After the flight of Henri de Valois from Cracow in June 1574, there were some people who did not accept this to be the end of the reign of the French king on the Polish throne. The Catholic milieu, centred around Jakub Uchański and Stanisław Karnkowski, strived actively for convincing Henri to retain power in Poland. In summer 1574, one of the most fervent Henri’s supporters, Jan Dymitro Solikowski, set off to France. His aim was to persuade Henri that he should not renounce the Polish crown and that he can rule the distant kingdom when staying in France.

Solikowski presented his arguments in a much discussed text *Probi et Galliae ac Poloniae amantis viri, ad Gallos et Sarmatos oratio* – a fiery oration evoking similarities between the two nations and extolling benefits of their union under one ruler. The oration has been published anonymously in


3 Solikowski himself wrote about the authorship of the oration: *Extat hoc nomine Oratio Basileae impressa, sub titulo 'Probi et Galliae ac Poloniae amantis viri', utilis, plena
Basel in 1575 and attached to it was the text (announced already in its subtitle) of *Vaticinium de coniunctione Liliorum cum Aquila, desumptum ex antiquis praedictionibus Ioannis Lichtenbergii, quod adscribit D. Brigitaue Sveciae Reginae*. This part was omitted in all later reprints of *Probi et Galliae [...] oratio*, as well as in discussions on Solikowski’s political writings. An old prophecy that is contained therein, as well as its topical interpretation, seem to be a much more interesting argument to persuade Henri to keep the Polish crown, than any disquisition on the Polish-French friendship. In the days when *Adieu à la Pologne* enjoyed a considerable popularity in France, the grandiloquent Solikowski’s words could have been received with a kind indifference at the best. It is by referring to old prophecies, especially those predicting great successes for the French king, he could arise much more interest at the court and in humanist circles. In a chapter entitled *Vaticinium de coniunctione...*, Solikowski included a text taken from *Prognosticatio in Latino* (Heidelberg, 1488) by Johann Lichtenberger (ob. 1503), the court astrologer of the emperor Frederick

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5 *Probi et Galliae ac Poloniae...*, op. cit., l. 24r-27v. See Appendix.

The compilation work, combining ‘Arab astrology with Joachimian prophecies, calculations and fortune-telling’ as devoted to future fates of the Pope and Church, of the Emperor and the empire, laypeople, Turks and Jews. The astrological and political treatise turned out to be extremely successful. It was repeatedly reprinted and enjoyed an enormous popularity for almost a century, especially in German-speaking countries and in Italy. Lichtenberger, deeply convinced of the impending end of times, discussed in Prognosticatio… the most popular of the prophetic themes – that of the Last Ruler of the World, known from the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius and the prophecy of the Tiburtine Sibyl. The text describes a king who will defeat Arabs thus initiating a period of peace and prosperity. Then Gog and Magog will come, and after ten years and half of the king’s reign, the Antichrist will turn up. At that time, the king will lay his crown on the Golgotha and he will die, leaving the fight with the Antichrist to higher powers.


8 The main sources used by Lichtenberger were: a work by Paulus of Middelburg Prognostica (being in a great measure an adaptation of works of Albumasar), Tractatus de cometis by Konrad Heingarter, Liber Concordie by Joachim of Fiore, works of pseudo-Joachim (Super Hieremiam, Oraculum Cyrilli, Vaticinium Sybillae Erithreae), Telesfor of Cosenza, Reinhard Lollard, and St Bridget. For a more extensive discussion on this subject, see D. Kurze, ‘Prophecy and History. Lichtenberger’s Forecast of Events to Come from the Fifteenth to Twentieth Century. Their Reception and Diffusion’, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 21, 1958, p. 64; M. Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages. A Study in Joachimism, Oxford, 1969, p. 348.

