

# Illuminated Charters from Latvian and Lithuanian Archives in European Context

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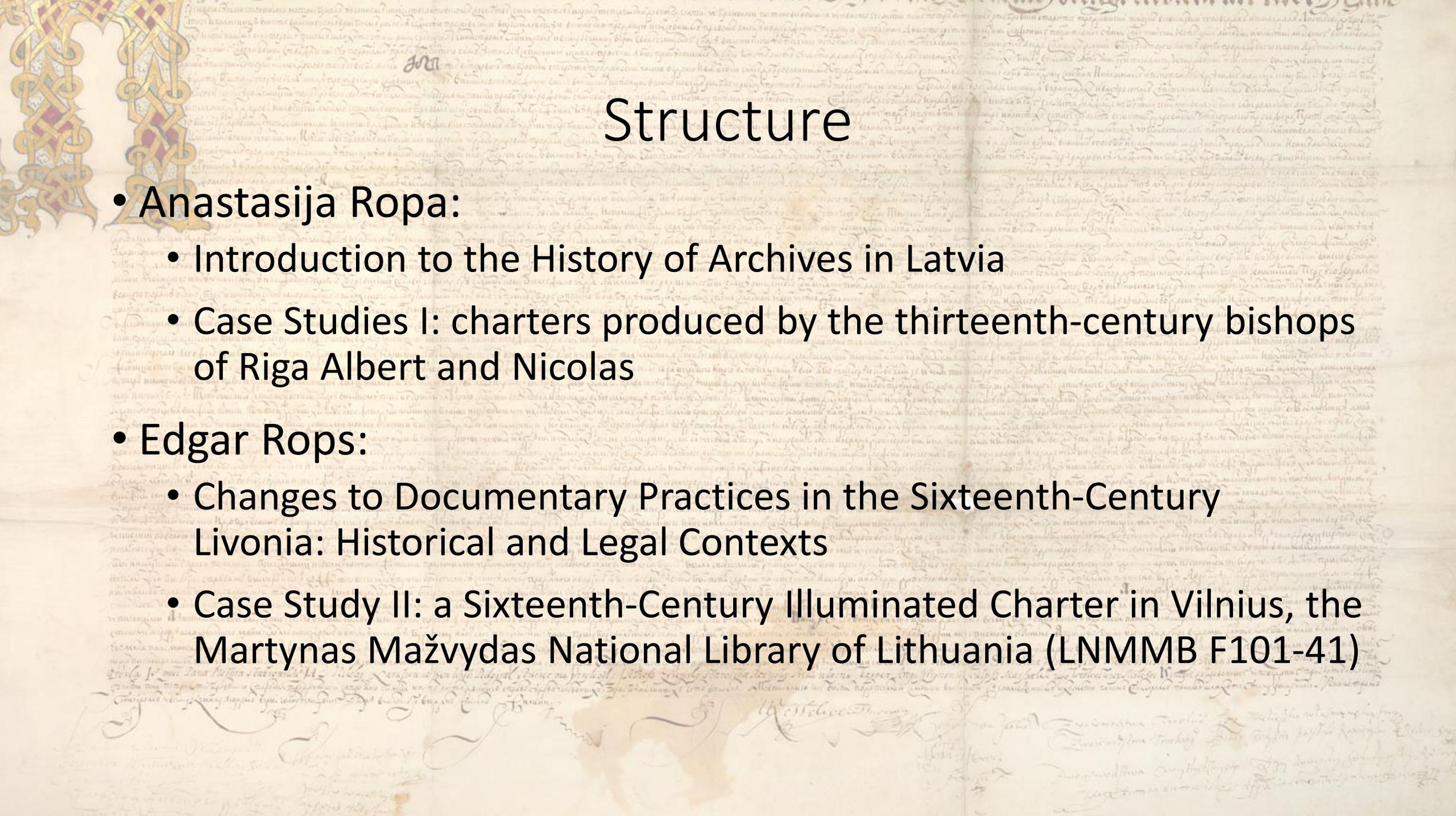
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[thegrailquest.wordpress.com](http://thegrailquest.wordpress.com)





