance, yet greater powers rode roughshod over Estonia leaving no authority to its local population in higher

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Sources Concerning the History of State Formation in 1521-1718. Second Part III: 1571-1592], Stockholm 1899, pp. 852-854.

<sup>50</sup> POHJOLAN-PIRHONEN (as in footnote 24), pp. 403-406; PENTTI RENVALL: Baltian kysymyksen kriisi [The Crisis of the Baltic Question], in: ARVI KORHONEN (ed.): Suomen historian käsikirja I, Porvoo—Helsinki 1949, pp. 339-341. See also ERIC ANTHONI: Till avvecklingen av konflikten mellan hertig Carl och Finland. I: Konfliktens uppkomst och hertigens seger [Towards the Settlement of the Conflict Between Duke Charles and Finland. I: The Beginning of the Conflict and Duke's Victory], Helsinki 1935, pp. 5-7. In general, Anthoni criticized the "renvallian" interpretation of Finnish "special interests" apart from the Swedish nobility. Concerning the events in Tallinn, he emphasized the role of the Swedish *riksråd* and nobility who resisted the king's plan to take his son Sigismund back to Stockholm, as this was against the Swedish lords' own interests for power. Regarding Anthoni's criticism of Renvall, see JUSSILA (as in footnote 16), pp. 223-225.

<sup>51</sup> Rådslag och böneskrift öfverlämnade dels i rådets dels i rådets och adelns samt krigsbefällets namn till konung Sigismund. Reval 1589 den 5 september (sic) [Counsel and Petition Given by the Council of the Realm, Nobility and Military to King Sigismund, Tallinn 1589-09-05], in: HILDEBRAND (as in footnote 49), pp. 822-837, here p. 831. Also: Adeln utan råds och krigsfolkets böneskrift till konung Sigismund. Reval 1589 den 23 september [Nobility's Petition, Without the Council of the Realm or Military, to King Sigismund, Tallinn 1589-09-23], *ibidem*, pp. 848-851, esp. pp. 849-850.

<sup>52</sup> LEPSZY (as in footnote 48), pp. 55-74; SZPACZYŃSKI (as in footnote 22), pp. 125-136; WISNER (as in footnote 47), pp. 52-56.

matters of state or what was considered foreign policy. In the end, pressure on the Vasa monarchs by the *riksråd* and the troops' threat to abandon their ruler persuaded the younger Vasa king to evaluate the situation anew. He was most likely persuaded by the argument that the best way (for the time being) to secure domestic peace in Sweden and a peace treaty with Muscovy was his return to Poland-Lithuania.<sup>53</sup>

After his fiery return to Stockholm, King John III gave his newborn son and namesake the Turku Castle and dominions in the Finnish lands, for which John (1589-1618) was named as duke of Finland (in 1590-1606).<sup>54</sup> Although the position of a duke of Finland could not be compared to that of the Prince of Wales (as an heir apparent to the English, or later British, monarch), the king's action can be seen as an attempt to strengthen his son's position in the Swedish realm. In Poland-Lithuania, King Sigismund's relations with the Commonwealth's estates were far from easy. The suspected collusion by Sigismund with the much-hated Austrian Habsburgs reached its culmination in the so-called inquisition *sejm* in late 1592, in which the nobility questioned the monarch over his actions and possible collusion with a foreign power (the Habsburgs). The king had to confirm that he did not intend to abdicate the Polish-Lithuanian throne. Finally, the king and the estates agreed that he would only travel to Sweden after the death of John III to receive the lordship of his hereditary realm. The solution of the *sejm* came just in time as John III died in December 1592.<sup>55</sup> The settlement over Estonia between Poland-Lithuania and Sweden now awaited Sigismund's coronation in his northern realm.

### The Crisis of the 1590s and Beyond: Finland and Estonia as Pieces of the Puzzle

The coronation of Sigismund Vasa in Uppsala in spring 1594 was preceded by difficult negotiations between the king, his uncle Duke Charles and the Swedish estates. The key question was about religion: Sigismund and the Church of Rome wanted to secure the right to practice Catholicism in Sweden, but Duke Charles was absolutely against this demand as he wished to prevent any Catholic mission in Sweden by Sigismund and his protégés. Sigismund's other realm, Poland-Lithuania, was an elective monarchy and long discussions between royal candidates and the estates were normal practice there. Sweden, on the other hand, was a hereditary monarchy, established as

<sup>53</sup> LEPSZY (as in footnote 48), pp. 65-74.

