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FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMONWEALTH OR
THE INDIVIDUAL. SUPPLICATIONS AND LETTERS
OF THE CROWN AND LITHUANIAN NOBLES FOR
THE GENERAL SEJMIK OF ROYAL PRUSSIA IN
THE SECOND HALF OF 17TH CENTURY

- Słowa kluczowe:** epistolografia, Prusy Królewskie, sejmik generalny Prus Królewskich, szlachta koronna i litewska, wiek XVII
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The proceedings of each general sejmik in Royal Prussia drew the attention of the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was commonly believed that the rich provincial treasury, if agreed upon by the classes, would not withhold its financial support from those who ask. It was also thought that the Prussian classes would provide their deputies with instructions, in which supporting the supplicants would be mentioned, especially since the number of Prussian deputies was not limited as in other regions. After the Swedish wars, the Crown nobility began to settle in Royal Prussia more and more often, with the aristocracy aiming at starostwo offices and positions of authority. To this end, they began their efforts to, first of all, gain the right to Prussian citizenship, known as *ius indigenatus*. The Crown nobility searched for support during powiat, voivodeship and general sejmiks. They believed that written requests, sometimes reinforced by arriving in person to a general sejmik, might actually be successful. Even though the Toruń archive burnt down, a lot of sejmik correspondence survived to date. There are 364 letters and supplications written for general sejmiks in the Gdańsk archives only. At times, over a dozen letters and supplications were sent to a single general sejmik. All of them include either requests for financial support or recommendations for particu-

lar persons, issues, institutions to be included within the Sejm instructions. Letters to the general sejmiks were sent by kings (also with contents different than strictly office-related), central figures, nobility, clergymen, soldiers, even bourgeoisie and peasants¹. The correspondence multiplied before each general sejmik. Senators representing Royal Prussia additionally received personal letters with requests for supports. Such documents were also written with smaller sejmiks in mind. Citizens from smaller towns asked larger cities to negotiate tax exemptions, release soldiers from duties and provide financial aid, especially to regions affected by fires, floods or storms. Thus, letters were vigorously exchanged before and during each sejmik. Deputies from large cities maintained regular contact with their authorities during the proceedings, especially when taxes were to be discussed.

As already mentioned, it was possible to identify 364 supplications and letters sent to the classes of Royal Prussia, so the ones gathered at the general sejmik. It is logical that supplications from noblemen constitute the majority; 45% of the entire official sejmik-related correspondence equals to 166 letters from nobles and aristocrats, both from the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. A lot of supplications were drafted by clergymen – bishops, order superiors, secular priests; they wrote 21% of the correspondence (75 letters). A considerable number of letters was sent by smaller towns in Royal Prussia, especially if they were not invited to the proceedings. Their inhabitants sent 39 letters and supplications, 11% of the entire sejmik correspondence. Peasants, mainly from the Żuławy area near Malbork, also addressed the general sejmik; there are records of their 24 supplications, 7% of the correspondence. Letters of military men and the Polish kings may also be found among the documents sent to the general sejmik².

For each sejmik, the royal chancellery sent a special expedition, including the royal decree, letters to senators, vocatoria to larger and smaller cities. When it comes to the general sejmik, it was attended by a royal deputy with the king's instructions. This person presented the most important state issues to other members of the gathering. It frequently happened that a monarch sent there their private letters with personal requests. John II Casimir warned about the impending war with Sweden before it broke out. When he was conflicted with the Marshal Jerzy Lubomirski, he sent out both official correspondence and letters to the nobility, senators, large cities. Jerzy Lubomirski also tried to gather the Prussian nobility at his side. In January 1666, he complained that all offices were taken from him and his lands were destroyed while he was expecting to receive royal mercy for try-

¹ S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich i Warmii w latach 1660–1703*, Olsztyn 1991, p. 144–157; *idem*, *Życie sejmikowe Prus Królewskich w latach 1647–1772*, Olsztyn 1999, p. 52–57; *idem*, *Supliki chłopów z Żuław Malborskich na sejmiki generalne Prus Królewskich*, *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie* (further KMW), 2013, no. 3, p. 499–507.

² S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...*, p. 144.

ing to reach an agreement³. The classes wished for reconciliation, finding common ground after the Swedish war, the expedition against Moscow and in the face of the Tatar and Turkish threat. When the Polish-Swedish war, commonly referred to as the Deluge, was coming to an end, the king aided those most affected by the military operations. In December 1659, he addressed the Prussian classes and asked for tax exemptions on behalf of beekeepers from the Tuchola area. It was then held by the queen Marie Louise⁴. Earlier, the king interceded for the city of Skarszewy, heavily damaged during the war⁵. In turn, the queen Marie Louise asked for tax exemptions for the inhabitants of the Tuchola starostwo and city⁶. In a separate letter, she vouched for Tuchola by recalling the attitude of its inhabitants during the war as well as calling to abide by the king's decision. The queen requested that the expenses for keeping the army should be reduced⁷. Letters sent in the autumn of 1667 were written in a completely different tone. Ever since the beginning of the year, a lot of discussions regarded the Tatar and Turkish threat to Poland and Europe. Polish deputies travelled to Crimea to convince the Tatars to honour the treaty. Their mission was not successful. In August 1667, regular battles were taking place on Ukrainian steppes. Tatars backed by Cossacks attacked in September. In a stronghold camp near Podhajce, the Grand Hetman of the Crown John Sobieski intended to stop those enemy forces. Sobieski's campaign was successful and led to signing treaties with Tatars and Cossacks in mid-October 1667. When the unrests in Ukraine continuing, the King John Casimir raised the alarm among the nobles and asked them for sacrifices. Meanwhile, the general sejmiks in Royal Prussia were either dissolved or boycotted, the taxes were not settled. John Casimir saw the divisions within the nobility and urged them to find agreement. The King demanded that *abyście bez żadnych skrupułów podatki jako najprędzej składali i na wypłacenie assygnati i dekretu komisji lwowskiej zabiegając większej szkodzie i ciężeniu ludzi ubogich mieli gotowe* [eng. *you should be ready, without any scruples, to pay taxes as soon as possible, and to pay the assygnati and the decree of the Lviv Commission in an effort to prevent more harm and burdening the poor*]⁸. John Casimir stated that he will not arrange a fourth sejmik in that year and that military delegates would arrive to collect the tax money. Soon, the troops fighting the Ukrainian campaign would arrive to Prussia Royal for their winter rest. Thus, the province must imple-

³ State Archives in Gdańsk (further AP Gdańsk), 300.29/156, k. 82, Jerzy Lubomirski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Wrocław 12 I 1666.

⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/150, k. 321, Jan Kazimierz do stanów Prus Królewskich, Gdańsk 30 XII 1659. Surely at the behest of his wife, the king asked for lowering the taxes for beekeepers, who would otherwise become bankrupt and so poor they would leave Bory Tucholskie.

⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/150, k. 321v, Jan Kazimierz do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Gdańsk 6 IV 1659.

⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/152, k. 158, Ludwika Maria do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 18 III 1661.

⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/151, k. 169, Ludwika Maria do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 19 III 1661.

⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/157, k. 489, Jan Kazimierz do szlachty województwa pomorskiego, Małogószcz 7 IX 1667.

ment the tax to avoid the unchangeably strenuous soldier stops. Earlier, the king defended the clerks in response to allegations that the Crown chancellery poorly handled sending out the Sejm-related expedition⁹. In mid-October 1667, he wrote a letter to the Pomeranian voivode Jan Ignacy Bąkowski, where he wrote that the defence of the Podhajce camp was still ongoing, that he mobilised the nobility and that the Pomeranian voivodeship was also to send its armed forces for Lublin for 20 November. He permitted a special provincial sejmik to agreeing on a wartime expedition¹⁰. Before the letter reached Royal Prussia, Sobieski managed to reach an agreement with the Tatars and Cossacks, so there was no need for a war expedition near Lublin. John Sobieski wrote a separate letter to the classes of Royal Prussia. While reporting on the victory at Podhajce, he demanded that the money collected from the hyberna should be sent to Warsaw and that they should be mentioned at the Sejm¹¹. The Grand Hetman of the Crown wrote from Lviv that he would release Royal Prussia from incurring the expenses of winter military quarters when the money for their maintenance would be delivered to Warsaw. In his second letter, he wrote: *Wielce upraszając, żebyście mię WMPP nie tylko za indygenę recipere, ale za osobliwego mieć raczyli brata i służę swego* [eng. *Hounourable deputies, I humbly ask you to consider me not only an indigen, but also your brother and servant*]¹². While requesting the recognition as a Prussian indigen, he described the battle of Podhajce and informed about a beneficial peace treaty with the Tatars and the subordination of the Cossacks.

The times were extraordinary. The Tatar-Turkish threat had not disappeared when the Commonwealth entered interregnum. John Casimir abdicated. Under such circumstances, the Grand Hetman of the Crown sent from Zhovkva a truly fatherly letter to the Prussian classes. Concerned for the fate of the Homeland, he asked *zaniechać waśni wewnętrznych, do spolnej obrady i należytej jej udali się obrony* [eng. *to abandon internal feuds, to deliberate collectively and defend her properly*]¹³. In the same letter, he mentioned the negotiations with the Zaporizhian Hetman Petro Doroshenko on extending the agreement of Podhajce. Doroshenko called *abyśmy przeciwko Moskalom posiłki im dali, praesidium na Białej Cerkwi nie mieli* [eng. *that we send our troops to help in their fight against the Muscovites, as they do not have the protection in Bila Tserkva*]¹⁴. The hetman did not favour any

⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/157, k. 266, Jan Kazimierz do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 31 VIII 1667.

¹⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/157, k. 482, Jan Kazimierz do szlachty województwa pomorskiego, Warsaw 17 X 1667.

¹¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/158, k. 98, Jan Sobieski do stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 22 X 1667; k. 100, Jan Sobieski do stanów Prus Królewskich, In a camp near Wyszogródek 23 X 1667.

¹² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/158, k. 100, J. Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, In a camp near Wyszogródek 23 X 1667; S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...*, p. 145.

¹³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/159, k. 133, Jan Sobieski do stanów Prus Królewskich, Żółkiew 5 VII 1668; S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...*, p. 145.

¹⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/159, k. 133v, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Żółkiew 5 VII 1668.

concessions towards the Cossacks and rejected suggestions of going to war with Moscow. Sobieski saw Turkey, Tatars and Cossacks as the main threats to the state. In October 1668, he reminded the Prussian classes to attend to their fortresses in the province *bo nieprzyjaciel z morza może zagrozić* [eng. *as the enemy may threaten from the sea*]¹⁵ and demanded funds for an artillery regiment of General Marcin Kątski. The general also called for the money owed to the regiment¹⁶. Sobieski showed that he did not trust Sweden by ordering that the classes of Royal Prussia pay close attention to the state of their fortresses. He sent another letter from Lviv, dated 15 May 1669. The content also regarded funds, but it was not the only issue mentioned there. The provincial subjects were to file their complaints related to in-subordinate soldiers to the delegated commissioners. The commissioners – Starogard starosta Władysław Denhoff, colonel of the Polish Guard Henryk Denhoff and a member of the Kiev voivode's Rota colonel Kazimierz Piwnicki – were obliged to collect these complaints and judge them so that such behaviours would not be repeated¹⁷. It was a time of interregnum and a period when the French candidacy of Condé was losing its significance. To everyone's surprise, the nobility elected Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, son of the famous Jeremi Wiśniowiecki, to be their next king. It was said that a Piast became the king and John Sobieski was not particularly fond of that Piast. Admittedly, the Commonwealth finally had a king whose duty was to attend to the whole state, but the Grand Hetman of the Crown still had to take care of the state of the army and the soldiers still did not receive their pay in due time on a regular basis. Sobieski thus kept reminding and demanding payment from the Prussian classes for two regiments of the army, the Crown artillery of General Marcin Kątski and the regiment of the Chełmno chamberlain Krzysztof Korycki¹⁸. In a different letter, the Deputy Crown Treasurer Jan Andrzej Morsztyn informed the classes about the indebtedness of the Crown treasury and asked for the introduction of new taxes¹⁹.

