

〔 Comment 1 〕

Comments on the paper by Prof. Jean-Frédéric Schaub

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First of all, I want to express my thanks to Prof. Jean-Frédéric Schaub for his very stimulating paper. I specialize in history of the country which was located on the opposite side of European continent from the Iberian empires, namely the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. I would like to make some comments on Prof. Schaub's presentation from the comparative point of view, presenting some information on the problem of the "colonial expansion in the composite state" in the case of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The comparative approach to Spanish history has a tradition in Polish historiography. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Joachim Lelewel, one of the founders of modern Polish historiography, wrote a very interesting and unconventional book under the title of *Historyczna paralela Hiszpanii z Polską* (*Historical parallelness between Spain and Poland*), which was published in 1831 in Warsaw and was translated into German (1834), French (1863) and Russian language (1863). He intended to show how and why two early modern great powers in the Western and the Eastern border of European continent had gone to decline. Lelewel described each period of Spanish and Polish history on the same page parallelly and compared the rise and decline of two countries from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. To our regret Lelewel made almost no mention to the colonial problems, because he interested in the domestic constitution, culture and diplomacy of each country.

In the second half of the twentieth century, some Polish historians took over this tradition which had originated from Lelewel. They paid attention also to the problem of the colonial expansion of the Iberian states. Janusz Tazbir, an eminent historian of early modern Polish history, discussed common features and differences between the *szlachta* (the Polish-Lithuanian nobles) and the *conquistadores* mainly from the point of view of cultural history, whereas Marian Małowist, a distinguished scholar of economic history, compared the oversea expansions of the Iberian monarchies with the territorial expansions of East European countries from the point of view of socio-economic history. Małowist's theses gave important suggestions to Immanuel Wallerstein as to the historical development of the system of the international division of labor. However, as far as I know, few Polish historians had been interested in the problem of the composite constitutions of Spanish empire and the Polish-Lithuanian state from the comparative perspective.

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The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth did not have oversea territories. If we can say something like the "colonial expansion" of early modern Poland, we are referring to the internal colonization by the Polish *szlachta* into Belarusian and Ukrainian borderlands from the second half of the sixteenth to the first half of the seventeenth century. Piotr

Grabowski, a nobleman from Parnawa in Livonia, wrote a book under the title of *Polska Niżna, albo osada polska* (*The Lower Poland, or a Polish colony*) in 1596. He insisted to colonize the land of Zadnieprze (the left bank of the Dnieper River in Ukraine), which he called “The Lower Poland” or “the new Polish colony”. He argued that there were uninhabited land inexhaustibly “from Ukraine to India” and the Polish nobles could exploit these lands at their will.

Actually many Polish nobles went to colonize Ukraine after the Union of Lublin (1569), by which Volhynia, Podolia and Ukraine were incorporated into the Polish Kingdom. Contrary to Grabowski’s opinion, these incorporated provinces were not “uninhabited lands”. There lived the Ruthenian nobles and peasants, and also the Ukrainian Cossacks. It is important to note that the relationships between the Polish and Ruthenian nobles were described as “the free to the free, the equal to the equal” in the documents which had been enacted in the *Sejm* (Diet) of Lublin (1569). The Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian nobility were united in the Commonwealth as equals. They regarded themselves as “free citizens” (*liberi cives*) in a “free Commonwealth” (*libera Respublica*). Stanisław Orzechowski, a nobleman of Ruthenian origin, was proud of their „glorious liberty” in 1553 as follows:

Liberty, which is the highest of all goods, is the property of your clan and your family. It is so vast and so great that, in comparison, the liberty of other nations would be unbearable servitude for us. Admiring the sweetness of this liberty, many provinces joined you and submitted to your rule, not due to your military strength, but due to the greatness of your liberty. (...) Though customs, laws and even the God of these people are not the same, your glorious liberty caused all people in the Kingdom to accept the same law.