<sup>54</sup> Konung Johans donationsbrev för sin yngre son hertig Johan på Åbo slott, stad och län, Åland, Bråborg, m.m. Stockholm 1590 den 4 januari [King John's Donation Letter to His Younger Son Duke John for Turku Castle, Town and County, Åland and Bråborg, Stockholm 1590-01-04], in: HILDEBRAND (as in footnote 49), pp. 1028-1035.

<sup>55</sup> LEPSZY (as in footnote 48), pp. 285-331; SZPACZYŃSKI (as in footnote 22), pp. 137-165.

such by Sigismund's grandfather Gustav I in 1544. Still, the Swedes—much of the initiative coming from Duke Charles—made high demands regarding royal administration and religion in Sweden before they would proceed with Sigismund's coronation. This was unprecedented under the Vasa monarchy and set clear limitations to Sigismund's rule. As a thoughtful political analyst, papal envoy Germanico Malaspina observed that in these circumstances, the differences between the Polish-Lithuanian elective monarchy and the Swedish hereditary rule were in fact quite minimal.<sup>56</sup>

One of the few supporters of Sigismund in Sweden was Klaus Fleming, whom John III had previously appointed as the governor-general of Finland and Estonia and as Lord High Admiral and Lord High Constable. These positions meant that Fleming was in command of both the army and navy. Fleming was born in Parainen, in Finland Proper, and represented the old soldier-nobility who possessed little education beyond their military experience. He had been a key supporter and trustee of John III, even at times when the king was highly suspicious of the *riksråd*. In the 1590s, Fleming continued to support Sigismund as the lawful king. Given his role as the governor-general of Finland (and Estonia) and his ability to get other noblemen from the Finnish lands to support him, previous Finnish historians often assumed that the “Finnish nobility” was especially supportive towards Sigismund, which would have meant that “Finland” somehow positioned itself against “Sweden.”<sup>57</sup> For Sigismund's camp, however, Fleming's position as Lord High Admiral was more important than any supposed ability to rally the “Finnish” nobility. In the tense atmosphere of the coronation trip in 1593/94, Malaspina pondered that it was especially important to secure the navy, ports and control over the coast for those loyal to Sigismund, hence the importance of Fleming's support to Sigismund.<sup>58</sup> Only when the 1590s crisis in Sweden intensified and the peasants in Ostrobothnia and Finland took up their cudgels and other weapons and rose against Fleming's troops did the nobility of “Finland” align itself more strongly with Fleming.

The so-called Cudgel War (1596/97) has remained a controversial issue in Finnish and Swedish history, as it includes a violent civil war (a peasant revolt) as a symptom of discontent within the estate society (between peasants and nobility/army), which then escalated into a conflict between Duke Charles and the supporters of King Sigismund and as such had its connections to the Reformation politics in the Baltic.<sup>59</sup> The conflict was not between the

<sup>56</sup> Avertimenti da osservanti da Sua Maiesta avanti la coronatione, s. d. (1593), in: Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV), Segr. Stato, Polonia 35, ff. 369v-370r.

<sup>57</sup> See esp. RENVALL (as in footnote 50), p. 363; POHJOLAN-PIRHONEN (as in footnote 24), p. 465; JUTIKKALA/PIRINEN (as in footnote 28), p. 104.

<sup>58</sup> Germanico Malaspina's advice to King Sigismund, s. d. [November–December 1593], in: ASV, Segr. Stato, Polonia 35, ff. 456r-460r.

<sup>59</sup> See esp. KATAJALA (as in footnote 38), pp. 179-205; MIRKKA LAPPALAINEN: Susimes-su: 1590-luvun sisällissota Ruotsissa ja Suomessa [Wolf Mass: The Civil War of the

different geographical parts of the Swedish realm but was an internal conflict within the Swedish state that took place in the territory that now comprises Finland. One of the causes of the war was that, although Sweden had been able to sign a peace treaty in Teusina with Muscovy in 1595, Fleming had refused to disband the army. The war burden on the home front did not ease and even peasants in Ostrobothnia, who had been freed to support the army on their lands, continued to suffer from the burden and other impositions required by the military and nobility. In consequence, the peasants rose against the army and noble troops. They received political support from Duke Charles, who took a stand against Fleming and eventually against King Sigismund and his supporters. Fleming and his troops were able to gain victories over the peasants, but after two campaigns in Finland by Duke Charles, the supporters of Sigismund had to give in, and several of them escaped to Poland-Lithuania. Fleming himself died during the conflict, though not in battle. King Sigismund appointed another loyalist, Arvid Stålbarm (1549-1620), in his place, but their cause was already lost.