The election victory of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki was not well-received by Sobieski. The Grand Hetman of the Crown had known the king since Wiśniowiecki was young and thus believed that the crown got into the wrong hands. Furthermore, despite many agreements, there was a conflict with the Wiśniowiecki family over the inheritance after the ordinate Jan Zamoyski. The relations between

¹⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/160, k. 165, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Gdańsk 4 X 1668.

¹⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/160, k. 167, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Gdańsk 4 X 1668; k. 169, Marcin Kątski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 1 X 1668.

¹⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/162, k. 239-239v, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 15 V 1669.

¹⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 122, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Żółkiew 4 I 1670; AP Gdańsk, 300.29/166, k. 159, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, From a camp 18 VII 1670. General Kątski also wrote to the states asking for the 4 000 florins due, see – AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 125-125v, M. Kątski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Młodzieszyn 20 I 1670.

¹⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, J.A. Morsztyn (Morstin) do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 17 I 1670.

Sobieski and the Field Hetman of the Crown Dymitr Wiśniowiecki, a relative of the king, were also problematic. Finally, Sobieski recognised Wiśniowiecki's election at the end of July 1669 and took part in his coronation in September 1669, where he pledged his allegiance to the new king. Sobieski headed the malcontents, but he did not forget that he was the Grand Hetman of the Crown and was responsible for defending the borders of the Commonwealth. To this end, he wrote letters to the sejmiks with warnings against the Turkish threat, demands for money to finance the army and recommendations to attend to the fortifications. The internal conflict was becoming fiercer and some even demanded that the bulava of a hetman should be taken away from Sobieski. In May 1670, Sobieski complained to the Prussian classes: *Pełno na mnie zawziętości ludzkiej, a przecież urzędy otrzymałem z łaski króla. Chciano je gwałtem wyrzucić przez różne artykuły po województwach, kiedy nie poskutkowało, to poczęli sięgać do innych sposobów. Oskarżają mnie jakoby chciałem króla z tronu spychać* [eng. *There is a lot of rancour towards me, even though I received all my offices by the king's grace. They wanted to take them from me by force in the light of various decrees around the provinces, but when their plans did not work, they conceived other means. They accuse me of wanting to remove the king from the throne*]²⁰. The hetman felt insulted since, as he explained to the nobles, he was the only one guarding the borders when others were busy with internal political quarrels. Sobieski advised the Prussian nobility not to listen to ill words about him and support him during the Crown Sejm. He warned that the social and political situation in Ukraine was deteriorating and that the treaty of Podhajce was more of a temporary compromise than a lasting peace agreement. Sobieski wanted the nobles to understand that the hetman Piotr Doroshenko aimed primarily at separating Ukraine from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as well as Moscow and shaping it as a country subordinate to Turkey, similarly to Moldova and Wallachia. In July 1671, when Doroshenko's Cossack troops besieged the main military base of the Commonwealth in Ukraine, Bila Tserkva, and their allied Tatar chambuls ravaged Podole, hetman Sobieski took defensive action. Tartar forces were defeated and bore severe losses. The hetman's success was both of military and political nature. The entire right-bank Ukraine was briefly controlled by the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, Sobieski's military victory was not exploited. Neither the reinforcements from the Crown, the Lithuanian army nor the *motio belli* arrived.

The Grand Hetman of the Crown was aware of the inevitable war with Turkey and knew that the Commonwealth cannot rely on the military aid of Eastern and Western Europe. He wrote about those threats in his letters to the nobility, also

²⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 268-271v, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Jaworów 2 V 1670; S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...*, p. 145; *idem*, *Władysław Denhoff (1639-1683) – nie tylko żołnierz*, in: *Z szabli i kielichem czyli życie po sarmacku*, ed. J. Tazbir, S. Zagórski, Łomża 2015, p. 49.

that in Royal Prussia, tirelessly calling for ensuring higher collectability of taxes and payments for the military. In November 1671, adjutant general Franciszek Zygmunt Gałęcki left for Royal Prussia as a delegate of royal troops encamped near Braclaw and carried a complaint that since 1662 *wojsko jest nieukontentowane* [eng. *the army is dissatisfied*] and the Radom Tribunal, which controls the allocation of money, is acting tardily instead of punishing cities that evade or fall behind with their taxes²¹. In June 1672, as the Turkish threat grew, Sobieski was worried about the recruitment of soldiers in Royal Prussia. He informed the Prussian classes in writing that he had given orders to Colonel Henryk de Beaulieu to *pomienionych ludzi, gdziekolwiek ich w Prusach zastanie aresztować, zatrzymać i na potrzebę Rzplitej zaciągnąć* [eng. *arrest, detain and enlist the mentioned men to serve the Commonwealth, wherever they are found in Prussia*]²². Every soldier was necessary. The large Turkish army besieged Kamianets-Podilskyi while Poland was tormented by internal disagreements. When the Tatar chambuls were close to Lviv and some units even reached Hrubieszów, Sobieski took military action, even though his forces were rather modest. With a handful of troops, he defeated Tatar troops, prevailed at Niemirów and Komarne with the help of the locals and freed thousands of people taken captive. The fall of Kamianets-Podilskyi forced the Commonwealth to sign a treaty in Buchach, in the light of which Turkey kept Podole with the Kamianets stronghold. The agreement was perceived by Poles as a shameful act. Although Sobieski beat the Tatars, he felt disappointed with the powerlessness of the state. He was also disheartened by the criticism that befell him. After the fall of Kamianets-Podilskyi and the treaty of Buchach, the Grand Hetman of the Crown did not write to explain himself to the Prussian classes with regard to the defeat but explained why a confederation was formed in Szczepczeszyn. For this purpose, colonel Jan Górczyński arrived at the general sejmik²³. Górczyński was remembered for the abdication Sejm in 1668, when he blamed John Casimir for all the misfortunes of the Commonwealth and, above all, claimed that the king wanted to grasp absolute power by pushing the *vivente rege* elections²⁴. Nevertheless, that failure mobilised the Prussian nobility. The general sejmik made decisions regarding the money for the recruitment of troops as a new war campaign that was expected to happen in 1673. In May 1673, Sobieski wrote to the general sejmik about the obligations of enduring war-related hardships, at the same time refrained from

²¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/167, k. 110, Informacja na sejmik generalny od wojsk JKM i Rzptej z koła generalnego dana generałowi Franciszkowi Zygmuntowi Gałęckiemu, Near Braclaw 1 XI 1671.

²² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/165, k. 174, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 25 VI 1672.

²³ State Archive in Toruń, VII, 33, p. 2080, Instrukcja od wojska koronnego na sejmik generalny w Malborku dano Janowi Górczyńskiemu pułkownikowi JKM, Szczepczeszyn 30 XI 1672.

²⁴ S. Ochmann-Staniszevska, Z. Staniszevski, *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej za panowania Jana Kazimierza. Prawo-doktryna-praktyka*, vol. 1, Wrocław 2000, p. 588.

mentioning the Szczepczeszyn confederation and complaining about the accusations made by the royalists. After all, the bickering political camps had reconciled earlier. It was paramount to increase the number of troops and seek allies in the war against Turkey. The Grand Hetman of the Crown wanted a modern army, one that is well-paid and disciplined. While remaining in Royal Prussia to win the favour of the classes, he wrote universals to the troops to persuade them to spare those living in the province. In the letter, he pointed out: *Ich.PP oficerom tak polskiego jak cudzoziemskiego zaciągu z wojsk JKM i Rzplitej wiadomo czynię tym powtórny uniwersalem. Ponieważ siła takich oficerów znajduje kwatery sub pretekstu nie dobranego w Prowincji Pruskiej chleba bez wiadomości mojej z consistencyi się swych ruszywszy quasi executori causa z regimentami i chorągwiemi prowincję tę lubo w dystrybucje hyberno rum nad słuszność ad Ich PP komisarzy Rzplitej przeładowana marszami i Przechodami, prawem i surowym zakazem moim zabronionem* [eng. *I hereby inform both the officers of the Polish and foreign forces recruited to the Royal and Commonwealth armies in a second proclamation. As a lot of such officers finds quarters sub the pretext while not receiving their bread in the Prussian province, they move without informing me from their lodgings, along with their regiments and units, throughout the province overloaded with marches and crossings; as the executor of the law, I strictly prohibit and forbid to do so*]²⁵. The general sejmik of Royal Prussia did not remain indifferent to the hetman's requests. In May 1673, the nobles gathered at the general sejmik in Malbork approved the poll tax payments and 13 excises for large cities. According to the estimates of the deputies of those cities, the nobility's poll tax was to reach about 96 or 98 000 zlotys and a similar amount was to be collected thanks to the 13 city excises²⁶. By doing so, the classes of Royal Prussia proved to be generous. Finally, Sobieski found satisfaction. The Sejm of 1673 granted him and his descendants as a reward of 150 000 zlotys located within the Gniew starostwo area²⁷. At the same time, this Sejm reimbursed him for more than 63 000 zlotys spent on *na różne legacyje i potrzebne z sąsiadami konferencyje, a także i na suplementy i restauracyją chorągwi pod Trościanem zrujnowanych* [eng. *various missions and essential conferences with neighbours, as well as for supplementing and restoring the ensigns depleted at Trościan*]²⁸. When the Sejm was concluded, Sobieski left for Royal Prussia to see the properties granted to him by the Parliament. From that moment, he sent his decrees to royal troops and demanded that they spare the province which enacted new taxes and managed to enlist the troops.

²⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/170, k. 122v-123, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Rzucewo 12 V 1673.

²⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/174, k. 61, Reces sejmiku generalnego, Grudziądz 6 IV 1674; S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...* p. 194, 202.

²⁷ Z. Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski*, Warsaw 1983, p. 203.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 203.

It was a huge military effort for a war-ridden country that was internally divided not so long ago. The Crown managed to recruit 37 500 soldiers, with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania adding about 9 000 more and 65 cannons. This army was to stand its ground against enemy forces. The hetman decided to battle the army of Husayn Pasha of 30 000 soldiers. Sobieski and his troops arrived at Chocim on 9 November 1673. The fighting commenced on the second day and Poland emerged victorious on 11 November. The joy of this major victory was smothered by the news of the death of King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki. As the king died in Lviv on 10 November, the Commonwealth entered into another interregnum. When news of the victory reached Royal Prussia, everyone rejoiced. The church bells rang to announce it and call the Prussians to thanksgiving prayers. They tolled for a second time to mark the King's death. John Sobieski wrote to the Prussian classes from Lviv in December 1673 to both report on the Chocim victory, emphasizing that *Turcy chcą z nami uspokojenia* [eng. *the Turks want peace with us*], and state confidently that *Mocno tedy o poparcie tej wojny myśleć potrzeba zwłaszcza kiedy nas wszystkie zawiodły państwa chrześcijańskie, które nam obiecywano subsidia* [eng. *There is a strong need to think how to support this war, especially when Christian states that promised to send assistance have failed us*]²⁹. The hetman made it clear that the victory was not the end of the war and asked how they are to prevail as *podatki nie zupełnie wydane, pogłównne zmniejszone, cła małe, pierwsze ćwierci nie wypłacone, dawne po województwach zatrzymane a teraz znowu żołnierz na nowo w borgową wchodzi służbę* [eng. *taxes are not fully allocated, poll taxes reduced, custom duties lowered, the first quarter taxes not paid and the former ones stopped by the voivodeships, and now the soldiers serve without payment yet again*]³⁰. In the same letter, he added that under such difficult circumstances it is essential to choose a king who would give the Commonwealth a victory and nullify of the Buchach treaty. Sobieski told the Prussian classes, a province of significance, that: *Życzę tedy, aby accelerare dobrze przed porą wojenną electią a takiego obierać Pana, któryby pożytkom Rzplitej a nie cudzym wygadzał interesom i ubóstwo nasze swoimi ratował dostatkami a przytym sławę wojenną był u świata wzięty a za tym nieprzyjaciołom straszny* [eng. *I wish you that you manage to accelerate the elections well before the war and choose a King who would attend to the needs of the Commonwealth, not those of foreign powers, and save us poor with his own riches, and hold renown for his war efforts so that the enemies would fear him*]³¹. Who did John Sobieski see on the Polish throne, himself already? It was still a mere suggestion. Meanwhile, the

²⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/172, k. 92, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 18 XII 1673.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/172, k. 92, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 18 XII 1673; S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...*, p. 146.

convocational Sejm deliberating in January and February 1674 ruled out the candidacy of a Piast after objections from Lithuanians, but only by means of *verwali lege*. Such a resolution was rather bizarre. It was already obvious that this Piast could only be Sobieski himself. The election Sejm was scheduled for mid-May 1674. The duel for the throne was to be settled between Condé, supported by Sobieski, and Prince Charles of Lorraine, backed by the Habsburgs and the Pac party. Sobieski did not wish for Prince Charles to win, because the Habsburgs had let him down, he did not like their supporters in Poland and the Prince was known to be a good leader, which would diminish the hetman's importance in the military in case of victory. Consequently, it would be inferred from the letter to the Prussian classes that the hetman is willing to reach for the crown. His wife Marie Casimire was urging him to do this. In a letter to the classes of Royal Prussia written on 6 March 1674, Sobieski marked it clearly: *Ja dotąd w Panu, da Bóg, przyszłym a szczęśliwie obranym największą dalszego tej wojny poparcia pokładam nadzieję. Ale widzę, że żaden z tych, którzy by tę wojnę prowadzili, nie ubiegają się o koronę* [eng. *So far, I put my faith regarding the further support of this war in a King, soon and happily elected by God's grace. However, I can see that none of those who would wage this war are willing to take the crown*]³². The Prussian classes favoured the Piast's candidacy. Sobieski was supported by the Warmian bishop Jan Stefan Wydźga, the Pomeranian voivode Jan Ignacy Bąkowski, the Denhoff family and other significant houses of Royal Prussia. Unsurprisingly, the nobles that arrived at the elections did cast their votes for Sobieski. As King, he sent documents to the general sejmiks that were drawn up by the royal chancellery. In those letters, he explained to the classes the crucial matters of state and foreign policy, while also recommending the continuous enactment of taxes. Every royal deputy arriving at a general sejmik held instructions with such proposals for the classes to discuss. King Sobieski sent only a few personal letters to the Prussian classes. In April 1680, he intervened on behalf of a regiment once commanded by the Chełmno chamberlain Krzysztof Korycki, to which the Prussian treasury owed 5665 florins³³. The King also reminded about paying the soldiers in April 1682³⁴. Sobieski wrote fewer letters as a king than as a hetman, since a king is replaced by officials – the Grand Treasurer of the Crown and the Grand Hetman of the Crown. It is worth mentioning that John III was one of the largest landowners in Royal Prussia. He held the Puck starostwo, bought out from Gdańsk in 1678³⁵, and the Gniew starostwo area since 1667. Sobieski was also

³² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/173, k. 119-119v, Jan Sobieski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Jaworów 6 III 1674; S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...*, p. 146.

³³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/184, k. 95, Jan III do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 15 VI 1680.

³⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/186, k. 126-126v, Jan III do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Jaworów 8 VI 1682.

³⁵ S. Achremczyk, *Zawadzcy na Waplewie*, KMW, 2018, no. 1, p. 36-37; E. Cieślak, *Walki społeczno-polityczne w Gdańsku w drugiej połowie XVII wieku. Interwencja Jana III Sobieskiego*, Gdańsk 1962, p. 216-217.

ruling over the Tuchola area for a short time. In 1673, he received the Osieck starostwo and a little later the Międzyłęż area, both bordering with Gniew. In 1680, he bought out the Nowy Dwór starostwo on the Wielka Żuława island. Queen Marie Casimire came into possession of the starostwo in Brodnica and the one in Tczew due to the Sejm resolution of 1678. In 1685, John III bought the vast Rzucewo and Wejherowo areas and, as King, additionally managed the Malbork economy³⁶.

King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki did not address the Prussian classes in his private letters. He intervened only in January 1672 in the case of Ewa Zimmermann, a widow whose husband incurred the costs in casting cannons for the Warsaw and Malbork³⁷ arsenals. A week after the death of a Warmian canon Jan Baptysta Nycz, the King and, later, the Queen addressed the Warmian chapter in writing and recommended the appointment of Jan Kazimierz Wolf von Ludinghausen. Again in separate letters, Michał Korybut and Eleonora recommended Wolf's³⁸ candidacy. That Westphalia native was a member of the royal court at that time. In 1670, the King asked the Prussian classes for funds for the regiment of general of artillery Marcin Kański. Royal Prussia was generous towards the indebted and troubled by financial obligations Michał Korybut by deciding at a general sejmik in Grudziądz in January 1671 to grant him 120 000 zlotys as a gift from the province³⁹. This honouring of Michał Korybut was strongly supported by the Malbork voivode Stanisław Działyński but opposed by the Pomeranian voivode Jan Ignacy Bąkowski⁴⁰. A lot of letters addressing the general sejmiks were sent by the mother of the King, Gryzelda Wiśniowiecka. The issue regarded the Zamoyski fee tail which she wanted to claim because she came from the Zamoyski house. Gryzelda inherited it from her late heirless brother, the Sandomierz voivode Jan Zamoyski. She was successfully managing this large complex of estates. Thanks to her financial position, the king's mother began to play a considerable role in politics and rallied many nobles at her side. However, she was distracted from the great politics by the argument over the fee tail, the rights to which were expressed also by other living Zamoyski family members as well as John Sobieski on behalf of his wife Marie Casimire⁴¹. Although it was possible to arrive at an understanding with Sobieski, the dispute with the Zamoyski family was not settled. Both the Zamoyski family

³⁶ S. Achremczyk, *Prusy Królewskie wobec polityki wewnętrznej i zagranicznej Jana III Sobieskiego*, Zeszyty Naukowe PAX, Kultura, Oświata, Nauka, no. 3, 1983, p. 47; W. Odyniec, *Jan II Sobieski a Prusy Królewskie*, Zeszyty Naukowe PAX, no. 3, 1983, p. 40–41.

³⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/167, k. 140, Michał Korybut do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 2 I 1672.

³⁸ Archives of the Warmian Archdiocese in Olsztyn, Ab 11, k. 80, Michał Korybut do kapituły warmińskiej, Warsaw 10 X 1670; k. 81, Królowa Eleonora do kapituły warmińskiej, Warsaw 12 XII 1670; k. 92, Królowa Eleonora do kapituły warmińskiej, Warsaw 23 I 1671; k. 93, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki do kapituły warmińskiej, Warsaw 24 I 1671.

³⁹ S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...*, p. 194, 202.

⁴⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/166, k. 68, reces sejmiku generalnego, Grudziądz 26 I 1671.

⁴¹ J. Matyasik, *Obóz polityczny króla Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego*, Warsaw 2011, p. 44–45.

and Gryzelda Wiśniowiecka sent letters to voivodeships asking for the support of the nobility. Gryzelda Konstancja Zamoyska was the daughter of Tomasz and the granddaughter of the Grand Hetman of the Crown and Chancellor Jan Zamoyski. Gryzelda had a brother Jan, Sandomierz voivode and the keeper of the ancestral fortune. Jan Zamoyski married Marie Casimire, the future queen of Poland and wife to Jan Sobieski. Upon marrying Jeremi Wiśniowiecki, Gryzelda received a substantial dowry⁴² and became the wife of a powerful magnate in the borderline areas. After his unexpected death in 1651, she became poor after having previously lost large Ukrainian lands. Therefore, it was not surprising that the provincial sejmiks recommended that the Sejm should support Wiśniowiecka. When Jan Zamoyski died in 1665, Gryzelda Wiśniowiecka quickly secured her brother's estate and did not allow Marie Casimire to claim the inheritance after her husband's passing. The dispute over the inheritance after Jan Zamoyski was triggered after Stanisław Koniecpolski, the nephew of Sandomierz voivodeship, son of Aleksander and Joanna Barbara Zamoyska, Jan's second sister, made claims to the fee tail. Financial claims were voiced by a Zamoyski family from the side-line – Chernihiv castellan Zdzisław with his sons Marcin (Lviv podstoli) and Stefan. The issue entered public discussions during the sejmiks and Sejms as well as Crown tribunals. The conflict with Marie Casimire included Gryzelda Wiśniowiecka, Stanisław Koniecpolski and Koniecpolski's father-in-law Dymitr Wiśniowiecki. In April 1666, the Sejm court passed a judgment in favour of Sobieska and granted her about 800 000 zlotys and life tenancy, but only after paying off the debts of the late Jan Zamoyski. This ruling did not end the dispute. The agreement regarding the parties was not reached until October 1667. Marie Casimire's claims were lowered to 400 000 zlotys, though she did not receive those funds⁴³. Wiśniowiecka managed to settle the issue with Marie Casimire but was not able to do the same with the Zamoyski family. Marcin Zamoyski⁴⁴, who later became the Grand Treasurer of the Crown, addressed a general sejmik in 1665 and 1666 and complaining that *a mnie z niej wygnano* [eng. *I was exiled from it*]⁴⁵. Three years later, he wrote again to the Prussian classes for support for *rodu Zamoyskich któremu przez siedem sejmów doprosić się nie mógł* [eng. *the Zamoyski family, which I have been asking for throughout seven sejms*], highlighting that they cannot allow *żeby dom przez procesy nie przychodził do ruiny* [eng. *for the house to be ruined because of the trials*]⁴⁶. The letters to the general sejmik were sent by the Zamoyski family and Gryzelda Wiśniowiecka. In June 1666, she complained

⁴² A. Przyboś, *Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki 1640–1673*, Cracow 1984, p. 22.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 26–27.

⁴⁴ Z. Hundert, *Listy przepowiednie dla Marcina Zamoyskiego z lat 1656, 1679 i 1683 na chorągiew jazdy i regiment pieszy w wojsku koronnym*, „Res Historica”, 2017, no. 43, p. 313–336.

⁴⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/156, k. 87v, Marcin Zamoyski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 1 I 1666.

⁴⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/161, k. 185-185v, Marcin Zamoyski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 20 I 1669.

about their obstinacy, the lawsuits, their desire to deprive her of her rights to the fee tail⁴⁷. In July and August 1669, after the election of Michał Korybut as king, Gryzelda Konstancja not only wrote a letter to the Prussian classes, but sent a royal peace emissary to plead her case during the sejmik. She accused the Zamoyski family of wanting to dispose of her right to the inheritance⁴⁸. Wiśniowiecka sent applications to the general sejmik as well as letters to provincial sejmiks with complaints about the Zamoyski family⁴⁹. Since the issue was not solved in 1670 and 1671, Gryzelda Konstancja Wiśniowiecka once again asked the Prussian classes for support, recommendations for discussing her case during the Sejm and stating demands to refute Zamoyski's claims⁵⁰. The ongoing dispute was settled in the resolution of the convocation Sejm on 30 April 1674, when King Michał Korybut and his mother were already dead. As stated in the act, Marcin Zamoyski took over a part of the disputed possessions. Meanwhile, Dymitr Wiśniowiecki made his claims to the fee tail. As a Field Hetman, Wiśniowiecki wrote an appropriate letter to the general sejmik in July 1675.⁵¹

The Zamoyski family did not cease to send out letters to the classes after settling the issue of the Zamoyski fee tail. Marcin Zamoyski, the voivode of Lublin, reminded in 1683 the merits of his brother Kazimierz and asked to properly⁵² rewarding them. In 1683, when he took over the state treasury from Andrzej Morsztyn, he requested the Sejm deputies to discharge him from the management of the treasury. His wish was honoured in 1685. He failed to account for his activities for a few years because of the sejms being called off. Zamoyski died before he managed to do that. His family asked for a settlement of his accounts and actions. His brother, Bełż voivode Kazimierz Zamoyski, supported this request in a letter to the classes of Royal Prussia⁵³. He pointed out that Marcin had submitted proper treasury documents before his death but did not receive the Sejm's approval due to the proceedings being disrupted. The Bełż voivode asked for a point to be written down in the Sejm instructions of Royal Prussia with regard to settling the accounts for the treasurer's successors. The voivode wrote: *Proszę włączyć do instrukcji poselskiej na sejm aby Rzplta na sejmie przyszłym sukcesorów śp. Rodzonego mego praetensionibus*

⁴⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/159, k. 148-148v, Gryzelda Konstancja Korybutowa Wiśniowiecka do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 20 VI 1668.

