



Recenzje/Reviews

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The Results of the Dynastic War in Sweden (1597–1660): Swedish and Finnish Refugees^{1,2}

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Wojciech Krawczuk is a historian specialising in the history of the Kingdom of Sweden and the Polish royal chancellery, as well as an outstanding editor and translator of historical sources. The reviewed book presents the problem of refugees in the early modern era. Currently, the issue is one of the main problems of the present-day world. The author poses a question about an analogous phenomenon, but in the historical perspective of the 17th century.³ In the history of the Commonwealth its inhabitants had to seek refuge in other countries many times. Reverse situations occurred just as often, when the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland or the Grand Duchy of Lithuania hosted various types of groups of people, who can be classified as refugees. The

1 This paper was written as part of a research project funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, OPUS-16 (contract no. UMO-2018/31/B/HS3/00846), entitled “Social and economic importance of military camps and garrisons in the Polish–Lithuanian state (16th–18th cc.).”

2 Wojciech Krawczuk, *Wierni królowi. Szwedzi i Finowie na uchodźstwie w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów, w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (Kraków: Historia Jagellonica, 2019), 1–292.

3 An interesting link between these two perspectives is the fact that UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld’s (1953–1961) ancestor was Per Mikaelsson, who left the country with Sigismund III. Eventually, however, he returned to Sweden and was ennobled in 1610.

Commonwealth became a home for Tatars,⁴ Jews,⁵ Armenians,⁶ Scots,⁷ but also fleeing residents of the Tsardom of Muscovy,⁸ or the Kingdom of Sweden. The latter issue is the subject of Wojciech Krawczuk's new monograph.

The circumstances of the refugees living in the Commonwealth were truly dramatic. The death of Stephen Báthory (1576–1586) was followed by a stormy election of the next ruler. Archduke Maximilian Habsburg (supported by the magnates) and Sigismund III, the son of John III of Sweden, were elected simultaneously. The latter candidate was far more popular since the House of Vasa had blood bonds with the ancient dynasty of the Jagiellons. Sigismund August's sister, Catherine Jagiellon, was Sigismund's mother; moreover, he was brought up in the Catholic tradition.⁹ Finally, the Battle of Byczyna (24 January 1588), which Vasa's supporters won, decided on the fate of the throne.¹⁰

After the death of John III Vasa on 27 November 1592, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Kingdom of Sweden found themselves in a personal union. The solemn coronation took place in the cathedral of Uppsala on 1 March 1594. Soon afterwards, without solving the fundamental problems of the kingdom, Sigismund had to return to the Commonwealth. His attempt at playing political forces between the regent, Charles of Södermanland, and the Council of the Kingdom ended in a fiasco. Against the king and the council, Sigismund's uncle decided to summon a convention of the estates in the town of Arboga. Afterwards, using the support of free peasants, despite the king's objection, he summoned the Riksdag (parliament) in Uppsala. This triggered Sigismund's reaction, who headed for Sweden in July 1598 trying to regain control over the kingdom. As soon as August, Samuel Łaski captured Stockholm on behalf of the king. However, a terribly passive attitude resulted in the failure of the undertaking. The Battle of Stångebro of 4 October 1598 was of key importance; it brought the king great humiliation: he had to give away to the regent his closest collaborators (who were shortly executed). The dynastic dispute transformed into a state conflict

4 Jan Tyszkiewicz, *Tatarzy na Litwie i w Polsce: Studia z dziejów XIII–XVIII w.* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1989).

5 Daniel Tollet, *Historia Żydów w Polsce od XVI wieku do rozbiorów*, trans. Dorota Zamojska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1999).

6 Krzysztof Stopka, *Ormianie w Polsce dawnej i dzisiejszej* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2000).

7 David Worthington, "« Unfinished work and damaged materials»: historians and the Scots in the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania (1569–1795)," *Immigrants & Minorities* 34 (2016), 3: 276–296.

8 Aliaksandr Kazakou, "Muscovites among the Courtiers of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Sigismund the Old. Evidence from the Census of 1509," in: *The Fifth International Congress of Belarusian Studies. Working Papers*, vol. 5 (Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University Press, 2016), 63–66.

