

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY  
LITHUANIAN INSTITUTE OF HISTORY

Rasa  
LEONAVIČIŪTĖ-GECEVIČIENĖ

# Bona Sforza and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: strengthening of the Jagiellonian Dynasty

**SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

Humanities,  
History and archeology H 005

---

VILNIUS 2021

This dissertation was written between 2016 and 2021 at the Lithuanian Institute of History.

**Academic supervisor** – Dr. Raimonda Ragauskienė (Lithuanian Institute of History, Humanities, History and archeology – H 005).

Dissertation Defence Panel:

Chairman – **prof. dr. Irena Vaišvilaitė** (Vilnius University, Humanities, History and archeology – H 005).

Members:

**Dr. Jolita Sarcevičienė** (Lithuanian Institute of History, Humanities, History and archeology – H 005).

**Doc. dr. Eugenijus Saviščevas** (Vilnius University, Humanities, History and archeology – H 005).

**Dr. Marius Sirutavičius** (Vytautas Magnus University, Humanities, History and archeology – H 005).

**Prof. dr. Rita Regina Trimonienė** (Vilnius University, Humanities, History and archeology – H 005).

The dissertation shall be defended at a public meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel at 3 p.m. on 29 October 2021 in the meeting room of the Lithuanian Institute of History.

Address: 17 Tilto st, Vilnius, Lithuania, (85) 261 4436, istorija@istorija.lt

The text of this dissertation can be accessed at the libraries of Vilnius University and the Lithuanian Institute of History, as well as at the Vilnius University website:

[www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiukalendorius](http://www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiukalendorius)

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS  
LIETUVOS ISTORIJOS INSTITUTAS

Rasa

LEONAVIČIŪTĖ-GECEVIČIENĖ

# Bona Sforca ir Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė: Jogailaičių dinastijos stiprinimas

**DAKTARO DISERTACIJOS SANTRAUKA**

Humanitariniai mokslai,  
Istorija ir archeologija H 005

---

VILNIUS 2021

Disertacija rengta 2016–2021 metais Lietuvos istorijos institute.

Mokslinė vadovė: Dr. Raimonda Ragauskienė (Lietuvos istorijos institutas, humanitariniai mokslai, istorija ir archeologija – H 005).

Gynimo taryba:

Pirmininkė – **prof. dr. Irena Vaišvilaitė** (Vilniaus universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, istorija ir archeologija – H 005).

Nariai:

**Dr. Jolita Sarcevičienė** (Lietuvos istorijos institutas, humanitariniai mokslai, istorija ir archeologija – H 005),

**Doc. dr. Eugenijus Saviščevas** (Vilniaus universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, istorija ir archeologija – H 005),

**Dr. Marius Sirutavičius** (Kauno Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, istorija ir archeologija – H 005),

**Prof. dr. Rita Regina Trimonienė** (Vilniaus universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, istorija ir archeologija – H 005).

Disertacija ginama viešame Gynimo tarybos posėdyje 2021 m. spalio mėn. 29 d. 15 val. Lietuvos istorijos instituto posėdžių salėje.

Adresas: Tiltų g. 17, Vilnius, Lietuva, tel. (85) 261 4436; el. paštas [istorija@istorija.lt](mailto:istorija@istorija.lt)

Disertaciją galima peržiūrėti Vilniaus universiteto, Lietuvos istorijos instituto bibliotekose ir VU interneto svetainėje adresu:

<https://www.vu.lt/naujienos/ivykiu-kalendorius>

## SUMMARY

### 1. RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH AND PROBLEM

At the beginning of the 15th and 16th centuries significant economic, political and cultural changes took place in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 150 years Lithuania made a phenomenal leap in culture and, in the 16th century, it finally fitted into Europe. In the context of these significant changes, the wife of the ruler Bona Sforza (1491 Vigevano, Italy–1557 Bari, Italy) became heavily involved in the political, economic and social life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. She showed that the noblemen of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania would have to respect her interests. Bona Sforza ruled the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for almost four centuries, from 1518 to 1557. During this period, she was actively involved in the political life, she administered the land management, managed the customs, developed businesses, cared for cities and towns and was a member of the court. It is hard to compare Bona's activity with the wives' of the previous rulers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as there are not many historical sources about other active women, such as Morta, Ona Vytautienė, Julijona Algirdienė. Elena, the wife of Aleksandras Jogailaitis, the grand duchess was for a relatively short period of time. Bona ruled for a long time, her activities have been extensively documented, therefore, the aspects of Bona's activity can be analyzed in more depth.

