The three-day Battle of Warsaw (28–30 July 1656) has been the subject of a number of academic works since it was the largest field battle between the army of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the joint Swedish and Brandenburg forces fought in the period of the Deluge. Despite such extensive body of literature concerning this event, historians continue to discuss such details of the battle as the number of soldiers fighting on each side, Jan Kazimierz’s conception of the battle, chances of breaking the Swedish-Brandenburg defence on the second day of the battle, composition of the Hussar attack group commanded by Aleksander Hilary Połubiński, and the famous duel between a Hussar soldier and Swedish King Charles X Gustav. The author of this article hopes to provide a definitive answer to at least some of those questions.

The aim of the Battle of Warsaw was to gain military advantage over the forces of Charles X Gustav, which up to that point had prevailed over the restored army of Jan Kazimierz Waza, and force the Swedes to retreat to Royal Prussia and then to Sweden. Both sides of the conflict had high expectations for the battle, hoping to deal the final blow to the opponent. The armies were to meet in the fields of Praga near Warsaw, which had been reclaimed by the

Polish-Lithuanian forces in early July, opening up a number of opportunities for Jan Kazimierz. As the Commonwealth regained power over this strategic water node, the royal forces were able to strike not only from the direction of the Duchy of Prussia or Royal Prussia, but also interject communication between Swedish units located along the Narew and transportation routes leading to Livonia. Warsaw was the location of the most convenient Wisła crossing, with two river confluences nearby: the confluence of the Bug and the Narew in Serock, and the confluence of the Wisła and the Bugo-Narew in Nowy Dwór. Alas, the Polish command, unlike Charles X Gustav, underestimated the strategic importance of this water node. Eventually, it was the Swedish and not the Polish army that took control over the two lodgements after the Polish-Lithuanian forces had reached the Warsaw foreground. Having returned from the Greater Poland Campaign against the forces of Stefan Czarniecki, the Swedish king ordered his brother, Prince Adolph John, to charge towards Nowy Dwór and take control over the Bug crossing. The prince established a fortified camp in the fields of the village of Modlin as early as 13 June. Robert Douglas, previously sent out to strengthen the unit stationing at Pułtusk upon the Narew, soon joined the main forces and established another camp, located 4 km away from the first one, at the Pomiechów crossing on the Wkra River. The aforementioned river node was therefore controlled by the two Swedish camps, with bridgehead sconces on the Wisła River in Kauń, on the Bug in the so-called Kępa Szwedzka and near Pomiechów. This allowed the Swedish monarch to carry out military operations against the Polish-Lithuanian forces located near Warsaw or the Warsaw or Praga riverside.

Until the recapture of Warsaw (1 July 1656), the Polish-Lithuanian Army did not carry out any major operations against the Swedish forces and the Brandenburg units concentrating around Szreńsk (Charles X Gustav entered into alliance with Elector Frederick William on 25 June in Malbork). The Commonwealth’s preparations for the strike on the Swedish units coincided with torrential rains which destroyed the Wisła crossing and the bridges controlled by the Swedes. In consequence of these events, the initial plan to engage in a general battle with the forces of Jan Kazimierz were subject to certain changes (fig. 1). Charles X Gustav suspected that Poles would not be able to rebuild the bridge connecting Warsaw with the right riverbank (the Praga bank) – where Lithuanian units led by Hetman Paweł Sapieha were stationed – in such a short time. He therefore planned to attack the enemy on

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4 For more information on the importance of Modlin in the period of war against Sweden see: M. Wagner, „Rejon Modlina w dobie potopu szwedzkiego w latach 1655–1656”, [in:] 200 lat twierdzy Modlin (1806–2006), Modlin 2006, pp. 19–27.
the Praga bank, overcome the Lithuanians, reach the left bank of the Wisła in a protected march through the Bugo-Narew and Wisła crossings, and charge towards the main Crown forces located around the capital city. It continued to rain heavily on 20 July, so the process of rebuilding the bridge crossing to connect the divided armies was initiated three days later. The mention of chilly and rainy weather lasting until 23 July can be found in the diary of Jan Antoni Chrapowicki, who was crossing Podlasie en route from the capital to Bielsk on 9 July. It is certain that the construction works on the river crossing were concluded on 26 July, since Subchan Ghazi Aga, the commander of Tatar units supporting the Commonwealth, crossed the bridge on the morning of 27 July, arriving to Warsaw for military briefing.

The other side of the conflict, meanwhile, focused on concentrating its units in order to reclaim Warsaw. The capital city had strategic importance – its recapture by Jan Kazimierz discontinued the transportation route on the Wisła River connecting Toruń with Kraków. It had immense importance for the Swedish forces as the waterway had been used by them to send provisions to their garrisons in occupied towns of the Commonwealth and to alleviate logistic shortages in the units fighting on both sides of the Wisła. Retaining control over the transportation route was a priority for the command of the allied forces. Its strategic importance manifested itself in early April 1656, when provisions were sent to Charles X Gustav’s army locked in the river fork between the Wisła and the San. As described by Wespazjan Kochowski, the Swedish king “broke out of the encirclement even though many believed he would never be able to do this” because “almost three thousand men sent out from various units came to his rescue in boats along the Wisła River.” It was therefore indispensable for the Swedish Army to reclaim Warsaw in order to be able to support the garrisons located along Wisła and to have control over transportation routes facilitating military operations of Swedish corps on both sides of the river.

The forces of the Elector of Brandenburg reached Szreńsk on 14 July and were then headed to Płońsk. From there, Frederick William travelled to the Modlin camp to consult with the Swedish king (19 July). In the meantime, the Swedes had not only lifted the siege of Tykocin, but also resisted the attack of Lithuanian Hetman Wincenty Gosiewski on Pułtusk, forcing him to cross the Narew. Not being able to gain ground on Lithuanians, Charles ordered to march back to Modlin on 26 July; he reached the village in the morning of 27 July. The army started to prepare for a general battle as the first Brandenburg units led by the Elector arrived to Zakroczym on the same day.

6 S. Herbst, Trzydniowa bitwa..., p. 303; c.f. P. Des Noyers, Lettres... secrétaire de la reine de Pologne Marie-Louise de Gonzague, pour servir a l’histoire de Pologne et de Suede de 1655 a 1659, Berlin 1859, p. 100.
The Swedish were weakened by the operations carried out against the Lithuanian forces and the strife of marching to the river crossings. It was planned to use a komunik [a light cavalry unit] without any wagon forts, since food supplies, heavy artillery, and 2,000 people had been left in the Modlin camp for protection. Actually, however, the units received provisions for three days only, that is for the time necessary to defeat Lithuanians near Praga and then vanquish the main forces of Jan Kazimierz at the walls of the capital city.

