

Mindaugas Šapoka, *Warfare, Loyalty, and Rebellion. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Great Northern War, 1709–1717*, London, New York: Routledge, 2018. 228 pp. ISBN 978-1-472-48435-2

Three centuries after the end of the Great Northern War (1700–1721), which fundamentally changed the geopolitical balance in Europe, we notice revived interest in society about these events, and in response, the war has entered the field of vision of history researchers with increasing frequency.¹ The monograph by Mindaugas Šapoka about the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) during the years of the Great Northern War,² published in 2018 by Routledge, is an excellent addition to research on this topic. Even though the monograph echoes the author's doctoral thesis defended at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, in 2014,³ in this case, his research is somewhat different in nature, and the monograph is a more conceptual work.

Until now, the socio-political and socio-economic contexts of the Great Northern War were generally given less attention in studies of the internal and foreign policies of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in this period, and in research on warfare. In the historiographical contexts of grand policy and distinctive war campaigns, the accentuation

¹ Recent noteworthy overviews presenting the Great Northern War include *Great Northern War Compendium*, Vol. 1, ed. by S.L. Kling Jr. (THGC Publishing, 2015) (two articles are dedicated to the GDL). Several works on warfare have appeared recently in the 'Century of the Soldier' series: L.E. Wolke, *The Swedish Army of the Great Northern War, 1700–1721* (Solihull, 2018); B. Megorsky, *The Russian Army in the Great Northern War 1700–21: Organisation, Material, Training and Combat Experience, Uniforms* (Solihull, 2018). Also worth mentioning is: G. Esposito, *Armies of the Great Northern War 1700–1720 (Men-at-Arms)* (Osprey Publishing, 2019). A study of the Battle of Poltava has appeared in Russia as well. See: V.A. Artamonov, *Poltavskaje bitva. Generalnaja batalija Severnoj vojny, 1700–1709* (Moskva, 2020).

² In Lithuanian historiography, probably on account of the lesser involvement of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, this war has traditionally been referred to simply as the Northern War; however, in recent times, the term Great Northern War has been used more frequently.

³ The supervisors of Šapoka's doctoral thesis 'The Genesis of the 1715 Vilnius Confederation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1710–1715' (2014) were the University of Aberdeen professors Robert Frost and Karin Friedrich.

of the specific situation the GDL found itself in has often 'fallen by the wayside'. A certain exception, in a good sense, would be the research conducted by Robert Frost,⁴ which the author of the monograph under review appears to extend, by focusing his research exclusively on the GDL. This is an important point, because not so long ago in Lithuania, when presenting historiography on the Great Northern War, specialists in the history of warfare described this period in the 18th-century context as one of the least studied.⁵

If we do not include the brief preface, Šapoka's monograph begins with a rather thorough introduction, where the reader is introduced not only to the political system alive in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth following the 1569 Union of Lublin (pp. 1–9), and the origins of the Great Northern War and its start (pp. 9–15). It also seeks to present specific terminology, to assess the historiography of the issue and the most important research sources. The broad use of archival material is unquestionably one of the advantages of this research: archival material from archives and library manuscript departments in England (two), Belarus (one), Poland (ten), Lithuania (four) and Russia (one) have been used in the monograph. At first glance, the presentation of the main GDL officials from the period under discussion (Tables 1.1–1.4) in the introductory part may appear somewhat banal, but for international readers this may serve as an excellent aid in navigating the labyrinthine personal state bureaucracy. The chronological perspective of the monograph is framed in an exclusively geographical sense by two significant events: the Battle of Poltava in 1709, which fundamentally altered the course of the Great Northern War, and the Silent Sejm in 1717, which marked an increase in Russian political influence in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. We notice that, compared to his doctoral dissertation, the 'official' chronological boundaries of Šapoka's research have been expanded somewhat in this monograph. The research develops three thematic cross-sections that reveal the contexts of warfare, loyalty and rebellion, which are reflected both in the title and in the structure of the monograph itself. Thus, it consists of three main parts, Warfare

⁴ R. Frost, *The Northern Wars. War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721* (London, 2000); R. Frost, "Everyone understood what it meant": The Impact of the Battle of Poltava on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth', in: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 31, No 1/4 (2009–2010), pp. 159–176.

⁵ V. Rakutis, 'XVIII a. Lietuvos karo istorijos tyrimų apžvalga', in: *Karo archyvas*, Vol. XVIII (2003), pp. 309–310, 319.

(pp. 29–86), *Between Loyalty and Rebellion* (pp. 87–157), and *Rebellion* (pp. 159–205), which I shall discuss here in a little more detail.