⁴⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/162, k. 251, Gryzelda Konstancja Wiśniowiecka do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 19 VII 1669.

⁴⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/162, k. 241, Gryzelda Konstancja Wiśniowiecka do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 22 VIII 1669.

⁵⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 359, Gryzelda Konstancja Wiśniowiecka do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Zamość 14 VII 1670; AP Gdańsk, 300.29/167, k. 144, Gryzelda Konstancja Wiśniowiecka do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Zamość 28 XI 1671.

⁵¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/175, k. 181, Dymitr Wiśniowiecki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Zamość 5 VII 1675.

⁵² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/187, k. 175, Marcin Zamoyski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 5 V 1683.

⁵³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/192, k. 176, Kazimierz Zamoyski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 19 XI 1689.

skarbu *quitowała* [eng. *Please include it in the instructions for the Sejm deputies so the Commonwealth can settle treasury issues for the successors of my own late brother during its next proceedings*].⁵⁴ Right after the letter from Kazimierz arrived, letters written by the sons of Marcin Zamoyski – Jan, Tomasz and Marcin – as well as his wife, Anna Zamoyska, were delivered⁵⁵. During the Sejm of 1690, the aforementioned Kazimierz Zamoyski attempted to settle the treasury-related problems that were still unresolved since his brother's passing by trying to influence the election of persons for the treasury⁵⁶. Not everything unfolded as he wished. The sejm, however, acknowledged the activities of Marcin Zamoyski, thus freeing his successors from any liabilities.

Treasury matters and the issues of payment for the army led the Grand Treasurer of the Crown Andrzej Morsztyn and the Grand Hetman of the Crown Jan Stanisław Jabłonowski to write letters each year since 1668. It is worth mentioning that in the years 1672–1681 Morsztyn actually governed the Tuchola starostwo and Jan Stanisław Jabłonowski was a Świecko starosta. As a Grand Treasurer of the Crown, Morsztyn not only urged to pass taxes or pay regular instalments for the army. In his letters to Prussian classes, he assessed the condition of the state and the treasury. In the summer of 1668, he sent a written note about the state of the treasury and the national debt. He told the nobles of Royal Prussia: *Marszałek wielki koronny przestrzega, że bez płacenia Tatarom upominku spokoju z ich strony nie będzie*. [eng. *the Grand Marshal of the Crown warns that without paying the Tatars there will be no peace with them*]. He went on to point out that: *pogłowne żydowskie odłożone, ale z tego dochód mały... upadek handlu od złej pochodzi monety* [eng. *the Jewish poll tax is put aside, but it is a small income... the fall of trade starts with the debasement of coinage*]⁵⁷. The treasurer stressed that they were lacking 90 000 zlotys to pay the outstanding amounts to the army. In a second letter dated the same day, month and year, he asked for the indiginate. Morsztyn wrote: *abyście mię WMPP in gremium sui gdzie mię łaska JKМ wprowadzić raczyła, łaskawie przyjąć chcieli. Jako generalny tej Rzptej urzędnik powszechną pracą obsługiwać będę tę łaskę WMPP, jako nowy obywatel będę się starał abym w obronie przywilejów prowincji najstarszym nie*

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/192, k. 177, Jan, Tomasz, Marcin Zamoyscy do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Zamość 18 XI 1689; k. 175-175v, Anna Zamoyska do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Zamość 26 XI 1689. Zamoyska wrote: *Po śmierci męża przybyło utrapienie w niedoszłem dla zerwanego sejmu quicie z rachunków skarbu koronnego za żywota nieboszczykowego liquidowanych... Aby Rzpta z dosyć uczynienie sobie nas pozostałych quitowała sukcesorów. Sumy, które za nieboszczyka męża do skarbu wchodziły na potrzeby publiczne zostały wydane* [Eng. *After the death of my husband, a problem arose because of the receipt from the Crown Treasury accounts liquidated during my husband's lifetime that did not reach the broken-off Sejm... So that the Commonwealth could compensate us by gaining funds from other successors. The sums that went to the treasury when my late husband lived were spent on public needs*].

⁵⁶ R. Kołodziej, *Ostatni wolności naszej klejnot. Sejm Rzeczypospolitej za panowania Jana III Sobieskiego*, Poznań 2014, p. 406, 475.

⁵⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/159, k. 218, A. Morsztyn do Stanów Prus Królewskich, 27 VII 1668.

ustąpił [eng. so that you gracefully accept me in gremium sui, which I entered by the grace of the King. As a general administrator of the Commonwealth, I will serve you for your grace, as a new citizen, I will do my best to defend the privileges of the province as strongly as the eldest among you]⁵⁸. In autumn 1668, the treasurer reported that a Tatar envoy arrived in Warsaw for a gift that has not been paid for years and threatened to go to war if the funds were not delivered. As a result of the talks with the Grand Treasurer of the Crown and the Grand Marshal of the Crown John Sobieski, the Tatar deputy was content with a 100 000 thalers, or 460 000 zlotys⁵⁹. Therefore, the treasurer asked the classes to pass a special tax on the general sejmik that would fund the Tatar claims. In August 1669, after the election of Michał Korybut, Morsztyn alerted the Prussian classes that the treasury was in enormous debt. The treasurer highlighted that *wojsku zostaje jeszcze długu ad diem ultimaam Julii 1667 przyłożywszy do tego wszystkie oschłe i powrócone assygnacie także sumy na klejnotach i na mennicach regimentom assecurowane wszystkiego blisko półosma miliona złotych. Do czego przyłożywszy długi króla Kazimierza, dług kurfurstu brandenburskiego i różne credit dawne skarbowe, znajdzie się nie omylnie wszystkiego długu jedenaście milionów złotych i nad to* [eng. the military is still, since July 1667, owed nearly seven and a half million zlotys, old and returned assignats tied to jewels and mints secured for the regiments. Adding to that the debts of King John Casimir, the debt of the Brandenburg curfirst and various former treasury credits, the indebtment will surely exceed eleven million in total]⁶⁰. That letter showed the terrible state of the Treasury, massive debt and the lack of attempts at financial reforms. The treasurer, therefore, demanded a swift monetary reform and the enactment of taxes that would allow for paying at least half of the debt. After the lost war against Turkey, he praised in 1672 the sacrifice of the classes and recommended that new taxes should be enacted for the expected war, and all of this should be done *ku Ojczyzny miłości* [eng. for the love of Homeland]⁶¹. After the Chocim victory and the election of John Sobieski as king, Morsztyn rekindled his plan for the indigene by reminding the classes of his merits in settling taxes, namely allowing for the general sejmik to decide on the new taxes passed during the Sejm. In 1677, the treasurer sent a highly interesting settlement of taxes that were collected in Royal Prussia. In that document, he informed the Prussian classes gathered at the general sejmik that the Prussian treasurer and Malbork voivode Jan Ignacy Bąkowski paid to the state treasury 600 000 zlotys as enacted in 1674, 200 000 zlotys of poll tax enacted in 1673 and 78 000 zlotys of a lump sum for water tariffs as enacted in 1661 and

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, k. 215, Andrzej Morsztyn (Morstin) do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 27 VII 1668.

⁵⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/160, k. 175, Andrzej Morsztyn do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 20 IX 1668.

⁶⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/162, k. 240, Andrzej Morsztyn do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw VIII 1669.

⁶¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/170, k. 233, Andrzej Morsztyn do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 16 VI 1673.

1662 and paid for by the treasury of the province by the order of the Tribunal of Radom⁶². Morsztyn meticulously listed where the money was allocated, which branch of the army got it and how much. Thus, the financial input of Royal Prussia was considerable and the solvency of the province, although settled after the deadline, was still rather on time if compared to other provinces. Finally, in August 1678, Morsztyn sent a farewell letter to the Prussian classes, explaining that he must leave the country due to health reasons⁶³. In fact, he left Poland to avoid the accusations of high treason, as he was even suspected of trying to dethrone John III Sobieski. The Sejm did not approve his treasury report. Morsztyn stepped down from the office. The treasury was managed by Marcin Zamoyski for two years, who became the Grand Treasurer of the Crown in 1685.

The Prussian classes also received letters in the years 1661–1668 from the Grand Treasurer of the Crown Jan Kazimierz Krasiński. Apart from requesting taxes and faster pay-outs to the military, he intervened in one of the letters on behalf of the royal secretary Grzegorz Berkmann and his wife, leaseholders of Byszewo and Besterhagen estates in Royal Prussia. By the resolution of the Sejm of 1658, Berkmann received 14 000 florins located within those royal goods. The treasurer gave him a document stating that he regularly paid quarter taxes from his estates and could not be forced to cover other liabilities⁶⁴. The heirs of the treasurer had trouble in settling the accounts regarding the reign of John Casimir. The Sejm did not release Krasiński from the treasury business for a long time and his frightened heirs had to defend themselves against paying the related liabilities. The treasurer's son Jan Krasiński was trying to settle his father's activities during a general sejmik. In January 1675, he wrote: *abyście w sprawach skarbowych ojca mego instantią za mną uczynili, niech na sejmie koronacyjnym koniec sprawy mojej będzie, żem ja ex one re ojca mego nic Rzptej nie winien, owszem zapłaciłem niewinnie z dekretu Radomskiego 140 tysięcy złotych,, którzy mi majątność pozajeżdżali windicowałem prawie wszystkie [eng. as for the treasury matters of my father, I ask that you intercede on my behalf, so that my case ends during the coronation Sejm and it becomes known that, on behalf of my father, I owe nothing to the Commonwealth; in the light of the Radom decree, due to the foray, I willingly paid 140 000 zlotys and paid off nearly all of them]*⁶⁵. When Jan Krasiński received his appointment at the Sztum starostwo in the summer of 1679, he asked the Prussian classes to grant him the indiginate and

⁶² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/180, k. 176-177, Andrzej Morsztyn do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 16 V 1677; k. 178, 180-180v.

⁶³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/181, k. 148, J.A. Morsztyn do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Gunua 20 VIII 1678.

⁶⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/154, k. 195, Jan Kazimierz Krasiński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Rawa 20 VI 1661.

⁶⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/175, k. 197-197v, Jan Krasiński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 18 I 1675; see also AP Gdańsk, 300, 29/164, k. 360, Jan Krasiński do Stanów, Warsaw 1 VII 1670; AP Gdańsk, 300.29/167, k. 158, Jan Krasiński do Stanów, Warsaw 21 XII 1671.

justified that he was a Prussian terrigene who has served the province well⁶⁶. On the general sejmik in Grudziądz in April 1682, Krasieński became an indigenate by signing a reverse saying that he would fervently defend the rights of the province⁶⁷. Already as an indigen, he requested in 1684 that the treasury of the province covers the expenses of his hussar unit⁶⁸. In 1692, as a Sztum starosta, he sent a supplication for tax exemption because of the natural disasters that affected his starostwo⁶⁹.