While observing the events from afar in Poland-Lithuania, King Sigismund negotiated with the *sejm* about sending supporting troops to Sweden. The Polish nobility were not very interested in the matter, an attitude that emphasizes their indifference towards Sweden. The Lithuanians were, in general, more open to supporting Sigismund's stand in Sweden, but they had entered into their own political conflict with the monarch over the nomination of a new bishop in Vilnius.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, Sigismund hesitated to use military power in Sweden, as he quite rightly considered that such intervention would not increase his support in the northern realm. Finally, Sigismund travelled to Sweden with his troops, but they were defeated at the Battle of Stångebro in 1598. Sigismund lost Sweden. Duke Charles's retribution was harsh and many of Sigismund's noble supporters and their family members were killed in the bloodbaths in Turku, Viipuri (Viborg) and Linköping in 1599-1600, including the sons of Klaus Fleming.<sup>61</sup> Many of the nobility of "Finnish origin" were sentenced to death or otherwise relieved of their posts. In the seventeenth century, Swedish and Livonian-born nobility were settled in Finland as royal officials or were rewarded with land.

During the crisis of the 1590s, *nuntius* Malaspina considered whether Estonia and Finland could be separated from Sweden and secured for Sigismund and the Catholics. The papal envoy argued that Sigismund had a hereditary right to these lands, the territories had officials who were loyal to Sigismund (especially Fleming and his successor Stålbarm), and the Polish-Lithuanian

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1590s in Sweden and Finland], Helsinki 2009; HEIKKI YLIKANGAS: Nuijasota [The Club War], 7th ed., Helsinki 2009.

<sup>60</sup> See e. g. TEREŠKINAS (as in footnote 37), pp. 76-80.

<sup>61</sup> See e. g. ANU LAHTINEN: A Nobleman's Death: Power Struggle and Resistance in Accounts of a Political Execution in Early Modern Sweden, in: HENRIK JENSEN (ed.): Rebellion and Resistance, Pisa 2009, pp. 33-49.

estates had long demanded the annexation of the Estonian lands by the Commonwealth. Malaspina further speculated that the geographical location of Finland (it remains unclear what kind of territorial unit the nuntius meant here) on the Baltic seacoast and adjoining Muscovy, would interest the Poles and Lithuanians enough to provide Sigismund with the resources he needed to secure the area under his rule. Malaspina considered it important to strengthen the position of Catholics in the Baltic, not only against Sweden, but also against other Protestant (naval) powers such as England and Denmark.<sup>62</sup>

It must be emphasized that Malaspina's speculative plans to detach "Finland" from Sweden were his alone, and there was no wider support for such a plan. Although the nobility in Finland had sworn loyalty to King Sigismund in 1593<sup>63</sup>, this had taken place before the open conflict with Duke Charles, so it cannot be interpreted as indicative of their position later in the conflict of the 1590s.<sup>64</sup> There were no public discussions or preparations to detach Finland from Sweden in the 1590s. Fleming and other Sigismund supporters defended—in their view—the lawful monarch and their own political and social position in a domestic conflict. Finally, there were no demands for any Finnish lands in Poland-Lithuania, unlike the case over Estonia. As Sigismund was dethroned in Sweden in 1599 and Duke Charles (officially King Charles IX from 1604 to 1611) extended his attack to Livonia in 1600, Sigismund finally agreed with the Polish-Lithuanian nobility and declared the annexation of the whole of Estonia to the Commonwealth.<sup>65</sup>

