For the Habsburg Monarchy the Polish Republic was, apart from its close dynastic ties, not only the largest neighbour after the Ottoman Empire but also a potential ally against the Swedes and Turks. It was therefore important to maintain a relationship which would ensure Austrian interests and influence and keep at bay the influence of other powers, especially that of France, in order to prevent a possible threat from the North East. The intervention of the Austrian army in the wake of the alliance of 1656 saved the Republic from Swedish occupation; the coalition

1 Between the 15th and 18th century, eight Polish queens were of Habsburg origin, the first being Elizabeth, daughter of Roman king Albrecht II and wife of Casimir IV, the last being Maria Josepha, daughter of emperor Joseph I and wife of king Augustus III. As a result of his marriage with Anne of Bohemia and Hungary, all successors of Emperor Ferdinand I were descendants of Casimir IV which explains later Habsburg candidacies for the Polish throne.


3 For Franco–Polish relations since the early modern period see the recently published volume by O. Chaline, J. Dumanowski, M. Figeac (eds.), Le rayonnement français en Europe centrale du XVIIe siècle à nos jours, Pessac 2009.

4 The alliance of 1 December 1656 was between Emperor Ferdinand III and King John II Casimir. The respective originals of the treaty are kept in the Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych Warsaw [AGAD], Crown Archives and in the haus–, Hof–, und Staatsarchiv Vienna, [HHStA], Allgemeine Urkundenreihe. Cf. L. Bittner,
army under king John Sobieski saved Vienna from Turkish conquest in 1683\(^5\). The relief of Vienna was the climax of Austro–Polish relations. Sobieski’s subsequent campaigns in Hungary were not equally as successful, and as early as the negotiations at Karlowitz, the weakness of the Polish Republic was made obvious despite the territorial gains in the peace treaty\(^6\).

The attitudes of Austria towards Poland during the Great Northern War have so far met with little interest by researchers\(^7\). The following remarks shall examine these attitudes on the basis of discussions at the

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Viennese court and of instructions and correspondence with Austrian diplomats sent to Poland. Political strategies were discussed by the members of the Privy Conference and then recommended to the emperor for further decision. Discussions on Poland and on which policy to pursue towards the Republic were mainly conducted by the heads or other representatives of the Court Chancery, the Aulic War Council (Hofkriegsrat) and, if necessary, the Bohemian and Hungarian Chanceries, who were also responsible for implementing imperial decisions. Instructions for the diplomatic representatives were drafted according to the conclusions recommended by the Conference and the decisions of the emperor; thus, they are another main source for our knowledge of attitudes towards the Republic. Ambassadors and envoys who were sent to Poland had to deal with both the king and nobles as every agreement had to be confirmed by the diet in order to be binding for the Republic. Consequently, ambassadors or envoys also received credentials presented to various ecclesiastical and secular nobles such as the Primate of Poland or the crown hetmans. It is not without interest in this context to mention that the king and the republic were addressed in a different way. Whereas the king was entitled to be addressed in the same way as fellow monarchs of the period, as “serenissimus”, the Republic and her aristocratic representatives had to content themselves with the slightly lesser rank of “illustrissimi”.

8 See for this body S. Sienell, Die Geheime Konferenz unter Kaiser Leopold I. Personelle Strukturen und Methoden zur politischen Entscheidungsfindung am Wiener Hof, Frankfurt am Main et al. 2001. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Sienell for making available to me his yet unpublished manuscript on the protocols of the Conference under Leopold I.

9 Cf. e.g. the credentials of count Erdödy (as below) for the Primate and the Estates, HHStA, Staatenabteilung [StAbt] Polen III, box 1, fol. 20–22v.