The topic of Bona's personality and activity is not new. Although, in history, already analyzed topics often become relevant in the context of new events, the approach of the society and researchers is changing, new methods of research are being employed, the society have new questions for historians. Compared to other wives' of rulers, Bona's activity has always been analyzed with particular attention. There were positive, as well as negative impact. On the one hand, an early attention to the uniqueness and significance of Bona's activity made possible for historians to gather information about Bona's

activity, promoted debate and interpretations. On the other hand, negative narrative formed stereotypes, which prevented more significant and thorough research without prejudice.

The most profuse research have been done by Polish historians. They mostly analyzed Bona's foreign and domestic policy activities. Her activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has been sidelined or became a context, therefore some aspects have been analyzed more thoroughly, and others – only very briefly, by concentrating on her political aspirations. It is possible that Bona has not become “our” ruler in the Lithuanian historiography because of the conflict about Barbora Radvilaitė, which tarnished Bona's reputation, or maybe because of a lack of information about her activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as negative narrative in the Polish historiography. As more data become available, as well as studies on the political and social processes of that time, there is a need to take a fresh look at Bona's activity by concentrating not on the broadness of the research, but on its depth. Bona's social political and economic activity have been analyzed very briefly, in the context of the ruler's economic policy, and only emphasizing her major wealth and power but not the ability to act and make decisions.

Significant social and cultural changes allow a more thorough research of Bona Sforza's, a member of the Jagiellonian dynasty, economical and legal activities, as well as better understand the possibilities, limits and characteristics of the Grand Duchess activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and to evaluate her contribution to strengthening of the Jagiellonian dynasty's economic power. In the Lithuanian and Polish historiography, the social political and economic aspects of Bona's activity have not been analyzed as thoroughly as the database of historical sources allows. Attila Bárány has summed up the research on queens' income and power and noted that money linked personal and political motives and significantly affected the limits of women power. Bona had more land in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania than in the Kingdom of Poland. The revenue from the mansions in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania significantly added to

Bona's treasury, as well as helped to improve the financial wellbeing of the Jagiellonian dynasty. Considering the significance of the link between a woman's financial situation and power, a more detailed research on Bona's economic activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is necessary.

The research is relevant because of the lack of more detailed approach in historiography. Eileen Power, a British historian, said that any woman's status, based on theoretical, legal and practical approach, will always be different. At the beginning of the early modern period the political theory in Europe was out of touch with reality. Although politics was only for men, in the 16th century Europe there were an unprecedented number of queens regnant. It is known for a long time that rulers could be, and often was, influenced by their wives, daughters and mothers, who were using their informal influence, as well as the political and social situation of that time in order to achieve their objectives. In the Western Europe historiography the phenomenon of women activity and real power has been analyzed for decades – from feministic to a broader, multidisciplinary discourse of gender studies, as well as from separate historical studies to comparative studies of the women's queenship in the context of the Western Europe. There are significantly less such studies in the Central and Eastern Europe. They are mostly biographical, there is still a lack of comparative research on the political, financial and cultural aspects of the ruler's wife's queenship in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as the Jagiellonian dynasty in Europe in the 15th and 16th century. Maria Bogucka first started comparative analysis of the women status in the Kingdom of Poland compared to the Western Europe. In the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Bona was an obvious exception to the mentioned "political rule", she competed with men, had significantly more abilities to operate. Therefore, this research is relevant in the context of gender studies of the region, also it would add to the Western Europe historiography, analyzing women's political and financial power in the Central and Eastern Europe.

## 2. THE OBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The analysis of all Bona's activities in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania would be too broad for one dissertation, especially since some aspects of Bona's activity, for example, her foreign politics, has already been analyzed by Polish historians. The object of this research is the queen of Poland and the Grand Duchess of Lithuania, Bona Sforza's economic activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania aspects in the context of the restoration of the Jagiellonian dynasty's material base and the strengthening of its finances, having regard to the effect her activity had on the political nation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its financial wellbeing. This is where the power of Bona, as a spouse of the ruler, and Bona as a natural person, is unfold. Bona's economic activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania best illustrates her effort to strengthen the dynasty economically, as well as to centralize the power of the Grand Duke, to assemble personal wealth and to increase her influence within the domain and limits of the Jagiellonian dynasty.

### 2.1 The main aim and the objectives of the research

The main aim of the research is to analyze the Queen of Poland and the Grand Duchess of Lithuania Bona Sforza's domestic policy and economic activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which demonstrated her personal goals, as well as needs of the Jagiellonian dynasty.

The objectives of the research are:

1. To present a general status of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania foreign policy and economy and related dynasty problems at the beginning of 16th century and after Bona Sforza became the Queen of Poland and the Grand Duchess of Lithuania.



