

MILITARY ACTIONS ON THE TERRITORY OF THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH IN 1706

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Rezumat: Acțiuni militare pe teritoriul Uniunii Polono-Lituaniene în 1706

Politicile iresponsabile ale lui August al II-lea, care s-a aliat cu Rusia și Danemarca în dorința de a-l înfrânge pe tânărul rege al Suediei, Carol al XII-lea, au condus la implicarea Uniunii statale polono-lituaniene în Marele Război al Nordului (1700-1721). Dar sfâșiata de disputele interne de la acea vreme, Uniunea nu s-a putut apăra în fața invaziei vecinului din Nord. Întinsul teritoriul al Uniunii a devenit câmp de luptă pentru armatele Suediei, Rusiei și Saxoniei. Între timp, conflictul dintre partidele politice s-a transformat într-un război civil deschis între partizanii și adversarii lui August al II-lea cel Puternic. Aceștia din urmă, sprijiniți de regele Suediei, Carol al XII-lea, și împotriva legii Uniunii, l-au ales pe Stanislaw Leszczyński ca nou rege, în 1704. În pofida numeroaselor confruntări, nici una dintre părți nu a reușit să obțină victoria finală. Marșurile, urmărirea și eschivele armatelor aflate în luptă au fost numite de contemporani "Hopa-Mitică". Apogeul luptelor s-a produs în 1706. A început ca o blocadă nereușită a armatei ruse la Grodno și ca o mare izbândă a armatei suedeze la Fraustadt, și s-a încheiat cu ocuparea Saxoniei și abdicarea lui August al II-lea, prin Tratatul de la Altranstädt. Înfrângerea lui Wettin nu a putut fi evitată nici chiar prin victoria de la Kalisz în fața armatei suedeze. Cu toate acestea, nici măcar forțarea regelui de a abdica de la tronul Poloniei nu a pus capăt acțiunilor militare poloneze pe teritoriul Uniunii. 1709 s-a dovedit a fi anul crucial.

Abstract: *Irresponsible politics of Augustus II, who allied with Russia and Denmark in a wish to defeat the younger king of Sweden, Charles XII, led to involvement of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in Great Northern War (1700-1721). However, the Commonwealth, which was torn by internal disputes at that time, could not defend itself against the invasion of the northern neighbour. The vast territory of the Commonwealth became proving ground for the fighting armies of Sweden, Russia and Saxony. In the meantime, the conflict between the political parties turned into open civil war between supporters and opponents of Augustus II the Strong. The latter ones, with the support of the king of Sweden, Charles XII, and against the Commonwealth law, in 1704 elected Stanislaw Leszczyński as the new king. Despite numerous fights, neither of the parties was able to gain the ultimate victory. The marches, chases and escapes of the fighting armies were called by the contemporaries "both kings' ducking dance". Apogee of the fights is dated to*

1706. It started as an unsuccessful blockade of the Russian army in Grodno and great victory of the Swedish army in Fraustadt, and ended with the occupation of Saxony and abdication of Augustus II under the Treaty of Altranstadt. The Wettin's defeat could not be avoided even by the victory over the Swedish army in Kalisz. However, even forcing the king to abdicate the Polish throne did not end the military actions on the Commonwealth territory. 1709 turned to be the crucial year.

Résumé : Actions militaires sur le territoire de l'Union Polonaise-Lituanienne en 1706

Les politiques irresponsables d'Auguste II, qui s'allia avec la Russie et le Danemark voulant vaincre le jeune roi de la Suède, Charles XII, conduisit à l'implication de l'Union étatique polonaise – lituanienne dans la Grande Guerre du Nord (1700-1721). Déchirée par les querelles internes de cette époque-là, l'Union ne put pas se défendre devant l'invasion de son voisin du Nord. Le vaste territoire de l'Union devint champ de bataille pour les armées suédoises, russes et saxonnes. Pendant ce temps, le conflit entre les partis politiques se transforma dans une guerre civile ouverte entre les partisans et les adversaires d'Auguste II le Puissant. Les derniers, appuyés par le roi suédois, Charles XII et s'opposant à la loi de l'Union, élurent Stanislaw Leszczyński comme nouveau roi en 1704. Malgré les nombreuses confrontations, aucune des parties ne réussit à obtenir la victoire finale. Les contemporains nommèrent les marches, les poursuites et les esquives des armées en lutte "lot changeant". En 1706 on enregistra l'apogée des luttes. Celui-ci commença comme un blocus pas réussi de l'armée russe à Grodno et comme un grand triomphe de l'armée suédoise à Fraustadt et finit par l'occupation de la Saxe et l'abdication d'Auguste II, par le Traité d'Altranstädt. On ne put pas éviter la défaite de Wettin malgré la victoire de Kalisz devant l'armée suédoise. Cependant, ni même après avoir forcé le roi à abdiquer du trône de la Pologne, les actions militaires polonaises sur le territoire de l'Union ne prirent pas fin. 1709 prouva être l'année cruciale.

Keywords: Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Great Northern War, Battle of Fraustadt, Battle of Kalisz, XVIII century, the modern era military

Introduction

Great Northern War (1700-1721) was one of the most unusual conflicts Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was involved in. At that time, it was decided by the Noble's Parliament whether the Commonwealth entered war with another country or not. At the beginning of the XVII century king Augustus II the Strong of Wettin, who was also hereditary monarch of Saxony, signed an anti-Swedish treaty with tsar of Russia, Peter the Great and the king of Denmark, Frederick IV. He did it as the ruler of this German Duchy because he could not do it as the king of the Commonwealth, as he could not count on the support of the

pacifist-oriented Polish nobility. However, when one looks at the map of Europe of that period, it becomes clear that the Saxon army could attack Swedish Livonia only from the territory of the Commonwealth. As a consequence, the victory of the young Swedish king in the battles of Narva (1700) and Crossing of the Düna (1701), and retreat of Saxons into the territory of Lithuania led to encroachment of the Swedish army in the territory of the Commonwealth during their chase after the defeated army of Augustus II¹. That is why the territory of the Commonwealth became the proving ground, even though it was not involved in the war officially. Additionally, it could not stand against the aggression, as it was torn by internal conflicts. On the other hand, Wettin was supported by Russia and had untouched financial and military supply base in Saxony, which allowed him to continue fights despite losses. Apogee of the fights is dated to 1706, the fifth year of so-called "both kings' ducking dance", as the chase of Charles XII after Augustus II on the vast territory of the Crown and Lithuania was called by the contemporaries. The consequence of the 1706 fights was the treaty of Altranstädt. The battle of Kalisz, bloody and not bringing lasting political effects, became the symbol illustrating the intricacies of the policies of Wettin.

The Divided Commonwealth

The society of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, especially its "political body", i.e. the nobility, had been divided since the Royal Elections in 1697². The most evident manifestation of the division was the civil war in

¹ K. Вагнер, *Первые военные действия Великой Северной войны или что предшествовало битве под Нарвой (1700) в свете польской и шведской историографии* [The first military actions of Great Northern War, or what precluded the battle of Narva (1700) in the light of Polish and Swedish historiography], „Codrul Cosminului”, vol. XIX, no. 2, 2013, p. 311 – 334; B. Dybaś, *Inflanty a polsko-litewska Rzeczpospolita po pokoju oliwskim (1660)* [Livonia and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the treaty of Oliwa (1660)], in *Między Zachodem a Wschodem. Studia z dziejów Rzeczypospolitej w epoce nowożytnej* [Between West and East. Studies on the history of the Commonwealth in the modern era], ed. J. Staszewski, K. Mikulski, J. Dumanowski, p. 114 – 115; G. Sliesoriūnas, *Wywiad moskiewski o wydarzeniach w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim na przełomie wieku XVII i XVIII* [Moscow's Intelligence about the events in Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the turn of XVII and XVIII century], in *Między Zachodem a Wschodem. Etniczne, kulturowe i religijne pogranicza Rzeczypospolitej w XVI-XVIII wieku* [Between West and East. Ethnical, Cultural and Religious borders of the Commonwealth in XVII-XVIII century], ed. K. Mikulski, A. Zielińska-Nowicka, Toruń 2005, p. 110 – 111.

² K. Jarochoński, *Dzieje panowania Augusta II od śmierci Jana III do chwili wstąpienia*

Lithuania between the supporters of the most powerful at that time house of Sapieha and the houses of Wiśnowiecki, Radziwiłł, Pac and Ogiński, who were supported by the middle nobility. Sapieha house was defeated in the battle of Olkieniki in 1700, however, they quickly found the chance to fight back when the Swedish army entered³. Also after the victories of Kliszów in 1702 and Pułtusk in 1703 and surrender of Saxon army sieged in Toruń on 14 October 1703, the anti-royal opposition in the Crown found itself a protector in Charles XII. However, despite his victories, the king of Sweden could not achieve his basic goal of forcing Augustus II to withdraw from the war⁴.

