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The celebration of the centennial of the Battle of Vienna as an example of the historical policy in Stanisław August times.

In 1778, that is five years before the official celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna, Nathaniel William Wraxall, an English traveller noted, surprised, that Poles are critical towards the battle, won by Jan III. Even though the military success and the glory that it bestowed upon the victors was not questioned, the assessment of long-term effects of the help offered to the Habsburg empire was less favourable. Wraxall quotes an opinion probably shared by a significant number of Poles: "Sobieski unwisely accelerated the collapse of the Ottoman Empire by defeating the Turks in Hungary. By helping the Emperor, he laid the groundwork on which the Austrian power would be built up. The rulers of Austria were far more dangerous to us. [...] And this is why we think that our current situation can be attributed to some extent to Jan Sobieski".¹

Especially in the face of the first partition, the aid Sobieski provided Austria may have seemed to be a misguided decision. The voices of criticism, concerning both the political actions of the king, as well as the battle itself were heard during the entire reign of Stanisław August.² It is significant that people who actively participated in the preparations for the celebration in 1783 by writing speeches or songs honouring the great victor, in other statements openly criticised the king. A good example of this trend was Franciszek Salezy Jezierski, who in 1783 in Lublin delivered a speech, praising the king, but on another occasion he said that "the man had all the characteristics of a good leader, but never had quite enough to be praised as a competent king". Jezierski accused Sobieski of "being gullible and oblivious to the tricks of foreign governments and opposition at home", of "establishing a border treaty³ with a country named after its capital, with loss of land and their first city," "always fails to apply thought and caution". His overall assessment of Sobieski's reign was not favourable either: "He died in glory, supported rather on splendid great deeds, than on the deeds beneficial for the nation".⁴ A similar opinion was voiced by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, who wrote a song of praise for the celebration of 1783. In his speech, delivered during the Sejm on 16th of September 1790 he said:

¹ *Polska stanisławowska w oczach cudzoziemców*, ed. and introduction Waław Zawadzki, Warsaw 1963, vol. 1, p. 545.

² Kazimierz Bartkiewicz, *Obraz dziejów ojczystych w świadomości historycznej w Polsce doby oświecenia*, Poznań 1979, p. 174–179, 183–186.

³ This is the Eternal Peace Treaty of 1686.

⁴ Bronisław Treger, *Wojna w twórczości Franciszka Salezego Jezierskiego (zagadnienia wybrane)*, „Napis” VII, 2001, p. 362, footnote 4.

“He did a lot for the glory of the Polish Army, but not for the benefit of the country itself. He was buried as a famous man, but he was neither loved, nor mourned”.⁵

The aforementioned examples prompt to ask some questions: why did the royal court and other political forces decided to celebrate the anniversary of the event, the assessment of which was still ambiguous? Why, despite the circumstances discussed above, the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the battle became, as Kamilla Mrozowska aptly summed up, the first great national holiday in the history of the Commonwealth?⁶ And finally, why did Stanisław August choose Sobieski as the protagonist in his historical policy, in spite of all the differences between those two rulers? Why would he attempt to raise the figure of Sobieski on a pedestal and stand there beside him, if several years ago he (or someone whom he ordered to do so, perhaps Adam Naruszewicz?) wrote in *Suum cuique* that “Jan Sobieski had great talents mixed with great vices and defects, his deeds were indeed great, and perhaps they would be even greater if his unseemly greed and the vision of private benefits did not obscure his mind”?⁷

The idea to organise an official celebration was undoubtedly conceived by people connected with the royal court. The impulse that directly initiated the preparations was the *List okólny do zgromadzeń szkolnych* (*General letter to all schools*) written by the king’s brother, bishop of Płock and the director of the Commission of National Education, Michał Poniatowski, on 7th of July 1783⁸, where he recommended that the schools should celebrate the anniversary of the battle⁹. He also asked everyone wishing to deliver a speech during the celebration to send a draft of the speech in order for it to undergo consultation. Thanks to this, the message in all the speeches was cohesive; some of the addresses even clearly quotes the words from the Bishop’s letter, and the authors often used examples provided by Poniatowski. The letter, therefore, is an example of the historical policy of the royal court, but also a set of guidelines for its representatives in the country; it shows that the celebration should be less about reminding the glory of the past, and more about education and upbringing, as well as the virtue of patriotism of the past generations, the great representative of

⁵ Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Mowy sejmowe 1788–1792*, pub. Aleksander Czaja, Warsaw 2011, p. 159.

⁶ Kamilla Mrozowska, *Funkcjonowanie systemu szkolnego Komisji Edukacji Narodowej na terenie Korony w latach 1783–1793*, Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1985, p. 218.

⁷ *Suum cuique*, Warsaw 1771, n.p.

⁸ Marcin Poczubut, *Opisanie obchodu stoletniej pamiątki zwycięstwa Jana III nad Turkami pod Wiedniem*, n.p., in: *Pamiątka stoletnia zwycięstwa pod Wiedniem przez Jana III Króla Polskiego nad Turkami otrzymanego*, Wilno 1784. A reprint of the letter can be found in, among others: Józef Lewicki (pub.), *Ustawodawstwo szkolne za czasów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Rozporządzenia, ustawy pedagogiczne i organizacyjne (1773–1793)*, Kraków 1925, p. 185–191. In further references to the letter, I will provide page numbers from Lewicki’s edition.

⁹ The celebrations were moved to October, because students were still on holidays in September.

which was Sobieski. The celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna was therefore a response to the contemporary needs, supposed to help with the much needed educational reforms as well as with the upbringing of the good citizens, who would serve the country, as apart from the knowledge obtained in schools they needed a noble example from the Polish history.

