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The Battle of Orsha (1514) on Maps: Mapping the Muscovian War as Renaissance Politics of Memory*

14 września 1514 r. w okolicach miasta Orsza połączone siły polsko-litewskie pokonały wojska moskiewskie. Wśród wielu tekstów upamiętniających bitwę znajdują się również mapy, wydane drukiem między rokiem 1526 a połową XVII w. Autor dowodzi, że każde odwzorowanie kartograficzne bitwy może być interpretowane jako przykład renesansowej polityki pamięci. Bitwa mogła być elementem propagandy dynastycznej Jagiellonów, argumentem w rywalizacji między Rusią Litewską a Moskwą, fragmentem dyskursu republikańskiego lub częścią narracji o wielkiej przeszłości Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego.

On 14 September 1514, in the vicinity of the town of Orsha, the combined Lithuanian-Polish forces defeated the Muscovian army. Among many texts commemorating the battle are maps published between 1526 and the mid-seventeenth century. The author argues that each cartographical representation of the battle can be interpreted as an example of Renaissance politics of memory. The struggle could be an element of the Jagiellonian dynastic propaganda, an argument in the competition between the Lithuanian

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Ruthenia and Muscovy, a fragment of the republican discourse or a part of narration about the great past of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

S ł o w a k l u c z o w e: bitwa pod Orszą 1514, kartografia renesansowa, literatura renesansowa, Moskwa, Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie, Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów, retoryka kartograficzna, Bernard Wapowski

Key words: 1514 Battle of Orsha, Renaissance cartography, Renaissance literature, Muscovy, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, cartographical rhetoric, Bernard Wapowski

Introduction

The Battle of Orsha¹ was a clash in the war between Muscovy and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania that took place in 1512–1515; this war was, in turn, one of many recurrent military conflicts between these two countries. The stake of these wars was hegemony in the north-eastern part of Europe in early modern times.

The battle took place on 14 September 1514 on the Dnieper River, near the town of Orsha.² The combined Lithuanian-Polish forces commanded by the Grand Hetman of Lithuania Konstanty Ostrogski (Belarusian: Kanstantin Ivanavich Astrozhski; Lithuanian: Konstantinas Ostrogiškis; Ukrainian: Kostiantin Ivanovich Ostroz'kii) defeated the Muscovite army. The enemy suffered heavy losses, with Ivan Cheliadnyn, its commander, among the numerous prisoners of war.³

¹ The town of Orsha is located on the Dnieper River in eastern Belarus. In early modern times, it was an important military, educational, religious, and economic centre. The Belarusian name of the town is Orsha (Орша) or Vorsha/Vorša (Ворша). The town has a multicultural and multilingual history, hence it has names and spellings in several languages: German: Orscha, Hebrew: Orsha (אורשה), Latin: Orsa, Lithuanian: Orša, Polish: Orsza, Russian and Ukrainian: Orsha (Орша), Ruthenian: Rsha (Рша), Yiddish: Orshe (אָרשע). In this article, an English transcription of the more common Belarusian version is used.

² P. Drózdź, *Orsza 1514* (Warszawa, 2000), pp. 190–206; A. N. Lobin, *Bitwa pod Orshei 8 sentiabria 1514 goda* (Sankt-Peterburg, 2011), pp. 142–184; M. Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość polska w XVI wieku*, vol. 1: *Lata 1500–1548* (Zabrze, 2011), pp. 192–210; M. Nagielski, “Orsza 1514”, *Kwartalnik Bellona* 96, no. 3 (2014), pp. 102–121, https://zbrojni.blob.core.windows.net/pzdata/TinyMceFiles/bellona3_2014.pdf (accessed 14 December 2022).

³ Cf. H. Grala, “Jeńcy spod Orszy: między jagiellońską „propagandą sukcesu” a moskiewską racją stanu (1514–1552)”, in: *Aetas media – aetas moderna: Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę*

In the sixteenth century, the Battle of Orsha became a symbol of the victorious struggle of Lithuanians and Poles (i.e. the political nations) against “barbarian” Muscovy. In an impressive number of propaganda texts, it was presented as one of the greatest successes in the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. The corpus of the texts consists of chronicles, letters and poetic works, but there are also visual representations of this battle. This investigation will closely examine a sub-group of these sources, namely the presentation of the Battle of Orsha in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cartography, which have received little attention in research. References to the victory at Orsha first appeared on Bernard Wapowski’s map of European Sarmatia⁴ from 1526, then on Anton Wied’s map of Muscovy from 1555, and Stanisław Sarnicki’s map of Poland from 1585. The famous Radziwiłł Map, published in 1613, was the fourth map with the Lithuanian-Polish victory at Orsha marked on it.⁵ Since this map was reprinted several times in

urodzin, ed. A. Bartoszewicz, W. Falkowski, H. Manikowska (Warszawa, 2000), pp. 439–466.

⁴ In Ancient Greek-Roman texts, Sarmatia was a territory which covered today’s Eastern Europe. *Sarmatia Europea* (European Sarmatia) was presented on the Eighth Map of Europe accompanying the *Geography* by Ptolemy (second century AD). The treatise was published many times in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the term *Sarmatia* was revived by early modern scholars. European Sarmatia was usually identified with the territories of the Polish Crown, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Prussia, Livonia, Courland, Muscovy, the Crimean Khanate, Moldova, Wallachia, Transylvania, and the northern part of the Kingdom of Hungary. The history of reception of the geographical term of Sarmatia was reconstructed by Tadeusz Ulewicz in his fundamental study *Sarmacja. Studium z problematyki słowiańskiej XV i XVI w.* (Kraków, 1950).

⁵ There is also an interesting plan of the Battle of Orsha in a military treatise by Sarnicki, called *Księgi hetmańskie*, but the plan of the battle is drawn only in one of them. See *The Books about Commanding Army*, c. 1577–1578. Cf. S. Sarnicki, *Księgi Hetmańskie* (MS), vol. 1, 1577–1578, Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (The Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Poland), Archiwum Publiczne Potockich, sygn. MS 325, p. 387; S. Sarnicki, *Księgi hetmańskie*, ed. M. Ferenc (Kraków, 2015), pp. 362–367. There are two copies of the original manuscript or two manuscript copies. M. Ferenc, “Wstęp”, in: S. Sarnicki, *Księgi hetmańskie*, ed. M. Ferenc (Kraków, 2015), pp. X–XII (The Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Archiwum Publiczne Potockich, 325, vol. 1). Since this map is of a completely different character than the other representations of the battle, it is not analysed here. Cf. K. Łopatecki “Rola map i planów w działaniach taktycznych wojsk polskich i litewskich do początku panowania Stefana Batorego”, *Terminus* 19, no. 3 (2017), pp. 630–661, <https://www.ejournals.eu/Terminus/2017/Terminus-2017-3/> (accessed 14 December 2022).

the seventeenth century, cartographical information about the battle had a remarkably *longue durée*. It seems as if cartographers and publishers “returned” to the event every quarter of a century, although the fight lasted only a few hours on 8 September 1514. They thus established an imagined but constant and everlasting event and locus on the map. This continuity is, in fact, astonishing; why and how did cartographers mark an event that belonged to the past on at least four maps created and published more than a hundred years after it took place? Analysing the four maps and two woodcuts depicting the Battle of Orsha, I propose answers to this question.

Although the Battle of Orsha is a well-known event in history and the history of literature (see below), almost no research has been dedicated to depictions of the battle on maps drawn in the Polish-Lithuanian state in the sixteenth century. Some remarks about the representation of the Battle of Orsha in individual maps – the Wapowski map, the Radziwiłł Map and the picture of *The Battle of Orsha* from the National Museum in Warsaw – have been offered by scholars.⁶ Still, there is no study examining the phenomenon of the repetitiveness of this historical event in cartography. This paper discusses one of the mechanisms of transmitting geographical information on maps and constituting them as “cartographical facts”.⁷ It also proposes interpretations of the cartographical facts as pieces of political and ideological messages.

Concerning methodology, my investigation is based on an approach developed by the scholars who constituted the “cartographical turn” or the “cultural history of cartography” in the 1980s and onwards.⁸ According to this approach, information on a map does not

⁶ S. Alexandrowicz, *Kartografia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego od XV do połowy XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 2012), p. 104; G. Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica*, vol. 9: *Hessel Gerritsz. (1580/81–1632). Master Engraver and Map Maker, Who ‘Ruled’ the Seas* (Amsterdam, 2013), pp. 213–214; M. A. Janicki, “Obraz *Bitwa pod Orszą* – geneza, datowanie, wzory graficzne a obraz bitwy ‘na Kropiwniej’ i inne przedstawienia batalistyczne w wileńskim pałacu Radziwiłłów”, in: *Bitwa pod Orszą*, ed. M. Nagielski (Warszawa, 2015), p. 202; K. Łopatecki, “Mapy historyczne Polski i Litwy w epoce nowożytnej”, in: *Z dziejów kartografii*, vol. 22: *Dawna kartografia historyczna i wojskowa* (Warszawa, 2018), pp. 14–15.

⁷ J. B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power”, in: id., *The New Nature of Maps. Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. P. Laxton, introd. J. H. Andrews (Baltimore–London, 2001), pp. 76–77.

⁸ J. B. Harley, D. Woodward, “Concluding Remarks”, in: *The History of Cartography*, ed. J. B. Harley, D. Woodward, vol. 1: *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and*

contain a constant meaning. Quite the opposite – the information is “opalescent”, i.e. its meaning and significance change depending on its historical and communicative context. Thus, the content of a map is not a value-free and constative piece of communication;⁹ instead, rhetorical strategy plays a crucial role here. The purposes of this strategy might be diverse: political declarations, the consolidation of an imagined community, acts of building a collective memory, taking a territory into possession – or “counter-mapping”, i.e. disarming other cartographical “facts”, especially officially recognised ones.¹⁰ In other words, “cartographical facts” are constructed by those whose primary purpose is to establish or strengthen different forms of cultural capital.