Not being able to end the conflict the way he wished, Charles XII attempted to drastically resolve the situation by the end of 1703. He had gained the control over the major cities of the Commonwealth, what guaranteed him safety in the Greater Poland and enabled him to control strategically important line of Vistula (Cracow, Warta, Toruń, Elbląg)⁵. He had seen the house of Sapieha and the royal opposition as his allies, however, during that year the situation changed drastically. On the one hand, the General

Karola XII na ziemię polską [The reign of Augustus II from the death of Jan III to entering the borders of Commonwealth by Charles XII], Poznań 1856; J. Pielas, *Szlachta sandomierska wobec najważniejszych wydarzeń politycznych pierwszych lat panowania Augusta II (1696 – 1704)* [The nobility of Sandomierz in the face of the political events in the first years of reign of Augustus II (1696-1704)], in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej* [The Commonwealth during Great Northern War], ed. J. Muszyńska, Kielce 2001, p. 130 – 131; J. Staszewski, *Elekcja 1697 roku, „Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici”* [The election of 1697, „Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici”], v. 28 (259), 1993, p. 73 – 92; J. Staszewski, *„Jak Polskę przemienić w kraj kwitnący...”. Szkice i studia z czasów saskich* [How to change Poland into a country in bloom.... Drafts and studies from Saxon period], Olsztyn 1997, p. 7 – 22;

³ G. Sliesoriūnas, *Wywiad moskiewski o wydarzeniach...* [Moscow's Intelligence about the events...], p. 111 – 115; J. Pielas, *Szlachta sandomierska wobec...* [The nobility of Sandomierz in the face...], p.138 – 139.

⁴ B. Krzysztopa-Czupryńska, *Rzeczpospolita w wielkiej wojnie północnej w świetle relacji Johna Robinsona (1703-1707)* [The Commonwealth during Great Northern War as described by John Robinson (1703-1707)], , in *Polska wobec wielkich konfliktów w Europie nowożytnej. Z dziejów dyplomacji i stosunków międzynarodowych w XV – XVIII wieku* [Poland in great European conflicts of modern era. Diplomacy and international affairs in XV – XVIII century], ed. R. Skowron, Kraków 2009, p. 96 – 98; M. Wagner, *Działania wojenne na ziemiach polskich w drugiej połowie 1703 r.* [Military actions within Polish territory in the second half of 1703] , in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...*[Commonwealth during...], p. 56; M. Wagner, *Bitwa pod Kliszowem 19 lipca 1702 roku* [The battle of Kliszów, 19 June 1702], Oświęcim 2013.

⁵ M. Wagner, *Działania wojenne na ziemiach polskich...*[Military Actions...], p. 56.

Sejm convened in Lublin by Augustus agreed to enter peace talks with Russia, what showed that the nobility started to support Augustus II and forecast involvement of the Commonwealth in the war against Sweden. On the other hand, the head of the Catholic Church in Poland, primate Michał Radziejowski, expressed his support for the anti-royal confederation of Greater Poland⁶. Charles XII saw his chance to drive Augustus II from the Polish-Lithuanian throne and force him to sign peace treaty. For that purpose, in 1704 the king of Sweden managed to establish pro-Swedish and anti-royal confederation of nobility under the command of Radziejowski. The supporters of Sweden who entered the confederation declared dethronement of Augustus II, and in July 1704, while being guarded by the Swedish army, elected a new king. Even though the election was conducted according to the will of Charles, not many nobility came to the Election Field, they were mostly reluctant to the adventurous politics of Wettin and being advocates of legalism. After the imprisonment of prince Jakub and prince Konstanty Sobieski, Stanisław Leszczyński, hitherto Poznań governor, was elected king. However, the election broke the law of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy and, paradoxically, led to the increase of support for Augustus among the nobility⁷. Because of the military instability, the crowning ceremony of the king-elect was conducted later, on 4

⁶ J. Kopiec, *Polityka Augusta II wobec Rzymu na tle obsady biskupstw w pierwszym okresie rządów* [Augustus' II Policy towards Rome and bishops in the first period of his reign], in *Dwór a kraj. Między centrum a peryferiami władzy* [The court and the country. Between the centre and the periphery of reign], ed. R. Skowron, Kraków 2003, p. 526; H. Suchojad, *Sejmy i zjazdy walne czasów wojny północnej* [Sejms and General Sejms during Great Northern War], in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 105; J. Pielas, *Szlachta sandomierska wobec...* [The nobility of Sandomierz during...], p. 144 – 145; J. Poraziński, *Sejm lubelski w 1703 roku i jego miejsce w konfliktach wewnętrznych na początku XVIII wieku* [Sejm in Lublin in 1703 and its role in the internal conflicts of the beginning of XVIII century], Warszawa-Poznań-Toruń 1988, p. 120 – 121.

⁷ D. Dolański, *Związki polsko-śląskie w latach wielkiej wojny północnej* [Polish-Silesian relationship during Great Northern War], in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 218 – 220; J.A. Gierowski, *Kandydatura Sobieskich do tronu polskiego w czasie wielkiej wojny północnej*, [Sobieski's candidacy to Polish throne during Great Northern War] „Sobótka” 1980, n° 2, p. 369 – 381; K. Piwarski, *Królewicz Jakub Sobieski w Oławie* [Prince Jakub Sobieski in Oława], Kraków 1939, p. 35 – 37; J. Poraziński, *August II, Piotr I i Karol XII. Polityczne koncepcje trzech monarchów a Rzeczpospolita w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej (1702 – 1710)* [Augustus II, Peter I and Charles XII. Political ideas of the three monarchs and the Commonwealth during Great Northern War (1702-1710)], in *Między Zachodem a Wschodem. Studia z dziejów...* [Between West and East. Studies on...], p. 132.

October 1705 in Warsaw, not in Cracow, as it was done traditionally⁸.

Moreover, the Warsaw confederates were forced to sign a treaty of alliance with Sweden in 1705 which restricted political and economic sovereignty of the Commonwealth⁹. Under the treaty, the “Leszczyński’s Commonwealth” agreed to pass the territory of Livonia and Courland into the Swedish hands, and Swedish army was allowed to be stationed and collect contributions from the citizens of Commonwealth. Moreover, the treaty obliged the nobility to cooperate in the war against Augustus II until his formal abdication from the commonwealth throne and gave Sweden a number of trade privileges¹⁰.

In response to the actions, in 1704 the pro-royal party created nobility confederation in Sandomierz. The authorities of the confederation saw themselves as the representatives of the whole society. They sent their emissaries to Tsar Peter I. In August 1704, in Narva, the emissaries signed a treaty with Russia. It is assumed that since that moment the Commonwealth, or at least its part recognising the rule of the Saxon (so called “Augustus’ Commonwealth”), was at war with Sweden. In the treaty both sides declared united continuation of the war without possibility of signing a separate treaty with Sweden. Peter I also promised military help and financial subsidy¹¹.

⁸ A. Wieczorek, „Została Polska dla niezgody w kartach...” – implikacje rozbieżnych przekonań w świetle pism politycznych 1705 r. [„Poland was to cause discord...” – implications of diverse beliefs in the light of political letters of 1705], in *Między Zachodem a Wschodem. Studia ku czci profesora Jacka Staszewskiego* [Between West and East. Studies to commemorate professor Jacek Staszewski], vol. II, ed. J. Dumanowski, B. Dybaś, J. Poraziński, S. Roszak, Toruń 2003, p. 601 – 605.

⁹ *Traktat warszawski między Leszczyńskim a Karolem XII z dnia 18 listopada 1705 roku* [Treaty of Warsaw between Leszczyński and Charles XII signed on 18 November 1705], in W. Konopczyński, *Czasy saskie w Polsce w świetle źródeł* [Saxon period in Poland in source texts], Kraków 1923, p. 4 – 5.

¹⁰ J. Feldman, *Polska w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej 1704 – 1709* [Poland during Great Northern War 1704-1709], Kraków 1925, p. 128 – 132; W. Konopczyński, *Polska a Szwecja od pokoju oliwskiego do upadku Rzeczypospolitej 1660 – 1795* [Poland and Sweden from treaty of Oliva to the fall of the Commonwealth 1660 – 1795], Warszawa 1924, p. 50 – 52; B. Liljegren, *Karol XII* [Charles XII], trans. W. Łygaś, Gdańsk 2010, p. 134 – 135.

¹¹ P. Krokosz, *Rosyjskie siły zbrojne za panowania Piotra I* [Russian armed forces during the reign of Peter I], Kraków 2010, 318; J. Pielas, *Szlachta sandomierska wobec...* [The nobility of Sandomierz in the face...], p. 147 – 148; G. Sliesoriunas, *Starania dyplomacji rosyjskiej o wciągnięcie Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów do wojny ze Szwecją w roku 1702 a problem integralności państwa polsko-litewskiego* [The efforts of Russian diplomacy to involve the Commonwealth into the war with Sweden in

Nevertheless, in the face of focus of Russian forces in the Baltic theatre, the military situation of Augustus still was not advantageous. After the battles of Poniec in 1704 and Warsaw in 1705 Sweden and its allies gained control over the Duchy of Courland, Samogitia, Cuiavia and major part of Royal Prussia. Even the king retreated to Saxony where he rebuilt his destroyed army while allied Saxon and the Commonwealth detachments were involved in limited military operations¹².

The situation of Charles XII, whose major forces were positioned in Greater Poland at that time, also was not easy as he was vastly outnumbered and the opponents were using hit-and-run tactics based on the local population. Territorial acquisitions were only temporary and victories in battles were insufficient to end the war¹³. What is more, the king of Sweden rejected every peace proposal from Russia as he did not agree to give up Petersburg, even though in the meantime he lost Dorpat and Narva. He was convinced that after bringing Augustus II to his knees he would also force Peter I to surrender¹⁴. In the meantime Wettin, who was in Saxony at that time, managed to gather another army using the resources from a wealthy and untouched by the war duchy which was at his disposal, and with military and financial support of tsar. Additionally, his loyal Crown and Lithuanian hetmans enlarged their armies. Moreover, in July 1705 strong Russian forces entered Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the east with the intention to permanently separate Charles' XII army from Swedish forces stationed in Courland and Livonia¹⁵.