In Part I, *Warfare*, the first two sections (*The Council of Warsaw*, pp. 31–42, and *Efforts to Continue the War*, pp. 43–56) discuss the general *sejmik* in Brest that assembled after a long interval on 25–30 January 1710, the circumstances behind the activities of the Council of Warsaw that functioned from 4 February to 16 April in 1710, and the question of enlarging the army of the GDL. The research reveals that the nobility in the GDL did not want to increase or introduce new taxes which would go towards boosting the number of men in the army. Even though the nobility was rather positively disposed towards the return of Augustus II to the throne of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, given the situation in the GDL following the Battle of Poltava in 1709, they hoped to resolve the matter of enlarging the army by permanent and already-existing taxes. The monograph draws attention to the contribution of Ludwik Pociąg (1664–1730), the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, regarding various initiatives for the enlargement of the GDL's army. Pociąg accepted a position that carried a great deal of responsibility, taking the grand hetman's mace (*butawa*) after the unexpected death of the former grand hetman Hrehory Ogiński, and most likely having received the support of Peter I, the tsar of Russia. According to the author, the introduction of a new tax and the enlargement of the GDL's army at the Council of Warsaw can be associated with the cooperation between the ruler, Pociąg and Karol Radziwiłł, and is viewed as the obvious triumph of Augustus II. An interesting circumstance surrounding the formation of the GDL's army in 1710–1711 shows that Pociąg, the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, spent around 200,000 zloties of his own on this cause, which he later never sought to recover from the state. Understandably, he most likely managed to regain this money, or at least some of it, by administering the collection of a tax on alcohol, which the Council of Warsaw had just happened to allow him to do in 1710. Assessing the circumstances of the formation of the GDL's army and the actual preparedness of its structural elements for military campaigns, the author reaches the conclusion that in the middle of 1711, the army of the GDL would have consisted of around 16,000 men, a figure somewhat smaller than planned.

The decision to turn the spotlight on the situation in the treasury of the GDL in this chapter of Part I (*The Lithuanian Budget*, pp. 57–74) is particularly significant, as probably the only serious research of that

period, by Michał Nycz, is already outdated.⁶ It could be said that Šapoka has for the first time in historiography stopped to look more thoroughly at the formation of the GDL's treasury in the first two decades of the 18th century, the tax structure, and how taxes were collected. Until now, more comprehensive research has only focused on the situation of the GDL's treasury and organisational aspects in the 16th, 17th and the second half of the 18th centuries, while the period of reign of the Saxon (Wettin) dynasty was always overlooked.⁷ Šapoka's research has revealed that the treasury of the GDL contained from 812,000 (in 1710) to 2.3 million złoties (in 1716), thus, in 1710–1717, the average annual budget of the GDL was 1.5 million złoties. This would suggest that the financial system and tax collection functioned rather effectively in the GDL. Incidentally, the need for expenditure on military matters was obviously greater, and often the potential of the GDL's treasury was exceeded by three or four times (Diagram 3.5). For example, in 1711, the need for military expenditure came to seven million złoties, whereas the treasury of the GDL could only provide 2.12 million. In this context, the only year that stands out is 1717, when the revenue of the treasury of the GDL was greater (2.23 million) than the need for military expenditure (2.16 million). The trend is becoming clear from the research that the situation in the GDL's treasury depended on revenue collected from the hearth tax and the one-off 15 złoties tax and the 16 złoties tax (in 1711, a total of 2.18 million was collected, in 1712, 270,000, in 1716, 1.36 million, and in 1717, 927,000 złoties), while in 1710, 1713, 1714 and 1715, there was no revenue from these taxes. Other permanent taxes (hyberna, kwarta, czopowe szeleżne, customs duties, Jewish poll tax) guaranteed more stable flows of money into the GDL's treasury. The excellent visual representation (Diagram 3.4) of the tax structure presented in the study leads to one fundamental question: did these sums of money all reach the GDL's

⁶ M. Nycz, *Geneza reform skarbowych sejmu niemego. Studium z dziejów skarbowo-wojskowych z lat 1697–1717* (Poznań, 1938). For a more thorough review of this issue in 18th-century historiography, see: T. Cieselski, 'Stan badań nad skarbowością polską i litewską wieku XVIII', in: *Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego*, Vol. 8 (2003), pp. 44–59.

