[Jacob Heinrich von Flemming] *Mémoires concernant l'élection d'Auguste II pour roi de Pologne et les débuts de la guerre du Nord (1696–1702)* / [Jakub Henryk Flemming], *Pamiętniki o elekcji Augusta II na króla polskiego i o początkach wojny północnej (1696–1702)*, wyd. U. Kosińska, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2017, 501 s. ISBN 978-83-7543-428-6

The publication by Urszula Kosińska of Warsaw University of the memoirs attributed to Jacob Heinrich von Flemming (in Polish Jakub Henryk Flemming), a famous military and political figure in Saxony and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the time of Augustus II, who became probably the ruler's favourite and closest adviser, gives us a very important and valuable historic source about the election of the ruler of Poland and Lithuania in 1697, the beginning of the reign of Augustus II, and the preparations to engage in the war with Sweden which became known in history as the Great Northern War (1700–1721). As we know, at the elections for the ruler of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, held in Warsaw on 26 and 27 June 1697, two nominees were declared king: the French-backed François Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Conti, and the Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus I (in German Friedrich August I von Sachsen) of the House of Wettin (Wettiner). The Elector of Saxony proved to be the stronger contender in the struggle for the crown. Soon after the elections, together with units of the Saxon army, he entered the Kingdom of Poland, and was crowned in Krakow on 15 September. After his coronation, he took the title Augustus II, and has often been called Augustus II the Strong (August II der Starke). The Prince of Conti and a fleet of about six French warships sailed close to Gdansk only in the middle of September. The fight for the throne of the King of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania did not take long. The appearance of Saxon military units and those of the Kingdom of Poland that supported Augustus II in the approaches to Gdansk forced the Prince of Conti and his French fleet to withdraw on 9 November and return to France. The political regulation of the internal conflict in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that arose as a result of the disagreement over the king's election took longer than expected, and was only ultimately concluded at the Pacification Sejm (Diet) of 1699.

Flemming played an incredibly important role in all these events. He was the envoy of the Elector of Saxony at the Election Sejm of 1697, where his appearance ensured success for his ruler. Flemming was in command of the Saxon units that forced the Prince of Conti to retreat from Gdansk. He was also in charge of the Saxon units that marched on Hrodna at the end of 1698, and forced Kazimierz Jan Sapieha, the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, to give in to his opponents in Lithuania, the 'republicans', and agree to a radical reduction of the Lithuanian army, not to mention other demands made by the nobility who had risen up against the Sapiehas. Flemming was the most important figure to plan the war against Sweden, and the one who led the Saxon army in February 1700 that began the attack on Swedish forts near Riga, thereby bringing about the war. He was very closely associated with the financial backing for all the campaigns mentioned above, and the diplomatic initiatives. At the same time, he is a historic figure whose activities have still not been a subject of the thorough research his actual role warrants. That is why the publication of his memoirs is a very important and eagerly awaited event in the study of history. The memoirs not only reveal many unique background details concerning the activities of Flemming and Augustus II, but also make a significant contribution to compensating for the shortage of historical sources from the winning side that illuminate the election of 1697, the position of Augustus II and Saxony. A major lack of such sources is still felt today; whereas sources that were created in great volumes at the end of the 17th century representing the position of the supporters of the French candidate dominate,¹ which had, and continue to have, a major influence on researchers.

This publication consists of a very comprehensive introduction (in French on pp. 9–44, and in Polish on pp. 253–287), the source itself in the original language (almost the whole source was written in French

¹ *Histoire des dietes de Pologne pour les élections des rois...*, 1697; *Histoire de la scission ou division arrivée en Pologne, le 27 juin 1697, au sujet de l'élection d'un roy*, par M. de La Bizardière (Paris, 1699); M.D. de La Bizardière, *Histoire M. de La Bizardière, Bezkrólewie po Janie III Sobieskim*, wyd. J. Bartoszewicz (Wilno, 1853); (Jean-Baptiste Blaise Des Roches de) Parteney, *Histoire de Pologne sous le regne d'Auguste II*, vol. 1–4, La Haye, 1733–1734; J.B. Parthenay, *Dzieje panowania Fryderyka Augusta II, króla polskiego przez... w roku 1734 napisane*, przekł. T. H...RT. (Warszawa, 1854); *Depesze księdza de Polignac posła francuskiego po śmierci Jana III króla polskiego. Z rękopisu cesarskiej biblioteki w Paryżu*, t. 1–2, wyd. J.K. Żupański (Poznań, 1855); M. de Mongrillon, *Pamiętnik sekretarza ambasady francuskiej w Polsce pod koniec panowania Jana III oraz bezkrólewia i wolnej elekcji po jego zgonie (1694–1698)*, oprac. Ł. Częścik (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź, 1982), and others.

