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POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH.
POLITICAL GAMES, SOCIAL COMMUNICATION,
DIPLOMACY

Edited by
Aleksandra Ziober and Alessandro Boccolini



EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: LA RIVISTA

Il Comitato redazionale e scientifico è lieto di presentare al pubblico la rivista scientifica *Eastern European History Review*.

Con un carattere internazionale e interdisciplinare, una cadenza annuale e una fruibilità *open access* la rivista focalizza i propri interessi sulle dinamiche occorse nell'Europa Orientale durante tutta l'età moderna (XIV-XIX). *Eastern European History Review* è espressione del Centro Studi dell'Università della Tuscia CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna) nato nel 1997 per intuizione del Prof. Gaetano Platania, Direttore Emerito della Rivista.

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The Editorial and Scientific Board are proud delighted to present the *Eastern European History Review* under the aegis of Sette Città Editore.

The *Eastern European History Review* is an international and interdisciplinary annually online and open access peer-reviewed journal about studies on Central and Eastern Europe in the Modern Age (XIV-XIX). The Journal is also the expression of the Study Center CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna – Center Study on the Age of Sobieski and Modern Poland) of the University of Tuscia, born in 1997, from an idea of Prof. Gaetano Platania, today Director Emeritus of this journal.

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The editorial initiative we present comes from the obvious lack of a journal, in Italy, concerning the history of Central and Eastern Europe during the Modern Age, this despite its fundamental role in the history and culture of that part of the continent, wrongly considered distant and peripheral.

Quite the contrary is true, in fact. Main objective of the journal is to create a space for reflection and discussion on topics pertaining to Central and Eastern Europe, but also relations with Continental Europe, encouraging dialogue between scholars and experts in the field, and between different approaches of scientific research.

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THE ROLE OF STANISLAW STADNICKI (C. 1551–1610) DURING THE THIRD FREE ELECTION¹

ABSTRACT

The article discusses Stanisław Stadnicki's role in the events surrounding the third election in 1587, focusing on his involvement in the camp of the Maximilianists, i.e. Habsburg supporters. The internal differences within this faction are shown, as well as Stadnicki's actions and his military significance in the context of the struggle for the throne between Maximilian Habsburg and Sigismund Vasa. The study highlights the importance of family connections in the politics of the time and Stadnicki's influence on the course of events, despite his lack of leadership position. Ultimately, the article assesses the effectiveness of Stadnicki's and the Maximilianists' actions, pointing out the reasons for their defeat.

KEYWORDS: Stanisław Stadnicki; Sigismund Vasa; Third election; Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

This article examines a group of Polish-Lithuanian politicians whose common goal was to install a representative of the Habsburg monarchy on the throne, with particular emphasis on the role of Stanisław Stadnicki (c. 1551–1610) in the events surrounding the third free election. In Polish history, this group is commonly referred to as the “Maximilianists”. Although they shared common goals and interests, they were internally strongly differentiated, both in terms of the position of individual members and their conception of policymaking. The internal situation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was plagued by numerous conflicts and forced to face the chaos of an interregnum for the third time in 14 years, was also considered. Stephen Báthory's death caused great surprise among his subjects. The royal secretary Reinhold Heidenstein compared the news of the monarch's death to a thunderbolt, which struck the Republic and caused fear among his subjects². Although the monarch's ailments were not a secret, he was widely regarded as an active individual, capable of withstanding the rigors of military campaigns, and he preferred hunting over any form of courtly entertainment³.

1 The article is the result of research carried out under the “PRELUDIUM” 17 project entitled: *Rebel and traitor or defender of the nobility's liberties? The political biography of Stanisław Stadnicki (c. 1551–1610)*. Project no.: UMO-2019/33/N/HS3/01883, funded by the National Centre for Science.

2 Reinhold Heidenstein, *History of Poland from the Death of Sigismund Augustus to 1594: Book XII*, eds. Janusz Byliński, and Włodzimierz Kaczorowski (Opole: Wydawnictwo i Drukarnia Świętego Krzyża, 2015), 509.

3 Dominik Kadzik, Agnieszka Pawłowska-Kubik, *Kulisy stanu zdrowia i*

Prior to presenting the events immediately preceding the Third Free Election, I would like to briefly delineate Stanisław Stadnicki during the second half of the 1580s. He was one of the most colorful figures of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, known as “the Devil of acut” by his contemporaries. He was born around 1551 into the family of a well-known infidel, Stanisław Mateusz Stadnicki and Barbara Stadnicka, née Zborowska. During the period of interest to us in this article, he was a member of the Zborowski party, which demonstrates how strong family connections were in politics of the time.