2. Based on the Lithuanian and Polish historiography, to summarize the tendencies and specificity of the ruler's activity in the political life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by emphasizing the ensuring of the dynasty's continuity, gathering a circle of proponents and her influence in appointing the authorities in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

3. By identifying typological specifics of Bona's holdings, as well as the difference of her legal status in separate holdings, to define the principles and dynamics of creating the network of Bona Sforza's land management and other properties, from which she benefited economically.

4. To analyze the specifics of administrating Bona's complexes in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the tendencies of formation of coherent land management complexes.

5. To review the characteristics of the complex of Bona's officials – elders, vicegerents, visitors in terms of their national, social, family status and career.

6. To analyze the ruler's actions when auditing and revising the holdings of the Grand Duke, to evaluate the nature and importance of these audits in the context of strengthening the Jogailaičiai rulers complex and the centralization of the ruler's authority.

7. To present the Queen's and the Grand Duchess's actions when economically strengthening her own financial status through implementing innovations in agriculture, as well as her participations in managing the State customs and the activity of administrating woods and forests as a natural person and as a ruler.

### 3. THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The research chronologically covers the period from 1518 to 1557 – from Bona's arrival to the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to her death. It is important to continue the research after 1556, when Bona came back to Bari, in order to assess how important the matters of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the

Kingdom of Poland were to Bona after returning to Italy. When necessary for the research or to disclose the continuity of a particular process, the research will be brought forward to 1506, the beginning of Sigismund I the Old's reign.

#### 4. THE ACCESSIBILITY AND THE METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

A broad methodology can be applied for similar research. For a long time in the Western Europe a biographical method was applied, documenting the life of queens as wives, mothers and widows. However, the texts did not address the issue of women's queenship in more depth. In the Western Europe, methodological changes started in the second half of the 20th century, when the issue of women's queenship became a part of multidisciplinary research, raising questions about a woman's wealth, political power, patronage, social relations, image, etc. Today the issues of the activity of women from the highest social status are analyzed applying methods, used in political theory, economic and social history, literature, religion studies, art studies and other fields. Very often in this kind of research a comparative method is applied – vertically, as well as horizontally comparing women rulers of the same country, as well as temporary rulers throughout a broader region or all Europe.

The aspects of one person's particular activity are being analyzed in this research, and not all the biography and all the activities, therefore, the methodology of the research is narrower. Along a general, multidisciplinary, broader queenship accessibility, now applied in the analysis of the activity of women in the Western Europe, the analysis of Bona's economic activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in order to strengthen the dynasty is based on the methods, used for historical research. The key of the research is a critical analysis of historical sources. Based on this analysis, empirical data of historical sources were structures and interpreted. This method

is less applied in the beginning of the dissertation. In this part of the research, descriptive method and research synthesis are used, based on which other historians studies of various Bona's activities are summarized.

Although about some Bona's officials, such as local officers, messengers, courtiers, trustees are known more than about others, the prozopographic method allows to identify their commonalities and differences. The questions of all Bona's officials about their origin, career, social relations show their collective features and it allows to determine, how Bona formed the administration of her land management and property. A retrospective method is useful assessing the abilities of estates, cities and other properties that Bona ruled. Inventories of Bona's estate are sparse, there are only a few of them from the period of Bona's ruling. On the basis of chronologically earlier and a little bit later historical sources, the retrospective method allows to formulate insights about the changes of Bona's ruling period, estate economic abilities, the results of improving the management of the economy and their lasting value. A comparative method is useful in order to determine Bona's status regarding the ruler and landowners.

## 5. THESIS ARGUMENTS

1. Faced with domestic and geopolitical realities of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, The Queen of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Bona Sforza regarding the relationship with her officers, turned her activity toward strengthening and expanding the material powers of the dynasty.

2. The ruler's wife's relations with the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were based on power and benefit. However, Bona's influence in reappointing or pursuing a career wasn't significant. Bona did not form a strong circle of supporters that she could have counted on until 1556; she had the most political power until 1548, the death of her husband Sigismund I the Old.

3. Bona's domain in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was formed from the lands granted by the ruler, as well as due to permission to repurchase large properties, mainly based on the domains of the dynasty. The part of private individuals' lands in her land holding network was insignificant. Due to the lands accumulated by Bona, the concept of table manors was formed during the reign of Sigismund Augustus.

4. The network of Bona's lands was actively expanding in the 3rd and 4th decades of the 16th century (inclusive.) In the 5th and 6th decades, the network was getting smaller because of the expansion of Sigismund Augustus' lands, as well as the ongoing purchasing and other transactions.