What was the composition of the forces on both sides of the conflict? Academic works on the subject unequivocally indicate that the Swedes were outnumbered by the Polish-Lithuanian units, which gained additional support through the levy of nobility from the following provinces: Ruskie, Bełskie, Lubelskie, Mazowieckie, and Podlaskie (ca. 10,000–13,000 men). Stanisław Herbst estimates that regular forces were composed of 24,000–25,000 men with ca. 2,000 Tatar orda warriors brought to the battlefield by Aleksander Koniecpolski. The total number of people in the army amounted to ca. 36,000–40,000 people, including only 4,000 regular infantrymen. After the recapture of Warsaw, around a dozen thousand soldiers left – one group were noblemen levied from Greater Poland who returned home and the other – the Kraków unit, including the regiment led by Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski, which was sent to reclaim Kraków. The number of people in the latter unit is estimated at 5,000-6,000, including over 4,000 soldiers of the Computable (Regular) Army9. Another several thousand Lithuanian soldiers (4,000–6,5000) also left after recapturing Warsaw, including 2,000 men sent to the unit led by Lithuanian Field Hetman Wincenty Gosiewski. It is therefore difficult to estimate the number of Lithuanian cavalrymen taking part in the Battle of Warsaw; it is only possible to list the regiments that remained under the command of Jan Kazimierz:

- regiment of Lithuanian Grand Hetman Paweł Sapieha,  
- royal regiment under Lithuanian Field Clerk Aleksander Hilary Połubiński,  
- regiment of Royal Deputy Cupbearer of Lithuania Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł,  
- regiment of Krzysztof Sapieha,  
- regiment of Filip Krzysztof Obuchowicz, deceased province governor of Smoleńsk10. (fig. 2)

Seeing that cavalry played an important part in the Battle of Warsaw, especially its second and third day, it is worth mentioning 16 out of 17 cavalry regiments participating in combat. Together with light cavalry units, the Computable Army had 156 chorągiews (‘banners’), that is 17,043 horses11. Af-

10 M. Nagielski, Bitwa pod Warszawą..., p. 242.  
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After Lubomirski’s division had departed, this number fell to 137 chorągiews in 16 regiments, amounting to 14,000–15,000 horses, excluding blind portions in the cavalry. No registry of Crown forces divided into regiments has been preserved, but on the basis of various accounts of “what undergoes in Poland until diem 23 Augusti 1656” we can assume that 15 out of 17 cavalry regiments took part in the three-day Battle of Warsaw:

- royal regiment led by Castellan of Kyiv Stefan Czarniecki;
- regiment of Lithuanian Grand Hetman Stanisław Rewera Potocki;
- regiment of Polish Crown Hetman Stanisław Lanckoroński;
- regiment of Provincial Governor of Sandomierz Aleksander Koniecpolski;
- regiment of Castellan of Sandomierz Stanisław Witowski;
- regiment of Crown Field Clerk Jan Sapieha;
- regiment of Crown Deputy Cupbearer Jan Zamoyski;
- regiment of Crown Guard Aleksander Zamoyski;
- regiment of Crown Standard-bearer Jan Sobieski;
- regiment of Crown Quartermaster Andrzej Potocki;
- regiment of Military Guard Mariusz Jaskólski;
- regiment of Duke Dymitr Wiśniowiecki;
- regiment of Elder of Braclaw Seweryn Mikołaj Kaliński;
- regiment of Stefan Piaseczyński;
- regiment of Jerzy Bałaban.

The most valuable units in the army were four foreign infantry regiments composed of ca. 3,500 men and 1,500 dragoons, including a regiment of the king’s dragoon guard under Jan Henryk von Alten-Bockum. The forces amassed by Jan Kazimierz on the right bank of Wisła (crossing the river from 26 July), together with the Lithuanians, had the strength of 34,000–36,000 men ready for battle, since some of the forces, composed mainly of Hungarian infantry, had been ordered to stay in Warsaw. At the same time, the (royal) cavalry regiment led by Czarniecki was sent to Zakroczym along the right bank of the Wisła River in order to collect intelligence on the planned operations of the Swedes.

The allied army, which started to cross the bridge on the Bug River on 27 July, was composed of 18,000 soldiers, including 12,500 reiters and dragoons and 5,500 infantrymen. Cavalrymen were predominantly Swedish (there were 37 Swedish and 23 Brandenburg squadrons), while most infantry units

12 Princes Czartoryski Library, manuscript 149, no. 92; c.f. ibid., manuscript 386, book 127-130.
13 Absent during two first days of the Battle of Warsaw; M. Nagielski, Bitwa pod Warszawą 1656, pp. 101-102.
14 Not included are the regiments of J.S. Lubomirski and Elder of Buhusław Kacek Szemberg located in Kraków at the time (2,275 horses); see: J. Stolicki, Obłężenie Krakowa..., pp. 97-98
15 Data according to which S. Czarniecki led 4,000–5,000 men to Zakroczym cannot be seen as reliable as such great amount of soldiers would not have been sent away on the eve of an important battle and the Castellan of Kyiv was sent there to collect information on the station points of the allied forces; S. Herbst, Trzydniowa bitwa..., p. 309.
were Prussian (nine brigades with the total of 3,500 men, while Swedish infantrymen were organised in six brigades with the total of 2,000 men). The allied armies had more artillery units than the Polish-Lithuanian forces – the former had 47 artillery pieces, while the latter – 18\(^{16}\).

Both sides of the conflict were commanded by experienced leaders. The Swedish Army was led by Charles X Gustav (b. 1622), who had demonstrated good tactical skills during the Thirty Years’ War, in the battles of Breitenfeld (1642), Jüterborg (1644), and Janków (1645), and had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Swedish forces in Germany in 1648. Having little wartime experience, Elector Frederick William was sidelined by the Swedish monarch and given the command of the right wing of the allied armies in the Battle of Warsaw.

The leader of the other side of the conflict, Jan Kazimierz Waza (b. 1609) had substantial military experience gained during the battles fought against Sweden (1629) and Moscow (1633-1634). In 1635 he had participated in battles at the side of the emperor, having command of a cuirassier regiment. He had also been an independent leader during the battles against Cossacks and Tatars fought in the Zborów Campaign (1649), Beresteczko Campaign (1651) and Żwaniec Campaign (1653). As a representative of the Western European military art, he combined traditional Polish elements (dominance of cavalry) with new Western military trends, appreciating the importance of infantry and artillery\(^{17}\).

The Polish-Lithuanian side of the conflict had a major disadvantage when it came to its high command. Jan Kazimierz could not rely on the highest ranking commanders as both Lithuanian hetmans could not participate in the Battle of Warsaw (Paweł Sapieha had suffered a leg injury while Wicent Gośiewski had been sent to Podlasie\(^{18}\)), while the Crown hetmans continued to serve more as assistants during meetings than real support for the monarch. Seeing that the authority of hetmans had decreased in 1655, they were substituted in the chain of command by regiment commanders Lubomirski and Czarniecki. Both of them, however, were absent during the first two days of the Battle of Warsaw – the Castellan of Kyiv had been in Zakroczym and did not arrive to Warsaw until the evening of 29 July, while Śreniawita was preparing for the siege of Kraków. Due to such state of affairs, the only high-ranking commander who could lead the cavalry charge on the second day of the battle was Połubiński, the commander of the royal regiment. It is therefore no coincidence that Jan Kazimierz was surrounded by numerous foreign officers, including General Andersson, which must have been a source of frustration for the staff of the national enlistment.

The situation in the high command of the allied forces was radically different. Among the people standing by the side of Elector Frederick William

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\(^{17}\) W. Majewski, Bitwa warszawska..., pp. 24–25;

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there were such experienced veterans as Graf Georg Friedrich of Waldeck, Major General Krzysztof Kannenberg, Major General Joachim Rüdiger Goltz or Graf Otto Christoph von Sparr. Charles X Gustav was accompanied by commanders experienced in battles of the Thirty Years’ War: Major General Carl Gustaf Wrangel, Major General Henrik Horn, Robert Douglas, Count Gustaf Oxenstierna. They followed daily orders, preparing their units in line with the *ordre de bataille* of the commanders-in-chief. The events of the three subsequent days of the battle demonstrated the superiority of the allied high command over its Polish-Lithuanian counterpart.

Let us therefore perform a separate analysis of each day of the battle in the area of Praga. The allied armies did not manage to gain advantage by surprising the other side of the conflict since Jan Kazimierz had managed to transfer the majority of Crown forces, along with wagon forts and the mass levy, to Praga on 27 and 28 July. Thanks to the detailed account of French envoy Antoine de Lumbrres, both the Swedish and the Brandenburg leaders had been made aware that they would be dealing with joint Polish-Lithuanian forces supported by Tatar units very early on, when marching towards Jabłonna. Nowy Dwór was located approximately 30 km from Praga; columns of the allied armies took the route to Jabłonna via Suchocin, Skierdy, Rajszewo. The theatre of operations on the right bank of the Wisła River consisted of a damp plain area sliced by numerous small streams, with a natural border created by a line of dunes located ca. 1,200-1,500 metres from the river. This area – the Praga fluvial terrace – was the site of the 1656 Battle of Warsaw. The battlefield was bounded by a marshland spreading from Białołęka to Bródno on the north-eastern side. The line of dunes between the villages of Kamionka and Jabłonna, running parallel to the Wisła River, could be used as artillery posts. S. Herbst rightly noted that the area was more suitable for defence than for charges of large numbers of cavalry.