The declared annexation of Estonia to the Commonwealth had little practical effect, as Poland-Lithuania was unable to take control of the northern parts of the land. In southern Estonia, Sigismund tried to strengthen his position among the local population with the help of the Catholic (Counter) Reformation and restrictions on Protestant worship. Especially in the 1610s, the Estonian-language Protestants' religious life and practices faced restrictions. In 1612, King Sigismund went as far as to forbid preaching any other faith except Catholicism to ethnic Estonians and Latvians in Livonia—most of them in the unfree peasant communities but also including some townspeople.<sup>66</sup> Baltic Germans remained a different matter as they belonged largely to the upper classes of the community (nobility, merchants) and it was more difficult to ban Protestantism among them by a royal order. Active efforts for the Catholic Reformation were made especially among the ethnic Estonians

<sup>62</sup> Germanico Malaspina to Cardinal San Giorgio, 1594-01-16, in: ASV, Segr. Stato, Polonia 35, ff. 491r-494r; Germanico Malaspina to Rome, 1597-04-12, in: ASV, Fondo Borghese, ser. III, 89d, ff. 50r-52v; LEITSCH (as in footnote 22), pp. 236-237.

<sup>63</sup> POHJOLAN-PIRHONEN (as in footnote 24), pp. 418-419; RENVALL (as in footnote 50), p. 358.

<sup>64</sup> See also JUSSILA (as in footnote 16), pp. 223-225.

<sup>65</sup> LEITSCH (as in footnote 22), pp. 237-238; WISNER (as in footnote 47), p. 89.

<sup>66</sup> Sigismundus III (1612-12-01), in: RA, TM, EAA.995.2.52.

(and Latvians in Livonia), and the Jesuit order made a strenuous effort to promote the use of the Estonian language in education and religious life.<sup>67</sup>

Confessional unity was considered important for political loyalty and Sigismund strengthened his confessional policies especially in the peripheries and border zones of the Commonwealth: the Ukrainian and Livonian lands. In the former, the Union of Brześć in 1595/96 established a church union between the Catholics and the Orthodox Church, creating the Uniate Church. The Uniates kept their traditional Orthodox dogma but acknowledged papal authority. As the royal policy was to advance the union, it declared the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and in the Commonwealth illegal.<sup>68</sup> Confessional policy was no Polish oddity, however. As King Charles IX's troops occupied Tartu, they captured and disgraced the town's Jesuits. Their collegium was to be abolished and replaced by a Protestant school.<sup>69</sup>

By the 1620s, Poland-Lithuania had lost all its Estonian possessions to Sweden. Charles had ambitious ideas to integrate Estonia closely with Sweden proper. In the early 1600s, he repeatedly asked the Estonian estates to join the *riksdag*.<sup>70</sup> Already in 1602, he sent a request to the city council in Tartu claiming that, since Tartu had been incorporated into Sweden, the city should send its representatives to an upcoming session of the *riksdag*.<sup>71</sup> Such unification attempts came to nil, however, because of opposition by the local nobility. In practice, the unification projects of Estonia to Sweden proper came to an end after the death of Gustav II Adolf (r. 1611-1632), as the Instrument of Government of 1634 made a clear division between Sweden proper (including Finland) and the annexed provinces.<sup>72</sup> At the same time, the lands of modern Finland were integrated more closely with the rest of Sweden. The seventeenth century witnessed Sweden's rise to become the great power of northern Europe for about 100 years. Though the administrative re-

<sup>67</sup> TARVEL (as in footnote 44), pp. 168-178; ERWIN OBERLÄNDER: Das Konzept der Frühen Neuzeit und die Geschichte Estlands, Livlands und Kurlands 1561-1797, in: NORBERT ANGERMANN, KARSTEN BRÜGGEMANN et al. (eds.): Die baltischen Länder und Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit, Köln et al. 2015, pp. 11-35, here pp. 19-20. On the "Polish" Counter-Reformation in Livonia, see also GVIDO STRAUBE: Das Scheitern der von Polen-Litauen begonnenen Gegenreformation in Livland, *ibidem*, pp. 217-225.

<sup>68</sup> See e. g. REMIGIUS ČERNIUS: Unia Kościelna [Church Union], in: VYTAUTAS ALIŠAUSKAS (ed.): Kultura Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego: Analizy i obrazy, Kraków 2006, pp. 798-822; KARIN FRIEDRICH: Von der religiösen Toleranz zur gegenreformatorischen Konfessionalisierung, in: BÖMELBURG (as in footnote 5), pp. 251-289, here p. 270; SERHII PLOKHY: The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine, New York 2001, pp. 77-99; BARBARA SKINNER: The Western Front of the Eastern Church: Uniate and Orthodox Conflict in 18th-century Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, Illinois 2009.