It appears that the third interregnum is a highly developed subject matter. Kazimierz Lepszy has given this period great attention⁴. For many years, his work was the only point of reference. In recent years, mainly thanks to the studies by Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula⁵, Henryk Lulewicz⁶, Anna Pieńkowska⁷ and Maciej Pieńkowski⁸, new threads and research questions have emerged, as well as voices calling for a revision of Kazimierz Lepszy’s findings based on new archival sources⁹. It is widely acknowledged that this was the third attempt made by the Habsburgs to acquire the Polish crown. Historiography has already evaluated the Habsburg diplomatic actions towards free elections in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the death of Sigismund II Augustus in 1572 and during the first two interregnums¹⁰. The numerous failures of the Habsburgs in the subsequent elections (1573, 1575,

okoliczności śmierci Stefana Batorego, in *Konsylia Historyczno-Medyczne. Materials*, eds. Bożena Czwojdrak, and Marta Piber-Zbieranowska (Warszawa: Instytut Historii im. Tadeusza Manteuffla Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2022), 14.

4 Kazimierz Lepszy, *Oblężenie Krakowa przez arcyksięcia Maksymiliana* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, 1929); Id., *Walka stronnictw w pierwszych latach panowania Zygmunta III* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, 1929).

5 Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula, *From hostility to friendship. The Austrian Habsburgs vis-à-vis Poland in 1587–1592* (Katowice: University of Silesia Press, 2019).

6 Henryk Lulewicz, *Gniewów o unię ciąg dalszy. Polish-Lithuanian relations in the years 1569-1588* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2002).

7 Anna Pieńkowska, *Conventions and assemblies of the interregnum period after Stefan Batory’s death* (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, 2010).

8 Maciej Pieńkowski, *The difficult road to power in the Republic. The Coronation Sejm of Sigismund III 1587/1588 and the Pacification Sejm of 1589* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2021).

9 Joanna Choińska-Mika, “The political system of the 16th to 18th centuries—the state of research after 1989”, in *Materiały pokonferencyjne. Spojrzenia w przeszłość*, vol. 1: *Średniowiecze, nowożytność. Konferencja Muzeum Historii Polski, Jadwisin, 25–26 października 2007*, eds. Paweł Skibiński, et al. (Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polski, 2009), 203-14.

10 See more: Stanisław Cynarski, “Uwagi w sprawie kandydatury habsburskiej w czasie pierwszych elekcji w Polsce”, *The Sobótka Silesian Historical Quarterly*, 1-2 (1992): 63-8.

and 1587), despite their considerable political and financial efforts, were noted by Barwicka-Makula¹¹. She correctly noted that the biggest problem was the inconsistent foreign policy vision of the members of the imperial family. After the heirless death of Jagiellon, the Habsburgs sent numerous envoys to the Commonwealth, contacted representatives of the senatorial-dignitary elite, and gave many tips to agents and informers. Their actions ended in defeat twice. The researcher identifies the rationale behind the failures in certain characteristics of Maximilian II Habsburg's character, such as his vacillation and inconsistency in his initiatives, the sluggishness and protracted activities of his diplomatic service, and ultimately, a lack of discernment in the selection of those accountable for the success of Habsburg policy on the Vistula.