Jan Kazimierz, having more cavalry than the enemy, planned to use the topography of the area and wear down the allied forces in the strip between the line of dunes and the bed of Wisła, where he placed artillery posts (three redoubts ca. 50 m apart) leaving passages for cavalry, which was to annihilate disoriented units of the enemy during interruptions in exchange of fire. On the north-eastern side, the Polish positions were flanked by a four-bastion square fort located ca. 600 m from the Żerański Forest. It can therefore be seen that it was decided to take a defensive stance against the forces of Charles X Gustav due to several factors. A part of the army, mostly wagon forts, had been transported to the right bank of the Wisła River. Moreover, it was believed that the allied armies would try at any cost to break the Polish defence through frontal assault, even if it were to lead to major losses. This is why almost 3,000 infantrymen from the regiments of Wilhelm Butler, General of Crown Artillery Krzysztof Grodzicki, Colonel Ernest Magnus Grotthauz, and Provincial Governor of Sandomierz Jan Zamoyski, together with 18 pieces of artillery, were concentrated in a line ca. 250–300 metres

long. The commanders of the allied forces were surprised by the narrow corridor between the dunes and the Wisła River near Tarchomin, Świdry or Żerań (800 m in its widest point). In certain spots, therefore, it was possible for only one squadron to march through the area at a time, making the march column stretch significantly. Additionally, clouds of dust raised by each squadron made it impossible to see the road ahead. The narrow passage forced Charles to carry out frontal assault on the Polish forces with a limited number of soldiers – the vanguard. The Polish-Lithuanian forces, however, did not take advantage of this situation and carried out inept attacks on the marching column with the use of a small number of forces – around a dozen Lithuanian chorągiews and Tatars vulnerable to the fire of the allied reiter and infantry units. These attacks were easily fended off by the reiter regiment led by Carl Gustaf Wrangel. The biggest threat for Swedes were the Tatar units, which avoided engaging in battle with reiters and instead carried out assaults on wagon forts and attacked from the rear, which is probably why Swedish publications on the battle overestimate their numbers. According to these sources, as many as 6,000 Tatars may have participated in the battle – three times as many as the actual number.

The allied vanguard led by Major General Count Claes Tott did not manage to break the Polish defence despite being supported by reiters from the army’s right wing. As dusk started to fall, the Swedish-Brandenburg units started to withdraw into the Wisła River corridor at approximately 8 o’clock in the evening, moving ca. 2-3 km away from the artillery posts of the Polish infantry. They set up a camp in the fields surrounding the villages of Żerań and Świdry. The units led by Jan Kazimierz were effectively triumphant on the first day of the battle, but it proved to be a Pyrrhic victory. The Polish-Lithuanian side did not have any concept for the subsequent battles, hoping that the next day Charles X Gustav would once again try to break infantry fire posts with frontal assault and that cavalry would successfully fend off the attacks of reiters. In fact, most units of the Polish-Lithuanian cavalry, including the mass levy chorągiews, did not take part in the fights on the first day of the battle (fig. 3). Samuel Pufendorf, the Swedish chronicler of the war, noted that Poles had perfectly selected and fortified their positions, making them difficult to break. He wrote that the Polish-Lithuanian forces “so narrowed [...] the field that the [Swedish] king did not have enough space between the forest and the river to spread his wing into one front. This is why his regiments had to march one after the other, as demanded by the topography of the site.”

In the early morning of the following day, 29 July, Charles X Gustav collected intelligence on the Polish positions and decided to bypass the fortifications on the Wisła corridor from the east, bringing his forces to the dunes between Białołęka and Bródno. This position allowed them to attack the Polish-Lithua-

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nian forces from the flank and push them towards the Wisłă River, with only one bridge crossing in the area. This would effectively lead to the annihilation of the entire army. In order for the plan to succeed the Swedes continued to simulate attacks on the fortifications of the Polish infantry while at the same time moving their units along the edge of the Białołęcki Forest. Despite being attacked by Tatars, the allied forces managed to take over the hills located in front of the Bródno dunes by 12 noon and continued to march on, crossing the boggy riverbeds of the Skurcza and the Ząza. When the forces were crossing the former, the artillery pieces led by Waldeck became stuck. The Polish and Lithuanian units did not use this moment to their advantage. While the Tatar orda and Lithuanian rotas half-heartedly attempted to attack the marching enemy columns, they were fended off by the fire of Swedish reiters commanded by Horn. Until 3 PM the allied forces were free to take positions in the dunes between Białołękca and Bródno; even though the villages were set on fire by Tatars soon afterwards, no major operations were carried out. The indolence of Jan Kazimierz’s forces is surprising since the monarch must have had some information on the actions of the allied armies. He was nonetheless taken by surprise by the enemy’s manoeuvre; not only did the Polish-Lithuanian side notice it quite late, but it also did not have any conception for further operations. It was only decided to move the front by 90 degrees in order to take positions straight ahead of the Bródno dunes taken by the allied units. (fig. 4)

The activities on the Polish side until 3 PM deserve to be criticised; the Polish-Lithuanian forces did not take advantage of the allied forces being scattered and did not try to attack the fortifications in the Wisła corridor or assault the marching column of the enemy. Any attempts to prevent the opponent from moving forces from the areas near the Wisła to the Bródno fields in Praga were half-hearted and carried out with the use of limited forces of the orda (1,000 horses) and a small number of Lithuanian rotas (1,500 horses). The most decisive action taken by the Polish-Lithuanian side was to place the Crown and Lithuanian cavalry regiments straight ahead of the allied posts in the Bródno dunes.

At ca. 4 o’clock in the afternoon the Swedish-Brandenburg units took positions fortified by artillery posts. The left flank was composed of Swedish cavalry, the right one – Brandenbrg cavalry, while infantry regiments of both leaders stood in the centre. This proved unfavourable for the forces of Jan Kazimierz, which had to engage in a battle with the enemy in order to be able to gain time for moving infantry and artillery from the Warsaw corridor to new positions. It was therefore decided to charge on the unprepared allied forces with cavalry units composed of Hussar rotas selected from each regiment. It is uncertain whether the idea to use Hussars was conceived by Połubiński – commander of the royal Hussar chorągiew – or by a person close to the king. It has also not been determined what forces were sent exactly and what chorągiews they were composed of; these questions are still a subject of debate. S. Herbst and historians supporting his views estimated that the conditions created by the landscape did not favour the use of Hussars.
not allow to use more than 900 Hussars, assuming that they would be sent out in three echelons, with 300 men in each row. In fact, only several out of 14 cavalry regiments grouped in the fields of Praga contained Hussar rotas. The units that were missing from the battlefield were the regiments of Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski, Jacek Szemberg, and the royal regiment led by Stefan Czarniecki, which at the time was returning from the reconnaissance mission in Zakroczym.

Jan Kazimierz could use four Hussar rotas in the Crown Army:
- rota of Crown Grand Hetman Stanisław Potocki – 188 horses,
- rota of Crown Field Hetman Stanisław Lanckoroński – 98 horses,
- rota of Jan Zamoyski – 126 horses,
- rota of Provincial Governor of Sandomierz Władysław Myszkowski – 171 horses.

The units had the total of 83 horses. Excluding blind portions in each rota, they were composed of ca. 500 Hussars.