The second half of the 17th century was a time of numerous, initially defensive wars and, after the victory of Vienna, costly war campaigns in Moldova and Wallachia. The costs of maintaining an army were reflected in numerous letters of Crown and Lithuanian officials and senators. The Commonwealth after the Deluge was politically torn, there were soldier confederations, the expensive and failed expedition against Moscow, the war with Jerzy Lubomirski. The fighting led to massive devastation. Finally, the Commonwealth felt relief as the armistice was concluded in early November 1665 near Połczyn⁷⁰. John Casimir agreed to grant amnesty to Jerzy Lubomirski and his supporters, while Lubomirski was to leave the country and allow the Sejm to settle any issues. In truth, the Połczyn agreement ensured only a temporary peace. The King called it an ice treaty. Lubomirski felt disappointed as he was not restored to his former offices and the plans for *vivente rege* elections were not banned. The settlement did not calm the minds of the nobles either. Each party sought allies. The Poznań castellan Krzysztof Grzymułtowski, a supporter of Lubomirski, sent a letter to the Prussian classes. Grzymułtowski explained why the nobles of Greater Poland took part in the *motio belli* against the union troops. The castellan explained that *za uniwersalami pana podkanclerzego koronnego (Jana Leszczyńskiego) jako generała województw naszych ex lauda publico wydanemi stanąc w gromadzie na jednej trzymaliśmy szali dostojęństwo JKM, na drugiej całość Rzptej i prawo ojczyste* [eng. *in the light of the decrees of the Vice-Chancellor of the Crown (Jan Leszczyński) as the General of our provinces ex lauda publico, as we*

⁶⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/183, k. 133, Jan Krasieński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Sztum 16 VII 1671; k. 262, Jan Krasieński do Stanów, Warsaw 26 IX 1679.

⁶⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/186, k. 114, 116 *Laudum indigenatus* Jan Krasieński, Grudziądz 20 IV 1682.

⁶⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/188, k. 67, Jan Krasieński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 29 IV 1684.

⁶⁹ AP Gdańsk 300.29/194, k. 186, Jan Krasieński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Sztum 10 IX 1692. Krasieński wrote: *I in primordus possessionis meae powiodło mi się było nienajgorzej, kiedym do znacznej intraty był przywiódł to starostwo. Teraz zaś od czterech lat in circa, kiedy hurmem niejako calamitatum nastąpiły casus, y rok po roku nowemi coraz a ciężkiem nawiedzone zostały boskliemi plagami, jednego bowiem roku w wodach niziny wszystkie z których największa intrata medius Augusti pływały; drugiego Pan Bóg gradami, nieplaceni zbóż y nieurodzajem znacznym nawiedził wszystek generaliter powiat; trzeciego koni pięćset zdechło, czwartego woły i bydła niemal wszystkie odeszły* [Eng. *And in primordus possessionis meae I was rather successful, as I brought this starostwo to generate a substantial income. Now, for four years in circa, the events unfolded as if calamities year after year, new and heavy plagues, as in one year in the lowlands which brought greatest intratawere flooded medius Augusti; in the second year, Lord sent hails, lack of payment for grain and failed harvest all over the country; in the third, five hundred horses died, and nearly all oxen and cattle died in the fourth*].

⁷⁰ A. Przyboś, M. Rożek, *Biskup krakowski Andrzej Trzebicki. Z dziejów kultury politycznej i artystycznej w XVII stuleciu*, Warsaw-Cracow 1989, p. 59.

stood together, on one side of the scales we held the dignity of HRH, while the entire Commonwealth and the domestic law on the other]⁷¹. The nobility of Greater Poland, according to Grzymułtowski, defended their lands both against Lubomirski's troops and the royal armies constantly pursuing the Rokosz supporters. The castellan mentioned that signing the armistice near Połczyn was possible only through the mediation of the bishop of Cracow Andrzej Trzebicki and the bishop of Chełmno Tomasz Leżeński. Letters to the Prussian classes was also sent by the senators from Greater Poland: bishop of Poznań Stefan Wierzbowski, bishop of Kamieniec Zygmunt Czyżowski, Paradyż abbot Andrzej Karol Grudziński, Inowrocław voivode Krzysztof Żegocki, Międzyzłęz castellan Zygmunt Żełęcki, Nakło castellan Władysław Rogaliński⁷². The citizens of Greater Poland warned the nobility of Royal Prussia against the supporters of Jerzy Lubomirski, especially against the letter of castellan Krzysztof Grzymułtowski that was sent everywhere. In their letter, they wrote *zdało nam się oznajmić WMPP ponieważ przy skończonych pod Połczynem traktatach JKM krzywdę swoją i urazę jako Pan Dobrotliwy i Ociec łaskawy darował wojskom i wszyscy z dawna pożądanego przy łasce Bożej pewni jesteśmy pokoju* [eng. *we managed to inform you that at the end of the Połczyn treaty negotiations HRH graciously forgave the soldiers for his harm and let go of the resentment as a kind lord and father and that we are all certain of the long-desired peace for the mercy of the Lord*]⁷³. They continued to explain to their Prussian neighbours that some nobles started to disrupt the sejmiks with their letters and transforming the recent peace agreement into a war immediately after the treaty was signed. Senators warned not to listen to such people, their suggestions and writings. These allegations were addressed at Krzysztof Grzymułtowski. Piotr Branicki from the hussar unit of the Grand Marshal of the Crown John Sobieski, lieutenant of the armed Rota Stefan Radliński and Łuków huntsman Radliński⁷⁴ left from Wschowa, where the armies loyal to the Crown were gathered, to Royal Prussia and all other provinces. They complained about the internally divided nobility, sejms being broken off, the enlistment of troops against the king, lack of funds to pay the army. Jerzy Lubomirski reminded the nobles about himself with a letter written in Wrocław to the sejmiks, including on the general sejmik of Royal Prussia⁷⁵. Lubomirski declared to abide by the Połczyn agreement but complained about the destruction of his lands and deprivation from offices. The Sejm gathered in mid-March 1666 did not arrive at an

⁷¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/156, k. 95, Krzysztof Grzymułtowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Śniat 4 XII 1665.

⁷² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/156, k. 88, Senatorowie wielkopolscy do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Poznań 14 I 1666.

⁷³ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/156, k. 91, Instrukcja delegatów żołnierskich na sejmik generalny przedsejmowy województwa malborskiego, XI 1665.

⁷⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/156, k. 82 i n, Jerzy Lubomirski do stanów Prus Królewskich, Wrocław 12 I 1666; A. Przyboś, M. Rożek, *op. cit.*, p. 62–63.

agreement and was dissolved. Eventually, in June 1666, the ex-marshal Lubomirski took hostile actions that led to the battle of Małty and the defeat of the royal army. After the bloody encounter, an understanding was concluded in Łęgonice. The King relinquished his plans of the vivente rege elections, vowing to pay the Rokosz soldiers and grant them amnesty. Jerzy Lubomirski, having apologised the King, left the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and went to Silesia. In January 1667, his life came to its end⁷⁶. The troops were needed to defend the Ukrainian borders. The unpaid soldiers were entering the political scene by organising military confederations, which was dangerous for the Commonwealth.

In general, the soldiers were never paid on time in the second half of the 17th century. The costs of the wars against the Tatars and Turkey were largely exceeding the state's financial capabilities. Unsurprisingly, each Grand Hetman of Crown, Field Hetman and every commander were asking for the due payment. First as Field Hetman of the Crown and since 1682 as the Grand Hetman of the Crown, Stanisław Jabłonowski constantly reminded the nobles about the needs of the army, the solvency of the provinces, not turning down the army deputies coming for the due money. Since 1679, he regularly wrote letters to the Prussian classes. As a Field Hetman of the Crown and later as a Grand Hetman of the Crown, he was constantly stressing the importance of settling military finances. In his letters to the general sejmiks, he complained that military envoys sent for money were being sent back with nothing. The provincial treasury forwarded them to the Crown treasury⁷⁷. After the battle of Vienna, he virtually threatened the classes that not paying the soldiers and allowing for those liabilities to grow would lead to invasions, soldier lawlessness, contributions⁷⁸. The Grand Hetman of the Crown was constantly on the battlefield. At the battle of Vienna in 1683, he commanded the Polish right wing, fought at Párkány. In 1684, he went to Kamianets-Podilskyi. A year later, he led troops to Bukovina and marched to Wallachia in 1686. During the battle of Lviv in 1695, he prevailed over a Tatar invasion. All of these war actions and expeditions to Moldova put a strain on the state's finances without bringing any considerable military or political benefits. Financial liabilities towards the military continued to grow. After the death of John III Sobieski, the military entered into a confederation headed by Piotr Baranowski⁷⁹. The fear of confederate soldiers helped to achieve the goal. The Grand Hetman of the Crown wrote from Lviv in May 1697

⁷⁶ Z. Wójcik, *Jan Kazimierz Waza*, Wrocław 2004, p. 200–203.

⁷⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/183, k. 131, J.S. Jabłonowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Grodno 10 IV 1679; k. 268, Lviv 10 X 1679.

⁷⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/188, k. 65, J.S. Jabłonowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 14 IV 1684; k. 63, Lviv 25 IV 1684; AP Gdańsk, 300.29/189, k. 136–137, J.S. Jabłonowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 10 VI 1685; AP Gdańsk, 300.29/192, k. 171–172, J.S. Jabłonowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 4 XI 1689.

⁷⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/198, k. 217, Piotr Baranowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Sambor 19 I 1697.

to the classes of Royal Prussia about an agreement with the army, highlighting that the soldiers should be paid 6763 zlotys from Tuchola, 7433 zlotys from the Osieck starostwo and 1079 zlotys from the Hammerstein starostwo⁸⁰. Only Warmia was dutiful when it came to the payments to the Crown treasury. In 1690, its lands paid 60 000 zlotys and further 78 963 zlotys in 1696.⁸¹

Dymitr Wiśniowiecki reminded the Prussian classes about himself first as a Bełż voivode and later as a Field Hetman of the Crown. In 1674, he sent a Chernihiv ensign Jan Michał Myśliszewski to Royal Prussia with 1 800 zlotys to pay out to 50 foot soldiers⁸². Wiśniowiecki not only asked for the money owed to the soldiers, but he also recommended that the most gallant ones should be nobilitated or financially rewarded⁸³. The hetman did not abandon his personal plans as he was asking the classes to support his efforts to keep the Ostrogski fee tail. Even simple soldiers sent letters to the general sejmik, asking for gratification for their participation in the war campaigns. Colonel of the royal armies Michał Żebrowski requested not only the payment of the due hyberna, but also some satisfaction for his bravery as well as the recommendation that the Grand Treasurer of the Crown exempted his lands from taxes⁸⁴. A royal captain Jan Swensson Gos, a Swede, complained that the city of Danzig occupied the two acres in the Ciechocin village, Puck starostwo, given to him by King Sigismund III for war merit⁸⁵. In 1672, a Zaporizhian hetman Michał Hanenko sent to the general sejmik a letter and Cossack deputies – centenaries Stefan Biłtyj and Piotr Senenko⁸⁶. The deputies asked for the Cossack freedoms and privileges to be upheld, the payment of the outstanding wages for soldiers and *żeby donativum pieniężne było nam na czołna wymyślone, by miasta tureckie niepokoić* [eng. *for money donations to be enacted for boats for us, so we can disturb the peace of Turkish cities*].⁸⁷

The General of Crown Artillery Marcin Kątski asked for support, not only in financial matters. Kątski was one of the most distinguished military men in the Commonwealth. Educated in Italy, he learnt the art of military engineering and artillery in France. He fought against the Swedes under the command of the Crown Regimentarz Jerzy Lubomirski. During John Casimir's expedition to left-bank Ukraine in 1663–1664, he commanded Jan Bokum's regiment of dragoons,

⁸⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/197, k. 227, J.S. Jabłonowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 4 V 1697.