In line with these assumptions, Bishop Poniatowski skillfully used contemporary allusions in his letter. He often emphasised the need to cooperate harmoniously with the king. About Sobieski, then a Marshal and Hetman, he wrote that “his purpose was to serve the public, to give his talents and his fortune to the Country and the King”.¹⁰ Other speeches and sermons echoed this statement: Vice-Rector J. Michałowski in Białystok,¹¹ Father Filip Nerjusz Golański¹² and Franciszek Karpiński¹³ who delivered their speeches in Warsaw put a strong emphasis on the triad of three virtues of old – religiousness, love of the homeland and loyalty to the king. The speeches and letters also use more subtle allusions, very often Sobieski is referred to as “the Polish king”, and sometimes even “the Piast king”, which, undoubtedly was supposed to show the similarity between King Jan III and Stanisław August. In another speech priest Golański tries to make an allusion to Stanisław August and his attempts to reform the country by saying “[because of the envy] often even the best kings, fathers for their citizens, will never see the effects of their work”.¹⁴ Bishop Poniatowski also noted that “if reviving our weakened power lies beyond our reach, we shall at least make an effort to arm our descendants with the power of mind”.¹⁵ Very often the bad situation of the country both in the times of Jan III and during the reign of Stanisław August were brought to attention, and presented the king – sometimes metaphorically, sometimes literally – as a saviour, who would save the country like Sobieski saved the country, and the whole Christian World, from the Turkish threat. Julian Antonowicz considered it an action of the Providence: The same God, who had chosen the

¹⁰ Poczobut, *Opisanie obchodu*, p. 187–188.

¹¹ Danuta Teofilewicz, *Działalność Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w województwie podlaskim: 1773–1794*, Warsaw 1971, Aneks 2: J. Michałowski, *Mowa do młodzi szkolnej przy obchodzie stuletniej pamiątki odniesionego przez Jana III nad Turkami pod Wiedniem zwycięstwa, miana w Białymstoku przez prorektora szkół roku 1783 dnia 12 października*, p. 184–186.

¹² Filip Nerjusz Golański, *Mowa przy obchodzie setnej rocznicy Zwycięstwa pod Wiedniem, do uczącej się młodzi w szkołach Warszawskich Księży Pijarów, miana przez kp. Filipa Nerjusza Golańskiego, nauczyciela wymowy w tychże szkołach, r. 1783*, in: Jan Kazimierz Radecki, *Pamiętki z dziejów dawnej Polski*, Poznań 1842, p. 59–92. Fragments of the speech were also presented by *Gazeta Warszawska* 84, 18 X 1783.

¹³ Franciszek Karpiński, *Mowa na pochwałę Jana Sobieskiego*, in: id., *Dzieła*, Warsaw 1806, vol. 3, p. 335–360.

¹⁴ Golański, *Mowa*, p. 82.

¹⁵ Poczobut, *Opisanie*, p. 185.

brave Jan to fight the numerous [...] enemies, chose Stanisław August to a greater service to the Country by improving the hearts and enlightening the minds of its young Citizens”.¹⁶

The Bishop also reminded Sobieski’s actions while in opposition to the king Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, but also noted that when the threat of Turkish and Tatar forces arose, he turned out to be “better man, who did not mind the personal grudge [...] said to his knights: “I accept your oath, but let us turn it and defend our beloved Country”.¹⁷ Michał Poniatowski, and others who also delivered speeches during the academic celebrations,¹⁸ providing the example of Sobieski, addressed the opponents of Stanisław August “Jan, who was enraged by the vituperative terms of the peace treaty [of Buchach], forgets about his personal grudges, and by paying homage to the king, pushed others towards unity”.¹⁹ By showing that even the great king Sobieski made mistakes, the king’s faction sent a clear message to its opponents that they were willing to forgive them past grudges and begin cooperation, under one condition: “forgetting private grudges” and “paying homage to the King”, as Poniatowski clearly suggested in his letter.²⁰

Could those still be the echoes of the Bar confederation? Could this be all about the attempt on the king, and the parting of ways between the royal faction and the Czartoryski family in the 1770s? In 1774 Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, Michał Czartoryski, submitted his resignation (and died just a year later), and his brother, Ruthenian Voivode August Czartoryski retired from politics (died in 1782). The reins of the family were taken by Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, son of August, Grand Marshal of the Crown Stanisław Lubomirski, and two brothers, who just entered into the world of great politics: Ignacy and Stanisław Kostka Potocki. They all turned their backs on the politics of Stanisław August. The Sejm of 1782 was another blow that hit the monarch. Even some apparent successes, such as getting his candidates into the Permanent Council, despite efforts of the opposition and the Russian ambassador, quickly became sour victories. The ambassador Otto Magnus von Stackelberg, in order to stir up the public opinion stated that “the freedom in Poland has

¹⁶ Julian Antonowicz, *Mowa z okoliczności uroczystego obchodu stoletniej pamiątki zwycięstwa Jana Sobieskiego króla Polskiego nad Turkami pod Wiedniem, miana przez X. Juliana Antonowicza Z.S.B.W. Prow. Litt. nauczyciela wymowy w szkołach Włodzimierskich roku 1783 dnia 12 października, 1783*, n.p.

¹⁷ Poczobut, *Opisanie*, p. 188.

¹⁸ Michał Karpowicz, *Kazanie na obchód stoletniej pamiątki zwycięstwa króla Jana III i Polaków nad Turkami, w obronie Wiednia i chrześcijaństwa całego w roku 1683*, Wilno 1784, n.p.; Golański, *Mowa*, p. 81; Antonowicz, *Mowa*, n.p.; Karpiński, *Mowa*, p. 355.

¹⁹ Poczobut, *Opisanie*, p. 189.

²⁰ It is worth a side-note that the reference to these words could paradoxically put Stanisław August in a bad light. If Jan Sobieski’s attitude was given as the paragon of the current king, then the „equivalent” of Stanisław August was King Michał Korybut.

died, because Stanisław and his brother Michał want to rule Poland according to their own will”.²¹ The words fell on a fertile ground, and the first accusation that the king wanted an absolute rule appeared. The Saxon resident reported to Dresden: “Never before any ruling monarch had to face such atrocious accusations”.²² Calling for unity and agreement in the country was a good move from the standpoint of the royal faction.