When it came to the Lithuanian Army, the following units could be used:
- royal rota led by Aleksander Hilary Połubiński – 147 horses,
- rota of Lithuanian Grand Hetman Paweł Sapieha led by Hrehory Kruniewicz – 193 horses,
- former rota of Hetman Janusz Radziwiłł, taken over by Paweł Sapieha and led by Provincial Governor of Mazyr Jerzy Władysław Chalecki,
- Lithuanian Carver Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł.

Excluding the rota of Lithuanian Field Hetman Gosiewski, who commanded a separate unit in northern Mazovia and did not manage to return to the capital on time, the number of Lithuanian Hussars is appraised at over 500. Renowned Swedish historian Peter Englund estimates that the assault group led by Połubiński was composed of over 1,000 horses, most probably due to the losses suffered when charging on the allied forces.

According to Wiesław Majewski, only Lithuanian Hussars – a group of possibly as many as 1,200 men – participated in the charge. After the enemy fire fended off the attack of cavalry units on the wings, the Polish-Lithuanian forces initiated another charge after 4 o’clock in the afternoon, this time only with the use of Połubiński’s centre unit, with his royal Hussar rota at the front.

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26 According to data from the third quarter of 1656, see: J. Wimmer, Materiały do zagadnienia liczebności..., n.b.
27 The participation of this rota is uncertain as it formed part of the royal regiment taken to Zakroczym by S. Czarniecki. The authors analysing the history of two Hussar chorągiews: of S. Potocki and W. Myszkowski, followed S. Herbst and decided that they took part in the charge on Warsaw; see: E. Janas, L. Wasilewski, "Społeczne aspekty rozwoju husarów w latach 1648-1667 na przykładzie chorągwi hetmana wielkiego koronnego Stanisława Potockiego i wojewody sandomierskiego Władysława Myszkowskiego," SMHW 1981, vol. 23, pp. 79–80.
29 See his bio in Polski słownik biograficzny, vol.3, Kraków 1937, p. 252. According to the state for 9 February 1656 it was composed of 196 horses, but it suffered major losses in the winter/spring campaign; Lietuvos Valstybes Istorijos Archyvas in Vilnius, manuscript 3410, p. 309.
30 M. Nagielski, Bitwa pod Warszawą..., pp. 141–142.
31 P. Englund, Lata wojen, p. 34. It was to be followed by 4,000 men and horses of the Quarter Army, which in fact did not happen and made the charge unsuccessful.
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The aforementioned author believes it is unlikely that the Polish command would have enough time to separate Hussar rotas from each regiment; moreover, the soldiers of the Crown Army were reluctant to follow orders given by Lithuanians, in this case by the Lithuanian Field Clerk. There is also no reason not to include Gosiewski’s Hussars into the assault group since the Lithuanian Field Hetman would not have used heavy Hussars in an attack demanding moving quickly along the Narew. These hypotheses find their confirmation in the account of renowned diarist Jakub Łoś, a member of an armoured cavalry unit, who described the Hussar charge in the fields of Praga as follows:

Only Lithuania quickly stood against it [the new group of the allied forces]; and when it started to taunt them, His Majesty’s Lithuanian Hussar chorągiew commanded by Połubiński, the Lithuanian Field Clerk, did not wait for reinforcements and charged at the reiters with lances so bravely that the Swedes at once started to retreat and escape from their sconces; our men were surprised, but no reinforcements arrived; if they had supported the units at the front, they would have not allowed the Swedes to recover; and therefore, having driven the Lithuanians away, the enemy left the battlefield victorious.

A similar evaluation of the charge can be found in the diary of Stanisław Wierzbowski written many years later, where he claimed: “Our men battled well with God’s help; peculiarly, however, only the royal Lithuanian Hussars led the charge. They were led by Honourable Mr Połubiński. The unit bravely attacked the enemy and scared the Swedish king himself[...] because almost no soldier in the unit withdrew out of necessity”34. This backs up the hypothesis of W. Majewski, who claimed that only Lithuanians took part in the charge and that only the unit led by Połubiński reached the enemy. The fact that land grants for achievement in the battle were awarded mostly to the members of the Lithuanian units, including the royal Lithuanian Hussar rota, can serve as a confirmation of the author’s claims even though it does not mean that no land grants were awarded to Hussars from the Crown Computable Army over the following years35. According to recent research carried out by Andrzej Majewski, only Lithuanian Hussars took part in the charge; among the units attacking the enemy there was not only the rota led by Połubiński, but also the unit of Paweł Sapieha led by Władysław Jerzy Chalecki; they had the total of 340 horses, which amounted to ca. 300 Hussars. The author does not believe that the rota of Lithuanian Field Hetman Gosiewski also participated in the charge because Gosiewski was an adversary of Sapieha and would not have entrusted his own Hussars to him. In this case, however, it was the king who made the final decision as the commander-in-chief of the Battle of

34 S. Wierzbowski, Konnotata wypadków w domu i kraju zaszłych od 1634 do 1689 r. skreślona przez..., ed. J.K. Załuski, Lipsk 1858, pp. 102–103.
35 See list of land grants for Połubiński and members of his unit; M. Nagielski, Bitwa pod Warszawą..., pp. 152–156.
Warsaw, which means that it is impossible to entirely rule out the participation of the Hussars of the Lithuanian Field Hetman. The hypothesis according to which only Lithuanian rotas led the charge is supported by an anonymous chronicle cited by the author, which contains the following passage: “Several Hussar units of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania charged with lances into the Swedes.” It would seem that Jan Kazimierz, not being able to collect more rotas for the attack on the allied forces and not having any information on their fitness for battle after the change of front, decided to carry out the assault only with the aforementioned two rotas, which would engage in combat and at the same time collect information on the enemy’s position.

It is obvious that the Hussar attack came too late, after the enemy had already taken positions and prepared artillery posts. The entire Lithuanian Army did not have 1,200 horses; even including Gosiewski’s rota, the Field Clerk could hardly collect ca. 500 people, especially with losses suffered in march and in combat during previous battles. Jan Kazimierz had 2-3 Hussar rotas grouped in two echelons at his disposal; he sent them to fight against the allied forces through the corridor, 300–400 metres ahead. It is probable that the Polish command attempted to lure the enemy into the Bródno fields in order to use the advantage of cavalry, since on paper the army had over 20,000 horsemen, including the mass levies. Such short notice did not allow for the Polish-Lithuanian side to prepare reserve composed of several thousand armoured rotas which would support the Hussar assault. In this respect, Jan Kazimierz could not rely on hetmans or lower-ranking commanders who would lead their regiments behind Połubiński’s Hussars. This only goes to show that the allied forces surprised the Polish command, forcing it to improvise – change the formation of the entire group and attempt to gain information on the new positions of Charles X Gustav’s forces by combat.

What happened in the clash of Hussars with the allied forces? The leader of the charge, Lithuanian Field Clerk Połubiński, was a renowned colonel in the Lithuanian Army and had served in the Lithuanian Computable Army since 1648, that is since the enlistment carried out by Janusz Radziwiłł to fight against Zaporizhia Cossacks (even though he became the commander of the royal Hussar rota in February 1655). In the first period of his service he commanded his own Hussar unit and distinguished himself in two battles of Loyew against Cossacks, in 1649 and 1651. He was a member of the faction of Lithuanian Vice-Chancellor Kazimierz Lew Sapieha, whom he had come to know much earlier, but was also appreciated by Janusz Radziwiłł, as could be seen in the battles against Moscow in the years 1654–1655. While W. Majewski is right to claim that Połubiński did

37 PAN Library Kraków, manuscript 967, p. 26; after: A.A. Majewski, Szarża husarska pod Warszawą..., p. 170.
not have much authority in the Lithuanian Army up until March 1656 due to his service in the Swedish Army, he was the only high commander who could lead the charge against the allied forces because Lithuanian hetmans and Czarniecki were not present in the Praga fields. The factor decisive in appointing him as the leader of the attack was the fact that he was the colonel of the royal Hussar rota, which at the same time made him the commander of the royal regiment in the Lithuanian Computable Army. The absence of the commander of the royal regiment – Castellan of Kyiv Czarniecki – severely limited the options of the king, probably influencing the fact that Hussar rotas were not included in the assault group as their commanders were reluctant to follow Lithuanian orders. His absence also impacted the attitude of the remaining cavalry units in the Computable Army, which remained passive during Połubiński’s charge instead of carrying out a supporting attack right behind the Hussars.