5. Bona's land holdings in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were firstly administered by local officers, related to the administered territory. With the expansion of the lands, more Polish officers were introduced, however, the new-comers from Poland did not dominate among Bona's officers.

6. The ruler initiated many initiatives, related to the dynasty's material resources audit and optimization. The initiatives should have revealed the real situation of the Grand Duke's lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as enforced better administration of the ruler's estate. Bona's knowledge about an optimal way of managing the ruler's holdings derived from the heavily bureaucratic accounting system of the Kingdom of Naples, ruled by her grandfather and other members of the Aragon dynasty.)

7. The example and the basis of the economic reforms initiated in Bona's manors were the economic systems of the Western Europe and Poland, as well as economical and tax restructuring initiated by the ruler in the first decades of the 16th century, which started the transition from payment-in-kind to quit rent. Although restructuring tax systems was essential in the Volog reform (especially the global reform based on Sigismund Augustus' regulations in 1557), first of all, the surveying of Bona's lands, initiated by Bona herself,

was an important part of the audit of the Grand Duke's lands and the assessment of the capacity.

8. During the 5th and 6th decades of the 16th century, Bona gained a lot of significant levers of power, which strengthened her individual status, as well as a status of the dynasty: the network of her lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was large enough to compete with those of large landowners, she had a right to manage and exploit the forest of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as to administer the customs of all the regions of the Duchy. This allowed her and the ruler to make an attempt to monopolize these resources (which were very beneficial to the Treasury) and to crowd out private players.

## 6. THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The research consists of 4 parts. The first part is contextual and discusses the situation of the Jagiellonian dynasty in the 16th century in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland and Europe. It also outlines the problems which the Grand Duchy of Lithuania faced at the beginning of the 16th century, due to which it was needed to strengthen the dynasty's material foundation. It also summarizes the information about Bona's political activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, her relationship with the ruling elite of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as her influence on their lands and career. The other three parts of the research cover the three significant elements of Bona's activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: 1. The space 2. People and 3. Her activity regarding strengthening the Jagiellonian dynasty and creating personal material well-being. In the second part, the network of Bona's lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, separate complexes of land holdings relationships with Bona, the geography and typology of her lands, the dynamics of the expansion of the land complex and significant changes are defined. The third part discusses the contingent of the officers, who administered the previously mentioned complex, analyzing the administration of Bona's lands as separate complexes of land properties, as well as distinguishing

Bona's local administration officers' group features. The fourth part discusses the assistance of previously mentioned officers, Bona's economical, business and administrative activity focusing on Bona's endeavors to audit, inspect and legally enshrine dynasty's and personal property complexes, for the Grand Duke to have the power to manage significant resources of the State Treasury, to accelerate and reorganize the State economy. In the annex of the thesis, the maps, which illustrate Bona's land holdings in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, are added.

## 7. HISTORIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

### 7.1. Historiography

There is plenty of historiography about the Queen of Poland and the Grand Duchess of Lithuania Bona Sforza's activity. The reason is because, first of all, historians started to write about Bona's personality and her activity quite early. Feedback, mostly negative, about the specifics of Bona's activity was left by her contemporaries. Right after her death, they begun to create legends about Bona, which had a significant impact on the narrative of the early scientific historiography. First of all, the historiography is detailed in terms of chronology – the topic of Bona's activity found its place in the 19th century's historiography and is being analyzed to our day. The research has been done by Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Russian, Italian scholars, therefore, the historiography is broad in terms of geography as well. The historiography regarding the ruler's activity is not only abundant, but also multilingual. The most significant publication is a five-volume monograph dedicated to analyzing Bona's personality, environment and activity in Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, published by a Polish historian Władysław Pocięcha. This monograph has filled the gap of information about Bona's activity in Polish, and especially in

Lithuanian historiography. The third volume addresses the problems of Bona's activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. However, the monograph chronologically covers the period until 1539, therefore, it does not reveal all Bona's life and activity. The research by Władysław Pocięcha more or less discusses the problems of the formation and administration of Bona's land holding, her political and economic relations with the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as cultural initiatives. For a long time, this study was considered to be the best because of a vast body of factual material and summaries. The newest historiography is still referring to the monograph by Władysław Pocięcha. Some conclusions and summaries of the thesis are already adjusted or contradicted by historians, and modern historiography requires more deep research of the problem. A significant study about Bona's personality and activity was also carried out by Maria Bogucka.