The following fragment of the Bishop’s letter reveals another intention of the royal faction: The closer descendants of our brave ancestors were not able to preserve the glory, won by the bravery and the virtue of their fathers, for they did not follow in their fathers’ steps, and therefore squandered the fruits of their bravery and virtue”.²³ This sentence clearly demonstrates that the author contrasted the reign of Jan III with the Saxon times. It was not a new thought among the king’s allies, as we can see in *Suum cuique*, where Stanisław August (?) wrote: “When king Jan died, the Country started to die as well, here starts the era of our demise”.²⁴ After the tragedy of the Bar confederation and the resulting First Partition, the royal faction understood that a complete break with the past is not conducive to national peace, what is more, it undermines the attempts to introduce reforms. A shift towards modernity made the king and his supporters a lot of powerful enemies. The Bar confederation showed that the attachment of the noblemen to the traditional values – Catholic faith, freedom – was indeed very strong. Therefore the royal faction decided to change their politics according to circumstances: if a break with the past and going away from the Sarmatian tradition was impossible, they had to find positive examples in the past and present them in such a way that they would support the cause of reformation. It converged with an opposite tendency: as another tragedies struck the country (The Bar confederation, the Massacre of Uman, the First Partition), the nobles often remembered the peaceful reign of August III, when the country was equally as weak and defenceless, but the foreign powers did not make any use of it. The royal faction therefore tried to shift the way the nobility thought. Perhaps Franciszek Salezy Jezierski provided the best summary during his speech in Lublin: “We look on the past times as happy, and in fact those were the years where our Homeland was lethargic, after which began the spasms [...] not when the citizens’ spirit was already broken, but when the hearts were still full of the Old Polish virtue and bravery, and king Jan III Sobieski, the hero of our Nation, got glory by defeating the enemies of the Country and the Faith”.²⁵ Jezierski consciously admitted that the reign of Jan III was not ideal, that the citizens’ spirit already showed some signs of breaking, but the old virtue and

²¹ Krystyna Zienkowska, *Stanisław August Poniatowski*, Wrocław 2004, p. 295.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 295.

²³ Poczobut, *Opisanie*, p. 185.

²⁴ *Suum cuique*, n.p.

²⁵ Treger, *Wojna*, p. 362.

bravery was still there, and then, when the downfall of the country began during the Saxon reign in Poland, those were nowhere to be found. Interestingly enough, a similar diagnosis was written years before (in 1771) by Chancellor Michał Czartoryski, who referred to the reign of August III as “silence on the sea”, which should be ascribed to the “pure coincidence, and mutual disbelief in each others’ power”.²⁶

The organisation of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna was therefore supposed to present the positive examples from the still fresh past of the Commonwealth, as well as to show the negativity in the positively perceived Saxon reign in Poland. This contrast was clearly visible during the celebrations, especially in the speeches delivered. Priest Michał Karpowicz mentioned the piety and religiousness, as well as the civic virtues of Jan III several times during his sermon, while comparing him to the youth of the time: spoiled, looking up to the foreign powers, feminine. Karpowicz blamed the Saxon reign for this bad upbringing and bridged the two positively assessed epochs – Sobieski’s and Stanisław August’s. The juxtaposition of the “crimes of our Fathers” and “the virtues and bravery of our Grandfathers” used by the priest is quite telling. There is a visible call to forget about the degenerated past of the Saxon times and to return to the – not so distant – tradition of patriotism, bravery and virtue of the past epoch. Only king Stanisław August can save the country from the slump after the Saxon times – Karpowicz called him a “lover of truth, the nation and the father of our Country”.²⁷ Vice-rector Michałowski delivered a speech in Białystok with similar undertones. He said “Whose virtues did I give you as an example? The virtues of your ancestors, the virtues of the Polish blood, the virtues which are our heritage. What a miserable twist of fortune caused twisted the minds of our predecessors?”²⁸ Priest Filip Neriusz Golański referred to this divergence in the very beginning of his address: “The closest successors of our brave ancestors inherited the honourable privilege, but chose not to use it”.²⁹ Also Franciszek Karpiński in the introduction to his speech said that “Jan III was the last in the fellowship of the brave Men of State”.³⁰ The priest even asked a rhetorical question: “And now, where is the Nation which was so widely respected in Europe?”³¹

While criticising the Saxon times, the speakers tried to praise the time of Jan III and compare it to the contemporary situation, on the one hand looking on the similarities between the two, on the other

²⁶ Jerzy Michalski, *Kanclerz Michał Czartoryski i początki autokrytycznej refleksji nad dziejami Polski*, in: id., *Studia historyczne z XVIII i XIX wieku*, Warsaw 2007, vol. 2, p. 386–395.

²⁷ Karpowicz, *Kazanie*, n.p.

²⁸ Teofilewicz, *Działalność*, p. 184–186.

²⁹ Golański, *Mowa*, p. 61.

³⁰ Karpiński, *Mowa*, p. 340.