1702 and the problem of the integrity of Polish – Lithuanian state] , in *Polska wobec wielkich...* [Poland during great...], p. 465 – 481.

¹² K. Wagner, *Szwedzka okupacja Starej Warszawy w źródłach narracyjnych 1702-1705* [Swedish occupation of the Old Warsaw in narrative sources] , in *Na z góry upatrzonych pozycjach* [On the positions chosen before], ed. B. Międzybrodzki, M. Gajda, K. Fudalej, M. Przeperski, Warszawa-Zabrze 2011, p. 175-184; D. Płowy, *Poniec 7 XI 1704. Kampania jesienna Karola XII* [Poniec 7 XI 1704. Autumn campaign of Charles XII], Zabrze-Tarnowskie Góry 2013.

¹³ More about the Swedish army of that period: A. Aberg, *The Swedish Army, from Lützen to Narwa* , in *Sweden's Age of Greatness 1632 – 1718*, ed. M. Roberts, London 1972, p. 265 – 287.

¹⁴ J. Wolf, *The Emergence of the Great Powers 1685 – 1715*, New York 1951, p. 54.

¹⁵ J. Przebendowski do A. Sieniawskiego, obóz pod Sandomierzem 8 V 1704 [Sandomierz camp 8 V 1704] , in *Listy Jana Jerzego Przebendowskiego podskarbiego wielkiego koronnego do Adama Mikołaja Sieniawskiego wojewody bełskiego i hetmana wielkiego koronnego z lat 1704 – 1725* [The letters of Jan Jerzy Przebendowski, Grand Treasurer of the Crown, to Adam Mikołaj Sieniawski, voivode of Belz and Crown Grand Hetman from 1704-1725], ed. A. Perłakowski, Kraków 2007, p. 44 – 45; В.С. Великанов,

On 12 November 1705 Augustus II forced his way to Grodno, which was the Russian army's headquarter, operating within the territory of the Grand Duchy. Crown and Lithuanian senators loyal to the king also arrived there, what marked the beginning of the meeting of General Confederate Council at Grodno due to the impossibility to convene Sejm, the most important political body of that part of the country that still recognised the reign of Wettin in the torn by the war state¹⁶.

One of the decisions that were taken in Grodno was the one dated to 20 December 1705 concerning the creation of a new "komput" of army. After the expansion, the number of soldiers in the Crown army was supposed to be as follows: 2 080 Polish Hussar horses, 8 660 heavy cavalry, 3 000 light cavalry, 1 300 harquebusier, 4 360 dragoon, 16 600 infantry. The numbers totalled to 36 000 horses and people. The number of soldiers in the Lithuanian army was also increased: 430 hussar horses, 3 300 heavy cavalry, 1 770 light cavalry, 900 harquebusier, 2 000 dragoon, 3 600 infantry - 12 000 in total. It is clearly visible in the numbers that the military potential of immersed in crisis Commonwealth was reduced to 24 000 horses and people after the war with Turkey in 1699. At the same time, at the beginning of the conflict, Sweden had 76 000 armed soldiers, what was increased to 115 000 in 1708. At that time Russia had 220 000 soldiers and France - 350 000. Prussia had similar sized army; however, its population was 2-3 times smaller¹⁷.

It should be noted, that the actual number of soldiers was drastically different from the official statistics. It may be explained by the fact that in the Commonwealth army of that time officers were not provided with a separate soldier's pay. They earned equivalent of several pays of an ordinary soldier that is why "horses" and "people" were considered financial, not military units). Secondly, the army had to deal with a high level of desertion due to irregularity of pay and unwillingness to take part in what seemed to be a civil

Участие русских войск в боевых действиях на территории Польши и Литвы в 1702 – 1704 гг. [The involvement of Russian military forces in the military actions in the Commonwealth of 1702-1704], in *Wybrane problemy badawcze historii wojskowej. W panczerzu i mundurze* [Selected research issues of the history of military. In armour and uniform], ed. K. Kościelniak, Z. Pilarczyk, Toruń 2014, p. 129 – 161.

¹⁶ W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny północnej* [The memoir of Great Northern War], issued M. Nagielski, M. Wagner, Warszawa 2002, p. 30 – 31, 36.

¹⁷ P. Kennedy, *Mocarstwa świata. Narodziny, rozkwit, upadek* [The powers of the world. The birth, the blossom, the fall], Warszawa 1994, p. 109; J. Wimmer, *Polskie wojsko i sztuka wojenna w czasie wielkiej wojny północnej* [Polish army and the art of war during Great Northern War], SMHW, v. 21, 1978, p. 360.

war. It was not uncommon for infantry and dragoon to be 30 to 50% smaller than the official numbers. The situation in the cavalry was similar. Another problem was the attitude of officers who went on vacation during their service very often. At that time, however, a lot of units existed outside of the komput system, mainly private detachments which belonged to magnates and financed from contributions gathered from local residents by force. That is why the actual size of the Crown and Lithuanian army is extremely difficult to precisely estimate¹⁸.

Additionally, it should be remembered that because of the defeats Polish-Lithuanian army started to show signs of so-called "Swedish complex" which can be defined as unwillingness to open fight with Sweden because of lack of faith in victory. Officers started to rely on limited military actions focusing mainly on attacks on smaller units or destroying supply lines - hit-and-run tactics¹⁹. Also permanent shortage of infantry (mostly used in manning fortresses in threatened by Cossacks Ukraine) and artillery made it impossible to take over permanently or defend major cities. The shortage of infantry is visible in the battle of Kliszów in which only 2 rota of Polish infantry (about 500 soldiers) were fighting against 10 500 Swedish infantry²⁰. What is more, Polish infantry was also underequipped when compared to its opponent. Only between 1703 and 1708 the matchlock muskets were replaced by flintlock guns. That is the reason why only small units of cavalry were operating. Using their mobility and

¹⁸ M. Nagielski, *Upadek staropolskiej sztuki wojennej w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej* [The fall of traditional Polish art of war during Great Northern War], in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 25 – 26.

¹⁹ A.K. Link-Lenczowski, *Czy wojna północna była okresem trwałego załamania systemu wartości funkcjonujących w Rzeczypospolitej?* [Was the Northern War the period the lasting collapse of the value system of the Commonwealth?], in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 285 – 286; M. Prejs, *Obraz wojny północnej w poezji pierwszej połowy XVIII wieku* [The Northern War in the poetry of the first half of XVIII century], in *Wojny, bitwy i potyczki w kulturze staropolskiej* [Wars, battles and encounters in old Polish culture], ed. W. Pawlak, M. Piskała, Warszawa 2011, p. 271; J. Ronikier, *Hetman Adam Sieniawski i jego regimentarze. Studium z historii mentalności szlachty polskiej 1706 – 1725* [Hetman Adam Sieniawski and his regimentaries. Study on the history of mentality of Polish nobility 1706 – 1725], Kraków 1992, p. 146 – 150.

²⁰ M. Nagielski, *Upadek staropolskiej sztuki wojennej...* [The fall of traditional...], p. 17; J. Ronikier, *Hetman Adam Sieniawski...* [Hetman Adam Sieniawski...], p. 130 – 132; M. Wagner, *Bitwa pod Kliszowem...* [The battle of Kliszów...], p. 84; J. Wimmer, *Historia piechoty polskiej do roku 1864* [The history of Polish infantry to 1864], Warszawa 1978, p. 261; A. Шкваров, *Петр I и казаки*, Санкт-Петербург 2010, p. 152 – 158.

the element of surprise they harassed the opponent at the same time being unable to drive him out of the territory permanently. While the conflict prolonged, the units started to aim on conquering territories which were supposed to become their source of supply, however. The fact that unpaid soldiers had to organise their stocks themselves had miserable effect on the discipline and morale²¹.

Due to the expansion of the forces loyal to Augustus and the entry of Russian forces to Lithuania at the beginning of 1706, the allies gained advantage over the enemy: about 25 000 Russian soldiers were located to Tykocin near Grodno, Prince Alexander Danilovich Menshikov with his 12 000 soldiers was in Belarus, and about 10 000 Saxons and Lithuanians were stationed near Brest-Litovsk. The Crown army was also numerous: 30 000 Cossacks of Hetman Ivan Mazepa stationed probably in Volyn and Right-bank Ukraine. The Crown army (officially 36 000, actually smaller) supported by about 1 000 nobility volunteers was resting during winter in Lesser Poland, Rus, and Podolia. Additionally, 18 - 20 000 Saxons and Russians of general Hans Wostromirski started preparing for military actions in Saxony. That way the allied armies formed a great ring surrounding the army of Charles XII and Stanisław Leszczyński²².

Winter - Spring Campaign of 1706

Taking into consideration the facts presented in the previous chapter, Charles XII, the head of the Polish-Swedish army placed west from Vistula, had every right to fear coming spring. That is why the king of Sweden wanted to anticipate coaxial attack of his opponents by gathering all the available forces and attacking Grodno in January 1706. He left only covering corps of about 10 - 12 000 soldiers in Greater Poland under the command of Karl Rehnskiöld²³. The launch of military actions in winter surprised the allied who were not able to gather their army. The army of Charles XII of about 19 - 20 000 Swedish and 8 -

²¹ M. Nagielski, *Upadek staropolskiej sztuki wojennej...* [The fall of traditional...], p. 19, 39; J. Ronikier, *Hetman Adam Sieniawski...* [Hetman Adam Sieniawski...], p. 135 - 145; M. Wagner, *Działania wojenne na ziemiach polskich...* [Military actions...], p. 57; J. Wimmer, *Polskie wojsko i sztuka wojenna...* [Polish army and the art of war], p. 361.