(pp. 45–235, 249–250), only Appendix 3 is in German (pp. 236–248), a Polish translation of the whole source (pp. 289–473), a list of the most commonly used abbreviations (p. 474), a bibliography (pp. 475–483), which includes the manuscripts and printed sources that were consulted, the historiography on this topic and informative literature (encyclopedias and dictionaries), and indexes of names and locations (pp. 495–501). Both the source in its original languages and its translation into Polish feature a thorough scientific apparatus, consisting of references and explanations. The references in French and German, and in the Polish translation, are not completely identical (they do not ‘mirror’ each other), their numeration is different, but this does not make the Polish translation any less informative, where explanations of only the very obvious things are left out (such as identification of the ‘elector’ [Appendix 4, p. 472]; in the French text (p. 248), footnote 4 explains that this was Frederick Augustus II, the future King Augustus III of Poland). In the introduction, the editor of the source claims that the first part of the publication where the sources are given in the original languages is strictly scientific, with the full reference apparatus in action and reference notes given in French (except for original quotes of extracts from the German source), while the Polish translation is more of a popular-knowledge text (pp. 39, 282). The editor of the source was too modest in making this distinction. The quality of the Polish translation and the comprehensiveness of its scientific apparatus are of an equally high level. Knowing how complicated the translation of manuscript sources from the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries actually is, and seeing the excellent results of this work, we can only praise the editor of the publication and the translators, Krystyna Zaleska and Maria Gołębowska-Bijak.

The publication itself consists of three parts and four appendices. The first part is the longest and the most valuable (pp. 45–176, 289–405), where events on the eve of the elections in 1697 are described, as well as the elections themselves, and the subsequent battles over the establishment of the Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus I, as the ruler of Poland and Lithuania. The second part (pp. 176–200, 409–427) discusses events from August 1698 (the campaign launched against the Turks) until the seizure on 24 March 1700 of Daugavgrīva (in German Dünamünde), the Swedish-controlled fort at the mouth of the River Daugava near Riga. This account is significantly briefer than the description given in the first part; however, researchers into Lithuania’s history should find this part of the memoirs attributed to Flemming especially important, as it also discusses the events from the end of 1698 near Hrodna, when the internal

conflict that had taken hold of Lithuania between the Sapieha magnate faction and the other magnates and nobles who opposed the hegemony of the family, known as the 'republicans', managed to be contained, at least temporarily. This part of the memoirs also shows the details in the preparations for the war against Sweden, and its beginning, and also the circumstances behind the unofficial involvement of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the conflict. The third part of the memoirs is even briefer, spanning the period from 1700 to May 1702 (pp. 203–228, 431–454). This part is especially important to researchers into Lithuania's history for the information it contains about the culmination in the breakthrough in the civil war in Lithuania between the Sapieha faction and the so-called 'republicans', when on 18 November 1700, not far from the town of Valkininkai, the 'republicans' defeated the army of the Sapiehas, and broke the hegemony of the Sapiehas in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Appendices supplement the memoirs as well. They include a preface (Appendix 1, pp. 231–234, 457–458) attributed to Flemming to the description of the king's election (the first part of the memoirs), Flemming's letter to Jan Jerzy Przebendowski, the Castellan of Chelmino (in English Culm), written at the beginning of June 1697, where the castellan is encouraged to continue the work meant to ensure the success of the Elector of Saxony in the elections (Appendix 2, pp. 234, 459), and an extract from the monumental early 18th-century work *Theatrum Europeum ...* (vol. XV, Frankfurt am Main, 1707), in which a German description of the 1697 elections was published (Appendix 3, pp. 236–248, 460–471). This was the only source to be published earlier (in 1707) that is presented in the book. It is directly related to the first part of the memoirs attributed to Flemming. In an article in 1906, the German historian Paul Haake raised the possibility that this German description of the elections (severely shortened and after eliminating all confidential details and personal references) was based on a French account of the elections, kept (even today) in the State Archives of Saxony in Dresden (pp. 31, 261). Haake was the first researcher to relate these memoirs to Flemming. However, the primary source, the French memoirs attributed to Flemming, have never been published until now, and were used very rarely by historians. The last appendix (4) is a note about how the main texts (the first and second parts) of the memoirs attributed to Flemming were concealed (taken out of the set of 'papers' that Flemming left) in 1733, and their repeated concealment in 1736 (pp. 249–250, 472–473). These actions were directly related to the efforts of the son of Augustus II, the Elector of Saxony, Frederick

Augustus II (known as Augustus III after his coronation in Krakow), to win and later to defend the crown of the ruler of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1733–1736. The appendices allow us to confirm the attribution of the memoirs published here to Flemming, and also to explain why they were not available to the public or to historians for such a long time.

