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Austrian Political Attitudes towards the Polish Republic during the Great Northern War

For the Habsburg Monarchy the Polish Republic was, apart from its close dynastic ties¹, 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 relationship² which would ensure Austrian interests and influence and keep at bay the influence of other powers, especially that of France³, in order to prevent a possible threat from the North East. The intervention of the Austrian army in the wake of the alliance of 1656⁴ 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.

² For a general overview on Austro-Polish relations see Jerzy Gaul, *Zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen Polen und Österreich vom 14.- 20. Jahrhundert*, [in:] *Weiß-Rot – Rot-Weiß-Rot. Historische Momente polnisch-österreichischer Beziehungen vom 14.- 20. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 2005, 3-18, with references to additional literature. Cf. also *Österreich-Polen. 1000 Jahre Beziehungen*, *Studia Austro-Polonica* 5, 1996, ed. by J. Buszko and W. Leitsch and *Polnisch-österreichische Kontakte sowie Militärbündnisse 1618-1918*, ed. by Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna 2009.

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 XVII^e 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 Głównie 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 1683⁵. 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 treaty⁶.

The attitudes of Austria towards Poland during the Great Northern War have so far met with little interest by researchers⁷. The following remarks shall examine these attitudes on the basis of discussions at the

Chronologisches Verzeichnis der österreichischen Staatsverträge, 1, Vienna 1903, 63 n. 332 and *Weiß-Rot...*, 27, n. 15.

⁵ For an introduction to the abundant literature on the second Turkish siege of Vienna see K. Vocelka, *1683:1983. Ein Jubiläum? Fortschritt oder Stagnation der historiographischen Aufbereitung der zweiten Wiener Türkenbelagerung*, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 92, 1984, 165–194; B. R. Kroener, *Wien 1983. Internationale Politik und Kriegführung im 17. Jahrhundert – Probleme der Forschung*, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 12, 1985, 181–216; and M. Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence. War, State and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy 1683–1797*, London–New York et al. 2003, 166f.

⁶ For negotiations at Karlowitz see J. Bérenger, *La paix de Karlowitz, 26 janvier 1699. Les relations entre l'Europe centrale et l'Empire ottoman*, Paris 2010; see also G. Barany, *The Anglo-Russian Entente Cordiale of 1697–1698*, New York 1986, 55ff. and the remarks by B. Spuler, *Die europäische Diplomatie in Konstantinopel bis zum Frieden von Belgrad (1739)*, [in:] *Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven NF*, 11, 1935, 53–115, 171–222 and 313–366, here at 56–65.

⁷ This is pointed out by Jacek Staszewski, *Die polnisch-österreichischen Beziehungen im 18. Jahrhundert. Anmerkungen zum Stand der Forschung*, [in:] *Österreichische Osthefte*, 32, 1990, 229–239. A recent contribution to the topic has been made by L. Schilling, *Der Wiener Hof und Sachsen-Polen (1697–1764)*, [in:] *Sachsen und Polen zwischen 1697 und 1765*, Dresden 1998, 119–136, here at 121–124. Cf. also the remarks by J. A. Gierowski, *The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the XVIIIth century. From Anarchy to Well-Organised State*, Cracow 1996, esp. 94f. Very surprisingly, there are no references to Austrian attitudes towards Poland during this period in the article by C. Augustynowicz, *Habsburgisch-polnische Beziehungen vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, [in:] *Polnisch-österreichische Kontakte...*, 41–76, and only very few in the article by T. Ciesielski, *Österreichisch-polnische Militärkontakte in der Zeit der polnisch-sächsischen Union 1697–1763*, *ibid.*, 141–152.

Viennese court and of instructions and correspondence with Austrian diplomats sent to Poland. Political strategies were discussed by the members of the Privy Conference⁸ 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 hetmans⁹. 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”¹⁰.

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 Poland¹¹. 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 1720¹².

Since his election in 1697, the new Polish King, Augustus II¹³, struggled to strengthen royal power and to establish his descendants as a

general see W. Roosen, *Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach*, [in:] *The Journal of Modern History*, 52, 1980, 452–476 and – for the imperial court – L. Auer, *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell am Kaiserhof der Frühen Neuzeit: Perspektiven eines Forschungsthemas*, [in:] Ralph Kauz et al. (eds.), *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der frühen Neuzeit*, Vienna 2009, 33–53.

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 Buccelini (Court Chancery); cf. e.g. HHStA, Staatenabteilung Saxonica box 15, fol. 116–123v (after 19 May 1702). Under Charles VI special conferences in *nordicis* were held.