²² W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny..* [The memoir of...], p. 36; J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II i Rzeczpospolita 1697 - 1706*, Kraków 2010, p. 555 - 556; A. Шкваров, *Петр I и казаки* [Peter I and Cossacks], p. 307.

²³ O. Sjöström, *Bitwa pod Wschową 1706. A potem pole bitwy zabarwiło się na czerwono...* [The battle of Wschowa. And then the battlefield turned red...], trans. W. Łygaś, *Zabrze-Tarnowskie Góry* 2012, p. 72

10 000 Polish soldiers crossed Bug and blocked the majority of Russian army in Grodno. After consulting other officers and with the approval of Augustus II, the commander of the army, Georg Oglivie, chose to fortify, rather than fight in the open field. On the other hand, Charles XII did not dare to storm strong fortifications. He began to block the city counting on famine and diseases to force Russians to surrender after some time. Seeing the development of the situation, Wettin used the last open passage to retreat from Grodno with 4 000 Russian cavalry, which could not be used during a siege, to command operations that were aimed firstly on defeating the Swedish units left in Greater Poland, and secondly, defeating the forces of Charles XII surrounding Oglive in Grodno. When Peter I learnt about the siege of his best units of infantry, he ordered to secure the borders of the Russian empire by building fortifications, mobilising population, and concentrating the remaining forces near Minsk what would enable them to relieve Oglive. Other Russian units together with allied Lithuanian banners were ordered not to let the army of Charles XII join with Swedish army operating in Livonia²⁴.

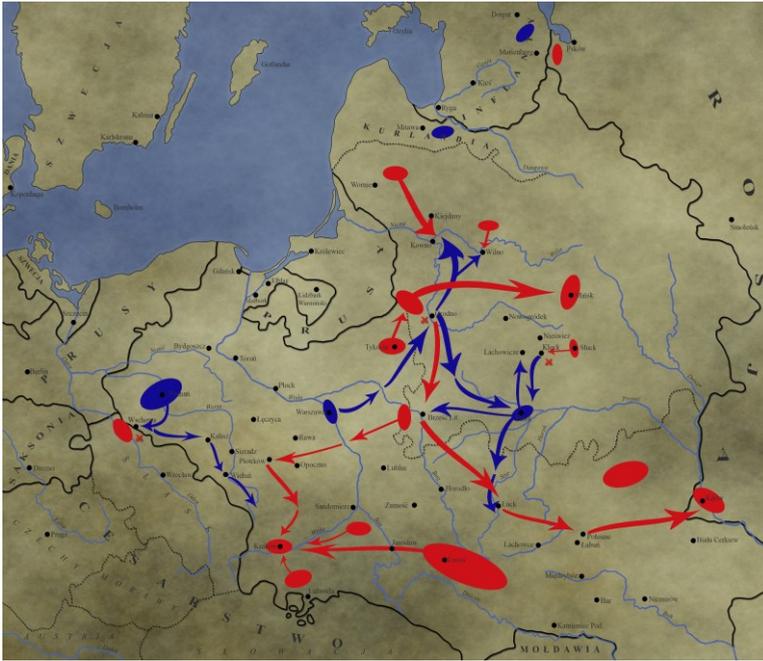
Augustus II moved towards Mazovia calling the Crown army and Saxon units placed in Cracow and Lublin from winter rest. However, instead of relieving Grodno, as Peter I wished, he send urging orders to general Mathias Johann von der Schulenburg, who commanded Saxon army placed in Saxony and had just rebuilt after previous defeats²⁵. That way he wished to attack from both sides the covering corps of general Rehnskiöld. He assumed that the Swedish units would be defeated and the victorious Saxon army would recapture Poznan and only then move to fight Charles XII. This bold plan was not executed, because Swedish general gathered all his forces and moved to attack the stronger of the two opponents, the army of Schulenburg²⁶.

The Saxon general was trying to convince his king that his units were not ready to fight experienced and well-trained Swedish army. Saxon army had had troubles with recruitment after big losses in the previous years. That is why the

²⁴ A. Kamiński, *Przeciwko Szwedom i Leszczyńskiemu. Działania wojsk rosyjskich na terenie Polski w 1705 – 1706 roku* [Against Sweden and Leszczyński. Military actions of Russian army in Poland in 1705 – 1706], SMHW, v, 12, 1966, part 2, p. 239 – 242; P. Krokosz, *Rosyjskie siły zbrojne...* [Russian armed forces...], p. 324 – 325; B. Liljegren, *Karol XII* [Charles XII], p. 135 – 136; J. Wimmer, *Wojsko Rzeczypospolitej w dobie wojny północnej* [The army of the Commonwealth during Great Northern War], Warszawa 1956, p. 304 – 305.

²⁵ O. Sjöström, *Bitwa pod Wschową 1706* [The battle of Wschowa 1706], p. 108 – 109.

²⁶ B. Liljegren, *Karol XII* [Charles XII], p. 136; J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...* [Peter I, Augustus II...], p. 616, 622.



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contingents had been replenished in every possible way, what resulted in poor quality of the soldiers. In the end Schulenburg had to rely on Bavarian and French captives from the war on Spanish succession and people such as seasonal workers, or vagrants, all enlisted by force. However, the king's orders were clear and the monarch himself was convinced that he would win. Not having the choice, Schulenburg gathered all his army (16 000 infantry and 4 000 cavalry, including 6 000 Russian infantry) and on 7 February 1706 crossed the border of Austrian Silesia in order to enter Poland the shortest way. Unfortunately, poor weather conditions and slow pace of the crossing of Oder River caused by unexpected thaw gave Sweden enough time to recognise the opponent's moves and concentrate all the forces in the area²⁷.

On 11 February Saxon army reached the border village of Sława. Schulemburg received the message there that Swedish troops were approaching, so he forbade crossing the border and ordered his army to occupy defensive positions on a hill. Rehnskiöld did not decide to attack more numerous opponent in an easy to defend place which was located within the neutral Silesian

²⁷ O. Sjöström, *Bitwa pod Wschową 1706* [The battle of Wschowa 1706], p. 109, 111 – 113; J. Wimmer, *Wojsko Rzeczypospolitej w dobie...* [The army of the Commonwealth...], p. 305 – 306.

territory. He had learnt from the prisoners that Saxons had some troubles with supplies, so he understood that they would not be able to stay there for long, so they would have to enter the territory of the Commonwealth. To encourage them to do so, he decided to simulate a retreat. The manoeuvre was risky, because each day of delay could end with cavalry under the command of Augustus II entering the battlefield. Saxons could also bypass Swedish army and meet the army of their king²⁸.

However, the manoeuvre was successful and when he learnt that the Saxon army moved towards the nearest town of Fraudstadt, he turned back his army and attacked the surprised enemy. The Saxon general formed a combat force as quickly as possible in a way very similar to his enemy, with infantry in the centre and cavalry on the sides. The battle began on 13 February 1706 in the afternoon. Even though Saxon and Russian army was bigger (18 000 compared with 10 000 soldiers and 32 to 0 canons), they took defensive positions and waited for the actions of their enemy. However, they were completely defeated by Swedish corps attacking from the front in the whole line. Russian forces in the left wing of Schulenburg's army were broken first. Next, the Saxon cavalry in the right wing surrendered. Saxon infantry in the centre defended itself for the longest time. It dealt the enemy considerable damage; however, it was also defeated after the attack from the wings and back by Swedish cavalry²⁹.

Up to this day the murder of part of the Russian infantry by Swedish troops is unsolved. Probably about 500 prisoners were killed because they tried to hide in Saxon uniforms. In total, about 7 400 Saxons and Russians died in the battle, and twice as much were imprisoned. Sweden lost 400 people and 1000 - 1500 were injured. Some of the injured were able to continue the service. The victory greatly impressed the contemporary, and is still considered one of the biggest victories in the history of Sweden³⁰. Augustus the Strong did not manage to reach the battlefield in Wschowa, and being afraid of the victorious Sweden, he retreated to Cracow by Piotrkow, where he gathered his remaining forces³¹.

²⁸O. Sjöström, *Bitwa pod Wschową 1706* [The battle of Wschowa 1706], p. 138 – 142.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 181 – 242.

³⁰B. Liljegren, *Karol XII* [Charles XII], p. 136 – 137; O. Sjöström, *Bitwa pod Wschową 1706* [The battle of Wschowa 1706], p. 243 – 248; A. Filipczak-Kocur, *Propaganda sukcesów szwedzkich w czasie wielkiej wojny północnej w niemieckojęzycznych gazetach ulotnych 1701-1709* [The propaganda of Swedish successes of Great Northern War in german newspapers 1701 – 1709], in *Rzeczpospolite w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 412 – 414.

³¹W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny...*[The memoir of...], p. 39 – 42.; J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*[Peter I, Augustus II...], p. 627.

