

Issue 3 of 2016 is fully dedicated to the history of the famous magnate House of Sapieha. The issue opens with a preface by its editor, a historian from Minsk **Andrej Macuk**.

In his article «Sapiehas relations to Brandenburg-Prussia during the period 1674—1696» a historian from Poland **Andrzej Kamiński** traces the connections of the magnate family with Brandenburg diplomats during the time of family's rise to power and subsequent domination in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The conclusion is made that the Sapiehas adhered to the typical policy of magnate families of the time which consisted in strengthening a family's power. Same policy had earlier been pursued by the Radziwiłłs, and the Pacs, who relied on Brandenburg-Prussia in their anti-royal activities. In their turn the rulers of Brandenburg were politically interested in internal struggle among conflicting groups in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

A researcher from Poland **Diana Konieczna** in her article «Among the Pacs, the Radziwiłłs and the Sapiehas: the hard choice of Aleksander Hilary Połubiński in John III Sobieski's time» makes the conclusion that the Grand Marshal of Lithuania was trying hard to lay the foundation of his own influential political party. However it was in conflict with the interests of John III Sobieski, who at that time was counting exclusively on Sapiehas.

In his text «Closer relations between the Sapiehas and the Radziwiłłs during the period 1696—1697. Dietines during an interregnum» a researcher from Lithuania **Gintautas Sliesoriūnas** points out that the Sapiehas and the Radziwiłłs most often acted in concert during the time after John III Sobieski's death and an interregnum period that followed it. However it did not deter the Radziwiłłs from supporting the equalization of rights program in its limitation of rights of Lithuanian Grand Hetman and the Grand Treasurer of Lithuania. This bill was proposed during Navahradak dietine chaired by Chancellor of Lithuania Dominik Mikołaj Radziwiłł on the eve of the Electoral Diet of 1697. A conclusion is made that the equalization of rights bill was initially proposed by the Radziwiłłs and later during the dietine was backed by a group of republicans which was in opposition to the Sapiehas.

An article by a Belarusian historian **Dźmitry Vičko** «Lithuanian Tribunal of 1698, court violence against the Sapiehas» is dedicated to one of the instances of struggle of the republican group

against the magnate house of Sapiehas, which dominated the political life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania throughout most of the late 17th century. Having won the election to Lithuanian Tribunal (the highest judicial body of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) the republicans took many legal decisions on a variety of lawsuits against the Sapiehas and their supporters which virtually stripped them of their political rights. Most of the sentences were handed down in absentia and in many cases with procedural violations.

An article by **Andrzej Macuk** «The Sapiehas during the reign of Augustus III of Poland» is dedicated to the political activity of the Sapiehas in mid 18th century. At the beginning of Augustus III of Poland's reign it seemed that the Sapieha family was heading towards its decline, however they managed to keep the leading positions in the political life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania thanks to their new leaders and changes of policy within the family. In that time the family was headed by two prominent politicians Michał Antoni and Józef Stanisław Sapieha. For the first time in more than 50 years the Sapiehas started to collaborate with the royal court and the court supporters' party. It allowed them to protect their possessions and acquire new posts thus strengthening their position in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

An article by **Adam Danileczyk** «Freedom is our motto, public good is our goal. The start of political career of Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha» looks into the early period (till late 80s of XVIII century) of one of the most distinguished representatives of Kodeń branch of Sapieha family. The author points out Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha's determination to play the leading role in opposition movement in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Apart from that the king treated him relatively friendly.

In his article «Military and political activity of Alexander Dadźbog Sapieha during the war with Muscovy (1609—1618)» a Polish historian **Andrzej Grzegorz Przepiórka** closely studies the little-known pages of this Sapieha family member's biography whose activities took place in early 17th century. The researcher mentions the man's organizational and tactical talent which made him one of the most respected military leaders of the time in the country.

Another Polish historian **Przemysław Gawron** in his research «The Sapiehas' part in the preparation for Livonian campaign of 1625» studies the organizational activity of the Grand Hetman Lew Sapieha, his son Jan Stanisław and other members

of the family. The activity consisted in forming military units, army provision before and during the campaign. Both positive and negative aspects of campaign preparation and execution are pointed out. The belated mobilization which the Sapiehas were not responsible for, led the Swedes achieving their tactical goals almost unresisted. The units whose task was to counter the Swedes were supplied badly they didn't have enough infantry and artillery and were not experienced in laying siege. At the same time the swift formation of military units is mentioned which, within three months, allowed to form an army that managed to inflict heavy losses to the Swedes.

An article by another Polish scholar **Andrzej Adam Majewski** «Paweł Sapieha in his relationships with the court party during 1656—1660» is dedicated to military and political activity of the renowned Lithuanian magnate after acquiring the post of Lithuanian Grand Hetman. It was the time of hardship caused by the war with Russia. Among other things the author studies the use of Lithuanian army by this figure as a political tool to exert pressure on the court in order to achieve the goals set.

Aleksandra Ziober in her article «A friendship between a prince and a young magnate: Władysław Sigismund Wasa and Jan Stanisław Sapieha» demonstrates the capabilities of interpersonal relationships research basing on historical sources and social psychology methods. As the object of her research the author chose an interesting example of a friendship between a member of rich magnate family and a would-be king, which ended because of mental illness of the former.

A scholar from Poland **Dariusz Rolnik** in his essay «Kazimierz Nestor and other Sapiehas in the reign of Stanisław August (1764—1795): the perception and evaluation of the family in memoir literature» paints socio-psychological portraits of Sapieha family members who lived during the period of the reign of the last king of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. The author shows Sapiehas as seen by their contemporaries, drawing upon the many sources of the epoch.

A researcher from Lithuania **Agnė Railaitė-Bardė** in her article «The genealogical self-awareness of the Sapiehas and its reflection in heraldry» analyses the compound coats of arms placed in commemorative and celebratory editions dedicated to Sapieha family members, coat of arms poetic dedications and also their genealogical trees and charts. A conclusion is made that heraldry served Sapiehas as a way to manifest their origin and status also helping to form genealogical self-awareness.

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Two articles, published in this issue are dedicated to the history of Sapieha family possessions.

A researcher from Belarus **Natallia Sliž** in her article «Dziarečyn: from a manor to an earldom (XV — early XIX centuries)» traces the history of this manor both before its becoming the property of the Sapiehas and during the period of their ownership of the estate. The author also dwells on the history of Dziarečyn churches and on the everyday life of its commoners.

A historian from Poland **Karol Żojdź** in his article «The actions by Sapiehas taken to acquire Jan Karol Chodkiewicz's possessions after his death» closely studies the conflict over the inheritance of Lithuanian Grand Hetman that broke out in the 20s of the XVII century. The author notes that successes in the struggle over disputed estates greatly contributed to the growth of Sapieha family power.

The issue closes with a publication of a Belarusian translation from French of a hand-written diary of Teofilia Sapieha of 1775—1776, which gives a lot of information about the life of Bar confederates in French exile, who were urged to emigrate from Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to France after the confederation's defeat. The publication opens with a preface by the translator **Dzianis Kandakoŭ**.