The third attempt to acquire the Polish crown was already taking place under changed political conditions. Habsburg policy was led by a new ruler, Rudolf II, «the emperor with unfulfilled hopes»¹². An interesting aspect of the battle to obtain the Polish crown for the Habsburgs is the detailed presentation of the attempt to build a pro-Habsburg party in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, consisting of dignitaries and representatives of the nobility. Its axis was undoubtedly the Zborowskis and their relatives, including Stanisław Stadnicki. The Zborowski brothers, court marshal Andrzej, the castellan of Gniezno Jan, and outlaw Krzysztof, led this group. Furthermore, we can mention Poznań voivode Stanisław Górka, referendary Stanisław Sędziwoj Czarnkowski (1526–1602), starosta of Śniatyń Mikołaj Jazłowiecki, the Stadnicki family (mainly Stanisław and Marcin), Spytek Jordan (†1596), grand lithuanian stolnik Aleksander Proński (†1595) and Kyiv bishop Jakub Woroniecki (†1588). The satirical work *Corpus Austriacum* shows the composition of the pro-Habsburg camp and mentions additional 'players'. The anonymous author, who was an opponent of the Austrian candidacy, used the metaphor of the human body. The individuals of the party were characterized by their assigned body parts. For example: head (*caput*) – Stanisław Górka, brain (*cerebrum*) Grand Marshal of Lithuania Albrycht Radziwiłł (1558–1592), nose (*nasus*) Voivode of Sieradz Olbracht Łaski (1536–1605), breast (*pectus*), soul (*anima*) Jan Zborowski, back (*dorsum*) Kostek, heart (*cor*) Krzysztof Zborowski, viscera (*intestina*) Andrzej Zborowski, hand (*manus*) representants of Stadnicki family, stomach (*stomachus*) Mikołaj Jazłowiecki, stomach (*venter*) Krzysztof Warszewicki, bladder (*vesica*) Prokop Pękosiński, ass (*posticum*) Mikołaj Kazimierski¹³. Research on the Maximilianist party in the Commonwealth is imperative, as it is without it we will not be able to comprehend the dynamics of the conflict and internal relations within the Polish-Lithuanian state. This was a diverse social, financial, and prestige-diverse group. Even the ironic overtone of the piece cited above testifies to the common belief that the Zborowskis were the heart and head of the movement. It is noteworthy to note that the Stadnickis were referred to as the “hands” of the party, which I believe to be quite accurate, given their significant executive role in it.

Stanisław Stadnicki and his brother Marcin were present during the local council

11 Barwicka-Makula, *From hostility to friendship*, 21 and next.

12 Barwicka-Makula, *From hostility to friendship*, 67.

13 BCzart., 92, “*Corpus Austriacum*”, p. 215; same reference in *Ibid.*, 328, p. 38.

(*sejmik*), which was convened in Lviv on 7 January 1587 by Stanisław Żółkiewski¹⁴. It lasted for almost two weeks and was not a peacefare¹⁵. Jan Zamoyski, perhaps mindful of his recent defeat at the local council of the Ruthenian Voivodeship in 1584, actively participated in the deliberations of the Lviv assembly. The event was attended by several senators and the political associates of the chancellor¹⁶. His legitimate concern must have been the “lesser brothers”, i.e. the nobility. Despite the large attendance of senators with their military postings, it was not without conflict. Into a dispute with the chancellor came the Speaker of the Assembly, Mikołaj Jazłowiecki, who: «resisted the Chancellor, saying that they feared him so that he would not bring them the Voivode of Transylvania to Poland»¹⁷. As Reinhold Heidenstein noted, the assembled nobility was in the majority: hostile «to the Chancellor»¹⁸, and the Stadnickis manifested their influence and military power by arriving in the company of «several hundred riders»¹⁹. Although probably not all of Jan Zamoyski’s opponents at the Sejm could be attributed to the Zborowskis’ party, undoubtedly Jazłowiecki’s strong position and his speech criticising the Chancellor’s policy, supported by the Stadnicki’s “argument of force”, showed that Zamoyski’s position in the Ruthenia Voivodeship was not unshakable. During the assembly, other representatives of the nobility also spoke in favor of limiting the Hetman’s power and demanding the enactment of the exorbitance²⁰. This indicates that Zamoyski was unsuccessful in subjugating the sejmiks, even in provinces that were traditionally under his strong influence.

Immediately following the conclusion of the proceedings in Lviv, the Stadnickis proceeded to the local council in Proszowice. It began its deliberations on 26 January. On the night preceding the assembly, a clash erupted between them and the armed forces of the Cracow starosta general, Mikołaj Zebrzydowski. The Stadnickis occupied his inn and, despite Zebrzydowski’s warnings, refused to depart. They were to: “drink and shoot” to insult the late king and important politicians. The next day, in

14 “Confederation of the Ruthenian Voivodeship”, Lviv 7 I 1587. See, *Akta grodzkie i ziemskie z czasów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej: z archiwum tak zwanego bernardyńskiego we Lwowie w skutek fundacyi śp. Alexandra hr. Stadnickiego*, t. 20: *Lauda sejmikowe*, t. 1: *Lauda wiszeńskie 1572-1648*, ed. Antoni Prochaska (Lviv: Wydawnictwa fundacyi Al. hr. Stadnickiego ogłaszane przez Towarzystwo Naukowe we Lwowie, 1909), 53.

