STRUCTURE OF THE CAVALRY GROUP OF THE CROWN STANDARD-BEARER MIKOŁAJ HIERONIM SIENIAWSKI, STATIONED IN MOLDAVIA AFTER THE BATTLE OF KHOТYN (CHOCIM) IN 1673*

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ABSTRACT. On 10 and 11 November 1673 Commonwealth’s armies crushed Ottoman forces at the battle of Khotyn. Victory open new theatre of the operations against High Porte: towards river Danube and on the Polish territories lost in 1672 (Podolia with Kamianets-Podilskyi and Right-bank Ukraine). Polish and Lithuanian troops were very weary after the campaign, what’s more death of King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki led to interregnum. Polish command decided to set up the system of border defence, to protect country until the election of new monarch, which should later lead to the new offensive. As such cavalry detachments were spread out in Podolia and Moldavia, while corps under command of Mikołaj Hieronim Sieniawski, Crown Standard-bearer was sent to occupy the latter country. Previous research mentioned that this group had between 6000 and 8000 soldiers. Thanks to document from National Library in Warsaw, we can now identify much more detailed organisation of Sieniawski’s force. He had 48 pancermi banners and two light horse banners, in total 5206 horses. Despite capturing Iași, capitol of Moldavia, Sieniawski’s troops were forced on 17 January 1674 to retreat to Poland, under pressure from the fresh Tatar attack. Despite of the withdrawal from Moldavia, border defence system was still functional and Commonwealth managed fairly quickly to elect new king.

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In summer 1672 army of the Ottomans invaded completely unprepared Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. During the successful offensive Sultan Mehmed IV captured Podolia with important fortress of Kamianets-Podilskyi and Right-bank Ukraine, then forced upon Commonwealth heavy conditions of the peace treaty in Buchach (18 X 1672). Commonwealth had to cease to Ottomans all captured territories, where Turks created new province.\(^1\) In 1673 Poles attempted to go into offensive. Treaty of Buchach wasn’t ratified, and both Commonwealth’s armies — Polish and Lithuanian — prepared well to take the fight to the enemy. Ottomans decided to focus on the defence, attempting to keep previous year’s booty with three corps — two deployed in Moldavia (one at Khotyn and one at Iași) and one in Podolia near Kamianets-Podilskyi. The largest of those, with approx. 30,000 men, was stationed near Khotyn. It became main target of the Commonwealth’s attack and during the battle that took place on 10 and 11 November 1673, Polish-Lithuanian army under overall command of Crown Grand Hetman Jan Sobieski defeated Hussein Pasha’s force. It was the worse Ottoman land defeat up to date.\(^2\)

Commonwealth wasn’t able to follow up the victory in autumn 1673 due to both late season and beginning of the interregnum. On 10 November died King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, which lead to the start of the election process, in order to choose new monarch. To secure the border with Ottomans and their allies, Sobieski decided to use part of his force to garrison few strategic locations captured in 1673 in Moldavia and Podolia. He attempted to create new base of operations for the future offensive, planned for the period after the election of new king. Hetman wanted also to control the whole of Moldavia, by deploying their detachment of Polish cavalry. It was move aimed at cutting off logistics lines to Kamianets-Podilskyi, which could lead to its quick surrender and return to Poland.\(^3\) Cavalry group that was to fulfil this mission was under the command of Crown Standard-Bearer Mikołaj Hieronim Sieniawski, one of the closest political and military collaborators of Jan Sobieski. In this article I would like to focus on analysing the organisation and structure of this corps.

System of Kamianets-Podilskyi’s blockade, created at the end of November 1673, is well researched in Polish historical-military literature. Thanks to work of Janusz Woliński and Marek Wagner, we know well the activities of Sieniawski’s group in Moldavia, from its creating to retreat into Commonwealth on 17 January


1674. Both researchers didn’t knew the register of the cavalry banners from the manuscript kept in National Library in Warsaw though. Document, written in camp near river Dzicza Racka on 29 November 1673, not only provides exact list of the units that were part of Sieniawski’s corps but also other cavalry forces, created during the army gathering at the camp in Kakaczary (or Kakaczany) on 27 November 1673. It provides details of units under command of Deputy Cup-bearer of Sieradz Andrzej Modrzewski, that was located in Międzyboż at Podolia and those led by Knight of Malta Hieronim Augustyn Lubomirski at Łabuń, protecting border between Volhynia and Right-bank Ukraine. Unfortunately there is no information about second strongest, after Sieniawski’s corps, group of Polish cavalry — force that under Voivode of Braclaw Jan Potocki was directly blockading Kamianets-Podilsky. It does include small detachment of Potocki’s forces though, that under Lieutenant Jan Golejowski was stationed near Studzienica between Halicz Land and Podolia. In this article we will focus on Sieniawski’s force, having in mind researching other cavalry detachments in the future.