According to W. Majewski, the Hussars charged through a narrow corridor along the road leading to Bródno, “along today’s northern wall of the Bródzieński Cemetery”\textsuperscript{40}. The attack was thwarted after charging ca. 500 m into the centre of the left wing of the allied forces, where the Hussars clashed with elite Swedish reiter regiments: Uppland (under Andreas Planting, Småland (Johann von Rosen), Ostgothen (Graf Ludwig Löwenhaupt) and the regiment of Duke John George von Anhalt-Dessau. Even though a part of the Hussar forces was stopped on the first line of the enemy’s cavalry, most soldiers broke through and engaged in combat with five squadrons in the second echelon of the Swedish reiters. These squadrons were the cavalry units led by Colonel David Sinclair, Margrave Charles Magnus von Baden-Durlach, Field Marshall Arvid Wittenberg and Finnish dragoons under Colonel Fabian Berends. The momentum of the assault was weakened by the strong fire of the Swedish reiters and the infantry, with the latter striking the Hussars with lateral fire from the centre. It is possible that Połubiński’s Hussars came under the fire of the infantry guard of Elector Frederick William, commanded by Colonel Pierre de la Cave, and other infantry regiments, both Swedish and Brandenburg\textsuperscript{41}. According to other accounts, the units that fired at the charging Hussars, inflicting great losses among the Lithuanian cavalrymen, were two reiter regiments of the Swedish royal couple, that is the regiment of Charles X Gustav led by Palsgrave Philipp von Sulzbach and the Queen’s regiment led by John George von Alhalt-Dessau\textsuperscript{42}. Not being able to break the second echelon of the allied forces and suffering great losses under musket fire, the “winged” cavalrymen were ordered by Połubiński to retreat to their positions. The charge lasted no more than several minutes and was not given support from reserve units. The losses among Hussars were significant: 150–200 fellows and their servants were

\textsuperscript{40} W. Majewski, \textit{Bitwa warszawska...}, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{41} Depending on which \textit{ordre de bataille} of the allied forces is considered reliable; the Swedish one, on the basis of drawings by E. Dahlbergh or the Brandenburg one by J. Mankell, other infantry and cavalry units could fend off the Hussar attack in the second echelon; see: M. Nagielski, \textit{Biwa pod Warszawq...}, p. 126–127, 146–147; c.f. W. Majewski, \textit{Bitwa warszawska...}, p. 28–29.
They therefore amounted to 10–15%, while the royal Lithuanian Hussar unit probably noted even greater losses, up to 20%.

The chaos of the battle almost took the life of Charles X Gustav, who, having fended off a Tatar attack on wagon forts, moved to an endangered area with his personal guards and was assaulted by legendary Jakub Kowalewski. As described in the diary of Jakub Łoś, the Hussar pointed his lance at the Swedish king and “probably would have had his way if it had not been for Duke Bogusław Radziwiłł shooting his pistol” and killing him. Wespazjan Kochowski’s Klimaktery also mentions the Lithuanian equerry assisting the Swedish king. This is how Kochowski described the memorable deed of Jakub Kowalewski: “For when the Swedes were staggered by his extraordinary boldness, a man from the king’s entourage (many said it was Bogusław Radziwiłł), whose horse happened to stand right next to the king, aimed his pistol at the charging man’s head and defeated this outstanding soldier with a single shot.” There is no mention of the incident in the autobiography of Duke Radziwiłł, who most probably would not have missed the opportunity to boast about his achievements in the battle, especially since he wrote that “the Swedish king ordered to protect him in the battle.”

In fact, Charles’s life was saved by one of his guards, Bengt Travare, who was awarded a land grant in the form of four farms after the battle. Kowalewski’s body was taken away from the battlefield; the Swedish monarch, following the code of chivalry, ordered Bernardine monks to bury him in Praga. The friars also buried numerous other Hussars taking part in the charge on the second day of the battle, for example Wojciech Lipski – for his burial, they received 650 florins from the Commonwealth Treasury. S. Putendorf has a different view of that episode. He claims that the Swedish king’s life was endangered by 6,000 Tatars who charged the left wing, which is where Charles X Gustav was at the time. He was saved thanks to the bravery of the court quartermaster and Lieutenant Colonel Bengt Trafvenfelt (Travare), both of whom supported the monarch in the battle. This is what was written on the subject in his chronicle:

He was surrounded by seven Tatars with lassos and spears. The king shot two with his pistols, while another’s spear got tangled with the bridle of the royal horse; the king stroke the man’s head with a spade numerous times until he finally fell off his horse. The king then rushed to help Trafvenfelt, who had also shot two Tatars and

43 P. Englund and M. Nagielski write about 150 deceased, while W. Majewski estimates the losses at as many as 200 people, probably including assistants. P. Englund, Lata wojen..., p. 38; M. Nagielski, Bitwa pod Warszawą..., pp. 149–150; W. Majewski, Bitwa warszawska..., p. 29. S. Herbst (Trzydniowa bitwa..., p. 322) estimates the losses at 100–150 people.
44 J. Łoś, Pamiętniki towarzysza chorągwi pancernej..., p. 19.
45 W. Kochowski, Lata potopu..., p. 203.
46 B. Radziwiłł is also mentioned by W. Kochowski in his annuals (Lata potopu..., p. 203); c.f. B. Radziwiłł, Autobiografia, published by T. Wasilewski, Warsaw 1979, p. 138.
was fighting with the remaining ones so fiercely that two of them escaped. This way, the king survived in the face of obvious danger⁴⁹.

The episode has recently been researched by historians Zbigniew Hundert and Andrzej Majewski, who used the resolution adopted by the Warsaw Land Sejmik on 27 April 1672 to prove that the Swedish king was assaulted by several Hussars, including Kowalewski and Lipski, both of whom were killed. The resolution reads as follows:

With his blood and health, Illustrious and Magnificent Lord Lipski, the provincial governor of Rawa, famed the Praga field near Warsaw in the battle against Swedes when he and Sir Kowalewski, both contributes, both of the same coat of arms, gloriae acpericuli socii assaulted the Swedish king with lances and if their bravery aequior favisset fortuna and if support had arrived, their deed would have been a grand tropheum of our land⁵⁰.

This is probably why various accounts mention other Hussars who famed themselves with the attack on the Swedish king, for example Odachowski or Dąbrowski⁵¹. This confirms the thesis proposed by the authors, according to which Charles X Gustav was assaulted by several Hussars, all of whom were killed by the fire of the Swedish guard and the monarch’s assistant dignitaries (including Bogusław Radziwiłł)⁵².

The Hussar charge ended in a defeat, but it nonetheless served its purpose. Not only did it shake up the allied command, which lost a lot of time on reinstating order in each echelon of its regiments, but also forced the enemy to regroup and strengthen their wings with infantry regiments⁵³.