In historiography, the analysis of the aspects of a formation of Bona's land holding network has been inconsistent so far. The network of her land holdings in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has not been purified, its composition and dynamics has not been analyzed in more depth. The formation of the ruler's land holding network is mostly analyzed in the context of restoration and strengthening of the Grand Duke's domain. Andrej Bondarenko discussed the network of Bona's landholdings the most consistently. He analyzed different ways of Bona's land holding network in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania formation, considered a question of the landholding formation strategy, highlighted an important issue of different Bona's legal relations with separate land complexes. The list of the ruler's manors and towns was modified and complemented, pointing out smaller manors. So far, it is the most cohesive and concise study about Bonas's lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Ana Pytasz-Kołodziejczyk widely discussed the exploitation of natural resources in the Podlachia region and the forests of Grodno. She discussed the usage of forests and other manure during the period when Bona was responsible for the maintenance of Podlachia and Grodno forests. Exploitation of

forests and other natural resources has been analyzed by other researchers in different aspects. They highlighted Bona's role in marketing the forest production outside the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The management of Bona's land holdings, the appointment, activity and career of local administrative officers are not discussed.

The historiography dedicated to the Voloĥ reform is extensive, however, not always informative regarding economic reorganization, ongoing in Bona's manors. Historians, first of all the Russians, quite early noticed the significance of Bona's economic reorganizations, significant studies were carried out in the last decade. Researchers, who analyzed the economic development of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, highlighted this problem as relevant. It can be stated that the process and significance of Bona's economic reorganizations were widely analyzed, the studies are detailed and very factual, attempting to assess Bona's activity and benefits in the context of the economic changes in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th century. On the other hand, the studies lack more significant conclusions. Economic benefits of the ruler's reorganizations, as well as the specifics of her officers' activity need to be analyzed in more depth based on new historian records.

## 7.2 Sources

Bona's involvement in the economic activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania led to the abundance of various historical sources about her. Many sources about Bona's activity are published. In the 19th century, some sources in the Ruthenian language regarding the economy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were published. Privileges, granted to people and towns, constitutional and founding documents, educational and informative texts, commercial and lease contracts, bills, audit documents and inventories, judicial decrees: complaints, appeal letters, instructions to judges and commissioners, court decisions and other sources reveal the aspects of Bona's activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This study is based on published and



unpublished historical sources. Unpublished sources are scattered throughout libraries and archives collections, and published – throughout various historical sources, published for over a century. In some cases, the actual documents have not survived, we know about them only from the registers of privileges, granted by the ruler. The Lithuanian Metrica (hereinafter – LM) is the most significant collection of the documents for this study. The office-keeping books, which had been collected from the 15th century, is considered as the core archive of Lithuania State. The LM consists of the different copies of the documents from various fields: privileges (to estate, people, lands, duchies, towns, etc.), the decrees issued by the ruler, Lithuanian Council of Lords or other courts, records of received complaints, granting, purchase, donations and lease transactions, the documents of the Treasury, diplomatic documents and other various types of acts. The LM has not been fully used for revealing the aspects of Bona's activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. For this research, the published books of the LM, as well as the microfilms of the unpublished books were revised. The documents in the books of the Lithuanian Metrica chronologically cover the whole period of Bona's reign in the Kingdom of

Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, it reveals the aspects of her economic and legal activity, representing the process of accumulating and managing land holdings, the aspects of appointing local officers, their activity and communication with Bona, it reflects the details of economic reorganizations in the manors, it shows Bona's influence in development of cities and towns, etc. The LM is undoubtedly the most valuable collection of documents, and without it the analysis of this thesis would be impossible.

Revision documents and inventories, which show economic state of Bona's land holdings in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, are used for this analysis. Due to the revision of the right to landownership, some documents survived and they discuss the specifics of management and administration of the territories, situated in Bona's land holdings. Several documents of the nobility and the

clergy right to landownership have survived: the sources regarding the audit of Pinsk, Kleckas, Horodok, Rahachow, Sielcai, the material of the check-up of Maišiagala and Mstibovo nobility's right to landownership. These documents show the status of territories or properties appropriated by Bona, and how this status was changing during Bona's reign. There are relatively few sources of inventories. Some this kind of documents regarding Bona's land holdings are published as separate historical sources, some are published with mixed sources, and some are not published. A valuable source is Pinsk and Kleckas properties' book, written by a Pinsk elder Stanislov Chvalchevskij in 1552–1555. It shows the progress of the economic reorganization carried out by Bona, also taxes and obligations, working arrangements, it shows the territorial composition of Pinsk and Kleckas lands, the soil quality, the capacity of economic activity, as well as social, economic and administrative situation before and after economic reorganizations. Other historical sources complement this source, highlighting the economy and administration of the region. Economic reorganizations in the Grodno region started relatively early, therefore, Bona's messengers, manor managers, revisers and the Voloč clerks frequently travelled there. The documents in the Grodno property book, which appeared after Bona's death, as well as other documents reveal the condition of the eldership manors and the process of the economic reorganizations. Some inventories and descriptive documents, drawn up upon Bona's instructions, as well as the documents which appeared after Bona's death are valuable, however, not all of them are detailed and chronologically consistent. When analyzing the aspects of Bona's economic activity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the sources of audit documentation and inventories should be complemented by other mixed documents.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