15 BCzart., 92, “Discurso dell’ Interregno di Polonia del Anno 1587 di Horazio Spannocchi”, f. 855.

16 These included: Stanisław Żółkiewski, Przemyśl castellan Jan Fredro, Jan Sienieński, Halych castellan Mikołaj Herburt, Kyiv voivode Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski. See, Heidenstein, *History of Poland*, 513.

17 BCzart., 328, “Niezgoda na sejmiku lwowskim między Zamoyskim a Jazłowieckim”, ff. 107-09.

18 Heidenstein, *History of Poland*, 514.

19 Heidenstein, *History of Poland*, 514.

20 AGAD, APP, 6, “Votum p. Gabriela Świrski wygłoszone w Lwowie 13 stycznia 1586 r.”, p. 120-27.

“thirty horses”, they surrounded the church where the proceedings were customarily held. They were asked to send back their soldiers, but in a snide reply they agreed on condition that the starost would remove his troops from the town. Another of the nobles, Mikołaj Kaźmierski – a supporter of the Zborowskis – pointed out that the senators were to blame for the heated atmosphere at the assembly. He encouraged them to deliberate collectively, without regard to the positions and duties they held. The chance to do so was missed by the soldiers, possibly the Stadnickis, who fired in the direction of the starost who was entering the church²¹.

In the middle of the difficult year of 1587, dispatches arrived from Prague offering hopes of the Habsburgs obtaining the Polish crown. The biggest obstacle may have been the lack of consensus among family members for vigorous diplomatic action. Several informants and observers of the situation at the time viewed the Habsburgs’ Polish supporters negatively, citing their tendency to change their views and accept material benefits²². The course of the electoral *Sejm*, which commenced its deliberations on the final day of June 1587, failed to elicit any sense of optimism²³. Discussions were held surrounded by armed troops, and many magnates arrived in military assistance. The assembly was divided into groups: supporters of the Habsburg candidacy (Archduke Maximilian), supporters of Tsar Fyodor I Rurykovich, for whom some Lithuanians were in favor, the “Piaś”, and the Swedish prince Sigismund Vasa. On 15 August, the starost of Wenden, Prokop Pieniążek, a *Zamojszczyk*, put forward Zamoyski’s candidacy, but the assembled nobility completely ignored this vote²⁴. After several days of interminable discussions, the election was polarized. On August 19th, the Swedish Prince was proclaimed, and three days later, Archduke Maximilian was elected. As stated by Walter Leitsch, Habsburg received 73 votes²⁵. The diploma of election was confirmed by only seven senators and a limited number of representatives of the nobility²⁶. Among this group, it is noteworthy to mention a dozen individuals, as I hold the belief that they constitute the core of the “Maximillianist” party in the Republic, but a thorough investigation is required. From the Crown, the act of election of the Archduke was signed by Stanisław Górka, Voivode of Poznań, the Zborowski brothers (Castellan of Gniezno Jan and Court Marshal Andrzej), Castellan of Kamień, Marcin Lwowski Ostroróg, and Jakub Woroniecki, nominate bishop of Kyiv, who was not a full senator

21 AGAD, APP, 6, “Acta die 26 januarii w Proszowicach w kościele na tymże sejmiku”, pp. 50-9.

22 Barwicka-Makula, 94.

23 Jan Dziegielewski, *Sejmy elekcyjne, elektorzy elekcje 1573–1674* (Pułtusk: Oficyna Wydawnicza Aspra-JR, 2003), 101.

24 “Diariusz elekcji 1587”, in *Diariusze sejmowe r. 1587. Sejmy konwokacyjny i elekcyjny*, ed. August Sokołowski, vol. 11 (Kraków: Czcionkami Drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1887), 111.

25 Walter Leitsch, *Sigismund III. von Polen und Jan Zamoyski. Die Rolle Estland in der Rivalität zwischen König und Hetman* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 58.