9 See: Przemysław Szpaczyński, *Mocarstwowe dążenia Zygmunta III w latach 1587–1618* (Kraków: Universitas, 2013), 54–78.

10 Marek Plewczyński, "Bitwa pod Byczyną 24 I 1588," *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości* 17 (1971), 1: 125–170.

along with the incorporation of Estonia into the Commonwealth in 1600, which consequently resulted in the Rigsdag depriving Sigismund of his rights to the throne.

After the dramatic events of 1598, Sigismund III Vasa still controlled some supportive provinces being part of the Kingdom of Sweden. It was primarily the Duchy of Finland, but also Estonia and the fortress Kalmar. The governor of Finland was Klas Eriksson Fleming, who supported the king. However, until 1595 a war was waged on this territory with the Tsardom of Muscovy. Overwhelmed with duties, the peasants raised a rebellion called “the Cudgel War” (Finnish: *Nuijasota*), which lasted from November 1596 to February 1597. It was obviously inspired by Charles of Södermanland, since the civil war in Finland weakened the supporters of the Polish–Lithuanian king. It ended with the slaughter of the desperate peasants, which led to Sigismund III being portrayed as a bloody ruler in the Finnish and Swedish historiography. In 1597, Governor Klas died, and was replaced by Arvid Stalarm, less dynamic in action. Swedish attacks broke the duchy on 29 August 1599 in the Battle of Sankt Martens. Meanwhile, on 12 May 1599, the key powerful fortress of Kalmar collapsed. The increasingly hesitant Estonia stayed with Sigismund.

The aforementioned events described in the book (pp. 17–23) constitute an introduction to further considerations referring to the refugees from the Kingdom of Sweden. The book under review consists of the introduction, five chapters, conclusions, and a very extensive source appendix, comprising over a third of the book (pp. 147–243).¹¹ Chapter I (pp. 37–46) presents the sources written in the years 1600, 1609, 1617 and 1620, which mentioned refugees from the Kingdom of Sweden.

Chapter II (pp. 47–88) presents the operational strategy and the structure of the group. It describes in detail the independent Swedish court functioning in the Commonwealth existing beside the Polish and Lithuanian court. The author describes the plans for regaining the Swedish throne by building a fleet, conducting land operations in Livonia, and finally the role of the refugees in propaganda, diplomatic and spying activities. Interestingly, a subchapter elaborates on women in the group under analysis, with particular emphasis on Anna Vasa, Sigismund III’s sister, who also migrated from Sweden. As a Swedish princess, she had an independent and very strong position, second to the king (she was an ardent Lutheran). She took particular care of the Swedish women; she cared for their education, financial needs and helped them get married. Wojciech Krawczuk also noted the fact that the women of the refugees often stayed in Sweden, trying to protect the real estate as well as the movable property from confiscation.

¹¹ The six appendices concern a list of: persons summoned at the Riksdag in Linköping to return to their homeland (Sweden); Swedes serving in the Polish–Lithuanian army in 1600; Swedes and Finns exiled or sentenced to death between 1597 and 1616; Swedish refugees from the years 1609 and 1620; and the approval of rights for Swedes living in the Republic issued by Władysław IV in 1636.

The author also notices the religious problem among the Swedes and the Finns living in the Commonwealth (chapter 3: pp. 89–98). Those of them who did not live in Royal Prussia changed their confession to Roman–Catholic. Besides, an important group of the refugees were Catholics, who existed in Sweden peacefully in the tolerant days of John III Vasa. Reaching the Commonwealth without a livelihood, a big group of them decided to join a seminary. Some of them even gained prominent positions of canons. The climax of ecclesiastical careers of five people was a place in the Ermland Chapter.¹² The situation was similar for women, who found shelter and basic subsistence in convents, and nuns from the Swedish Vadstene settled in the convent of the Bridgettines in Gdańsk. The complexity of the situation is evidenced by the fact that even until 1613 over a dozen Swedish families sent their children to the Jesuit school in Braniewo. This hardly ever happened after that date.

