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**PROMOTIONS, DECORATIONS
AND ENNOBLEMENT IN THE NAPOLEONIC ARMY.
THE CASE OF POLISH OFFICERS
IN THE PENINSULAR WAR (1808–1813)**

On the one hand, the article examines – in the context of Polish officers in the Peninsular War – the question of non-financial advantages available for soldiers in the Napoleonic army: promotions, decorations and ennoblement. On the other hand, the article tries to present the actual state of research as well as methodological problems which arise while working on this topic.

Keywords: Promotions, decorations, ennoblement, Napoleonic army, Polish officers, Peninsular War, Legion of Honour.

In the Napoleonic army – including foreign troops remaining in the French service – there were various means to remunerate soldiers for their commitment on the battlefield and other merits. There is no unique typology to categorise them but among others it would be justified to put forward a division between financial and non-financial rewards. Or, better to say: between financial and non-financial (prestigious) aspects of rewards in question. For the practice shows that bonuses which are by name non-financial ones, i. e.: promotions, decorations and ennoblement were inexorably linked with monetary gratification. In this paper I would like to focus in the first place on the element of prestige. I am limiting here the scope of interest to Polish soldiers taking part in the Peninsular War (1808–1813) – as it is most commonly known in the Anglo-Saxon historiography and memory. And although there were Polish officers fighting in the Anglo-Spanish-Portuguese camp¹, e.g. in the so-called Irish-Legion [21, p. 33], I shall take into consideration only those

who fought alongside Napoleon in on the following units, listed in the order of appearance in Spain:

– 1st Polish Light Cavalry Regiment of the Imperial Guard (*chevau-légers*), comprised of four squadrons, each composed of two companies (Σ: 8 companies);

– Vistula Legion (*Légion de la Vistule*) comprised of three, later on, of four infantry regiments, each composed of two six-company battalions (Σ: 48 companies) [25];

– 1st Vistula Light Cavalry Regiment (*Lanciers de la Vistule*)², formally being a part of the Vistula Legion, but according to Napoleon’s decree, having a separate administration council (*conseil d’administration*) [25], comprised of 4 squadrons, each composed of 2 companies plus one artillery company, (Σ: 9 companies) [16, p. 240–241];

– Duchy of Warsaw Division or “Polish Division” (*Division Polonaise*), comprised of three infantry regiments, each composed of two eight-company battalions plus one company of artillery and one of engineers (Σ: 50 companies) [13, p. 420].

¹ Usually offered service in the British army after their having been taken POWs.

² Since June 1811 to be known as the 7th chevau-léger Regiment (incorporated into the French army).

The number of Polish servicemen engaged in Spain is where the first research problem lies. It is relatively easy to count only the normative number of soldiers in all above-mentioned regiments: 115 “regular” companies plus those which constituted military bases in France¹ – in the number of 15², altogether 130 companies counting from 125 [1] to 140 men [19, p. 39] plus 9 staffs at the regiment level, of 10 to 18 officers each which shall finally indicate a number around 17,500. Professor Jarosław Czuby in his book devoted to the Duchy of Warsaw estimates that the number would gravitate around 24,000 [14, p. 193] which is probable, taking into account the estimated number of complementary soldiers, including officers *à la suite* – no more than one third of the initial figure, as suggested by Stanisław Kirkor, perhaps the most competent specialist on the Vistula Legion and the Duchy of Warsaw Division. This calculation though is to be taken extremely carefully.

Applying the same calculation method, i.e. starting off from the company level, it is possible to estimate the number of Polish officers engaged in Spain. Companies in cavalry had – according to regulations – either five (chevau-légers) or four officers (lanciers). At the regiment level there were 18 [1] and most probably 12 [19, p. 562] officers respectively. Therefore, in cavalry there might have been initially 120 officers. In infantry the number of officers was lower – because regiments did not need experts in horse treatment. Almost every infantry company was staffed with three officers³ and every regiment headquarters with 10 up to 15 ones in the Vistula Legion. However, after the reform in 1810 the number of staff officers in the Duchy of Warsaw Division was raised to 17 [18, p. 74], so following the highest indicators possible, we should estimate the total of infantry officers at 441 men. The two figures summed up (Σ : 561) and augmented by one-third (187) should make approximately 750 officers.

The ultimate number of Polish officers in Spain, still requiring to be better established, is extremely important to present statistical relations which, in turn, are indispensable in prosopography, quite commonly believed to be the best method when examining groups of people.