# Structure

- **Anastasija Ropa:**
  - Introduction to the History of Archives in Latvia
  - Case Studies I: charters produced by the thirteenth-century bishops of Riga Albert and Nicolas
- **Edgar Rops:**
  - Changes to Documentary Practices in the Sixteenth-Century Livonia: Historical and Legal Contexts
  - Case Study II: a Sixteenth-Century Illuminated Charter in Vilnius, the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania (LNMMB F101-41)

# History of Archives in Latvia

*'the development of archives in Latvia, and the present whereabouts of extant records relating to Latvian history, are exceedingly complex matters because Latvia, as presently constituted, did not exist as a single territorial unit until before 1918. Early record keeping practices and the resultant records of the Latvian nation have accordingly been intricately related to the previous administrative units and to various governing powers that controlled and administered the territory'*

*(Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Belorussia (Princeton, 1981), p. 161)*

# Latvian Archives

- [Latvian State Historical Archives](#)

The archive holds documents of the Livonian order, the Archbishop of Riga, the bishops of Terbata, Kurzeme and Samsala, the city of Riga, etc.

However, many of the archives originally preserved in Riga were absorbed into the *Collectio autographorum* and transferred to the Imperial Public Library in St. Petersburg. In 1922, part of the *Collectio* was taken to Poland (Cracow and Warsaw).

Alternatively, part of the medieval archives in Riga were destroyed during the Swedish period (XVII c.) or deported to Sweden (Stockholm).

To celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Archives, a number of documents significant for the history of Riga were digitised and described (available only in the old version of the website, and only in Latvian - <http://www.arhivi.lv/index.php?&1651>).

# Studies of Latvian Archives

- The documents' transcripts follow the early work by Johann Christoph Brotze (1742-1823), *Diplomata Rigensia descripta*.
- Early sources on Latvian history, including the texts of charters held in Latvian and foreign archives were published in *Latvijas vēstures avoti (Les sources de l'histoire de Lettonie)* from the 1937, in the original Latin.
- The most recent publication in the area, an album of facsimiles of documents relating to the history of [Turaida castle in the XIII-XVIc by Vija Stikāne](#), reproduces Brotze's transcripts and, in certain cases, translates the document, with a concise commentary and select bibliography for certain documents. The edition testifies to the spread of sources in Latvian history over Europe, from Vatican to Stockholm, Cracow, Moscow, etc.
- Separate studies by Latvian scholars provide critical interpretation of individual documents, notably the article by Andris Lēvans, '*Cum litterarum testimonio. Practice of document reduction in the bishopric of Riga during the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. A sketch of the relation between studies of medieval history and diplomatics,*' *Zinātniskie raksti* [in Latvian, abstract and list of figures in English]

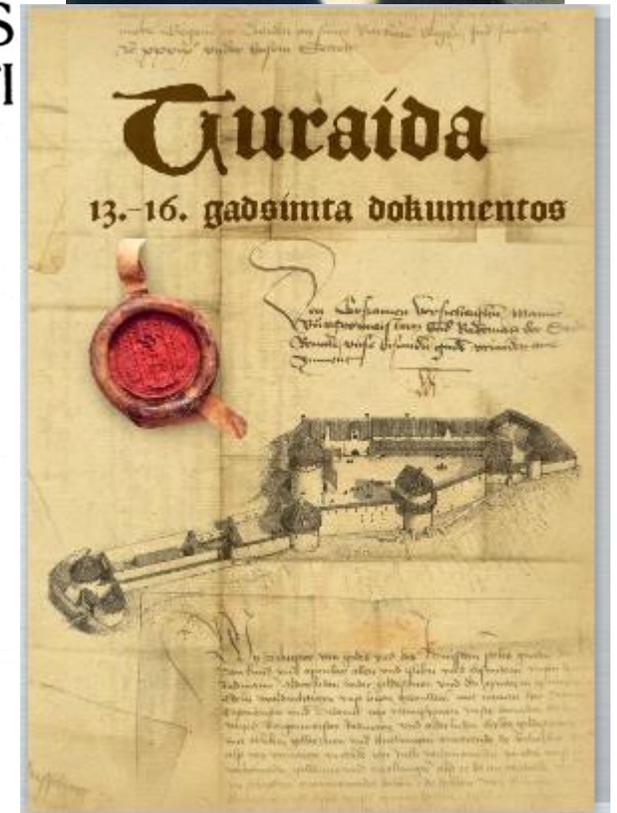
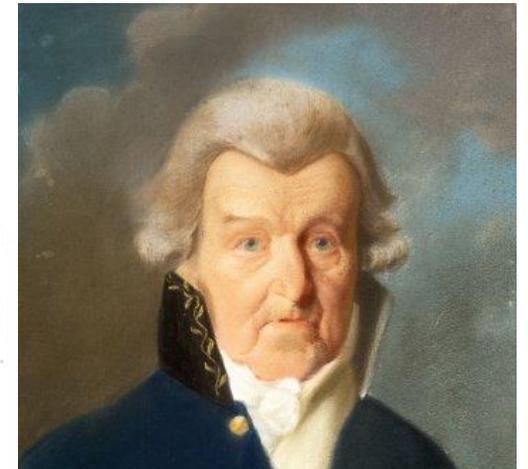
LATVIJAS VĒSTURES AVOTI  
LES SOURCES DE L'HISTOIRE DE LETTONIE