The problem presented here is more complex than it seems at first glance. Cartographers not only automatically and without hesitation borrow geographical information from one another. Sometimes, they do that because they have their own (secret) agendas. Cartographers put some elements on a map (e.g. Kyiv on Wied’s map of Russia) and erase others (e.g. Vilnius, which is absent on the same map). As Grzegorz Franczak shows in his recent study, one of the secret agendas of Wied and his co-authors was to present Kyiv – not Moscow or Vilnius – as the main centre of the Orthodox faith and legitimate successor of the in Rus’ in the first half of the sixteenth century.¹¹ To fully understand the map’s message, its reader has to reveal the hidden agenda. This cannot be done without a thorough analysis of its rhetoric.

Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean (Chicago–London, 1987), pp. 502–509; D. Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York–London, 1992), pp. 4–27; Ch. Jacob, “Selected Papers from the 16th International Conference on the History of Cartography: Theoretical Aspects of the History of Cartography. Toward a Cultural History of Cartography”, *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996), pp. 191–198; J. Black, *Maps and Politics* (London, 1997), pp. 113–115; Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power”, pp. 51–81; C. Jacob, *The Sovereign Map. Theoretical Approaches in Cartography throughout History*, transl. T. Conley, ed. E. H. Dahl (Chicago–London, 2006), pp. 4–9.

⁹ Cf. D. Cosgrove, Introduction to: *Mappings*, ed. D. Cosgrove (London, 1999), pp. 4–5.

¹⁰ Cf. G. King, *Mapping Reality. An Exploration of Cultural Cartographies* (New York, 1996), pp. 40–56.

¹¹ G. Franczak, “Anton Wied’s Map of Muscovy: Negotiating Hegemony on Russian Lands in the Polish-Lithuanian Cartography” (paper presented at the 64th Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, New Orleans, 22–24 March 2018).

Harley writes about two types of hidden agendas or secrecy and transparency in early modern cartography: intentional and unintentional.¹² Cartographers intentionally manipulate the content of maps to protect vital military or economic data. Their unintentional manipulations are more difficult to discern. These are related to the limits of the early modern mapmakers' *episteme*, i.e. basic, certain knowledge.¹³ Such hidden agendas were strongly influenced by education, political views, confession, social background and social status of particular mapmakers. The idea of presenting the Battle of Orsha on maps and the methods of presentation can be mainly attributed to the *episteme* of the cartographers and only partially to their deliberate manipulations of the content of a map.

This study reveals the strategies adopted by the authors of the most important maps produced in the Polish-Lithuanian state in the sixteenth century, who marked the same event on different maps. These strategies relied on cartographic rhetoric. The cartographers: a) expose some elements (victorious battles) and omit others (defeats), like Wapowski and Sarnicki; b) manipulate the centre-periphery relations and put the territory of the enemy on the margins (Wapowski, Wied and Sarnicki); c) construct links between the Battle of Orsha and other historical events (Sarnicki and Radziwiłł/Strubicz); d) produce a simplified picture of the battle (Wied, Radziwiłł/Strubicz); e) comment verbally on events represented on the maps. As we see below, the comments on the Battle of Orsha and/or its visual representation change in each map and offer new meanings to the cartographical fact. Thus, maps say much more than "the Battle of Orsha happened here in 1514" but make claims to identity and culture.

First, the mapmakers activated memories about the Battle of Orsha and legitimised the Lithuanian possession of the contested borderland. Second, in each instance, cartographers had their additional hidden agendas. They used the Battle of Orsha to strengthen someone's cultural and political capital. Wapowski promoted the interests of the Jagiellonian dynasty, Wied and his collaborators tried to establish Ruthenian hegemony over Muscovy, and Sarnicki expressed the ideas of a newly established Polish-Lithuanian federation and the team around Prince Radziwiłł, recalling the past and contemporary

¹² J. B. Harley, "Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe", *Imago Mundi* 40 (1988), pp. 57–76.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

glory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. These constructed memories were directed against the historiographies of Muscovy and/or Poland.

However, the cartographers were not the only ones to depict the battle. Three important pictures of the Battle of Orsha from the sixteenth century provide context for imagining the battle on maps. Another vital factor is propaganda activity launched by the king's chancery in the second and third decades of the sixteenth century. Thus, the article's first and second parts are devoted to the propaganda of the Polish Jagiellonian court, both visual and textual.

1. The Propaganda Context of the Maps: Literature and Pictures

For Lithuanians and Poles, the battle was considered a great military success. However, to a much greater extent, it became a propaganda success.¹⁴ The latter is primarily the result of the royal chancery and the humanists employed here as secretaries – Ioannes Dantiscus, Andrzej Krzycki, Jan Łaski, and Bernard Wapowski – as well as two professors of the University of Kraków, namely Matthias of Miechów (Maciej z Miechowa, Miechowita) and Ioannes Vislicensis (Jan z Wiślicy).¹⁵ As soon as the news of the victory reached King Sigismund I the Old, the royal chancellery immediately forwarded it to Pope Leo X, King Vladislaus II of Bohemia and Hungary, the Master of the Teutonic Order Albrecht Hohenzollern, the Master

¹⁴ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce. Czasy zygmunto-wskie* (Warszawa, 1966), p. 50; Grała, "Jeńcy spod Orszy", p. 441; M. Poe, "A People Born to Slavery". *Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476–1748* (London, 2000), p. 21; Lobin, *Bitwa pod Orshei*, pp. 83–84, 166–184.

¹⁵ The propaganda action of the Polish chancery was possible because, in the early sixteenth century, the capital of Poland became a major centre of book production. Three important printing houses were established in Kraków by local businessmen: Johann Haller (1505), Florian Ungler (1510), and Hieronymus Vietor (1517). L. P. V. Febyre, H.-J. Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450–1800*, transl. D. Gerard, ed. G. Nowell-Smith, D. Wotton (London, 1976), pp. 201–202; A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, D. Bacewiczowa (eds), *Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku*, vol. 1: *Małopolska*, part 1: *Wiek XV–XVI* (Wrocław et al., 1983), pp. 44–62, 299–313, 325–352). The printing houses published a number of books written by royal officials and professors of the University of Kraków, among them propaganda poems and historical works by Dantiscus, Jodocus Decius, Krzycki, Matthias de Miechów and Wapowski.

of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword Wolter von Plettenberg, the Venetian Doge Leonard Loredan, and the Voivode of Transylvania John Zápolya.¹⁶ The letters contained a report from the battle and a list of significant prisoners of war. The second stage of spreading information was publishing poems praising the battle. Some of them were printed in Kraków as soon as in the autumn of 1514. They were collected by Chancellor Jan Łaski and Wapowski, who were staying there at that time, supplemented with additional works and published in one volume in 1515 in Rome: *Carmina de memorabili cede Scismaticorum Moscoviorum per serenissimum ac invictissimum dominum Sigismundum, regem Poloniae, magnum ducem Lituaniae, Russiae, Prussiae, Sarmaticae Europaeae dominum et heredem apud Aras Alexandri Magni peracta* [Poems about the Memorable Defeat for the Muscovite Schismatics by the Most Serene and Invincible Sigismund, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania, Ruthenia, Prussia, the Lord and Heir of European Sarmatia, Near the Altars of Alexander the Great].¹⁷ The volume¹⁸ contains a dedicatory letter by Łaski and poems by Dantiscus, Valentin Eck, Christoph Suchten, Wapowski, Krzycki, Jacob Piso and Tranquillus Andronicus. There are no pictures in the book.¹⁹

Several historical and geographical works resulted from the battle. The most important was a geographical treatise by Matthias of Miechów, his *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis, Asiana et Europiana* [Treatise about Two Sarmatias: European and Asian],²⁰ partially based on relations of Muscovite prisoners of war captured in the

¹⁶ Grala, "Jeńcy spod Orszy", p. 443.

¹⁷ Research: Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce*, pp. 52–60; A. Dziuba, "Elegia orszańska Bernarda Wapowskiego", *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 45, no. 3 (1997), pp. 118–119; Lobin, *Bitwa pod Orshei*, pp. 168–169; M. Čiurinskas, "Lietuva pergalės prie Oršos (1514) poetų tekstuose", *Senoji Lietuvos Literatūra* 40 (2015), pp. 17–70; Z. Głombiowska, Introduction to: *Epinikia orszańskie, czyli wiersze o pamiętnej klęsce Moskali*, ed. ead. (Gdańsk, 2019), pp. 7–33.

¹⁸ See: *Carmina de memorabili cede Scismaticorum Moscoviorum per serenissimum ac invictissimum dominum Sigismundum, regem Poloniae, magnum ducem Lituaniae, Russiae, Prussiae, Sarmaticae Europaeae dominum et heredem apud arras Alexandri magni peracta* (Roma, 1515), Cim.Qu.2770, <https://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/show-content/publication/edition/305405?id=305405> (accessed 14 December 2022).

¹⁹ Cf. M. Fabiański, *Wokół dworu wawelskiego. Cztery studia o sztuce renesansowej* (Kraków, 2020), pp. 134–135.

²⁰ Matthias of Miechów, *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis Asiana et Europiana et de contentis in eis* (Kraków, 1517), Cim.Qu.2071, <http://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=257104&from=publication> (accessed 14 December 2022).

Battle of Orsha. The battle was described in chronicles by Jodocus Decius (1521), Marcin Kromer (1555), Marcin Bielski (1564) and Maciej Strykowski (1582). Several pictures depicting the battle were also issued in the following years.

All these texts contributed to constructing a cultural memory about the first great conflict between the Jagiellonian monarchy and Muscovy.

