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## *Alma Mater Vilnensis:* The Reconstitution of Stephen Bathory University in Vilnius

The tsar's decree of May 1, 1832 ended more than 250 years of almost continuous operation of the university in Vilnius. Tsar Nicholas I's decision to shut down the Imperial University of Vilnius caused it to disappear from the city, and its property was destroyed or divided. However, this did not eradicate the legend of *Almae Matris Vilnensis*, which, cherished in the memory of the people of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for the next 87 years, facilitated the restitution of the University in 1919. It was not without reason that Wiktor Sukiennicki, who was the member of the first year of the first "generation" of students of the University resurrected in 1919, wrote years later:

The material treasures of the University were then plundered and taken out of Vilnius, and the memory of the University was exterminated or even sterilized. [...] The names of Vilnius professors in most cases were as unmentionable as those of their most prominent students. [...] The legend of the former Vilnius University and its professors and students arose and survived for almost a century among the people at the behest or against the strictest prohibitions of the authorities of the time. [...] Somewhere in the "underground" inaccessible to the partitioners, among the "simple" people, not in the official press, books, or among the intelligentsia, some of whom were making brilliant careers, the

legend of the Vilnius University and its amazing, “extraordinary” students and professors emerged and was preserved.<sup>1</sup>

After the Medical and Surgical Academy was closed in 1842 and the Clerical Academy was moved to St. Petersburg, it seemed to the tsarist authorities that the University would disappear not only from the city’s space, but also from the memory of its residents. However, the University’s legend was the cause of attempts to recreate it in Vilnius from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries.

The first two attempts were made as early as in the mid-19th century, shortly after the University was closed, by the marshals of the Vilnius and Grodno nobility Edward Mostowski and Kalikst Orzeszko. Both attempts ended with the emperor’s refusal. This is because they were made at a time when the personal and material “capital” of the former Vilnius University was being used to create other universities in Russia (such as the Saint Vladimir Imperial University in Kiev).<sup>2</sup>

The outbreak and collapse of the January Uprising, in which the nobility and intelligentsia of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania were particularly heavily involved, prevented any serious efforts and plans to restore the university in Vilnius for the next 40 years. Count Mikhail Nikolaevich Muravyov, appointed on May 1, 1863 as the new governor-general of the Northwest Territory, received unlimited powers from Tsar Alexander II and the task of restoring calm and punishing all those responsible for the outbreak of the revolt. Successive Vilnius governors-generals followed the literal orders of Tsars Alexander II and Alexander III, aiming to “unite”

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<sup>1</sup> W. Sukiennicki, *Legenda i rzeczywistość: wspomnienia i uwagi o dwudziestu latach Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie* [Legend and reality: the memories and notes about the twenty years of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius], Paris 1967, pp. 14, 122.

<sup>2</sup> See: J. Kozłowska-Studnicka, “Likwidacja Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego w świetle korespondencji urzędowej” [Liquidation of the University of Vilnius in light of official correspondence], in: *Księga pamiątkowa, ku uczczeniu CCCL rocznicy założenia i X wskrzeszenia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego* [Commemorative book to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment and the 10th anniversary of the resurrection of the University of Vilnius], vol. 1: *Z dziejów dawnego Uniwersytetu* [On the history of the former University], Vilnius 1929, pp. 405–419. At the time of its closure, the University of Vilnius was the largest university in the Russian Empire, with more than 1,300 students (about 2,000, according to Daniel Beauvois).

these territories with the Russian Empire and de-Polonize and Russify them. Perhaps that is why the only project at the time to establish a university in Vilnius was written in 1897 by a member of the Vilnius City Council M. Vladimirov, and the argument referred to the need to erase the transgressions of the former University.<sup>3</sup>

Polish initiatives to establish a higher education institution in Vilnius that had a real chance of success, due to both financial and personnel factors, appeared only in the early 20th century. In late 1901 and early 1902, efforts to reactivate a higher education institution in Vilnius were made by the Vilnius Agricultural Society. The project of an agricultural university prepared by the members of the Society's council was submitted by Count Antoni Tyszkiewicz and Hipolit Gieczewicz. Perhaps they were emboldened by the tsar's approval of the restoration of the Society after many years of effort in late 1899. The concept was to establish an agricultural college in Vilnius as a kind of a "technical university with several faculties." This time, too, the tsarist authorities responded negatively to the initiative, although an official request for the restitution of the University was never made by the Society. The years from 1897 to 1901 was the period of rule in Vilnius of Vitaly Nikolaevich Trotsky, the governor general of Vilnius, Kaunas, and Grodno, thanks to whose efforts first a museum was established in the city, and then a statue of Mikhail Muravyov was unveiled. Trotsky also advocated maintaining all restrictions imposed on the Polish nobility after the January Uprising, and penalized any deviation from this policy by refusing to accept the founding of any Polish educational or scientific societies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> W. Wołkanowski, *Michał Węśławski: biografia prezydenta Wilna w latach 1905–1916* [Michał Węśławski: the biography of the president of Vilnius in 1905–1916], Opole 2015, pp. 250–251. The so-called Northwest Territory included six governorates of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, i.e. Vilnius, Grodno, Kaunas, Minsk, Mogilev, and Vitebsk, and from December 1866 also Suwałki and Łomża.

<sup>4</sup> H. Ilgiewicz, *Societates Academicæ Vilnenses: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk w Wilnie (1907–1939) i jego poprzednicy* [Societates Academicæ Vilnenses: Society of Friends of Science in Vilnius (1907–1939) and its predecessors], Warsaw 2008, pp. 23–24; the author also describes other initiatives undertaken illegally by the Polish intelligentsia at the time, including, for example, the establishment of secret libraries, self-education groups, and courses for teachers; *ibidem*, pp. 25–19. See also: W. Wołkanowski, *Michał Węśławski: biografia prezydenta Wilna* [Michał Węśławski: the biography of the president of Vilnius], p. 251.

At the same time, the topic of restoration of the university was also taken up by the municipal authorities. The Society's project was expanded, so to speak, by an event that took place in 1903, when the convention accompanying the Agricultural Exhibition in Daugavpils, chaired by Stanisław Łopaciński, considered as the first item on its agenda the question of establishing a "higher scientific establishment for the Northwest Territory." The convention participants agreed on a university with a large agronomy department. This time, too, the tsarist authorities responded negatively to this initiative.<sup>5</sup>

The issue of establishing a university returned during meetings of the Vilnius City Council in late 1906 and again in early 1908. Józef Ziemacki wrote about this in an article "O wznowieniu uniwersytetu w Wilnie" [On the restoration of the university in Vilnius] published in the *Dziennik Wileński* newspaper in late November 1918:

[...] A dozen or so years ago, the issue of establishing a university was dealt with very actively. A convention of representatives of the country's major cities was authorized. [...] Representatives of the municipal boards of Mogilev, Vitebsk, Daugavpils, Grodno, Minsk, and Kaunas arrived. About 100 people gathered. A committee was formed; it was chaired by the late M. Węśławski. The files of that committee contain many carefully prepared and source-based memorials that have only historical value at the moment. The final result was the decision to fund the Agricultural Academy in Vilnius. The governor gave a favorable response. The ministers promised their support. But it was all delusion and hypocrisy. For it was a foregone conclusion in St. Petersburg that there would be no Agricultural Academy here.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> W. Wołkanowski, *Michał Węśławski: biografia prezydenta Wilna* [Michał Węśławski: the biography of the president of Vilnius], pp. 252ff. Z. Opacki, "Reaktywowanie czy powstanie? Dyskusje wokół utworzenia Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie w latach 1918–1919" [Reactivation or formation? Discussions on the formation of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius in 1918–1919], *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 1998, no. 3, p. 50; A. Srebrakowski, "Litwa i Litwini na Uniwersytecie Stefana Batorego" [Lithuania and Lithuanians at the Stefan Batory University], in: W. K. Roman, J. Marszałek-Kawa, eds., *Stosunki polsko-litewskie wczoraj i dziś: historia, kultura, polityka* [Polish-Lithuanian relations yesterday and today: history, culture, politics], Toruń 2009, pp. 106–107.

<sup>6</sup> J. Ziemacki, "O wznowieniu Uniwersytetu w Wilnie" [On the revival of the University of Vilnius], parts 1–2, *Dziennik Wileński* 1918, no. 270 (of November 20), pp. 2–3; no. 272, p. 2

A committee established by Michał Węśławski, then president of Vilnius, prepared two projects for the university: the first with a humanities profile and the second as a school organized as a university of technology. There was also a third plan to establish a university with faculties of law, medicine, physics and mathematics, agriculture, and philology.

A convention on the university was held in Vilnius on May 4, 1908, attended by delegates of city councils, agricultural societies, banks, and scientific establishments from six governorates. During the deliberations, a subcommittee was established to develop a project for a mixed university with several faculties, including a faculty of agriculture, which was to eliminate the conflicts between the different nationalities. The committee met regularly until mid-1909, after which the plans were kept in the city's office for another two years. It seems that they were looking for a pretext to present them to the tsar. At the end of 1911, at a meeting of the Vilnius City Council, Nikolai Sobolev proposed a project for a higher education institution to be established to commemorate the three-hundredth anniversary of the reign of the Romanov dynasty in Russia and to be named after the tsar's family (Imperial Romanov University). At the time, a pledge was also made that the city would donate one million rubles and 20 dessiatins of land for the purpose. We don't know whether the project made it to St. Petersburg. At the end of 1913, another project appeared that modified the previous ones. It was agreed that a "Folk University" with an agricultural profile under the patronage of the Romanov dynasty should be sought; a delegation composed of representatives of all nationalities was selected to present a petition to the tsar on this matter. A request was made to the Interior Ministry for an audience with Tsar Nicholas II. When he refused to hold an audience after several weeks, a new memorial was prepared in case the decision was changed.

The outbreak of war put an end to these plans.<sup>7</sup>

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(of November 22). Initially, the idea was to establish courses for women in Vilnius, and this project also supported by President M. Węśławski.