In that situation Russian army in Grodno, reduced almost by half because of the losses and diseases, and not hoping for relief, was forced by the tsar to fight through the Swedish blockade, because otherwise they could be totally annihilated. Peter I wanted to avoid it at all costs because it would mean losing his best units of the reformed army and opening the borders to the Swedish attacks. Grodno army was supposed to move as the ice on Neman River breaks, what would secure it from the main forces of Charles XII³². On 3 April 1706 Russian units escaped the siege and retreated quickly to Kiev marching by Tykocin, Brest-Litovsk and Kovel. The Swedish army tried to stand in the way of the retreat of Russian army by marching towards Minsk and Polesia. They found many fortifications there, mostly manned by Kosack units under the command of Ivan Mazepa, or Lithuanian units loyal to Augustus. All the fortifications were captured, and Cossack's relief defeated by Col. Kreutz in the battle of Klatsk, however, due to the delays it had caused, it was impossible to catch up Russian army³³. It was also the last campaign of marshal Ogliva as the commander of Russian army. After some disputes with tsar he resigned. As it seems, until the end of his command he was not able to understand, as well as other Saxon generals, that the army of Charles XII fights differently than other western European armies, what was the reason why they could not fight them successfully in the battlefield³⁴.

A the same time (April - June 1706) Augustus gathered Saxon and Crown military detachments in Lesser Poland, collected taxes to cover the needs of his army and reinforced Cracow. However, when Swedish army moved towards him from Greater Poland, Wettin did not choose to fight. He retreated north, towards Radom since he feared he could be separated from Russian forces. At

³² A. Kamiński, *Przeciwko Szwedom i Leszczyńskiemu* [Against Sweden and Leszczyński...], p. 243 – 248; P. Krokosz, *Rosyjskie siły zbrojne...* [Russian armed forces...], p. 326 – 327; А. Шкваров, *Петр I и казаки* [Peter I and Cossacks], p. 307 – 308.

³³ W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny...* [The memoir of...], p. 42 – 43; A. Kamiński, *Przeciwko Szwedom i Leszczyńskiemu* [Against Sweden and Leszczyński...], p. 254 – 257; B. Krzysztopa-Czupryńska, *Rzeczpospolita w wielkiej wojnie...* [The Commonwealth during...], p. 105; B. Liljegren, *Karol XII* [Charles XII], p. 138; J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...* [Peter I, Augustus II...], p. 624 – 626.

³⁴ G. Arteus, *Szwedzka taktyka walki podczas wielkiej wojny północnej* [Swedish tactics during Great Northern War], SMHW, v. 21, 1978, p. 347 – 358; R. Frost, *W sprawie zachodniej techniki wojskowej w okresie Wojen Północnych (1558-1721)* [On western tactics in the period of Northern Wars (1558-1721)], in *Między Zachodem a Wschodem. Studia z dziejów...* [Between West nad East. Studies on...], p. 300; P. Krokosz, *Rosyjskie siły zbrojne...* [Russian armed forces...], p. 326 – 328.

that time, he had nearly 10 000 Crown soldiers under his command, as well as part of Lithuanian, Saxon and Russian cavalry. In total, the Crown forces summed up to about 15 000 people, according to the contemporaries, so they were comparable with Rehnskiöld army. Next, after crossing Vistula river he travelled towards Lithuania, which was free from Swedish units and merged with the forces of 6 000 Lithuanian army under the command of Hetman Wiśniowiecki. Even having under his command so significant military force he avoided fights with corps of general Arvid Axel Mardefeld stationed in Brest, even though his army outnumbered several times the army of the Swedish General. It seems that the king lost his fighting spirit after the defeat of his army in Wschowa, or he was not convinced about the loyalty of numerous Polish soldiers fighting on his side³⁵.

Due to the Swedish victory in Wschowa and the escape of Augustus II from Cracow, divisions of the Crown army under the command of Crown Chamberlain Jerzy Aleksander Lubomirski and Oboźny of the Crown, Jerzy Dominik Lubomirski switched the sides and joined Leszczyński. Additionally, seeing further successes of Charles XII and his Polish supporters, the following magnates sponsored private detachments and joined Leszczyński: Lublin voivode Adam Tarło and Chamberlain of Cracow, Franciszek Lanckoroński. Their regiments operated in Lesser Poland and joined later the main forces under the command of Kiev voivode and hetman of Leszczyński's army, Józef Potocki³⁶.

The Attack on Saxony

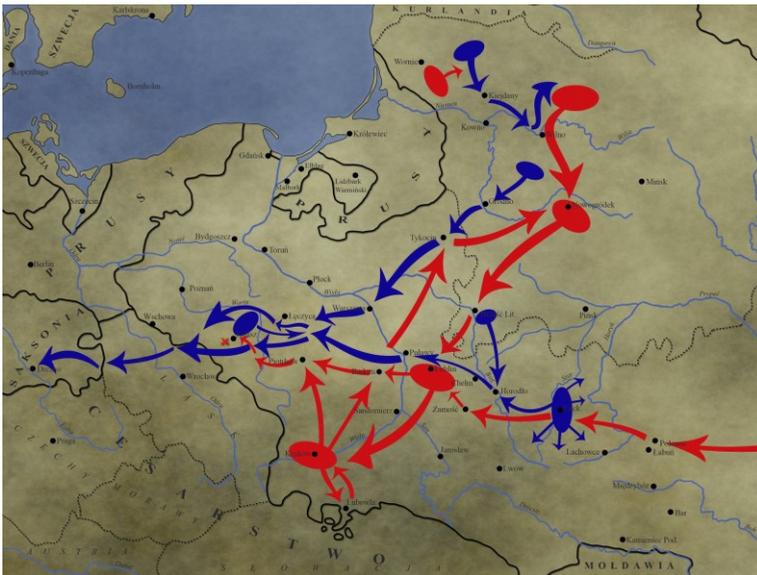
By the end of spring 1706 the military situation was much better for Sweden and their Polish supporters than it had been half a year earlier, however, they were still far from victory. Even though Saxon army had been defeated in Wschowa, it was slowly rebuilt, as well as Russian detachments, which were fortifying borders in fear of direct Swedish attack on Kiev or Smolensk. Also Cossacks, defeated in a number of battles, or the Crown army operating between Cracow and Lviv were still able to fight. That is why Charles XII decided to take a risky step, even though he travelled from Grodno to Wolyn during his chase. He

³⁵ W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny...* [The memoir of...], p. 43 – 44; K. Jarochoński, *Z czasów saskich spraw wewnętrznych, polityki i wojny* [On Saxon internal affairs, policies and war], Poznań 1886, p. 392 – 395; J. Wimmer, *Wojsko Rzeczypospolitej w dobie...* [The army of the Commonwealth...], p. 308 – 309.

³⁶ W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny...* [The memoir of...], p. 46; J. Wimmer, *Wojsko Rzeczypospolitej w dobie...* [The army of the Commonwealth...], p. 308.

decided to attack Saxony in an attempt to throw Augustus II to his knees and subject all the Commonwealth to Stanisław Leszczyński³⁷.

The decision was probably taken in July 1706 when Swedish army was resting after difficult marches in Wolyn and causing terrible devastation in the area. Charles XII decided to attack from the territory of Silesia, which separated Poland and Saxony, the hereditary principality of Augustus in order to force him surrender. He hoped that because of the victory the majority of nobility and magnates in the Commonwealth would recognise the reign of Stanisław Leszczyński and the whole country would become his ally in the war against Russia. Saxony was the most sensitive point of Wettin. It was left almost defenceless after the battle of Wschowa, even though the Saxon army was being rebuilt, it was clear that it could not stand a chance against experienced Swedish soldiers. That is why it was possible to eliminate one of the two anti-Swedish coalition partners with one bold move. The economic potential was also important, which was supposed to be used in the near future to modernise and rebuild Swedish army exhausted by the few years of constant battle³⁸.



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³⁷ A. Kamiński, *Przeciwko Szwedom i Leszczyńskiemu* [Against Sweden and Leszczyński], p. 257 – 259.

³⁸ J. Poraziński, *August II, Piotr I i Karol XII...*, [Augustus II, Peter I and Charles XII...], p. 132 – 133; J. Wimmer, *Wojsko Rzeczypospolitej w dobie...* [The army of the Commonwealth...], p.308, 310.

Charles XII gathered the majority of available forces on his side and on 17 July 1706 marched west from Jarosławice near Lutsk³⁹. He did it against the advice of the majority of his officers, who were afraid that entering Silesia would cause Austria enter war supporting Augustus. Swedish army marched through Wojnicz, Pidhaitsi and Vladimir to Horodło, where it joined the forces of general Mardefeld from Brest and Polish-Lithuanian divisions loyal to Leszczyński⁴⁰. The king of Sweden with all his forces moved from there to Greater Poland through Puławy and Radom accepting pledges of allegiance to king Leszczynski from forced to do so nobility⁴¹. West from Vistula a covering division was chosen to stay in Greater Poland, and on 15 August king of Sweden left Warta with the divisions of generals Rehnsköld i Mayerfeld. On 11 September 1706 the allied forces entered the borders of Saxony⁴².

The plan of Charles XII was successful - Wettin, who was in the Commonwealth at that time, seeing occupation and ruination of his hereditary principedom, which he valued more than the elective throne of Polish - Lithuanian state, entered peace talks. He had seen through the plan of Charles XII quickly, and on 16 August 1706 authorised his secret representatives, Georg Pffingsten and Anton von Imhoff to enter peace talks with the king of Sweden when his army was still marching through Greater Poland⁴³.