From the beginning, celebratory texts – poems and letters – were accompanied by visual materials. All of them were similar to early modern maps, mainly because they present the battle from a bird's-eye-view. The less known but very interesting woodcut attached to Andrzej Krzycki's poem *Cantilena eiusdem victoriae rem gestam summarie continens* [A Song about this Victory Containing a Short Narration about the Events] presents a simplified plan of the Battle of Orsha, with the bridge over the Dnieper as point of orientation (Fig. 1).²¹ The most prominent position is occupied by Lithuanian troops (bottom, right) commanded by Hetman Ostrogski. They bear the banner and a shield with the two-barred Jagiellonian Cross. On the other side of the river are Polish troops marked by the banner of arms with the Polish Eagle and Muscovites with their eastern Slavonic cone helmets. This map has an eastern orientation, i.e. the east is at the top, not the north, as on modern maps. An unknown artist sketched the topography of the site where the battle took place and the deployment of troops.²² In addition, it is possible to distinguish several stages of the battle as described in the poem and other letters that circulated in Europe: the Polish cavalry crossing the Dnieper, the Lithuanian troops in the bottom, a skirmish of the Polish and Muscovian vanguard on the left bank of the river, crossing the bridge by the artillery and infantry, the primary battle and the miraculous intervention of St Stanislas, the patron of the Polish Crown.²³

²¹ A. Krzycki, *Ad divum Sigismundum Poloniae regem et magnum ducem Lithuaniae semper invictum post partam de Moskis victoriam...* (Kraków, 1515), <https://polona.pl/item/ad-divvm-sigismvndvm-poloniae-regem-et-magnvm-dvcem-lithvaniae-post-partam-de,MTE2MjIxNDQ/4/#info:metadata> (accessed 14 December 2022); id., “*Cantilena eiusdem victoriae rem gestam summarie continens*”, in: *Epinikia orszańskie*, p. 229.

²² T. Jakimowicz, *Temat historyczny w sztuce epoki ostatnich Jagiellonów* (Warszawa–Poznań, 1985), p. 102; Janicki, “*Obraz Bitwa pod Orszą*”, pp. 189–190.

²³ The day of the battle was also a Catholic feast of St Stanislas – the anniversary of his canonisation.



1. Andrzej Krzycki, *Ad Sigismundum Poloniae Regem carmen*, a woodcut presenting the Battle of Orsha, the oldest known depiction

This woodcut illustrating Krzycki's poem is, as far as we know, the first cartographic depiction of the Battle of Orsha.

The second representation, well known in the sixteenth century, is a woodcut from the third edition of the *Kronika to jest historyja świata* [Chronicle of World History] by Marcin Bielski (1564) (Fig. 2).²⁴ This woodcut bears many similarities to the one from Krzycki's poem. The orientation of the view, topographical details and at least three stages of the battle exhibited in the pictures are similar.²⁵ The depiction from

²⁴ Cf. M. Bielski, *Kronika, to jest historyja świata*, vol. 3, ed. D. Śnieżko, D. Kozaryn, particip. E. Karczewska (Szczecin, 2019), p. 262; J. Białostocki, "Zagadka Bitwy pod Orszą", *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 17, no. 1 (1955), pp. 84, 86–87, <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/bhs1955/0090> (accessed 14 December 2022); Grala, "Jeńcy spod Orszy", p. 442.

²⁵ M. Gębarowicz, *Początki malarstwa historycznego w Polsce* (Wrocław, 1981), pp. 14–15; Janicki, "Obraz Bitwa pod Orszą", pp. 191–192.



2. Marcin Bielski, *Chronicle*, a woodcut presenting the Battle of Orsha, probably based on the same visual source as the woodcuts from Krzycki's book (Fig. 1) and from Wied's map (Fig. 6)

the *Chronicle* shows more details than the woodcut from 1515: the Polish troops hold banners representing St Stanislas and the White Eagle, the Muscovites are marked with banners with St Michael and St George, there are military musicians, etc. But there are also some differences (e.g. a lack of signs of the Lithuanian troops). Still, both pictures were probably based on the same visual sources.

A more complex representation of the battle is the famous painting *The Battle of Orsha*, created by an unknown artist and held in the National Museum in Warsaw (Fig. 3). It was painted no earlier than in 1531, probably in the 1540s.²⁶ Several hypotheses about the

²⁶ V. Hucul, "Obraz *Bitwa pod Orszą* – propaganda dworska czy epos rycerski?", *RIHA Journal* no. 3 (2014), p. 2, <http://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2014/2014-jul-sep/hucul-orsza-pl> (accessed 14 December 2022); Janicki, "Obraz



3. *Battle of Orsha* (1531 or later), a fragment of an anonymous painting showing the crossing of the Dnieper by Polish and Lithuanian infantry, artillery and cavalry

authorship of the picture were put forward, but its author remains unknown. Researchers are unanimous, though, that the painter was a German or influenced by German artists. Also unknown is the commissioner of this huge panel and the intended purpose of its creation.²⁷ The painting was probably inspired by older representations of the battle, on which the authors of the 1515 and 1551 woodcuts could have based their works as well. Military historians have pointed out that the painting is a battle plan.²⁸ It shows the topography and movements of troops and simultaneously represents several battle stages.²⁹ Notably, the struggle was shown from above, referred to as

Bitwa pod Orszą, p. 221. In his meticulous study Janicki summed up a long discussion of historians about the attribution and time when the picture might have been executed.

²⁷ Hucul, “*Obraz Bitwa pod Orszą*”, pp. 44, 52–53.

²⁸ Łopatecki, “*Rola map i planów*”, pp. 618, 630–631.

²⁹ Z. Żygulski jun., “*Bitwa pod Orszą – struktura obrazu*”, *Rocznik Historii Sztuki* 12 (1981), p. 87, <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/rhs1981/0087> (accessed

the God's-eye-view. This is typical for cartography.³⁰ In the case of this representation, the south is at the top of the map.³¹

It is almost certain that all three depictions are based on some pictures or plans drawn immediately after the battle. They all have much in common with early sixteenth-century cartography, especially war maps.³² With letters, chronicles and poems, they produce a narrative frame for mapping the Battle of Orsha.

2. The Map of Wapowski (1526)

Sixteenth-century cartographers usually marked the site of battles with short textual explanations. The first to feature the Battle of Orsha was Bernard Wapowski, the first known Polish cartographer. Wapowski spent several years in Italy, cooperating with the Italian cartographer Marco Beneventano.³³ Wapowski was a co-author of the new map (*tabula moderna*) of *Sarmatia Europea* in a new edition of Ptolemy's *Geography* by Beneventano.³⁴ After his return to Poland in the 1520s, Wapowski published in Kraków several woodcut maps of central-eastern Europe.

14 December 2022); Hucul, "Obraz Bitwa pod Orszą", p. 26; Janicki, "Obraz Bitwa pod Orszą", p. 174.

³⁰ J. Niedźwiedz, *Poeta i mapa. Jan Kochanowski a kartografia XVI wieku* (Kraków, 2019), p. 61.

³¹ In sixteenth-century cartography, a map could be orientated to the south (e.g. the map of Germany by Sebastian Münster in Ptolemaeus 1552) or the east (e.g. Wied's map).

³² J. Hale, "Warfare and Cartography, ca. 1450 to ca. 1640", in: *The History of Cartography*, ed. D. Woodward, vol. 3: *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, part 2 (Chicago–London, 2007), pp. 731–733.

³³ Marco da Benevento; cf. L. A. Birkenmajer, *Marco Beneventano, Kopernik, Wapowski a najstarsza karta geograficzna Polski* (Kraków, 1901); M. Palumbo, "Marco da Benevento", in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 69, 2007, http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marco-da-benevento_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed 19 December 2022).

³⁴ M. Beneventano, B. Wapowski, "Tabula moderna Poloniae, Ungarie, Boemie, Germanie, Russie, Lituanie", in: Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Cosmographia* (Roma, 1507); K. Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography from the 15th to the 18th century*, transl. A. Potocki (Wrocław, 1966), pp. 30–31; H. Rutkowski, "Polska na mapie Europy Środkowej z roku 1507", in: *O rzeczach minionych. Scripta rerum historicarum Annae Rutkowska-Plachcińska oblata*, ed. M. Młynarska-Kaletynowa, J. Kruppé (Warszawa, 2006), pp. 281–293; S. Alexandrowicz, J. Łuczyński, R. Skrycki, *Historia kartografii ziem polskich do końca XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 2017), p. 63.

The Battle of Orsha can be found on his map representing southern European Sarmatia (*Tabula Sarmatiae Europaeae*).³⁵ Its three fragments (c. 50 per cent of the eastern part of the map) were discovered in 1932 by Kazimierz Piekarski. They have not survived to our times because they were burned by a German Brandkommando, together with thousands of other unique documents in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw in 1944, but its reproductions have been preserved.³⁶

On the upper, northern fragment of the map, the cartographer placed the following inscription: “Hic Sigismundus rex Poloniae anno 1514 octuaginta milla Moscovitarum magno prelio superavit” (“Here, the King of Poland Sigismund defeated eighty thousand Muscovites in a great battle in 1514”). The battlefield is marked on the right side of the Dnieper (Borysthene), between three unnamed towns, one of which might be Orsha (probably the one on the left of the river) (Fig. 4). However, in Wapowski’s time, Orsha was not often identified with the battle. Contemporary textual sources inform us that the battle took place close to the Dnieper River or its tributary, the Krapivenka (Kropiwna) River.³⁷ Sometimes, Orsha is mentioned as the closest important military point to more precisely identify the place of the battle. The name “the Battle of Orsha” was established later, but “the Battle of Kropiwna” was also used.³⁸ Probably, the Battle of Orsha was also marked on another map by Wapowski: the wall map of Poland published in Kraków in Florian Ungler’s printing house in 1526.³⁹ Unfortunately, this map also has not sur-

³⁵ Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography*, pp. 32–36.

