

Janusz Antoni Wiśniowiecki, *Ilias Polski (1700–1710)*, eds. Przemysław P. Romaniuk i Jacek Burdowicz-Nowicki, Warszawa: Fundacja Lanckorońskich i Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2018. 329 p. ISBN 978-83-66018-01-3

In 2018, some very valuable memoirs that covered a number of episodes from the first half (1700–1710) of the Great Northern War (1700–1721) and political life of the times were published. This was when Saxony and the Polish-Lithuanian state, which were joined by a personal union under a common ruler, August II the Strong of the Wettin dynasty, were both actively involved in the war. The editors of these memoirs are well-known researchers of this epoch. Przemysław P. Romaniuk has already published a work in which he proposes a thesis about the close links between two sources, the 'Little Chronicles of Lithuania' (*Kroniczka litewska*) and the 'Memoirs of Ignacy Olszowski' (*Pamiętniki Ignacego Olszowskiego*). He suggests that both these sources are composite parts of one work, *Ilias Polski*, and that the authorship of the work itself could be attributed to a famous magnate, Janusz Antoni Wiśniowiecki.¹ Jacek Burdowicz-Nowicki is an eminent researcher into relations between the Polish-Lithuanian state and Russia at this time.² Parts of these memoirs have been used in historiography for rather a long time,³ but the issue of authorship had not been resolved. It has been suggested that the author(s) must have had close ties with Janusz Antoni Wiśniowiecki's circle.⁴ This major study by Przemysław P. Romaniuk, in which he identifies the author, raises no doubts. The earlier hypothesis was confirmed by the discovery of the original memoirs,⁵ which formed the basis of the publication discussed in this review. Even though in the narrative Janusz Antoni

¹ P.P. Romaniuk, 'Ilias Polski' księcia Janusza Antoniego Wiśniowieckiego, czyli „kroniczka litewska” i pamiętnik Ignacego Olszowskiego', in: *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, R. CXVII, z. 3 (2010), p. 71–78.

² J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II i Rzeczpospolita 1697–1706* (Kraków, 2010).

³ For example, they were used by Józef Feldman, who highly appreciated their importance. See: J. Feldman, *Polska w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej 1704–1709* (Kraków, 1925).

⁴ I. Czamańska, *Wiśniowieccy. Monografia rodu* (Poznań, 2007), p. 380.

⁵ 'Manuskrypt nazwany Ilias Polski...', Biblioteka Jagiellońska, sygn. Przyb. 4/57.

Wiśniowiecki refers to himself in the third person, the original memoirs appear to have been written by his secretary, and include numerous corrections made by Wiśniowiecki himself. This confirms that he was the inspiration and authority behind the writing of the memoirs. This mode of writing memoirs in the third person, assisted by a secretary (a clerk or assistant), was widely practised by magnates in this epoch: the memoirs of Jacob Heinrich von Flemming from the same time, compiled and recently published by Urszula Kosińska, were prepared in the same way.⁶ Confirmation of a direct link between this historical source and one of the most famous Lithuanian and Polish magnates from this epoch makes these memoirs all the more valuable.

Janusz Antoni Wiśniowiecki lived from 1648 to 1741. He began his political career in the office of the Lithuanian Cupbearer (*podczaszy*) from 1697 to 1699, but even then his sights were set on the highest political posts in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL). His direct competitors were the Sapieha magnate family, who had dominated the GDL until then. The Sapiehas' political might started to wane, due to major opposition from the nobility, which had united into an anti-Sapieha movement, the 'Lithuanian republicans'. By 1702, Wiśniowiecki had risen to a ministerial post in the GDL, the Grand Marshal of Lithuania. This period features in the timespan covered in the memoirs published. These years are particularly important in Lithuanian history, for the political infighting in Lithuania grew into an armed struggle, an internal war between the Sapieha faction and the republicans. Regardless of his relative youth and his limited political experience, Wiśniowiecki emerged as one of the most important political leaders in the movement. His region of influence in Lithuania was the Pinsk district (*powiat*). He was the largest landowner and the most influential local official there, the Pinsk district court elder. His younger brother Michał Serwacy joined him among the leaders of the anti-Sapieha movement. The brothers' attitude towards the Sapiehas, and their determination to overthrow their foes' hegemony by force, was ignited by an incident on 25 April 1700. On the eve of the inauguration of the Lithuanian Supreme Tribunal, the escort of Kazimierz Jan Sapieha, the Grand Hetman of Lithuania and Palatine (Voivode, *wojewoda*) of Vilnius, mistakenly mistook the Wiśniowieckis' carriage for that of the Sapiehas' harsh enemy at the