SEJUMS II VOLUME

SENĀS LATVIJAS  
VĒSTURES AVOTI

2. BURTNICA  
(1238.—1256. g.)

LATVIJAS VĒSTURES INSTITUTA APGĀDIENS  
RIGĀ, 1940



**In nomine sanctae et individuae trinitatis.** Albertus Dei gratia rigensis episcopus. Vniuersis presentem paginam  
inspecturis in perpetuum. ea que infra causas statuerunt uidelicet in religiosis domibus ad hospitalia seu pau-  
perum sustentationem ne cum tempore labantur. aut obliuione tradantur sua veteri firmitate muniti et ad noti-  
ciam posterorum infirmi. Unde notum facimus quod ad usus pauperum infirmantium hospitale in noua ciui-  
tate Rigae constitutum et ne quis eius dominus preter nos liberum esse statuerimus. qui pios et idoneos  
ponemus. et minus utiles deponemus. Quia quod secundum morem aliorum hospitalium infra suum recytaculum ha-  
debunt ubi et memoria fiat suorum fratrum et benefactorum absque sepultura et cura parochiali. Siquis igitur  
ad sustentationem eorundem pauperum sua largitus fuerit christo qui pro nobis pauper factus est  
suum consequatur retributionem. Nos autem presentem paginam scriptis nostris et sigilli nostri appensione munitam  
Datum Anno. m. cc. xx. Pontificatus. n. xj. Anno. r. secundo. ad hec



The oldest document in the State Historical Archive of Latvia, charter granted by Albert, 3<sup>rd</sup> bishop of Riga, in 1220, establishing a hospital in Riga (LVVA, 8. f., 3.a apr., 1. l). *In nomine sanctae et individuae trinitatis. Albertus Dei gratia, rigensis Episcopus. Vniuersis praesentem paginam inspecturis in perpetuum.*