³¹ Karpowicz, *Kazanie*, n.p.

hand trying to show what the contemporary people can learn from their ancestors and where the present overtook the past times. Michał Poniatowski wrote that “Your task will be to especially [...] clearly explain that, even though our ancestors could not get such a good education in their schools, which is currently spreading throughout the country thanks to the wise king and his Education Commission [...], however they surpassed us in another aspect, namely that after leaving their schools, educated worse than us, they constantly improved and strengthened their citizenship and their piety by constant practice and good examples”.³² And here the speakers took the inspiration from the Poniatowski’s letter. Julian Antonowicz, addressing the students of Włodzimierz schools said: „Young people, look upon the honourable deeds of your ancestors, who fought and achieved them without the enlightenment of the education: look upon the virtuous king Jan, who with his arm held the falling Homeland, and if that is not enough, look upon the virtuous and wise Stanisław August”.³³ Also Filip Golański clearly based his speech on the Bishop’s letter: “The rulers did not care that much for the education of the Nation, this glory was left to Stanisław August [...] However, even though our ancestors had worse education and therefore a harder start, by constant practice and by looking up to the best examples became faithful believers and patriots”.³⁴ Marcin Poczobut went even further with his analogy: “This celebration of the 100th anniversary of Jan III’s glory shall serve as a model of celebration of the achievements of King Stanisław August”.³⁵

Some of the speeches were also concerned with the philosophy of the royal court or the trends and tendencies common during the Enlightenment period. Many authors, while presenting the military achievements of Jan Sobieski and the Battle of Vienna referred to the idea of a just war. Franciszek Salezy Jezierski said “That war created an alliance between the king and our Nation with emperor Leopold, in order to defend his home and his country”.³⁶ The references to then-popular theory of physiocracy were also abundant. In Warsaw, professor Jacek Przybylski, who taught law in one of the Warsaw’s schools, departing for a moment from the main topic of the celebration noted, that “the power of the nation cannot be measured with the strength of its army, or the beauty of its buildings, or the splendour of its celebrations, or the fervour of its past traditions, or the taste of anything new. One needs to seek it under the roofs of peasants’ houses, on the fields, in the talents of people living in the cities, in the products of looms and workshops, in the flow of money and stock, in the education of the youth. [...] There is no other way to achieve prosperity, other than good education and good management, and the virtue and bravery may only strengthen it and ensure its

³² Poczobut, *Opisanie*, p. 189–190.

³³ Antonowicz, *Mowa*, n.p.

³⁴ Golański, *Mowa*, p. 91.

³⁵ Marcin Poczobut, *Do Najjaśniejszego Pana Stanisława Augusta Króla Polskiego*, in: id., *Pamiętka*, n.p.

³⁶ Treger, *Wojna*, p. 365.

durability”.³⁷ Interestingly enough, while he mentioned that the well-being of the society stems from, among others, produce and the work of farmers, not one of the speakers referred strictly to the figure of Sobieski, whose convictions were very similar to the physiocrats of the Enlightenment, and who also thought that by rebuilding its agriculture, the Commonwealth may become a prosperous country.³⁸ Could they possibly forget about the thoughts of the hero of Vienna?

Although the celebrations planned by the royal faction concentrated on the official speeches, the visual aspect was not forgotten. We know one detailed report and two drawings presenting the decorations which were created for the celebrations in the church of Saint Johns in Vilnius³⁹. On 11th of October a Mass was celebrated in order to commemorate the soldiers who fell in the Battle of Vienna, and on the next day the victory was celebrated during another Mass. On both days the participants could witness a different example of celebratory architecture, designed by Jan Chrzciel Knackfus, the royal architect. On the 11th of October a pyramid with the statue of Minerva holding a spear and a shield with image of Jan III on the top, was built in the middle of the church. The figure was accompanied by a lion and a captive Turkish soldier. Inside the pyramid there was an ornamental tablet, decorated with military motives (*panoplia*), among which a shield – probably a reference to the Janina coat of arms – was the most prominent. On the pedestal two cannons were displayed, along with the sculpture depicting the Homeland “crying for her lost children”; above them a Turkish tent was built, held by two Turkish slaves. On the next day the pyramid was replaced with a column, with a statue of Mars, which should rather be considered a depiction of Peace.⁴⁰ The canopy, which was over it, was held by an eagle. Uniformed soldiers also were there. Similar celebrations were held in other cities, especially Warsaw (as mentioned in *Gazeta Warszawska*)⁴¹ and in Krakow – this element was imposed by the Bishop, who set the schedule and intentions of the Masses.⁴²

³⁷ Kalina Bartnicka, *Wychowanie patriotyczne w szkołach Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Warsaw 1998, p. 191.

³⁸ Two works will serve as an example from Jan III’s time: the poem “Poczta” by Wacław Potocki: “You see the coat of arms of the Polish monarch: A field within a field / He is Jan, it is Janina. In no school / which God did not show a flawless piece of art / Containing in this: SOBIESKI IAN – SOWED FURROWS. / And to you want IAN KING? You will find a craftsman for it, too, / Since for sowing the furrows you need a FARMER”, and the plafond *Summer* in the King’s Bedroom at the Palace in Wilanów, showing in mythological costume Jan III’s conviction of the necessity to restore agriculture in the Commonwealth. See Wojciech Fijałkowski, *Wnętrza pałacu w Wilanowie*, Warsaw 1986, p. 66.

³⁹ Poczobut, *Opisanie*, n.p. The celebrations in Vilnius are also discussed by: Hanna Widacka, *Stulecie wiktorii wiedeńskiej*, www.wilanow-palac.pl/stulecie_wiktorii_wiedenskiej.html (access date: 19 VIII 2013).

⁴⁰ This figure is identified as Mars in *Opisanie obchodu...*, but on the basis of preserved engravings, we would have to conclude that it rather an allegory of Peace holding an olive branch. The shape of the shield the figure also holds refers to the coat of arms Janina shield, decorated with a cross. The message, therefore, refers to the merits of Jan III for the defense of Christianity and ensuring peace in the Commonwealth.

⁴¹ *Gazeta Warszawska* 84, 18 X 1783.

⁴² Jan Leniek, *Obchód stoletni odsieczy wiedeńskiej*, Kraków 1883, p. 8.