³⁶ E. Schnayder, “Bernhard Wapowski’s Lost Maps of Poland, Sarmatias and Scandinavia”, *Imago Mundi* 26 (1972), p. 76; K. Buczek (ed.), *Monumenta Poloniae cartographica* (Kraków, 1939), Tabula II b, c, d. *Monumenta Poloniae cartographica*, which contains a facsimile of fragments of Wapowski’s maps, was published a couple of weeks before the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. Almost all of this edition was burned by the Nazis. Less than ten copies of this publication are extant today. They are preserved in Kraków (one copy in the Jagiellonian Library, three in the Scientific Library of the PAAS and the PAS), Kórnik (two copies in the Polish Academy of Sciences Department), Warsaw (one copy in the University of Warsaw Library and one in the Niewodniczański Collection in the Royal Castle in Warsaw).

³⁷ Cf. Janicki, “Obraz *Bitwa pod Orszą*”, pp. 207–211.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

³⁹ Buczek, *Monumenta Poloniae cartographica*, Tabula III a, b, c, d; *id.*, *The History of Polish Cartography*, pp. 36–39; J. Łuczyński, “Ziemie Rzeczypospolitej



4. Bernard Wapowski, *Tabula Sarmatiae Europaeae*, a fragment with the Battle of Orsha

vived to our times, and we now have only facsimiles of its four fragments (the originals were destroyed in 1944 with the fragments of the map of Southern Sarmatia, as already mentioned). Although only copies of pieces have survived, it was one of the most important maps of Poland and neighbouring territories created in the sixteenth century because many later cartographers took it as a model, i.e. they copied and, at most, adapted it. It is also possible that later cartographic representations of the Battle of Orsha were based on this map and not on Wapowski's map of *Sarmatia*. This assumption is based on the fact that Wapowski's map of Poland had a more significant impact on later maps of Poland and Europe.⁴⁰ However, we cannot prove it as we only have a small fragment of the map of Sarmatia, on which the battle site is indicated and specific information about the responsible leader and the scale of the victory is given.

It seems that Wapowski included the battle on the map in continuation of propaganda activities from a decade previously in which he took part. As we remember, Wapowski published in Rome poems

w kartografii europejskiej XVI wieku (próba ustalenia filiacji map wydanych drukiem)", *Polski Przegląd Kartograficzny* 41, no. 2 (2009), pp. 128–132.

⁴⁰ Cf. Buczek, *Monumenta Poloniae cartographica*, pp. 36, 39.

that commemorated the victory of King Sigismund – his own texts and a collected volume. On the occasion of the map's publication, Wapowski decided to recall the success of 1514. However, if we look at the whole map, this is not the only military event mentioned in the existing fragments.⁴¹ In the central part of the same map, in the eastern part of Podolia, there is a marked place which indicates the successes achieved by Bolesław I the Brave and Bolesław II the Generous, Polish kings from the Piast Dynasty, and the Lithuanian Duke Vytautas, in the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, respectively. In the lower part, the Battle of Varna is marked, in which King Władysław III of Poland died in 1444 (Fig. 5). This map was, therefore, not only a cutting-edge advancement in the field of European cartography but also a cartographic reflection on the history of Poland. This reflection focuses on the territorial coverage under the rule of Piasts and Jagiellons and their military achievements. The map shows that this power covers virtually all of southern Sarmatia, i.e. Sarmatia to the south of the Baltic Sea (parts of contemporary Belarus, Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine).

Wapowski was as concerned with history as he was with the present. He was the author of several historical works, including a chronicle of Poland.⁴² On his map, he used history to talk about the reign of Sigismund the Old, who was his contemporary. The map shows the territorial range of aspirations of this ruler and his subjects. On Wapowski's map, the territory ruled by King Sigismund is an empire (or at least a local empire). A similar imperial perspective can be found in the poem by Ioannes Vislicensis entitled *Bellum Pruthenum* from 1516. This poem was inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid* and Statius's *Tebais*.⁴³ The poet gave Sigismund the role of the ruler of the "Jagiellonian empire", i.e. Poland and Lithuania.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Cf. Łopatecki, "Mapy historyczne Polski i Litwy", p. 15.

⁴² A. Wyczański, *Między kulturą a polityką. Sekretarze królewscy Zygmunta Starego (1506–1548)* (Warszawa, 1990), p. 108; J. Smółucha, "Bernard Wapowski – kontynuator Jana Długosza i ojciec polskiej kartografii", in: *Krakowskie środowisko historyczne XV–XX w. Ludzie – Idee – Dzieła*, ed. T. Gaśowski, J. Smółucha (Kraków, 2018), pp. 183–194.

⁴³ E. Ulčīnaitė, "The Song of the Grunwald Battle", in: *Ioannes Vislicensis/Jonas Vislicietis. Prūsų karas/Bellum pruthenum*, ed. E. Ulčīnaitė (Vilnius, 1997), p. XLI.

⁴⁴ It is worth noting that in some visual representations, Sigismund was shown as a new Alexander the Great, cf. Fabiański, *Wokół dworu wawelskiego*, pp. 114–126.



5. Bernard Wapowski, *Tabula Sarmatiae Europaeae*, a fragment with the Battle of Varna

Wapowski's poem from the propagandist publication mentioned above depicts the king as the ruler of all Sarmatia.⁴⁵ Sigismund was named here "Sismundus Casimiriades, Rex inclitus orae || Sarmaticae, patriae gloria magna suae" [Sigismund, son of Casimir, famous King of the Sarmatian land and a great glory of his country].⁴⁶ On the title page, which Wapowski composed, Sigismund is called "the ruler and heir of European Sarmatia" (*Sarmatiae Europaeae dominus et heres*).⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Carmina*, pp. C1v–Dv.

⁴⁶ Cf. B. Wapowski, "Panegyris", in: *Epinikia orszańskie*, pp. 87, 9–10.

⁴⁷ The term "rex Sarmatiae" was used by other authors constructing the image of Sigismund (cf. Ulewicz, *Sarmacja*, p. 50). For example, Dantiscus wrote in his poem *Ad Herbersteinium soteria* (1517) about the journey of Siegmund von Herberstein, the envoy of Emperor Maximilian I to Moscow: "Unde ferox cupiens belli sedare tumultus / Inter Sarmatiae regem saevumque tyrannum / Moscorum, caesar mediis in militibus unum / Te solum offendit, cui tanta negotia soli / Crederet. (The emperor [Maximilian I], who wanted to calm down the ferocious racket of war between the King of Sarmatia and the savage tyrant of the Muscovites, chose you from thousands of others and entrusted only you such an important task); I. Dantiscus, *Carmina*, ed. S. Skimina (Kraków, 1950), pp. 93, 51–55. King Sigismund was represented in a similar manner by the Swedish humanist and cartographer Olaus Magnus. Sigismund was portrayed as the king of Poland and Lithuania in the right lower corner of Magnus's famous map of Scandinavia; O. Magnus, *Carta marina et descriptio septentrionalium*

Therefore, both on the map and in poetry, the Battle of Orsha was one of the elements that legitimised the Jagiellons' claim to treat European Sarmatia as a territory subject to the rule of this dynasty. This legendary victory also contributed to constructing the image of the Jagiellonian dynasty and its memory.⁴⁸

On the map of Sarmatia, the battle was put almost on its margins. Further north-east there is only a part of Muscovy. Wapowski used the "subliminal geometry"⁴⁹ to establish centres and peripheries, and Muscovy is obviously a periphery of Europe. He expressed a similar attitude in his publication from 1515. On the title page, he stressed that the battle occurred near "the Altars of Alexander the Great"⁵⁰, meaning it was the borders of European *oecumene*.⁵¹

Wapowski constituted a historical and cartographical "fact"⁵² which had some impact on European cartography. The place of the Battle of Orsha was marked, for example, on the map of Europe by Gerardus Mercator from 1554⁵³ and the map of Russia by Joannes and Lucas Van Doetecum published in Antwerp in 1562–1572,⁵⁴ who also used Wapowski's comment. However, it was a rhetorical gesture in the rivalry about contested spaces rather than a piece of objective information about a geographical area.

terrarum ac mirabilium rerum in eis contentarum, diligentissime elaborata anno dni 1539 (Venezia, 1539), <http://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/imageViewer.jsf?dsId=ATTACHMENT-0001&pid=alvin-record%3A88495&dswid=-9289> (accessed 14 December 2022). The humanist added a quotation from the Bible: "There was no King equal to him" ("Non fuit rex similis ei. 4. Re. 18"); cf. Niedźwiedź, *Poeta i mapa*, p. 142. The *Carta marina* was partially based on Wapowski's maps. Cf. Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography*, p. 33; J. Łuczyński, "Ziemie Rzeczypospolitej", pp. 129–130.

⁴⁸ Cf. N. Nowakowska, "An Ambiguous Golden Age: the Jagiellonians in Polish memory and Historical Consciousness", in: *Remembering the Jagiellonians*, ed. N. Nowakowska (London–New York, 2019), pp. 50–52; T. Hoshko, "The Jagiellonians in Ukrainian traditions", in: *ibid.*, p. 198.

⁴⁹ Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power", p. 66.

⁵⁰ *Carmina*, title page.

⁵¹ K. N. Piechocki, *Cartographic Humanism: The Making of Early Modern Europe* (Chicago, 2019), p. 82. The legendary Altars of Alexander the Great were marked on Ptolemy's Map of European Sarmatia (no. VIII), in the Riphean Mountains (*Riphaei Montes*). On the "tabulae modernae" (new maps) by Beneventano and Martin Waldseemüller, which combine ancient and contemporary geographical knowledge, Moscow and Muscovy was located north to these legendary mountains.

⁵² Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power", pp. 76, 77.

⁵³ Cf. Alexandrowicz, Łuczyński, Skrycki, *Historia kartografii*, p. 75.

⁵⁴ Cf. Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica*, pp. 161–162, 164–165.