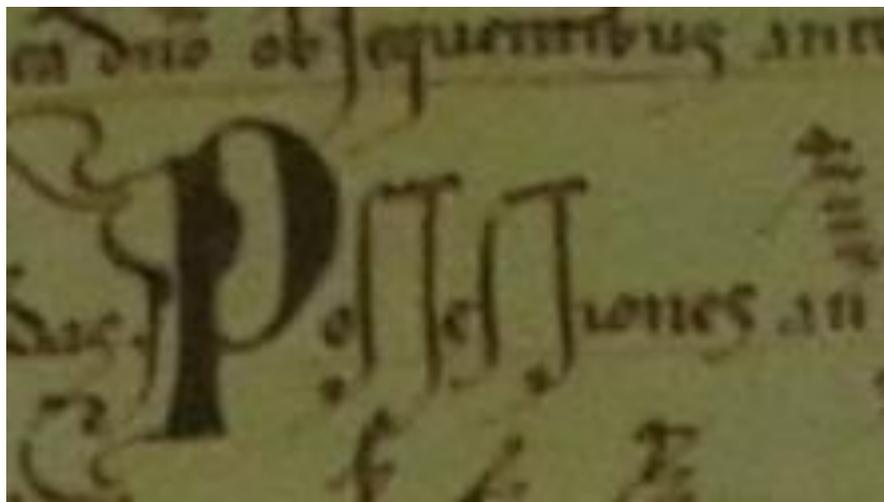
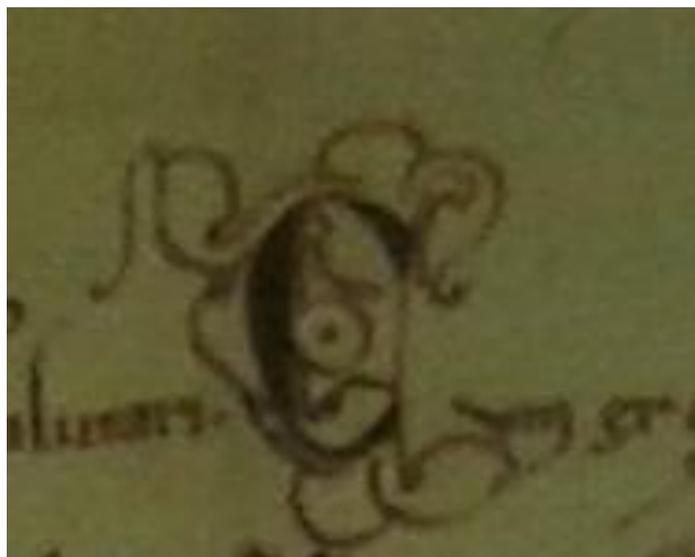
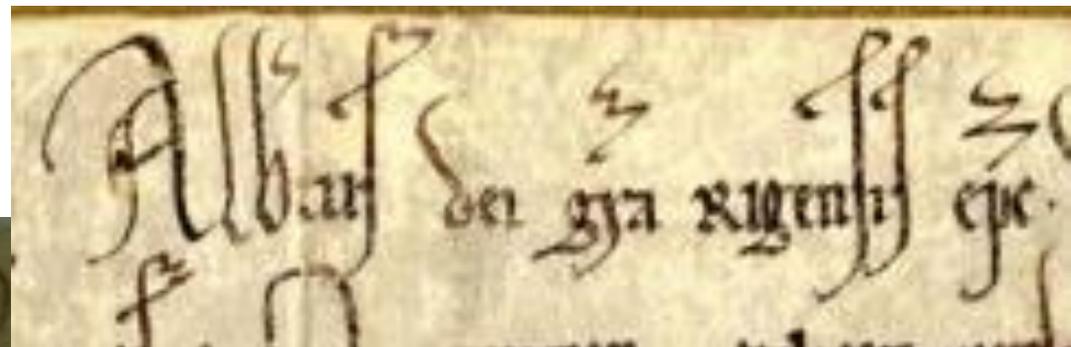
# Charter by Nicholas, Bishop of Riga

- The charter, originally in the Riga Cathedral Chapter, was preserved in the Imperial Public Library in St. Petersburg until 1922. Presently in Warsaw, Main Archive of Ancient Acts, *Collectio autographorum*, n. 207: 11. A photographic copy is in the [Riga School Museum](#).
- Nicholas, Bishop of Riga, confirms by the charter dated 16 August 1248 the title of the Riga Dome Chapter to the properties granted by Bishop Albert and later grants by Nicolas himself, as well as the lordship in the areas of Turaida, Lielvarde and Remine.
- The transumpt dated 19 May 1424, adds a province, 'Usmesede', not mentioned in the original document.

# Historical context for the 1248 charter and the 1424 transumpt

- Nicolas has previously issued charters granting lands to religious institutions in Riga or confirming previous grants. Accordingly, his charter issued in 1245 grants 200 arcs of land to the Riga Dome Cathedral Chapter (the charter is preserved in Stockholm; photograph in the Riga School Museum). In 1248, Nicolas has in fact issued two charters, of which the later confirms the previous grants of land (Warsaw, *Collectio autographorum*, n. 207: 10 and 207:11).
- Why did Nicolas choose to issue charter confirming previous grants? The growing powers and ambitions of the Livonian Order in the area presented a threat to Nicolas's grant to the Riga chapter in the area of Kursa (*Curonie*). Consequently, Nicolas asked Pope Innocent IV to confirm the borders of the bishopric of Riga marked by the papal legate Wilhelm on 17 September 1237. The request was granted on 14 July 1246, yet, apparently, the papal confirmation did not provide complete security for the holdings of the Riga Dome Chapter against the increasingly powerful Livonian Order.

Nicolaus's charter shows continuities and elaborations on the early style used in the Riga Dome Chapter chancellery.