⁸¹ Archives of the Warmian Archdiocese in Olsztyn, Ab 22, k. 6, J.S. Jabłonowski do biskupa J.S. Zbąskiego, Warsaw 10 V 1690; k. 179, J.S. Jabłonowski do biskupa J.S. Zbąskiego, Warsaw 27 VIII 1696.

⁸² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/174, k. 102, Dymitr Wiśniowiecki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 11 VI 1674.

⁸³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/175, k. 193, D. Wiśniowiecki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 7 XII 1675; 300.29/174, k. 106, Warsaw 15 VCI 1674.

⁸⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 130, Michał Żebrowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 22 XII 1669; k. 131, Jan Dennenmark i Michał Żebrowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 22 XII 1669; AP Gdańsk, 300.29/168, k. 45, Michał Żebrowski do Stanów, Walycz 24 IV 1672.

⁸⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/169, k. 108, Jan Swensson Gos do Stanów Prus Królewskich, 1672.

⁸⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/169, k. 225–226, Michał Hanenko do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Zamość 23 XI 1672.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, k. 226.

making a name for himself in a series of skirmishes. In 1667, the King appointed him General of Artillery, the successor the late Fromhold von Ludinghausen Wolff. Already in 1667 and the next several years, he wrote letters to the Prussian classes asking for payment to soldiers and the decision to constantly expand the artillery arsenal⁸⁸. His demands were supported by John Casimir, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki and, especially, John Sobieski, both as Grand Hetman of the Crown and King. In 1680, as a general of artillery and Lviv castellan, he sent a supplication to the general sejmik which said: *Prowent na artylerię coraz mniejszy. Cekhauzy popadają w ruinę... Przed tem kwarta na artylerię wynosiła 200 tysięcy złotych to teraz ledwie co więcej nad sto tysięcy czyni* [eng. *The income allocated to artillery is smaller and smaller. The cekhouses are falling into ruin... Earlier, the quarter tax for artillery reached 200 000 zlotys, now it is barely more than a 100 000*]⁸⁹. The general asked the Prussian deputies to raise this matter during the Sejm. In his letter, he explained that all neighbouring states had strong artillery while the Polish formation deteriorated because of the lack of money. His predecessor, the aforementioned Fromhold von Ludinghausen Wolff, drew the attention of the nobility to the same issue. In the autumn of 1664, he informed the nobles information on the state of the artillery, writing that arsenals were empty, ammunition and gunpowder were gone and the money to pay the artillerymen came irregularly⁹⁰. After her husband's death, Ewa Wolff complained that colonel Rosen hid a certain amount from the province's treasury in her Prussian estates. This sum was overtaken by the Prussian treasurer on the basis of a decree of the kangaroo court. The aforementioned colonel demanded that the money should be returned to him and threatened to raid Wolff's lands. The frightened wife of the general asked the Prussian classes to look after and protect her property⁹¹. Friedrich Ritters Zeugewart, who supervised the Prussian arsenals, asked the sejmik deputies to *w mojej nieostrożności raczyli podać rękę* [eng. *lend me a hand in my carelessness*]⁹². This carelessness consisted in giving out ammunition and gunpowder without proper documents.

For each general sejmik, Crown and Lithuanian aristocracy sent letters with requests regarding the Prussian indiginate, support in their efforts to obtain offices, starostwo positions, financial donations. Accused of high treason, Hieronim Radzie-

⁸⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/158, k. 102, Marcin Kątski (Kącki) do Stanów Prus Królewskich, 1667. The General requested that an entire quart should be allocated for the maintenance of the artillery. He reminded about paying the army in 1669 and 1670. See: AP Gdańsk, 300.29/162, k. 189, Marcin Kątski do Stanów, Warsaw 26 XII 1668; 300.29/166, k. 167, Warsaw 10 XII 1670.

⁸⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/185, k. 121-121v, Marcin Kątski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 18 X 1680.

⁹⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/155, k. 167-167v, Fromhold Ludinghausen Wolff do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 25 IX 1664.

⁹¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/177, k. 193, Ewa Kniphhausen in Lidinghausen Wolff do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Jania 13 VII 1676.

⁹² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 134-134v, Friedrich Ritters Zuegwart do Stanów Prus Królewskich 1670.

jowski wanted to return to the country, so he turned to the pre-Sejm gatherings from Wrocław, where he asked for restoring his lost rights and honour⁹³. Radziejowski sent a letter not only to the general sejmik of Royal Prussia, but also to the Warmian bishop Jan Stefan Wydźga, who was presiding over the Prussian lands, and to the Sandomierz voivode Jan Zamoyski. Radziejowski was understood by the deputies of the Malbork sejmik. However, he did not find any favours during the Sejm. And yet, Radziejowski was needed by the King to carry out his reforms. The court pulled him into a whirlwind of great politics. He spent a long time attempting to gain and maintain support so that the Sejm would restore him, even though total restitution was not possible. Radziejowski did return to the political scene, sent as an envoy to Turkey on 8 August 1667, but he could not rebuild his good name.

Michał Pac and Michał Radziwiłł, fighting between themselves, tried to gain the favour of the Prussian classes while applying for offices. After the death of Lithuanian Field Hetman Władysław Wołłowicz, the Lithuanian Vice-Chancellor Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł became the new hetman, to the surprise of the Pac family. Radziwiłł gained the King's privilege of the so-called window, which means that he was allowed to insert the date of taking over the office⁹⁴. He did use this opportunity. Pac, who soon received a nomination to the office of the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, in his letters sent to the sejmiks, also the general sejmik of Royal Prussia, opposed to this method of nomination by saying that it took place in a small group of senators and not during a sejm⁹⁵. Pac wrote: *chcąc się na buławę polną wsadzić nie słusznych środków udał się, gdy się odezwał przed stanami Rzptej na przeszłej konwocaciej, że dwiema na te buławę po zeszłym panu wojewodzie witebskim, hetmanie polnym WXL sobie daną przywilejami. Z jednym, że za żywota jeszcze nieboszczykowskiego nową metodą otrzymanym* [eng. *desiring the Field Hetman's mace, he did not use the rightful means when speaking before the classes of the Commonwealth at the past convocation that we both wanted to succeed the late voivode, the Field Hetman of the Duchy, granted by privileges. He gained it using a new method while the deceased was still alive*]⁹⁶. As others joined this wave of criticism, Michał Radziwiłł sent an explanatory letter to the general sejmik and proved that he merely switched the Lithuanian vice-chancellorship for the more honourable office of the Field Hetman.⁹⁷ Interestingly, he referred to himself in that document as the Vice-Chancellor of the Grand Duchy. At the same time, he asked the deputies not to charge his Człuchów starostwo with taxes that would be too high. He signed another written

⁹³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/151, k. 183, Hieronim Radziejowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Wrocław 14 III 1661; A. Kersten, *Hieronim Radziejowski. Studium władzy i opozycji*, Warsaw 1988, p. 508–509.

⁹⁴ *Urzednicy centralni i dygnitarze Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV–XVIII wieku*. Lists, reviews by H. Lulewicz, A. Rachuba, Kórnik 1994, p. 46.

⁹⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/161, k. 199, Michał Pac do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 11 XII 1668.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/168, k. 39, Michał Radziwiłł do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Gdańsk 2 V 1672.

letter on 2 November 1673 as a Field Hetman of the Grand Duchy and asked for the support of his wife's claims to the Ostrogski fee tail⁹⁸. The Grand Chancellor of the Grand Duchy Krzysztof Pac also addressed the Prussian classes in explaining that it was not his intention to criticise the privileges of the Prussian province during the Sejm of 1673, adding that he was not familiar with those privileges of Royal Prussia⁹⁹. The claims for the Ostrogski fee tail were also expressed by a Knight of Malta Hieronim Augustyn Lubomirski¹⁰⁰. In his letters to the general sejmik and to the Warmian chapter, he stated that the special rights to the fee tail should be granted to him as he is fighting with the pagans and the income from those lands would be allocated to fight the infidels¹⁰¹. The sejmik correspondence records also include several letters written by members of the Potocki family. Field Writer of the Crown Jakub Potocki wrote in 1667 and 1668 from military camps to the Prussian nobility, asking them to intercede on his behalf during the Sejm; having lost his hereditary goods in Ukraine, he tried to claim two villages, Tłomacz and Solotvyn in the Halych land, as hereditary¹⁰². In such a situation, the classes did not turn him down. The Sieradz voivode Szcześnie Potocki asked for Prussian indiginate, which he wanted to gain to secure the estates in Royal Prussia after the destruction of his Ukrainian lands. He issued the requests for the indiginate for three years, 1674-1677, to receive it in 1677¹⁰³. In June 1677, as he was expressing his gratitude for the indiginate, he vowed to defend for the rights of the province and asked the classes to exempt the inhabitants of the Zajączkowo and Montawy villages he leased from taxes¹⁰⁴. The Prussian classes granted the indiginate to Potocki and won the favour a very influential person since he soon became the Cracow voivode and a Field Hetman of the Crown. In 1684, the Cracow castellan Jędrzej Potocki complained to the Prussian classes that his regiments of dragoons had not been paid any money promised to them by the Prussian voivodeships¹⁰⁵.

The Warmian and Chełmno bishops were obliged to participate in general proceedings and even head those meetings, yet they rarely attended the Prussian sejms. They always sent letters that justified their absence and explained specific requests.

⁹⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/172, k. 90v, Michał Radziwiłł do Stanów Prus Królewskich, In a camp on Wallachian fields between Pruth and Jassy, 2 XI 1673.

⁹⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/170, k. 235, Krzysztof Pac do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 3 VI 1673.

¹⁰⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/172, k. 91v, Hieronim Lubomirski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, In a camp near Chocim 14 XI 1673; AP Gdańsk, 300.29/174, k. 107-107v, Hieronim Lubomirski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 3 VI 1674.

¹⁰¹ AAWO Ab 19, k. 112, Hieronim Lubomirski do kapituły warmińskiej, Rzeszów 22 VIII 1673.

¹⁰² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/158, k. 94, Jakub Potocki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, In a camp near Wyszogródek, 19 IX 1667; AP Gdańsk, 300.29/159, k. 144, Jakub Potocki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, In a camp near Werba 18 VII 1668.

¹⁰³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/174, k. 44-44v, Szcześnie Potocki na sejmik generalny, Warsaw 12 VI 1674; 300.29/175, k. 179, Szcześnie Potocki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Krasny Staw 18 XII 1675; 300.29/177, k. 183, Szcześnie Potocki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Cracow 2 IV 1676; AP Toruń, VII, 33, s. 2528; Laudum indigenatus Sz. F. Potocki, Grudziądz 28 VI 1677.

¹⁰⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/180, k. 156, Szcześnie Potocki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, VI 1677.

¹⁰⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/188, k. 268-268v, Jędrzej Potocki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 21 IX 1684.

Since they did not hold the indigenate upon receiving the bishopric appointment, they first tried to gain Prussian citizenship. Prussian classes usually issued resolutions granting the indigenate, often after long deliberations. Bishops Jan Stefan Wydźga and Jan Stanisław Zbąski had to go through that process. To gain presidency of the Prussian lands, Zbąski had to gain Prussian citizenship after becoming the Warmian bishop. Royal Prussia followed the principle that non-indigenes were not wanted as officials and they were not invited to participate in the political life of the province. In 1689 and 1690, Zbąski led a wide campaign among the most important Prussian officials in order to win their favour. The bishop sought the support from Malbork voivode Ernest Denhoff, Chełmno voivode Jan Kos, Bratian starosta Tomasz Działyński, judge of Chełmno land Adam Trzciński, writer and juror of the Chełmno land court Jan Kruszyński¹⁰⁶. The Warmian bishop also tried to rally influential priests – Chełmno parish priest Tomasz Prątnicki, Chełmno archdeacon Feliks Kretkowski – and sent letters to provincial sejmiks¹⁰⁷. No one refused the bishop. Zbąski received the Prussian indigenate on the general sejmik, for which he thanked in writing to everyone that supported him in his efforts. He also expressed his gratitude during the general Sejm. As customary for Prussian senators and presidents, the letters of the Warmian bishops usually raised issues of taxation, contained appeals for consent to increase the number of troops and maintain internal peace within the country. In 1660, Wydźga asked the Prussian classes to support his efforts to free Braniewo and Frombork from Brandenburg armies. As pointed out in his letters, the bishop rarely attended the sejmiks but he always sent justifications and delegated Warmian canons to represent his person and office during state deliberations. His writing expressed Wydźga's support for the state reform plans announced by John Casimir, reminded to pay the armies regularly and, when civil war broke out, called for peace. Wydźga did not hide his affection toward John Casimir and John III Sobieski, and quickly recognised the election of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki. He also tried to maintain a neutral position during the king's conflict with Grand Hetman of the Crown John Sobieski¹⁰⁸. Bishop Michał Radziejowski also sent a letter out of courtesy¹⁰⁹.