1. After Bona Sforza became the Queen of Poland and the Grand Duchess of Lithuania, the Jagiellonian dynasty dominated in the Central and Western Europe. They ruled the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland, Czechia and Hungary. The thrones of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania belonged to the Jagiellonians. The Grand Duke of Lithuania, Sigismund the Old, at that time was the main power of the Jagiellonian dynasty – he was the ruler of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as a guardian of a young king of Czechia and Hungary. The ruler balanced between the interests of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, his reign coexisted with the power of the noblemen of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an important support for the dynasty, an indivisible patrimony, and the straight path to the throne of the Kingdom of Poland. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the State and the dynasty faced financial difficulties due to wars with Moscow. In the second half of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century, the Grand Duke's domain drastically decreased, there were failures of the agriculture system, the military organization was not efficient. Sigismund the Old started to tackle these problems by implementing a number of agriculture and military reforms. In the documents from 1507, 1520, 1524 and 1528, the systematic attempt to audit and reorganize the military can be seen. In 1514, 1527 and 1529, a tax regulation begun, impetus was given to change the form of paying taxes – to pay in cash rather than in the form of agricultural produce. The actions of Sigismund the Old laid down the foundation for further agricultural reforms, the domestic policy that the ruler conducted coincided with Bona's vision and initiatives.

2. After Bona became the Queen of Poland and the Grand Duchess of Lithuania, some of the ruler's high ranking officials were from old, Catholic noble families. The Radziwiłł family, the Kęsgailos, A. Goštautas and K. Ostrogiškis dominated the political

elite. The noblemen were expanding their land, they were financially strong and able to credit the Grand Duke of Lithuania. In the first decade of Bona's life in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the noblesse was a strong power, which Bona had to use for her own, as well as the dynasty's interests. Bona had only a few supporters, such as A. Chodkevičius, T. Sanguška. It appears that for J. Hlebavičius it was beneficial to support Bona career wise. From 3rd to 6th decade, Bona's influence grew, stabilized and decreased. The connection with Bona for the noblemen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was useful only until the death of Sigismund the Old. We can see that, until 1548, Bona had direct and indirect influence on careers and granting something. After 1548 it was more useful to be on the side of Sigismund II Augustus, the Chodkevičiai was inherently loyal. In the 6th decade of the 16th century, Bona's supporters mostly were less politically influential people. In the 4th and 5th decades of the 16th century, Bona's influence on appointing officials was the most significant. However, it is not a result of Bona's consistent policy. Although she was active in the field of social politics, her achievements were rather insignificant, she did not gain more power nor did she acquire more supporters.

3. Three phases can be distinguished: the growth of Bona's power (3rd decade of the 16th century), the peak (4th decade of the 16th century) and its decrease (5th–6th decades of the 16th century). During the first phase, Sigismund the Old's donations allowed to expand her holdings. During the second period, Bona created extended latifundia in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, she invested grand sums in redeeming and extending the important lands of the dynasty. Bona did not need sporadic, not very potential holdings, therefore they were quickly sold, exchanged or otherwise neglected, and in usable areas complexes of manors were built. It shows that Bona's land formation policy in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was purposeful. The last significant phase of Bona's land expansion was in 1543. In 1544, Sigismund II Augustus took over the majority of the land management of the dynasty. After 1548, the Grand Duke was taking over more and

more land. In the 6th decade of the 16th century, Bona was independently managing her holdings in the eldership of Piskas and Kleckas, as well as in some parts of Grodno region and Podlachia.