# Details

- **Authenticity** – Original
- An extract from the books of the Supreme Tribunal Court was issued to the Evangelical Reformist community of Vilnius.
- **Place and date of issue:** Vilnius (Ö âèëüí7è), July 3, 1590 (the document was registered in Vilnius, July 7, 1590).
- **Content:** Sale of a private brick building, the so-called Adjutants' Palace (íà ê7àíáíèöÖ... iðîç7ûâà7âíó7p âèðUø7úëîâUñêÖ7p), located in the neighbourhood of a fish market in Vilnius by Piotr Voitehovich Stabrovskij (iãÙđÚ âî9Uãõîâè÷U ñUàáđîâñêè9 ñUàđîñUà Uđî9äàíüñêè9 UèâóíU âãñâ7ßíUñêè9), steward of Traidenas (*present day Turaida, Latvia*) and the elder of Viešvėnai.
- Contains 13 signatures.
- **Language:** Office Slavic (also referred to as West Russian, Ruthenian or Old Belorussian)

# Historical Context:

## Livonian War and Submission of Livonia to Polish – Lithuanian Rule

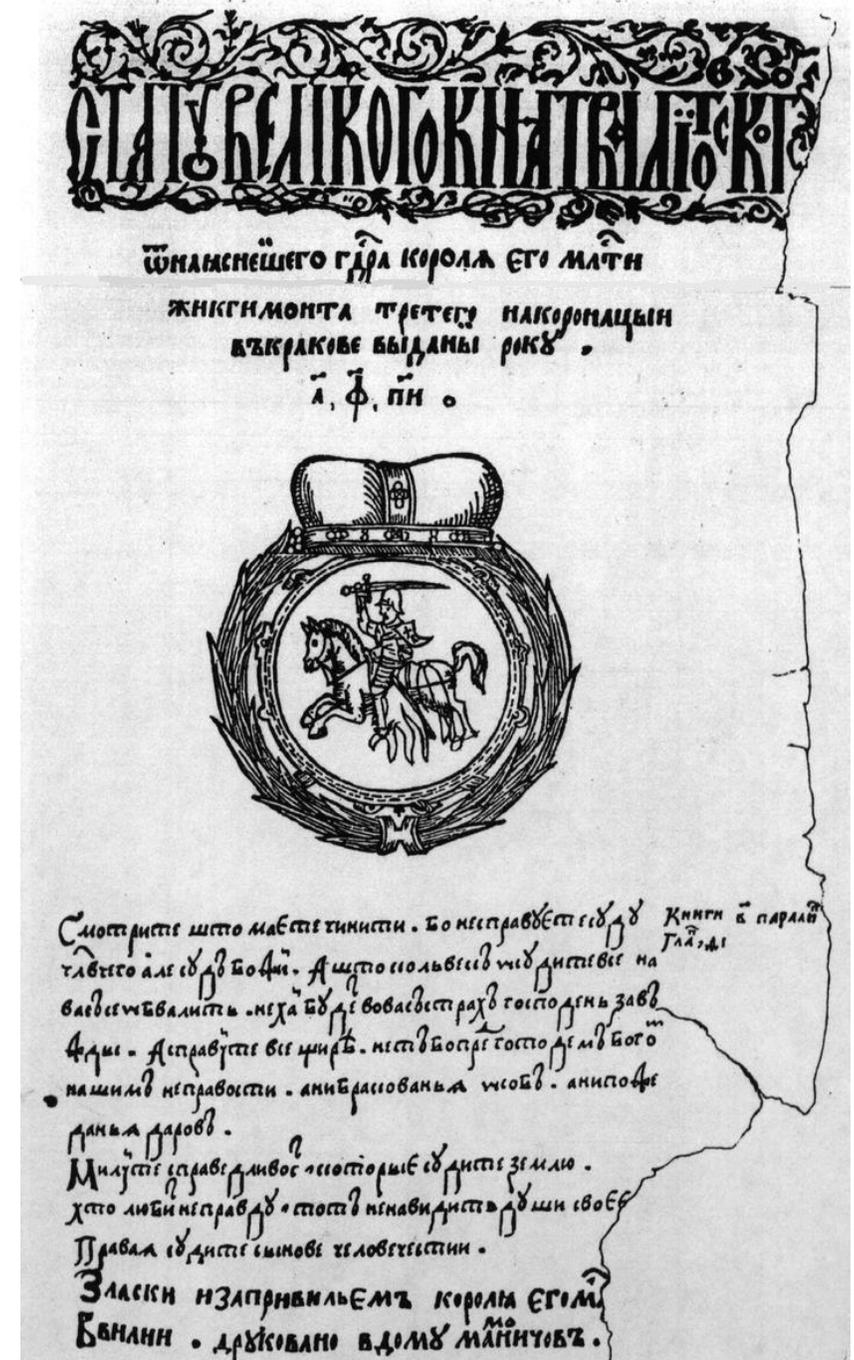
- Livonian war of 1558–1582;
- Treaty of Vilnius (28 November 1561), created the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia and Duchy of Livonia, which merged into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth;
- First Lithuanian governor appointed in 1566;
- In 1582 Livonian Constitution rearranged the law and administration to correspond to those of Grand Duchy of Lithuania.