10 Cf. the instructions for Count Damian Hugo Virmont of 6 May 1716, fol. 7, and for the Hungarian Vice–Chancellor Count Adam Ladislaus Erdödy of 31 August 1720, fol. 4, HHStA, StAbt, Polen III, box 1. For questions of diplomatic ceremonial in
Personalities at the Viennese court instrumental in the shaping of Austro–Polish relations and in the formulation of a policy towards the Republic were – apart from the emperor himself – the Court Chancellor and the president of the Aulic War Council (Prince Eugene from 1703), together with their respective advisers and, depending on the case, their fellow members in the Privy Conference. Sometimes special committees or commissions were also established to discuss questions relating to Poland\textsuperscript{11}. Periods during which such questions arose were the outbreak of the war, the first Swedish victories and the reign of King Stanislas, the return of King August to power, his constitutional settlement with the Polish aristocracy in 1716/17 and the final phases of the war, the alliance of 1719 between Austria, Hanover and Saxony, and the Polish diet of 1720\textsuperscript{12}.


\textsuperscript{11} During the last years of the reign of Leopold I this was the commission of Turkish affairs which usually consisted of Counts Harrach (Lord High Steward), Öttingen (Imperial Aulic Council), Mansfeld (Aulic War Council), Kaunitz (Imperial Chancery) and Buccellini (Court Chancery); cf. e.g. HHStA, Staatenabteilung Saxonica box 15, fol. 116–123v (after 19 May 1702). Under Charles VI special conferences in \textit{nordicis} were held.


\textsuperscript{13} For his reign as king of Poland see J. Staszewski, *August II Mocny*, Wroclaw 1998. For the European context of the election cf. also L. Auer, *Das europäische...*
hereditary dynasty in Poland\textsuperscript{14}. To achieve this aim he sought to gain Livonia by an agreement with some of the local nobility and to abolish Swedish dominance of the eastern Baltic with the help of Denmark and Russia. When in pursuing this plan, he attacked Livonia at the end of 1699, thus provoking war with Sweden, neither the emperor nor his chief advisers were very happy about it. In the midst of discussions over the partition treaties of the Spanish monarchy\textsuperscript{15} and with the prospect of yet another impending war, they feared an impact on the issue of the Spanish succession and an eventual merging of the two conflicts. Not least, discussions among Austrian ministers and diplomats of the period reveal both their distrust of Augustus, who was known for his duplicity\textsuperscript{16}, and their anxiety as to the ability of the Polish Republic to wage a successful war: the Republic’s constitutional structure with the predominant role of the aristocracy affected the efficiency of its military system\textsuperscript{17}.

\textsuperscript{14} J. Black, \textit{Rise of the European Powers}..., 21f.
\textsuperscript{16} In a letter of 22 December 1706 to the Imperial Vice-Chancellor Count Schönborn Prince Eugene stressed this fact by the words “indem der König Augustus kapabel ist, dasjenige heute zu brechen, was er gestern versprochen”; cf. M. Braubach, \textit{Prinz Eugen von Savoyen}, vol. 2, Vienne 1964, 187 and n. 7. His duplicity was also shown after the first treaty of Altranstädt when he led a Saxon–Russian army only one month after secretly ratifying this treaty, which included his abdication as king of Poland; cf. R. Frost, \textit{Northern Wars}..., 230.
\textsuperscript{17} On the impact of the aristocratic liberties and privileges on the Polish military system see the perceptive remarks by R. Frost, \textit{Northern Wars}..., 244–258, and J. Topolski, \textit{La réforme militaire en Pologne au XVIII\textsuperscript{e} siècle}, [in:] Jean Bérenger (ed.), \textit{La révolution militaire en Europe (XV\textsuperscript{e}–XVIII\textsuperscript{e} siècles)}, Paris 1998, 139–148, here at 139–142. Cf. also the report of the Austrian ambassador Count Stratmann of 2
News about the Saxon forces crossing the Dvina reached Vienna via Berlin in March 1700 together with information on the Danish attack on Holstein\(^\text{18}\). While *mandata avocatoria* were sent to the Danish king and talks for a planned alliance suspended\(^\text{19}\), no rupture with Poland occurred. Quite the contrary, the exigencies of the Northern War and the War of the Spanish succession became intertwined. After negotiations led by Count Stratmann, the Austrian ambassador in Warsaw\(^\text{20}\), an alliance between the emperor and Augustus the Strong was signed on 16 January 1702 and ratified by both parties one month later\(^\text{21}\). Augustus was to supply 12,000 men from his Saxon troops to the Maritime Powers. In two secret articles, Poland was to be included in the alliance in case of an attack and the king to be assisted against rebel forces. At the same time, Augustus promised to refuse support to the Hungarian rebels under Ferenc Rakoczi\(^\text{22}\). However, after the battle of March 1702, HHStA Polen II, box 1, 1702, fol. 82v, in which he asks himself “ob aber die Cron Armee ins Feldt zu gehen, so baldt in standt gesetzt wirdt werden können, alß man es gern sehen thät, daran ist desto mehr zu zweiflen...”.