It is also worth noting that near the day of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna Stanisław August undertook other initiatives aimed at commemorating this event and the Polish king. In 1778, historic paintings depicting and praising the deeds of Sobieski – among others the paintings by Martin Altomonte depicting the Battle of Vienna and the Battle of Párkány) were moved to Poland from Żółkiew (which back then was already on Austrian territory) in order to serve as an example for new big format historical paintings by Marcello Bacciarelli. In 1782 he begun work on *Sobieski at the Battle of Vienna*, which was to be displayed in the Knights Hall of the Royal Castle in Warsaw⁴³. Even though the first sketches were different than the final version (unveiled along with the entire interior of the Knights Hall in 1786), it is visible that the concept work begun in the early 1780s, and intensive works were in progress in 1783. At the same time Stanisław August commissioned a new sarcophagus for the remains of Jan III, buried in Wawel Cathedral, from Jan Chrystian Kamsetzer. An interesting account from the opening of the sarcophagus was recorded by Józef Mączyński, citing the story of an eyewitness. According to him, even though almost a century had passed since the death of Jan III, the body of the king, and especially his moustache were “absolutely unspoiled, and decorated the hero’s face”.⁴⁴ However, as Leszek Sługocki explained later, the face and the moustache seen in 1783 were a mask, because the remains of the King, who suffered from many sexually transmitted diseases decomposed quickly after his death.⁴⁵ But the legend of the brave monarch, whose body remained for so long in its original state of former glory, had been strengthened, and Stanisław August, funding the new sarcophagus, could once again bask in its glow. Work was finished a year later,⁴⁶ Adam Naruszewicz wrote in his diary, reporting on the return from Kaniów, that the king visited the Wawel Cathedral and “the tour ended with a visit to the grave of King Jan III, whose body His Royal Highness had 3 years ago ordered to be placed in a marble coffin, at his cost and richly made, and decorated with an inscription of his great works, to be placed in a place of honour, in order to preserve his memory”.⁴⁷ Regardless of the work being completed in 1784, the initiative to build a new sarcophagus was also put forth in the centennial year of the Battle of Vienna.⁴⁸

Political centres unaffiliated with the court also answered to the rather extensive celebrations of Jan III’s victory at Vienna prepared by the royal camp. There were celebrations organised in Puławy,

⁴³ Dorota Juszcak, Hanna Małachowicz, *Malarstwo do 1900. Katalog zbiorów. Zamek Królewski w Warszawie*, Warsaw 2007, p. 99, 114.

⁴⁴ Józef Mączyński, *Pamiętka z Krakowa. Opis tego miasta i jego okolic*, cz. 2: *Kościół*, Kraków 1845, p. 108.

⁴⁵ Leszek Sługocki, *Sekcja zwłok króla Jana III Sobieskiego*, Łódź 2004, p. 122–123.

⁴⁶ Michał Rożek, *Tradycja wiedeńska w Krakowie*, Kraków 1983, p. 30–31.

⁴⁷ Stefan Truchim, *Wizyty królewskie*, Poznań 1926, p. 72–73.

⁴⁸ Fijałkowski, *W kręgu legendy Jana III Sobieskiego*, in: Jadwiga Mielezsko (ed.), *Tron pamiątek ku czci „Najjaśniejszego, Niezwyciężonego Jana III Sobieskiego Króla Polskiego” w trzechsetlecie śmierci 1696–1996*, katalog wystawy, *Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie*, 17 VI–30 IX, Warsaw 1996, p. 36.

the home of the Czartoryski family. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz recalls them in *Pamiętniki*: “Puławy was unparalleled in the celebrations, radiating with the true civic spirit. I wrote a song for the occasion, which will be in my writings, the Princess [Izabella Czartoryska née Fleming] composed music for it. Our youth sang it in a chorus. There was a feast, dancing and illuminations appropriate to the day”.⁴⁹ Niemcewicz’s song is limited to the remembrance of the figure of Jan III and his heroic deed, and is maintained in a patriotic tone, with an optimistic note.⁵⁰ It is true that in the first verse, the author writes about the present as a “time of universal misery”, but the song gives up on modern references and analogies. There is no attempt to adapt the old virtues to the needs of the present, there is a clear awareness that the story of Jan III is a closed book: “O King! You live in the happy fields now / Where you were awaited by Stefan and Casimir”. Towards the end of the song a pastoral note creeps in, with a slightly humorous accent:

You were a knight of your age,

You will prefer it over any tribute, / That today, the fair sex sings your deeds.

Also creating in the circles connected with Puławy was Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin, author of *Na stoletni obchód zwycięstwa Jana III pod Wiedniem*.⁵¹ His work echoes with regret for the triumph that was the last great moment of the Commonwealth:

A hundred years have passed, since Polish temples / Were adorned with proud laurel today.

Since the last time in a unanimous group / Glory and their hearts joined forces.

Kniaźnin also outlines an apology for the republican system and the love of freedom: “they could boldly say to their neighbours’ pride: / Let Europe know what the free people can do”. What is interesting, he also refers to the physical reminders of the battle: “The oaks still stand at the Danube, / Where the pagan hid among them” and then later “these walls still stand, these churches of old, / That shook at the power of the storming hand”. The germinating interest in the memorabilia of the past is clear here, which will in the Puławy circles change into a cult of “national relics”, fully developed in post-partition Poland. No less important is the cult of the trees, which

⁴⁹ Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki czasów moich*, pub. Wacław Zawadzki, Warsaw 1957, vol. 1, p. 164.

⁵⁰ Jerzy Śliziński, *Nieznany druk wiersza okolicznościowego Juliana Ursyna Niemcewicza z 1783 r., „Studia Wilanowskie”* 3–4, 1978, p. 118. See also: Roman Kaleta, *Pieśń J.U. Niemcewicza napisana w setną rocznicę zwycięstwa wojsk polskich pod Wiedniem*, in: id. (ed.), *Miscellanea z doby Oświecenia*, Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków 1965, vol. 2, p. 103–105.

⁵¹ Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin, *Na stoletni obchód zwycięstwa Jana III pod Wiedniem*, in: id., *Dzieła*, Lipsk 1837, vol. 2, p. 27–28; See also:

www.wiersze.wikia.com/wiki/Na_stoletni_obchod_zwyciestwa_Jana_III_pod_Wiedniem (access date: 19 VIII 2013).