9 Kurze, ‘Prophecy and History…’, op. cit., p. 64.

10 Cf. Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy…, op. cit., p. 351.


14 Cf. Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy…, op. cit., pp. 300-03.
When Lichtenberger started to work on the treatise, he viewed Frederick III as the Last Ruler of the World. When these expectations did not come true, the astrologer turned his hopes towards Maximilian I.\(^{15}\)

The author of *Prognosticatio*… believed that it is an alliance of France and Germany, an union of the Lily and the Eagle, that will bring about the end of times. He took the concept of the union of the Lily and the Eagle from a popular prophecy attributed to St Bridget,\(^ {16}\) and he added it to Chapters 17 and 18 in the second volume of his book.\(^ {17}\) It was the text of those chapters that Solikowski included in his oration.

The text of *Vaticinium*… is preceded by a wood engraving that depicts a cloud with a hand emerging from it, holding a pennant.\(^ {18}\) On the pennant there are three French lilies and a crowned eagle in the form known from the Polish coat of arms. The iconography of the engraving was taken from the work of Lichtenberger.\(^ {19}\) *Prognosticatio*… was an illustrated book, enriched with forty-five wood engravings. According to Dietrich Kurze, the engravings were intended not only to illustrate the text, but also to remind the eidetic sources of the prophecy. Paracelsus described such representations as ‘magic figures’, pointing out that their function is equally prophetic as is the text itself.\(^ {20}\) The engraving included

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15 Cf. ibid., p. 347, 350-53.
16 Prophecies attributed to St Bridget have been published already during her lifetime in seven volumes of *Liber coelestis revelationum*. Basing on fragments of them, Johannes Tortsch from Leipzig compiled around 1433 a short work *Onus mundi*, being the most popular source for the prophecies of the saint (ibid., p. 338).
18 [http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k794627.zoom.f47](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k794627.zoom.f47) [accessed 30.05.2009], see also, Reeves, ‘Joachimist Influences…’, *op. cit.*, s. 341-46.
in *Vaticinium*… from 1575 differs slightly from its German prototypes. In all editions, a half of a black eagle is depicted, with its head bent markedly to the left, which suggested the two-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire, introduced in that form by Sigismund of Luxemburg.

The Polish eagle instead of the German one on the engraving in *Oratio*… is a harbinger of the book’s contents. Lichtenberger’s prophecy is followed by its *Explicatio*…: the famous astrologer, basing on the revelation of St Bridget, rightly predicted the fortunate alliance of the Lily and the Eagle, which means France and Poland. The consecutive sentences of the prophecy and their Polish-French meaning are presented in the limpid form of a table. The interpretation is not surprising: the appearance of the Lily in the West came true through the election of Henri de Valois as the Polish king, and such expressions as ‘Aquila Orientalis’ (fr. L) or ‘Terra Virginalis’ stand – according to Solikowski – for Poland. The most important part of the prophecy, ‘Nam de bono Gallo antique prophetia invenitur, ad eum modum. Aquilae grandi sociabitur Lilium ab Occidente in Orientem et movebitur contra leonem’ (fr. G) is crucial also for its ‘Polish’ interpretation: the Lily united with the Eagle will be transferred to the East, where it will oppose the Lion. The Lion stands – according to *Explicatio*… – for Turkey, thus Henri, as the king of Poland and France, will fight against the Ottoman Empire. According to Lichtenberger’s text, the Lion will be betrayed by the Lily (fr. H). Next, when commenting on the sentence ‘Flagrabit lilium in Alemania, unde laus eius superma volabit sub Aquila’ (fr. I), Solikowski criticises the traditional identification of the Eagle with Germany. It is the alliance of Poland and France, led by Henri, that will secure the victory for Christendom (fr. K, M, N). This idea concludes the text of *Vaticinium*…