\(^\text{18}\) HHStA, Reichskanzlei [RK], Diplomatische Akten, Berichte aus Berlin box 7a, folder Jan/May 1700 and Weisungen nach Berlin box 2c, folder 1695–1700, fol. 172–173v; HHStA, StAbt Dänemark box 20, Varia, fol. 42–44 and 56–58v.

\(^\text{19}\) HHStA, RK, Vorträge box 6a, folder 1697–1702, fol. 174–179; HHStA, RK, Kleinere Reichsstände box 209, fol. 290–293v.

\(^\text{20}\) See his reports between first and 26 January 1702, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 1, 1702, fol. 2–2v, 5–5v, 19v, 44–49. Count Heinrich Stratmann was a son of Court Chancellor Theodor Althet Stratmann.

\(^\text{21}\) L. Bittner, *Chronologisches Verzeichnis...*, 119, n. 620. Copies of the treaty are kept in HHStA, Allgemeine Urkundenreihe and ibid., Kriegsakten box 244, fol. 10r–37r and 81r–87v. One important reason for signing the alliance had been the wish to keep Augustus from concluding an alliance with France; cf. the report of Stratmann, 12 January 1702, loc. cit. fol.19v.

\(^\text{22}\) When the alliance was signed, Rakoczi stayed in Warsaw with the French resident; cf. the rapport of Stratmann ibid. fol. 19.
Kliszów in which Augustus suffered a crushing defeat\textsuperscript{23} and after the occupation of large parts of Polish territory by Charles XII, these secret articles do not seem to have been applied, most likely because the Republic had not adhered to the treaty\textsuperscript{24}.

The election of King Stanislas in 1704 and the Swedish invasion of Saxony two years later changed the political situation completely. After the election there were practically two kings with their respective supporters fighting each other. Stanislas was generally not accepted; part of the nobles, especially those who were united under the confederation of Sandomierz\textsuperscript{25}, declared themselves in favour of Augustus. This situation left the emperor, at first Leopold I and then his successor Joseph I, with a dilemma. 1704 was a crucial year for the emperor because of the campaign against Bavaria\textsuperscript{26}, which rendered any interference in Polish affairs quite impossible. Hence, strategic interests of the War of Spanish succession and of the Great Northern War once again conflicted with each other. Furthermore, to annoy

\textsuperscript{23} Report of Stratmann, 20 July 1702, loc. cit. fol. 219r–220v. Attached to this report, though with erroneous folios (185–192v), is a lengthy description of the battle. For the aftermath of the battle cf. Staszewski, \textit{August II Mocny...}, 134f.