On 21 November Sobieski informed about his military plan interrex, Archbishop of Gniezno Kazimierz Florian Czartoryski, writing to him that operations was to start after the general gathering of the Polish army, in the camp at Kakaczary. After the gathering, those army units that were not assigned to any of the battle groups travelled to Poland, to be stationed on the winter quarters. Amongst them were all banners of winged hussars (that played important role in the battle of Khotyn), part of pancerne units, all arkabuzeria and majority of infantry and dragoons regiments — except those that were part of garrisons in Podolia (Międzybóż, Žwaniec, Jazłów, Satanów) and Moldavia (Khotyn, Suceava, Târgu Neamț). Cavalry was to be sta-
tioned on quarters between rivers Vistula and San, while infantry and dragoons between rivers Dniester and Buh (Boh). We can find confirmation of their march towards assigned places, as there are surviving documents explaining all the damages they caused en route in Ruthenian and Belz Voivodeships.

Units assigned to the winter campaign of 1673/1674 were severely depleted by the previous fights with the Ottomans, also suffered due to late-year weather, hunger and sickness. Up to 30 banners of cavalry and few units of dragoons (in total no more than 4000 soldiers) were under command of Jan Potocki. According to the muster from 29 November 1673 at Dzicza Racka, Andrzej Modrzewski had 10 banners of cavalry (935 horses), two units of dragoons (269 horses) and one infantry regiment (275 portions) — total 1479 horses and portions. Hieronim A. Lubomirski was in charge of six banners of panceri cavalry (941 horses). As mentioned before, Mikołaj H. Sieniawski’s corps was the strongest, as according to previous research it was estimated as 6000–8000 panceri cavalry, light horse cavalry and dragoons. What’s more, under his command were 3000–4000 men from garrisons in Moldavia. Those contingents were composed of infantry regiments and artillery from Polish army, supported by few Lithuanian units that didn’t returned to the country.

Polish public opinion had high hopes about Sieniawski and troops, their activities were observed and commented during Convocation Sejm in Warsaw, that started on 15 January 1674. For example Voivode of Witebsk, Jan Antoni Chrapowicki, author of detailed day-to-day diary, wrote few notes about the operations of Sieniawski’s corps. Under 16 and 18 January he mentioned that Poles captured capitol of Moldavia, Iași, dethroned pro-Ottoman prince (hospodor) Dumitrașcu Cantacuzino and chose his predecessor Ștefan Petriceicu but soon, due to problems with lack of provisions, had to retreat. On 31 January he wrote that under pressure from Tatars Poles aban-

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10 There is evidence of damages caused in those voivodeships by many units, including hussar banners of Andrzej Potocki and Stefan Grudziński, also infantry regiments of Jan Sobieski, Aleksander Ludwik Niezabitowski and Mikołaj Hieronim Sieniawski. See: Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv [hereinafter: CDIAUL], fond 1, opis 1, ms 264, p. 78–85, 102–103, 132–135, 747–749 and fond 9, opis 1, ms 430, p. 34–36, 312–316, 326–328.


15 In Autumn 1673 one of the Ottoman corps was stationed there but after battle of Khotyn it retreated towards Danube. See: Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Danzig, 10 XII 1673, The National Archives in London (hereinafter: NAL), ms 88/13, p. 117.
doned Moldavia and are not in border town of Śniatyń. In reality Sieniawski managed to defeat Tatars at Husza on 14 January but due to huge problems with provisions and increasing pressure from Tatars, he had to on 17 January retreat to Poland. His withdrawal caused lots of concern, as some were worrying that it will lead to collapse of the system of border protection in such vulnerable time of election of the new king. Luckily for Poles, Ottomans and Tatars didn’t have sufficient forces for the offensive moves against the Commonwealth and Sieniawski’s corps was able to march to Busk in Belz Voivodeship. As such situation on the border was fairly stable until the new monarch, Crown Grand Hetman Jan Sobieski, elected on 21 May 1674 as Jan III, started new campaign in the autumn of 1674. Of course there were also negative sides of Sieniawski’s retreat. Most important of them were losing chance for the complete blockade of Kamianets-Podilsky, abandonment of the possible starting points for new offensive in Moldavia and fact that after Poles left, pro-Polish Voivode of Moldavia, Ştefan Petriceicu, was dethroned again. So let’s try to see what was the force that Sieniawski had under his command during this ill-fated expedition.