<sup>7</sup> Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas in Vilnius (hereinafter: LCVA), F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheet 45, Protokoly Komisji Organizacyjno-Rewindykacyjnej Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego [Minutes of the Committee for the Organization and Revindication of the University of Vilnius], Minutes of May 21, 1919. During the Committee's meeting, Waclaw Gizbert-Stud-

Renewed hopes for the establishment of a higher education institution in Vilnius emerged soon after the outbreak of World War I, when the political situation changed and Russian troops left the city. Probably not without significance was the fact that General Hans H. von Beseler established a Polish university in Warsaw to replace the one abandoned by the Russians. Just before the Germans occupied the city, a Vilnius-Kaunas Civic Committee, consisting of representatives of various nationalities, was formed to serve as the local government, whose charter was approved by the last Russian governor, Pyotr Vladimirovich Verovkin before he left Vilnius.<sup>8</sup>

In September 1915, Vilnius was occupied by German troops. In late 1915 and early 1916, several representatives of the Vilnius intelligentsia put forward another project to restore the University, and launched higher scientific courses, known as the “flying university.” The German authorities rejected the project to establish the university, although in February 1916 they gave permission for the printing of the *Dziennik Wileński* newspaper, published by Jan Obst. They also soon suspended the scientific courses and the activities of the Vilnius Society of Friends of Sciences, which was founded on the initiative of Alfons Parczewski and Władysław Zahorski in October 1906, and whose main goal was to care for the development of science and literature in the Polish language, as well as natural, ethno-

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nicki recalled the initiative of the landed gentry dating back to 1909 or 1910 to establish a higher scientific institution in Vilnius and Mr. Ogiński’s donation of several dessiatins of land in Antokol for the future university. See also: W. Wołkanowski, *Michał Węśławski: biografia prezydenta Wilna* [Michał Węśławski: the biography of the president of Vilnius], pp. 250–258, the author described in detail the efforts to establish a higher education institution in Vilnius and the participation of President M. Węśławski; J. Schiller, *Universitas rossica: koncepcja rosyjskiego uniwersytetu 1863–1917* [Universitas rossica: the concept of a Russian university 1863–1917], Warsaw 2008, p. 363, the author writes that between 1860 and 1914, Vilnius asked successive tsars five times for a university, institutes of technology, agriculture, technology, and a clerical academy, and offered 500,000 rubles.

<sup>8</sup> H. Ilgiewicz, “Relacje polsko-litewskie w przededniu odzyskania niepodległości w świetle dzienników i wspomnień działaczy wileńskich” [Polish-Lithuanian relations on the eve of regaining independence in light of journals and memoirs of Vilnius activists], *Rocznik Stowarzyszenia Naukowców Polaków Litwy* 2019, vol. 19, pp. 4–7, the German occupation authorities initially recognized the Committee’s activities, only to later limit its function to charity, and finally dissolve it in 1916.

graphic, and statistical research in the country.<sup>9</sup> For the group of people gathered around the Society, including Ludwik Abramowicz, Stanisław Kościółkowski, Ludwik Czarkowski, Czesław Jankowski, Lucjan Uziębło, Józef Ziemacki, and Stanisław Władyczko, the idea of restoring a higher education institution in Vilnius was a primary goal. And even though their efforts failed, they confirmed that the memory and legend of the *Almae Matris Vilnensis* and the desire to restore it were still alive among Vilnius residents.

This was mentioned in early January 1919 at the first organizational meeting of the Committee for the launch of the University of Vilnius, where it was emphasized that

[...] the idea of reviving the activity of the University of Vilnius was and is one of the matters that all members of the Polish intelligentsia in Vilnius are most vividly concerned about, and that efforts have been made to this end at every opportunity, specifically, after the Russian authorities left Vilnius in 1915, Higher Scientific Courses were created, which developed very successfully, but were suspended by the German occupation authorities.<sup>10</sup>

It should be noted that in parallel with the Polish authorities, efforts to restore the university have also been made by the authorities of the reborn

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<sup>9</sup> A. Wrzosek, “Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego w roku 1919” [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius in 1919], in: *Księga pamiątkowa, ku uczczeniu CCCL rocznicy założenia i X wskrzeszenia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego* [Commemorative book to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment and the 10th anniversary of the resurrection of the University of Vilnius], vol. 2: *Dziesięciolecie 1919–1929* [The decade 1919–1929], Vilnius 1929, pp. 2ff, the author wrote that in February 1916, an article titled “O Uniwersytet w Wilnie” [In support of the University of Vilnius] appeared in a Cracow newspaper, which mentioned that a memorial on the restoration of the university in Vilnius had been submitted to the German authorities in December 1915. H. Ilgiewicz, *Societates Academiae Vilnenses*, pp. 272ff, the author described, among other things, the circumstances of the founding and the activities of the Vilnius Society of Friends of Science; eadem, “Wileńskie towarzystwa naukowe w latach pierwszej wojny światowej” [Vilnius scientific societies in the years of World War I], *Rocznik Stowarzyszenia Naukowców Polaków Litwy* 2015, vol. 15, pp. 42–47.

<sup>10</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, k. 2, *Protokoły Komisji Organizacyjno-Rewindykacyjnej Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego* [Minutes of the Committee for the Organization and Revindication of the University of Vilnius], Minutes no. I of the organizational meeting of the Committee to launch the University of Vilnius, Vilnius, January 4, 1919.

Lithuanian state. The Lithuanian Society for Aid to War Victims, known as the Lithuanian Committee, established in Vilnius in 1915 and headed by Antanas Smetona, with the favor of the German authorities, carried out charitable and political activities in that territory and abroad. In September 1917, with the approval of the German occupation authorities, the Lithuanian State Council (*Lietuvos Taryba*), headed by Antanas Smetona, was established in Vilnius; on February 16, 1918, it proclaimed the “Act of Lithuanian Independence.” In November of that year, *Taryba* received permission from the occupying German authorities to form a government. On November 11, Augustinas Voldemaras was sworn in as prime minister and formed the first Lithuanian government, which, with changes, operated in Vilnius until January 1, 1919. The initiative to revive the University of Vilnius was taken by the Lithuanian Scientific Society, which in October 1918 selected a committee to draft the charter of the new university, prepared by Jurgis Alekna, Mykolas Biržiška, and Aleksandras Stulginskis, among others. As early as on December 5, 1918, the Provisional Government of Lithuania adopted a charter, the first point of which proclaimed that the University of Vilnius, “resurrected on January 1, 1919, is the heir to the institution of learning and teaching of the University of Vilnius, which was closed in 1832.” The charter stipulated that the university was to be a state Lithuanian university, where classes would also be conducted in Polish and Russian. Four faculties were planned for the Lithuanian university: faculties of theology, social sciences, medicine, natural sciences, and mathematics. Initially, only two faculties were to begin operations: faculties of theology and social sciences. Therefore, that university was to be very different from the University of Vilnius that existed in the 19th century. The changing political situation prevented these intentions from becoming a reality. After January 1, 1919, the Lithuanian government moved with *Taryba* to Kaunas, where – after two years of wars and the establishment of Lithuania’s borders – it established the Lithuanian University in Kaunas, as envisioned in the charter of December 1918.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> S. Jegelevičius, “Pierwsze próby wskrzeszenia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego i powstanie Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego” [The first attempts to resurrect the University of Vilnius and the formation of the Stefan Batory University], in: L. Piechnik, K. Puchowski, eds., *Z dzie-*



There is no doubt that the effectiveness of the Lithuanian intelligentsia's actions caused the acceleration of the efforts undertaken by the Polish side. The idea of reactivating the University of Vilnius, which resurfaced at the end of 1918, provided an impetus for members of the Scientific Society to resurrect the university the following year. Meanwhile, however, the intentions were articulated. In November 1918, the *Dziennik Wileński* newspaper published the above-quoted article by Józef Ziemacki titled "O wznowieniu Uniwersytetu w Wilnie" [On the revival of the University of Vilnius], in which the author stressed the need and possibility of quickly resurrecting a university in Vilnius with the following faculties: theology, law, mathematics and physics, history and philology, medicine, and agronomy:

[...] Now no one can hinder the cause of restoring the Polish university in Vilnius. The university will claim its edifices, its foundations. Who will be able to not give them to it? And the city, when the governance of our city passes into the hands of its legal landlords, will not skimp on the land and edifices it needs, should it be too cramped within the old university walls. [...] Well, now is the moment when the Polish society in Vilnius should take into its hands the matter of the reconstruction of the university. This does not require lots of money. There will be no need to base the university's existence self-taxa-

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*jów Almae Matris Vilnensis: księga pamiątkowa ku czci 400-lecia założenia i 75-lecia wskrzeszenia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego* [On the history of the Almae Matris Vilnensis: a commemorative book to honor the 400th anniversary of the foundation and the 75th anniversary of the resurrection of the University of Vilnius], Cracow 1996, pp. 243–244 (polemics: W. Dziewulski, "Prawda o wskrzeszeniu Wileńskiej Wszechnicy w 1919 roku" [The truth about the resurrection of the Vilnius University in 1919], in: *ibidem*, pp. 282–283); Z. Opacki, "Reaktywowanie czy powstanie? Dyskusje wokół utworzenia Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego" [Reactivation or formation? Discussions on the formation of the Stefan Batory University], p. 52; D. Zamajska, "Ta ludność życzy mieć uniwersytet..." – walka o utworzenie Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie" ["This nation wishes the university..." – the struggle for the formation of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius], *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* 2006, book 2, pp. 8–9. See also: "Stepono Batoro universitetas: perimti ir įsigyti turtais (1919–1939)," in: *Alma Mater Vilnensis: Vilniaus universiteto turtais istorijos skersvėjuose (XVI–XXI amžiai)*, [redaktorių kolegija], Vilnius 2016, pp. 385–386. From 1905, Lithuanians had been striving to create an educational system with a Lithuanian national university at its head. In June 1930, on the 500th anniversary of the death of Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas, the university was officially renamed Vytautas Magnus University.

tion of any form. You need to start in the most modest size, with the smallest possible spending. After the war, the least anticipated, least expected funds will be found, and they will ensure the university's existence. Anyway, the Vilnius University had huge endowments, had huge museums, a huge library.<sup>12</sup>

The idea of the restoration of a Polish university was revisited almost simultaneously in Warsaw and Vilnius. On the initiative of the Lithuanian Committee, which had been operating under the Regency Council in Warsaw since 1917, a conference was convened on December 13, 1918 under the chairmanship of Rev. Antoni Szlagowski, during which, after hearing Stanisław Władyczka's paper "On the resurrection of the Polish University in Vilnius," a resolution was unanimously adopted on the resurrection of the University of Vilnius "no later than in the autumn of 1919," and the Warsaw Committee for the Revival of the Polish University in Vilnius was established, with 12 members and Alfons Parczewski as its chairman and S. Władyczko as its secretary.<sup>13</sup>

On December 28, 1918, the Polish Committee, which had been operating in Vilnius since 1916, adopted a proclamation written by Stanisław Kościakowski to reestablish the university closed in 1832, which was to open, with four faculties, no later than in the autumn of 1919, i.e. at the beginning of the 1919/1920 academic year:

[...] Four faculties are to be launched: theological, law and administration, medical, and philosophical consisting of two sections: mathematics and nat-

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<sup>12</sup> J. Ziemacki, "O wznowieniu Uniwersytetu w Wilnie" [On the revival of the University of Vilnius], parts 1–2, *Dziennik Wileński* 1918, no. 270 (of November 20), pp. 2–3; no. 272, p. 2 (of November 22).