Izabela Czartoryska showed in the Puławian garden. A particular role was assigned to oak trees.⁵² In Książnin's song, there is also a bitter reflection, present since the time of the first partition, about the ingratitude of Austria: "Fame, then standing with us, / Advised us to defend ungrateful neighbours".⁵³ We still, however, have to do mainly with exalted remembrance, there rarely appears a bitter historical reflection, there is also a lack of positive analogies to the present, attempts at reinterpreting the myth. It is a different shade, perhaps more melancholy, of the sentimentalism present in Niemcewicz's song.

Of interest is also the poem of Kazimierz Ustrzycki, who was associated with the court, titled *Hymn na stuletnią obronę Wiednia*,⁵⁴ in which various plots are interwoven. In the first verses, the author paints a vision of the omnipotence of Divine Providence, which is then followed by a bitter reflection about the fall of the Republic in Saxon times, well known to us from the *List okólny* of Michał Poniatowski and special occasion speeches:

The Poles' old glory is gone, / Our fathers' traditions and laws are raped:

With virtue, power and glory and property / Have vanished like shadows!

Ustrzycki ends his poem with an apostrophe to Providence: "By Your will, when we before virtuous, / We will awaken – happy!". His faith in the moral course of history is evident here, the conviction that if the forgotten virtues of the forefathers could be revived, the country could be saved, too. The starting point presented by Ustrzycki is in a way close to the diagnosis that the court camp provided: the proposed methods of repair are somewhat different, however.

The third camp, beside the royal court and the Puławy hub, which decided to organise celebrations of the centennial of the Battle of Vienna, was the court of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł "Panie Kochanku" ("My Dear Sir") in Nesvizh. These were truly original and striking celebrations. Even the fairly "pro-government" *Gazeta Warszawska* noted: "Nowhere were the celebrations of the past century of King of Poland Jan III's 1683 victory in Vienna over the Turks were as splendidly (although at the highest cost) organised as they were in the city of Nesvizh".⁵⁵ Karol Stanisław decided to set up a "throne of

⁵² Alina Aleksandrowicz, *Ogród puławski jako teren inspiracji kulturowych. Z problematyki kultu drzew*, in: Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, Agata Roćko (ed.), *Dwory magnackie w XVIII wieku. Rola i znaczenie kulturowe*, Warsaw 2005, p. 147.

⁵³ This nascent cult of memorabilia also echoes in the written at the behest of the National Education Commission *Mowa na pochwałę Jana Sobieskiego* Franciszka Karpińskiego: „hardly have the traces faded of the feet of the great Sobieski, and lining our roads are trees that are his age!” (Karpiński, *Mowa*, p. 357);

⁵⁴ Kazimierz Ustrzycki, *Hymn na stuletnią obronę Wiednia*, „Archiwum Wróblewieckie”, Poznań 1869, vol. 1, p. 123–126; See also: www.pl.wikisource.org/wiki/Hymn_na_stuletnią_obronę_Wiednia (access date: 19 VIII 2013).

⁵⁵ *Gazeta Warszawska* 85, 22 X 1783.

souvenirs” of Jan Sobieski, which he had inherited, at the Corpus Christi collegiate church.⁵⁶ Among the numerous memorabilia was of course a royal portrait, as well as Sobieski’s sabre, two marshal staves and two maces, representing the offices he had held before being elected king. Radziwiłł also presented the famous spoils of war taken from the vizier’s tent at Vienna, and the gifts received by Jan III – the Order of the Holy Spirit from Louis XIV and the sword from Pope Innocent XI. In the “throne of memorabilia” were also personal objects of Jan Sobieski, such as “King Jan’s drum, which he had with him during conflicts, for calling his adjutants to his side”, or “King Jan’s water bag, which he had at his saddle during conflicts”.⁵⁷ This “throne of memorabilia”, the appearance of which we can see in a drawing by Piotr Józef Korsak,⁵⁸ was at the same time to demonstrate who was the rightful heir to the fame of Jan Sobieski. Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, and the masses of the nobility who followed him, reasoned that someone’s glory passed to the next generations, either through blood ties or through the objects belonging to the hero. In both cases, “Panie Kochanku” had plenty to show in regards to Jan Sobieski. Although this was thinking straight from earlier eras, it certainly fell on fertile ground in noble society. The Nesvizh “throne of memorabilia” was supposed to help Radziwiłł send a clear message to his supporters and to the court camp, that there was no place for any attempt of appropriation and reinterpretation of the Viennese tradition and the character of Jan III. He made this clear even more forcefully a year later, when he hosted King Stanisław August in Nesvizh, while the monarch was on his way to the Sejm in Grodno. This is undoubtedly the epilogue to the story of the “throne of memorabilia” from 1783, still deserving an individual, detailed discussion.⁵⁹

We can thus see that in 1783 different approaches to tradition emerged clearly. Stanisław August used the references to the past to realize modern goal and allusively promote himself. At the same time, he reinterpreted or expanded certain associations connected with historical events. The Czartoryski camp in Puławy acted a bit differently, treating history rather as a costume for political conservatism, the source of former glory and lofty examples that should be referenced and given their due honour, emphasising respect for ancestors and tradition. Much like the court, the Czartoryski camp exhibited self-serving political calculation. Their attitude was clearly different from

⁵⁶ The father of Karol Stanisław, Michał Kazimierz Rasziwiłł “Rybeńko” took over the Żółkiew estate from the granddaughter of Jan III, Maria Karolina de Bouillon, and along with it, the family memorabilia. The great-grandfather of Karol Stanisław, Michał Kazimierz, was the King’s brother-in-law, since he married Jan Sobieski’s sister, Katarzyna.

⁵⁷ A detailed catalogued of the items on display is listed by the *Gazeta Warszawska* 85, 22 X 1783. A short description of the throne of memorabilia is also in: Dariusz Główka, *Nieświeskie stulecie wiktorii wiedeńskiej*, www.wilanow-palac.pl/nieswieskie_stulecie_wiktorii_wiedenskiej.html (access: 19 VIII 2013).