<sup>69</sup> TARKIAINEN/TARKIAINEN (as in footnote 39), pp. 72-73.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 73-75, 90-95.

<sup>71</sup> Charles to the city council in Tartu, 1602-03-13, in: RA, TM, EAA.995.2.38.

<sup>72</sup> TARKIAINEN/TARKIAINEN (as in footnote 39), p. 95.

forms of that time set an example for other European powers of a new bureaucratic state, the enhanced use of resources was primarily intended to wage war. As a result of the Great Northern War, Sweden lost its possessions in Estonia, Livonia, Ingria and Karelia and the town of Viborg in eastern Finland to the Russian Empire, but was able to keep most of Finland for almost another century.

## Conclusions

In this article I have focused on the issue of how early modern Sweden and Poland-Lithuania as composite states managed their lands in the coastal areas of the Finnish Gulf, namely in Finland and Estonia/Livonia. Traditionally, Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth have been considered as very different from each other. The concept of the composite state, however, enables a historian to compare the states in a new way and also to focus on their potential similarities. Here I have focused especially on the Swedish and Polish-Lithuanian attempts to unify their territories, and the challenges they faced. During the crisis of the 1590s, which concluded in King Sigismund's dethronement in Sweden and Sweden's attack on Poland-Lithuania in Livonia, Finland became a key area of the conflict internally. In the relations of Poland-Lithuania and Sweden, however, Estonia always received more attention than Finland, as the Polish-Lithuanian estates repeatedly made their claim to incorporate the whole of Estonia into the Commonwealth. Only in nuntius Malaspina's mind could both Estonia and Finland have been secured by the Catholics and Poland-Lithuania.

In 1600, Sigismund finally agreed to the incorporation of Estonia, but only after it was clear that he had lost his power in Sweden, and his uncle Duke Charles continued the war in Livonia. By comparison, any plan for detachment of Finland from Sweden at this point was unrealistic. Finland was not a disputed area, the estates in Finland did not seek to leave Sweden, and the Polish-Lithuanian nobility never made such claims. Even though (parts of) Finland were occasionally called and administered as a duchy, Finland was never an autonomous part of the Swedish realm. The royal title of grand duke of Finland, introduced by John Vasa and followed by his son Sigismund, was mainly intended to impress foreign audiences. It was devised to emphasize the grandeur of the monarch himself, but it did not reflect the actual administrative system of Finland. In this article I have suggested that John Vasa was most likely inspired by the eastern concept of a grand duke, and that he introduced the title to make his realm appear comparable to Poland-Lithuania and the Russian lands.

It is not an easy subject to tackle the early modern history and political conditions in areas and communities that were not yet modern nations during the time under scrutiny. One should avoid fitting modern nations into the early modern settings. Thus, my aim has not been to rewrite the histories of

Finland and Estonia to emphasize their autonomous position. Representing different cases and conditions, however, both early modern Finland and Estonia provide interesting perspectives on early modern composite states in the Baltic. The acquisition of Estonia turned early modern Sweden into a composite state. Finland, on the other hand, was often seen by earlier historians as a separate part of the realm, thus implying (erroneously) that Sweden was a composite/conglomerate state even before 1561, even if the historians in question did not yet use or know this concept.

As their mutual conflict intensified, both Sweden and Poland-Lithuania aimed at securing their border areas tightly to the motherland. In case of Finland, closer integration to the government in Stockholm was successful and replaced the previous “elusive” state system, though this took place after a violent battle for power between Duke Charles and Sigismund’s supporters. In Estonia and Livonia, Poland-Lithuania aimed at close integration of these territories by introducing the Commonwealth’s administration and religious system, but soon lost these lands to its opponent, Sweden. Finally, Swedish rule in the Baltic provinces had to be agreed and compromised with the local elite, who did not oppose the Swedish kingdom, but wanted to stay conveniently apart from its core. Although distant from the capitals of Stockholm and Warsaw, both Finland and Estonia were important pieces of the greater puzzle comprised of the different composite states in the Baltic.