<sup>13</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 14, sheets 4–5, Minutes of the meeting of the Conference convened by the Lithuanian Committee in Warsaw on the resurrection of the University of Vilnius. This happened on December 13, 1918; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 2(VI)B, b. 2, sheets 49–50, Rękopisy Wydziału Prawa i Nauk Społecznych USB 1929/30 [Manuscripts of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences of the SBU 1929/30] (A. Parczewski, "Przyczynek do wspomnienia o wskrzeszeniu Uniwersytetu w Wilnie w roku 1919" [A contribution to the memory of the resurrection of the University in Vilnius in 1919], Vilnius, July 5, 1929); A. Wrzosek, "Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], pp. 4–5 – the entire minutes of the December 13, 1918 conference of the Lithuanian Committee were published there.

ural sciences section, and humanities section – as well as subunits: agronomic, veterinary, and pharmaceutical. The University is to serve science and the most broadly understood universal human culture – in accordance with its great traditions – and to take into account, in the best possible way, the cultural needs of all residents of Lithuania and all nationalities living in the country.<sup>14</sup>

As a side note, it is worth mentioning that Stanisław Kościalkowski, an eminent historian, was also the author of the document titled “Uwagi nad zadaniami Komisji oraz trzech jej dotychczasowych Sekcji (podkomisji): finansowo-rewindykacyjnej, gospodarczej i programowo-naukowej” [Notes on the tasks of the Committee and its three existing Sections (subcommittees): financial and revindication, economic, and programming and scientific], in which he demanded, among other things, to establish departments of Lithuanian studies with Lithuanian as the teaching language. He also did not rule out, which was difficult for many Polish activists at the time to accept, the establishment of a second, independent Lithuanian university in Vilnius, as well as providing it with assistance in terms of staff.<sup>15</sup>

To meet, in a way, the activities of the two professors’ initiatives, the Education Committee, empowered in Vilnius by the Polish Committee and headed by Witold Węśławski, at its meeting on January 4, 1919, appointed a provisional Academic Senate headed by Rector Józef Ziemacki to manage academic affairs. The Education Committee recommended that the Senate appoint as deans of the planned faculties: Stanisław Ptaszycki (faculty of

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<sup>14</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 14, sheets 6–7v, Odezwa Komitetu Polskiego w Wilnie [Proclamation of the Polish Committee in Vilnius], Vilnius, December 30, 1918. See also: S. Władyczko, “Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych nad odbudową Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego (13.XII.1918–11.X.1919). Sprawozdanie Komitetu Wykonawczego Odbudowy Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego” [The first period of the organization work on the restoration of the University of Vilnius (December 13, 1918 – October 11, 1919). Report of the Executive Committee for the Restoration of the University of Vilnius], in: *Księga pamiątkowa, ku uczczeniu CCCL rocznicy założenia i X wskrzeszenia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego* [Commemorative book to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment and the 10th anniversary of the resurrection of the University of Vilnius], vol. 2: *Dziesięciolecie 1919–1929* [Decade 1919–1929], Vilnius 1929, pp. 34–36.

<sup>15</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheets 16v–17, 25–30, Minutes of the fourth meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee of the University of Vilnius of April 27, 1919, at Dr. Zahorski’s apartment.

philosophy), Alfons Parczewski (faculty of law), Stanisław Władyczka (faculty of medicine), as well as members Kazimierz Noiszewski, Władysław Zawadzki, and Stanisław Kościałkowski. On January 20, 1919 the chairman of the Education Committee, W. Węśławski, wrote a letter to J. Ziemacki, in which he “[...] offers to you the position of provisional Rector of the University of Vilnius to take action with the aim of launching the University with the participation of the provisional Academic Senate.”<sup>16</sup>

In addition, at the January 4 meeting, an announcement was made on the establishment “for organizational and revindication purposes” of an Organization and Revindication Committee, which was to handle preparatory work aimed at launching the Vilnius University. Its members were social and educational activists from Vilnius, including Witold Węśławski, Władysław Zahorski, Konrad Niedziałkowski, Jan Piłsudski, Józef Wierzyński, Ludwik Czarkowski, Tadeusz Dembowski, Stanisław Cywiński, Rev. Leon Puciata, Duke Eustachy Sapieha, Emma Dmochowska, Zofia Paszkowska, and Emilia Węśławska. At the second meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee, held on January 6 under the leadership of Rector J. Ziemacki, it was resolved that he would be the chairman of the Committee to ensure coordination of the work of the two bodies, and Władysław Zahorski was appointed as the chairman of the revindication subcommittee.

In early January 1919, Vilnius again became a site of warfare. After the German army withdrew, the city was occupied by units of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army. Under the Bolshevik protectorate, the Soviet Republic of Lithuania and then the Soviet Republic of Lithuania and Belarus,

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<sup>16</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 14, sheets 11–11v, Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee in Vilnius on January 4, 1919, chaired by Dr. Witold Węśławski, the chairman of the Education Committee, with Mr. Wierzyński, the secretary; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheets 2–2v, sheet 6, *Protokoły Komisji Organizacyjno-Rewindykacyjnej Uniw[ersytetu] Wil[eńskiego] (odpisy) [Minutes of the Organization and Revindication Committee of the Univ[ersity] of Vil[nius] (copies)]*; see: minutes no. 1 and minutes no. 2; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 1, sheets 1a–4, Copies of letters from Rector J. Ziemacki to A. Parczewski, W. Władyczka, Stanisław Ptaszycki, K. Noiszewski, W. Zawadzki, and S. Kościałkowski, Vilnius January 10, 1919; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 16, sheet 4, copy of the letter dated January 20, [19]19, from the Chairman of the Education Committee.

with Vincas Mickievičius-Kapsukas as the head of the Council of People's Commissars, existed in Vilnius until February 27, 1919. The authorities of this republic also took up the idea of establishing a university and on March 13 published the "Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of Lithuania and Belarus on the establishment of a Labor University in Vilnius," which was to begin operations in the spring of that year. To make this concept a reality, the Council established an Executive Committee consisting of three commissioners – Vaclovas Biržiška, Stefan Heltman, and Stanisław Bobiński – who asked Rector Ziemacki to present a project for the university's reopening with lists of candidates proposed for the posts of faculty heads.<sup>17</sup>

The warfare and the occupation of the city by the Bolshevik army slowed down the work undertaken by the Polish intelligentsia to revive the university in Vilnius. Despite the unfavorable political situation, the Organization and Revindication Committee continued to work with trusted individuals to gather information about the real estate belonging to the former University, draft the charter of the new university, and seek appropriate funds and staff to work in the faculties of the future university. Despite the war, a meeting of the Provisional Academic Senate was held on March 12, during which the names of the departments and their staffing in the Faculty of Medicine were discussed, and a resolution was passed to approach the deans of the planned departments regarding their organi-

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<sup>17</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 14, sheet 13–14v, a document on the course of the negotiations between the Executive Committee and Prof. Ziemacki on the establishment of a Common Labor University in Vilnius, March 13, [19]19. The republic formally covered the area of present-day Lithuania, Belarus, and a part of Poland (the Podlasie and Suwałki region); in fact its authority did not reach Podlasie and the western part of Lithuania. It was eliminated by the Polish offensive in August 1919 and formally abolished on September 1 by its government, which retreated to Smolensk. See also: A. Srebrakowski, "Uniwersytet Stefana Batorego w Wilnie 1919–1939" [Stefan Batory University in Vilnius 1919–1939], in: A. Srebrakowski, G. Strauchold, eds., *Wrocław na litewskie millenium. Materiały z uroczystej konferencji z okazji 1000-lecia udokumentowania nazwy Litwa* [Wrocław for Lithuania's millenium. Materials from the ceremonial conference on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the documentation of the name Lithuania], Wrocław 2010, pp. 85–86.

zation and the faculty heads.<sup>18</sup> On March 19, 1919, Stanisław Władyczko, authorized by Rector Ziemacki, left for Warsaw “[...] to take action in all matters aimed at starting the Vilnius University.” There, together with the members of the Warsaw Committee, a proclamation was issued to the Polish society on the restitution of University of Vilnius. During that stay, Władyczko, together with Prof. Władysław Zawadzki, also met with Ludwik Kolankowski, the director of the Department for the Affairs of the Polish Eastern Territories, and Adam Wrzosek, the head of the Department of Science and Higher Education Institutions at the Ministry of the Religious Denominations and Public Education, to whom he presented the projects and the work plan of the Provisional Academic Senate and the Organizing Committee. Kolankowski then appointed Władyczko as the representative for the affairs of the University of Vilnius at the Eastern Territories Administration.<sup>19</sup>

The offensive of the Polish army began on April 16, 1919. As a result, Vilnius was taken over by the Poles on April 19. The Organization and Revindication Committee resumed its session on April 25. Later that day, Władyczko received a letter from L. Kolankowski, the director of the Department for Polish Eastern Territories, in which the latter requested, on behalf of the Head of State, that “the provisional Academic Senate continue to work on the launch and organization of the University of Vilnius. Please conduct your work in consultation with the Ministry of the Religious Denominations and Public Education in Warsaw.”<sup>20</sup> Two days later, on April 27,

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<sup>18</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 14, sheets 12–12v, Meeting of the Academic Senate of the University of Vilnius on March 12, 1919; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 1, sheets 8b–8c, Copy of Rector Ziemacki’s letter to the Head of State dated April 27, [19]19.

<sup>19</sup> See: LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheet 42, Władyczko’s account of his visit to Warsaw presented at the seventh meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee on May 21, 1919. See also: S. Władyczko, “Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych” [The first period of the organizational works], p. 37, the author described the activities of the Committee and the Provisional Senate; D. Zamojska, *Akademy i urzędnicy: kształtowanie ustroju państwowych szkół wyższych w Polsce 1915–1920* [Academics and officials: shaping the organization of the state higher education institutions in Poland 1915–1920], Warsaw 2009, p. 81.

<sup>20</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 1, sheet 13, a letter from S. Władyczko to J. Ziemacki dated April 25, [19]19. In a letter dated April 23, Władyczko urged Ziemacki to meet with the Head of State about the University; *ibidem*, sheet 11; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 16, sheet 7,

the provisional rector Ziemacki was able to personally, during a two-hour audience, report to Commander-in-Chief Józef Piłsudski, who had arrived in Vilnius, on the progress of the Committee's activities, present the plan of work on the resurrection of the university and its needs, and ask for financial assistance and care. At 6 o'clock in the evening of the same day, a meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee was held at W. Zahorski's apartment, during which Ziemacki reported on the meeting with the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>21</sup> Since Vilnius was not within the borders of the reborn Polish state and was under the administration of the General Civil Commissioner to the Civil Administration of the Eastern Territories, the Committee was subordinated to that administration.

The detailed course of its work to resurrect the university in Vilnius can be reconstructed from:

- the account by Adam Wrzosek, then the Head of the Science and Higher Education Institutions Section of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education (MRDPE), based on the minutes of the meetings of the Organization and Revindication Committee operating in Vilnius and his memoirs;<sup>22</sup>
- the memoirs of the first rector of the SBU by Michał M. Siedlecki;<sup>23</sup>

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a letter from Department Director L. Kolankowski to provisional Rector of the University of Vilnius, April 25, 1919.