In turn, the Chełmno bishops were more likely to attend the sejmiks, while their letters usually regarded their own interests. They had quite a lot of trouble

¹⁰⁶ Archives of the Warmian Archdiocese in Olsztyn, Ab 21, p. 8, J. Zbąski do E. Denhoffa, Heilsberg 9 XII 1689; p. 14, J.S. Zbąski do J. Kosa, Heilsberg 9 XII 1689; p. 15, J.S. Zbąski do A. Trzcińskiego, Heilsberg 9 XII 1689; p. 17, J.S. Zbąski do T. Działyńskiego, Heilsberg XII 1689.

¹⁰⁷ AAWO, Ab 21, p. 3, J.S. Zbąski do T. Prątnickiego, Heilsberg 8 X 1689; p. 4, J.S. Zbąski do F. Kretkowskiego, Heilsberg 8 X 1689; p. 5, Listy sejmikowe, Heilsberg 9 XII 1689.

¹⁰⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/150, k. 399v; Jan Stefan Wydźga do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Heilsberg 1660; k. 322, Jan Stefan Wydźga do stanów, Heilsberg 28 IX 1660; 300.29/153, k. 449, Jan Stefan Wydźga do Stanów, Heilsberg 25 V 1662; 300.29/152, k. 156v; Jan Stefan Wydźga do Stanów, Heilsberg 1 IX 1661; 300.29/164, Jan Stefan Wydźga do stanów Heilsberg 25 V 1670; 300.29/177, k. 177, Jan Stefan Wydźga do stanów, Gdańsk 8 VII 1676; S. Achremczyk, *Biskup warmiński Jan Stefan Wydźga jako prezes ziem pruskich*, KMW, 1988, no. 3–4, p. 284–285.

¹⁰⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/185, k. 348, Michał Radziejowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Brunsberg 8 X 1681.

with Protestant cities pushing Catholics to the margins. Bishop Adam Kos in 1660 urged the nobles to quickly enact the taxes and defend the privileges of the province, advising to ask King John Casimir *abyśmy tandem po tak okrutnej wojnie w tak ciężkim zrujnowaniu mogli uznać fructum pacis* [eng. *so that, after such a vicious war and such a heavy ruin, we could enjoy the fruit of peace together*]¹¹⁰. When it comes to bishop Andrzej Olszowski, when he was a Vice-Chancellor of the Crown, he excused himself by saying that numerous official duties do not allow him to attend the sejmiks, always asking for the enactment of taxes, prompt payments to the provincial treasury and paying the military. At the same time, he proposed a new tax, which he called aratralium, meaning plough¹¹¹. Olszowski was preoccupied with great politics, so his letters presented state affairs and included assurances that he would always remember about the rights and privileges of the province should they be violated by anyone. By contrast, bishop Jan Opaliński (Opaleński) was arguing with the nobility of Chełmno, the Zawadzki family and the city of Toruń, so he presented his reasons to the Prussian classes, asking that the deputies favour his stance. Chełmno bishops after the Deluge used counter-reformist sentiments to reclaim churches from Protestant hands. Bishop Andrzej Olszowski, as a person closely familiar with his diocese, was the most successful and regained the Church of St. James in Toruń. Seizing the temple and handing it over to the Benedictines annoyed the Protestant Toruń. The processions during Corpus Christi, which started at St. John's Church cemetery and progressed through the streets of the city since 1682, were even more exasperating. It showed a militant face of Catholicism. When the Protestants of Toruń offended the Catholics taking part in such a procession, a conflict broke out. Bishop Opaliński appealed to the Prussian classes. In 1688, he wrote a letter to the general sejmik and accused Toruń authorities of being hostile towards Catholics. He could not forgive insulting the Catholic procession on Corpus Christi¹¹². However, the bishop did not have a good reputation as he was conflicted with the Dobrski family and Kazimierz Zawadzki. When Zawadzki wanted to install his brother Stanisław as a parish priest, brutally removing Opaliński's nominate, scandalous events unfolded. The case was disputed at the Crown Court; the bishop, executing the decree of the Tribunal, invaded Waplewo, Zawadzki's estate. Zawadzki defended his lands, but he had to apologise to the bishop, repent and beg for forgiveness¹¹³. When the conflict with the Zawadzki family ended, bishop

¹¹⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/150 k. 399, Adam Kos do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Toruń 16 XII 1660; S. Achremczyk, *Życie polityczne Prus Królewskich...*, p. 149.

¹¹¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/161, k. 187, Andrzej Olszowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Grudziądz 15 II 1669; 300.29/164, k. 358, Warsaw 1 VIII 1670; 300.29/184, k. 107-108, Warsaw 12 VII 1680.

¹¹² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/190, k. 134-135v, Jan Kazimierz Opaliński (pisał Opaleński) do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Mościska 8 VII 1688; k. 224-226, Jan Kazimierz Opaliński do stanów Prus Królewskich, Lutrzyń 11 I 1689.

¹¹³ S. Achremczyk, *Zawadzcy na Waplewie...*, p. 44.

Opaliński protested against the taxes enacted by the general sejmik. In December 1690, he proved that the taxes *beze mnie na mnie włożone* [eng. *imposed on me without me*] should not apply to the Chełmno bishopric estates. He was thinking about a way to reconcile the needs of the military with a general reluctance to pay taxes, as the tax money tended to disappear. Opaliński postulated that taxes should be allocated to satisfy the needs of the troops¹¹⁴. Two years later, he reminded the Prussian classes of his achievements and asked them to bear in mind the failed crops in the bishopric of Chełmno while enacting the taxes¹¹⁵.

Those of the Kujawy bishops whose dioceses were included in the Pomeranian voivodeship also wrote letters to the general sejmiks, but they did not attend them. In 1683, bishop Bonawentura Madaliński sent Rev. Czarliński with a letter to the general sejmik. The letter encouraged the deputies to bear certain sacrifices on the eve of the expected armed conflict with Turkey. Madaliński deliberated on how *utrapionej Ojczyźnie ex naufragia wywieść naśladować przezornych gospodarzów, którzy nie dopiero kiedy gore, ale wcześniej et requisitio do ugazzenia ognia gotować zwykła* [eng. *to help the afflicted Homeland from the wreckage by following the footsteps of a prudent host who prepares and leads in preventing the fire rather than when the flames burst out*]¹¹⁶. Not leaning on the support of neighbouring states, the Kujawy bishop advised counting only on themselves because *Zachowała jeszcze natura Polakom ręce, sprawiedliwość, żelazo, Pan Bóg zaś doda sposobów i siel ad avertenda ultima Reip. Fata* [eng. *Nature let the Poles keep their hands, justice, iron, and the Lord God will show the ways and add strength to divert the ultimate fate of the Commonwealth*]¹¹⁷. He called for sacrifices but also asked the Prussian classes in 1683 to exempt his Subkowy lands from taxes¹¹⁸.

Numerous letters written by various persons searching for support in their private affairs were delivered during general sejmiks. For instance, the Grand Treasurer of the Court Władysław Rey reminded Royal Prussia in 1660 that they would not allow for Elbląg to be taken by Brandenburg forces so that *miejsce to, które bezpiecznie equum trojanum Rzptej zwać mogą w posesji JKM zostawać mogło* [eng. *this place I can surely call the Trojan horse of the Commonwealth could remain within HRH possessions*]¹¹⁹. Both Rey and the Warmian bishop Jan Stefan Wydźga were sent to Königsberg as deputies of the Commonwealth for the tribute ceremony of Royal Prussia. Polish commissioners appointed for the tribute made clear that their arrival depended on releasing Frombork and Braniewo from Branden-

¹¹⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/193, k. 333-334v, Jan Kazimierz Opaliński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Mościska 15 XII 1690.

¹¹⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/194, k. 185, Jan Kazimierz Opaliński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Mościska 18 IX 1692.

¹¹⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/186, k. 422, Bonawentura Madaliński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Wolbórz 28 XII 1682.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/187, k. 196, Bonawentura Madaliński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Smarżowice 6 VI 1683.

¹¹⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/150, k. 258, Władysław Rey do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Elbląg 25 VIII 1660.

burg occupation and not allowing those foreign forces to gain Elbląg and execute their objective. Already in 1681, Rey wrote a letter to the Prussian treasurer and asked for money for his hussar ensign. A letter full of disappointment was sent by Hieronim Wierzbowski, calling himself the commissioner of HRH and the Commonwealth during the talks with Moscow deputies. He spent 12 weeks in Vilnius on negotiations and did not receive the appropriate monetary compensation from the state treasury. Thus, he requested the Prussian deputies to raise his case during the Sejm and demand that the Grand Treasurer of the Crown paid for his commissary service¹²⁰. Even more requests regarded overdue military service pays. Those from Ukrainian lands begged for paying the ransoms for sons and husbands in Turkish captivity. Ewa Miłkowska expressed her request in 1661 in the following way: *Zostawszy osierocała ze czworgiem dziatek luboć nie po zmarłym jednak więtym małżonku moim z synem w 16 roku, do niewoli tatarskiej, którzy już to na trzeci rok ciężkie barzo okrutnych rąk pogańskich cierpią więzy i z nikąd niespodziewając się od samego tylko Boga ratunku* [eng. *Having been left with four children, my late husband's son of 16, taken into Tatar captivity and suffering the cruel pagan chains for three years, seeing no rescue other than in God's mercy*]¹²¹. Andrzej Rosniatowski from Podolskie voivodeship asked for financial aid after being bought out for 600 red zlotys from Tatar captivity, in which he spent over two years. To pay this price, his family took a loan and could not repay the debt at that time as their lands were completely destroyed during Tatar raids¹²². A Podole citizen, Zofia Karczevska, asked the Prussian classes to cover the ransom for her husband captured *w czasie chocimskiej potrzeby* [eng. *during the Chocim predicament*]¹²³. Dorota Domuchowska also asked for support as her husband was captured with their children and all of their possessions were devastated¹²⁴. Dorota was searching for monetary assistance that would allow her to buy out her husband and children from Muslim hands.

Many demanded payment for their war merit and serving the Commonwealth; not being able to receive that from the treasury, they asked the sejmiks for compensations, if not financial, then by raising their matters during the Sejm. An unusual request for the general sejmik was expressed by Ewa Rybicka. She demanded monetary satisfaction promised by Wejherowo for delivering their letters to Gdańsk from Malbork, which was besieged the Swedes. This brave woman performed the task, managed to get through a cordon of Swedish troops and reached Gdańsk, but she never received what she was promised¹²⁵. Ewa Zymermann asked

¹²⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/155, k. 108-109, Hieronim Wierzbowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, 1660.

¹²¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/162, k. 249, Ewa Miłkowska do stanów Prus Królewskich, 1661.

¹²² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, Andrzej Rosniatowski z małżonką do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Bar Styczeń 1670.

¹²³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/185, k. 142, Zofia Karczevska do Stanów Prus Królewskich, XII 1680.