Promotions

In the Napoleonic army, as most probably in every army, promotions were granted much more rapidly during the time of war than during the time of

peace [23, p. 77]. It was not due only to the rotation but also to the fact that a higher rank could be bestowed on a soldier thanks to his military feats already on the battlefield. Therefore, many a time servicemen obtained promotion without having served the amount of years required by the law. Happily for Polish soldiers in Spain and their military careers, their whole stay in the Peninsula was marked by war. Which is why it is extremely hard to find somebody who hadn't been given any promotion.

Unlike in most European armies today, there were only 8 officer ranks in the Napoleonic army:

Rank (English)	Rank (French)	Function
Divisional general	<i>Général de division</i>	Commands a division or a corps
Brigadier general	<i>Général de brigade</i>	Commands a brigade
Colonel	<i>Colonel</i>	Commands a regiment
Major	<i>Gros-major</i>	Responsible for accountancy, administration and discipline
Squadron commander (cav.)	<i>Chef d'escadron</i>	Commands one or two squadrons
Battalion commander (inf.)	<i>Chef de bataillon</i>	Commands one battalion
Captain	<i>Capitaine</i>	Commands a company or does service as <i>adjudant-major</i>
Lieutenant	<i>Lieutenant</i>	Commands a platoon
Second lieutenant	<i>Sous-lieutenant</i>	Replaces the lieutenant

The above chart looks very neatly on paper. In fact it does not take into consideration two elements which we are going to discuss on the example of a certain Mikołaj Kaśinowski whose career, is one of those rapid albeit prematurely terminated ones as he got killed during the Russian campaign.

Kaśinowski, born in 1766, joined the army even before the final partition of the I Republic and he received the rank of captain. After 1795 as many Polish ex-soldiers seeking occupation and opportunity to avenge the Motherland, he enrolled in the so-called “Polish Legions” created in Italy by the general Jan Henryk Dąbrowski. Just before his and his unit's movement to Silesia in April 1807 he obtained from Joseph, king of Naples a battalion commander diploma [19, p. 425]. Already four months later, on June 11, by the decision of the Westphalian king he was appointed major in the 2nd regiment of the Polish-Italian Legion⁴. After a prompt death of his immediate superior Szymon Białowiejski (March 22, 1808), an Imperial decree issued on July 9 elevated him to the rank of colonel; not a regular one, though, but *à la suite* [26]. The reason for that is that by the order of Napoleon, the

¹ Although these people did not necessarily fought in Spain, they “serviced” the campaign.

² 2 for chevau-légers, 6 for the Vistula Legion, 6 for the Duchy of Warsaw Division, 1 for lanciers.

³ Artillery and engineer companies had four officers [20, p. 16].

⁴ Previous name of the Vistula Legion.

2nd and the 3rd Vistula Legion regiments were to be commanded by majors [25].

It seems that three elements require our attention here. First of all, it has been said that soldiers were promoted quickly. It is true but in order to be a part of it, the serviceman in question had to pass a tough military training and not get killed. The 16 highest posts in the Vistula Legion (including lancers), from battalion/squadron commander upwards, were taken by people who joined the army before 1800. There is only one, Franciszek Schütz, who did it in 1801 [27]. It is to be remarked though that lancers were somewhat discriminated during the Spanish campaigns numerous vacancies in their regiment were filled with *chevau-légers* which blocked inner promotions [28, p. 38].

Secondly, the *à la suite* officers. The expression translates into English as ‘next, subsequent’ which means that these individuals, being supernumerary, didn’t exercise the functions normally attributed to their posts. Did they get the wages attributed to their posts then? It seems not, at least that is what the Imperial decree from 17 Frimaire year XI says. Kaşinowski himself admitted in a letter to the minister of war that he didn’t deserve a colonel’s wage [26]. To end up with the question it is worth mentioning that the existence of *à la suite* officers is one of the main factors that hinder the researcher from accurate calculation of the true number of officers in or – better to say – by regiments. It would not be enough to know what the regulations provided for but it takes looking up cartons stored in French military archives, usually named ‘Situations’, and the Chłopicki collection, stored in Kraków.

Last but not least, Kaşinowski’s case shows that it may come to pass that officers exercise functions superior to their ranks. But that’s not particularly shocking as it was practised in the Napoleonic army on a regular basis. What’s quite unusual is that in the above-mentioned situation officers occupied posts at the expense – as it were – of superior servicemen.