The author also focuses on the financial (and not only financial) aid extended to the refugees by the Vasas (chapter 4: pp. 99–118). Sigismund III and his sons, Ladislaus IV and John II Casimir felt attached to the group and willingly used the refugees for diplomatic, military or office work. A great number of immigrants could count on salaries from tariff revenues from the ports in Gdańsk and Elbląg. They were also bestowed with small land properties. The royal agent residing in Gdańsk, Szymon Bahr, played a particular role; he was in fact the most important official with executive power in the residual administration of the Swedish state operating on the territory of the Commonwealth.¹³ A systemic plan of aid was not developed until 1636, but, as demonstrated, permanent financial aid addressed to individuals had been provided since 1608.

Finally, the last chapter (pp. 119–130) is devoted to the further fate of this group. A thesis was formulated that most refugees returned to their homeland after many years. The returns intensified after Charles IX of Södermanland's death and assumption of the throne by Gustav II Adolf (1611–1632). A small group of those most loyal stayed in the Commonwealth and were assimilated; some were even granted an indigenate (i.e. they were recognised as Polish–Lithuanian nobles). The last important

12 The Ermland Chapter was a collegiate institution attached to the Bishop of Warmia and was located in Frombork. At that time, it exercised secular power over the third part of Warmia. Andrzej Kopiczko, "Warmińska kapituła katedralna. Zarys dziejów," *Studia Elbląskie* 19 (2018): 11–27.

13 The only office operating after Sigismund III escaped from Sweden was the royal chancellery. Between 1598 and 1600, this administration administered the areas still loyal to the king (Finland, Estonia, Kalmar), but the military successes of Charles IX of Suderman, led to Sigismund III ruling only over a group of refugees and taking diplomatic action. See: Wojciech Krawczuk, ed., *Protokół i regesty kancelarii szwedzkiej ekspedycji niemieckiej króla Zygmunta III z lat 1597–1600. Riksregistraturet vol. 87 Riksarkivet w Sztokholmie* (Kraków: Historia Jagellonica. Towarzystwo Wydawnicze, 2020).

representative of the Swedish diaspora in Poland was Sigismud Gyllenstierna (1598–1666), who even became a Gdańsk castellan in 1656.¹⁴

The book depicts a not very numerous, but surprisingly influential, group of inhabitants of Scandinavia, who found their temporary or permanent home in the Commonwealth. It is one of the best works analysing prosopographic groups, constituting a collective biography of a certain community. The success of the monograph results from perfectly-conducted research, reliable source criticism, and undoubtedly an inspiring research problem. Moreover, the author uses the studies of Polish, Swedish and Finnish historians, combining them in a coherent whole.

The author decided to present in the book not only the population migrating from Sweden and Finland, but also their descendants (primarily the second generation). I greatly appreciate the clear distinction of the people of Finnish origin, who were more attached to Sigismund III Vasa as the king of a Scandinavian country. Chronologically, the issue was reduced to the first half of the 17th century. This is due to the fact that Jerzy Michałowicz dealt with an earlier period (his research concerned the years 1587–1600).¹⁵ First and foremost, however, from 1600 onwards the Commonwealth was in a long-lasting military conflict with Sweden. The inhabitants of Sweden had to make a choice in the new reality, to remain faithful to the king or to their fatherland. Being loyal to Sigismund Vasa meant the need to leave their country and head south. The closing date is the “Swedish Deluge,” or the war against Sweden of 1655–1660. The Peace of Oliva (1660) puts a definite end to the Vasa dynasty’s policy seeking to regain the Swedish throne.

Unfortunately, the book lacks quantitative analyses. I wish the author had calculated the number of the refugees staying in Europe and demonstrated the process of return in quantitative terms. In addition, there is a certain inconsistency in this matter. In one place it is noted that at the end of the 16th century, ca 500 people fled from Sweden (primarily men), out of whom ca 100 persons left ten years later. In the Conclusion the author mentions 383 people as the initial number of the refugees (pp. 37–38, 131).

I complete this fundamental question for the years of Sigismund III’s reign (the king died in 1632). For this purpose I use a propaganda work against Charles IX of Södermanland titled *Slaktarebenck*.¹⁶ The aim of the book was such that its authors showed a huge number of refugees faithful to their legitimate king. Therefore, the text also includes representatives of lower classes, as well as figures who stayed outside the

14 For more about the further fate of this family, which unfortunately was not presented in the book – Stanisław Achremczyk, “Spory i konflikty szlachty malborskiej w drugiej połowie XVII wieku,” *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie* 4 (2010): 418–421.