⁶ (Jacob Heinrich von Flemming) *Mémoires concernant l'élection d'Auguste II pour roi de Pologne et les débuts de la guerre du Nord (1696–1702)* / (Jakub Henryk Flemming), *Pamiętniki o elekcji Augusta II na króla polskiego i o początkach wojny północnej (1696–1702)*, ed. U. Kosińska (Warszawa, 2017), p. 501

time, Michał Kazimierz Kocięł, the Castellan of Vitebsk, the formal leader of the republican movement, and the declared general lieutenant of palatinates and districts in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Shooting broke out, during which both Wiśniowiecki brothers were wounded. The circumstances and the incident are mentioned in the memoirs, and reveal the views of the Wiśniowieckis (pp. 76–77). Even though the Sapiehas tried to gloss over the misunderstanding, apologising to the Wiśniowieckis and bringing them aid, the brothers were deeply insulted, and planned to take their revenge on the Sapiehas. The incident is recognised in historiography as contributing significantly to the development of the civil war in Lithuania, leading to its culmination in the most important battle in the war, which took place on 18 November 1700 near Valkininkai. The Sapiehas suffered a crushing defeat, bringing to an end the Sapieha hegemony in Lithuania. But it is not possible to state with accuracy that the military campaign against the Sapiehas was planned immediately following the incident. The published memoirs of Wiśniowiecki confirm without doubt that the mobilisation of the anti-Sapieha nobility into universal recruitment in the autumn was planned in Vilnius in the first few days after the incident mentioned. The aims of the most important leaders of the anti-Sapieha movement were planned at that time. The Wiśniowieckis had already promised to bring around 3,000 nobles and Cossacks, and to provide financial support for the mobilisation of anti-Sapieha forces (p. 77). This or a similar number of armed men that the Wiśniowieckis brought to the republican side in the autumn of 1700 (late October/early November) appears in other sources as well.⁷ However, in his memoirs, Janusz Antoni Wiśniowiecki polemicises on this claim, which must have spread in the minds of the nobility and in public opinion at the time. According to him, the Wiśniowiecki brothers did not manage to gather as many men as was agreed in Vilnius, but ‘as many as they could’ (p. 80). The memoirs also reveal the difficulties the Wiśniowieckis faced in mustering their supporters and servants for the armed conflict against the Sapiehas. According to Janusz Antoni Wiśniowiecki, the plans that he and his brother Michał Serwacy developed were almost scuppered by their mother, Anna Dolska, the widow of Jan Karol Dolski (1637–1695), the Grand Marshal of Lithuania

⁷ The fact that the Wiśniowieckis brought around 2,000 soldiers is mentioned in the description of the Wiśniowieckis’ arrival at the republican war camp near Lipniškės. Manuscripts Department of the Wrublewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, col. 17, file 177, p. 251: ‘*Mieli Xiążęta z sobą ludzi ze dwa tysiące, y niemało towarzystwa koronnego*’.