Decorations

Undoubtedly the most important medal for Polish soldiers was the Legion of Honour (*Légion d’Honneur*), all the more so because it was associated with the one who established this highest French state decoration in 1802 more than with anybody else. It is not uncommon to encounter the opinion that the Legion of Honour was more desired than a simple promotion. At the time of the Peninsular War the order was divided into 5 classes (ranks); the membership in each of them was accompanied by an annual pension [7, p. 181]:

Class (English)	Class (French)	Pension (francs)
Grand Eagle	Grand Aigle	According to revenue
Grand Officer	Grand Officier	5,000
Commander	Commandeur	2,000
Officer	Officier	1,000
Knight	Chevalier	250

We shall discard right away the two top ranks as the only Pole who was given a Grand Eagle – prince Józef Poniatowski – had never set his foot on the Spanish soil. In turn, two Polish illustrious soldiers were endowed with the dignity of commander for that very reason: Wincenty Krasincki – let us retain that name – leader of the *chevau-léger* regiment and Jan Konopka, his counterpart in the lancers. The first case is somewhat questionable in that sense that Krasincki obtained his last decoration on June 30, 1811 [11, p. 376] so long – 2,5 years – after his departure from Spain, even if a part of the regiment, approx. 350 men came back there after the victorious battle of Wagram [2]. The latter case does not provoke reservations: dated December 11, 1808, the nomination was signed during the second siege of Saragossa [5, p. 1].

A bit bigger is the group of soldiers awarded officer crosses for their Spanish engagement. We shall note at least nine names and not four as the only existing table suggests [17]. All but one were superior officers, majority of whom (89 %) belonged to the widely understood Vistula Legion:

Name	Rank	Date of decoration	Merit
Chłopicki Józef	Colonel	9 July 1809	‘has long deserved it’
Chłusowicz Józef	Battalion commander	23 June 1810	Assault on Mequinenza (June 1810)
Estko Sykstus	Colonel	2 Mar. 1811	Siege of Tortosa (Dec. 1810)
Godlewski Wojciech	Battalion commander	11 Jan. 1812	Battle of Sagunto (25 Oct. 1811)
Huppé Adam	Captain	25 Aug. 1808	Forming an artillery company
Klicki Stanisław	Major	11 Dec. 1808	Battle of Tudela (23 Nov. 1808)
Kostanecki Telesfor	Squadron commander	6 Aug. 1811	Battle of Albuhera (16 May 1811)
Lubiński Tomasz ¹	Squadron commander	5 Apr. 1809	Spanish campaign as a whole?
Michałowski Jan	Major	2 Mar. 1811	Siege of Tortosa (Dec. 1810)

(List composed after: officers’ personal dossiers kept in SHD, series 2ye; Legion of Honour dossiers kept in AN, series LH; Chłopicki’s papers and S. Loza’s classic monograph ‘Legia Honorowa w Polsce’).

The practice shows that Legion of Honour petitions referred usually to one event. And so e. g. on September 17, 1808 the Great Chancellor of the Legion, count de Lacépède sent Chłopicki – the commander of the Vistula Legion – 13 crosses (11 for officers) for the first siege of Saragossa with a name list attached [7, p. 937–39]. When Napoleon was present in Spain (late 1808), applications for decoration were examined quickly. That is why there is a small time interval between, say, the battle of Tudela (November 23, 1808) and the act of conferment: less than three weeks. However, when the Emperor was in Paris, Fontainebleau or, even worse, at the Eastern front, candidates for decoration would have to wait much longer. That is the case of Albuhera, where the whole process took most probably two and a half months, since May 29, 1811 when at least three applications signed by the colonel Jan Konopka and the administration council were sent to Paris [3, p. 2]; [4, p. 2]; [6, p. 2].

Zbigniew Dunin-Wilczyński estimates the number of Poles awarded the cross for Spain at 183, including 123 officers [17]. In my opinion, this number is a bit underestimated and, having to take into account names such as Teodor Kielkiewicz or Jan Yon, we could carefully propose a total of 150. Which would mean that 20 % of officers received the cross.

Polish soldiers were privileged in this sense that apart from French decorations they could receive also Polish ones. *Virtuti Militari*, created in 1792 by the last king of Poland, Stanisław August Poniatowski, was the highest military decoration granted by the state. Alike *Légion d'Honneur*, it was divided into five classes. Among three big distribution ceremonies only one – in 1810 – referred to the Peninsular War. Initially the sovereign of the Duchy Of Warsaw, Frederic August, planned to reward only 16 soldiers [8, p. 265]. But Chłopicki's tough character let him extort 48 crosses from the Monarch, so three times as many [9, p. 269–270]. He himself received on this occasion the title of commander, which equalled the grand officer in the Legion of Honour.