¹² For an overview on these events see R. I. Frost, *The Northern Wars. War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe 1558–1721*, Harlow–London et al. 2000. Cf. also D. McKay and H. M. Scott, *The Rise of the Great Powers 1648–1815*, London–New York 1983, 78–93 and J. Black, *The Rise of the European Powers 1679–1793*, London et al. 1990, 21–28.

¹³ For his reign as king of Poland see J. Staszewski, *August II Mocny*, Wrocław 1998. For the European context of the election cf. also L. Auer, *Das europäische*

hereditary dynasty in Poland¹⁴. 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 monarchy¹⁵ 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 duplicity¹⁶, 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 system¹⁷.

Staatensystem im Zeitalter Prinz Eugens, [in:] Erich Zöllner and Karl Gutkas (eds.), *Österreich und die Osmanen – Prinz Eugen und seine Zeit*, Vienna 1988, 69–87, 74.

¹⁴ J. Black, *Rise of the European Powers...*, 21f.

¹⁵ L. Auer, *Europäisches Staatensystem...*, 76 and id., *Österreichische und europäische Politik um das spanische Erbe*, [in:] *Archiv und Forschung. Das Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte Österreichs und Europas*, ed. by E. Springer and L. Kammerhofer, Vienna 1993, 96–109, here at 99f.

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, *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, *Northern Wars...*, 230.

¹⁷ On the impact of the aristocratic liberties and privileges on the Polish military system see the perceptive remarks by R. Frost, *Northern Wars...*, 244–258, and J. Topolski, *La réforme militaire en Pologne au XVIII^e siècle*, [in:] Jean Bérenger (ed.), *La révolution militaire en Europe (XV^e–XVIII^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 Holstein¹⁸. While *mandata avocatoria* were sent to the Danish king and talks for a planned alliance suspended¹⁹, 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 Warsaw²⁰, an alliance between the emperor and Augustus the Strong was signed on 16 January 1702 and ratified by both parties one month later²¹. 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 Rakoczi²². 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 zweifeln...“.

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.

¹⁹ HHStA, RK, Vorträge box 6a, folder 1697–1702, fol. 174–179; HHStA, RK, Kleinere Reichsstände box 209, fol. 290–293v.

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.

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.

²² When the alliance was signed, Rakoczi stayed in Warsaw with the French resident; cf. the report of Stratmann *ibid.* fol. 19.

Kliszów in which Augustus suffered a crushing defeat²³ 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 treaty²⁴.

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 Sandomierz²⁵, 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 Bavaria²⁶, 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

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, *August II Mocny...*, 134f.

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.

²⁵ A copy of the printed manifesto of the Confederation of 28 July 1704 is kept in HHStA, Collection diplomatique box 10, fol. 385–392v. The confederates declared war on Sweden, concluded an alliance with Russia and refused to recognise Stanislas as legally elected king even after Altranstädt; cf. J. A. Gierowski, *Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth*, 91f. For the constitutional role of confederations in Poland see K. Baran, *The Constitutional Uniqueness of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, [in:] *Die Reiche Mitteleuropas in der Neuzeit. Integration und Herrschaft*, ed. by A. Perłakowski, R. Bartczak and A. Schindling, Cracow 2009, 97–108, here at 99 and 106.

²⁶ Cf. L. Auer, *Zur Rolle Bayerns in der Anfangsphase des Spanischen Erbfolgekrieges*, [in:] M. P. Schennach et al. (eds.), *1703. Der „Bayerische Rummel“ in Tirol*, Innsbruck 2005, 39–50.

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 Altranstädt²⁷. Despite Augustus' abdication from the throne of Poland, the emperor and his advisers hesitated, for the same reasons, to recognize Stanislas until February 1707²⁸. 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 needed²⁹. However, his position may have been influenced by the tsar's decision to suggest the Prince as a candidate for the Polish throne³⁰.

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

²⁷ For a detailed discussion on the negotiations at Altranstädt see Ch. W. Ingrao, *In Quest and Crisis. Emperor Joseph I and the Habsburg Monarchy*, West Lafayette, Ind. 1979, 54–59. Cf. also H. Kretschmar, *Der Friedensschluß von Altranstädt 1706/07*, [in:] J. Kalisch and J. Gierowski (eds.), *Um die polnische Krone. Sachsen und Polen während des Nordischen Krieges 1700–1721*, Berlin 1962, 161–183, here 179–183.

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.

²⁹ Cf. his letter to Schönborn, M. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen...*, vol. 2, 187 and n. 8 and the letter of 21 February from Count Wratislaw to king Charles III, published by A. von Arneth, *Eigenhändige Correspondenz des Königs Karl III. von Spanien (nachmals Kaiser Karl VI.) mit dem Obersten Kanzler des Königreiches Böhmen Grafen Johann Wenzel Wratislaw*, [in:] *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, 16, 1856, 1–224, here at 33.