⁵⁸ Fijałkowski, *W kręgu*, p. 36–37.

⁵⁹ Adam Naruszewicz, *Dyjarjusz podróży Jego Królewskiej Mości na Sejm Grodzieński*, pub. Magdalena Bober-Jankowska, Warsaw 2008, p. 61–78, 344–357, 381–391.

that of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł; what for others was the source of references and interpretations, for him was the proper, never abandoned way of life; this was a figure who saw himself in the era of Sarmatian triumphs, although he was above all the heir to the Saxon times.

The difference between the disputing parties can also be seen in their different approaches to national costume. Ludwik Dębicki paints a very interesting characterisation of Prince Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski: “The Prince had a greater gift than his father [August] for uniting the hearts of the nobility [...]; although he did not change his cap, did not cheer for cups, and did not embrace as tenderly as Prince Radziwiłł “Panie Kochanku”. With his dress, custom and education, he differed from the old nobility; however, he was free from any arrogance [...]”⁶⁰ Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, who “loved variety of dress, appeared before the Sejm of 1786 on the first day in a powdered wig and a military uniform, and the next day in a voivodeship *kontusz*”;⁶¹ we also know that in 1776 before the Sejm, he travelled through Lithuania dressed “in the Sarmatian fashion”.⁶² Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, during a meeting in Nesvizh in 1784, answering the king’s remark that he did not care enough for his appearance, replied, “Sire, this *kontusz* is the thirteenth in a row that Radziwiłł, the voivode of Vilnius, wears, it is not wonder that it is old”.⁶³

In this “war of tails and *kontusz*”, three positions clearly emerge, corresponding with the three political centres, which organised the celebrations of the Battle of Vienna centennial. Much like Stanisław August never wore an Old Polish costume, and Karol Stanisław “Panie Kochanku” never wore anything but a *kontusz* and *żupan*, so Prince Adam changed into a historical costume (or rather “donned it”) to demonstrate his views. This seemingly subtle difference between Radziwiłł and Czartoryski is also seen in the awe of Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, ostensibly a “man of Puławy” himself, over “Panie Kochanku”. Writing about the Four-Year Sejm, Niemcewicz wrote: “I remember when [Rzadziwiłł] entered the senate in a crimson *ferezja* with sable, pinned at the top with a diamond buckle, a sable cap, a scalloped *żupan* and yellow boots, proudly holding up his head, one would say that the times of the Zygmunts had returned”.⁶⁴

The Puławy camp saw the Old Polish attire as a “return of the old days”, a calculated reference to the past, a thoughtful turn towards conservatism. In Radziwiłł’s Nesvizh, the Old Polish attire was not a costume, not the subject of a choice or a decision – it was simply the only available choice,

⁶⁰ Ludwik Dębicki, *Puławy (1762–1830): monografia z życia towarzyskiego, politycznego i literackiego*, Lwów 1887, vol. 1, p. 152. The reference to arrogance is probably an allusion towards August Czartoryski, and perhaps even King Stanisław August.

⁶¹ Dębicki, *Puławy*, p. 152.

⁶² Michalski, *Sarmatyzm a europeizacja Polski w XVIII wieku*, in: id., *Studia*, vol. 2, p. 25.

⁶³ Dionizy Sidorski, *Panie Kochanku*, Katowice 1987, p. 261.

⁶⁴ Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki*, p. 300.

a natural emanation of the owner's personality: Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł put on the clothing, while Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski put on a costume. These were clear parallels to the way that Jan III Sobieski's memory and his Vienna victory was celebrated; Radziwiłł simply presented the Vienna victor's old possessions, while the Czartoryski camp arranged suitably solemn celebrations of the occasion, loftily remembering the hero in song. It is also worth noting that Stanisław August, even though he brought paintings from the time of Jan III from Żółkiew, this was mostly to serve Baciarelli in painting historical sources where past events would be presented in new interpretations. In the court camp, the old examples were used to write very much current history.

Also telling is the contrast between the locations of the celebrations. At the time, the traditionally inclined nobility and magnates suffered from a kind of "Warsaw obsession" – the city was identified with the court and treated as the source of foreign influence, godlessness, libertinism, deceit – threats to the traditional Old Polish virtues.⁶⁵ The Czartoryski move from the Blue Palace in Warsaw to Puławy was not only a desire to distance themselves from the court – it was also a change of philosophy: a break from chasing after any and all news, a foreign Warsaw, and a turn towards conservatism, cultivating the morals and virtues of the Poles of old. The Nesvizh of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł was even farther away from Warsaw, not only geographically – it actually belonged to another era. When in 1784, the king stopped at Karol Stanisław's palace on his way to the Sejm in Grodno, the meeting gave the impression of an audience granted to the monarch by the uncrowned Duke of Lithuania.

This geographic separation of the celebrations was very meaningful. The speeches delivered in schools on the occasion of the centennial of the battle were an attempt to reach the local centres of the Commonwealth, in a form dictated by the court. The celebrations in Puławy and Nesvezh should be seen in this context as a local "counter-action", and certainly a manifestation of their independence from the courtly "Warsaw", which tried to expand their reach. Let us recall the words of Niemcewicz: "Puławy was unparalleled in the celebrations, radiating with the true civic spirit".⁶⁶ The spirit of rivalry was palpable in the manifestations of attachment to tradition. Let us not how far from Warsaw the opponents of Stanisław August - Szczęsny Potocki in Tulczynie, Seweryn Rzewuski in Podhore, Jerzy August Mniszech w Dukla. This is of course not a new phenomenon. Urban culture in the Commonwealth was extremely weak, and the nobility and magnates were attached to their land and life as far away as possible from the capital. Nonetheless, this phenomenon did not weaken during Stanisław's reign and possibly even grew in strength. Moreover, it extends to other areas of

⁶⁵ Michalski, „Warsaw”, czyli o antystołecznych nastrojach w czasach Stanisława Augusta, in: id., *Studia*, vol. 2, p. 37–96.