Augustus began simultaneous diplomatic game full of ambiguities. He decided to negotiate with Sweden, and at the same time asked tsar for financial and military support in order to resume fights with the Swedish king. In order not to disclose his negotiations to Polish and Russian allies, whom he was simply betraying, Augustus II agreed to begin military actions against small divisions of Polish - Swedish army. Firstly, one of the commanders of the Crown army, Crown Master of the Hunt Jakub Zygmunt Rybiński led Polish and Saxon army towards

³⁹ J.. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem 29 października 1706 roku* [The battle of Kalisz 29 October 1706] , in *Osiemnaście wieków Kalisza* [Eighteen centuries of Kalisz]. V. 3, ed. A. Geysztor and K. Dąbrowski, Kalisz 1962, p. 122.

⁴⁰ W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny...* [The memoire of...], p. 46 - 47; K. Jarochoowski, *Z czasów saskich...* [On Saxon...], p. 398 - 399; B. Krzysztopa-Czupryńska, *Rzeczpospolita w wielkiej wojnie...* [The Commonwealth during...], p. 106; J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...* [Peter I, Augustus II...], p. 674.

⁴¹ A. Panek, *Sejmik lubelski w okresie wojny północnej 1702 - 1716* [Sejmik of Lublin in the period of Northern War 1702-1716], in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 161.

⁴² D. Dolański, *Związki polsko-śląskie...* [Polish - Silesian relationship...], p. 224.

⁴³ K. Jarochoowski, *Z czasów saskich...* [On Saxon...], p. 405 - 406; J. Wimmer, *Wojsko Rzeczypospolitej w dobie...* [The army of the Commonwealth...], p. 310 - 311.

Cracow, and Spiš to fight pro-Swedish starosta of Spiš, Teodor Lubomirski⁴⁴. Wettin moved later with the main Polish - Lithuanian forces from Navahrudak to Lublin, where on 30 September 1706 joined the forces with the Russian reinforcements of prince Alexander Danilovich Menshikov and accompanying him irregular divisions of Cossacks and Bashkirs (Russian forces were directed to defend Kiev from the following winter, and after retreat of Charles they entered Wolyn). Russian forces were about 10 000 regular cavalry, 6 000 Bashkirs (called Kalmyks in memoirs), 4 000 Cossacks and 62 battalions of infantry (each was 600 people on the payroll, but all the sources talk about 20 - 25 000 infantry, not 37 000 as it resulted from the payroll)⁴⁵.

Military Actions in Greater Poland

On 1 October 1706 the joined forces moved west from Lublin and after crossing Vistula in three columns near Kazimierz, they reached Poitrków - Opoczno line before 15 October 1706. Because of the insistence of the officers and probably because of fear Peter I felt that the situation in Grodno would repeat, where most of his reformed army was isolated from the supply base, he decided to leave all the infantry on the other bank of Vistula. Russian army did not differ from the Swedish or Saxon soldiers when considering its behaviour. It also confiscated and robbed local people whenever it could⁴⁶.

In order to maintain his reign in the Crown, Charles XII left a division of about 6 000 soldiers in Greater Poland under the command of Arvid Marderfeld. They were supposed to be supported by his Polish allies stationed in Rawa Voivodeship, but without Stanisław Leszczyński, who moved to Saxony with his personal division. The Swedish general focused near Warta his

⁴⁴ E. Otwinowski, *Dzieje Polski pod panowaniem Augusta II* [Poland under the reign of Augustus II], Kraków 1849, p. 96; M. Wagner, *Jakub Zygmunt Rybiński jako organizator i dowódca wojsk koronnych w latach 1706 - 1712* [Jakub Zygmunt Rybiński as the organiser and commander of the Crown army between 1706 - 1712], in *Między Zachodem a Wschodem* [Between West and East], v. II, p. 584.

⁴⁵ W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny...* [The memoir of...], p. 50; K. Zawisza, *Pamiętniki Krzysztofa Zawiszy wojewody mińskiego (1666-1721)* [The memoirs of Krzysztof Zawisza, voivode of Minsk (1666 - 1721)], issued J. Bartoszewicz, Warszawa 1862, p. 243; K. Jarochoowski, *Z czasów saskich...* [On Saxon...], p. 408; P. Krokosz, *Rosyjskie siły zbrojne...* [Russian armed forces...], p. 329; A. Шкваров, *Петр I и казаки* [Peter I and Cossacks], p. 310; J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 123.

⁴⁶ A. Panek, *Sejmik lubelski w okresie...* [Sejmik of Lublin...], p. 158.

forces that had been distributed near Wschowa. Uniejów and Sieradz. Additionally, he was in constant contact with the armed forces of Józef Potocki, who commanded a well-armed, rested and paid divisions in comparison with other armies of that period⁴⁷.

On 2 October the Swedish forces moved from the area of Warta to Wieluń and Brzeźnica. From there small units were sent towards the allied forces which were crossing Vistula, the Crown forces of Rybicki stationed near Cracow, and divisions of Śmigieński operating in Greater Poland. That way general Mardefeld received information that a great army was marching towards him, which consisted of i.a. 20 000 experienced Russian infantry. In that situation he decided to retreat towards Kalisz, where he kept his supplies and could easily continue towards Poznań. General did not let hetman of Leszczyński's army attack the marching allies, even though Polish reconnaissance informed that the actual number of infantry was lower, what was the result of leaving infantry divisions on the other bank of Vistula, as described earlier⁴⁸. Marderfeld was constantly exchanging letters with Charles XII, however, the correspondence was delayed in relation to the accelerating events. For example, we learn from the memoirs of the general that he received the letter in which the king let him retreat towards Poznań after he had made the decision himself⁴⁹.

At the same time, simultaneously with military actions in southern Greater Poland, negotiations were taking place with occupying Saxony Charles XII. As a result, on 24 September 1706, the Treaty of Altranstädt was signed by the representatives of Augustus II, Charles XII and Stanisław Leszczyński. The Saxon elective king gave up Polish throne and released his Polish subjects from the pledge of allegiance. What is more, Wettin was supposed to discontinue contacts with Russian tsar, return Polish archives and crown jewels, and surrender to Sweden all the Russian soldiers who supported Saxon army and deserters from Swedish army⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ J.A. Nordberg, *Konung Carl XII: p. Historia* [King Charles XII: true story], v. I, Stockholm 1740, p. 682; W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny...* [The memoirs of...], p. 47; J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 123.

⁴⁸ *Relacja bataliej kaliskiej in Anno 1706 die 30 8bris odprawionej* [The relation from the battle of Kalisz of 1706], Biblioteka Czartoryskich, manuscript 1687, p. 225 – 229.

⁴⁹ *Arvid Axel Marderfelts berättelse* [Arvid Axel Mardefeld narrative], in *Karolinska krigares dogböcker* [Karolinska warrior diaries], v. 8, Lund 1913, p. 95 – 124; E. Otwinowski, *Dzieje Polski...* [Poland under...], p. 105; J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 125. I would like to express my gratitude to Katarzyna Wagner for sharing the account of general Mardefeld.

⁵⁰ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...* [Peter I, Augustus II...], p. 686 - 688; B.

The news about signing the treaty and its conditions reached Saxon prince and hitherto Polish king when he was near Piotrków (probably on 15 October), where he signed the peace treaty brought by Georg Pfigsten. However, the treaty was kept secret, because Wettin was afraid of the reaction of the Poles and Russians fighting on his side. What is more, Pfigsten had brought a letter from Charles XII to general Mardefeld, but he left it in Wrocław on his way back to Saxony. In order not to break the terms of the treaty with his actions, Augustus was trying to delay the activities of Polish - Saxon - Russian forces and sent a letter to Mardefeld informing about the treaty and asking him to withdraw without fight. However, the Swedish general, who had not received a confirmation of this fact, did not trust Augustus II and did not retreat on time because he thought it could be a trap⁵¹.

The Swedish general ordered to stop the retreat of infantry near Kalisz and returned there cavalry in order to concentrate all the forces. Only after he had done it, he received a letter from Charles XII informing about the peace treaty and advising to retreat in order to avoid battle. Unfortunately, when the letter came the army of Mardefeld was dangerously close to the advance party of the allied (what is more, it was cavalry and dragoons, whereas Swedes had also infantry), on the back of the army staroste of Gniezno Adam Śmigielski with Polish cavalry and two detachments of Saxon dragoons showed up. In that situation retreat was impossible without sacrificing all the infantry and laagers.

On 26 October 1706, when the main forces of Augustus II reached a village called Staw (about 20km from Kalisz), Józef Potocki proposed a counter attack against the allied. When Mardefeld refused, the following day hetman arbitrarily attacked the enemy with several dozen units of cavalry. A day later, on 28 October 1706, the allied forces came near Kalisz in a battle formation, however, they were separated from the forces of general Mardefeld by Prosna river. It was crossed at night 5 km from the city. Because of muddy banks and collapse of the bridge, the last units crossed the river at dawn⁵².

Liljegren, *Karol XII* [Charles XII], p. 141; J. Wimmer, *Wojsko Rzeczypospolitej w dobie...* [The army of the Commonwealth...], p. 311.

⁵¹ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...* [Peter I, Augustus II...], p. 688; J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 126.

⁵² *Relacja odprawionej szczęśliwie batalie pod Kaliszem die 29 8bris Anno 1706* [The relation from the battle of Kalisz of 1706], Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, manuscript 274, p. 169 – 172; J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 127.