*Gotthard von Kettler*  
1517 — 17 May 1587

# Legal Context I

- Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – partial codification of existing Lithuanian law;
- First passed in 1529, amended and restated in 1560 and 1588;
- Statute of 1560 introduced and Statute of 1588 further elaborated mechanism of voluntary registration of contracts at local court;
- All Statutes were divided into sections and articles (e.g. Article 7:1 is Article 1, Section 7).



# Legal Context II

- Article 7:1 – Voluntary registration and issue of charters;
- Article 4:1 – Language of proceedings;
- Article 4:37 – Qualifications of Court personnel (judges, jurors and clerks);
- Article 9:12 – presence of 9 witnesses in evidence of real-estate transaction and burden of proof;
- Articles 4:76 and 9:14 – Christian faith of witnesses and exceptions.

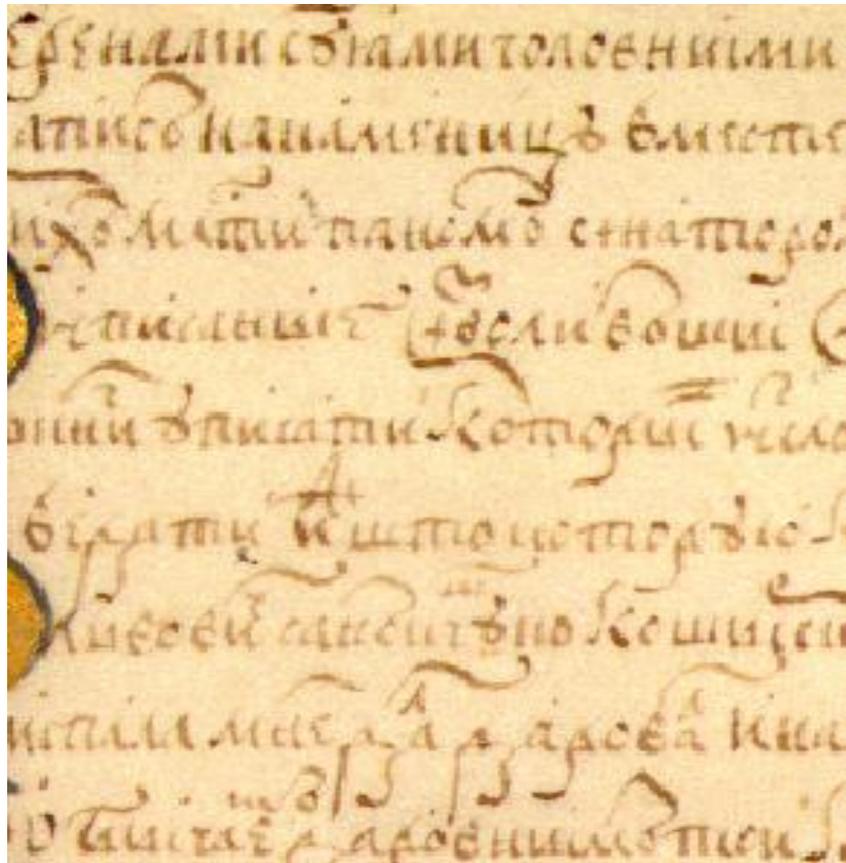
# Content of the Charter

Peter Stabrovsky hereby guarantees and represents:

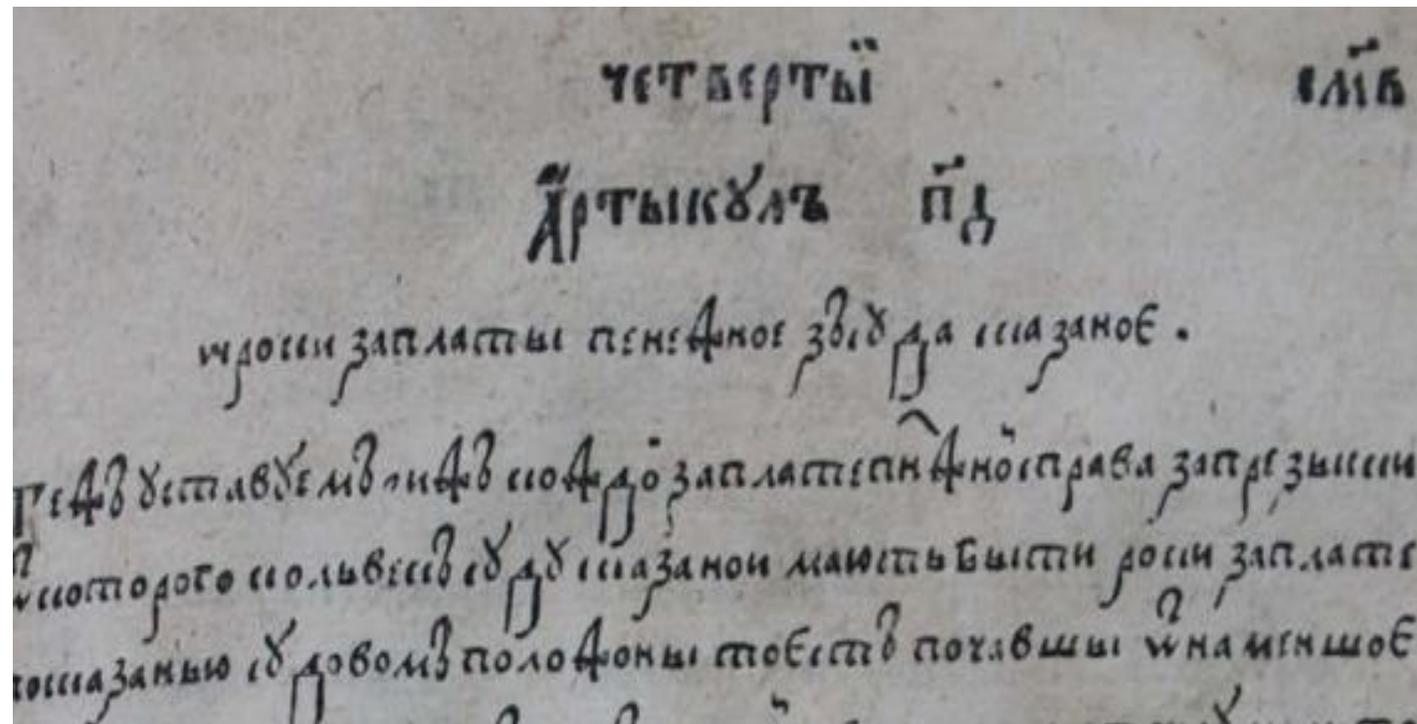
- That the house is his legitimate and hereditary property;
- That he (his spouse or appointed agents) would make no further claims on the property, contents thereof, or income derived from it;
- Agrees to indemnify the buyer against claims by any other persons;
- Price is named – 2 thousand score pence ( . . . . .  
. . . . . ).

# Hand (body text)

The Charter



Working copy of 1588 Statute  
(Vitebsk city museum)