15 Jerzy Michalewicz, “Dwór szwedzki Zygmunta III w latach 1587–1600,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 11 (1986): 161–180.

16 Wojciech Krawczuk, ed., *Slaktarebenck czyli Krwawe jatki księcia Karola Sudermańskiego* (Kraków: Historia Jagellonica, 2017).

Kingdom of Sweden for even a short time. These drawbacks are simultaneously an advantage of the source, primarily because people of lower strata are also included. The nobility was probably still overrepresented, but there are plenty of different data, and the proportions in the status of the refugees can be assessed.

I have collated a database of 385 people on the basis of source appendices and biographies compiled by Wojciech Krawczuk (the reviewed book mentions 383 people). Jointly there were 115 knights (including 24 aristocrats and members of the Royal Council); the highly-qualified staff consisted of 93 people, and representatives of lower classes (burghers, peasants and soldiers) made a group of as many as 177 people. However, they do not make the entire community. It should be borne in mind that reiters served with two or even three horses, so apart from 84 reiters mentioned in the source at least the same number of servants should be added. Moreover, the full number of military men is not presented, which we know on the basis of the list of reiters serving for Sigismund III from 1600.¹⁷ Hence, every fourth soldier failed to be mentioned in the analysed source. Additionally, on the basis of two more registers of refugees prepared in 1609 and 1620, out of 162 people recorded, 37 cannot be identified with the list placed in *Slaktarebenck*, which constitutes 22.8% (it concerns both the nobility and the lower strata). Thus, I believe that the estimation for all the groups (apart from the aristocracy, for whom there are precise scientific findings) should be adjusted upwards by 23%, and the group of soldiers by 25%.

According to this methodology, there are 576 people, and 18 students of the Jesuit College in Braniewo not mentioned in other lists should be added to this number. Having subtracted the people who were arrested by Charles of Södermanland in the years 1598–1599, and then executed, we obtain 583 people really staying outside the borders of the Kingdom of Sweden (at least briefly) in the years 1599–1632. Few of them lived in Denmark and the German Reich. Therefore, it is important to state that at the beginning of the 17th century about five hundred adult men found refuge on the territory of the Commonwealth.

17 See: Appendix 2 (pp. 159–165), where in 29 reiters serving in Livonia in 1600, 22 (75.8%) are recorded in *Slaktarebenck*.

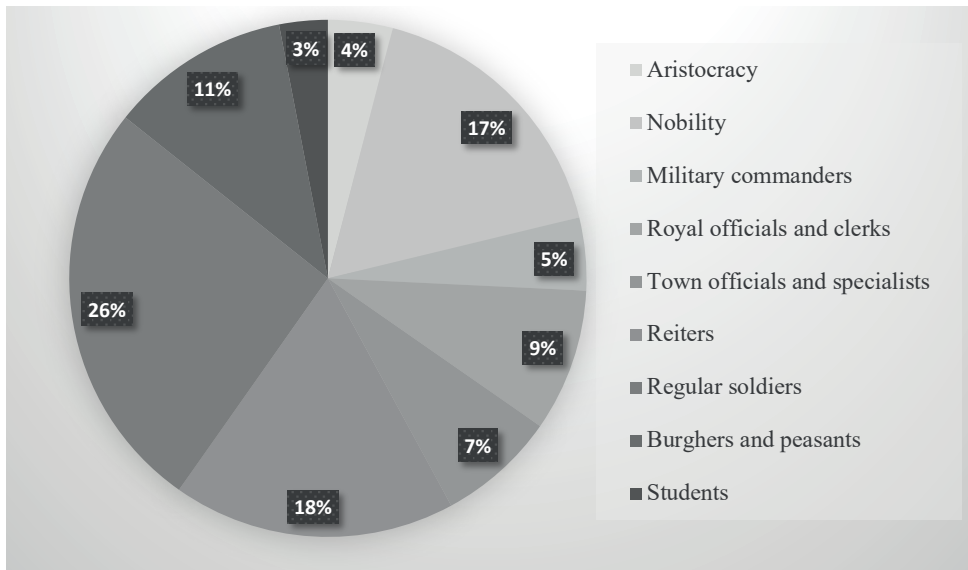


Figure 1. Proportions of refugees from the Kingdom of Sweden in the years 1599–1632

Source: on the basis of Wojciech Krawczuk, ed., *Slaktarebenck czyli Krwawe jatki księcia Karola Sudermańskiego* (Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2017), 91–124; Wojciech Krawczuk, *Wierni królowi. Szwedzi i Finowie na uchodźstwie w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów, w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2019), 92–96, 159–240.