Battle of Kalisz

The battle took place on 29 October 1706 on the foregrounds of Kalisz, between Dobrzec, Kościelna Wieś and Warszówka⁵³. Because of the size of the fighting armies, it was the biggest battle of the Great Northern War that took place within the borders of Commonwealth.

General Arvid Axel Mardefeld had only 4 358 Swedish soldiers under his command: a regiment of cavalry from northern Scania, three regiments of dragoons, a Pomeranian regiment of infantry, a Bavarian regiment of infantry, a battalion of Swedes and a battalion of French grenadiers (both consisted of soldiers captured during the battle of Wschowa) - in total there were 6 battalions of infantry and 26 companies of cavalry. There was only one additional small regiment of infantry in Greater Poland, stationed in Poznań, so in case of defeat, it was clear that the Swedish reign in the Crown would end. What is more, the newest studies show that not only the Swedish and French battalions, but also other, mostly German units, were formed after the battle of Wschowa. In the Mardefeld's corps only one regiment was formed in Sweden, what irritated the soldiers serving there, because they were the only regiment that did not go with their king to wealthy Saxony⁵⁴.

These forces were supported by about 9 000 Polish and Lithuanian soldiers, however, they were equipped and trained much worse than their Swedish allies. The command over the units took the voivode of Kiev and hetman of Leszczyński's army, Józef Potocki. His forces were divided into regiments: Royal, Józef Potocki's, Michał Potocki's, Crown Chamberlain Jerzy Dominik Lubomirski's, Crown Great Quartermaster Jerzy Aleksander Lubomirski's, Crown Master of the Kitchen Stanisław Tarło's, and Chamberlain of Cracow, Franciszek Lanckoroński's. Lithuanian forces of about 3 000 soldiers were commanded by Great Field Writer of the Crown, Michał Potocki and the house of Sapieha: staroste of Babruysk, Jan, and Lithuanian pantler, Antoni Kazimierz. Additionally, both Mardefeld and Potocki had 10 cannons at their disposal⁵⁵.

⁵³Publications on the battle: R. Jankowski, P.S. Skworoda, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem w świetle polskiej historiografii lat 1954-2013 i wątpliwości z nią związane* [The battle of Kalisz in the light of Polish historiography of 1954-2013 and doubts connected with it], in *Studia historyczno-wojskowe* [Historical and military studies], v. 5, ed. M. Nagielski, K. Bobiatyński, P. Gawron, Zabrze-Tarnowskie Góry 2015, p. 195 – 208.

⁵⁴K. Jarochoński, *Z czasów saskich...* [On Saxon...], p. 401 – 402; J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...*, [Battle of Kalisz...] p. 128.

⁵⁵M. Nagielski, *Kalisz w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej (1701-1716)* [Kalisz during Great

In the army of Augustus II Strong the most valuable element were 9 regiments of Saxon cavalry and 5 regiments of dragoons under the command of Michał Brandt. These should be about 600 people in 56 squadrons, however, it is known, that there were only 42 squadrons (some of them had to be either dismissed because of losses, or left in the home country. In total, it was about 6 000 soldiers instead of 8 400⁵⁶. Additionally, Augustus had cavalry and Russian dragoons under his command led by prince Alexander Menshikov. Various sources state that they were about 4 to 8 000 soldiers, and about 6 000 Cossacks and 4 000 Bashkirs⁵⁷. There were also probably 10 000 Polish soldiers under the command of Crown Grand Hetman Adam Sieniawski and Crown Field Hetman, Stanisław Rzewuski. Unfortunately, it is not possible to find any sources that would tell which units (chorągiew) participated in the battle. Comput of 1706 assumed that 15 000 cavalry and 5 640 dragoons would fight against Sweden, however, as it was mentioned earlier, the actual number of soldiers was much lower. Additionally, the nature of the hit-and-run tactics makes it doubtful that all the units were placed on the battlefield. It is also worth remembering that the regiments of both Lubomirski brother sided with Stanisław Leszczyński. The regular forces were reinforced by 12 units (chorągiew) of *pospolite ruszenie* under the command of Adam Śmigieński, which were about 1 000 people⁵⁸.

In total, the whole Saxon-Russian-Polish army is estimated by historians to be between 31 and 36 000 soldiers. The artillery consisted of 17 canons. Additionally, Russian dragoons carried small mortars, which were effectively used in the final stage of the battle⁵⁹.

As it is possible to estimate from the comparison, the proportion was about 2.5:1 in favour of Augustus army. With such disproportion of power, it is surprising that the Swedish general did not decide to fight the battle in a defensive manner based on not very modern city walls or reinforced camp, but he chose to fight an open battle in the fore fields of Kalisz instead. He began to march out of the city on 27 October. It is even more surprising when one takes into account the fact that the Polish-Saxon-Russian forces consisted mostly of

Northern War (1701-1716)], in *Kalisz na przestrzeni wieków* [Kalisz over the centuries], ed. T. Baranowski, A. Buko, Kalisz 2013, p. 230 – 231.

⁵⁶ K. Zawisza, *Pamiętniki Krzysztofa Zawiszy...* [Memoires of Krzysztof Zawisza...], p. 243.

⁵⁷ J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 128.

⁵⁸ K. Jarochoński, *Z czasów saskich...* [On Saxon...], p. 420; J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 129.

⁵⁹ M. Nagielski, *Kalisz w dobie...* [Kalisz during...], p. 231.

cavalry, Cossacks and Bashkirs who had little value when storming reinforcements. There could be three motifs of the decision. Firstly, it could be caused by Swedish tactics of Charles XII who had focused on quick and breaking attack on the enemy lines. Secondly, it was also possible that he chose the tactics because of the fact that he had numerous cavalry under his command. These were units that had little value when fighting defensive battles. What is more, there was no guarantee that both leaders and not disciplined soldiers would agree to get trapped in the camp or feel urge to fight. Finally, they could not expect relief forces, since the main Swedish forces were in Saxony and there was no chance that they could manage to travel to Kalisz quickly.

Arvid Maderfeld set his forces in two lines. In the centre there were regiments of infantry and Swedish cavalry backed up by the artillery. These were the units having the biggest combat value. In the wings he put units of Warsaw Confederates. On the left wing there were Lithuanian units commanded by Michał Potocki and the Sapieha brothers. On the right wing there was the Crown army under the command of Józef Potocki, supported by Lubomirski brothers, Stanisław Tarło, and Franciszek Lanckoroński. At the back of the formation, Polish soldiers formed a traditional reinforced camp that was made from carts which they fastened together in a shape of quadrangle. In case of defeat it was also a place where the soldiers could hide. There were also the families of the higher rank officers in the camp, including both Potocki. Swedish army put up their camp in the suburbs of the city. General left small Swedish garrison of 2 companies of dragoons in Kalisz. The wings of Mardefeld's army were placed between swamps and wood, what was supposed to protect it from outflanking, however, at the same time it forced to attack uphill⁶⁰.

Due to the natural restrictions of the battleground and the vast number of the soldiers, the opposing army was arranged in a much deeper set up consisting of four lines. In the centre were placed the best units: on the right side 3 lines of Russian cavalry commanded by prince Menshikov and on the left Saxon cavalry and dragoons commanded by general Brand. Also whole 17-cannon artillery was placed there. The Crown cavalry was placed in two lines on both wings. The left wing was commanded by the Crown Field Hetman Stanisław Rzewuski and the right wing – by the Crown Grand Hetman Adam Sieniawski. On the left wing there was also a group of 12 units (chorągiew) of cavalry hidden behind forest and commanded by Adam Śmigielski, mayor of Gniezno, which could outflank the right wing of the opponent. Bashkirs and Cossacks, together with two regiments of Russian cavalry crossed the Proсна

⁶⁰J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 130.

River what caused encircling of the Mardefeld army and the company guarding the city without participating in battle⁶¹.

Augustus II was the nominal commander of the allied forces; however none of known accounts mentions his role in the battle, besides disciplining retreating units. Thus, we get the picture of the battle in which 4 parties were fighting independently. However, this issue still needs additional research. The battle began late, at about 15.30, and ended late in the evening. The reason for such late hour was because when the allied lined their army to the battle, they realised that they have to move left from their original position in order to bypass obstacles.

The first to attack was Swedish cavalry grouped in the centre of general Maderfeld forces. The first wave was fought off with loses, however, the second wave of cavalry supported by infantry forced the centre of Augustus II army to move back. Especially critical was the situation in the section of Russian troops who did not stand against the impact of the attack of cavalry of general Krassau and colonel Horn. However, the forces grouped in the centre were retreating in order and caused significant loses to the Swedish army It was because of general Michał Brandt's orders, who rushed Saxon dragoons and stopped the attack of Sweden with fire.

It gave some time needed on the wings, where Poles were fighting with each other. The attack of Warsaw confederates on the wings was stopped and they were forced to retreat by Augustus' II chivalry. Sieniawski's units started to outflank slowly the Swedes attacking Saxons due to their numerical superiority. The first to retreat were the units of Józef Potocki. They were attacked by more numerous adversary and when they saw forces of Adam Smigielski emerging from the forest behind them, they simply fled towards the reinforced camp and to Kalisz. Later their deed was repeated by the Lithuanian forces attacked by Rzewuski's troops. Józef Potocki hid with some of his soldiers in the camp, among wounded, wives and children of some of the commanders. This resulted in the Swedish centre being double flanked and it was surrounded soon. Swedish forces were hit by the artillery and had to split into smaller groups which soon were forced to surrender. Only general Krassau managed to escape to Poznan due to brave attack of his 500 cavalry and breach they managed to make in the line of the Augusts' army. Infantry which was still defending itself was surrounded by general Mardefeld when the allied brought cannons and mortars of Russian dragoons. Many escapees

⁶¹ J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 130 – 131.

drowned in Prosna river or were caught, because of the fact that Cossacks and Bashkirs, taking advantage of numerical superiority, were sent to the back of Polish- Swedish army⁶².