\textsuperscript{24} There were, however, negotiations with the Saxon envoy count Wackerbarth in Vienna during which the latter claimed assistance with reference to the treaty; cf. HHStA, StAbt Polen I, box 82, folder 1701–1710, fol. 13 and 24–29.


the Tsar would have been as dangerous as to annoy the Swedish king, thus calling for a cautious course of action. The same attitude recommended itself after the Swedish invasion of Saxony and the first convention of Altranstädt. Despite Augustus’ abdication from the throne of Poland, the emperor and his advisers hesitated, for the same reasons, to recognize Stanislas until February 1707. Even then, Prince Eugene, at this period president of the Aulic War Council, had his doubts as to whether it was a wise decision, fearing that it might endanger Russian support if needed. However, his position may have been influenced by the tsar’s decision to suggest the Prince as a candidate for the Polish throne.

By his recognition of Stanislas as King of Poland the emperor had hoped to gain some concessions by Charles XII, such as the recognition of his brother as King of Spain or a Swedish contingent for the imperial army, but new problems quickly arose which led the Swedish King to demand the surrender of Russian troops under Saxon command and the restoration of

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28 Discussions in the Privy Conference after autumn 1706 are described by Ch. W. Ingrao, *In Quest and Crisis...*, 56f. Frederick I of Prussia had recognized Stanislas as early as in 1706, Queen Anne did so one year after the emperor; cf. Ch. W. Ingrao ibid. 67f. and 191 and 196.


30 For this surprising suggestion cf. M. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen...*, vol. 2, p. 203f. and Ch. W. Ingrao, *In Quest and Crisis...*, 67 with n. 190. The emperor was not in favour of a new election and finally rejected the idea of a candidacy of Prince Eugene.
Protestant faith in Silesia. Thus, the negotiations with the emperor dragged on despite the efforts of the Duke of Marlborough during a brief visit to Altranstädt in April 1707\textsuperscript{31}. It was only when Joseph I sent his Bohemian chancellor, Count Wratislaw, to Charles XII that a final agreement was reached. The stipulations of the second treaty of Altranstädt, signed on 1 September, freed the Swedish King from his obligation to provide a contingent to the imperial army, recognized a Holstein cousin as bishop of Lübeck and restored Lutheran religious freedom in Silesia\textsuperscript{32}. Two weeks later Charles XII marched to Poland to resume his military activities.

Austrian relations with king Stanislas developed in quite a satisfying way for the Viennese cabinet\textsuperscript{33}. The position of the new king was too weak to pose a threat to the Habsburg Monarchy. Stanislas himself was interested in maintaining a good relationship and even refrained from giving any support to Ferenc Rákóczi and his followers\textsuperscript{34}. However, due to the ongoing war in Poland, it seems to have been difficult to sustain regular diplomatic contacts. Stanislas was not represented by an ambassador of his own at the Viennese court; only towards the end of his reign did he envisage to send the starost of Cracow to Vienna. On the other hand, the Austrian ambassador, Count Zinzendorf, had left Poland and maintained contact with

\textsuperscript{31} Ch. W. Ingrao ibid. p. 58.


\textsuperscript{33} Unfortunately, much of the Austrian material on the relations between king Stanislas and the Viennese court seems to have been lost or even willfully destroyed. At least there is a significant gap in HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 1 for the correspondence of 1703–1709.

\textsuperscript{34} Ingrao, In Quest and Crisis p. 200. In fact, Rákóczi made several attempts to win Stanislas for joining forces with him against the emperor; cf. Ingrao ibid. p. 55 with n. 116. See also G. Kiss, *Franz Rákóczi II., Peter der Grosse und der polnische Thron*, [in:] Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas NF, 13, 1965, 344–360.
Stanislas from Breslau/Wroclaw. Nor had the emperor much to fear from Augustus, who, due to his defeat against Charles XII, had to be docile. As a result, no danger was to be expected from the northeastern frontier. However, after Poltava and the return of Augustus to Poland, the situation changed once again. Denmark, Saxony and Russia renewed their coalition which gave new impetus to the war, both in Poland and in the Baltic.