<sup>21</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 1, p. 8–8c, a copy of the letter from Rector Ziemacki to the Head of State dated April 27, [19]19; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, *Protokoły Komisji Rewizyjno-Organizacyjnej Uniw[ersytetu] Wil[eńskiego]* [Minutes of the Revision and Organization Committee of the Univ[ersity] of Vilnius], sheets 11–12 (minutes of the third meeting of April 25, 1919), sheets 16–17 (minutes of the fourth meeting of April 27, 1919), sheets 25–30 (compiled by S. Kościółkowski). Józef Piłsudski allocated 30,000 marks for the organizational work carried out by the Committee.

<sup>22</sup> A. Wrzosek, "Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], pp. 1–32.

<sup>23</sup> M. Siedlecki, "Wspomnienia z pierwszych dwu lat organizacji Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [Memories of the first two years of the organization of the University of Vilnius], in: *Księga pamiątkowa, ku uczczeniu CCCL rocznicy założenia i X wskrzeszenia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego* [Commemorative book to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment and the 10th anniversary of the resurrection of the University of Vilnius], vol. 2: *Dziesięciolecie 1919–1929* [Decade 1919–1929], Vilnius 1929, pp. 59–114.

- the reports of the Executive Committee for the Reconstruction of the University of Vilnius;<sup>24</sup>
- the memoirs of Ludwik Kolankowski, who, from May 7 to August 30, 1919, was the plenipotentiary of the Commander-in-Chief for the reconstruction of the University of Vilnius;<sup>25</sup>
- the archival sources from the Archives of the Stefan Batory University, which are now stored at the Lithuanian Central State Archives in Vilnius (Fond 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 1–18).

Notably, the accounts of A. Wrzosek and the Executive Committee, and the memoirs of M. Siedlecki were published in the second volume of the *Commemorative book to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment and the 10th anniversary of the restoration of the University of Vilnius*, which was published in 1929.

In the discussion of the concepts of the University of Vilnius, the most important one, which had not been articulated before, was omitted. On April 22, shortly after arriving in Vilnius, the Head of State issued, in Polish and Lithuanian, a proclamation *To the inhabitants of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, in which he appealed to the descendants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to act together in restoring independence, without, however, addressing the question of the state affiliation of these lands. He also met with representatives of the Vilnius authorities and presented them with his vision for the city and the university, which were to become a center of Polish culture. There is no doubt that the reconstruction of the university was an element of the federation projects of Józef Piłsudski, who wanted to convince other nationalities living in Vilnius to join the emerg-

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<sup>24</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 12a, *Protokoły Komitetu Wykonawczego Odbudowy Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego (oryginały)* [Minutes of the Executive Committee for the Reconstruction of University of Vilnius (originals)]; S. Władyczko, “Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych” [The first period of the organizational works], pp. 33–58. From May 27 to September 13, 1919, the Executive Committee, headed by the provisional rector J. Ziemacki, held 41 meetings. On December 17, 1919, at the request of Michał Siedlecki, the rector of the SBU, the last meeting of that Committee was held (without the participation of L. Kolankowski).

<sup>25</sup> L. Kolankowski, *Zapiski pamiętnikarskie* [Diary notes], prepared for print, introduction, and footnotes by S. Grochowina, Toruń 2012, pp. 109–147 [Participation in the resurrection of the University of Vilnius]. Kolankowski’s mission ended on August 30, 1919.



ing Polish state. He entrusted its implementation to Ludwik Kolankowski, a former director of the Department of the Eastern Borderlands (Lithuanian-Byelorussian) and a Civil Commissioner to the Military Administration of the Eastern Borderlands, whom he appointed on May 7, 1919 as the Commander-in-Chief's plenipotentiary for the reconstruction of the University of Vilnius, at the same time handing over to him the university's documentation.<sup>26</sup> Thanks to Kolankowski's *Diary notes* published in print in 2012, we know not only the details of that meeting, but also the details of his participation in the restitution of the Stefan Batory University.

This is how Kolankowski described in his *Diary notes* his conversation with Piłsudski:

Here you have a Kaziuk from Vilnius. They gave it to me there, and I am giving it to you. It is a late one, but it is a Kaziuk from Vilnius. To my silent question about what it could be, he added: "They came up with the idea in Vilnius that they want to have a university there. We have been talking about it – as you already know – for a long time, and here are the acts that they gave me. I told them that I would pass this on to you." To my remark that when I hand over the office to Mr. Osmałowski tomorrow, it will be up to him as the General Commissioner, Piłsudski replied: "They don't know how to do it. It will come apart, and you will get it done." "Yes, Sir," I replied briefly [...].<sup>27</sup>

In his nomination act, the Commander-in-Chief gave Kolankowski "[...] the task of drawing up, together with the scientific body and the local scientific institutions, the charter of the University and the establishment of auxiliary institutions for it."

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<sup>26</sup> The role of L. Kolankowski in the Lithuanian-Belarusian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Civil Commissariat is discussed in detail by J. Gierowska-Kałuża, "Między polityką a nauką. Ludwik Kolankowski w pierwszym półroczu 1919 roku" [Between politics and science. Ludwik Kolankowski in the first half-year of 1919], in: P. Oliński, W. Piasek, eds., *Ludwik Kolankowski: dzieło i życie: indywidualny przypadek historiograficzny* [Ludwik Kolankowski: work and life: an individual historiographic case], Toruń 2017, pp. 23–40; eadem, *Zarząd Cywilny Ziem Wschodnich (19 lutego 1919–9 września 1920)* [Civilian Administration of the Eastern Territories (February 19, 1919 – September 9, 1920)], Warsaw 2003, pp. 66–69, 71–72, 74, 111–112ff.

<sup>27</sup> L. Kolankowski, *Zapiski pamiętnikarskie* [Diary notes], pp. 119–120.

Authorized by Piłsudski, Kolankowski initiated and coordinated organizational work and, in cooperation with the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (MRDPE), prepared a project for the selection of scientific staff. He arranged all administrative and economic matters with the Commissioner General of the Civil Administration of the Eastern Territories, Jerzy Osmołowski.<sup>28</sup>

Kolankowski's enthusiasm and Piłsudski's support enabled the work of rebuilding the university in Vilnius to proceed quickly. On May 27, the Plenipotentiary appointed the Executive Committee for the Reconstruction of University of Vilnius, headed by the provisional rector J. Ziemacki, which included representatives of the Vilnius intelligentsia, such as Stanisław Władyczko, Ludwik Wasilewski, Stanisław Kościółkowski, Zygmunt Nagrodzki, Waclaw Gizbert-Studnicki, Józef Wierzyński, Michał Brensztejn, Ludwik Czarkowski, Michał Minkiewicz, Walenty Parczewski, Ferdynand Ruszczyc, Witold Staniewicz, Witold Sławiński, Jan Obst, Count Antoni Tyszkiewicz, and Władysław Zahorski. The Committee, in consultation with the provisional Academic Senate, was to begin the necessary preparations for the inauguration of the academic year at the Vilnius University as early as in October 1919, and to activate the local community to help with the work on the organization of the university, the acquisition of buildings, furniture, and fuel, the raising of adequate funds, etc.<sup>29</sup> At the end of

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<sup>28</sup> D. Zamojska, “‘Ta ludność życzy mieć uniwersytet...’” [“This nation wishes the university...”], p. 12; eadem, “Akademy i urzędnicy” [Academics and officials], p. 84; P. Żukowski, “Uniwersytety we Lwowie, Krakowie i Wilnie na naukowej drodze Ludwika Kolankowskiego. Życie naukowe Ludwika Kolankowskiego do 1939 roku” [Universities in Lviv, Cracow, and Vilnius on the scientific path of Ludwik Kolankowski. The scientific life of Ludwik Kolankowski until 1939], in: P. Oliński, W. Piasek, eds., *Ludwik Kolankowski: dzieło i życie: indywidualny przypadek historiograficzny* [Ludwik Kolankowski: work and life: an individual historiographic case], Toruń 2017, pp. 67–68, annex, doc. 8 (p. 204).

<sup>29</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 12a, sheets 3–4v, Minutes no. 1 of the organizational meeting of the Executive Committee at the University of Vilnius on May 27, 1919 at the premises of the University Chancellery, led by the University Superintendent Professor L. Kolankowski; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 18, Fotografie i życiorysy członków Komitetu Wykonawczego Odbudowy Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego z 1919 r. [Photographs and biographies of the members of the Executive Committee for the Reconstruction of the University of Vilnius from 1919].

April, the MRDPE also joined the work on the restitution of the university. The ministry was represented by Adam Wrzosek, who took control of the nascent university, which was being established in a city with a then-undetermined – which was very important – legal situation.

As Dorota Zamojska rightly pointed out, from May to August 28, 1919, the reconstruction of the university in Vilnius was handled by several institutions and individuals who were in competency and conceptual conflicts with each other, which caused the problem “multi-authority” leading to a delay in the organizational work.<sup>30</sup>

Launching a higher education institution at such a rapid pace was not only an extremely difficult logistical undertaking, but above all a financial one. Vilnius was a poor city ravaged by war, as some of the professors who took a job at the university there in October 1919 wrote in their memoirs. This is best reflected in the diary of Józef Kallenbach, the dean of the Faculty of Humanities, who wrote upon his arrival in Vilnius: “[...] the filth and stench in the streets, the snowmelt, the Jewish-Russian chatter, the uncertainty of the situation. [...] I am determined to get out of here, I just still don’t know where.”<sup>31</sup>

In the already quoted *Diary notes*, Kolankowski, a direct participant in these events, noted:

But all my struggle to make the Vilnius University one of Poland’s universities is a secondary thing. The first was for it to be created. And I must [...] say, according to the account of the Reconstruction Committee, that the Ministry of Education did not want the University of Vilnius, at least in 1919.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(1)A, b. 14, sheet 15, Copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Polish National Council of April 16, 1919, where information was given that Stanisław Władyczka and Władysław Zawadzki held two conferences on the University of Vilnius with the head of Science and Higher Education Institutions Section Adam Wrzosek; D. Zamojska, “Akademy i urzędnicy” [Academics and officials], p. 84.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted after: D. Zamojska, “‘Ta ludność życzy mieć uniwersytet...’” [“This nation wishes the university...”], pp. 19–20.

<sup>32</sup> L. Kolankowski, *Zapiski pamiętnikarskie* [Diary notes], p. 137.

From the quoted excerpt of the *Diary notes* it can be seen that L. Kolankowski was indeed keen on the rapid realization of the idea of rebuilding the Vilnius University.

Important in the work on the organization of the university was the question of the number and form of the faculties that were to be created, as well as of finding academic teachers with appropriate scientific qualifications who could take the posts of faculty heads.