⁶⁶ Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki*, p. 164.

culture. In a time when Warsaw was seeing the beginnings – main in architecture and sculpture – the art of the early Classic period, promoted by the court of Stanisław August, the Ruthenian lands saw the triumph of the so-called Lviv rococo sculpture. Although its peak took place in the 1750s–1760s, it was still popular in the later decades of the century in smaller centres, and local sculptors were reproducing the patterns even in the early 19th century. The same was true about the architecture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which cultivated Late Baroque traditions to the end of the 18th century. Neoclassicism was the “official” trend there, showing in the Vilnius cathedral or the Vilnius town hall, and the provincial churches or temples of religious orders remained – in the vast majority – largely faithful to Baroque art, reaching subtleties unheard of in Europe. The same was also true in literature, where courtly writers’ Enlightenment aspirations clashed not only with sentimentalism (pre-Romanticism) of Puławy but also with the work of Father Józeph Baki, who was to Baroque literature what the Lviv school was to sculpture and the Vinius school to architecture – the last word, the extreme and a kind of mastery of 17th century tendencies.

Based on the knowledge about the assumptions and methods of the royal court’s historical policy, it is worth asking why Stanisław August chose the Battle of Vienna to serve the goals he had set for his own historical politics – despite its critique and the obvious differences between its hero and Stanisław August himself. The most important was probably the fact that the tradition of “the last gleaming of Polish arms” was still alive and commented on, and what’s more – in Stanisław’s time, there were still people living, who remembered (or were considered to remember) Jan Sobieski. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz writes in his *Diaries* that “my grandfather [Aleksander] born in 1681, still remembered King Jan”.⁶⁷ An incredible (albeit eloquent) information was published by the *Leyden Courant* about a certain Hohel from Konstantynów, who had served in the military of Jan Sobieski and at the age of 108 joined the Capuchin order.⁶⁸ As much, this information does not seem probable, the fact that finding a person who still remembered Jan Sobieski aroused such great sensation, speaks eloquently to the cult of the King. What is more, supposedly King Stanisław August’s grandfather, Franciszek Poniatowski was also at Vienna.⁶⁹ We know very well that one of the kings closer to Stanisław (and worshipped by the royal court) was Casimir III the Great, and that he himself gladly modelled himself on Henry IV of France. However, none of these figures (least of all a foreign monarch) would so fire up the hearts and minds of Poles, as the still living – in stories and legends – Jan Sobieski. And although from the point of view of the court, it was not a perfect example, he did arouse emotions. He was the first – counting back from Stanisław’s times and into the depths of Polish history – example of a positive hero of large format in national history.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶⁸ *Leyden Courant* 93, 21 XI 1786.

⁶⁹ Adam Zamoyski, *Ostatni król Polski*, Warsaw 1994, p. 15.

We cannot ignore the international context of the Battle of Vienna centennial celebrations. They coincided with tensions between Russia and Turkey. From August 1783, the royal court was preparing a draft of a confederation should war break out between these two countries. In exchange for Russia's help, it saw the guarantee of the inviolability of the borders of the Commonwealth, and perhaps some territorial gains at the expense of Turkey. Was the reminder of Jan Sobieski an attempt to play the anti-Turkish card and persuade the public to support an alliance with Russia, as was the case five years later, when a statue of Jan III was unveiled in Agrykola in Warsaw.⁷⁰

The idea of organising a general national celebration of the battle may have been inspired in a way by the celebrations of the centennial of the Capuchins being brought to the Commonwealth. This event was celebrated on 6 August 1781 in Warsaw, with the assistance of King Stanisław August – a mass was said in the decorated church, where portraits of Jan III, August III and Stanisław August were crowned with laurels, tours of the church and the monastery were organised, and “Te Deum” was sung. There was also the illumination of the church and firing of the cannons on Miodowa Street. Michał Baliński, in his paper on the Capuchin order writes: “King Stanisław August himself came to the rescue of the Warsaw convent and covered all the costs himself”.⁷¹ It is possible, therefore, that these celebrations, organised to the support and generosity of the monarch, gave him the idea of using the upcoming centennial to implement the goals he set for his historical policy.

The two ways of appealing to the past – interpreting it through new sources, as the court camp did, and the “decentralised” cult of authentic traces of the past, connected with exalted remembrance of former glory⁷² - will have their continuation. The new political situation of the post-partition Republic would give priority to Puławy, which would inherit much from the “throne of memorabilia” philosophy of Radziwiłł – a Temple of the Sybil would be build there, where the famous scrying shield of Jan III, donated by Dominik Radziwiłł, would be placed in a central location.⁷³ Attempts at showing Jan Sobieski in the context of his art patronage, education and the Old Polish virtues that his court adopted, were pushed to the side in the 19th century. Criticism of Sobieski also disappeared in post-partition Poland – under the threat of loss of identity, it was not fitting to doubt the actions and character of a hero from the national pantheon. The 19th century turned the Sarmatian past into relics, arcs of Polishness and national pantheons, practically eliminating critical discourse. Stanisław

⁷⁰ Michalski, *Sprawa przymierza polsko-rosyjskiego w dobie aneksji Krymu*, in: id., *Studia*, vol. 1, p. 442–443, 448.

⁷¹ Michał Baliński, *Fundacja zakonu i kościoła XX. Kapucynów w Warszawie*, Warsaw 1840, p. 42-43.

⁷² Wacław Walecki, *Tradycje staropolszczyzny w Oświeceniu stanisławowskim*, Kraków 1987, p. 62.

⁷³ Already in the late 1870s, the paths of Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski and Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł converged greatly. After the 1776 Sejm, Czartoryski praised the “sentiments”, “grandness of soul” and “wise and prudent steps” of Radziwiłł.

August's times were the last historical era in which attempts were made to view Sobieski from multiple dimensions – considering both the scope of his work as well as their justification and effect.