The editor puts forward the hypothesis that the addressee and inspiration for the memoirs attributed to Flemming, referred to in the text as ‘Madame’, could actually have been Urszula Katarzyna von Alten-Bokum Lubomirska, the wife of Jerzy Dominik Lubomirski, the Crown Deputy Court Master of the Pantry (in Polish *podstoli*), who in 1697, like the majority of the Lubomirskis, supported the Prince of Conti, the rival of the Elector of Saxony. In 1700–1704, she was the official mistress of Augustus II. This is an interesting and rather motivated assumption, which deserves further examination in the future. According to Urszula Kosińska, the memoirs attributed to Flemming must have been written between March 1700 and February 1705, with additional corrections made later (up to June 1706, at least). We can agree with this conclusion. It corrects slightly Paul Haake’s earlier conclusion regarding the date when these memoirs were written (by extending the ‘corrections’ period).

The main problem with the published memoirs is to whom authorship has been attributed. Paul Haake has already associated them with Flemming, but some doubts still remain. In Urszula Kosińska’s opinion, there is no doubt that Flemming initiated these memoirs, and might have dictated them to his secretary. The fact that the text was not written in Flemming’s own hand, the mentions of Flemming in the third person, and references to a ‘narrator’ who was not Flemming, could, in the first instance, suggest that someone very close to Flemming actually wrote the memoirs (his secretary or assistant?). However, many of the subtle and confidential pieces of information and statements could only have appeared if dictated directly by Flemming, or on his express orders. The incomplete nature of later fragments of the memoirs, the depersonalisation of the narrative, and numerous factual errors, show that Flemming’s personal contribution towards the writing of that part of the memoirs must have been smaller, whereas the input of the person writing the text (his secretary?) would have been greater compared to the first, largest and most valuable part of the memoirs. This is especially evident in the third part. The ‘Preface’ to the first part of the memoirs that appears in Appendix 1 is the part of the text that can most confidently be associated with Flemming himself. In the opinion of Urszula Kosińska, this preface

was written in Flemming's own hand. The problem of the authorship of these memoirs is discussed thoroughly in a special sub-chapter in the introduction to the publication (pp. 28–35, 270–277).

The complicated issue of authorship of the memoirs and their incomplete nature raised an additional complex task for the editor: the memoirs had to be supplemented with a rich commentary and corrections of the numerous factual errors and inaccuracies. Urszula Kosińska has handled the task very well, and only a handful of doubts arose in the mind of this reviewer. For example, the voivodeship called 'Massau' is identified as Mstislav or Minsk (both, in this case, would have been in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) (pp. 240, 463). However, it is more likely that this was actually what the Mazovian Voivodeship (Province), Masovie in French, was called. In the part of the memoirs where reference is made to the death of Benedykt Paweł Sapieha, the Grand Treasurer of Lithuania, after the Battle of Valkininkai (18 November 1700), the editor's comment makes the correction that the treasurer did not die in the battle but was simply injured (pp. 212, 439). However, both these pieces of information that circulated at the time (in late November and early December 1700) are misleading. They were circulated via handwritten newsletters (gazettes, in Polish *gazety pisane*).² Later, news about the treasurer's injury was a kind of 're-correction' of the first announcement of his death. No source close to the Sapiehas can confirm information about Sapieha's injury.³ The fact that this claim about the death of Benedykt Paweł Sapieha at the end of November 1700 appeared in the memoirs attributed to Flemming, even though it is widely known that the same Flemming met Sapieha on various occasions after this date, in early 1701 and 1702, and that later still, when the memoirs were probably corrected (1702–1706), Sapieha was still quite active in politics and was one of the most important opponents of Augustus II (and of Flemming as well) and backed the Swedish King Charles XII, shows that assistants had much more influence in writing

² An announcement about the Battle of Valkininkai that was made on 18 November 1700 (*Relacya domowej wojny*), sent to the postmaster of Toruń, Janitzen, which mentions the death of Benedykt Paweł Sapieha. *Archiwum Państwowe w Toruniu*, Katalog II, dział XIII, nr. 35, pp. 911–912.