4. Bona's lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania consisted of the ones gifted by Sigismund I the Old, the estate purchased by Bona herself, the donations of private persons as well as the united lands ruled by both, Sigismund the Old and Bona. The majority of her lands (40 percent) were granted by Sigismund the Old and 35 percent of them were purchased. Sigismund the Old was giving the lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to Bona from 1519 to 1548. The majority of lands (almost 40 percent) was gifted from 1519 to 1525. Later, the amount of gifted lands decreased. The most significant lands were gifted by 1536 inclusive (more than 80 percent). In the second place were the estate complexes purchased by Bona (often with a permission of the ruler). There were some purchasing "leaps" – a huge amount of money was spent instead of buying gradually. The most significant purchases were made by 1536 m. Later ones were in small sums and not so significant to Bona's lands and the treasury. The ruler's territories in Podlacha, Bielsk and Grodno region were formed from the purchased lands. The dominions, temporary administered by Sigismund II Augustus, mostly were in the current territory of Lithuania, in Žemaitija and around Alytus. After 1544, only a couple of Bona's estates left here. By 1544, only 12 percent of all Bona's domains were the lands of this kind. Only 13 percent of all Bona's domains in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were donated by private persons. The most donations by private persons were given in the 4th decade of the 16th century, when Bona's domains were rapidly extending. The majority of them were considered as giving back the debts to Bona. Almost half of all Bona's property consisted of districts and villages. It shows that Bona's land management was village-like. More than 30 percent of towns in Bona's domains were situated by the ruler herself, mostly on the border with Prussia, the Kingdom of Poland when populating the woods and forests. The most dense network of estates and towns of Bona's domains was in Trakai

Voivodeship in Podlachia and Grodno region. These object also centered near the border with Prussia. In the 5th decade of the 16th century, Bona' domains were augmented with towns, estates and castles in Volhynia. The minority of the domains ruled by Bona's was home ruled.

5. The complexes of Bona's domains were more or less stable. From the 3rd decade of the 16th century, more or less stable was the complex of Pinsk, Kleckas, Kobryn, Horodok and Rahachow, ruled by one headman. The estates in Podlachia and Bielsk were administered as a separate complex. Around 1548, the complex of Mosty, Dubno, Nowy Dwór and mansions of Skidal in Grodno region were more or less stable. Significant separate domains were those in Kremenets and Kovel. They were the main and stable complexes of Bona's domains in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and their composition barely changed. From 3rd to 6th decades of the 16th century, Bona's domains were administered by more than 40 people – headmen, visitors and vicegerents. With their helpers, ministers, messengers, officers measuring valaks, there were more than a hundred people working for Bona. The majority of Bona's officials were from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the 5th and 6th decade of the 16th century, the number of officials from Podlachia and Poland increased, but they did not outnumbered those from the Grand Duchy if Lithuania. In the 5th and 6th decade of the 16th century, the number of officials of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the polish origins was almost the same. There is no sufficient information about the quarter of Bona's official, other than that they served for Bona. They weren't from significant families and it was not the highest peak of their career. Some of Bona's officials used to work for the noblemen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Some of them were the ruler's courtiers, some – headmen or other officials. 8 people from 15, who had previously administered a domain or worked as stablemen or wojski, had the same post in Bona's domain. There were 50 percent of cases when a person, who had experience in working as an officer in a specific region, was left to work for Bona in the same region. When there were

no connection with the previous workplace, the majority of officers had exceptional work experience.

6. There were large-scale economic activities in Bona's domains and the tendencies were connected to the reign of the Jagiellonian dynasty. In the 3rd and 4th decades of the 16th century, Bona initiated the action of assuring the noblemen right to land management, when the privileges of the noblemen of Pinsk, Kleckas, Horodok, Mstibovo, Maišiagala and Kobryn were inspected. It was found out that the majority of the noblemen did not have the right to rule the lands. In such cases, after the noblemen died, their property was given back to the reserve of the country's domains. In the 3rd and 4th decades of the 16th century, the territories in Podlachia had the elements of the audit of dukes' domains, when the lands in the forest of Grodno and Bielsk were added to the territory of the dynasty. Also, in the court, Bona regained territories of forests in Podlachia, which had been expropriated by landowners of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the 5th decade of the 16th century, a revision of the Volhynian land owners substantiating their right to collect customs was carried out and which can be considered as an audit of the dynasty's property. The examination of dukes' and Bona's lands and other objects, characteristic of the beginning and the middle of the 16th century, can be considered a more or less successful attempt to rationalize the management of the Grand Duke's assets and accounting. It is possible that strong bureaucratic apparatus of the Naples Kingdom, expressed through the activity of the administrative and fiscal organ Regia Camera della Sommaria, formed Bona's approach to a rational and centralized governance of the country.

7. Bona's economic activity was implemented in the lands, formed in the 3rd–6th decades of the 16th century. The majority of the lands were not fertile, there were a lot of swamps, woodlands and sands. A couple of regions of the Pinsk eldership, Volhynian lands, the eastern territory of the Grodno eldership and some territories of the Podlachia region were favourable for agriculture. Bona started the Voloč reform in order to increase effectiveness of agriculture. In the

4th–6th decades of the 16th century, the majority of Bona's territories in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were measured, a new system of land tenure, based on clear units of land measurement and taxes, directly connected to them, was formed. The Voloک system in Bona's domains was different from the one implemented by Sigismund II August in 1557 regarding the amount of taxes and their ratio. In Bona's domains, taxes in cash (quit rent) dominated over the payment-in-kind. During Sigismund II Augustus' reign, money was even more significant and even though quit rent was a smaller part of the total tax, the majority of the payment-in-kind was replaced by the payment in cash. Bona's Voloк reform was the starting point of more complex land reorganizations of the Grand Duke. The surveyors, trained in Bona's lands, played a crucial role in them. During Sigismund II Augustus' reign, the table manors was being formed based on Bona's land management and produced significant amount of revenue.