Neither the emperor nor his advisers were too happy about this development which threatened to lessen commitments to send supplies to the imperial army in the War of the Spanish succession. After the death of Joseph I, Austrian diplomats also regarded with suspicion the close understanding between Augustus II and the Tsar, as demonstrated by their meeting in Jaroslaw, and feared Russian predominance in Poland, and eventually even in the northern parts of the Empire, as one of its results. Moreover, Augustus and his son were possible rivals of the Habsburgs in a future candidacy for the office of emperor. To counterbalance such contingencies early on, Joseph I kept in contact with members of the Polish aristocracy, encouraging them in their opposition against the king and

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35 See the report by Zinzendorf from Breslau, 11 July 1709, HHStA, StAbt Polen I, box 82, folder 1701–1710, fol. 32r–35v. Only Franz Tiepolt seems to have remained in Poland from 1702–1715 without major interruption.

36 J. A. Gierowski, Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth..., 92f.; R. Frost, Northern Wars..., 294f.


38 See the letter of Joseph I to Prince Eugene of 1 September 1708, HHStA, Große Korrespondenz [GK] box 90b, quoted by M. Braubach, Prinz Eugen..., vol. 2, 459 n. 17 and by L. Schilling, Wiener Hof..., 122 n. 9.
against the outrages committed by Saxon and Russian soldiers. There were also wide-spread rumours in Poland, perhaps not completely unfounded, that the Viennese cabinet supported the Turkish war of 1711 against Peter the Great and the Polish followers of Augustus. In any case, during the months before and after the death of Joseph I relations between Augustus and the Viennese court were at a low, making the latter anything but keen to come to the rescue.

Charles VI, annoyed by Augustus’ attempts to be elected emperor, initially continued his brother’s policy and, after ongoing altercations with Hungarian rebels, even seemed to have encouraged members of the nobility to put up resistance against the king at the time of

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39 For complaints about these military outrages see the report of the Austrian envoy Baronet Franz Tiepolt from Danzig, 25 February 1711, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 1, folder 1711, fol. 27–27v.

40 Report of Count Johann Ernst Herberstein from Danzig, 28 February 1711, as above fol. 31–35, here at fol. 31v. By a letter of 15 April 1711 Prince Eugene had informed the Grand Vezir of the Austrian neutrality in the Russian–Turkish war; cf. B. Spuler, Europäische Diplomatie..., 80 n. 171.

41 Cf. the instructions to Herberstein by Joseph of 24 December 1710 and by his mother Eleonora of 13 June 1711, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 66, fol. 6–7v and 13–15 according to which the ambassador should mainly gather information about the relations between Augustus and Peter the Great and, –at the very least/if necessary offer Austrian mediation. The Viennese court was above all aggravated by Augustus and Peter the Great contacts with Hungarian rebels and even had hired the services of a French officer, Sacilly, to countermine them. Cf. various reports by Tiepolt and Herberstein, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 1, folders 1710 and 1711.

42 For aspirations of Augustus of this kind see M. Braubach, Prinz Eugen..., vol. 3, 48. Augustus had also raised difficulties in convening the electors for electing a new emperor; cf. Eleonora to Herberstein 8 July 1711, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 66, fol. 19–23v.

43 One of the main issues was a visit of the Hungarian rebel Bercsenyi to Lwów and Warsaw; cf. the instruction to Franz Tiepold of 8 February 1713, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 66, fol. 39–39v.
the confederation of Tarnogród⁴⁴. But when in 1716 a new war broke out between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, the Viennese court tried, though without much success⁴⁵, to enlist Polish support. A member of the Aulic War Council, Count Damian Hugo of Virmont⁴⁶, who was later to be the Austrian plenipotentiary in the peace negotiations at Passarowitz⁴⁷, was sent to Warsaw to achieve this aim⁴⁸. To facilitate a decision for Polish participation he also received orders to assist in the talks between the king and his opponents held in Lublin⁴⁹ in order to bring about a general reconciliation. However, all his endeavours to achieve the accession of the king and the republic to an anti-Turkish alliance between the emperor and Venice were without success, despite the fact that the Holy League of 1684 was nominally still in existence. After all the damages the country had suffered during the still ongoing Northern War, the Polish nobility was not at all interested in another military enterprise. Virmont’s negotiations continued until March 1717 due to lengthy discussions for, as had been observed by an Austrian diplomat on a previous occasion, every