⁷ Research into the activities of the GDL Fiscal Tribunal from just this period can be mentioned, see: L. Šabūnas, *Didžiosios Lietuvos Kunigaikštystės Iždo tribunoslas (1613–1764)*, (Kaunas, 1936); A. Filipczak-Kocur, 'Litewski Trybunał Skarbowy (1591–1717)', *Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego*, Vol. 7 (2002), pp. 183–209; T. Cieselski, 'Grodno miejscem obrad komisji i trybunałów skarbowych. Przyczynek do dziejów skarbowości litewskiej pierwszej ćwierci XVIII w.', in: *Garadzanski palimsest* (2009), pp. 140–151.

treasury in all instances, or did these plans remain only as goals in the light of the demographic decline and the difficult conditions of war? This question is not an easy one to answer; the author adds that the source base that could aid in answering this question is relatively limited, marking his research as a significant step in historiography. Generally speaking, the important insights and calculations the author makes in this section, which reveal the structure of the GDL's treasury and its potential under the difficult circumstances of the Great Northern War, allow for a more realistic assessment of the situation than has hitherto been presented in the existing historiography.

The last section in Part I (Local Politics, pp. 75–86) discusses the influence of magnate factions (clans) on political life in the GDL. The reduced influence of the Sapiehas in the early 18th century allowed other clans to take hold. The author distinguishes the Pocij-Ogiński clan as being the most influential in 1710–1717; its core included Ludwik Pocij, his brother Kazimierz Pocij, and Kazimierz Ogiński. Marriages played an important role in entrenching their clan: Leonard Pocij, the father of Ludwik and Kazimierz Pocij, was married to the sister of Jan Ogiński, the father of Hrehory and Kazimierz Ogiński. Besides using the GDL's army as a means of control to strengthen their clan, they also relied on the leverage gained from controlling the Supreme Tribunal of Lithuania to increase their economic power. The author draws attention to the prevailing, albeit one-sided, approach in historiography about the unconditional dependence of the middle and lower nobility on magnates in the GDL. The monograph expands the issue of the internal repositioning in the estate of nobles, and regional particularities (more attention is given to highlighting the situation in Žemaitija [Samogitia] and to presenting the role of the burgeoning Billewicz political faction).

The author reveals the increased significance of local district (*powiat sejmiks*), based on an analysis of GDL *sejmik* documents,⁸ where their role in tax affairs became particularly relevant. Even though this rather compact section on revealing the main issue is auxiliary information, when elucidating local political contexts in the GDL, chronologically overlapping research on the activities of the GDL *sejmiks* is often

⁸ The insights of the author correlate with those appearing in historiography describing the parliamentarisation process of the activities of the GDL *sejmiks*. See: R. Jurgaitis, 'Funkcjonowanie sejmiku wileńskiego w latach 1717–1795: między szlacheckim parlamentaryzmem a samorządem', in: *Praktyka życia publicznego w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w XVI–XVIII wieku*, pod redakcją U. Augustyniak i A.B. Zakrzewskiego (Warszawa, 2010), p. 37.

undeservedly omitted from the research spectrum,⁹ in which local policy construction mechanisms that function at the very lowest institutional level are disclosed.

Part II of the monograph, *Between Loyalty and Rebellion*, offers a broader presentation of the political context from the growth of Russia's influence until the changes inspired by the infighting among political factions. The first section (Russian Influence, pp. 89–102) reveals how Russia expressed its greater influence after the Battle of Poltava, the actions of the occupying army, and the circumstances surrounding the collection of rather large contributions (the vassal Duchy of Courland alone had to pay 3.2 million zloties in the period 1709–1717). We learn that Peter I, the Russian tsar, supported pro-Russian political factions, by allocating them pensions and separate payments, but the author has not managed to find any confirmation that the Pocij-Ogiński clan received even an insignificant payment in 1710–1717. More light is shed on Marcjan Wołłowicz, the Council of Warsaw's appointed envoy to the Russian tsar, the leader of the anti-Sapieha movement and Grand Marshal of Lithuania in 1710–1711, and the significance of Michał Puzyna's legations in 1712, the demands to remove the Russian army from the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the conditions for the return of Livonia. On the other hand, the author shows clearly that Russian influence on political life in the period under discussion was not always as strong as has been portrayed in historiography.¹⁰ This influence decreased even further in 1711–1712, when the GDL nobility's dissatisfaction with the actions of the Russian army grew markedly, and Russia was simultaneously forced to go to war against Turkey. In trying to adapt to the changing situation, Russia not only ordered its army to observe strict discipline, but, most importantly, Peter I tried to present Russia as a defender of the nobility's freedoms, and as having liberated the Commonwealth from Swedish occupation. The fact that Peter I had rejected Prussia's offer to divide up the Commonwealth in 1709 was also frequently exploited.