Ennoblement

In 1808 Napoleon said: 'by creating the nobility I reached the end in substituting the ancient and hated prejudices by things which are meritocratic and positive' [24, p. 64]. In other words, the Emperor wanted to replace the old nobility by birth with a new one, composed of those who distinguished themselves in the service of France. How did it work in practice? In addition to receiving a noble title (knight – baron – count – duke – prince) the endowed person would be given a donation, that is to say a lot – for example in the Duchy Of Warsaw

or in the Confederation of the Rhine which should theoretically give some annual revenue fixed by the official table. According to this table, knights (not to be confused with knights of the Legion of Honour), barons and dukes should receive yearly 2000, 15 000 and 30 000 francs respectively [15, p. 399]. The reality – as the literature confirms – was much more complicated as for example, the baron Chłopicki received along with his barony 'only' 4000 francs of yearly revenue [10, p. 1103].

Among Poles engaged behind the Pyrenees, it was Wincenty Krasieński who climbed the highest in hierarchy. By the decree of June 3, 1811 Napoleon appointed him count of the Empire [12, p. 101]. It did not forcibly mean that the Emperor acknowledged Krasieński's merits on the battlefield in a particular way. Seemingly, it was about showing the special role that the Imperial Guard was to play in relation to the rest of the army and, secondly, to make personal relations with the Polish aristocracy even stronger than they were. Apart from this special case, we can point out 10 barons [12]:

Surname	Name	Function at the time	Date of ennoblement
Chłapowski	Dezydery	Napoleon's batman	4 Jan. 1811
Chłopicki	Józef	Brigadier general	2 May 1811
Chłusowicz	Józef	Colonel	9 Oct. 1813
Kašinowski	Mikoła	A la suite colonel	3 June 1811
Klicki (Kliski)	Stanisław	Colonel	20 Mar. 1812
Kozietulski	Jan	Squadron commander	26 Apr. 1811
Kosiński	Michał	Major	11 Nov. 1813
Lubiński	Tomasz	Squadron commander	13 Feb. 1811
Michałowski	Józef	Major	14 Aug. 1813
Stokowski	Ignacy	Squadron commander	20 June 1811

In addition to which, there were 11 knights [12]:

Surname	Name	Function at the time	Date of ennoblement
Brocki (Brucki)	Aleksander	Lieutenant	27 Sept. 1813
Godlewski	Wojciech	Battalion commander	9 Oct. 1813
Krokowski	Ludwik	Captain	3 Jan. 1813
Lipowski	Wojciech	Captain	3 Jan. 1813
Mierosławski	Adam	Battalion commander	14 Aug. 1813
Mroziński	Józef	Captain	21 Feb. 1814
Murzynowski	Makary	Captain	9 Oct. 1813
Rechowicz	Stanisław	Captain	10 Jan. 1813
Regulski	Józef	Battalion commander	9 Oct. 1813
Schütz	Franciszek	Battalion commander	5 Aug. 1813
Smett	Stanisław	Captain	9 Oct. 1813

Some regularities are visible at first sight. First of all, as we have seen it on the occasion of granting military crosses, noble titles were attached to military ranks. That is to say, barons of the Empire were chosen from among generals, colonels and battalion/squadron commanders. Battalion/squadron commanders and above all captains could count on knighthood. Among squadron commanders who were appointed barons we shall find only officers of the chevau-léger regiment, which once again shows the priority the Emperor gave to guard units. And out of all “Polish” barons, four, so 40 % came from this regiment whereas the whole officer corps constituted approximately 10 % of all Polish officers in Spain. On the other hand, the choice of chevau-légers was not accidental: Koziatulski commanded the 3rd squadron in the famous charge of Somosierra (November 30, 1808), Stokowski got wounded at the battle of Wagram [11, p. 380], Łubieński distinguished himself in this battle.