⁴⁴ This is argued by J. Staszewski, Polnisch-österreichische Beziehungen..., 234f. Cf. on the confederation of Tarnogród J. A. Gierowski, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth..., 93 with n. 66.

⁴⁵ In a letter of 25 July 1716 to the Austrian envoy in Warsaw, Baron Martels, Prince Eugene expressed his doubts “viel Gutes und Fürträgliches zum Behuf der hiesigen Kriegsverfassung loswirken zu können”; cf. M. Braubach, Prinz Eugen..., vol. 3, 306 and n. 27. Eugene maintained a regular correspondence with Martels of which large parts for the years 1717–1725 are kept in HHStA, GK box 99a and b. Previous correspondence with Tiepolt and Herberstein 1711–1713 is kept in KA, AFA boxes 272, 273 and 314.

⁴⁶ For count Damian Hugo Virmont see the article in Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, vol. 55, 338–341 and B. Spuler, Europäische Diplomatie in Konstantinopel..., 341.


⁴⁸ Cf. his instruction of 6 May 1716, HHStA, StAbt Polen III, box 1.

⁴⁹ A copy of the proceedings of the so-called Lublin congress is kept in HHStA, StAbt Polen I, box 87, fol. 266–277v.
Pole loves to make a speech\(^{50}\). The only success was his contribution to the settlement, the so-called pacification of February 1717 between Augustus and his opponents, which was finally reached at the Lublin congress\(^ {51}\).

Despite the failure of Virmont’s mission, a reorientation of Austrian policy towards Poland began to take shape. Since the Russian intervention in Mecklenburg\(^ {52}\), the Tsar was a far greater danger than the Polish king. Once again ministers in Vienna cherished the idea to rely upon the Polish Republics a barrier against Russian predominance. At the same time, the conclusion of the Turkish war left the emperor free to turn his attention to the North. His wish to come to the rescue of Sweden coincided with the British policy to limit Russian expansion in the Baltic. When, in 1718, the Polish diet at Grodno called on the tsar to withdraw his troops


\(^{51}\) Cf. the instructions to Virmont 6 May, 9 September and 19 December 1716 and of 3 and 20 March 1717, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 66, fol. 44–48v and 50–55v.

from Polish territory and supported the king’s firm stance towards Russia\textsuperscript{53}, the Polish option of Austria and Britain seemed to materialize. Beginning in August 1718, the Privy Conference under the chairmanship of Prince Eugene discussed the English proposal of an alliance\textsuperscript{54}, and after negotiations in Vienna between Eugene, the Court Chancellor Sinzendorf, Saint–Saphorin (England/ Hanover) and Flemming (Saxony/ Poland)\textsuperscript{55}, a treaty between the Emperor, (England–) Hanover and Saxony (–Poland) aimed at putting pressure on the Tsar to end the Northern War\textsuperscript{56} was signed on 5 January 1719\textsuperscript{57}.