26 BCzart., 92, “Diploma Elections in Regem Poloniae Maximiliani Archiducis Austriae”, ff. 407-10.

(he also proclaimed Maximilian king). The court marshal published the document of election. The document also contains two signatures of senators from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: the bishop of Vilnius, cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł, and his brother, the Castellan of Troki, Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł “Sierotka”. Next, among the nobility, it is worth noting the support of the Habsburg candidacy by as many as six representatives of the Stadnicki family: Stanisław *Diabeł*, Stanisław, Marcin, Samuel, Jan and Andrzej. This fact alone proves that they were a major force in the pro-Habsburg camp – no other family was so numerously represented. In addition, the document was signed by the Lithuanian pantler Aleksander Frydrychowicz Proński, the starosta of Śniatyn Mikołaj Jazłowiecki, the starosta of Sącz and the pantler of Kraków Spytek Jordan, the starosta of Piotrków Piotr Dunin Szpot, the chamberlain of Mielec and, at the same time, the marshal of the pro-convocation circle Kasper Dembiński, and the royal secretaries Jan Zbigniew Ossoliński and Krzysztof Warszawicki. There were also signatures of the royal courtier Jan Szczesny Herburt, Stanisław Pstrokoński and Prokop Pękosławski. It is worth noting that many of these people were related to each other (to Stanisław Górka: Jan Zbigniew Ossoliński, Marcin Ostroróg, family Stadnicki) and related (to the Zborowskis family were related to the Stadnickis, Jan Zbigniew Ossoliński, Marcin Ostroróg, Spytek Jordan, and Aleksander Proński).

The Stadnickis were thus linked through familial connections to three significant figures within this party. It is sometimes attempted to discredit his strength, but in my opinion this is wrong and not in keeping with the situation at the time. The Poznań Voivode had not only influenced in Greater Poland, but also a hereditary estate which secured his political activities. He did not hesitate to spend it on soldiers either. He accompanied a force of 3,000 foreign infantry to the battle. The Stadnickis, who also participated, were no less threatening. Jazowiecki was an important figure at the time, since he was in control of the castle in Kamieniec Podolski. Spytek Jordan also brought with him a 200-strong infantry rotation. As can be seen, the pro-Habsburg party was not short of wealthy men, ready for armed effort, politically influential and possessed of dignity. Of course, they undoubtedly expected financial gratification and further careers, but the same was true among the Swedish prince’s supporters. I am of the opinion that in the case of the “Maximilianists”, a significant role was played by a fervent desire for vengeance, specifically to compensate the Chancellor for the humiliations of recent years, and a fervent aspiration for a resumption of the political prominence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The army with which Archduke Maximilian entered the Republic consisted of mercenary troops drawn from various areas of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, as well as German infantry and bodyguards. During his march from Vienna, which he left on 14 September 1587, he was actively recruiting, and Jan Wimmer estimates his forces at around 5,000 men – poorly disciplined, lacking heavy siege artillery, and among whom there were too little infantry necessary for besieging cities²⁷. At the end of September in Olomouc, the Archduke met with a delegation of his Polish supporters, received from them the diploma of election and took the oath of *pacta conventa*. Habsburg’s supporters presented him with two alternative plans for

27 Jan Wimmer, *Odparcie najazdu arcyksięcia Maksymiliana w 1587–8 r.* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1955), 19 and ss.

assuming power. The first step involved marching by the shortest route to Krakow and seizing it by force to carry out the coronation. The second was to take control of Greater Poland, where the voivode of Poznań, Stanisław Górka (1538–1592), wielded considerable influence, coronate in Gniezno and stop Sigismund Vasa's march from Gdańsk to Kraków. The Archduke chose the first option – the less favorable one, which meant having to besiege the capital and confront the armies of the Swedish prince's supporters concentrated there. He set off from Olomouc on 29 September and, via Opava, Racibórz, Gliwice and Bytom, arrived at the border with the Republic on 10 October 1587. He was surprised to find that in his first town, Będzin, he was not greeted by a Polish messenger, and that the burghers of Olkusz, the next town he entered, did not want to swear an oath to him. Perhaps he was already beginning to realise that the people of the Commonwealth were not treating him as king-elect, but as an invader. In Olkusz, Maximilian's army was joined by his partisans with their troops. These included the Zborowskis with a force of 1,500 men, Spytek Jordan with 360 soldiers, and the troops of Śniatyń starost Mikołaj Jazłowiecki. Jan Wimmer calculates that at that time the Archduke could have had about 11,000 armed²⁸. On their way to Kraków, they attempted to capture Rabsztyn, but despite two assaults they failed to defeat the castle defenders. Unfortunately, Maximilian did not realise the danger of leaving enemy troops in the rear of his own forces. The Archduke did not decide to give battle to the defenders of Kraków, even though his army greatly outnumbered the forces hastily assembled by Hetman and Great Crown Chancellor Jan Zamoyski (1542–1605). He made his way to Mogiła, near Kraków, where there was a Cistercian monastery which became the headquarters of Maximilian and his supporters – here he received envoys and sent his supporters to win him sympathisers among the inhabitants of the Republic. The reinforcements he was expecting from Moravia and Silesia fell victim to ambushes by the archduke's opponents. Stanisław Stadnicki stayed in the castle in Korzków near Kraków but had to surrender it to Jan Zamoyski's army. These setbacks weakened morale in Maximilian's camp. He expected more help from his Polish supporters and Emperor Rudolf II. The storming of Krakow on 23 November 1587 ended in defeat and the archduke's forces began a chaotic retreat.