¹²⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/185, k. 141, Dorota Domuchowska do Stanów Prus Królewskich, XII 1680.

¹²⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/160, k. 184, Ewa Rybicka do stanów Prus Królewskich, X 1668.

for payment for the King Sigismund statue standing in front of the Warsaw castle that her husband made. She did not receive the 10 000 zlotys to date¹²⁶. Gabriel Ferdynand Szczepański demanded payment for his military service. He was deprived of the Grudziądz starostwo office *z nie nasyconej królowej zmarłej chciwości (Ludwiki Marii)* [eng. *because of the unquenched greed of the late queen (Marie Louise)*], his honours were taken from him and *z tytułów wyzuto* [eng. *his titles were taken away*]¹²⁷. He was the one to finance troops for Piława and Beresteczek battles with his own money. The borderland bailiff Franciszek Lewald Powalski from Podole also had an unusual request. He figured out that the best remuneration for any action for the benefit of the Commonwealth would be the appointment as a deputy from Royal Prussia¹²⁸. Having troubles with the verdicts of the Crown court, Franciszek Sapieha, Master of the Horse of the Grand Duchy, asked for support, just as Zygmunt, Marcin and Andrzej Olszowscy, who were also looking for a way to secure the inheritance after Vice-Chancellor Andrzej Olszowski¹²⁹. The royal doctor and a Swede, Laurenty Braun, addressed the general sejmik with a supplication. Because of his faithful service to King Sigismund III, accompanying the monarch during the wars with Moscow and converting from Lutheranism to Catholicism, he lost his lands in Livonia and did not receive any compensation¹³⁰. Luiza and Ewa Boratini also sent letters to the general sejmik, demanding the return of 18 000 zlotys previously lent to King John Casimir¹³¹. The Poznań bishop Stefan Wierzbowski vouched for them.

The inhabitants of Greater Poland and those of Royal Prussia, especially of the province of Pomerania, were interested in their internal affairs. The nobles living in the borderlands had estates both in Royal Prussia and in Greater Poland. Various property-related transactions were carried out in Nakło and Kcynia. The marriages between the Prussian houses and those from Greater Poland were not uncommon. Even the sejms maintained correspondence-based communications. Great examples would be a letter from the marshal of the sejmik proceeding in July 1670 in Środa, namely Piotr Żychliński, and a message sent from that sejmik to the general

¹²⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, Ewa Cymermann do Stanów Prus Królewskich, 1670.

¹²⁷ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/161, k. 242, Gabriel Szczepański do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 7 VIII 1669; 300.29/164, k. 127, Gabriel Szczepański do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Jarosław 3 I 1670.

¹²⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/178, k. 120-120v, Franciszek Lewaldt Powalski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Piotrków 10 XI 1676.

¹²⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/185, k. 120, Franciszek Sapieha, Stanisław Korzeniewski, Marcin Babuchowski, Hieronim Komornicki do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lviv 8 XII 1680; 300.29/181, k. 158, Zygmunt, Marcin, Andrzej Olszowscy do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Płowce 6 XII 1678; 300.29/183, k. 129, Marcin Olszowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Gniezno 28 IV 1679.

¹³⁰ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 132-132v, Laurenty Braun do Stanów Prus Królewskich, 1670.

¹³¹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/190, k. 130, Luiza Boratini do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 4 VII 1688; 300.29/192, k. 187, Luiza Boratini do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 4 XII 1689; 300.29/193, k. 338-338v, Ewa Boratini do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 14 IX 1690.

sejmik¹³². The nobility of Greater Poland was concerned because of the army recruitments in Pomerania. They suspected that the opponents of King Michał Korybut were enlisting soldiers. The Greater Poland deputies asked: *Braci województw pruskich aby rzetelnie nas chcieli informować co za okazja zaciągów takich i jeżeli zaciągi te in reali są i od kogo* [eng. *Our brothers of the Prussian voivodeship to reliably inform us on the reason for such recruitments, if they are actually carried out and from where*]¹³³. Earlier, in June 1670, the marshal of the sejmik gathered in Środa, Maciej Mielżyński, sent a letter encouraging its recipients to support King Michał Korybut in those unfortunate times¹³⁴. Meanwhile, two opposing political camps competed with each other in Royal Prussia: the Działyński family stood behind King Michał Korybut, while the Pomeranian voivode Jan Ignacy Bąkowski favoured the Grand Hetman of Crown John Sobieski. At the same time, Jan Leszczyński wrote letters to the Prussian classes. Leszczyński was after the Malbork starostwo, from which he did not receive any income. He understood that the time of the Polish-Swedish war deprived him of those funds, but he remained merely an honorary and titular starost after the war. As so many years had passed since the war, there should be a possibility of remuneration at least from the income of Malbork economy, the royal lands. At the same time, he expressed his gratitude towards the Prussian classes for including a point regarding the compensation to Leszczyński in the instructions for the election sejm¹³⁵. The heirs of the Vice-Chancellor of the Crown and Gniezno archbishop Andrzej Olszowski also sent their supplications to the Prussian classes with reference to a part of the inheritance after the deceased. The Olszowski family complained that they could not receive any treasury documents about the sums left by the archbishop and allocated in various places. All they knew is that the archbishop located some funds in Danzig and secured certain amounts in the Crown treasury¹³⁶. Marshal of the Środa sejmik, Władysław Poniński, intervened on behalf of the Kalisz tribune Adam Mycielski, who had numerous relatives in the Prussian area and provided good services to those voivodeships. The marshal asked for monetary compensation granted to Mycielski by the general sejmik¹³⁷. In turn, Michał Grudziński, who entered into numerous court trials with the Leszczyński family and was sentenced by the Tribunal several times, sought justice in Royal Prussia¹³⁸. The Brześć and Kujawy castellan Kazimierz

¹³² AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 350, Piotr Żychliński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Środa 29 VII 1670; k. 349, Instrukcja dana posłom z sejmiku w Środzie – Jakubowi Chrzastowskiemu i Mściślawowi Zaleskiemu, Środa 29 VII 1670.

¹³³ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 349.

¹³⁴ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/164, k. 368, Maciej Mielżyński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Środa 25 VI 1670.

¹³⁵ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/161, k. 184, Jan Leszczyński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Środa 8 VII 1669; 300.29/162, k. 238-238w, Jan Leszczyński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Warsaw 12 VIII 1669.

¹³⁶ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/11, k. 158, Zygmunt, Marcin, Andrzej Olszowscy do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Płowce 6 XII 1678; 300.29/183, k. 129, Marcin Olszowski do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Gniezno 28 IV 1679.

¹³⁷ AP Gdańsk, Władysław Poniński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Środa 4 VII 1690.

¹³⁸ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/185, k. 129, Michał Grudziński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Szymanowo 20 IX 1680.

Grudziński asked the Prussian classes to return him the money granted to him Jakub Wejher in Wejherowo and Puck. He mentioned that his mother and Jakub Wejher were siblings¹³⁹. Others, like the Poznań castellan Krzysztof Grzymułtowski, asked for the indigenate. Many borderland aristocrats applied for this honour as their Ukrainian lands were devastated by Tatar and Cossack raids or wound up within Turkish borders. They sought for lands in the Royal Prussia, bought estates, were nominated to starostwo duties by kings, reached for senatorial offices. The Prussian nobility was irritated by such behaviour and often protested, yet the indigenate was finally granted to the rich.

Letters and supplications were also written by the nobles of Royal Prussia, members of the bourgeoisie, convents, clergymen, military persons and peasants hoping that the general sejmik would somehow take their issues into account. Some wanted financial aid, others sought for tax exemptions and there were those that wanted their cases to be presented and discussed by the Sejm. The Prussian classes actually granted tax exemptions and included those requests in the Sejm instructions, although they could not please everyone. The sejmik correspondence reflects the condition of the state, Crown finances, the disastrous situation of the military that was constantly taking part in battles without payment. The political problems are visible in the numerous letters, especially those written by the most important persons in the state. Greater and smaller political issues are discussed in the sejmik letters. What is important is the fact that the Crown and Lithuanian nobles recognised that Royal Prussia was a wealthy land, influential and unaffected by wars.

Stanisław Achremczyk, O dobro Rzeczypospolitej czy własne. Supliki i listy szlachty koronnej i litewskiej na sejmik generalny Prus Królewskich w drugiej połowie XVII stulecia

Streszczenie

Obrady sejmiku generalnego Prus Królewskich przyciągały uwagę mieszkańców Korony i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Po wojnach szwedzkich w Prusach Królewskich zaczęła coraz liczniej osiadać szlachta koronna a magnateria sięgać po starostwa i urzędy. W związku z tym szlachta koronna przede wszystkim zaczęła zabiegać o nadanie pruskiego obywatelstwa czyli indygenatu. Szukała zatem poparcia na sejmikach powiatowych, wojewódzkich a przede wszystkim na sejmikach generalnych. Wierzono, iż prośby listowne a czasami osobisty przyjazd na sejmik generalny okażą się skuteczne. Korespondencji sejmikowej mimo, że spaliło się toruńskie archiwum stanowe zachowało się dużo. Tylko w gdańskim archiwum naliczono 364 listów i suplik skierowanych na sejmiki generalne. Udało się ustalić 364 suplik i listów nadesłanych na adres stanów Prus Królewskich czyli do zgromadzonych na sejmiku generalnym. Najwięcej zachowało się suplik szlacheckich, 45% całej sejmikowej korespondencji oficjalnej, 166 listów szlachty i magnaterii zarówno koronnej jak i Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Dużo suplik przysyłali duchowni – biskupi, przełożeni zakonów, księżą świeccy, 21% korespondencji to listy duchownych (75 listów). Sporo pism na sejmik generalny kierowały małe miasta Prus Królewskich zwłaszcza, gdy zostały odsunięte od obrad sejmikowych. Małe miasta przysłały 39 listów i suplik – 11% całej oficjalnej sejmikowej korespondencji. O wsparcie sejmiku generalnego zwracali się też chłopcy głównie z Żuław Malborskich, zachowały się 24 supliki chłopskie – 7% korespondencji.

¹³⁹ AP Gdańsk, 300.29/196, k. 795, Kazimierz Grudziński do Stanów Prus Królewskich, Lutomiersko 20 VII 1696.

Stanisław Achremczyk, *Um das Gemeinwohl der Republik Polen oder um das eigene Wohl. Bittgesuche und Briefe der polnischen und litauischen Adel im Generallandtag der Königlichen Preußen in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*

Zusammenfassung

Die Sitzungen des Generallandtages der Königlichen Preußen erregten die Aufmerksamkeit der Bewohner der Republik Polen und des Großfürstentums Litauen. Der polnische Adel begann, sich um die Gewährung der Ureinwohnerschaft zu bemühen. Deshalb suchte sie Unterstützung bei Bezirks- und Provinziallandtagen und vor allem bei Generallandtagen. Man glaubte, dass sich die Briefanfragen und manchmal persönliche Besuche beim Generallandtag effektiv erweisen. Obwohl das Toruner Staatsarchiv niedergebrannt wurde, blieb ein großer Teil der Korrespondenz an die Landtage erhalten. Es wurden 364 Bittgesuche und Briefe identifiziert, die an den Landtag der Königlichen Preußen geschickt wurden. Die größte Zahl von den erhalten gebliebenen Bittgesuchen – 45% der gesamten offiziellen Landtagkorrespondenz – gehörte dem Adel. Das sind 166 Briefe sowohl von polnischen als auch von litauischen Adligen und Magnaten. 75 Bitten (21% der Korrespondenz) wurden vom Klerus verschickt: von Bischöfen, Ordensoberen und Laienpriestern. Viele Briefe an dem Generallandtag wurden von kleinen Städten aus Königlichen Preußen geschickt, besonders wenn sie aus den Landtagsitzungen ausgeschlossen waren. Auch die Bauern, vor allem aus Marienburger Werder, wandten sich an den Generallandtag um Unterstützung.

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