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 1707³¹. 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 Silesia³². 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 cabinet³³. 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 followers³⁴. 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

³¹ Ch. W. Ingrao *ibid.* p. 58.

³² For the negotiations on this second treaty of Altranstädt see Ch. W. Ingrao, *ibid.* p. 62ff. and N. Conrads, *Die Durchführung der Altranstädter Konvention in Schlesien 1707–1709*, Cologne–Vienna 1971.

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.

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/Wrocław³⁵. 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 Baltic³⁶.

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,³⁷ 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 emperor³⁸. 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

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.

³⁷ Reports of Count Heinrich Wilhelm Wilczek to Prince Eugene from Jaworow, 12 May 1711, Kriegsarchiv [KA] Vienna, Alte Feldakten [AFA] box 272, folder May 1711, and to the emperor from Jaroslaw, 7 June 1711, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 1, folder 1711, fol. 107–111v. Cf. G. Jonasson, *Schweden, Sachsen und Polen 1697–1706, Schsen und Polen...*, 102–118, here at 112–118, and the remarks by M. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen*, vol. 3, Vienna 1964, 43, and L. Schilling, *Wiener Hof...*, 123 with n. 13.

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 soldiers³⁹. 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 Augustus⁴⁰. 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 rescue⁴¹.

Charles VI, annoyed by Augustus' attempts to be elected emperor⁴², initially continued his brother's policy and, after ongoing altercations with Hungarian rebels⁴³, even seemed to have encouraged members of the nobility to put up resistance against the king at the time of

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.

⁴⁷ Cf. M. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen...*, vol. 2, 370 and 372–377.

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 speech⁵⁰. 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 congress⁵¹.

Despite the failure of Virmont's mission, a reorientation of Austrian policy towards Poland began to take shape. Since the Russian intervention in Mecklenburg⁵², 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 as 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

⁵⁰ Cf. the report of Stratmann, 18 February 1702, HHStA, StAbt Polen II, box 1, folder 1702, fol. 81r: "weil aber ein jeder Pohl haranguiren will....". This is one of the few remarks which may be claimed as example for the "view of the other", so cherished by modern research; cf. V. Jarren, *Die Vereinigten Niederlande und das Haus Österreich 1648–1748. Fremdbildwahrnehmung und politisches Handeln kaiserlicher Gesandter und Minister*, [in:] H. Gabel, V. Jarren (eds.), *Kaufleute und Fürsten. Außenpolitik und politisch-kulturelle Perzeption im Spiegel niederländisch-deutscher Beziehungen 1648–1748*, Münster–New York–Munich–Berlin 1998, 39–354; S. Malfèr, *Immagini dell'altro: austriaci e italiani*, [in:] *Il Risorgimento*, ed. by A. M. Banti and P. Ginsborg, Turin 2007, 825–856; J. Eibach, *Annäherung–Abgrenzung–Exotisierung: Typen der Wahrnehmung des Anderen in Europa am Beispiel der Türken, Chinas und der Schweiz*, [in:] *Europäische Wahrnehmungen 1650–1850. Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Medienereignisse*, ed. by J. Eibach and H. Carl, Hanover 2008, 13–73; J. Pirożyński, *Das Polenbild der Deutschen in der Renaissancezeit*, [in:] *Die Reiche Mitteleuropas...*, 233–244.

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.

⁵² For the Russian intervention in Mecklenburg and its impact on European affairs see D. McKay/ H. M. Scott, *Rise of the Great Powers...*, 88f. and L. Auer, *Europäisches Staatensystem...*, 82f. with references to additional literature. Cf. also M. A. Hughes, *Law and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Germany: The Imperial Aulic Council in the Reign of Charles VI*, Woodbridge 1988.

from Polish territory and supported the king's firm stance towards Russia⁵³, 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 alliance⁵⁴, and after negotiations in Vienna between Eugene, the Court Chancellor Sinzendorf, Saint-Saphorin (England/ Hanover) and Flemming (Saxony/ Poland)⁵⁵, a treaty between the Emperor, (England-) Hanover and Saxony (-Poland) aimed at putting pressure on the Tsar to end the Northern War⁵⁶ was signed on 5 January 1719⁵⁷.

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 avoided⁵⁸. 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

⁵³ Cf. L. R. Lewitter, *Poland, Russia and the Treaty of Vienna of 5 January 1719*, [in:] *The Historical Journal*, 13, 1970, 3–30, here at 13.

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.

