

The issue is dedicated to the history of *Radziwiłł* magnate family.

The issue opens with a preface by its compiler, a historian from Minsk **Andrej Macuk**.

A Belarusian historian **Nina Skiepján** in her article “The start of family traditions using the example of Mikolaj I Radziwiłł (the Old)” examines the first examples in the family’s history when the highest posts in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were passed on directly from father to son. The article also covers the family’s debut in European aristocratic circles which took place as the result of the establishment of family ties beyond the Grand Duchy and being conferred the title Prince of the Holy Roman Empire.

A historian from Poland **Piotr Łabędź** in his article “Krzysztof Mikolaj Radziwiłł «The Thunderbolt» as the first senator of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania” studies the political career of one of the best known members of the family of late XVI — early XVII centuries. After his father’s death, Krzysztof Radziwiłł took political initiative in Lithuania and was soon granted the office of the Voivode of Vilnius Voivodeship and the Great Hetman of Lithuania, which confirmed his dominant position among the elite of Grand Duchy. Continuing his father’s policy, Krzysztof Mikolaj Radziwiłł strived towards maintaining his prominent position among Lithuanian magnates and aspired to take the role of the informal leader of Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was most visible during the interregnum following Stephen Báthory’s death and the first years of Sigismund III Vasa’s reign, when Krzysztof Mikolaj Radziwiłł managed to underscore his position in the country despite several political failures. In the next few years Krzysztof Mikolaj Radziwiłł found himself in conflict with king Sigismund III, which revealed the real political power of the Lithuanian magnate, strictly opposing the court’s actions. The goal of the author is to use this article as a means of displaying Krzysztof Radziwiłł’s aspirations related to his efforts to play a main political role in Lithuania.

In an article by a Polish researcher **Tomasz Kempa** “Mikolaj Krzysztof «the Orphan» Radziwiłł and the Union of Brest” studies various examples of Mikolaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł helping Greek Catholic Church in a number of ways which lead to its significant expansion in the magnate’s lands. His support of Greek Catholic

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Church was especially useful due to insignificant support of the cause on the part of Roman Catholic Church during the period. An article by **Karol Żojdź** “«Having chosen the lesser of two evils, he gave preference to Swedish protection against Muscovite tyranny...»: some remarks as to the position of Janusz and Bogusław Radziwiłł in 1655” continues the long-lasting discussion over the position taken by the members of Biržai branch of Radziwiłł family during the wars among Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy in 1654—1667 and Sweden in 1655—1660. The author convincingly expounds the motives behind Bogusław Radziwiłł’s decision to accept Swedish protection and to remain in Swedish service till 1657. As it is known, many Commonwealth magnates accepted Swedish protection in 1655, but only such decision by the Radziwiłłs was evaluated negatively because of the “black legend” created by their enemies.

In his article “The struggle between Pac and Radziwiłł families over domination in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1666—1669” **Andrzej Adam Majewski** also turns to Bogusław Radziwiłł, who, together with Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł was a central figure of the opposition group in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On the basis of vast source material the author carefully analyzes the causes of struggle between the Pac and Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł families, its course and results, rightly noticing that the defeat of the Radziwiłłs was caused by the death of Bogusław Radziwiłł, which led to the group’s “weakening and disintegration”.

An article by **Krzysztof Kossarzecki** “The retreat of Krzysztof Radziwiłł The Thunderbolt in Livonia in 1601 by his own account” focuses on the last years of the magnate’s life accompanied by failures in the war against Sweden in 1600—1601, which delivered a heavy blow to his ambitious plans and his reputation.

In his article titled “In the service of the King and the Commonwealth: the participation of Lithuanian incisor Zygmunt Karol Radziwiłł in the war of Smolensk of 1632—1634” **Przemysław Gawron** tells a story of a not very famous and rich member of Radziwiłł family who selflessly served the King and his country. He sacrificed his health, time and funds to the service. The article contains a lot of new facts on the history of Smolensk war of 1632—1634, which ended in an excellent victory of the Grand Duchy troops.