The names of various faculties appeared in the minutes of the Organization and Revindication Committee: theological, legal, medical, philological, fine arts, physical and mathematical, agricultural, agronomic, veterinary, and pharmaceutical. And the members of this Committee shared the responsibilities related to the organization of the various faculties.<sup>33</sup> Such a large number of faculties was opposed by the delegate of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, A. Wrzosek, who on May 21, 1919, at an extraordinary meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee, attended by a government representative, the head of the Department of Enlightenment in the General Commissariat of the Eastern Territories, Władysław Lichtarowicz, Stefan Ehrenkretz from Warsaw, and members of the Committee, pushed for a small, two-faculty university, but one “in the European fashion,” such as in Poznań, where “[...] for the time being, they limited it to the faculties of philosophy, law, and administration.” During the meeting, it was resolved that after consulting with L. Kolankowski, as the official organizer of the University of Vilnius, they would ask the General Commissariat of the Eastern Territories to appoint “[...] at the earliest possible time, i.e., as early as in May, an Executive Committee to take custody and management of the University buildings and to manage their restoration.” This concept was opposed by A. Wrzosek, who believed that the Executive Committee should be formed in consultation with the Ministry and consist of a limited number of peo-

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<sup>33</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheets 31–32v, sheets 35–36, Minutes of meeting no. five (May 12, 1919), no. six (May 19, 1919) of the Organization and Revindication Committee; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 14, sheets 22–23, Minutes of the meeting of the Committee for the organization of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Vilnius, held on August 12, 1919, consisting of veterinarians.

ple. He also suggested the need to include classes “in the local languages: Belarusian and Lithuanian” in the faculty of literature and humanities. This was met with strong resistance by members of the Committee, who referred to “the deterrent example of Lviv, where similar conduct led to dissension and even brawls among the studying youth.” At that time, the decision was also made to “[...] urgently open the faculties of philosophy and law. A draft of the University Charter, the Estimate Budgets, and the List of the all professors were prepared.” In addition, a request was made to the state authorities to allocate adequate funds for the salaries of the clerks and the support staff, for printed materials, and for office supplies.<sup>34</sup>

The most difficult task was to find professors willing to leave universities in Poland and move to Vilnius, whose legal status was still unclear. The problems with the staff for the new university prompted the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment to advocate either to temporarily postpone its launch or to open it in a form limited to a faculty of philosophy (humanities) and perhaps a faculty of law. However, both of these faculties were defined in strictly utilitarian terms, as a school for training Polish teachers and officials, which would not have full academic rights.

The ministry’s authorities expressed their position explicitly on June 14, 1919, during a conference held at the home of Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, Jan Łukasiewicz, with the participation of Ludwik Kolankowski, a historian of the University of Vilnius Józef Bieliński, and members of the Provisional Academic Senate: Rector Józef Ziemacki, Alfons Parczewski, Stanisław Ptaszycki, Stanisław Władyczko, Kazimierz Noiszewski, and Władysław Zawadzki, which caused a robust response from Vilnius residents. On their behalf, S. Władyczko replied that

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<sup>34</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheets 40–46, Minutes of the extraordinary meeting (seventh) of the Organization and Revindication Committee of the University of Vilnius held on May 21, 1919, in the premises of the provisional Chancellery of the University; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 5, sheet 10, invitation to the members of the Organization and Revindication Committee to an extraordinary meeting to be held on Wednesday, May 21, 1919, at the University Chancellery, 26 Świętojańska Street.

[...] The Polish University in Vilnius, as the most important institution of Polishness in the eastern borderlands, is an issue so pressing and so timely that we do not have a moment to lose and must exploit today's political conditions so that the University will be formally active with all faculties as early as in autumn, if only in the stage of organization. [...] This is not Warsaw, not Cracow, Lviv is arranging a Polish University there, but these Polish people who have lived there for centuries, these people who cannot forget that the Śniadeckis taught within these walls, that Mickiewicz and Słowacki came out of these walls. [...] These people wish to have a university, not a humanities higher education institution or a high school, as proposed by Mr. Wrzosek.

The Vilnius residents pointed out the risks of delaying the launch of the university in an uncertain political situation and the need to open it with all faculties as early as in October that year. An agreement was reached only thanks to the decisiveness and statements of Kolankowski, who attended the meeting and, citing the will of the Commander-in-Chief, advocated the opening of the university with all planned faculties in the autumn.<sup>35</sup>

In a speech delivered on October 11, 1919, during the first ceremonial inauguration of the academic year at the University of Vilnius, Adam Wrzosek said:

[...] Eagerness and dedicated work have resulted in a few months in the fact that today we are celebrating the ceremonial reopening of the University, which in the past century has given to the homeland such services as no other Polish university has given. I was fortunate to witness this work, which was strenuous but full of youthful exuberance, from the first moments until the last. I do not know how to thank the Head of State for supporting all initia-

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<sup>35</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 14, sheets 66–70v, Notes to the minutes of a meeting on the Vilnius University at the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education, held on June 14, 1919 in Warsaw. A. Wrzosek repeated his position at the aforementioned meeting, where he again advocated “[...] for the possibility of opening only the Faculty of Humanities, in view of the lack of candidates for the head of the faculty of law and the absolute impossibility of organizing the faculty of medicine [...]” In addition, the minutes notes that “[...] the humanities and law faculties will be unconditionally opened, while the other faculties (agricultural, natural science, medical, and veterinary) will be in the stage of organization”; S. Władyczko, “Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych” [The first period of the organizational works], pp. 38–39.

tives for this purpose? [...] Or the relentless work of those who, led by Rector Siedlecki and Professor Ziemacki, made every effort to open the University as soon as possible. The joint efforts, goodwill, and dedication made it possible for this Central School to be established. [...] And the stronghold of Polish science has been rebuilt.

Thus, he omitted and dismissed the role of Ludwik Kolankowski in the work on resurrecting the Vilnius University.<sup>36</sup>

The most important issue preoccupying the university's organizers was the lack of academically qualified teachers capable of taking the posts of faculty heads.

Even in its early days, the Provisional Academic Senate conducted negotiations with scholars from various regions of Poland and those who worked abroad. For talks with Polish scholars working in Russia, the Senate delegated Stanisław Władyczko, who traveled to university cities there and offered the posts of faculty heads in Vilnius. The outcome of this search appears to have disappointed the Senate. Therefore, in early May, the Organization and Revindication Committee, at its next meeting, sent Rev. Leon Puciata to university centers in Poland and abroad to search for candidates to teach at the Faculty of Theology, allocating 1,000 Polish marks for this purpose. Rev. Puciata made the trip to Warsaw, Lublin, Lviv, Cracow, and Poznań from July 7 to July 30, 1919. It cost 2,000 Polish marks, of which he informed the Academic Senate in a letter dated April 17, 1921.<sup>37</sup>

As early as on May 27, at the first meeting of the Executive Committee for the Reconstruction of the University of Vilnius, L. Kolankowski proposed the creation of a scientific personnel and qualification committee,

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<sup>36</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 19, sheets 63–64, Speech of the Head of the Higher Education Institution Section, Prof. Adam Wrzosek, during the opening ceremony of the resurrected University of Vilnius on October 11, 1919.

<sup>37</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheets 31v–32, Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee of the University of Vilnius held on May 12, 1919, in Dr. Zahorski's apartment; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 48, sheet 299, Budgetary matters 1920/21, a letter from Rev. L. Puciata to the Illustrious Senate and Rectorate of the Stefan Batory University, April 17, 1921. See also: S. Władyczko, "Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych" [The first period of the organizational works], pp. 41–42.

which was to be responsible for staffing the faculties being created in Vilnius. It was to be composed of a delegate from the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, two delegates each from the Academic Senates of the Jagiellonian University, the University of Lviv, and the University of Warsaw, as well as three representatives of the Provisional Academic Senate of the University of Vilnius, namely Józef Ziemacki, Stanisław Władyczko, and Stanisław Kościałkowski. It was also decided that later in June of that year a letter would be sent to the senates of Polish universities, asking them to support the staff of the future University of Vilnius. Also the possibility was considered of employing in Vilnius Polish scientists working abroad: in Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium, and England.<sup>38</sup> There is no doubt that in the negotiations the tradition and history of the former University was invoked more than the opportunities related to housing and financial aspects. Consequently, on July 4, in Warsaw, during the first convention of representatives of Polish higher education institutions, held under the chairmanship of the former rector of the Jagiellonian University Kazimierz Kostanecki, negotiations on personnel matters and the staffing of the faculties in the newly created university were successfully conducted. The delegates of the University of Vilnius at the convention were Rector J. Ziemacki, S. Władyczko, and Ferdynand Ruszczyk. The representatives of the universities from Lviv and Cracow, who were present at the convention, passed a resolution in which they agreed to allow several of their professors to take a one-year leave so that they could temporarily work in Vilnius. Particularly invaluable was the assistance from the Jagiellonian University, which provided Vilnius with a sizable group of academic teachers, including Michał Siedlecki – the first rector of the Vilnius University. On July 31, during the next meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee, Rector Ziemacki submitted a report on his stay in Warsaw in connection with work on the

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<sup>38</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(1)A, b. 12a, sheets 3–4v, Minutes no. 1 of the organizational meeting of the Executive Committee at the University of Vilnius on May 27, 1919 at the premises of the University Chancellery, led by the University Superintendent Professor L. Kolankowski. See also: A. Wrzosek, “Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego” [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], pp. 14, 16–17.



resurrection of the University of Vilnius, and raised the issues related to the candidates for the posts of department heads and the permission to fill these posts.<sup>39</sup>

Ludwik Kolankowski, the plenipotentiary for the reconstruction of the University of Vilnius, recalled his cooperation at the time with the ministry and Adam Wrzosek in selecting the staff for the future university as follows:

[...] Among the many difficulties on the part of the ministry, I must also include the negative attitude towards the opening of some faculties, for example the Fine Arts, Legal, Theological, and Medical faculties. As for the first one, the ministry's opposition was principled, and as for the next two it was based on personnel considerations. Under the pretense that suitable candidates could not be found for the deans-organizers of the latter three faculties (for the Fine Arts faculty, there was the excellent Ruszczyk), rejecting the candidacies of Prof. Parczewski, Prof. Władyczko, and Rev. Żongołłowicz that I mentioned [...],