³ E.g., the description of the Battle of Valkininkai (18 November 1700), Manuscript Department of the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, col. 17, file 177, pp. 251V–254r. The 19th-century historian Justyn Narbutt, who favoured the Sapiehas, undoubtedly referred to this account. See: J. Narbutt, *Dzieje wewnętrzne narodu litewskiego z czasów Augusta II ...*, t. 2 (Wilno, 1842), pp. 80–87.

this part of the memoirs than Flemming, as it is highly unlikely that Flemming could have made gross errors of this kind. The person who wrote down directly the last parts of the memoirs must have used various written sources (including, most likely, the handwritten newsletters). A similar situation exists with Franciszek Stefan Sapieha, the Lithuanian Master of the Horse (equerry, in Polish *koniuszy*), known as the Treasurer of Lithuania, who was the father of Franciszka Izabela z Sapiehów, Flemming's wife (from 1702, he died in 1686). It is unlikely that Flemming could have made such a grave error, to which Urszula Kosińska draws attention (pp. 203, 431). Another point, not so much a comment as a possible version of an explanation, concerns the suggestion to associate the 'letter to the Commonwealth' mentioned at the end of the memoirs, written by the Primate of Poland Cardinal Michał Stefan Radziejowski, that was signed without the king's knowledge, which is mentioned among the events of 1701, and which was 'criticised by the king' (pp. 216, 443), with the 'primate's manifesto', which should actually be referred to as the open letter to the 'Commonwealth' prepared at the first Sejm in 1701 (held between 18 May and 18 June 1701, even though it was not formally inaugurated, as a Marshal of the Sejm was not elected) by the primate and commissars appointed to create a plan for regulating relations between the Sapiehas and the 'republicans', who were at loggerheads with each other in Lithuania.⁴ The note (on p. 216, footnote 81, and on p. 443, footnote 80) regarding this 'primate's letter to the Commonwealth' mentions that it could not be ascertained which of Radziejowski's letters is referred to. The brief retelling of the contents of the primate's 'letter to the Commonwealth' in the memoirs does not correspond with any of his public letters that we know of from this time, nor does it correspond with the contents of the 'primate's manifesto' mentioned above. However, other circumstances, such as the muddled chronology in the memoirs, confusing events from 1701 and 1702, and confusing the first Sejm in 1701 with the second (in 1701 and 1702), as the editor of this publication notes in her commentary, pointing out that the primate prepared this letter 'in secret' after the Sejm was suspended (which can be associated with the ending of the first 1701 Sejm without any specific results [its limitation]), and the fact that the king was not pleased with this 'letter' and 'criticised' the primate, would allow us to

⁴ *Manifestatio Eminentissimi Primatis et Illustrissimorum Commissariorum ad mediationem M.D.Litt[uani]ae deputatorum*, 28 June 1701, Warsaw (copy), *Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie*, Rkps. 6650, pp. 506–509.

link this information in the memoirs with the 'primate's manifesto' dated 28 June 1701. Another comment could be made about the confusion of the general and Michał Potocki, the Lithuanian Deputy Court Master of the Pantry (in Polish *podstoli*, from November 1700), who led the units of Kazimierz Jan Sapieha, the Great Hetman of Lithuania, sent in from Lithuania to assist the Saxon army near Riga in 1700, with Michał Potocki, the son of Feliks Potocki (the Polish/Crown Field Hetman), who became involved in a conflict during the campaign against the Turks on 24 November 1698 with Przebendowski, the favourite of Augustus II (p. 181, footnotes 11 and 13; and p. 205, see footnote 10; and also pp. 410–411, see footnotes 10 and 12; and p. 433, see footnote 18; as well as the index of names). In fact, Michał Potocki (1660–1749), the son of the Polish Field Hetman, and Michał Potocki (died circa 1711),⁵ the general and Lithuanian Deputy Court Master of the Pantry, who fought near Riga in 1700–1701, were two different people.

Bearing in mind how complicated it was to prepare these memoirs for publication, the handful of inaccuracies in the commentary by no means reduces the value of the work as a whole. The memoirs attributed to Flemming are a very important source, that go a long way towards comprehensively illuminating and helping readers understand the history of Saxony and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the end of the 17th century, and events in the first stages of the Great Northern War. Urszula Kosińska, the editor of the memoirs, and the translators who participated in preparing this publication, have carried out a truly major and complicated task very well. Due to the specifics of this source, significant requirements, great attention and professional qualifications are also expected of history researchers who are intent on using this worthwhile material.

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⁵ *Urządnicy centralni i dostojnicy Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV–XVIII wieku. Spisy*, oprac. H. Lulewicz, A. Rachuba (Kórnik, 1994), pp. 167, 231; Cf.: A. Link-Lenczowski, E. Szklarska, 'Michał Potocki (zm. 1749)', *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, t. 28 (Warszawa i &, 1984–1985), pp. 97–101.