⁹R. Kalvinskas, 'Kauno pavieto seimelio veikla Šiaurės karo metu', in: *Mūsų praeitis*, No 5 (1997), pp. 29–39; A. Macuk, *Baracka magnackich grupovak u VKL (1717–1763 gg.)* (Minsk, 2010); D. Konieczna, *Ustrój i funkcjonowanie sejmiku brzeskolitewskiego w latach 1565–1763* (Warszawa, 2013).

¹⁰In historiography, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is sometimes attributed, in a geopolitical sense, to the group of Client States of the Russian Empire. See: J.P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire 1650–1831* (Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 63–64.

The second section of Part II (The Internal Struggles, pp. 103–133) discloses the internal disagreements between magnate factions, and the circumstances of this political infighting at the Lithuanian Tribunal, the Fiscal Tribunal of the GDL, and at Lithuanian *sejmiks*. There was a number of political clashes in 1710–1713 over the Neuburg domains, the hierarchs of the Catholic Church in the GDL were unhappy about the stationing of GDL army units in the clergys' domains, and ultimately, mutual tensions between the commanders of the army of the GDL, Grand Hetman Pociiej and Field Hetman Stanisław Denhoff, became increasingly evident. But most importantly, the Sapieha family's aspirations to recover their lost political prestige grew all the more obvious. In the third section (Fatal Decision, pp. 134–157), the author discusses problems that arose when Saxon military units were brought into the territory of the GDL in the light of the threat of Turkish military intervention in 1713. The maintenance of the Saxon army, which numbered around 26,000 soldiers, was an additional burden to the entire Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (in November 1713, 9,000 Saxon soldiers arrived in Vilnius, and stayed for the winter). According to the author's calculations, contributions towards the maintenance of the Saxon army in 1714 would have reached 2.7 million zloties, and somewhat less in 1715, 1.1 million zloties (Table 7.1). However, rising dissatisfaction in the districts of the GDL made collecting such sums a difficult task, and exceptions that applied to certain magnate domains were another aspect that did not please the nobility. The author explains very well how the fact of the Saxon army's presence in the territory of the GDL influenced the position of the political elite. Grand Hetman Pociiej saw the stationing of Saxon military units in the territory of the GDL primarily as a direct threat to the army of the GDL, thus this situation and the pressure from political opponents forced him to seek political backing from Russia.

Part III, entitled Rebellion, which is also made up of three sections, discusses the circumstances surrounding the activities of the Confederation of Vilnius in 1715, and its results. Šapoka reveals very well the position of Pociiej, the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, demonstrating the subtleties of his political balancing act between Augustus II, the ruler of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian tsar Peter I and his envoys, and the nobility of the GDL and his own opponents. The main purpose of the Council of Vilnius, which took place under varying conditions between 29 July and 23 August in 1715, was to seek financial resources for maintaining the army of the GDL. The participants in this congress approved of the introduction of a one-off tax of 15 zloties for

the army of the GDL, obliged Pociiej not to use the GDL's army against Augustus II, and finally sent envoys to inform him of these decisions, and to dispel any possible suspicions he may have harboured. The planned contributions for the maintenance of the Saxon army were acknowledged as illegal, and Pociiej took over responsibility for defending the nobility's domains in the GDL from the Saxon army. Even though the Council of Vilnius was never formally announced as a confederation, in Šapoka's view it was in effect an act of confederation, which was also how contemporaries perceived this institutional compound. As the confederation's envoys reached Greater Poland, and also Lesser Poland, the author's research suggests that we may search for the roots of the anti-Saxon confederate movement within the GDL, whereas the later events in Poland were just a continuation. Contrary to what has been claimed in historiography, the author reveals that by summoning the Vilnius Confederation, Pociiej was not merely executing the interests of Peter I, but was in actual fact representing the interests of the GDL, by seeking to strengthen the army and to oppose the stationing of Saxon units. The activities and resolutions of the Vilnius Confederation, as the author highlights, were an obvious victory for Pociiej. On the other hand, later events and the Confederation of Tarnogród, which commenced its activities on 26 November 1715, were welcomed in the GDL as well, and signalled that changes were under way,¹¹ while Pociiej continued to coordinate subsequent actions with Peter I. It is obvious that Russia's position in the political battles that were going on in the GDL at the time was fateful, becoming even more evident when the confederates relieved Pociiej of command of the army of the GDL. Peter I opposed this move; nevertheless, with Russia at war with Sweden, it obviously needed a politically stable Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Finally, in the Conclusions (pp. 206–210), Šapoka summarises his research, and again highlights the role of the representatives of the GDL at the Council of Warsaw in 1710, the stability of the fiscal system in the GDL despite the difficult years of the Great Northern War, the leadership of the Pociiej-Ogiński clan in 1710–1717, and the counterweight of the middle nobility and the role of the *sejmiks* in the GDL. The author also rehabilitates Pociiej, the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, by removing the unwarranted 'baddie' label he appears to have earned

