

DESCRIPTION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

1. The objective of the research

The main purpose of the research is to determine the scale and the scope of the war damage that affected the areas of Red Ruthenia and the Greater Poland in the seventeenth century. Covering jointly the area in excess of 112 000 square meters, those two provinces have been chosen as a field for the comparative research with regard to the fact that the first was the sole province of the Kingdom of Poland not invaded by the military troops of all aggressors attacking the territory of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the latter was attacked only by Swedish army. It forms a basis for comprehensive comparisons pertaining the actual scope and scale of war damage caused by all enemy's military formations operating in the territory of Crown lands in the seventeenth century. The meticulous results of the pilot studies regarding the scale of war damage on the Land of Przemyśl in the seventeenth century and the preliminary results of research for the Greater Poland have shown that the economic decline processes in this regions differ from the ones commonly known in the literature until now in respect of their course and dynamics. This research leads to putting forward some preliminary hypotheses on seventeenth-century war damage on the overall area of the Commonwealth being of much larger scale and scope on the one hand and on less catastrophic consequences of the Swedish „deluge” as previously assumed on the other hand. Being different from the existing one in Red Ruthenia, the spatial distribution of the war damage in the Greater Poland is the other important research hypothesis. Focused on the rural areas in Red Ruthenia, the devastations were concentrated on the urban areas in the Greater Poland. It resulted i.a. from the asymmetric warfare commonly used by Tatars. Characteristic features of these population-centric military operation were avoiding direct clashes with the Polish troops, targeted killing and abductions of civilians as well as deliberate and indiscriminate damaging of economic infrastructure mainly on the rural areas. The objective of the research is to verify the above mentioned hypotheses in the broader territorial context with the use of GIS software (*Geographic Information System*) basing on so-called mass sources.

2. Methodology of the research

In view of the subject matter of the research and the applied tools and methods of the source material analysis, this project needs to be placed in between economic and military history. The specificity of the research on the war damage in the early modern times implies the use of both traditional forms of historical analysis as well and statistical and cartographic ones along with the use of geospatial data. The connection of those research procedures with techniques using so-called mass sources of high spatial and chronological resolution enables to create an innovative reconstruction of the movements of enemy troops in both operational and tactical scope. It enhances the possibility of determining the areas of the largest war damage precisely as well as of identifying its perpetrators. The research is based on the series of sworn declarations i.e. juraments included in castle court books from the Red Ruthenia and Greater Poland kept in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv, the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw and the State Archives in Poznań and Lublin. Thanks to the above mentioned archives as well as the control documentation in the forms of surveys of royal estates, fiscal tax registers and manor inventories, the level of war damage may be determined more precisely than with the use of the estimation method. In the research a new, narrowed and more homogeneous conception of the term „war damage” is applied. Contrary to the previous one used in literature, it basically encompasses only devastations and material losses resulting from the activities of enemy's military forces.

3. The influence of the research outcomes on the development of science, civilization and society

Carrying out the research may be of significant importance due to the poor advancement of the research in general as well as its ideologization in the Marxist historiography of the period of People's Republic of Poland. Those factors influenced the general and simplified conclusions which seem not to be based on the serious sources. Hence, the results of the research may question the strongly rooted in the Polish historical science theory of the major role of the mid-seventeenth century in economic development of the People's Republic of Poland in the modern times. The previous view that dominated in the debate on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth economic breakdown has been based on the conviction, that its main factor was the structural problems of the manorial system. What is more, the view assumed that the extensive war damage of seventeenth century only deepened the independent regressive economic phenomena. The planned research may cause the alteration in traditional approach towards the chronology of the beginning of economic regression on the Polish lands and what is more, it may indicate the military activities followed by the war damage as the factors shaping the crises on the large areas of Central and Easter Europe in the seventeenth century (Tatar invasions into Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Tsardom of Muscovy in the seventeenth century, Thirty Years' war of 1618-1648, the Chmel'nytsky uprising, Polish-Russian war of 1654-1667 and the Second Northern War of 1655-1660). The final result of the research project will be an extensive monograph consists of three volumes including the text, statistics of war damage in the form of tabular lists and resulting maps of all the lands of Red Ruthenia and Greater Poland.