Jan Kazimierz, meanwhile, managed to force some of the armoured cavalry units to lead another charge on the positions of the allied forces; one group of cavalry was fended off with infantry and artillery fire, while the other struck the right wing, occupied by Brandenburg regiments, including the infantry guard of the Elector commanded by Colonel Pierre de la Cave. The two sides did not engage in combat due to strong musket fire, which caused the Polish-Lithuanian cavalry units to withdraw to their initial positions⁵⁴. The unsuccessful attempt to break the allied lines discouraged the Polish-Lithuanian side from organising any more cavalry charges. Charles X Gustav wanted to counterattack the opponent, but the process of preparations and restoring order in units necessary to take over the line of dunes between Targówek and

⁴⁹ S. Pufendorf, Siedem ksiąg o czynach Karola Gustawa..., s. 160.
⁵² Z. Hundert, A. A. Majewski, O dwóch Rochach Kowalskich..., p. 286.
⁵³ W. Majewski, Bitwa warszawska..., p. 29.
⁵⁴ S. Herbst, Trzydniowa bitwa..., p. 322; W. Majewski, Bitwa warszawska..., p. 29; c.f. M. Nagielski, Bitwa pod Warszawą..., p. 158 (according to E. Dahlberg’s plan, the attack of armoured cavalry could be fended off by mounted guard of Frederick William and the reiters of Graf Georg Friedrich von Waldeck).
Bródno took so much time that dusk started to fall, causing the counterattack to be postponed for the next day. It is certain that the allied forces suffered significant losses in a number of regiments and had to make corrections in their *ordre de bataille*, which is a fact often omitted by Swedish researchers.\(^{55}\)

Tasks for the Polish-Lithuanian forces for 30 July were determined during a night-time meeting; no accounts of its participants have been preserved. (fig. 5) The command was aware that they had lost the battle, which is why it was decided that wagon forts would be transported to the left bank of the Wisła along with servants and the nobility accompanying the army, even despite the fact that the units led by Castellan of Kyiv Czarniecki had returned from Zakroczym and crossed the river to get to Praga. The decision was right, but its execution was quite poor, especially since the dignitaries and higher-ranking commanders turned out to be the first ones to prepare their belongings for crossing the river so that they would not be lost on the third day of the battle. Many decided to follow suit and, as Provincial Governor Jan Leszczyński underlined, the Crown Grand Hetman outdid everyone and was the first person to start sending his carriages to the other side of the Wisła. Leszczyński wrote: “some suffered from our *multum aclaritatis*, that is when the Grand Hetman [S. Potocki] ordered for his carriages to be sent to the bridge; it surely was a grand *consilium* to early and *bono ordine*, and *consilio impedimenta amovere* and to *obsidere* and finish off the starved enemy, but many were battered by those carriages”\(^{56}\). In order to have enough time for such great numbers of infantry, artillery, and wagon forts to cross the river, Jan Kazimierz decided to engage in a defensive battle the following day, allowing for the rest of the forces remaining on the Praga bank to retreat to the left bank. The allied forces started to take positions in the early morning hours, leaving wagon forts in the burned down village of Bródno. The Swedes set out their posts south of Bródno, ahead of the Praski Forest. The centre, composed mainly of Swedish and Brandenburg infantry, took positions along the axis of the road from Bródno towards Praga (current Św. Wincentego Street). Reserve was formed out of the remaining allied cavalry, flanking potential counterattacks of the Polish-Lithuanian forces from the side of the Wisła crossing. Reiters were organised into three echelons, with the first echelon commanded by Duke Adolph John (Swedish reiters) and Graf Georg Friedrich Waldeck. Preparations for general storm on the enemy positions were concluded at ca. 8 o’clock in the morning.

There were much more problems in the Polish-Lithuanian camp. The Polish monarch, assisted by both Crown hetmans, started to distribute cavalry in the battlefield and give new positions to each regiment at dawn. He granted command over cavalry *chorągiews* and the mass levy to Stefan Czarniecki and Alek-

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55 P. Englund (*Lata wojen...*, pp. 38–40) does not mention the Swedish losses caused by the Hussar charge as if no losses had been inflicted at all, even though this stands contrary to the description of the battle in the fields of Praga, where both commanders of the allied forces were at some point endangered.

56 J. Leszczyński to Father Jerzy Schönhoff to Vienna from Częstochowa 9 VIII 1656, Princes Czartoryski Library, manuscript 384, book 444-447.
Sander Koniecpolski. Lithuanians were still commanded by Połubiński, which shows that Lithuanian Field Hetman Gosiewski was still absent. The mass levy took advantage of the thick fog hanging over the fields and headed towards the river crossing to follow their luggage instead of taking positions. Despite being urged and threatened by the king, the nobility did not want to take positions at the side of the Tatar cavalry unit. Wespazjan Kochowski mentioned this lack of morale and eagerness to fight in his work: “However our men (it needs to be confessed openly) lost their previous spirit. Soldiers became indolent, felt tired from two days of fighting and weary from constant danger, and the cavalry, being aware of the fleetness of their horses, saw many an advantage in retreating”\textsuperscript{57}. The Polish-Lithuanian forces partially lost their superiority in numbers as large masses started to escape to the left bank of the Wisła. On the third day of the battle, 15,000–16,000 allied soldiers faced ca. 14,000 regular cavalrymen grouped in 15 regiments, 3,000 infantrymen (a part of infantry escorted wagon forts crossing the river), 4,000–5,000 Lithuanians, some whom were positioned north of Białołęka with the Tatar orda, near the wagon forts of the enemy, and 4,000–5,000 participants of the mass levy, mostly from the Sandomierskie Province, Lubelskie Province, and Belskie Province. There were no more than 25,000 men ready for battle on the Polish-Lithuanian side, excluding the Tatars evading direct combat\textsuperscript{58}. The post near the Praga Forest was taken by foreign infantry led by Ernest Magnus Grotthauz, accompanied by several dragoon units of the Castellan of Kyiv commanded by Krzysztof Wąsowicz (ca. 1,000 muskets in total) and two field guns. The decision to retreat to the other side of the river negatively influenced both the commanders of individual units and the soldiers themselves, who kept on turning their heads towards the bridge on the Wisła. This did not bode well for the battle.

Brandenburg infantry led by Graf Otto Christoph von Sparr initiated attack on the Praga Forest after 8 o’clock in the morning. The Brandenburg musket and artillery fire soon forced Poles to retreat; as they did not have horses, they could not even take their guns with them. Cannonading the Prussian forces pushing forward, the infantry units pushed towards the cavalry positioned right behind them. According to Jan Leszczyński’s description of the retreat, the enemy charged right at the infantry, which was not yet finished with the sconces they had been building throughout the night. The infantry, noticing the dubious stance of cavalry and seeing a thicket of guns in front of them, did not wait to confront the full force of the enemy and, having already suffered losses from artillery guns, started to retreat \textit{lentissime passu} and left their guns as \textit{magnus errore fatum} did not have horses by the artillery pieces; and so the infantry withdrew and the enemy took their guns\textsuperscript{59}.

\textsuperscript{57} W. Kochowski, \textit{Lata potopu...}, p. 205.
\textsuperscript{58} M. Nagielski, \textit{Bitwa pod Warszawą...}, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{59} J. Leszczyński to Father Schönhoffa from Częstochowa 9 VIII 1656, Princes Czartoryski Library, manuscript 384, p. 444–447; c.f. M. Nagielski, \textit{Bitwa pod Warszawą...}, p. 225
Soon afterwards, the disciplined allied squadrons and regiments assaulted the left wing of the opponent, composed of Lithuanians. Reiters led by Georg Friedrich of Waldeck and Carl Gustaf Wrangel pushed Polish cavalry off the Bródno dunes. Artillery fire caused major losses among Poles laboriously crossing the marshes surrounding the Skórcza River. Commanders could barely contain panic among the retreating infantrymen. Biggest losses among withdrawing infantry were suffered by Jan Zamoyski’s unit 60.

Upon seeing the attacking squadrons of Waldeck’s Brandenburg reiters, Połubiński and his Lithuanian cavalry avoided engaging in combat and fled towards Białoleńka through the Wisła corridor 61. Once they escaped, Lithuanians made the left wing of the army vulnerable to the attacks of the allied forces, which could more easily advance towards the Wisła crossing. Due to royal cavalry withdrawing from the dunes and Grotthauz’s infantry earlier leaving the Praga Forest, the Crown Army faced the threat of being encircled by the enemy and destroyed, as there was little chance to transport all forces and wagon forts to the other side of the river. In view of such state of affairs, Jan Kazimierz decided to withdraw the left wing and ordered for infantry and artillery to retreat so that they would cross the Wisła while being covered from attacks by cavalry.