¹¹ A collection of articles appeared recently devoted to revealing the details of the Silent Sejm of 1717 and its results. See: *Sejm niemy. Między mitem a reformą państwa*, ed. M. Zwierzykowski (Warszawa, 2019). This collection features an article by the monograph's author about the Confederation of Vilnius in 1715.

in earlier historiography. On the other hand, under pressure from the GDL's senators, the same Pociąg summoned the Vilnius Confederation in 1715, and when the middle nobility stood up to defend their interests, he created a pretext for Russia to interfere, and allowed Peter I to take the mediator's role in implementing the reforms of the Silent Sejm of 1717. We can agree with Šapoka that in many ways, his research corrects and clarifies the conclusions and assessments of Józef Feldman, Józef Gierowski, Jacek Staskewski and other famous researchers of this period regarding the GDL, and most importantly, he reveals more of the colours marking this rather tumultuous and complex period.

One or two shortcomings, or the odd inaccuracy, do appear in the monograph. A few source publications that were overlooked would have broadened the source base for the period under discussion.¹² A clearer evaluation of the results of the outbreak of plague during the Great Northern War (1709–1711) and its influence on the economic and military potential of the GDL would have been beneficial. Even though important documents from the GDL *sejmiks* were used, I did not find the documents of the Smolensk voivodeship and Starodub district *sejmiks*-in-exile, which took place in Vilnius, and wonder why they were omitted. The author's claim that the activities of the GDL general *sejmik* that began in 1710 convened only for the second time in almost a hundred years (p. 35) is somewhat incorrect; despite having experienced a clear decline in the second half of the 17th century, the frequency of the activities of this GDL parliamentary institution was greater than indicated, especially looking at it from the perspective of a hundred years.¹³ A lot of attention has been directed towards Pociąg, the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, in the monograph; however, the research would have benefited from a more comprehensive biography of this figure.¹⁴

¹² *Severnaja vojna 1700–1721 gg. K 300-letiju Poltavskoj pobedy: sbornik dokumentov*, t. 1: 1700–1709, eds. L.G. Beskrovnyj, G.A. Kumanev (Moskva, 2009); W.F. Rakowski, *Pamiętnik Wielkiej Wojny Północnej* (Warszawa, 2002); J.A. Wiśniowiecki, *Ilias Polski (1700–1710)*, wydali P.P. Romaniuk i J. Burdowicz-Nowicki (Warszawa, 2018).

¹³ A. Rachuba, 'Sejmiki generalne Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w Wołkowsku i Słonimiu', in: *Między Zachodem a Wschodem. Studia z dziejów Rzeczypospolitej w epoce nowożytnej*, eds. J. Staszewski, K. Mikulski, J. Dumanowski (Toruń, 2002), pp. 42–53; R. Kołodziej, 'Litewski sejmik generalny w Słonimiu na tle sytuacji w Rzeczypospolitej przed sejmem 1685 roku', in: *Res Historica*, No 40 (2015), pp. 97–113.

¹⁴ A. Rachuba, 'Ludwik Konstanty Pociąg', in: *Poczet hetmanów Rzeczypospolitej. Hetmani litewscy* (Warszawa, 2006), pp. 255–264. V. Rakutis, 'Liudvikas Konstantinas Pociėjus', in: *Lietuvos krašto apsaugos ministrai ir kariuomenės vadai, t. 1: LDK didieji etmonai ir sukilimų vadai*, ed. G. Surgailis (Vilnius, 2008), pp. 203–211.

There are also a few minor inaccuracies in the bibliography, but these small details in no way reduce the value of the research.

In summary, it can be said that this is a significant assessment of the situation of the GDL during the Great Northern War, which offers quite a new perspective in historiography. The research highlights and corrects the political career of Ludwik Pociej, the Grand Hetman of Lithuania. Within the compact chronological range of 1709–1717, the author has expertly revealed the position of the political elite in the GDL, and the changes it went through under such difficult geo-political circumstances, the gradual increase of Russia's influence, and most importantly, the actual economic and military potential of the GDL.

Robertas Jurgaitis
Lithuanian Institute of History