(her second husband). She attempted to prevent the mobilisation of anti-Sapieha forces (for example, by warning the mother of Grand Hetman Kazimierz Jan Sapieha about the agreement the republicans had reached in Vilnius, and by preventing her sons from collecting money and troops) because, according to the author of the memoirs, she hoped to marry Kazimierz Jan Sapieha, the most influential magnate in the GDL at the time, who was also a widower (pp. 77, 80). The value of the memoirs is especially great in this case, for these claims about the motives of Anna Dolska could easily be questioned were they not made by her own sons. While the memoirs do not give us any additional important information about the military action in the autumn of 1700 between the Sapiehas and the republicans, they do reveal the motives of the Wiśniowiecki brothers: why the older Janusz Antoni agreed to give up the position of leader of the republican movement in favour of his younger brother Michał Seweracy (p. 80). The nobles who gathered at the general recruitment to lead the republicans elected Michał Seweracy as Colonel General of the Voivodeships (Provinces) and Districts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (if we are to believe the memoirs, Michał Seweracy did not really want the post). After the signing of the Valkininkai Treaty of on 24 November 1700, which set down the republicans' newly formulated principles of a confederate government for the GDL, this position started to be known as the Colonel General of the Voivodeships (Provinces) and Districts and the Army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The publishers have divided subsequent chapters of the memoirs into years, revealing the political, and to a lesser extent, military activities of Janusz Antoni Wiśniowiecki: suppressing the Cossack uprising in western Ukraine (1702–1703); participating in the struggle by supporters of Augustus II against the Swedes and their supporters in Lithuania (the Sapiehas) and Poland (the primate Michał Radziejowski and Stanisław Leszczyński) in 1702–1704; participating in further battles against the Swedes (1704–1708) and later on, after he crossed over to the Swedish side and backed their candidate for the throne of ruler of Poland and Lithuania, Stanisław I Leszczyński (part of the memoirs covering 1707 has not survived, the editors have tried to partially reconstruct this section according to references and citations used in the work by Józef Feldman);⁸ and his activities in the circle of Stanisław I (1708–1709). The published memoirs reveal the reproaches made by the Wiśniowieckis to Russia, the main ally of Augustus II, and its most loyal ally among the republican leaders in the GDL, the Samogitian Lord

⁸J. Feldman, *Polska w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej 1704–1709*.

Lieutenant (*starosta generalny*) and Lithuanian Field Hetman Grzegorz Ogiński. The elucidation of the Ogiński-Wiśniowecki conflict from the point of view of the Wiśniowecki brothers is a very valuable feature of these memoirs. Their importance is enhanced by the fact that their author was climbing the career ladder at the time, becoming an increasingly important figure in the political Olympus of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Janusz Antoni Wiśniowecki became Castellan of Vilnius (1703), and then Palatine of Vilnius (1704) and Krakow (1706). The conflict between the author's brother and G.A. Ogiński continued to grow, until finally in 1707, after the forced abdication of Augustus II, Michał Seweracy Wiśniowecki also crossed over to the side of the Swedes and their placeman, Stanisław I Leszczyński. The mother of the Wiśniowecki brothers, Anna Dolska, who shared their affinity for the situation with her relative Stanisław I Leszczyński, played a rather significant role in establishing contact between the hetman of the left-bank Ukrainian Cossacks Ivan Mazepa and Stanisław I Leszczyński and the Swedes. According to Janusz Antoni Wiśniowecki, Mazepa hoped to marry Anna Dolska, Wiśniowecki's mother (p. 234). The fact that Michał Seweracy Wiśniowecki crossed over to the Swedish side, and the public declaration of the manifesto on this occasion, only served to enrage the Tsar of Russia, Peter I. All the more so that up till then, the Wiśnioweckis had enjoyed the favour of Augustus II and Peter I. The latter even considered the candidacy of Michał Seweracy Wiśniowecki for the throne of the Polish-Lithuanian state after Augustus II abdicated in 1706 (p. 221).

This version of the memoirs of Janusz Antoni Wiśniowecki has been very carefully prepared for publication. The comprehensive commentary, the identification of the figures mentioned, the additional information about events described in the memoirs, and the explanation of inaccuracies that appear in them, all deserve the greatest praise. Readers are also guided in their understanding of the memoirs by the numerous translations of Latin inserts into Polish given in the notes. The editors can also be commended for their qualified identification of original literary citations by authors from the times of Antiquity and later periods, and the inclusion of original versions. This publication of the memoirs of Janusz Antoni Wiśniowecki is a qualified execution of source research, undoubtedly assisting researchers of this epoch as a valuable primary source showing the events of the civil war in Lithuania and the Great Northern War from the point of view of one of the most important participants.