⁵⁵ The Austrian material on the negotiations is kept in HHStA, StK Friedensakten, box 24. A still useful account is provided by J. G. Droysen, *Die Wiener Allianz vom 5. I. 1719*, [in:] *Abhandlungen zur neueren Geschichte*, Leipzig 1876, 283–305. Cf. also M. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen*, vol. 4, 39 with notes 69 and 70; L. R. Lewitter, *Treaty of Vienna...*, 14f.; J. Staszewski, *August II Mocny...*, p. 204ff.

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, *Treaty of Vienna...*, 14ff.; D. McKay/ H. M. Scott, *Rise of the Great Powers...*, 89f.

⁵⁷ Cf. L. Bittner, *Chronologisches Verzeichniss...*, 136 n. 720.

⁵⁸ L. R. Lewitter *Treaty of Vienna...*, 22.

had aroused suspicion among the Polish nobility and created a climate of general distrust about the intentions of the king⁵⁹. Consequently, the Austrian ambassador, Count Josef Lothar Königsegg, who was delegated to represent the emperor at the diet which opened in January 1720⁶⁰, found it impossible, despite being seconded by the English envoy Scott⁶¹, 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 alliance⁶². 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 reforms⁶³. Other

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 suscipionem, quae istis inhaeret, Caesarem intendere per nuptias Archiducissae cum Principe electorali saxonico Regnum Poloniae Domui Saxonico hereditarium efficere. Ablegandus proinde legatus Caesareus ad imminencia comitia.

⁶⁰ Cf. his instruction of 8 December 1719, HHStA, Polen III, box 1.

⁶¹ L. R. Lewitter, *Treaty of Vienna...*, 24.

⁶² See his instruction of 31 August 1720, HHStA, Polen III, box 1.

⁶³ For this characteristic political behaviour of the emperor see L. Auer, *Carlos VI: Tema y materia de las ciencias históricas*, [in:] Cuadernos de Historia Moderna, 15, 1994, 191–198, here at 193f. and, with regard to his Italian dominions, F. Gallo, *La Sicilia di Carlo VI: riforma amministrativa e ricerca del consenso (1719–1734)*, [in:] Marcello Verga (ed.), *Dilatar l'Impero. Asburgo e l'Italia nel primo Settecento*, Rome

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 September⁶⁴ 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 accede⁶⁵, 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 prince⁶⁶, many participants of the diet maintained a firm opposition to ratifying the alliance⁶⁷. As Augustus himself, once more changing sides, was taking pains to become reconciled

1994, 187–226. However, it goes without saying that in the present case this attitude was also prompted by the wish to overcome Polish fears about the establishment of an absolute hereditary monarchy; cf. above n. 53.

⁶⁴ L. R. Lewitter, *Treaty of Vienna...*, 28. For this diet in general see J. Staszewski, *August II Mocny...*, 222ff.

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, *Treaty of Vienna...*, 25 with nn. 171 and 172.

⁶⁶ L. R. Lewitter *ibid.* p. 29 speaks of a mistimed marriage.

⁶⁷ L. R. Lewitter *ibid.* p. 28; J. A. Gierowski, *Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth...*, 95.

to the tsar⁶⁸, the emperor saw no realistic chance for an anti-Russian league without Poland and Prussia⁶⁹. 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 materialize⁷⁰, 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 end until 1731: neither Poland nor Sweden was any longer in a position to fight each other⁷¹.

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 react⁷². In the long run, however, they decided to rearrange their strategies and to turn to a new alliance system which included Russia⁷³, the only real winner of the Northern War. As Klaus

⁶⁸ The English representative Scott complained to the Austrian envoy Martels in November 1720: "Cette cour se mocque (sic!) de Vous et de Nous"; cf. the report of Martels to Prince Eugene, 13 November 1720, HHStA, GK, box 99a.

⁶⁹ L. R. Lewitter, *Treaty of Vienna...*, 27.

⁷⁰ 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.

⁷¹ J. Black, *Rise of the European Powers...*, 27f.

⁷² M. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen...*, vol. 4, 99–101 and L. Schilling, *Wiener Hof...*, 124.

⁷³ 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.

Zernack very ably put it in an article published in 1974⁷⁴, 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”⁷⁵.

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⁷⁴ K. Zernack, *Das Zeitalter der nordischen Kriege von 1558–1809 als frühneuzeitliche Geschichtsepoche*, [in:] *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 1, 1974, 55–79, here at 71–77. Cf. also L. Auer, *Europäisches Staatensystem...*, 83 and L. Schilling, *Wiener Hof...*, 122 with n. 12.

⁷⁵ L. R. Lewitter, *Treaty of Vienna...*, 30.