Prophetic texts, by definition obscure and symbolic, could have been easily adapted to any momentary needs. In the case of Solikowski’s *Explicatio*… the result was surprisingly good. He succeeded in interpreting a chosen fragment of one of the most important prophecies – acknowledged through the authority of St Bridget and disseminated through the work of Lichtenberger. He did it without manipulating the text, which was a common practice, for example, by quoting sentences without their context or omitting inconvenient fragments. To give an example related to Solikowski’s prophecy: this is how Jean Lemaire de Belges, in his *Traité de la schisme* (1511) promoting the cooperation between France and Germany,
quoted a sentence from *Prognosticatio*...: ‘Aquile grandi sociabitur lilium, et movebitur ab occidente in orientem contra leonem. Leo carebit auxilio, etc.’ As noticed by Jennifer Britell, Lemaire de Belges omitted the further part of the prophecy (where the Eagle is favoured) for the sake of Louis XII, being the addressee of the treatise. To adjust *Vaticinium*... to the current political situation, it was sometimes necessary to use elaborate arguments, as it was, for example, in a commentary by Wolfgang Aytinger, who, in 1496, reprinted Lichtenberger’s treatise claiming it to be the text of Pseudo-Methodius’ prophecy. According to Aytinger, in the sentence ‘Egrediet lilium ex agro occidentali et erit crescentis in mille millia in terra virginali’ the Lily means Charles VIII, while ‘terra Virginalis’ stands for Sicily, lying under the Virgo constellation. Thus the prophecy has been fulfilled in 1495, when the French king captured Naples.

The text of the prophecy was particularly favourable to Solikowski’s intentions. Chosing the lucid form of a table, he proposed an interpretation for each sentence in the whole two chapters of Lichtenberger’s work; this must have appeared unusually credible. Thus *Explicatio*... of the old prophecy was a spectacular argument in Solikowski’s political campaign aimed at convincing Henri de Valois to keep the Polish crown. In accordance with a common practice, *Vaticinium*... was used as a tool in the current political game. In spite of appearances, prophecies did never reach far into the future. On the contrary – they concerned mainly current events, like the papal or imperial elections. The prophetic tradition, wrote Jacques Halbronn, ‘has an answer to everything; it provides *ad hoc* a text for any circumstance.’ Apart from the union of Poland and France under a single ruler, as advocated by Solikowski, *Explicatio*... raises another issue that was urgent at that time, and namely the Turkish problem that – as it turned out – aroused the most intense interest among Solikowski’s audience.

Vaticinium… appealed without any doubt to tastes of the French court, where prophecies (and especially those predicting a glorious future for the rulers of France) were widely circulated and commented. For a long time, it was commonly assumed that Prognosticatio… gained no popularity in France. Actually, it was repeatedly reprinted since the late fifteenth century. Lichtenberger’s prophecies were published without his name and with no illustrations, as a part of a book entitled Mirabilis liber. In 1522 a Latin-French edition has been published (then reprinted several times), prepared with the aim of supporting Francis’ I candidacy to the imperial throne. Lichtenberger’s prophecy appeared in France for the last time before the election of Henri in 1561, as a part of a collection entitled Recueil de prophéties et révélations. All those books displayed, naturally, a French bias, being intended to support the monarchy in decisive or difficult moments, like, for example, the defeat in the battle of Pavia. Halbronn associates the publication of the French translations of Mirabilis liber in 1525, 1561, and 1611 with the regencies, respectively of Louise of Savoy, Catherine de’ Medici, and Marie de’ Medici.

In those troubled times, a significant popularity was gained by the prophecy attributed to St Bridget, that predicted a death on a battlefield for a victorious French king, and the reign over the East and the West for his mother. The contents of these prophecies, as well as the custom to use them for political purposes, were well known to Catherine de’ Medici and her circle. Moreover, Mirabilis liber was probably the source of the most important prophetic text popular during the reign of the last

29 Cf. Halbronn, Mise en évidence…, op. cit.
30 Cf. ibid.
Valois, *Livre merveilleux*, associated with Guillaume Postel — a versatile scholar, theologian, orientalist, cabalist and the prophet of a universal monarchy that would unite Jews, Christians and Muslims under the rule of a French king.