When setting up forces to protect Polish border at the end of 1673, all available army units were mustered in order to prepare lists for paying them special winter pay, known as hiberna. Crown Field Clerk Stefan Stanisław Czarniecki prepared list, presenting how each banner of hussars and pancerni were attached to the national cavalry regiments. Comparing it with the list of Sieniawski’s units we will be discuss the process of organisation of his corps, also add the strength of the banners, lacking in the muster document from National Library. Sieniawski’s corps was formed during fourth quarter of 1673. For the purposes of the soldiers’ pay it was counted between 1 November 1673 and 31 January 1674. During that time whole national cavalry of the Polish army, excluding light horses, was composed of 123 banners: — 12 of hussars (1697 horses) and 111 pancerni (11,166 horses) divided into 22 regiments (total: 12,863 horses). Sieniawski’s corps was composed of the following regiments and banners:21
Regiment of deceased king Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki

Pancerni banners:
1. Royal banner under Michał Kozubski, Starosta of Horodło22 134 horses
2. Prince Michał Czartoryski, Voivode of Volhynia 100 horses
3. Samuel Jerzy Prażmowski, Voivode of Płock 94 horses
4. Konstanty Piaseczyński, Castellan of Brześć Litewski 94 horses
5. Aleksander Cetner, Castellan of Halicz 100 horses
6. Wojciech Prażmowski, Crown Court Standard-bearer 98 horses
7. Mikołaj Tarło, son of the Catellan of Przemyśl24 98 horses
8. Mikołaj Koryciński, Starosta of Ojców 99 horses
9. Stefan Branicki, Starosta of Krosno 99 horses

Total: nine banners 916 horses

Comparing with its full strength, regiment is only missing hussar banner of the deceased king.


Pancerni banners:
2. Aleksander Michał Lubomirski, Voivode of Cracow 148 horses
3. Jan Andrzej Morszyn, Crown Deputy Treasurer 111 horses
4. Jan Wielopolski, Crown Pantler 122 horses
5. Jan Aleksander Myszkowski, Chamberlain of Bełz 98 horses
6. Mikołaj Sapieha, Starosta of Owruz 95 horses
7. Jan Karol Romanowski, Standard-bearer of Chełm 101 horses
8. Jan Lipski, Starosta of Czchów 107 horses
9. Jan Oleśnicki, son of the Chamberlain of Sandomierz 120 horses
10. Marcin Cieński 100 horses
11. Jan Rzeczycki (deceased) 92 horses

Total: eleven banners 1294 horses

When comparing with the original strength, regiment is missing four banners of hussars and one pancerni banner.

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22 In Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth starosta was the office of the territorial administration. He was either overseer of crown land known as starostwo (and then called starosta niegrodowy) or official that had judicial and constabulary supervision about starostwo (where he was called starosta sądowy).

23 In both Poland and Lithuanian it was custom in the army to call officers by their civil office title. That’s why muster rolls and other documents often will include just such title, without even name of the officer.

24 In Commonwealth sons of high ranking officials received honorific based on their father’s title. So for example son of voivode was wojewodzic, son of the local chamberlain (podkomorzy) was podkomorzy, son of castellan was kasztelan etc.
Regiment of the Voivode of Bełz and Crown Field Hetman,  
Prince Dymitr Jerzy Wiśniowiecki

_Pancerni_ banners:
1. Dymitr Jerzy Wiśniowiecki,  
   Voivode of Bełz and Crown Field Hetman  
   196 horses
2. Mariusz Jaskólski, Castellan of Sanok  
   102 horses
3. Samuel Leszczyński, Crown Camp-master  
   117 horses
4. Prince Konstanty Wiśniowiecki  
   98 horses
5. Prince Jan Karol Czartoryski, Deputy Chamberlain  
   of Cracow  
   100 horses
6. Marcin Zamoyski, Deputy Pantler of Lwów  
   100 horses

_Total: six banners  713 horses_

When comparing with the original strength, regiment is missing one banner of hus- 
sars and four _pancerni_ banners

Regiment of the Voivode of Kalisz Jan Opaliński

_Pancerni_ banners:
1. Jan Opaliński, Voivode of Kalisz  
   97 horses
2. Melchior Grudziński, Castellan of Brześ Kujawski  
   100 horses
3. Piotr Adam Opaliński, Deputy Chamberlain of Poznań  
   82 horses
4. Kazimierz Grudziński, son of the Voivode  
   of Rawa Mazowiecka  
   94 horses
5. Michał Rylski  
   77 horses