Ratifications having been exchanged by April, the struggle began for obtaining the accession of the Polish Republic. At first, Augustus tried to convince the members of the council of the Senate that it would be sufficient if they declared Polish adherence to the treaty. When they protested, it became clear that a general diet could not be avoided\textsuperscript{58}. In the meanwhile, the tsar’s intervention to prevent the Polish accession and the marriage of the electoral prince to the emperor’s niece, Maria Josepha, in August 1719

\textsuperscript{54} Cf. the protocols of the Privy Conference of 6 August (without Eugene), 1 and 30 September, 18 October, 6, 17 and 25 November 1718, HHStA, Staatskanzlei [StK], Vorträge box 22, folder 1718 VIII–XII.
\textsuperscript{56} That restraining Russia was the principal motive is shown by the instruction of 7 August 1718 to Penterriedter in London, HHStA. StK Protokoll 1718, fol. 138v. Cf. also R. Lewitter, \textit{Treaty of Vienna…}, 14ff.; D. McKay/ H. M. Scott, \textit{Rise of the Great Powers…}, 89f.
\textsuperscript{57} Cf. L. Bittner, \textit{Chronologisches Verzeichnis…}, 136 n. 720.
\textsuperscript{58} L. R. Lewitter \textit{Treaty of Vienna…}, 22.
had aroused suspicion among the Polish nobility and created a climate of
general distrust about the intentions of the king\textsuperscript{59}. Consequently, the
Austrian ambassador, Count Josef Lothar Königsegg, who was delegated to
represent the emperor at the diet which opened in January 1720\textsuperscript{60}, found it
impossible, despite being seconded by the English envoy Scott\textsuperscript{61}, to
overcome the difficulties caused by parts of the nobility and by the Russian
representative, Prince Dolgorukij. After little more than a month, the diet
broke up without reaching a decision.

In the autumn of 1720 the last Polish diet before the end of the war
was to be held. Charles VI sent the Hungarian vice–chancellor and bishop of
Neutra, Count Adam Ladislaus Erdödy, to Warsaw to make another attempt
to obtain the accession of the Republic to the Vienna alliance\textsuperscript{62}. In a
comment written in his own hand the emperor stressed the importance at
the coming diet of assuring the Polish nobles of Austria’s respect for and
adherence to their traditional liberties, a rather characteristic comment for
the emperor’s attitude towards long–standing traditions and privileges,
which he tended to uphold notwithstanding the need for reforms\textsuperscript{63}. Other

\textsuperscript{59} The Viennese cabinet was well aware of these circumstances and tried to
counteract. Cf. e.g. the protocol of the Privy Conference of 1 September 1718,
HHStA, StK Vorträge, box 22, folder 1718 VIII–XII, fol. 27: Cui (scil. rei publicae
Polonicae) quoque eximere oportet scrupulum seu suspicitionem, quae istis inhaeret,
Caesarem intendere per nuptias Archiducissae cum Principe electorali saxonico
Regnum Poloniae Domui Saxonico hereditarium efficere. Ablegandus proinde
legatus Caesareus ad imminentia comitia.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. his instruction of 8 December 1719, HHStA, Polen III, box 1.

\textsuperscript{61} L. R. Lewitter, \textit{Treaty of Vienna...}, 24.

\textsuperscript{62} See his instruction of 31 August 1720, HHStA, Polen III, box 1.

errands contained in Erdödy's instructions consisted in the reclamation of the thirteen pawned towns of the Zips, an issue to become important during the first partition of Poland, in determining the chances of a candidacy of the electoral prince to the Polish throne, and in resolving demarcation issues between Hungary and Poland. A separate instruction by the Bohemian Chancery charged Erdödy to raise complaints against the violation of the Silesian border by members of the Sapieha family and the starost of Gnesen, and against the discrimination of Silesian merchants in Poland.

The diet which opened on 30 September\textsuperscript{64} very soon became the scene of a persistent tug-of-war between the representatives of Austria, Britain and Russia with regard to the Polish accession to the Vienna alliance. Despite all endeavours, neither the members of the diet nor Prussia were willing to accede\textsuperscript{65}, leaving the alliance to crumble without having reached its main purpose of restraining the expansion of Russia. As the tsar had withdrawn his troops from Poland in 1719, the Polish nobility felt no need to continue the war. Due to the instigations of the Russian representative, Dolgorukij, and, once again, for fear of a hereditary monarchy emerging in the wake of the marriage of the electoral prince\textsuperscript{66}, many participants of the diet maintained a firm opposition to ratifying the alliance\textsuperscript{67}. As Augustus himself, once more changing sides, was taking pains to become reconciled

\textsuperscript{64} L. R. Lewitter, \textit{Treaty of Vienna...}, 28. For this diet in general see J. Staszewski, \textit{August II Mocny...}, 222ff.