Conclusions

The most unappreciated Polish unit in Spain was the Duchy of Warsaw Division. First of all, it seems there is no information about ennoblement within its ranks. Secondly, the actual state of research on Polish holders of the Legion of Honour, leads us to the conclusion that only 9 officers from that grouping received a cross – mostly for the valiant defence of the castle at Fuengirola (October 1810). What’s striking is that we are talking here about soldiers who constituted almost half of all Polish servicemen in the Peninsula. But the Division was unlucky twofold as nobody devoted a monograph to it – there is a very well written article by S. Kirkor. But it does not fulfil this gap. In consequence, if the battles of Somosierra or Saragossa where the Polish chevau-légers and the Vistula Legion “distinguished themselves”, to use a popular Napoleonic phrase, are

commonly known in Poland, out of numerous battles fought by the Division perhaps only the defence of Fuengirola is recognisable. Surely, the appearance of a well-documented study of that unit, as well as the completion of research on the holders of the Legion of Honour, are the most urgent tasks to draw a coherent picture of Polish officers in the Peninsular War.

The Napoleonic strategy – if one can at speak about any strategy at all – concerning rewards in the context of Polish officers – or, speaking more widely – Polish soldiers engaged in the Peninsular War, reveals three main things. Firstly, Napoleon would favour units belonging to the Imperial Guard. The thesis, of course, isn’t new but it gains here yet another proof. The Vistula Legion was also generally treated with much attention – most probably because the trunk of it was constituted by soldiers fighting for France since early 1800s or even before. Therefore, Napoleon knew that these were trustworthy professionals. Against such troops, the Duchy of Warsaw Division, having no tradition or glamour, since 1810 doing service in fortresses of Malaga, Almeria, etc. [20, p. 43] which gave fewer occasions to show off militarily, did not have a recognition sign. Secondly, the Emperor would care to mutually adjust hierarchies. It would be extremely unusual to find a low-rank officer enjoying the privilege of a baron of the Empire. It worked in another direction too: individuals who would climb the military ladder were given – sometimes reluctantly, as the colonel Chłopicki’s case shows – appropriate decorations. And the third conclusion is that among all advantages a soldier could get, promotions – not to be confused with initial appointment – can be seen as most meritocratic by character. Ennoblement was given more often for political and social purposes, decorations in turn – placed themselves somewhere in between.

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Д. Щенський-Костанецький

ПІДВИЩЕННЯ, ВІДЗНАЧЕННЯ ТА НАДАННЯ ДВОРЯНСЬКИХ ТИТУЛІВ У ВІЙСЬКУ НАПОЛЕОНА. ВИПАДОК ПОЛЬСЬКИХ ОФІЦЕРІВ ПІД ЧАС ПРЕНЕЙСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ (1808–1813 pp.)

Статтю присвячено дослідженню становища польських офіцерів у іспансько-французькій війні 1808–1813 pp. Зокрема, звернено увагу на нематеріальні способи відзначення солдат в армії Наполеона: йдеться про підвищення по службі, нагороди та надання дворянських титулів. Описано сучасний стан дослідження, а також ті методологічні труднощі, які виникають при роботі над цією проблемою.

Ключові слова: підвищення по службі, нагороди, надання дворянських титулів, армія Наполеона, польські офіцери, іспансько-французька війна 1808–1813 pp., Орден Почесного легіону.

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Кучірко О. Я.

АДАПТАЦІЯ ДО ЖИТТЯ В США АБРАГАМА КОНА В ЙОГО «ЩОДЕННИКУ ЄВРЕЙСЬКОГО ДРІБНОГО ТОРГІВЦЯ», 1842–1843 pp.

У статті досліджено щоденник мандрівного дрібного торгівця з німецьких земель – Абрагама Кона, який емігрував до США в середині XIX ст. Описано усвідомлення автором самого себе і свого місця, а також місця своїх співвітчизників у США, відображено його переживання та роздуми. Також у статті висвітлено враження автора від жителів Північної Америки, спостереження їхньої ментальності та характерів. Окремо описано ідеї про облаштування життя єврейської общини на нових територіях як землеробської общини, які вперше в історії американського єврейства висловив саме Абрагам Кон у своєму щоденнику.

Ключові слова: Абрагам Кон, євреї з німецьких земель, педлер, адаптація єврейства, американці в XIX ст., євреї-емігранти, єврейська землеробська община.

Процес адаптації євреїв – вихідців з європейських земель у США в середині XIX ст. був особливим, адже його супроводжувала низка специфічних чинників, як-от адаптація до економіч-

них та культурних викликів, а також процес зміни юдаїзму відповідно до потреб на новій землі. Щоденники євреїв того часу відображають погляди на можливі способи адаптації євреїв