_Total: five banners  450 horses_

Comparing with its full strength, regiment is only missing one _pancerni_ banner

Regiment of the Voivode of Sieradz Szczęsny Kazimierz Potocki

_Pancerni_ banners:
1. Szczęsny K. Potocki, Voivode of Sieradz  
   120 horses
2. Jan Aleksander Woronicz, Deputy Chamberlain of Kiev  
   104 horses
3. Stanisław Wężyk, _Starosta_ of Sieradz  
   74 horses
4. Aleksandez Gomoliński  
   75 horses
5. Jan Malski  
   73 horses
6. Samuel Lipski  
   98 horses
7. Wallachian light horse banner of Szczęsny K. Potocki  
   80 horses

_Total: seven banners  624 horses_

Regiment is missing one hussar banner but was reinforced by Wallachian light hor- 
se banner.
Regiment of the Castellan of Poznań Krzysztof Grzymułtowski

**Pancerni** banners:
1. Krzysztof Grzymułtowski, Castellan of Poznań 119 horses
2. Stanisław Tuczyński 94 horses
3. Franciszek Żychliński, Starosta of Walcz 87 horses
4. Constantin Şerban, former Prince of Wallachia 89 horses
**Total: four banners** 389 horses

Regiment in full strength, additionally reinforced by *pancerni* banner (former Wallachian light horse) of Constantin Şerban, from the regiment of Military Camp-master, Tomasz Karczewski.

Regiment of the Crown Standard-Bearer Mikołaj H. Sieniawski

**Pancerni** banners:
2. Jan Piaseczyński, Starosta of Nowogród Siewierski 98 horses
3. Jan Wojakowski, Standard-Bearer of Nowogród Siewierski 91 horses
4. Remigian Strzałkowski, Master of the hunt of Lwów 102 horses
5. Kazimierz Lipczyński, Master of the hunt of Przemyśl 100 horses
6. Tatar light horse banner of Mikołaj H. Sieniawski under *rotmistrz* Ułan 77 horses
**Total: six banners** 617 horses

Regiment is missing one hussar banner and two *pancerni* banner but was reinforced by Tatar light horse banner.

Regiment of the Crown Guard Stefan Bidziński

**Pancerni** banners:
1. Stefan Bidziński, Crown Guard 125 horses
2. Franciszek Sapieha, Lithuanian Master of the Horse 78 horses
**Total: two banners** 203 horses

When comparing to its full strength, this regiment is missing six *pancerni* banners.

According to the muster completed at Dzicza Racka Sieniawski’s corps was composed of eight national cavalry regiments, although they were sub-strength: without banners of hussar and part of *pancerni* units. Instead two regiments were reinforced by light horse — one Wallachian and one Tatar banner. In total force was had 48 *pancerni* banners (5049 horses) and two light horse banners (157 horses), so together 50 cavalry units with 5206 horses. As we can see it is much lower number that 6000–8000 assumed in previous research. Additionally, contrary to old-
er works, there is no indication of the presence of dragoon units. It is possible that Sieniawski’s force was supported by some pro-Polish Moldavian troops but there number had to be very low.26

Sieniawski’s corps was almost exclusively made of pancerni cavalry — the most numerous type of cavalry in the Polish army.27 It was universal formation, able to be used as shock cavalry utilising spears and sabre, supporting hussars with its firepower but also able to take part in reconnaissance mission or cavalry raids. Its wide range of the military capabilities can be easily seen in vast arsenal used by its soldiers: spears, sabres, pistols, carbines and bows.28 Sieniawski had under his command 48 of 111 Polish pancerni banners, so 43% of its units. When looking at the strength alone, percentage will be even higher, as 5049 horses were 45% of all pancerni serving in the Polish army in the last quarter of 1673. Amongst the units that marched to Moldavia were all banners that belongs to colonels of the regiments, including elite royal banner (after deceased King Michal) and banners of Grand Hetman Jan Sobieski and Field Hetman Dymitr Wiśniowiecki. No doubt their involvement in the campaign had to have psychological effect, in order to show soldiers from other units (lower in the army hierarchy) that elites are their with them during the difficult operation.