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<sup>39</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheets 64–66, Minutes no. 10 of the meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee held on July 31, 1919, at 6 p.m. at the Un[iversity] Chancellery, during which Rector Ziemacki discussed the convention of professors and the results of the talks held during his stay in Warsaw, and presented the names of the persons who had agreed to take the posts of departments in several faculties of the university being resurrected in Vilnius. See also: F. Ruszczyk, *Dziennik* [Diary], part 2: *W Wilnie 1919–1932* [In Vilnius 1919–1932], selection, arrangement, elaboration, introduction, and afterword by E. Ruszczyk, Warsaw 1996, pp. 17–22. Ruszczyk, an eyewitness to these events, described, among other things, the meetings of the Organization Committee held on June 19 and 23, 1919 in Vilnius, a trip to Warsaw on June 25, and talks at the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment; A. Wrzosek, “Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego” [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], p. 14. D. Zamojska, “Akademy i urzędnicy” [Academics and officials], pp. 95–96; eadem, “Konferencje rektorów szkół akademickich w Polsce w okresie międzywojennym: reprezentacja środowiska akademickiego wobec zmian ustawodawstwa” [The Conferences of Academic School’s Rectors in Poland in the interwar period: representation of the academic circles in relation to the changes in the legislation], *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty* 2004, vol. 43, pp. 115–120. The first rectors’ convention was held in Warsaw from June 28 to July 4, 1919. For more information on rectors’ conventions, see: L. Zembruski, ed., *Konferencje Rektorów Szkół Akademickich w Polsce w latach 1919–1931: protokoły narad, uchwały i memoriały* [Conferences of rectors of academic schools in Poland in 1919–1931: minutes of conferences, resolutions, and memorials], introduction by S. Streicher, Warsaw 1932.

the ministry delayed everything and yielded in part only under the pressure of the approaching autumn.<sup>40</sup>

Although Kolankowski's nomination decree indicated that he was to "act in matters of selection of the professors in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Religious Denominations in Warsaw," at a meeting of the Council of Ministers on July 16, 1919, for the sake of the project entrusted to him by Józef Piłsudski (albeit without agreement with the Commander-in-Chief), he transferred the authority to appoint professors to the ministry and in fact transferred his authority to the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. The head of the Department of Science and Higher Education Institutions, A. Wrzosek, took advantage of the situation and prevented Kolankowski from influencing the further organization of the University of Vilnius and the staffing of departments, in an effort to minimize and deprecate his earlier work. This distancing from the Plenipotentiary is also evident in the text titled "On the resurrection of Vilnius University in 1919" included in the second volume of the *Commemorative book to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the establishment and the 10th anniversary of the restoration of the University of Vilnius*, in which Wrzosek did not mention Kolankowski's participation in the resurrection of the SBU, writing that:

[...] Both the Minister of Education, Prof. Jan Łukasiewicz, and the head of the Academic Schools Section were ardent supporters of resurrecting the University of Vilnius as soon as possible, and as far as possible in its former academic splendor.<sup>41</sup>

However, there is no doubt that it was Kolankowski who, contrary to the Ministry's intentions, led to the establishment of a multi-faculty university in Vilnius. Joanna Gierowska-Kałuża is right writing that:

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<sup>40</sup> L. Kolankowski, *Zapiski pamiętnikarskie* [Diary notes], pp. 141–142.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 138–139. See also: A. Wrzosek, "Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], p. 10. Kolankowski's role in the restitution of the University of Vilnius was described by Dorota Zamojska in the article "This nation wishes the university..." passim.

[...] regardless of his personal beliefs, whatever they may have been, [Kolankowski] loyally carried out the program in force in the area subordinate to the Civil Administration of the Eastern Territories and therefore did not allow Warsaw to interfere.

A. Wrzosek's hostility towards L. Kolankowski also translated into the former's dislike of the candidates for professors' and deans' positions approved by Kolankowski.<sup>42</sup>

As a result, the responsibility for the personnel situation of the new university was assumed by the ministry. After July 16, it was Wrzosek who decided on the appointment of staff for the positions of department heads at the recently restored University of Vilnius, with Michał M. Siedlecki, a zoologist from the Jagiellonian University, as its rector, rather than Józef Ziemacki, who had greatly contributed for the university's reactivation.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time as the issue of appointment of staff for the academic positions, intensive work was being carried out on drafting the charter of the future university. According to S. Władyczko's report, as many as three drafts of the charter were drawn up at the time, which, among other things, provided for two separate faculties – mathematics and natural sciences, and humanities – instead of a single faculty of philosophy. Professors

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<sup>42</sup> J. Gierowska-Kałuża, *Zarząd Cywilny Ziem Wschodnich* [Civil administration of the Eastern Territories], p. 112; eadem, *Między polityką a nauką* [Between politics and science], pp. 38–39; R. Jurkowski, "U źródeł Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego – początki Wydziału Teologicznego (1918–1920)" [At the origins of the Stefan Batory University – the beginnings of the Faculty of Theology (1918–1920)], *Echa Przeszłości* 2017, vol. 18, p. 242.

<sup>43</sup> Z. Opacki, "Środowisko naukowe USB w Wilnie wobec polsko-litewskiego sporu terytorialnego o Wileńszczyznę w latach 1919–1922" [The academic circles of the SBU in Vilnius towards the Polish-Lithuanian territorial dispute over the Vilnius region in 1919–1922], in: R. Wapiński, ed., *Polacy i sąsiedzi – dysonanse i przenikanie kultur* [Poles and neighbors – dissonances and interpenetration of cultures], part 2: a collection of studies, Gdańsk 2001, pp. 179–181; A. Wrzosek, "Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], pp. 11, 21–23, 27; S. Władyczko, "Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych" [The first period of the organizational works], p. 43, the author wrote that "From August 20, 1919, the decisive factor in the selection of professors was exclusively the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, represented by the head of the Science and Higher Education Institutions Section, prof. Adam Wrzosek. At that time, the list of the professors for all the faculties was definitely established."

J. Ziemacki and S. Władyczko participated in the work on the charter. In addition to the faculties of theology, law, and medicine, the minutes of the Organization and Revindication Committee listed the faculties of philology, fine arts, physics and mathematics, agronomy, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry.<sup>44</sup>

Members of the Executive Committee – J. Ziemacki, W. Zahorski, Bronisław Umiastowski, Zygmunt Nagórski, and Ludwik Wasilewski – were received on August 2 by Józef Piłsudski during his stay in Vilnius. The issues discussed during that meeting included matters concerning the buildings that the newly reestablished university was to receive and the decree on the opening of the University. At the time, the Head of State stated that:

[...] the decree could only be issued if the academic staff consisting of a Rector, a vice-rector, and deans of faculties is presented to him, even if there were obstacles to the actual opening of the University in the current half-year. It was emphasized that that decree should mention the name of prof. Kolankowski as the organizer of the University of Vilnius.

As early as on August 3, 1919, the Commissioner General for the Eastern Territories Jerzy Osmałowski, most likely on Piłsudski's orders, granted the newly created university about a dozen pieces of real estate. These included the so-called main building of the former University, the former

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<sup>44</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 13, sheet 65, Minutes no. 10 of the meeting of the Organization and Revindication Committee of the University of Vilnius held on July 31, 1919, at 6 p.m., at the Un[iversity] Chancellery; S. Władyczko, "Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych" [The first period of the organizational works], pp. 45–46; D. Zamojska, "Ta ludność życzy mieć uniwersytet..." ["This nation wishes the university..."], pp. 22–25, the author described the drafts of the charter being prepared for the University of Vilnius; eadem, "Akademy i urzędnicy" [Academics and officials], pp. 86, 109; the draft charters written in the Vilnius circles referred to the Russian tradition (e.g., the layout of the faculties, the powers of the rector, etc.). See also: A. Wrzosek, "Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], pp. 12, 30–31, the author mentioned that J. Ziemacki prepared a charter, according to which the University in Vilnius was to have as many as ten faculties (Roman Catholic, Evangelical-Reformed, law and administration, humanities, pedagogical, mathematics and natural science, medical, veterinary, agronomy and forestry, and fine arts) and four "sub-faculties" (economical-political and consular, eastern languages, pharmaceutical, and odontological).

non-commissioned officers' school at 23 Zakretowa Street, the building of the former technical and chemical school at 22 Nowogrodzka Street, the post-Augustinian walls with barracks and the post-Bernardine walls with appurtenances, the post-Jesuit barracks at St. Ignatius Church, the house at 26 Zamkowa Street, and the Zakret farm. A sufficient number of buildings made it possible to think of a multi-faculty university.<sup>45</sup>

On August 5, a telegram was sent from the Executive Committee to the head of the Science and Higher Education Institutions Section, A. Wrzosek, and Plenipotentiary L. Kolankowski, stating that

Commissioner General Osmałowski demanded that we immediately submit the names of the members of the Senate for the decree we are going to give the following names Organizer Kolankowski, Rector Ziemacki, dean of theology Rev. Żongołłowicz, law Parczewski, humanities Godlewski [!], medicine Władyczko, fine arts Ruszczyc. We ask the Ministry to approve or change by telegram. The Head of State really wants the decree be issued before his departure from Vilnius which will take place on the eighth of August.<sup>46</sup>

The 20th meeting of the Executive Committee on August 9, the committee discussed, among other things, matters concerning the establishment of a committee to handle matters related to the University's opening ceremony. On Monday, August 11, a meeting was held of the committee for the invitation committee and the celebration committee for the opening of the University. The latter consisted of Count Antoni Tyszkiewicz (chairman), as well as Ferdynand Ruszczyc and Władysław Zahorski. A few days later, on

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<sup>45</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 12a, sheets 56–56v, Minutes of a hearing on August 2, 1919, with the Head of State Mr. Józef Piłsudski, given to the Executive Committee for the Restoration of the University of Vilnius; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 12a, sheets 59–60, Minutes no. 15 of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on August 3, 1919. See also: A. Wrzosek, "Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], pp. 17–18, the author enumerated all the pieces of real estate granted to the newly created University; S. Władyczko, "Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych" [The first period of the organizational works], pp. 46–48, 51.

<sup>46</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 4, k. 6, A copy of the telegram to Professors Wrzosek and Kolankowski dated August 5, 1919, regarding a list of Senate members.

August 14, Ruszczyć sent a letter to L. Kolankowski regarding the insignia for the new university, which he was to design.<sup>47</sup>

The advertisements published in the local and national press on August 16 included information that the university's ceremonial opening would take place on October 4, 1919, and would include the following faculties: law, theology, medicine, humanities, nature (with a faculty of agriculture and forestry), and fine arts.<sup>48</sup> The greatness of the new University was also emphasized by the article "Jakie znaczenie ma dla Wilna Uniwersytet" [The importance of the University for Vilnius], printed after August 19 in the daily newspaper *Nasz Kraj*, which stated that:

[...] And there is a third consideration, which supports high attendance at the University of Vilnius and is worth mentioning, and which will hopefully be of the greatest importance.

Namely: Vilnius, quiet but serious with its history and so great with its historical tradition, meets all the criteria to be the Athens of Poland. Not the bustling Warsaw, not the boisterous Lviv, not Poznań and not Lublin, which does not have University traditions, will be conducive to young people's concentration of their spirit and focusing of the efforts of their will to achieve the highest expressions of science. Vilnius has a tradition of Philarets and Philomaths, and it was not at all coincidentally that these famous Philaret societies were formed in Vilnius a hundred years ago. They formed because there was the proper soil for it here. And let us hope that this soil will be even more fertile after 87 years of fallow and that the most serious and hardworking youth in Poland will want to come to Vilnius to study.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 12a, sheets 67–68v, Minutes no. 20 of the meeting of the Executive Committee for the Restoration of the University of Vilnius held on August 9, 1919 at the University Chancellery at 10 o'clock; F. Ruszczyć, *Dziennik* [Diary], part 2: *W Wilnie* [In Vilnius], p. 32, footnotes 1, 2.