8. Regarding maintenance and exploitation of the forests in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Bona acted as a member of the dynasty, as well as a private person. From 1524, after the ruler authorized it, Bona administered large territories of Grodno woods and she gradually acquired more power in the forestry of the country. The majority of Bona's lands were in the wooded areas of Grodno, Bielsk, Kobryn and Punia, where the waterways were fairly well developed to trade forest production. In the European market Bona participated since the 4th decade of the 16th century. In parallel, the ruler initiated the establishment of the national forest management monopoly in order to exclude from the market as many private land owners as possible. Large territories of the Grand Duke's woods, vast human resources and duty free access undoubtedly was Bona's advantage. Bona had the latter advantage as a ruler and because of her close relations with the customs management of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

9. Bona's involvement in the customs management of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, sometimes considered as the customs reform, was a short-term process, which replenished the Treasury of



the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. However, an attempt to increase financial resources was also seen as an attempt to introduce central management of State institutes, when control and revenue belonged only to the ruler and were not shared with private individuals. In the 5th decade of the 16th century, the check-up of Vholynian noblemen right to collect private customs duties was performed in order to stop this problematic practice. At the same time, there was an attempt to monopolize the market of forest production in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the biggest source of revenue of the Grand Duke and Bona herself. The VoloK measurements increased the economy of the Grand Duke's holdings, the system of agriculture revenue was partially rationalized and organized. Bona's influence in all these areas is irrefutable, but only with the green light, given by Sigismund I the Old.

## RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

1. R. Leonavičiūtė, Bonos Sforzos vietinės administracijos pareigūnai Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje: personalinis aspektas // *Istorija*, vol. 109, no. 1 (2018), p. 4–27, ISSN 1392-0456.
2. R. Leonavičiūtė-Gecevičienė, Królowa Sędzia: Bona Sforza i kultura prawna Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego // *Kronika Zamkowa. Roczniki* (due to the pandemic the publication was delayed, the article is accepted and going to be published till the end of 2021).

## CONFERENCES

1. International scientific conference „Reformacija ir lituanistika“, on September 25-26, 2017 in Kėdainiai. Presentation topic „Bona Sforza ir Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje“.
2. Scientific conference „Dabartis yra istorija. Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės (LDK) vaidmuo ir reikšmė Europai“, on December 15, 2017 in Ukmergė. Presentation topic „Italai Lenkijos karalienės ir Lietuvos didžiosios kunigaikštienės Bonos Sforcos aplinkoje 1518-1556 m.“
3. International scientific conference „Bona Sforza d’Aragona (1494–1557). Legenda i rzeczywistość“, on April 20-21, 2018 in Warsaw. Presentation topic „Królowa Sędzia: Bona Sforza i kultura prawna Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego“.

## EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN WARSAW

Program duration: 11 days (from October 2 to October 12, 2017). Purpose of the exchange: to search for sources and historiography to be used in this dissertation. The following libraries and archives were visited: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych; Biblioteka Narodowa.

## EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN KRAKOW

Program duration: 10 days (from June 18 to June 27, 2018). Purpose of the exchange: to search for sources and historiography to be used in this dissertation. The following libraries and archives were visited: Biblioteka Naukowa Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie; Biblioteka XX. Czartoryskich w Krakowie; Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie; Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie.

## EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN WARSAW

Program duration: 10 days (from May 27 to June 5, 2019). Purpose of the exchange: to search for sources and historiography to be used in this dissertation. The following libraries and archives were visited: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych; Biblioteka Narodowa.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE DISSERTATION

Rasa Leonavičiūtė-Gecevičienė was born in 1990 in Varėna. In 2010–2016 she studied at Vilnius University in the Faculty of History where she earned a Bachelor's degree in history and a Master's degree in history. She has been a PhD student at Vilnius University and the Lithuanian Institute of History in 2016–2020. In cooperation with Jolita Bernotienė and „Aukso žuvys“ publishing house she published a book „Karalienės Bonos virtuvė“ in 2018.

Lietuvos istorijos institutas  
Tilto g. 17, Vilnius  
Spausdino UAB „Baltijos kopija“  
Kareivių g. 13B, Vilnius