

THE POLICY OF AUGUSTUS THE STRONG VIS-À-VIS POLAND

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The purposive political reorientation undertaken by Augustus the Strong led to the connection between Electoral Saxony and Poland in a personal union whose common head was the Saxon ruler. Fundamental to the achievement of this goal was the bond of friendship with the House of Hapsburg and what was then still a good understanding with Prussia, as well as the alliance with the Tsarist Empire. Next to the ties established with both of the great German powers, it was this latter relationship, whose guarantor was the Livonian nobleman Reinhold von Patkul, which enabled the elimination of the national opposition in Poland supported especially by France and Sweden. But another factor of no small importance was the enormous spiritual, financial and territorial sacrifices which Saxony — even at this time a developed commercial and manufacturing state — was forced to make.

It is an impressive fact that this cooperation could be reactivated in the Napoleonic era after the death of Frederick Augustus II. Indeed, its ramifications proved such that even in our century the question was repeatedly discussed whether the House of Wettin should not be recognized as the standard-bearer of Polish royal authority.