<sup>48</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 9, sheets 19, 20, letters from the University's Secretariat regarding enrollment and opening date; LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 7, sheet 10, J[ózef] Z[iemacki], Youth service in the military vs. the University of Vilnius (typescript of an article sent to several newspapers).

<sup>49</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 7, sheets 17–18, "Jakie znaczenie ma dla Wilna Uniwersytet 19 sierpnia 1919 r." ["The importance of the University for Vilnius August 19, 1919"] (typescript of an article for the daily newspaper *Nasz Kraj*).

The significance of the event was also felt by its creators. In a card dated August 20, 1919, addressed to Ludwik Wasilewski, Rector Ziemacki wrote:

[...] Things are going well. Already on these days decrees establishing the University will be issued. You will cry with joy, as I still have tears in my eyes because I have been lucky to live until this moment. The opening will take place on October 1, or even earlier.<sup>50</sup>

Ziemacki's letter to F. Ruszczyc, dated August 19, was written in a similar tone:

[...] Everything is already settled, as to the Senate and the decree stating the opening of the University. The ceremony will take place no later than on October 4, and perhaps a week earlier. My most fervent desire to work with you, esteemed and beloved Professor, as it seems, has already been fulfilled. [...] We are looking forward to seeing you here. We need to make the insignia. The seal in wax is already awaiting you, Professor. We have to print invitations and send them out.<sup>51</sup>

The announcement by the Head of State of the decree on the resurrection of the University of Vilnius, which was to take place in a few days, resulted in the termination of the work of the Warsaw Committee for the Restoration of the Vilnius University. On Sunday, August 24, the Committee issued a *Proclamation to the Polish Society* expressing joy at the establishment of the university in Vilnius. The document was signed by Chairman Alfons Parczewski and Committee members Józef Ziemacki, Józef Bieliński, Ignacy Baliński, Ferdynand Ruszczyc, Stanisław Władyczko, Władysław Zawadzki, and Kazimierz Noiszewski.<sup>52</sup>

On the eve of Józef Piłsudski's announcement of the decree on the resurrection of the Vilnius University, a proclamation *University and Vilnius* was issued, which said:

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<sup>50</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 4, sheets 21–21v, a card from J. Ziemacki to Ludwik Wasilewski.

<sup>51</sup> See: F. Ruszczyc, *Dziennik* [Diary], part 2: *W Wilnie* [In Vilnius], p. 33.

<sup>52</sup> S. Władyczko, "Pierwszy okres prac organizacyjnych" [The first period of the organizational works], pp. 56–58, the author cited the entire proclamation there; F. Ruszczyc, *Dziennik* [Diary], part 2: *W Wilnie* [In Vilnius], p. 34, footnote 2.

The opening ceremony of the resurrected University will be one of the most beautiful Holidays in the miraculously liberated Vilnius. The society here should prepare appropriately. Undoubtedly, the Polish Borderland community will perform do it properly. But the time is high to start the preparations. We would like to inform the general public that the Committee for the Celebration of the Ceremonial Opening of the University of Vilnius has already been formed under the leadership of Count Antoni Tyszkiewicz. Whoever wishes to contribute with advice or guidance, or to offer his or her cooperation and come to active assistance, please contact the Executive Committee for the Restoration of the University of Vilnius in the morning from 10 o'clock every day except Holidays.<sup>53</sup>

There is no doubt that it was possible to meet the deadlines and open the university in the autumn of 1919 only thanks to the energy and dedication to the “university’s cause” that shared by the representatives of the Vilnius intelligentsia and Ludwik Kolankowski.

The Commander-in-Chief issued a decree on August 28 establishing the Stefan Batory University (*Universitas Batoreana Vilnensis*) and appointing the first Academic Senate. Józef Piłsudski signed a text different from the one prepared earlier by the provisional Rector Józef Ziemacki. Its author was Adam Wrzosek. On September 1, J. Piłsudski appointed the first members of the Academic Senate: Rector Michał Siedlecki, Vice Rector Józef Ziemacki, Dean of the Faculty of Theology Rev. Bronisław Żongołłowicz, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Piotr Wiśniewski, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts Ferdynand Ruszczyc, and Władysław Mickiewicz, son of Adam Mickiewicz, as an honorary professor of the history of Polish literature at the Stefan Batory University.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 7, sheet 19, “Uniwersytet a Wilno 27 sierpnia 1919 r.” [“The university and Vilnius August 27, 1919”] (notebook with the proclamation).

<sup>54</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 944, sheets 170–176, Nomination of the members of the first Academic Senate; A. Wrzosek, “Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego” [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], pp. 21–23. In addition, the university was granted the right to use a seal with the image of an Eagle with a Crown and the Lithuanian Pogoń coat of arms. The first rector of the revived University was originally to be Ferdynand Ruszczyc – see: F. Ruszczyc, *Dziennik* [Diary], part 2: *W Wilnie* [In Vilnius], p. 33 – this was mentioned in a letter dated August 19, 1919 by Józef Ziemacki; *ibidem*, p. 39, footnote 1, entry under the date of September 10, 1919 – the author wrote about the appointments



Michał Siedlecki, a professor of zoology at the Jagiellonian University, recalled his appointment and the deliberations in Warsaw on the organization of the Vilnius University as follows:

[...] When I received the message that I had already been appointed as the first Rector of the University of Vilnius, I introduced myself to Józef Piłsudski, then the Head of State, and had a short but very pleasant conversation with him. We both reached the conclusion that the University of Vilnius must be an institution of intrinsically Polish culture, but at the same time it should be a focal point radiating to the neighboring countries. [...] Around August 18, 1919, a meeting was held with the Chief Commissioner of the Eastern Territories Mr. Osmałowski, during which we finally set the date for the opening of the University for October 10 and 11 of that year.

And this is how he described his arrival in Vilnius and his first days in the city:

[...] Around August 20, 1919, a small group of only 11 people, who were to hold academic positions at the University of Vilnius, set out from Warsaw to Vilnius. Beside me, the group included Rev. Prof. Żongołłowicz, Prof. Alexandrowicz, Prof. Patkowski, Prof. Wiśniewski, Sławiński, the two Dzięwulski brothers, and Dr. Wilczyński, Prof. Staniewicz, and the late Dr. Horodyski. [...] Since I was not yet very well known in Vilnius, I had the opportunity to talk on the street and in stores with simple people who did not know my role at all. Everyone was concerned about the fact that the University was being founded anew. The simple people talked about it as if it were some great holiday. From the expressions of these simple people emanated such deep patriotism, such great attachment to Poland, and such love for this institution, which was to be revived anew, that I can only explain it to myself by the innate depth of feeling in these people and the memories of the tradition of the old University of Vilnius, which has not yet been extinguished at all.<sup>55</sup>

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of the members of the Academic Senate (*Nasz Kraj* 1919, no. 117). See also: L. Kolankowski, *Zapiski pamiętnikarskie* [Diary notes], pp. 143–144, who recommended historian Stanisław Smolka for the position of the rector.

<sup>55</sup> M. Siedlecki, “Wspomnienia z pierwszych dwu lat organizacji Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego” [Memories of the first two years of the organization of the University of Vilnius], pp. 62–66, 73.

During the first year of the new university's operation, its staff was mostly made up of professors from the Jagiellonian University and the University of Warsaw.

Until Rector Siedlecki arrived in Vilnius, matters related to the organization of the university were managed by the Provisional Senate, headed by Józef Ziemacki. However, it was the Ministry that had a decisive influence on the composition of the first Senate of the newly established University. This was mentioned in the nomination decree by Józef Piłsudski, who noted that the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, which organized the University of Vilnius in consultation with him, had submitted to him, in a letter dated August 25, 1919, the names of the members of the Academic Senate who had received nominations. The first meeting of the Academic Senate was held in Rector Siedlecki's office on September 16, 1919. It was attended, in addition to the Rector and the Secretary of the University Jan Kaczkowski, by the Vice-Rector J. Ziemacki, Rev. B. Żongołłowicz, P. Wiśniewski and F. Ruszczyk.<sup>56</sup>

As Zbigniew Opacki rightly pointed out, this initially modest size of the Senate proved that negotiations were still underway at the end of August concerning the recruitment and appointment of suitable people to official positions. This concerned, among others, professor Marian Zdziechowski, planned for the position of the dean of the Faculty of Humanities, and professor Alfons Parczewski, who was to become the dean and organizer of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences.<sup>57</sup>

By October 11, 1919, i.e. the date of the opening of the university at the ceremonial inauguration of the 1919/1920 academic year, the appointment of deans had been completed. The person eventually appointed as the dean

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<sup>56</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 944, sheets 168–169v, Minutes of the first meeting of the Academic Senate of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius on September 16, 1919 in the office of the rector Professor Siedlecki.

<sup>57</sup> Z. Opacki, *Między uniwersalizmem a partykularyzmem. Myśl i działalność społeczno-polityczna Mariana Zdziechowskiego 1914–1938* [Between universalism and particularism. The thought and socio-political activity of Marian Zdziechowski 1914–1938], Gdańsk 2006, p. 139. Marian Zdziechowski did not accept the dean's position offered to him, although he was listed in a decree published by Jerzy Osmałowski in August 1919; A. Wrzosek, "Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius], p. 30.

of the Faculty of Humanities was Józef Kallenbach, and Emil Godlewski (junior) became the dean of the Faculty of Medicine. The positions of the dean of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences and several vice-deans were still vacant. Before October 13, 1919, J. Piłsudski appointed further academic authorities, including the dean and the vice-dean of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences: Alfons Parczewski and Władysław Zawadzki.<sup>58</sup>

L. Kolankowski's work on the organization of the University of Vilnius was ended by the decree of August 28, 1919 on the establishment of the SBU and the Commander-in-Chief's letter of August 30 dismissing him from his position as the organizer of the University. He was also "forgotten" when guests were invited to the SBU's inauguration ceremony in October 1919.<sup>59</sup>

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As early as in October 1919, the newly resurrected university had six faculties: humanities, theology, law and social sciences, mathematics and

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<sup>58</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 944, sheets 162–163, Minutes no. 2 of the meeting of the Academic Senate of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius of October 13, 1919, attended by the rector M. Siedlecki, the vice-rector J. Ziemacki, the dean of the Faculty of Theology rev. B. Żongołłowicz, the dean of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences A. Parczewski, the dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences P. Wiśniewski, the dean of the Faculty of Medicine

E. Godlewski, as well as Wiktor Staniewicz and Tadeusz Czeżowski. Absent were the dean of the Faculty of Humanities J. Kallenbach and the dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts F. Ruszczyk. See also: H. Ilgiewicz, "Uroczystości na Uniwersytecie Stefana Batorego w Wilnie" [Celebrations at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius], in: M. Kosman, ed., *Na obrzeżach polityki: praca zbiorowa* [On the fringes of politics: a collective work], part 9, Poznań 2013, pp. 15–18.