3. The Map of Anton Wied (1542, 1555)

Less than twenty years after the publication of Wapowski's map in Kraków, another very important one was drawn in Vilnius, the second capital of Sigismund the Old: Anton Wied's map of Asian Sarmatia or Muscovy (or in his words: *Russia*) is the oldest known map that was made in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Wied was a painter from the Germano-Roman Empire (born in Oberwesel on the Rhine⁵⁵) who probably worked on decorations in the Lower Castle in Vilnius. In 1542, he drew one of the oldest maps of Russia known today.⁵⁶ The map was a collective and "polyphonic" work. It was executed, i.e. drawn and engraved by Wied, but the actual authors (or at least co-authors) of the map were high commanders of the Lithuanian army and their informer, the Russian boyar Ivan Lyatsky (?–1552).⁵⁷ Lyatsky was a high official of Ivan IV the Terrible, who fled from Moscow to Vilnius in 1534. He provided the Lithuanians and Wied with detailed descriptions of the Muscovite state.

The map was published in print, probably in Antwerp in 1555, but its first version could have been printed in Lithuania or Poland

⁵⁵ Cf. R. W. Karrow Jr, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century and Their Maps: Bio-Bibliographies of the Cartographers of Abraham Ortelius, 1570* (Chicago, 1993), p. 584.

⁵⁶ H. Michow, *Die ältesten Karten von Russland. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Geographie* (Hamburg, 1884), pp. 12–20, https://www.e-rara.ch/bau_1/content/zoom/15135495 (accessed 19 December 2022); H. Michow, *Das erste Jahrhundert russischer Kartographie 1525–1631 und die Originalkarte des Anton Wied von 1542. Mit einer Text-Abbildung und 4 Karten* (Hamburg, 1906), pp. 10–12, 49–59; V. A. Kordt, *Materialy po istorii russkoï kartografii*, vol. 1: *Karty vseï Rossii i iuzhnykh eia oblastei do poloviny XVII veka* (Kyiv, 1899), p. 4, <https://digital-collections.nypl.org/collections/materal-y-po-istori-russko-kartografi/#/?tab=about> (accessed 19 December 2022); L. Bagrow, "At the Sources of the Cartography of Russia", *Imago Mundi* 16 (1962), pp. 44–45; L. Bagrow, *History of Cartography*, revised and enlarged by R. A. Skelton (London, 1966), p. 87; L. Bagrow, *A History of the Cartography of Russia up to 1600*, ed. H. W. Castner, vol. 1–2 (Ontario, 1975), pp. 64–68; Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography*, p. 42; B. A. Rybakov, *Russkie karty Moskovii XV–nachala XVII veka* (Moskva, 1974), p. 16; Alexandrowicz, *Kartografia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, pp. 53–56; K. Łopatecki, "Wykorzystanie map w działaniach strategicznych do 1586 roku w Koronie i Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim", *Terminus* 19, no. 3 (2017), pp. 529–531, <https://www.ejournals.eu/Terminus/2017/Terminus-2017-3/> (accessed 19 December 2022).

⁵⁷ Cf. A. Yelnitsky, "Lyatsky", in: *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, ed. A. Polovtsev, vol. 10 (Sankt-Peterburg, 1914), pp. 845–846, https://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/РБС/ВТ/Ляцкий,_Иван_Васильевич (accessed 14 December 2022).

in the 1540s. This map is interesting for various reasons, among others, because it has an eastern orientation, and most of the toponyms are written in the Ruthenian version of *skoropis*, a Cyrillic script used between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries in Poland, Lithuania and Muscovy.

The map itself is a “contested space” and belongs to several histories. Since the nineteenth century, historians of Russian cartography have claimed that Wied’s map is a Russian map and included it in the history of Russian cartography.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Polish historian Przemysław Zwoliński proves that the toponyms are written not in the Eastern Slavic vernacular spoken and written in the Grand Duchy of Moscow, but in Ruthenian or *prosta mova*, used on the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Crown (‘simple speech’, a written version of old-Belarusian or old-Ukrainian).⁵⁹ Thus, the map is part not only of the history of Russian cartography, but, first of all, of the cartographic heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, i.e. today’s Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine.

The lower right corner of Wied’s map shows the Battle of Orsha (Fig. 6), but in a completely different way than on Wapowski’s map. Firstly, the description is much more modest. It is in Latin and Ruthenian: *Conflictus an[no] 1514* and *Bumba #aḡḡōi* (the Battle of 1514). However, the graphic representation of the battle is much more interesting – on Wapowski’s map, it was limited to an inscription, but there is a small picture on Wied’s map.

Like the pictures illustrating Krzycki’s poem and Bielski’s chronicle, Wied’s map is orientated to the east. In the fragment depicting the battle, there is the Dnieper River with a bridge over it. The Lithuanian infantry and artillery cross it. The artillery is symbolised by a cannon located on the western side of the river. There are single Lithuanian and Polish riders on the west bank of Dnieper. The others have already crossed. On the other side of the river, there is a clash between the Lithuanian-Polish and Muscovian armies. Above that scene, one can see the defeated Muscovian troops fleeing in the

⁵⁸ Kordt, *Materialy po istorii russkoï kartografii*, vol. 1, p. 4; Bagrow, “At the Sources”, pp. 44–45; id., *A History of the Cartography of Russia*, pp. 64–66; Rybakov, *Russkie karty Moskovii*, p. 16; A. Postnikov, *Russian in Maps: A History of the Geographical Study and Cartography of the Country* (Moscow, 1996), p. 15.

⁵⁹ P. Zwoliński, “Pierwsza drukowana transkrypcja ruskiej cyrylicy na łacinkę”, *Slavia Orientalis* 16 (1967), pp. 449–453; id., “Najstarszy świecki druk białoruski (Antwerpia 1542 r.)”, *Slavia Orientalis* 17 (1968), pp. 463–465.



6. Anton Wied, *Map of Russia*, a fragment of the Battle of Orsha

north-eastern direction.⁶⁰ The town of Orsha (here: рша [*rsha*] in Cyrillic, Rstha in Latin letters⁶¹) is located north (here: on the left) of the battlefield, that is, the western side of the river.

To a certain extent, this representation of the battle resembles the woodcut accompanying the poem by Andrzej Krzycki and the woodcut from Bielski's *Chronicle* from 1515. The representation on Wied's map is their simplified version. It is possible that Wied knew the Kraków print from 1515. However, the similarity between the woodcut and the map can also be ascribed to the fact that both pictures are based on the same source material. It could have been a drawing or a plan of the battle.

The Battle of Orsha on Wied's map is different from the one on Wapowski's map. Wied, unlike Wapowski, does not explain what

⁶⁰ The symbolic colours of the horsemen (armies) probably do not correspond exactly to the presented events. Usually, the colours on the map were added by somebody who did not fully understand its content. This is especially visible in the colouring of the different territories, which does not always correspond to the specified borders.

⁶¹ It is an obvious mistake in the German transcription. There should be *Rscha* instead of *Rstha*. The version *Pua* was a standard one in Ruthenian documents of the time.



7. Anton Wied, *Map of Russia*, a fragment with four Livonian and four Muscovian strongholds. On the right (south) is the town of Polatsk (Połock, Polotsk)

battle he depicts. He assumes that the reader of his map knows what clash took place on the Dnieper River in 1514.⁶² Neither does he record any other military event on the map. Although there were references to the then ongoing struggle over Livonia (four Muscovian border strongholds and four strongholds of the Livonian Order were marked, Fig. 7), the Battle of Orsha is the only military event to be found on it.

Probably, this is not accidental. As Grzegorz Franczak has recently shown, this map should be treated as a Lithuanian-Ruthenian map of the eastern neighbour.⁶³ It comments on the rivalry between Ruthenia and Muscovy. According to Franczak, the subject who speaks or the creator of the rhetorical message (the abstract author) of the map is Ruthenians from the area of today's Belarus and Ukraine. This is why

⁶² It may contradict Stanisław Alexandrowicz's conclusion that Wied "took information about Battle of Orsha from Wapowski's map"; Alexandrowicz, *Kartografia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, p. 56.

⁶³ Franczak, "Anton Wied's Map of Muscovy".

Kyiv is such an important reference point. It is strategically located in the lower right corner. The victory of Orsha was placed near it. The distance between Kyiv and Orsha on the map does not correspond to the distance in the real space, but the map's author seems not to care about geographical accuracy. The cartographer manipulates the scales, and we find the use of cartographical rhetoric in this manipulation. For the author, the symbolic meaning of this representation was more important than the exact reflection of the 'real' relationships between objects placed on maps.

The symbolic and rhetorical meaning of the map is strengthened by an important addition. Above Kyiv, there is a table with the Cyrillic alphabet with its Latin equivalent (Fig. 8). According to Franczak, the proximity of Kyiv and Orsha to the Cyrillic alphabet is not coincidental: these are the determinants of the Ruthenian-Lithuanian identity.⁶⁴ The person who shaped the rhetorical message of this map that is the political sponsor of Anton Wied (perhaps Lithuanian Chancellor and Voivode of Vilnius Olbracht Gasztołd / Albertas Goštautas, c. 1480–1539), clearly wanted to mark the Lithuanian-Ruthenian dominance in this part of Europe.

To some extent, this attempt was successful. In 1570, a new, small version of Wied's map was published by Frans Hogenberg.⁶⁵ The map probably was to be included in Ortelius's *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570). Eventually, for his ground-breaking atlas, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* Ortelius chose the map of Russia by Jenkinson, and Wied's map was published separately at the same time.⁶⁶ Hogenberg significantly changed the map when he removed all but one Cyrillic inscription – but the Latin reference to the Battle of Orsha remained.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Before the Union of Lublin (1569) the vast majority of Ruthenian lands (contemporary Belarus and Ukraine) belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

⁶⁵ A. Wied, [*Moscovia*], ed. F. Hogenberg (Köln, 1570), <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/75046/moscovia-que-alba-russia-no-cotenta-europee-sarmatie-partie-wied-hogenberg> (accessed 14 December 2022).

⁶⁶ Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 585.