The aforementioned numbers are obviously only a rough estimate. Women (children, at least partly as adults, appeared in the subsequent lists of the refugees of 1609 and 1620) who left their country as nuns and wives should be added to them.¹⁸ Thus, probably at the turn of the 17th century at least 700 people left, including 126 male nobles (although 10 people were captured and killed immediately after the rebellion in the years 1598–1599). In conclusion, the group was much larger than assessed by the author of the reviewed publication (p. 131).

Above, Figure 1 represents the participation of social and professional groups in the process of seeking refuge. The data, however, may be misleading. A few military commanders, officials, or even reiters might not have been noblemen. The term “nobility” should be understood as covering the people who possessed real estates and were not classified into other professional groups. This results from the imperfectness of the source and the lack of sufficient biographical studies referring to those who were not so socially prominent. The material gathered by Wojciech Krawczuk allows us to enlarge the noble group by 8–10 persons who were included in the other groups; thus, these

18 Determining its number is impossible, but we know that women were quite numerous among the refugees. Estimating them as 20% seems a minimum percentage if we take into account, that the Bridgettine nuns from Vadstene had to go into exile.

would not be important changes. A conclusion can be drawn that the privileged group constituted merely a quarter of the refugees. What is worth noting is the emphasis on the number of soldiers (45% and including the commanding staff it makes even 50%), which results from their considerable mobility. Interestingly, the vast majority of them were Lutherans.

In the context of a community of ca a million people in the Kingdom of Sweden, the aforementioned numbers are of no significance. However, taking into account the fact that in the whole country, the nobility consisted of ca 500–600 adult men, the loss of 130 people was a huge shock (20–25%).¹⁹ To understand it, it is worth noting that October 1601 saw the death of the last active member of the Royal Council, Nils Gyllerstierna. Duke Charles had to recover the loss in the following year in order to restore the proper operation of the administration and diplomacy. For this purpose he appointed a new council of 15 people.²⁰ Moreover, the scale of the return is not entirely convincing. Indeed, the sources from 1609 and 1620 are modest in terms of estimating the number of people within the group, yet it embraced prominent people. Moreover, the process of assimilation, translocation and natural mortality could be observed. Out of 108 reasonably complete biographies of the Swedish nobility, 96 people have been isolated, about whom we know whether they stayed abroad or returned to their homeland. The biographies show that merely 38% returned of their own free will to their homeland (cf. Figure 2). This is to emphasise that the return of the other social groups made much less sense due to the considerably smaller property left, which made people ask for forgiveness.

The data presented by the author in the appendices make it possible to conduct considerably more complicated quantitative studies referring to spatial mobility, life expectancy and religious relationships in the group, and, most importantly, to carry out an assessment of the returns to Sweden, as well as the scale of later migrations after 1600. The work provides excellent material for future studies.

19 Jan Samuelson, *Aristokrat eller förädlad bonde?: det svenska frälsets ekonomi, politik och sociala förbindelser under tiden 1523–1611* (Lund: Lund Univ Press, 1993), 47.

20 Marko Hakanen and Ulla Koskinen, “The Gentle Art of Counselling Monarchs (1560–1655),” in: *Personal Agency at the Swedish Age of Greatness 1560–1720*, eds., Petri Karonen and Marko Hakanen (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2017), 58.