A great admirer of Postel’s thought was Claude du Pré — a lawyer based in Lyons, politician and, importantly, a close friend of Jan Dymitr Solikowski.

As can be learned from a letter sent from Lyons in October 1574, it was du Pré whom Solikowski asked for permission to consult the book of prophecies. In *Abbregé fidelle de la vraye origine et genealogie des François* (Lyons, 1601), du Pré mentions Lichtenberger’s prophecy transmitted by the Polish scholar, quoting *in extenso* Chapters 17 and

32 The text has been written in 1551 and was circulated in manuscript form since the middle 1560’s. Cf. F. A. Yates, *Astraea. The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*, London and Boston, 1975, pp. 125-46.


36 C. du Pré, *Abbregé fidelle de la vraye origine et généalogie des François*, Lyon, 1601, Thibauld Ancelin, I. 106r-107r: ‘Mais puisque nous sommes sur le discours des visions et prophéties […], il ne sera mal à propos d’escrire icy autre qui semble presager encore le retour et alliance des Rois François avec leur domination jusques en Orient, laquelle prophétie m’a esté baillée par un tres-scavent et eloquent Seigneur Iean de Soliskoski mon grand et singulier amy, qui avoit esté secretaire du feu Roy Sigismond de Pologne et vint en France l’an 1574 pour suivre le magnanime et vaillant Prince Henry III Roy de France et de Pologne, auquel il sembloit la vouloir accommoder: mais je ne diray rien si elle est de luy ou d’autre. Bien diray je en passant, que si les anciens ont adjousté foy à la prediction et oracle des faux Dieux, l’on peut mieux croire aux prophéties des chrestiens, mesmement quand elles sont rapportées par auteurs approuvez. S’ensuit donc la prophétie de saincte Brigide Royne d’Escosse [sic!] tirée des predications du
18 of Prognosticatio... Although du Pré mentions Solikowski’s name and describes the circumstances under which his text was composed, he ignores the ‘Polish’ interpretation of Vaticinium... The commentary explaining St Bridget’s vision as referring to the Polish-French alliance became outdated even before it was published. Early in the seventeenth century, the work of Solikowski aroused some interest because of its prediction of a victory over Turkey, and it was that explanation that was favoured by du Pré in Abbregé... and then in Pratum (1614).

Various prophecies foretelling the demise of Islam, and particularly Turkey being defeated by a universal monarch – the king of France, were among the most popular prophetic texts in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.37 In 1574, Stefano Lusignano offered to Henri de Valois, then staying in Venice, a collection of prophecies foretelling ‘come un Re di Francia debba essere Imperatore Romano et distrugitor della setta de’ Maometani’.38 In this context, Solikowski’s prophecy appeared again in 1611, reprinted in Recueil chrétien by G. de Bonnet. The work, dedicated to Marie de’ Medici and predicting the conquest of the East by Louis XIII, consisted of various prophecies attributed to St Bridget. According to Bonnet, the most important among these was the prophecy of an erudite Polish noble, described by du Pré in Abbregé... In the dedication, Bonnet mentions that in the troubled times after the death of Henry IV a prediction of a French king ruling the East encouraged him and raised his hopes for the future.39 The French text of the prophecy (which has been quoted twice in the book, first after Abbregé... and then after Recueil de prophéties et révélations published in 1561) is accompanied by a commentary in the form of a poem with anagrams. From words and letters of the prophecy, Bonnet derives Louis’ name, taking it as a harbinger of his glorious destiny.40

Seigneur jean de Liechtenberg Allemand, chapitres 17 et 18 lequel certes a fait de beaux recueils de propheties en son livre, que j’ay rière moy, mais par fortune en ces deux chapitre les feuillets se sont trouvez rompus et les au recouvert d’ailleurs'.