Cavalry from Sieniawski’s command were previously very active in campaign and battle of Khotyn in 1673, so it’s certain that soldiers from those units were weary and overworked with almost constant warfare. As such they were burdened with what seems to be far too difficult task and it’s hard to blame Sieniawski that, when facing offensive of the fresh Tatar troops, he decided to retreat. It’s worth to point out though, that he managed to withdraw without losses. Approach of Tatar Horde was the official excuse of the retreat from the theatre of war, which — once announce pub-

25 Although Hetman Sobieski wrote that he gave Sieniawski command over dragoon regiments but it seems that due to the lack of horses they didn’t took part in the expedition and returned to Poland. See: J. Sobieski to K.F. Czartoryski, Army Camp on the Pruth, 1 XII 1673 [in:] Ojczyzne spominki w pismach do dziejów dawnej Polski, ed. A. Grabowski, vol. 2, Kraków 1845, p. 357.

26 Petriceicu brought with him just 1500 at the battle at Khotyn, so it’s possible that they still accompanied him when Sieniawski escorted him to take over throne in Iași. The only unit from the Polish regular army, that was led by Moldavian or Wallachian and took part in Sieniawski’s operation in 1673–1674 was banner of former Wallachian voivode Constantin Serban. For that purpose it was specially attached to the different cavalry regiment from the one that it served with before. See more: I. Czamańska, Oswobodziciel czy najeźdźca? Polityka Jana III Sobieskiego wobec hospodarstw Mołdawii i Wołoszczyzny, “Roczники Historyczne” 1989–1990, vol. 55–56, p. 157; eadem, Jan III Sobieski wobec księstw rumuńskich i powstania węgierskiego, “Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego: Prace Historyczne” 2019, vol. 146, no. 2, p. 351.

27 In Lithuanian army in this period pancerni banners equipped with lances were classified as petyhorscy cavalry. Those banners that didn’t manager to receive hussar-like lances were still treated as pancerni units. See: Z. Hundert, Kilka uwag na temat chorągwi petyhorskich w wojskach Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1673–1683 [in:] W pancerzu przez wieki. Z dziejów wojskowości polskiej i powszechnej, eds. M. Baranowski, A. Gladysz, A. Niewiński, Oświęcim 2014, p. 136–149.

28 Overall description of pancerni cavalry during Sobieski’s reign, see: M. Paradowski, We came, We saw, God conquered..., p. 64–74.
licly — was met with rather wide disappointment. Francis Sanderson, who was at that time in Poland, informed Joseph Williamson that Sultan Kalga “with 10m Turc et 50m Tartars was fallen into Walachia, from whence the Crown Standard Bearer was forced to retreat”. Numbers of the approaching army was of course exaggerated. It was widely used in Commonwealth as a good excuse to explain the reason of retreat. At the same time it helped to show the public that, despite great victory at Khotyn, Turkey was still dangerous enemy. In perspective, Sieniawski’s group, composed solely of the cavalry, could not hope to fight for the long time so far from its logistic lines: on the enemy territory, without proper provisions and larger firepower. It couldn’t be even properly used to garrison Iași, unless hew Voivode of Moldavia could rule for the longer period of time. Alas, that didn’t happened.

Despite the fact that Polish corps was composed of elite units, and that its commander was an experienced soldier, it wasn’t able to fulfil its task. Still, despite all unfavourable elements, it seems that all that possible was done in order to protect Polish border in the winter of 1673/1674 and allow for proper election of the new monarch. It seems though, that when comparing it with the other detachments of the Polish cavalry active at that time, Sieniawski’s group did underperformed during its assigned operation.

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29 Proclamation of Convocation Sejm, Warsaw, 1 II 1674, CDIAUL, fond 9, opis 1, ms 430, p. 286–287, Warszawa, 1 II 1674. Document included information that: “że wojska świeże gromadne tureckie i tatarskie w ziemię wołoską weszły, dlaczego część wojska naszego w Wołoszech pod komendą wielmożnego jmp. chorążego koronnego natenczas zostająca, ku granicy polskiej pod Śniatyń zemknąć się musiała” (new and strong Turkish and Tatars forces entered the land of Wallachia [as Moldavia was called in Poland], therefore part of our troops, that were at that time stationed on Wallachia under the command of Noble Crown Standard-bearer had to retreat toward Polish border near Śniatyń).

30 F. Sanderson to J. Williamson, Danzig, 7 II 1674, NAL, ms 88/13, p. 130. In this case “m.” comes from Latin and means thousand.

31 Sieniawski was very active prior to the battle of Khotyn, where he captured few fortresses in Podolia. See: M. Wagner, Wojna polsko-turecka..., p. 366.
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