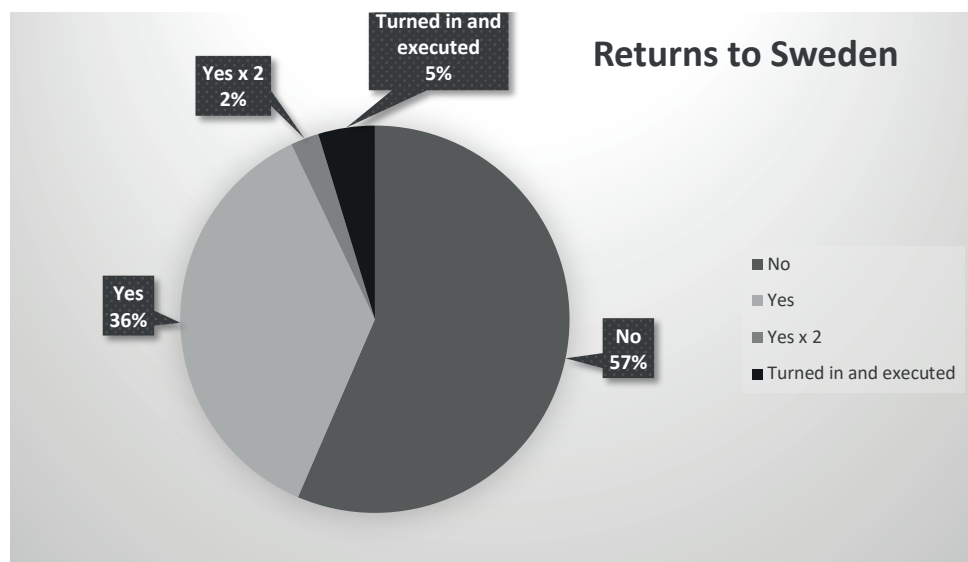


Figure 2. Proportions of refugees from the Kingdom of Sweden in the years 1600–1620

Source: on the basis of Wojciech Krawczuk, ed., *Slaktarebenck czyli Krwawe jatki księcia Karola Sudermańskiego* (Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2017), 91–124; Wojciech Krawczuk, *Wierni królowi. Szwedzi i Finowie na uchodźstwie w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów, w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2019), 159–240.

For example, this group can be shown through the lens of time (see Figure 3). The target group is the Swedish nobility, whose fate I traced in 108 cases. The inaccurate biographies of 21 individuals are an issue, as the date of their death is unknown. Therefore, between 1609 and 1610 in particular, a sharp decline can be seen. This is due to the fact that in 1609 there was a detailed census of refugees and for some people this is the last presence evidenced in the sources. Probably this decline included in the graph was not so steep, but the target point after 3–4 years should coincide with the obtained data (therefore graph 3 shows the 3-year moving average). In my opinion this graph can be interpreted with some caution as trends in other social groups that moved to the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the Kingdom of Sweden.

The graph shows that this group was the most numerous in 1598–1608, with a peak in 1600 and 1603. Afterwards, a steady erosion of this group was noticeable – newcomers were unable to replace those returning from or leaving for other countries. The returns to the homeland after Gustav II Adolf's accession to the throne could certainly be observed, and natural mortality was partly responsible. Before Ladislaus IV Vasa began his reign (the coronation took place on 6 February 1633), there was a symbolic number of six people of noble origin in these lands. Of course, it is impossible to estimate the number of Swedish–Finnish refugees in the second and third generations.