⁶⁷ The unique Cyrillic inscription on Hogenberg's version of the map is "Zolotaya Baba" (the Golden Woman), marked on its north-eastern corner. On the "Zolotaya Baba" on Wied's map, see G. Franczak, "Faex gentium. Polacy w Moskwie wobec rosyjskiej mniejszości", in: *Etniczność. Tożsamość. Literatura. Zbiór studiów*, ed. P. Bukowiec, D. Siwor (Kraków, 2010), p. 67. Roman Krzywy (*Wędrówki z Mnemozynie. Studia o topice dawnego podróżopisarstwa* [Warszawa, 2013], pp. 56–64) has examined the topos of "Zolotaya Baba" in Polish early modern literature. Cf. also Piechocki, *Cartographic Humanism*, pp. 102–106.

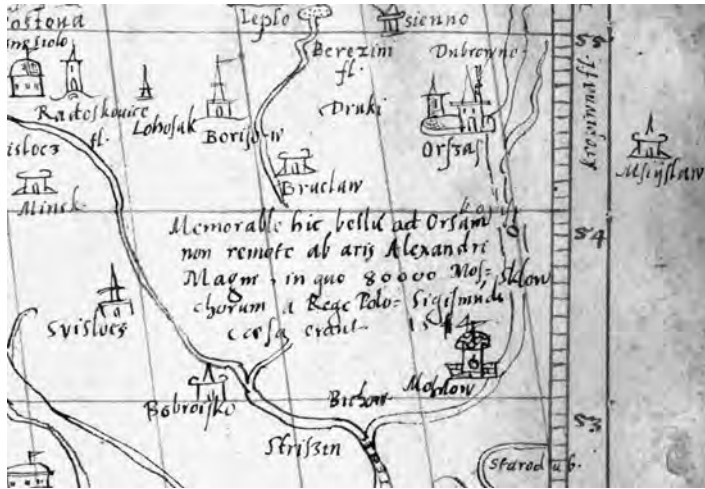


8. Anton Wied, *Map of Russia* (detail). In the upper part, there is a table with Cyrillic and Latin alphabets, Kyiv is in the bottom right part of the map. The city was added to the map without any respect to the real distances, and its presence is dictated by its symbolic meaning. The Battle of Orsha is to the left of Kyiv

4. The Map of Stanisław Sarnicki (1585)

A completely different perspective was adopted by the author of a later map in which the Battle of Orsha is indicated (Fig. 9). Polish historian Stanisław Sarnicki (c. 1537–1597) added a manuscript map to his printed book entitled *A Description of the Former and Contemporary Poland* (*Descriptio veteris et novae Poloniae, Cracoviae* 1585).⁶⁸ It presents the entire Commonwealth and Livonia. These handmade

⁶⁸ See: Ulewicz, *Sarmacja*, pp. 122–123; Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography*, pp. 47–48; Łopatecki, “Wykorzystanie map”, pp. 528–529.



9. Stanisław Sarnicki, *Regnum Poloniae et Magnus Ducatus Lithuaniae* (detail), the Battle of Orsha

maps were probably copied in series and added to Sarnicki's treatise. Three of its copies have survived to this day, meaning there must have been many more of them in the sixteenth century.⁶⁹ Sarnicki's map is based on several earlier maps of Poland, mainly by Wapowski and Grodecki. The map of Livonia is attached to his copy of one of the war maps from 1580, drawn during the Livonian War (1577–1582) between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy.

Sarnicki, like Wapowski sixty years earlier, placed some historical information on his map. These are the three marked victories: at Grunwald over the Teutonic Knights in 1410, at Obertyn over Moldavia in 1531, and at Orsha over Muscovy (Fig. 10). This last battle is accompanied by an extensive historical commentary: "Memorable hic bellum ad Orsam non remote ab aris Alexandri Magni in quo 80,000 Moschorum a rege Poloniae Sigismundo caesa erant 1514" ("Here the memorable Battle of Orsha [took place], near the

⁶⁹ Two copies are held in the National Museum in Kraków (one only partially preserved), the other one in the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Polska Akademia Nauk) in Gdańsk. The author presents a reproduction of the damaged Kraków copy, which contains less mistakes and may be closer to the original. The author would like to express his gratitude to Agnieszka Perzanowska and Iwona Długopolska from the National Museum in Kraków for their help.



10. Stanisław Sarnicki, *Regnum Poloniae et Magnus Ducatus Lithuaniae* (detail), the Battle of Obertyn, 1531 (the date on the map is wrong)

Altars of Alexander the Great, in which in 1514 King of Poland Sigismund killed 80,000 Muscovians”). Obertyn was marked only with a date, Grunwald also with a (much smaller) inscription: “*Prelium hic illud magnum 1410*” (“This is where the famous battle took place in 1410”).

For Sarnicki, all three battles are symbols of the successes of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the distant and recent past. To some extent, this resembles Wapowski’s cartographic gesture.⁷⁰ However, Wapowski assumed the perspective of the interests of the Jagiellonian dynasty and the Kingdom of Poland. In Sarnicki’s times, the political context was different. The cartographer created his map after the 1569 Union of Lublin and even marked a part of the border between the two countries. Three years later, the Jagiellonian dynasty became extinct.

⁷⁰ Wapowski did not mention the *Arae Alexandri Magni* on his map of the Southern Sarmatia. This might suggest that Sarnicki took this information from other cartographical source, maybe Wapowski’s map of Poland (1528). He might have been inspired also directly by Ptolemy or by the Rome publication (*Carmina*), where this place is mentioned on the title page (see above).

Moreover, the map's author was not an enthusiast of strong monarchical power. He supported the Executionist movement⁷¹ and advocated the privileges of the nobility.⁷² Even though Sarnicki writes that King Sigismund was the winner of the Battle of Orsha, the cartographer shows on his map not the interest of the dynasty but of the country understood as a common good, that is, the Commonwealth, *Rzeczpospolita*. However, on the last known map depicting the battle – the Radziwiłł Map – a different figure was represented as the victorious leader.

5. The Radziwiłł Map of Lithuania (1613)

The map of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, known as the Radziwiłł Map, again focuses only on one part of the Commonwealth, namely Lithuania (Fig. 11). It was created several years after Sarnicki's map, in the 1580s, but it was not published until 1613.⁷³ Its founder and co-author was Prince Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł “the Orphan” (1549–1616), and the primary author was probably the royal cartographer Maciej Strubicz.⁷⁴ This map had a significant impact on the way

⁷¹ The Executionist Movement in the Polish Crown and later in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a political movement of the middle nobility (*szlachta*) in the sixteenth century. The *szlachta* strengthened their position in the country and succeeded in reforming the state (among others, they limited the power of the magnates, the Catholic Church, and the king, reformed the public finances, established a standing army and religious tolerance).

⁷² H. Kowalska, J. Sikorski, “Sarnicki Stanisław”, in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 35 (Kraków, 1994), pp. 218–222.

⁷³ M. K. Radziwiłł “the Orphan”, M. Strubicz, *Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae caeterarumque regionum illi adiacentium exacta descriptio*, ed. H. Gerritsz (Amsterdam, 1613); cf. S. Alexandrowicz, “Mapa Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego Tomasza Makowskiego z 1613 r. tzw. ‘radziwiłłowska’, jako źródło do dziejów Litwy i Białorusi”, *Studia Źródłoznawcze* 10 (1965), pp. 33–67, <https://rcin.org.pl/dlibra/publication/39363/edition/26621/content> (accessed 14 December 2022); Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography*, pp. 58–63; *Imago Poloniae. Dawna Rzeczpospolita na mapach, dokumentach i starodrukach w zbiorach Tomasza Niewodniczańskiego*, ed. K. Kozica, J. Pezda, vol. 2 (Warszawa, 2002), pp. 190–193; Alexandrowicz, *Kartografia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, pp. 71–122; Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica*, pp. 195–218. Historians of cartography argue whether the map was published earlier. However, we have no proof that it was printed before 1613.

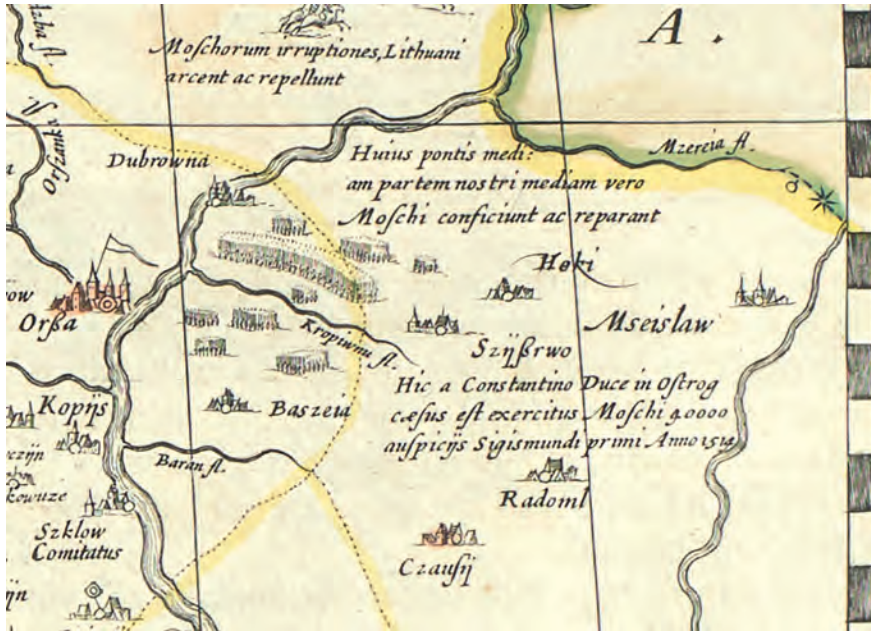
⁷⁴ Details: Buczek, *The History of Polish Cartography*, pp. 58–62; Alexandrowicz, *Kartografia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, pp. 72–78, 97f; Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica*, pp. 199–201.