An article “The Military Units of the House of Radziwiłłs in the Computable Crown Army during the times of kings Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki and Jan III Sobieski (1669—1696)” by a historian

from Warsaw, **Zbigniew Hundert**, focuses on the organisation, financial aspects and service purposes of the infantry regiments and cavalry companies of the House of Radziwiłłs in the Crown Army in the years 1669—1696. This article shows the reasons why the Radziwiłłs kept their own military units in the Computable Crown Army and discusses their political attitudes during the reign of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki and Jan III Sobieski.

An article by **Marek Ferenc** “The Queen and her brother: the relationship between Barbara Radziwiłł and Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Red” is also dedicated to the only member of Radziwiłł family on the royal throne and her relationship with the brother. It gives a convincing account of Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Red Radziwiłł the Red’s sister on the royal throne being his informer and excellent protector for him and his followers.

An article by a Lithuanian scholar **Lina Balaišytė** “Letters by court painters of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł: self-image and status of the painter” is dedicated to the state of painters at Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł’s court and their placement in the court hierarchy. Using the example of several painters the author demonstrates the very different destinies they had, Lina Balaišytė makes a reasonable conclusion that the “masters who came from abroad, were distinguished by their professional self-confidence and didn’t want to fit into the hierarchy established at court”. Apart from that, the author describes rather interesting attempts of training some local people to become court painters.

A scholar from Belarus **Natallia Sliž** dedicated her article “Holdings and palaces of Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł in Hrodna in XVIII century” to an interesting but little-known topic of Radziwiłłs’ palaces in Hrodna. Michał Kazimierz “Rybeńko” Radziwiłł was the one whose activity focused on the expansion redecoration of Radziwiłł-owned sites in the city, and their development in the form of palaces constructed on them reflected the high status of the owner and were in line with the new trends in architectural art.

**Sławomir Augustowicz** in his article “The demise and funeral of the Governor of Prussia Bogusław Radziwiłł” a detailed account of the last years of life, death and funeral of Bogusław Radziwiłł. A large part of the article is devoted to investigation of diseases of Bogusław Radziwiłł and finding out which of them caused his death. The author notes that, sensing the oncoming death, Bogusław Radziwiłł dedicated much of his time to the settlement of family and property matters and the development of instructions for the future upbringing of his daughter Ludwika Karo-

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lina. He put great effort into preventing his closest relatives, Radziwiłłs of Niasviž and Katarzyna Hlebowicz from claiming custodianship over the girl and from possible claims to property. However, such actions by Bogusław Radziwiłł led to the Hohenzollern gaining most of the power to manipulate his testament, which they used immediately. The article ends with a detailed description of preparation and the course of Radziwiłł's burial in Königsberg.

An article by **Karolina Stojek** "Funeral ceremonies at Niasviž court in the time of Michał Kazimierz «Rybeńko»" is dedicated to such aspect of the functioning of Radziwiłł court as funeral ceremonies, which considerably changes the everyday life of Radziwiłłs' residence in Niasviž for periods of mourning. The article covers all funerals of Radziwiłł family members during the time: Michał Kazimierz's mother Anna of Sanguszko, his son Janusz, his wife Franciszka Urszula, and his brother Hieronim Florian. Neither did the author overlook the funeral of Michał Kazimierz himself.

An article by **Filip Wolański** "Radziwiłłs' funeral ceremonies of XVIII against the background of funeral customs of the rest of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth" also touches on a similar topic and is generally dedicated to funeral ceremonies of the Radziwiłłs in XVIII century, which the author describes within the context of funeral rituals of the rest of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The author bases his study on the detailed accounts of the funeral of Anna Radziwiłł of Sanguszko and Navagrudak voivode Jerzy Radziwiłł.