38 Cf. S. Lusignano, Raccolta di cinque discorsi, intitolati corone, Padua, 1577, L. Pasquati; Secret, ‘De quelques courants prophétiques…’, op. cit., s. 29-32.

39 Cf. G. de Bonnet, Recueil chrétien, où sont une prophétie de sainte Brigide, reine d’Écosse, promettant au roi et aux chrétiens, par Sa Majesté, une grande prospérité et élévation, Paris, 1611, Pierre Chevalier, introduction, no p.

40 Cf. ibid., pp. 22-35.
There is no doubt that Solikowski consulted *Prognosticatio*... during his stay in Lyons, as said by du Pré. Probably, however, it was not his first contact with the prophecies. The prophecies of the Lily were known also in Poland, gaining there some popularity during the first free election. Jan Januszowski wrote in *Wróżki*:

Then, after the demise of Sigismund Augustus, the famous late king of Poland, if we elected Henri – the French king this day – as the Polish king [...] it was because of another prophecy about a lily in these words: Aquila a virgine fugata lilium excitabit, volabitque ad meridiem recuperando amissa. Hence they inferred that the monarch was destined for greatness. However, as the fate decreed otherwise, it was abandoned.\(^\text{41}\)

It cannot be excluded, therefore, that Solikowski’s idea to publish the prophecy of Lichtenberger was conceived still in Poland. He could have encountered with *Prognosticatio*... even earlier, during his studies in Wittenberg in 1559-60,\(^\text{42}\) when he met Philipp Melanchthon.

A letter to the German humanist is known, written by Jan Solikowski, the father of Jan Dymitr, expressing his gratitude for advices on his son’s education.\(^\text{43}\) Melanchton, fascinated with comets, supernatural phenomena and *mirabilia* of all sorts, was an ardent adept of astrology.\(^\text{44}\)


He expressed his admiration for Prognosticatio… of Lichtenberger in his extensive preface to the first edition of the famous Tractatus de Sphaera by Johannes de Sacrobosco (Wittenberg, 1531).45

One may expect that Solikowski’s book could have been well received at the French court. The reminder of an old prophecy with its new explanation, and an illustration never before published in France and invoking the authority of a great, unknown in France astrologer was a proof of erudition of the Polish scholar. The idea of an universal Catholic monarchy ruled by the French king, that was beginning to materialise through the election of Henri de Valois as the king of Poland, was portrayed in countless propaganda pamphlets, medals, slogans, and occasional installations.46 The work of Solikowski, although much belated, fitted perfectly into that propaganda campaign. The prophecy, depicting Henri as a great Christian king, matched frequently published at that time texts that described disturbing phenomena: the appearance of a ‘new star’ in 157247 and the great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Aries, announced for 1583. According to astrological teachings, that extremely rare, occurring once for 960 years, arrangement of planets was
a harbinger of exceptional, world-transforming events— for example, the coming of a great, universal ruler. Such expectations were advantageous for sycophants flattering their kings. In France, naturally, a glorious future was being predicted for Henri de Valois, whose reign in Poland was to be only an introduction to the conquest of the world.

APPENDIX

Vaticinium de coniunctione Liliorum cum Aquila, desumptum ex antiquis praedictionibus Ioannus Lichtembergii, quod adscribit D. Brigittae Sveciae Regiae


coelo defers, tribus aureis liliis confitum. Ideo Christianissimus vocaberis inter omnes Reges.

Explicatio
Ioannes Lichtembergius quis fuerit, eius scripta ostendunt, quae iterum atque; iterum excusa in nostris manibus versantur. Ex quibus appareat et astrorum scientiae peritissimum fuisse, cum prope omnia ad syderum vim ordinemque revocet: et in divinando faelicissimum, cum multa evenerint, quae eventura praedixit. Sumpsit et ex aliis se antiquioribus multa, ut hoc ex D. Brigittae revelationibus: quod si ii qui in republ. consilio et auctoritate valent expenderint probe, non de aliis temporibus aut principe praelicta cognoscent, quam nostris et rege communi Galliae et Poloniae, dabuntque operam, ut ne ea regna divinitus sociata separantur, quorumconiunctio utrisque populis et honorifica et salutaris, distractio exitiali et funesta procul dubio futura est. Sed iam explicationem ipsam vaticinii videamus. [25v]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaticinium D. Brigittae</th>
<th>Explicatio</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C Odore suo rigabit venenosa.</td>
<td>C Odore virtutis suae pravas hominum machinationes tolet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Et erit fortior cedro.