11. *The Radziwiłł Map*. The earliest edition of the Radziwiłł Map was published in Amsterdam in 1613. In the following decades, the map was several times reprinted by Hondius's printing house in Amsterdam

this part of Europe was depicted in European cartography until the mid-eighteenth century. It was reprinted several times in the atlases of Henricus Hondius (since 1636), Willem Blaeu and his son Joan Blaeu (between 1631 and 1667), Frederick de Witt (since 1689) and others.⁷⁵ The Battle of Orsha is depicted on some reprints until the middle of the seventeenth century, as in my example from c. 1660.

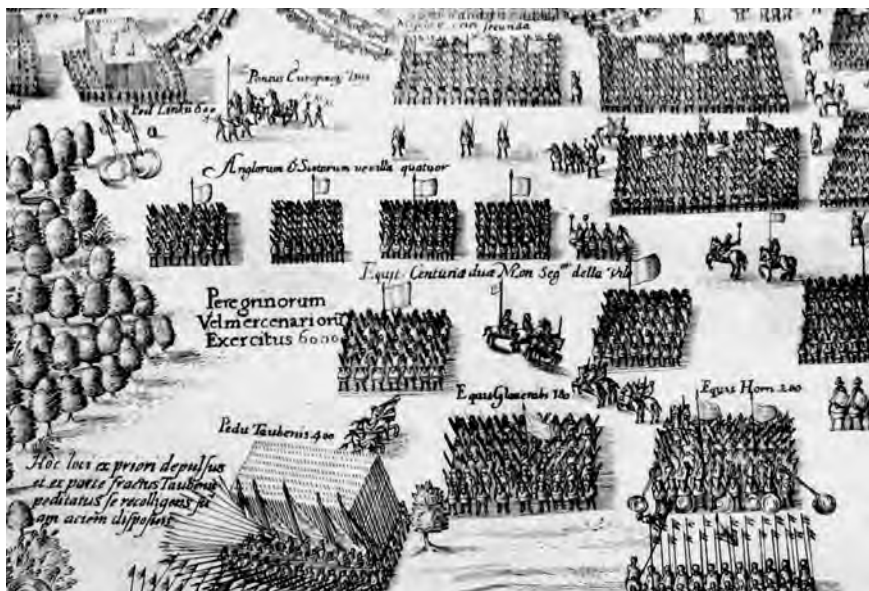
⁷⁵ Alexandrowicz, *Kartografia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, pp. 123–124; L. Kublin, B. Majewska, M. Tomaszewska, *Mapy ziem polskich kartografów niderlandzkich XVI i XVII w.* (Warszawa, 1987), pp. 176–178, no. 193.



12. *The Radziwiłł Map* (detail), the Battle of Orsha. This late reprint presents the *longue durée* of this cartographical fact on early modern maps, about 150 years. The quadrangle units of infantry mirror new forms of the cartographical language in the second half of the sixteenth century

The Radziwiłł Map contains several interesting details, including references to sites where victorious battles with Muscovy were fought. The Battle of Orsha is one of them. This is a new representation of the battle (Fig. 12). In the upper right edge of the map to the left of Orsha, one can see several cavalry and infantry formations and a commentary: “Hic a Constantino Duce in Ostrog caesus est exercitus Moschi 40,000 auspicijs Sigismundi primi anno 1514” (“Here Prince Konstanty Ostrogski crushed the 40,000-man army of the Muscovite Duke in 1514 during the reign of Sigismund I”).⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Alexandrowicz and Schilder noticed the Battle of Orsha and other historical events on this map. Alexandrowicz (*Kartografia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, p. 104) stresses the fact that they are meticulously marked “as if the authors meant to familiarize the audience with the basic events (not only military) in the history of the country”. Schilder (*Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica*, pp. 213–214) noticed that the map contains some historical and political events but does not comment on their meaning.



13a. Jakub Filip after Teofil Szembert, *The Battle of Klushino. Nyasvizh 1610* (detail). On 4 July 1610, Polish forces defeated the army of Tsar Vasili IV of Russia. The picture shows quadrangles of English and German mercenaries (musketeers and pikemen) making a part of the Muscovian army. Quadrangle units were a typical form of representing military troops in European cartography since the second half of the sixteenth century

Strubicz based his map on those of Wapowski and possibly Sarnicki. However, there are significant differences.

First, the battle was shown as it was done in the military cartography of the second half of the sixteenth century. The pikeman and cavalry units are set in regular quadrilateral positions (Fig. 13a, 13b). Naturally, this cartographic setting has nothing to do with the actual course of the battle of 1514. The number of units informs the reader only about some struggle and a multitude of soldiers on the battlefield. We can see here a development of cartographic signs that become symbols and not mimetic representations of a place or event (like on Wied's map). Secondly, Strubicz or Radziwiłł significantly reduced the number of defeated Muscovites. Previous maps indicated 80,000. The author of the inscription probably used some contemporary historical study in which he read more reliable data concerning the numbers of both armies. Thirdly, Hetman Ostrogski is mentioned as the actual leader and winner, not Sigmund I. Therefore,



13b. Peter Snayers, *Battle of Kirchholm*, c. 1620 (detail). In the Battle of Kirchholm on 27 September 1605, the Lithuanian army led by Hetman Jan Karol Chodkiewicz defeated the army of Charles IX of Sweden. A fragment of the picture commissioned by Polish King Sigismund III Vasa shows a fire exchange between quadrangles of Lithuanian and Swedish infantry. The picture combines oil painting with a plan of the battle but in another way than the *Battle of Orsha* (Fig. 3)

it was not the state's ruler who triumphed, as indicated on previous maps, but a nobleman and a high-ranking Lithuanian official. Thus, the success was primarily ascribed to the effort of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, not the house of the ruler and the king.

The Battle of Orsha is one of many such events on the Radziwiłł Map. The cartographers also marked the loss of Polatsk in 1563 and its recovery by Stephen Báthory in 1579, the victory of Mikołaj Radziwiłł "the Red" in the Battle of the Ula River in 1564, the smoke hovering over burning Sokół, captured in 1579.⁷⁷ These are just some of the ample information of this type inscribed on this map. The events depicted by Strubicz reflect not only the present but, perhaps above all, the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This map shows its territory from before the Lublin Union. It presents all the

⁷⁷ Alexandrowicz (*Kartografia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, pp. 102, 104) compiled a complete list of historical events depicted on the map.

lands that had ever been within the borders of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Battle of Orsha depicted on Radziwiłł map is, therefore, a fragment of a narrative about the great power of Lithuania.

Conclusions

Depicting the Battle of Orsha on a map made it a cartographic fact, i.e. an action of a cartographer that results in a single piece of information placed on a map, a sign of a city, a river, mountains, royal power, or bear hunting (Fig. 14a, 14b). In the real world, bear hunting is a different ontic category than, for example, buildings that make up a city or rivers, and it is difficult to juxtapose the two phenomena. On a map, however, bear hunting, a town, or a river have the same value and the same ontic status – they are a sign. They may have a referential character and refer to specific places or events. But they do not have to. A sign on a map may be utterly unrelated to the real world. For example, you can mark places on a map that do not exist now or have never existed, like the Altars of Alexander the Great or the Golden Woman mentioned above. The cartographic fact is, therefore, true mostly with regard to the map and not necessarily to any external reality. This is why it is often not credible in relation to real space. The aim of a cartographic fact is often persuasion. It is rhetorical in nature and, in this respect, similar to texts, statues, paintings, etc.

The long duration of the Battle of Orsha in European cartography is an excellent example of how cartographic facts work and construct a longstanding memory of the event. The location of the battlefield was marked on maps for over a hundred years. It was always “the same place” on the Dnieper River near the Lithuanian-Muscovian border. The choice of this location suggests that it pertained to the same point and the same event. It seems, therefore, that the cartographic fact is objective, but this objectivity is deceptive. Careful analysis and interpretation show that on every map, the cartographic fact means something different and produces a slightly other past. On Wapowski’s map, the Battle of Orsha served the interests of the Jagiellonian dynasty. On Wied’s map, it was a testimony to the rivalry between Lithuanian and Muscovian Rus’. On Sarnicki’s map, it speaks of the attitude of the nobility towards the idea of the republic and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as, above all,



14a. Anton Wied, *Map of Russia* (detail). A cartographic fact: a representation of bear hunting



14b. Olaf Magnus, *Carta Marina* (detail). A cartographic fact: a representation of control over space and royal power. Polish King and Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund the Old and the coats of arms of his monarchy: Polish Eagle and Lithuanian *Pogoń*. On the left – Vilnius (Vilna), the capital of Lithuania. Magnus also had his hidden agenda: King Sigismund was his benefactor, which is not directly expressed on the map

their common good. Finally, on the Radziwiłł Map, it is an expression of early-modern Lithuanian identity. The meanings of the Battle of Orsha on maps may differ, but each produces cultural capital accumulated in the form of a cartographical message. The authors of the maps can build this cultural capital because the meaning of the cartographical fact is opalescent, malleable, and strongly influenced by the rhetoric of the map.