At that point nobility started to panic as well. Having seen Lithuanians escape and infantry retreat, they rushed towards the river crossing. The bridge was a site of horrific scenes caused by unspeakable chaos and a stampede of people flocking to the crossing, which eventually led to the bridge collapsing. Many soldiers fell into the river, including Crown Grand Hetman Stanisław Potocki and Crown Deputy Cupbearer Jan Zamoyski. Infantry had to reconnect the spans of the bridge so that the crowded units could cross the Vistula. This is how Kochowski described these events:

the units fighting near the bridge or those trying to cross the river were depleted as the bridge could barely support the weight of the storming crowd; the soldiers squeezed in the narrow passage started to push each other into the water. Hetman Potocki, who had arrived to the bridge to prevent the escape, put his life in great danger – when he was giving orders to cavalry units located closest to the enemy front, he was pushed towards the very brink of the bridge, where the flocking crowd blindly rushing to the crossing proved to be more dangerous than the Swedes themselves 62.

The hetman was rescued by Andrzej Modrzewski, a member of the chorągiew of Chamberlain of Sieradz Zygmunt Karol Przerębski, but others were not quite as lucky; many soldiers and their servants drowned in the waters of the Wisła.

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60 As described by J. Łoś (Pamiętniki towarzysza chorągwi pancernej..., p. 20), the retreat of infantry ended in "a great defeat, especially the infantrymen of His Honourable Zamoyski, with several hundred men funded by him personally, and his regiment within the Quarter Army."
River. Polish losses suffered during the frenzied crossing of the Wisła were greater than those resulting from the previous two days of battle. As the Prussian infantry led by Otto Christoph von Sparr was getting nearer, the last infantry regiments with a part of artillery pieces left the Praga bank. Jan Kazimierz ordered to set the bridge on fire. According to Des Noyers, Tatars were to set fire to the bridge from the Praga side of the Wisła in order to stop the advancing forces of Sparr and “so that the Swedes would not take the boats supporting the bridge and build a new one” \(^{63}\). Infantry was rescued, but the army lost some of the artillery pieces, along with a culverin referred to as the “Dragon.”

As the allied infantry units reached the Wisła crossing, they cut off access to the bridge for around a dozen thousand Crown cavalrmen, mass levy \emph{chorągiews} and Tatar units. If the Swedes had managed to successfully attack Skaryszew and cut off Polish routes of escape towards Grochów, the day would have ended in a tragedy – the cavalry, pushed towards the steep banks of the Wisła, would have had to surrender to Charles. When the Polish right wing noticed that the crossing was inaccessible, the forces started to retreat through the sandy corridor between the Wisła and the sandbank near Kamion, heading towards Okuniew via Kamion, Grochów, Grzybów. Thousands of horses marching among clouds of dust surprised the command of the allied forces. According to Dahlberg, Charles X Gustav was absolutely disoriented, believing that Poles had initiated a counterattack on the allied positions \(^{64}\). He did not even consider the option of such a big group evading the battle and retreating from the battlefield. This is why he sent out Robert Douglas and a reiter unit towards the Polish cavalry, but they did not manage to catch up to the withdrawing forces. Nonetheless, Swedes inflicted significant losses among the mass levy from the Belskie Province, which was unwilling to join Tatar units retreating along the road to Okuniew and made a turn towards Żerzeń when marching near Kamion. Many noblemen from Bełz, including Swordbearer Michał Dłotowski, died in combat when fighting off the allied reiters \(^{65}\). Around noon, both commanders of the allied forces dominated the battlefield, taking control over the Praga bank along with all wagon forts, artillery pieces, and hundreds of bodies of Polish-Lithuanian soldiers left behind by the retreating army (see the map presenting the operations of the third day of the battle – 30 July 1656). Pufendorf provides the following explanation of why the allied forces did not continue to chase after the Polish-Lithuanian soldiers: “because they were hampered by fatigue among men and horses, after three days of battle they were weakened by their hunger” \(^{66}\). Interestingly, the Swedish chronicler lauded the command of Jan Kazimierz Waza, writing that “he persevered from the beginning to the end and was not negligent in any aspect, which is what makes a good commander.

63 P. Des Noyers, \emph{Lettres}..., p. 216 (letter of 11 August 1656 from Łańcut).
64 S. Herbst, \emph{Trzydniowa bitwa}..., p. 326.
65 See: M. Jemiołowski, \emph{Pamiętnik dzieje Polski zawierający...}..., p. 211; the post of the Sword-bearer of Bełz was then entrusted to Łukasz Serny on 8 August 1656; \emph{Urzędnicy województwa bełskiego i ziemi chełmskiej XIV-XVIII wieku}, ed. A. Gasiorowski, Kórnik 1992, p. 40.
66 S. Pufendorf, \emph{Siedem ksiąg o czynach Karola Gustawa}..., p. 161.
However, when he saw that his forces were keen to escape, he was the first to flee through the bridge to Warsaw, and then even further.\textsuperscript{67}

It is difficult to estimate the losses suffered by Polish-Lithuanian units. According to Peter Englund, there were 2,000 deceased and injured people, many of whom were not buried for a long time.\textsuperscript{68} Claes-Göran Isacson estimates the losses of the allied forces at 700 killed, while assessing that may have been as many as 3,000–4,000 deceased on the Polish-Lithuanian side.\textsuperscript{69} The losses of foreign infantry participating in the battle amounted to 600 people, mostly from the regiments of Jan Zamoyski, Wilhelm Butler, and Krzysztof Grodzicki. For example the infantry regiment of the Provincial Governor of Sandomierz was composed of 1,109 portions in the third quarter of 1656 and only 830 portions towards the end of the year (loss of 279 portions, 25\%).\textsuperscript{70} The losses of Polish-Lithuanian cavalry were lower than 1,000, with greatest number of cavalrymen killed among Lithuanian Hussars on the second day of the battle. It is difficult to calculate the losses of nobility raised in mass levy, but they can be estimated at several hundred killed and injured (including servants). In total, the losses of the Polish-Lithuanian army could amount to more than 2,000 people, which is confirmed by the account of Partyk Gordon, a participant of the battle on the Polish side.\textsuperscript{71} Fewer losses were noted among the allied forces and are estimated at several hundred soldiers; most losses were suffered on the first day of the battle. The Polish forces also lost their artillery, both 12 field guns and 27 artillery pieces and a mortar left behind in the capital. Nonetheless, Jan Kazimierz’s decision to leave Warsaw without a fight was right for a number of reasons. The army was short on food supplies and ammunition; moreover, the city walls had not been repaired since the battles fought over Warsaw in June. At the same time, it was rightfully assumed that significant numbers of Swedish-Brandenburg soldiers would concentrate around Warsaw and thus their pursuit of the scattered Polish-Lithuanian army would be delayed.\textsuperscript{72}

What was the outcome of this offensive/defensive battle fought in the fields of Praga by the Polish-Lithuanian forces against the allied Swedish and Brandenburg armies? On the first day of the battle, the Polish command set the tone of the battle, forcing the allied forces to carry out frontal assaults on artillery batteries. Their strong positions dissuades Charles X Gustav from attempting to break the Polish defence on the second day of the battle and led him to decide to bypass the Polish positions, thus surprising Jan Kazimierz. Using cavalry to attack new positions of the allied forces was a good decision as the opponent was not prepared for battle – the Swedish and Brandenburg forces were still in the process of taking positions according to the new ordre de bataille and the