# Illumination



Walters Manuscript W535 fol  
159r, 1594, Greek



Cetvorojevanđelje manastira  
Slepce, 1548 (RS 102), Serbian

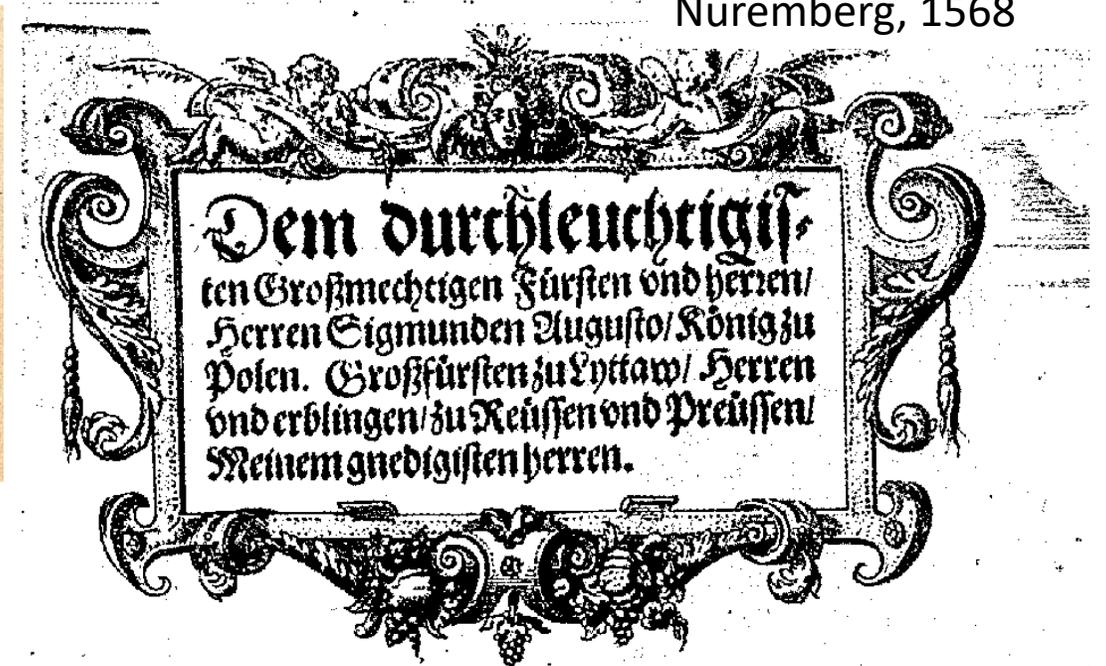
# The title



View of Grodno,  
Nuremberg, 1568



Perenspica Gospel, circa 1565  
Vernadsky National Library., Kiev



# Witnesses

- **JAn Pac Ciwun Wilenski Starosta Ka<...>mieski Marszalek Trybunalski** – Jan Pac, steward of Vilnius, elder of ... and tribunal marshal;
- ùàńíü9 î÷óìà÷èà äýíóÙàò âëàñòíê ðÖêîþ – Scasnoj Ochiumachka, deputy;
- **Jan Tryzna ręka swą** – Jan Tryzna;
- çâìèè æîîèèòñêîâ ÑòàìéñëDà ÷âõîâè÷ ìràùàèKà åãî ê Li – Stanislovas Chekhovich, [a deputy] from Žemaitija land, marshal;
- **Jasper Dawgird woiski wilkomirski** – Jasper Dawgird, Vilkomir ...;
- **Mkolay Sakietla kuchmistr własną ręka** – Mikolaj Sakietla, eating-house keeper;
- **powytu kowienskyego deputat stanyslaw diadkowsky stolnik kowiensky Ręka** – Stanyslaw Diadkowski, deputy of Kaunas district and dapifer of Kaunas;
- **Piotr Predrychowicz Rodoszansky: Deputat własną ręka** – Piotr Predrychowicz Rodoszanski, a deputy;
- èrêâ ïàòéââè÷ ìèñàðü – Lukerij(?) Petkevich, scribe;
- ç âîââîÒñÙàà ÒðHîêGî èââðâíü åÃâè÷ü ðrèõãðñêè9 – Lavrentij Jegvich(?) Richerski, deputy of Trakai palatinate;
- **Z woiewodztwa Trockiego Jzy Mieleszko własną ręka swą** – Jerzyj Mieleszko from Trakai palatinate;
- **Z woiewodztwa Trockiego Piotr Szvkszta podstoli kowiensky Ręka swą** – Piotr Szukszta from Trakai palatinate, dapifer of Kaunas;
- **Z woyewodztwa Wythebsyego Jzy droczky Sokolynsky Ręka swą** – Jerzyj Droczy Sokolynski from Vitebsk palatinate;
- ç âî7ââdîñÒâà <...>îèñëDàñêîâî âàøâ9 ââèè÷èè9 ðÖêîþ Ñîâîþ – Vashej Velichkij from ... palatinate.