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CONCLUSION

During this period, Stanisław Stadnicki was very active in public affairs. He implemented the Zborowski political plans in many ways. His military activity is most often reflected in the sources; not only did he provide the Archduke with a large army, but he also took independent action, such as military operations in Wielkopolska or attacking Hetman's troops. We are unaware of his statements during the conventions, if any, due to the failure to preserve accounts or diaries. It appears that he favored resolving issues through force at the time. I have no doubt that, although it was the Zborowskis and Stanisław Górka who were Archduke Maximilian's closest political associates, his "armed hand" was Stanisław Stadnicki and his brothers. The question is still: Was it effective? Certainly, a threatening and oppressive one, if only due to the fact of constant, persistent harassment of the Swedish prince's supporters. I think that in a situation where the entire

“Maximilianist” party would have been stronger, Stadnicki would have been more spectacularly successful.

By “stronger” I mean both the military and political aspects. I have tried to show that there were many reasons for the defeat of the Archduke in 1587. Among them, one can certainly point to the lack of unified cooperation within the Habsburg dynasty, their poor orientation in the internal affairs of the Commonwealth, communication and organizational problems of the pro-Habsburg party (among others, between the Crown and the Lithuanians, who under the direction of Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł and Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł “Sierotka” *de facto* constituted a separate pillar of the *faction*)²⁹. The events of 1587, which had their bloody finale at Byczyna, also demonstrated the lack of military training among the Archduke’s mercenaries. Although he had the support of domestic allies such as Stanisław Stadnicki, this was no substitute for the value of having a good and skilled army, mainly infantry, arquebusiers and cavalry. Maximilian also lacked siege artillery, and although he had military experience, his past campaigns against the Turks usually ended in failure. On the one hand, he too often delayed making decisions that could have changed the course of events and led to the capture of the capital, while on the other hand, when conferring with the commanders of the various formations before direct clashes, he often accepted the proposals put forward by his Polish adherents, who were pushing for combat and force solutions. I believe that the Archduke appreciated Stanisław Stadnicki’s military skills, and above all his military effort. This is evidenced by the fact that he entrusted him, together with Krzysztof Zborowski and Erazm Lichtenstein, with the mission of stopping Sigismund Vasa’s march on Krakow and, if possible, taking him prisoner. This plan failed, but this does not mean that none of Stadnicki’s actions were successful. Leaving aside the validity of various actions (e.g. robbery and intimidation of the population) – he was successful in this. Similarly, he briefly succeeded in capturing Wieluń, so the Archduke could escape from epidemic-stricken Krzepice to safety.

Stanisław Stadnicki’s role during the Third Interregnum was, against all appearances, significant. Although he was not a leading figure among the supporters of Archduke Maximilian Habsburg, his military capabilities, experience on the battlefield, ability to field sizable armed detachments and efficiency in reaching out to the assembling nobility were all reckoned with.

29 Kempa wrote about the distancing of the Radziwiłłs of Nesvizh to the Zborowskis, emphasising the conduct of contacts with the Prague court on their own or their different position regarding Maximilian’s entry into the Republic. See: Tomasz Kempa, *Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł Sierotka - wojewoda wileński (1549–1616)* (Warszawa: Semper, 2000), 130, 259, 261–270.

ABBREVIATION

AGAD: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie.

PP: Archiwum Publiczne Potockich.

BCzart.: Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich w Krakowie.

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