O iuvenis in terra lili attende, quod noua testa capit in veterata sapit.

Impinge tabulae cordis tui quae huc usque rasa, ut Regibus con-[25v]-gruit, corrige conscientiam tuam et vide, an sis de bono Gallo vel malo.

Nam de bono Gallo antiqua prophesia inventur, ad eum modum. Aquilae grandi sociabitur Lilium ab Occidente in Orientem et movebitur contra leonem.

Leo carebit auxilio et decipetur a lilio.

Flagrabit lilium in Alemania, unde laus eius supra volabit sub Aquila.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K</th>
<th>O Francia terra nobilis, quae talem fers florem, qui arbor-rem are factam iam multisannis transactis, solum odori-aspersione virescere faciet. [26v]</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>Arbor arefacta Galliam tot malis attritam significat. Odoris aspersionem vocat famam virtutis Regiae, quam cum sui tantiapud exteros fieri viderint, magis amabunt, atque ad concor-[26v]-diam reuersi, patriam revirescere sinent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Et amore charitatis inflam-mabit Aquilam Orientalem.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Amor hic se in electione ostendit, cum Aquila id est Poloni, eius id est principis huius amore inflammati, Regem summacontentione deponserunt, Aquila Orientalis Polonia est.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Volantem ad ardua alis dua-bus et fulgentem in montibus Christianitatis.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hoc loco evolatio eius Aquilae in montes Christianitatis id est in regnum Galliae praedicitur.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Istud est lilium odoriferum unde apes fidelium in Ecclesi-sia sugent mel affectionis ac desiderii, rebelles autem vale-nenum lamentationis.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Istum inquit principem fideles summo amore complectentur, ac eius interdum absentis desiderio tenebuntur. Rebelles autem ob prosperos eius successus se excruciabunt et ipsi sibi mala accersent, quae araneae esse quam apes malint.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Et lilium cum aureolis stabit illa-cesum. [27r]</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Regni, regnoque; stabilitatem policetur, per aureolos Franciae gloriam et praeemi-nen-[27r]-tiam ac privilegia illa coelestia quae caeteris regnis habet, significat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
P Istud lilium desiderabunt puellae Scorpionis Alemanicæ nationis, ut inde suas corollas plectant propter festivitatem, unde lugubriter flebunt.

P Desiderium Alemaniae et spem de hoc rege expectationemque declarat.

Q O iuvenis in terra lilii, vide ne dicatur, vae terræ in qua Rex puer est, cum tu sis ille qui campum saphyri sub coelo defers tribus aureis liliis conftum.

Q Praemonet iuvenem ut se et Regem esse agnoscat et quidem talem Regem

R Ideo Christianissimus vocaberes inter omnes Reges.

R Inter suos et externos.

Hanc praedictionem si Henricus tertius, prius Poloniae tantum, nunc et Galliae rex, sibi ab oculos ponet et re ipsa Christianissimus id est Christi gloriae studiosissimus erit et agnosket, haec non de alio quam se ipso praedici. Et intelliget, se non tantum [27v] eo loco esse, ut Galliam et Poloniae tueri ac ornare, verum etiam de toto orbe Christiano bene mereri possit, cum sempiterna nominis sui gloria et praemiis aeternis.

Esaiæ 44. Ioel 2.

Faciam prophetare filios et filias vestras si servaveritis mandata mea.

Translated by Kamil O. Kuraszkiewicz