This rhetoric implies that the authors have a clear political vision of what they want to say and what effect their message should imprint in the minds of their audience members. However, in this instance (and maybe in all cases of using cartographical rhetoric), the cartographers do not have complete control over their message. The capital they gain is simultaneously accumulated and scattered. When one cartographer uses a particular rhetoric to accumulate a meaning of a cartographical fact, another takes this piece of information and remakes it according to their needs or to the needs of their patron. Even though every new use of the cartographical fact might change its meaning (and this analysis intended to show how to change the meanings of the Battle of Orsha on maps), each new use strengthens the effect of reality and its symbolical power. Each resuming of the Battle of Orsha on a map is a new argument in the struggle over the territories on the Lithuanian-Muscovian borderland. This is not only a war about a real piece of territory; it may not have anything to do with the actual space. This is instead a war about an imagined space in the historical discourses about the past of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

In the seventeenth century, the battle was still present on maps reprinted in Amsterdam. However, the cultural memory of the victory of Orsha was replaced by other Polish-Lithuanian military successes of the time. They were the Battle of Khotyn (Polish: Chocim; 1621) and Vienna (1683) against the Ottoman Empire and the Battle of Smolensk (1610 and 1634) against Muscovy.⁷⁸ Dozens of artefacts remembering the three battles were executed: manuscript and printed relations, poems, memoirs, pictures, medals, maps and sculptures. In the seventeenth century and later, these military triumphs better matched the interests and aspirations of the kings, magnates,

⁷⁸ Cf. M. Nawrocki, "Mit Smoleńska w piśmiennictwie polskim XVII wieku – przypadek Jana Kunowskiego", *Terminus* 18, no. 4 (2016), pp. 401–420, <https://www.ejournals.eu/Terminus/2016/Terminus-2016-4/art/9247/> (accessed 14 December 2022).

and nobility. Only at the beginning of the twenty-first century did the Battle of Orsha again become a landmark and a site of memory in disputes over the contested spaces in Eastern Europe.⁷⁹

The author expresses his gratitude to the Jagiellonian Library in Kraków (Department of Graphic Arts and Cartography), the National Museum in Kraków (Department of Old Prints, Manuscripts and Cartography), and Herzog-August-Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel for permitting me to take pictures of maps necessary for this publications. I am also grateful to Grzegorz Franczak for illustration 8, which he took during our memorable trip to Wolfenbüttel in 2017.

List of Illustrations

1. Andrzej Krzycki, *Ad Sigismundum Poloniae Regem carmen*. A woodcut presenting the Battle of Orsha is its oldest known depiction. Source: A. Krzycki, *Ad divum Sigismundum Poloniae regem et magnum ducem Lithuaniae semper invictum post partam de Moskis victoriam...* (Kraków, 1515), <https://polona.pl/item-view/f995825c-f4e1-4001-9d7d-4791c26aff30?page=37>; public domain
2. Marcin Bielski's *Chronicle*, a woodcut presenting the Battle of Orsha, probably based on the same visual source as the woodcuts from Krzycki's book (Fig. 1) and from Wied's map (Fig. 6). Source: M. Bielski, *Kronika to jest historyja świata na sześć wieków a cztery monarchie rozdzielona...* (Kraków, 1564), inv. no. 5764.1974 (4), 411v <https://kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=219652>; public domain

⁷⁹ Several publications and conferences marked the five-hundredth anniversary of the battle in Belarus, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine in 2014. It was not only a set of events in the academia. The governments (especially Polish and Lithuanian), public institutions and state media exploited the anniversary in extending their politics of memory. For example, on 26 September 2014, the authorities of Vilnius organised special concerts and other public performances in the city centre, which were broadcasted by the public television LRT. The Belarusian authorities did not organise public events commemorating the battle but a special issue of the Polish popular historical journal *Mówią Wieki* was published in Belarusian in September 2014. It was entirely devoted to the victory of Orsha. All 2000 copies of the journal were distributed in Minsk, Hrodna, and Viciebsk in Belarus. The Belarusian issue of the journal was financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://mowiawieki.pl/index.php?page=slider&id=394> (accessed 14 December 2022).

3. *Battle of Orsha* (1531 or later), a fragment of an anonymous painting showing the crossing of the Dnieper by Polish and Lithuanian infantry, artillery and cavalry. Source: Digital National Museum in Warsaw, <http://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/dmuseion/docmetadata?id=22739>; public domain

4. Bernard Wapowski, *Tabula Sarmatiae Europaeae*, a fragment with the Battle of Orsha. Source: B. Wapowski, *Tabula Sarmatiae Europaeae*, in: *Monumenta Poloniae cartographica*, ed. K. Buczek (Kraków, 1939); photo: J. Niedźwiedź

5. Bernard Wapowski, *Tabula Sarmatiae Europaeae*, a fragment with the Battle of Varna. Source: Wapowski, *Tabula*; photo: J. Niedźwiedź

6. Anton Wied, *Map of Russia*, a fragment of the Battle of Orsha. Source: A. Wied, *Moscovia* ([Antwerp?], 1555); photo: J. Niedźwiedź

7. Anton Wied, *Map of Russia*, a fragment with four Livonian and four Muscovian strongholds. On the right (south) is the city of Polatsk (Połock, Polotsk). Source: Wied, *Moscovia*; photo: J. Niedźwiedź

8. Anton Wied, *Map of Russia* (detail). In the upper part, there is a table with Cyrillic and Latin alphabets, Kyiv is in the bottom right part of the map. The city was added to the map without any respect to the real distances, and its presence is dictated by its symbolic meaning. The Battle of Orsha is to the left of Kyiv. Source: Wied, *Map of Russia*; photo: G. Franczak

9. Stanisław Sarnicki, *Regnum Poloniae et Magnus Ducatus Lithuaniae* (detail), the Battle of Orsha. Source: S. Sarnicki, *Regnum Poloniae et Magnus Ducatus Lithuaniae* (MS), 1585, National Museum in Kraków, inv. no. VIII–XVI.137A, fol. 1, Digital Library of Małopolska, <http://mbc.malopolska.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=82757>; public domain

10. Stanisław Sarnicki, *Regnum Poloniae et Magnus Ducatus Lithuaniae* (detail), the Battle of Obertyn 1531 (the date on the map is wrong). Source: Sarnicki, *Regnum Poloniae*; public domain

11. *The Radziwiłł Map*. The earliest edition of the Radziwiłł Map was published in Amsterdam in 1613. In the following decades, the map was several times reprinted by Hondius's printing house in Amsterdam. Source: M. K. Radziwiłł "the Orphan", M. Strubicz, "Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae caeterarumque regionum illi adiacentium exacta description", in: *Orbis Terrae Compendium, Carolo Secundo dedicatum*, ed. J. Klencke (Amsterdam, 1660), https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY-8-1-305326-90075894:Magni-Dvcatus-Lithvaniae?sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No&qvq=w4s:/where%2FLithuania%2Fwhen%2F1660;q:lithuania;sort:Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No;lc:RUMSEY-8-1&mi=0&trs=1; Creative Commons – David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries

12. *The Radziwiłł Map* (detail), the Battle of Orsha. This late reprint presents the *longue durée* of this cartographical fact on early modern maps, about 150 years. The quadrangle units of infantry mirror new forms of the cartographical language in the second half of the sixteenth century. Source: M. K. Radziwiłł “the Orphan”, M. Strubicz, “Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae caeterarumque regionum illi adiacentium exacta description”, in: *Gerardi Mercatoris Atlas*, ed. H. Hondius II (Amsterdam, 1636), <http://www.lithuanianmaps.com/Maps1624-51.html>; public domain

13a. Jakub Filip after Teofil Szembert, *The Battle of Klushino. Nyasvizh 1610* (detail). On 4 July 1610, Polish forces defeated the army of Tsar Vasili IV of Russia. The picture shows quadrangles of English and German mercenaries (musketeers and pikemen) which were a part of the Muscovian army. Quadrangle units were a typical form of representing military troops in European cartography since the second half of the sixteenth century. Source: the University of Warsaw Library; photo: J. Niedźwiedź

13b. Peter Snayers, *Battle of Kircholm*, c. 1620 (detail). In the Battle of Kircholm on 27 September 1605 the Lithuanian army led by Hetman Jan Karol Chodkiewicz defeated the army of Charles IX of Sweden. A fragment of the picture commissioned by Polish King Sigismund III Vasa shows fire exchange between quadrangles of Lithuanian and Swedish infantry. The picture combines oil painting with a plan of the battle but in other way than the *Battle of Orsha* picture (fig. 3). Source: Château de Sassenage, Fondation de France, https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Kirholm_1605_I.JPG; public domain

14a. Anton Wied, *Map of Russia* (detail). A cartographic fact: a representation of bear hunting. Source: Wied, *Map of Russia*; photo: J. Niedźwiedź

14b. Olaus Magnus, *Carta Marina* (detail). A cartographic fact: a representation of control over space and royal power. Polish King and Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund the Old and the coats of arms of his monarchy: Polish Eagle and Lithuanian *Pogoń* (Belarusian: *Pahonia*; Lithuanian: *Vytis*; Ukrainian: *Pogonia*). On the left is Vilnius (Vilna), the capital of Lithuania is marked. Magnus also had his hidden agenda: King Sigismund was his benefactor, which is not directly expressed on the map. Source: O. Magnus, *Carta marina et descriptio septentrionalium terrarum ac mirabilium rerum in eis contentarum, diligentissime elaborata anno dni 1539* (Venezia, 1539); public domain

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The Battle of Orsha (1514) on Maps: Mapping the Muscovian War as Renaissance Politics of Memory

On 14 September 1514, in the vicinity of the town of Orsha, the combined Lithuanian-Polish forces defeated the Muscovian army. Several texts commemorating the battle were written or published in the sixteenth century. The battle was also depicted on several maps. The first was published in 1526, while the last was printed in 1613 and several times republished in the seventeenth century. The central question of the present study is: Why did cartographers mark an event that belonged to the past on the maps created and published for more than a hundred years after it took place? For this purpose, I analyse four maps and one woodcut depicting the Battle of Orsha. The woodcut was printed in the epinicion poem by Andrzej Krzycki (1515). The dissected maps are Bernard Wapowski's map of Southern Sarmatia (1526), Anton Wied's map of Muscovy (1556), Stanisław Sarnicki's map of Poland (1585) and the Radziwiłł map of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1613). In the paper, I argue that each cartographical representation of the battle gives a new interpretation of the event. Each of them is also an example of Renaissance politics of memory. On Wapowski's map, the battle is an element of the Jagiellonian dynastic propaganda, while on the map by Wied, Orsha is an argument in the competition between the Lithuanian Ruthenia and Muscovy. For Sarnicki, the battle is a fragment of the republican discourse of a Calvinist Polish nobleman. At the Radziwiłł map, the victory tells about the great past of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

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