\textsuperscript{65} Prussia had concluded a treaty with Russia in February 1720 by which both powers agreed to prevent Poland's adhesion to the treaty of Vienna; cf. L. R. Lewitter, \textit{Treaty of Vienna...}, 25 with nn. 171 and 172.

\textsuperscript{66} L. R. Lewitter ibid. p. 29 speaks of a mistimed marriage.

\textsuperscript{67} L. R. Lewitter ibid. p. 28; J. A. Gierowski, \textit{Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth...}, 95.
to the tsar\footnote{The English representative Scott complained to the Austrian envoy Martels in November 1720: "Cette cour se moque (sic!) de Vous et de Nous"; cf. the report of Martels to Prince Eugene, 13 November 1720, HHStA, GK, box 99a.}, the emperor saw no realistic chance for an anti-Russian league without Poland and Prussia\footnote{L. R. Lewitter, Treaty of Vienna…, 27.}. Consequently, Russia succeeded in concluding a peace with Sweden according to her own conditions. As a result, the international position of Poland was considerably weakened. Although the territorial integrity of the Republic could be preserved and plans for a partition did not materialize\footnote{Rumours for plans of partition were spread as early as 1702; cf. the report by Stratmann of 12 January 1702, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 1, folder 1702, fol. 11–11v and 24r–25v, and L. R. Lewitter, Zur Vorgeschichte der Teilungen Polens (1697–1721), [in:] Österreichische Osthefte, 32, 1990, 333–357. For partition plans in 1706, 1710 and 1721 cf. M. Braubach, Prinz Eugen…, vol. 4, 100 and n. 235; Ch. W. Ingrao, In Quest and Crisis…, 67f. with n. 192, and J. A. Gierowski, The PolishLithuanian Commonwealth…, 98 and n. 74.}, she was no longer in a position to play a decisive role in military or diplomatic initiatives. This was also shown by the fact that it proved to be rather irrelevant that the state of war with Sweden did not ended until 1731: neither Poland nor Sweden was any longer in a position to fight each other\footnote{J. B. Black, Rise of the European Powers…, 27f.}.

Furthermore, the emperor did not have any part in the peace negotiations at Nystad. Hence, apart from the Russian troops leaving Polish territory, the Vienna alliance was a complete failure. When the news of the signing of the peace agreement reached Vienna, Austrian ministers were at a complete loss as to how to react\footnote{M. Braubach, Prinz Eugen…, vol. 4, 99–101 and L. Schilling, Wiener Hof…, 124.}. In the long run, however, they decided to rearrange their strategies and to turn to a new alliance system which included Russia\footnote{This seems to have been at least the strategy of the Imperial Vice-Chancellor Schönborn; cf. M. Braubach, Prinz Eugen…, vol. 4, 101 and n. 237.}, the only real winner of the Northern War. As Klaus
Zernack very ably put it in an article published in 1974\textsuperscript{74}, the Great Northern War thus constitutes a crucial turning point in early modern history. With regards to Austrian political attitudes towards the Polish Republic, the ministers of the Viennese cabinet, after all their wasted endeavours, may have come to a conclusion very similar to that of Cambridge historian L. R. Lewitter, who remarks: “The republic’s failure to accede to the treaty of Vienna could only have shown her up as an unreliable and unrewarding partner in the game of international power politics and it is surely no coincidence that her status on the European chess-board was henceforth reduced to that of a mere pawn”\textsuperscript{75}.


\textsuperscript{75} L. R. Lewitter, \textit{Treaty of Vienna...}, 30.