<sup>59</sup> A. Wrzosek, "Wskrzeszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [The resurrection of the University of Vilnius in 1919], pp. 29–30 – other persons appointed as members of the SBU Senate were Wiktor E. Staniewicz as the vice-dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, rev. Kazimierz Zimmermann as the vice-dean of the Faculty of Theology, and Stanisław Władyczko as the vice-dean of the Faculty of Medicine. See also: L. Kolankowski, *Zapiski pamiętnikarskie* [Diary notes], pp. 109, 146, the author bitterly recalls the omission of his role in the resurrection of the Vilnius University; P. Żukowski, "Uniwersytety we Lwowie, Krakowie i Wilnie na naukowej drodze Ludwika Kolankowskiego" [Universities in Lviv, Cracow, and Vilnius on the scientific path of Ludwik Kolankowski], pp. 67–68.

natural sciences, medicine, and fine arts.<sup>60</sup> The university functioned according to the provisions of the *Statut tymczasowy Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie* (Provisional Charter of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius) granted to it by the Commander-in-Chief on October 11, 1919. The document perpetuated an organization of a higher education institution that was unusual on Polish soil. In particular, it was the first new charter in independent Poland, approved still in the course of the work on the act on academic schools, which was promulgated in July 1920. The innovative provisions in the charter was the creation of a faculty of fine arts within the university, the division of the traditional faculty of philosophy into two faculties: a faculty of humanities and a faculty of mathematics and natural sciences, and the merger of a faculty of social sciences with a faculty of law (Article 8). The charter also introduced the institution of a “General Assembly of Professors,” which had been unknown to universities in Galicia but found in Russian universities (Articles 11–13). According to Article 77 (p. 36) of the *Statut tymczasowy USB* [Provisional Charter of the SBU] “[...] the first composition of the teaching staff and the clerical and service personnel shall be established by the supreme government authority.”<sup>61</sup>

About a dozen days before the formal inauguration, the following proclamation was sent to newspapers:

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<sup>60</sup> There were also plans to establish a Faculty of Agriculture, the designs for which had already appeared in the work of the Organization and Revindication Committee. Eventually, in 1924, it was possible to establish an Agricultural College, which operated under the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. The Faculty of Agriculture was established at the SBU in April 1938, see: *Dziennik Ustaw RP* [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 1938, no. 26, item 233 (dated April 9, 1938).

<sup>61</sup> An order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces containing the *Statut tymczasowy Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie* [Provisional Charter of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius], October 11, 1919, Vilnius 1919, p. 7, art. 8 (*Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego RP* [Official Gazette of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education of the Republic of Poland], 1919, yr. 2, no. 10–11, item 2, pp. 304–317); D. Zamojska, “Akademicy i urzędnicy” [Academics and officials], pp. 100–101, 105–106, the charter was edited by Adam Wrzosek. See also: *Akt otwarcia Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego w Wilnie* [Act of the opening of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius], *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego RP* [Official Gazette of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education of the Republic of Poland], 1919, yr. 2, no. 10–11, item 1, pp. 303–304.

The Committee for the Celebration of the Ceremonial Opening of the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius kindly requests the residents of the city of Vilnius who are in a position to provide (free of charge or for a fee) apartments or rooms for the arriving guests of honor for the duration of the inaugural celebrations (October 9–15) to immediately (by September 20) contact the Celebration Committee through the University Chancellery (26 Świętojańska Street – the office hours are on weekdays from 9 to 3 in the afternoon).<sup>62</sup>

The first inauguration ceremony was a special moment to face the legend of the University of Vilnius. The organizers decided to invite Adam Mickiewicz's son Władysław and other relatives of former great graduates and creators of the University, such as the grandson of Prince Adam Czartoryski, Adam Ludwik, Stanisław Mianowski, the great-grandson of Mikołaj Mianowski, a 19th century University professor and rector of the Medical and Surgical Academy, a descendant of the Śniadeckis, Waleria Kulwieciowa, the daughter of Andrzej Towiański, and others.<sup>63</sup>

The inauguration was also attended by three delegates of the Lithuanian Scientific Society, invited by the organizers, namely President Jonas Basanavičius (Jan Basanowicz) and two members: Rev. Józef Tumas and Jonas Šepetys. At the time, the latter gave a speech in Lithuanian and Polish, in which he stressed that “[...] the Lithuanians he represents decided to take part in the celebrations because they believe that this university will serve not politics and denationalization, but pure knowledge.”

We know the description of the ceremony that took place in Vilnius on October 10–12, 1919, from numerous source accounts. This is how the inauguration ceremony in the Columned Hall was described by the SBU's first rector:

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<sup>62</sup> LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 7, sheet 21, A copy of the proclamation on the provision of housing by residents for the period of the university's opening ceremonies (text sent to newspapers, including the editorial office of *Nasz Kraj* and *Dziennik Wileński*).

<sup>63</sup> “Uroczyste otwarcie Uniwersytetu” [Ceremonial opening of the University], *Nasz Kraj* 1919, no. 145 (of October 12), p. 9; S. Mianowski, *Świat, który odszedł: wspomnienia Wilnianina 1895–1945* [The world that is gone: memories of a Vilnius resident 1895–1945], selected and prepared for print by M. nee Mianowska Parczewska, K. M. Mianowski, Warsaw 1995, pp. 122–123. On the day of the first inauguration, W. Kulwieciowa donated to the university a portrait of Andrzej Towiański by Walenty Wańkowicz.

[...] On the podium, under the portrait of Stefan Batory, there was a chair for the Rector, opposite, in the middle of the room, a chair for the Head of State. On either side of the Rector's chair sat Władysław Mickiewicz on one side and vice-rector Józef Ziemacki on the other. [...] Between the Rector's chair and the chair of the Head of State there was a table on which the university insignia were placed, and to the side there was another on which a parchment containing the act of resurrection of the University of Vilnius was spread. There were only two speeches: by the Rector and by the Head of State.<sup>64</sup>

Restored after 87 years in Vilnius, the University referred to the legacy of the former, famous Vilnius Academy, of which all that remained in 1919 was the walls identified in the city with the higher education institution where Adam Mickiewicz studied, and a handful of symbols in the oral tradition passed down from generation to generation.<sup>65</sup> The restoration of the continuity of the *Almae Matris Vilnensis* required the persistence and commitment of many people. The originators and founders of the SBU had to face financial difficulties in a city that had been plundered by successive occupiers, problems with premises, as many rooms even in the buildings at Uniwersytecka Street were still occupied for a long time by city and state institutions (to name just the Vilnius State Archives), and staffing problems.

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<sup>64</sup> M. Siedlecki, "Wspomnienia z pierwszych dwu lat organizacji Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego" [Memories of the first two years of the organization of the University of Vilnius], pp. 75–76; F. Ruszczyc, *Dziennik* [Diary], part 2: *W Wilnie* [In Vilnius], pp. 43–51, the author described in detail the first inauguration of the 1919/1920 academic year. Documentation from the opening of the University in Vilnius, including speeches delivered at the University's opening ceremony and telegrams with good wishes sent on the occasion (originals and copies), has been preserved – see: LCVA, F. 175, ap. 1(I)A, b. 19–22. The position of the Lithuanian intelligentsia towards the opening of the Vilnius University is presented in the article titled "Stanowisko społeczeństwa litewskiego wobec wskrzeszenia Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego w r. 1919" [The position of the Lithuanian society towards the resurrection of the Vilnius University in 1919] published in the periodical *Przegląd Wileński* 1929, no. 18–19 (October 27), pp. 2–7.

<sup>65</sup> See: W. Krupowies, "Rok 1919: pamięć Wilna – pamięć w Wilnie" [1919: Memory of Vilnius – memory in Vilnius], *Acta Baltico-Slavica* 2018, vol. 42, pp. 81–98, the author writes about cultural memory, but also about individual and family memory, thanks to which the past of the Vilnius University had survived and been passed on to future generations.

The hardest part, however, was meeting the expectations of Vilnius residents. The legend that has been preserved in the city's memory meant that every resident of Vilnius carried "his or her own" University in his or her heart, regardless of whether he or she had any family or professional ties to the *Almae Matris Vilnensis* and its alumni.

Antoni Gołubiew described it suggestively, emphasizing that every Vilnius resident felt somehow distinguished by the fact that the city has the University:

[...] There was little memory of the Batory's Jesuit academy and the rectorate of Piotr Skarga – it was a textbook, archival tradition, covered with library dust, a tradition of scholars and searchers. But the university of the Philomaths and Philarets [...], Adam Mickiewicz, and the third part of *Dziady* [...], of the Śniadeckis or Lelewel [...], of Poczobutt's astronomical observatory, and Jundził's botanical garden [...] – it was this tradition of the University that was still alive. God knows through what paths Poczobutt and Jundził seeped into the popular consciousness, but somehow they did seep [...]. This widespread recognition by Vilnius residents of the University as their own, as personally their own, is difficult to explain to people who are not local. And it was the most ordinary truth. [...] On the other hand, the university was not strange to the watchman or the vendor at the Kaziuki market, although, after all, neither of them had anything to do with the university, did not really know what it was [...].<sup>66</sup>

This legend, the need to meet the expectations of thousands of people, caused misunderstandings and disputes, which were settled by Commander-in-Chief Józef Piłsudski, who decreed the establishment of the Stefan Batory University. It was his University, and his sense of responsibility required him to support the Vilnius University in an almost symbolic way as well. We know of many examples of this support, such as the donation of the Head of State's salary to the University, the donation for the renovation of buildings for the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (at the corner of Objazdowa and Zakretowa Streets), and the recording of an album, the proceeds from the sale of which also went to the SBU's coffers. The University played a special role in the life of Vilnius. This role

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<sup>66</sup> A. Gołubiew, *Unoszeni historią* [Lifted by history], Cracow 1971, pp. 283–284.

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was described in his memoirs by its alumnus and one of its professors, Rev. Walerian Meysztowicz:

No one today knows what the university walls and the former Jesuit college at St. John's Church meant to us. What feelings were evoked by the University of the Śniadeckis, Mickiewicz, and Lelewel, the university of my great-grandfather [...] In my dreams, I see a nice city – in a narrow street somewhere – there is an old dear building – the walls of my university. The actual center of Vilnius was the Stefan Batory University. The tone of the city was set by the youth.<sup>67</sup>

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<https://apcz.umk.pl/AE/article/view/AE.2018-2019.009>

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<sup>67</sup> W. Meysztowicz, *Gawędy o czasach i ludziach* [Stories about times and people], London 1993, pp. 215, 228.