

From the Editor

The second volume of "Sarmatia Europea" has been dedicated entirely to political history. In the 19th century this branch of historical science was considered to be the most prestigious and, therefore, it was often argued that other research directions did not deserve as much attention. It was believed that only by studying the mechanisms behind high politics and diplomacy could one answer to the question "what really happened?" This line of reasoning has been of course abandoned with time, although the interest in political history is still very much alive.

In this volume we want to present the latest contributions of only few of the researchers interested in the political history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its neighbors in the 17th-19th centuries. During this period Europe witnessed some important changes – the decline of old Powers like Poland-Lithuania and Turkey and the emergence of new ones such as Prussia, Russia and Austria. This clearly had a significant impact on the developments in East Central and Eastern Europe until the early 20th century.

Some of our authors focused their texts on complicated dynastic policy – Anna Kalinowska presented a little known 17th -century project of a dynastic alliance between the Stuarts and the Polish Vasas, based on marriage negotiations between Władysław IV and Elizabeth, the Princess Palatine, daughter of "the Winter king" Frederick V and niece of Charles I. In his thought-provoking article, Leopold Auer focused on relations between Poland-Lithuania and the Empire during the so called Great Northern War (1700-1721). One of the key factors in Swedish political history of the late 18th and 19th c. was discussed in the article by Zbigniew Anusik, who

analyzed the 1772 coup d'état organized by Gustavus III of the House of Holstein–Gottorf and examined its impact on Swedish society. In spite of a negative assessment of the king's actions by Swedish liberal historiography, which accuses him of tyranny and suppressing his subjects' freedoms, Gustavus enjoyed the support of the majority of society who hoped that he would be able to prevent further decline of Sweden's international position and improve the government petrified by the 50-year-long “Age of Liberty”. The link between the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century was established in the text by Dariusz Nawrot, who presented the performance of French officials and their duties on the Eastern territories of the former Polish–Lithuanian State during the French–Russian War of 1812 – a moment of crucial importance for the future of both Poland and Eastern Europe. Two final articles summarized the achievements of Polish and Swedish historiographies: Wojciech Krawczuk analyzed Swedish publications on the second Northern War (1655–1660), so called “Swedish Deluge”, while Adam Perłakowski presented the attitudes of Polish historians towards Augustus II Wettin (1697–1733), from the 19th up to the 21st century.

Of course all these texts do not pretend to be the final say in the academic debates on the subjects they address. They aim rather to provoke further discussions and to result in inspiring completely new theories or more fully confirming the ones that have been already presented. We hope, therefore, that just as in the case of the previous volume of *Sarmatia Europaea*, the current one will not stay unnoticed by our colleagues.

Adam Perłakowski