\textsuperscript{67} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{68} P. Englund, Lata wojen..., pp. 49–50.
\textsuperscript{70} J. Wimmer, Materiały do zagadnienia liczebności..., n.p.
\textsuperscript{71} Tagebuch des Generalen Patrick Gordon während seiner Kriegsdienste unter Schweden und Polen vom Jahre 1655 bis 1661 und seines aufenthalts in Russland vom Jahre 1661 bis 1699, published by M.C. Posselt, vol. 1, Moscow 1849, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{72} M. Nagielski, Bitwa pod Warszawą..., pp. 181-182.
artillery posts were not yet ready. The execution of the attack, however, cannot be considered successful. The Hussar assault was not reinforced by attacks of the artillery, even though Jan Kazimierz had quite a significant number of guns at his disposal. Nonetheless, Wiesław Majewski is right to note that the topography of the area was not fit for a mass attack of armoured cavalry – it was forced to charge uphill through narrow corridors, which made it easier for the enemy to fire at the attacking forces and carry out a counterattack with the use of reiters. On the other hand, the Swedish did not achieve a strategic or operational victory after capturing Warsaw. They did not defeat the Polish-Lithuanian forces and were unable to inflict major losses on the cavalry led by Czarniecki and Koniecpolski retreating through the road to Okuniew. As correctly noted by Robert Frost, the tables turned in the Battle of Warsaw. It was Jan Kazimierz who decided to follow the Western style of battling based on field fortifications supported by infantry and artillery. Charles X Gustav, meanwhile, opted for a “Polish” fighting style, using the cavalry’s ability to manoeuvre and moving the front by 90 degrees. If we take a closer look at the structure of the allied armies, we can see that the cavalry to infantry ratio amounted to 2.27:1 in favour of cavalry, which had not been the case during the first year of the operations of the Swedish Army in Poland. R. Frost, therefore, rightfully observed that by using reiters, the Swedish monarch beat the Polish at their own game.

The Battle of Warsaw had practically no major influence on the proceedings of the Polish-Swedish war, but it impacted the character of war operations during the Deluge. Having captured Warsaw, the allied forces did not engage in any major operations until 8 August, when they set out south in order to face the Polish Army. In the end, however, they had only reached Radom before retreating north. Seeing that the fortifications of Warsaw were in poor condition, the Swedish-Brandenburg forces stationing in the town left on 29 August – 1 September causing numerous damages, as if they had no plan to return. It turned out that some Polish commanders were right to sceptically evaluate the chances of defeating the Swedish-Brandenburg forces in the fields of Praga during a war meeting held on 27 July. It is believed that Czarniecki openly admitted that he believed it impossible to fend off the attacks of artillery regiments of the enemy using only cavalry. Jan Kazimierz allegedly reacted to these words with indignation: “You gentlemen are not eager to engage in a full-fledged fight, you have so far enjoyed hit-and-run combat”. The Castellan of Kyiv then replied that the method proved to be successful in early 1656, for example during the winter/spring campaign against the forces of Charles X Gustav, which prompted the monarch to say: “Off with the heads of those who do not follow my orders”. Nobody else expressed any more doubts, including the commander of the Tatar forces, Subchan Ghazi Aga. Like the Castellan of Kyiv, he also believed that the enemy should not be battled but starved off...

by attacking transportation routes and destroying the backup resources of the Swedish. It turned out that both of them were right, since the Polish-Lithuanian army was not strong enough to be a worthy opponent of the forces of Charles X Gustav, both when it came to the ability to manoeuvre and firepower.

The Battle of Warsaw left its mark on subsequent Polish-Swedish confrontations in 1656–1660. It was the last time that the Polish monarch decided to engage in battle with the Swedes; from then on, he returned to the hit-and-run tactic, which proved challenging and thankless for the regular army⁷⁶. The Polish side became aware that they could not compete with the Swedes and recapture the taken fortresses and towns, such as Kraków, Poznań or Toruń, without expanding the foreign enlistment units (infantry, dragoons, and reiters). Over the following years, the strategy of focusing on foreign units and not on the national enlistment proved to be the right choice. The years 1657–1658 saw the process of raising foreign soldiers. In the fourth quarter of 1659, the Crown Army had 12 foreign infantry regiments (9,816 portions), 9 Polish-Hungarian infantry units (1,070 portions), 20 dragoon units (6,896 portions) and 8 reiter squadrons (2,176 horses). This amounted to the total of 19,958 portions and horses (53%) as opposed to the national enlistment units (17,666 horses – 47%)⁷⁷. Lesson were therefore drawn from the Battle of Warsaw and the ratio of fire formations to national enlistment cavalry units amounted to 1:1, which was a common characteristic of the structure of the armies of the neighbouring countries. It is also not true that the Hussars became an anachronistic formation (even though they did experience a crisis during the Deluge), as many foreign historians are led to believe⁷⁸. This is due to the fact that weaponry, armour and equipment of Hussar chorągiews described by foreigners such as Charles Ogier⁷⁹ or François-Paulin Dalairac⁸⁰ do not correspond to this used by Hussar rotas for combat, not for parades. Several decades later (Vienna 1683) the Hussars proved that they could be more powerful than reiters in proper field conditions and with support of other types of weapons.

Was the Battle of Warsaw doomed to end according to the premises of the military revolution, that is with muskets and cannons defeating cavalry? The answer is probably yes, at least during the reconstruction of the Commonwealth’s armed forces in the summer of 1656, especially after the losses suffered the previous year. Confrontations with the modern Swedish and Brandenburg forces resulted in modernisation of the Polish-Lithuanian army, which led to changes in the structure of the army, upgrade of the weaponry and replacements of low-

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⁷⁸ P. Englund, Lata wojen..., pp. 33–34.


er-ranging commanders. Eastern campaigns, both those in Belarus (Polonka, Lachowicze) and in Ukraine (Cudnów, Słobodyszcz) showed the superiority of the Polish-Lithuanian army over Muscovite and Cossack forces thanks to its contact with the Western European art of war during the Deluge. When the Polish command decided to adopt the strategy of hit-and-run attacks and irregular war in subsequent operations in 1656, Charles X Gustav realised that the Swedish forces would not be able to secure the captured areas and maintain communication between each unit. In consequence, he started to discuss the possibility of partitioning the Commonwealth with its neighbouring powers (Treaty of Radnot – 6 December 1656). New allies of Charles – Bohdan Khmelnytsky’s Cossacks and Prince of Transylvania George II Rakoczi – were involved in these talks as well. It is therefore important to note that even though the 1656 Battle of Warsaw did not tip the balance towards any of the sides in the Polish-Swedish conflict and prolonged the war for several more years, it resulted in signing the treaties in Niemieża and Radnot, which in turn led to the internationalisation of the conflict in Poland and to the Polish side opting for the hit-and-run variant in the subsequent years. The Commonwealth was also forced to modernise its military as it could not even dream of defeating the forces of Charles X Gustav with cavalry alone.

**Battle of Warsaw 1656 –summary**

The Battle of Warsaw (28–30 July 1656) was fought between the army of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the joint Swedish-Brandenburg forces commanded by Charles X Gustav and Frederick William. Until today, the battle remains a source of controversy among the historians of modern military science. The disputes concern both the conception and the course of the battle, losses suffered on both sides, composition of the Hussar charge on the second day of the battle under Aleksander Hilary Połubiński’s command, and the consequences of this clash in the fields of Praga for the further course of the Polish-Swedish war. The authors focus on the second day of the battle and provide detailed account of the Hussar charge on the Swedish-Brandenburg armies. The lack of support by the armoured chorągwie and mass levy counting several thousand soldiers resulted in breaking the charge and, subsequently, led to defeat in the third day of battle, when the Polish-Lithuanian army was forced to recede and Warsaw was yet again occupied by the allied forces.

**Key words:** Warsaw, Jan Kazimierz Waza, Charles X Gustav, Aleksander Hilary Połubiński, hussars

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