After the Union of Lublin (1569), the nobility of the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania elected their monarchs by common royal election and convened the Diet together. The noblemen of each country could acquire landed properties in the other part of the Commonwealth. From the constitutional point of view, the relationship between both countries was strengthened. On the other hand, the Union of Lublin did not abolish the institutional individuality of each part of the Commonwealth completely. Each country kept its own treasury and armed forces. The hierarchy of public offices was organized in Poland and Lithuania separately. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the Union of Lublin became a polity, which might be called a “composite republic of the nobles” rather than a “composite monarchy”, because the throne was elective and the royal prerogative was restricted to a large extent by the privileges of the nobles.

The Ruthenian nobles, many of which accepted the Polish and Catholic culture under the strong influence of the Counter Reformation, were relatively well integrated into the Commonwealth, whereas the Ukrainian Cossacks, who kept the Orthodox faith and their own life style, became more antagonistic against the Polish hegemony. In 1648 they rose in revolt under the leadership of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi (Chmienicki), hetman of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. In 1658, after Khmel’nyts’ky’s death, Ivan Vyhovs’kyi (Jan Wyhowski), the new hetman, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth concluded the treaty of Hadiach (Hadziacz), which granted Senate seats to the Orthodox hierarchs and assured the Cossacks of aristocratic privileges. The Hadiach Agreement was an attempt to enlarge “the Commonwealth of Two Nations” (Polish and Lithuanian) to “the Commonwealth of Three Nations” (Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian). In the next year Iurii Nemyrych (Jerzy Niemirycz), who was one of the drafters of this treaty, made a speech for the ratification of the union of Hadiach at the Diet held in Warsaw:

The value of the Polish Kingdom, which cannot be compared with anything, is the liberty. It is this liberty that drew us to this society. We are born and educated in this liberty, and now join to this society as free men.

In this statement of a Ukrainian nobleman we can hear an echo of the apotheosis of the “golden liberty” written by Stanisław Orzechowski, one hundred years earlier.

However the concept of “the Commonwealth of Three Nations” was not accepted by the majority of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Nemyrych was killed by them and the Hadiach union collapsed. The Ukrainian Cossacks on the left bank of the Dnieper chose to separate themselves from the Polish-Lithuanian state and to be under the suzerainty of Orthodox Russia. In the Ukraine, the “composite republic of nobles” faced its most difficult test. There, though the noble stratum was relatively well influenced by the political culture of the Polish nobility, the force of the ethnic and confessional identity of the Cossacks surpassed the attractiveness of the “free Commonwealth”. The Ukrainian case well illustrates the permeability of noble republicanism and its limits in the colonial space in the “composite republic of nobles”.

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In comparison with the Polish-Lithuanian example, I would like to ask Prof. Schaub three questions:

1) The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is a case at the opposite extreme from the “absolutist” model of early modern state. You pointed out that recently specialists in Spanish America were discussing on the notion of the “absolutism of negotiations”. It seems to me that the notion of “absolutism” is becoming more and more relativistic and is losing its “absolutist” meanings in historical studies. How do you think on the validity of the notion of “absolutism” in the context of the “composite state” thesis?

2) You considered the convergences and the divergences in the Iberian empires in the perspective of the *longue durée*. It seems to me that the persistence of the “composite” imperial system was marked obviously rather than the change or the upheaval in the empires. In the Polish-Lithuanian case, the ruling estates failed to integrate the “colonial” Ukraine into the “free Commonwealth” in a stable manner. Did the “failure of integration” occur in the Iberian empires? If it did not occur, do you think why? If it occurred, what were the factors which had disturbed the stable integration?

3) Twenty years ago J. H. Elliott presented the concept of “a Europe of composite monarchies”. Today you proposed to apply the concept to the Iberian empires including America. In other word you try to enlarge the coverage of the concept to the trans-Atlantic sphere. Do you think that now we can talk about “an Atlantic world of composite monarchies”?