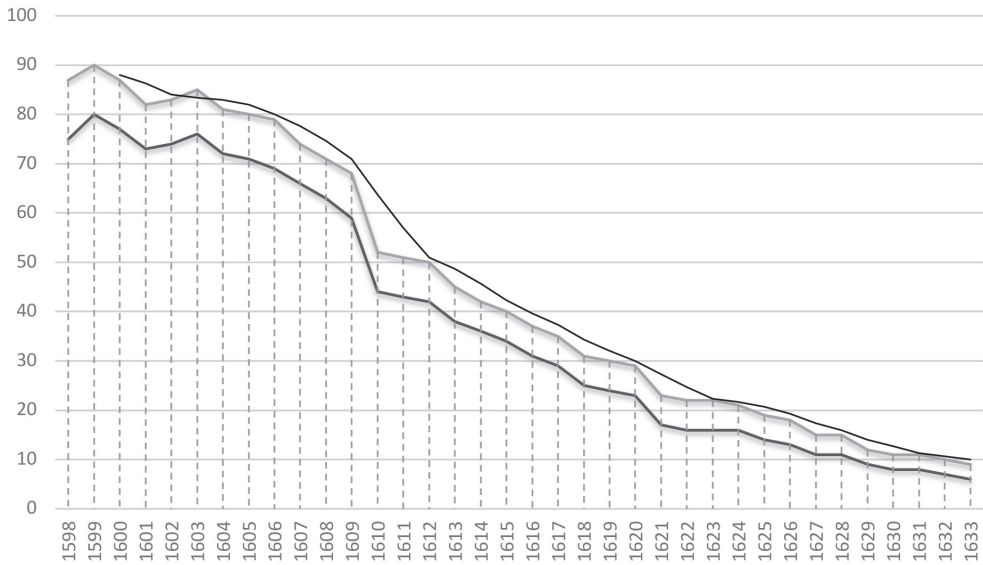


Figure 3. Number of refugees from Sweden and Finland in the Commonwealth

Source: The author's own study based on 108 biographies of the nobility (dark grey line) and 14 additional biographies of persons of non-noble origin (light grey line). 3-year moving average (black line).

Except for the reservations, the book is a must-read for all those interested in the domination on the Baltic Sea in the 17th century, where the competitors were the Tsardom of Russia, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is also an important voice in the debate on migrations in the early modern era.

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English version: Mark Atkinson

SUMMARY

The subject of the publication is a review of the book “Wierni królowie. Szwedzi i Finowie na uchodźctwie w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku” [Faithful Kings. Swedes and Finns in Exile in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the First Half of the 17th Century] written by Wojciech Krawczuk. In his monograph, the author characterised a medium-sized collectivity made up of Swedes and Finns fleeing their country as a result of the dynastic war between Sigismund III and his uncle Charles of Södermanland. A considerable part of the group settled in the Commonwealth and the kings (Sigismund III, as well as his sons) felt attachment to those people, which manifested itself in taking special care over them. The community, especially noblemen, was of great political importance, reaching in the Crown even senatorial positions. The article presents new

calculations of the diaspora connected with the results of the dynastic war. The calculations demonstrate that in the years 1600–1620 there were jointly c. 583 male refugees. Some of them spent abroad merely a few years and returned home; consequently, the number of the refugees was systematically falling (Figure 2 & 3). The social structure of people who left Sweden was presented in the form of Figure 1. It turned out that the nobility made up merely a quarter of the refugees, but it was almost 23% of all noblemen of the kingdom.

Skutki wojny dynastycznej w Szwecji (1597–1660): szwedzcy i fińscy uchodźcy

Słowa kluczowe: Szwecja w 1. połowie XVII wieku, Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów, Finowie, Szwedzi, uchodźcy w okresie wczesnonowożytnym, mobilność przestrzenna, szlachta szwedzka, Zygmunt III, Karol IX Sudermański

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł recenzyjny dotyczy zagadnień poruszanych w książce Wojciecha Krawczuka „Wierni królowie. Szwedzi i Finowie na uchodźctwie w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku.” W swojej monografii autor scharakteryzował średniej wielkości zbiorowość, którą tworzyli Szwedzi i Finowie uciekający ze swojego kraju w wyniku wojny dynastycznej między Zygmuntem III a jego wujem Karolem Sudermańskim. Znaczna część tej grupy osiedliła się w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów, a królowie (Zygmunt III oraz jego synowie) czuli przywiązanie do tych ludzi, co przejawiało się w sprawowaniu nad nimi szczególnej opieki. Społeczność ta, zwłaszcza szlachta, miała duże znaczenie polityczne, osiągając w Koronie nawet stanowiska senatorskie. W artykule przedstawiono nowe obliczenia diaspory Szwedzkiej i Fińskiej na ziemiach polsko-litewskich przy wykorzystaniu metod kwantytatywnych. Ze zgromadzonych przez Wojciecha Krawczuka danych wynika, że w latach 1600–1620 przebywało w państwie Zygmunta III co najmniej 583 uchodźców płci męskiej. Część z nich przebywała za granicą zaledwie kilka lat i wracała do kraju, w związku z czym liczba uchodźców systematycznie spadała (Wykres 2 i 3). Struktura społeczna osób, które opuściły Szwecję, została przedstawiona w formie Wykresu 1. Okazało się, że szlachta stanowiła zaledwie jedną czwartą uchodźców, ale była to prawie 23% całej szlachty królestwa.

Citation

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