Also the camp of Crown army and Kalisz itself fell a prey to the winners as they did not have any chance for relief. However, due to the late hour, it happened the following day. The health condition of the soldiers within the city walls and their small number could not guarantee any chances for victory. Only few units, among them part of confederates under the command of Michal Potocki, Sapieha brothers, and Jerzy Aleksander Lubomirski, managed to escape during the night through Prosna River and fight their way to freedom through Cossack detachments⁶³.

Swedish and Leszczyński's losses were significant. General Mardefeld was held captive, as well as many officers (among them four out of five who participated in the battle of Swedish colonels) and the commander of Polish army loyal to Leszczyński, Józef Potocki, Crown chamberlain Jerzy Dominik Lubomirski, Crown Master of the Kitchen Stanisław Tarło, Colonel Andrzej Skórczewski. Additionally, there were few thousands of Swedish and confederate soldiers captured due to taking over the city and cutting off possible ways of retreat. Zofia Potocka, the wife of Michał, and Wiktoria Potocka, the wife of Józef, were also captured. Over thirty banners fell prey to the winners of the battle. Swedish lost 780 soldiers in the battle, about 1 800 - 2 000 were captured, as well as the whole artillery and 5 000 supply carts. Russians lost 230, Saxons 120 and Poles about 100 soldiers. The majority of the prisoners, also the ones captured by Russians, were passed to Augustus II, who promised Menshikov to exchange them for the prisoners held by the Swedish army. A day after the battle, vice-chancellor Jan Szembek expressed his gratitude on behalf of the king and Kuyavian bishop Felicjan Konstany Szaniawski conducted mass⁶⁴.

The effects of war were visible in the city as well: Kalisz was strafed on 30 October in order to make the garrison surrender, next it was looted by the winning army, and later the citizens suffered from famine and epidemic, two usual consequences of war at that time. The evidence of the distresses can be visible in later resolutions of sejmik szlachecki in Środa, which exempted the city from taxation.

⁶² M. Nagielski, *Kalisz w dobie...* [Kalisz during...], p. 232 – 233.

⁶³ J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 133.

⁶⁴ P. Krokosz, *Rosyjskie siły zbrojne...* [Russian armed forces...], p. 329 – 330.

Due to the victory in Kalisz major part of Greater Poland was released for a short time from the Swedish reign. The result of the battle greatly impressed opponents of Swedish reign in Poland. Many of them were ready to acknowledge the reign of Augustus II the Strong. He had received such proposition just after the battle from recent commanders in the battle, Michał Potocki and Jerzy Aleksander Lubomirski. The proposition did not matter for Augustus, as he was bound by the earlier agreement with Charles XII and was focused on retreating from this complicated situation. That is why he did not go towards Poznan, but to Warsaw, officially to receive triumph because of his victory. From there he travelled back to Saxony officially to address key issues of the country⁶⁵. It was the best moment to leave, as soon later the public found out about the Altranstädt treaty. The information was given to the public by Charles XII himself, as after the battle of Kalisz he was fed up with duplicity and intrigues of Augustus. In the meantime, Wettin, who did not want to threaten his relations with the king of Sweden, released the prisoners from the last battle, what resented Peter I, as wanted to exchange the prisoners for Russians who were held captive by Swedes⁶⁶.

Conclusion

The events that took place on the fields near Kalisz on the last days of October 1706 are commemorated by the mound in the Kolonia Koscielna Wies village. In this small barrow rest the remains of the soldiers who took part in the battle, as it was confirmed by the archaeological study in 2006. The archaeologists also found some muskets bullets and military buttons from that period there. Unfortunately, these are the only possessions that remained, what can lead to the conclusion that the bodies were scavenged before burial, however, only a fourth part of the barrow has been examined. The archaeologists could not identify the remains, the process of identification will be conducted during anthropological study. However, taking into consideration the way they had been buried, they were probably

⁶⁵ K. Jarochoowski, *Z czasów saskich...* [On Saxon...], p. 438; B. Liljegren, *Karol XII* [Charles XII],

p. 142; J. Wimmer, *Bitwa pod Kaliszem...* [The battle of Kalisz...], p. 134.

⁶⁶ W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik wielkiej wojny...* [The memoir of...], p. 53; J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...* [Peter I, Augustus II...], p. 689; M. Nagielski, *Kalisz w dobie...* [Kalisz during...], p. 235.

private soldiers of the defeated army, as people do not usually throw their companions to a hole in the ground, but they put one next to the other in carefully dug graves. Archaeologists discovered that there are whole skeletons deeper, and in the top layers there are only fragments of bodies, limbs and heads (there were bullets in two skulls), as if at the end of the battle the fragmented bodies had been placed there. The layers of bodies were separated with lime mixed with sand, what was supposed to prevent epidemic and scare away animals⁶⁷.

However, in the face of Augustus' escape to Dresden and comeback of the main Swedish forces to Poland, the victory in Kalisz could not be used properly. What is more, Stanisław Leszczyński became the only king of the Commonwealth, even though he had been elected illegally. It forced Peter I to act, as he feared that he would be left alone in the war against Sweden. He took great financial and military effort which resulted in strengthening of anti-Swedish faction among Polish and Lithuanian magnates⁶⁸. The final battle took place three years later, on the other bank of Dnieper river, where the victorious king Charles XII ventured. The battle of Poltava marked the end of Swedish reign in the Commonwealth⁶⁹. It resulted in a comeback of Augustus II, how "did not remember" giving up the throne. It was also the end of major military actions within the borders of the Commonwealth; however, hit-and-run episodes were still taking place. Due to constant movements of armies, robberies, contributions and epidemics spread by the soldiers, Great

⁶⁷ A. Kędzierski, S. Miłek, L. Ziabka, *Tajemnice kopca pobitewnego w Kościelnej Wsi* [The secrets of the mound in Kościelna Wieś], „Kalisia Nowa” [New Kalisia], n° 9-10/2009, p. 31; L. Ziabka, S. Miłek, A. Kędzierski, *Archeologiczne ślady „bitwy narodów” pod Kaliszem w 1706 roku* [Archaeological evidence of „the battle of Nations” of Kalisz in 1706], „Kronika Wielkopolski” [The Greater Poland Chronicle], 2007, n° 1, p. 41 – 45.

⁶⁸ A.K. Link-Lenczowski, *Adam Mikołaj Sieniawski – faworyt czy opozycjonista?* [Adam Mikołaj Sieniawski – favorite or oppositionist?], in *Faworyci i opozycjoniści. Król a elity polityczne Rzeczypospolitej XV – XVIII wieku* [Favorites and oppositionists. King and political ellites of the Commonwealth of XV – XVIII century], ed. M. Markiewicz, R. Skowron, Kraków 2006, p. 403 – 405.

⁶⁹ A. Kamiński, *Piotr I a wojsko koronne w przededniu szwedzkiego uderzenia na Rosję w 1707 r.* [Peter I and the Crown army just before the Swedish attack on Russia in 1707], SMHW, v. XV, 1969, pt. 1, p. 41 – 59; Ł. Pabich, *Bitwa pod Koniecpolem 21 listopada 1708* [The battle of Koniecpol, 21 November 1708], Zabrze-Tarnowskie Góry 2014.

Northern War has set back the Commonwealth's development by 50 years. It was again in ruin, just like after the wars of the middle of XVII century⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ Z. Guldon, J. Wijaczka, *Zarazy a zaludnienie i gospodarka Polski w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej*, [Epidemics and population of Poland during Great Northern War] , in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 199 – 215; J. Motylewicz, *Obciążenia wojskowe w czasie wielkiej wojny północnej i ich wpływ na przemiany społeczne i etniczne w miastach ziemi przemyskiej* [Military contributions and their influence on the social and ethnical changes in the cities of Przemyśl land] , in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 225 – 237; J. Półciwiatek, *Ziemie czerwonoruskie czasów wielkiej wojny północnej. Charakter rozkładu gospodarczego i głębokich zmian społecznych* [Red Ruthenia during Great Northern War. The nature of economic distribution and deep social changes] , in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 263 – 277; M. G. Zieliński, *Chełmno na tle miast województwa chełmińskiego w okresie wojny północnej* [Chełmno on the background of the cities of Chełmińskie voivodeship during Northern War] , in *Rzeczpospolita w dobie...* [Commonwealth during...], p. 250 – 257; D. Kupisz, *Mieszkańcy województwa lubelskiego a wojsko Rzeczypospolitej w dobie wojny i kryzysu państwa w latach 1702 – 1717* [The citizens of Lubelskie voivodeship and the army of the Commonwealth during the war and the crisis of the state between 1702 – 1717], in *Spółczesność staropolskie* [Society of the old Poland], v. IV: *Wojsko a społeczeństwo* [Army and society], Warszawa 2015, p. 217 – 27; J. Topolski, *Polska w czasach nowożytnych. Od środkowoeuropejskiej potęgi do utraty niepodległości (1501-1795)* [Poland in the modern era. From Central European power to the loss of independence (1501 – 1795)], Poznań 1994, p. 532, 575.