

John Sobieski









John III Sobieski
A Polish King in Vienna

The image shows a richly decorated interior space. On the left, a large, ornate painting in a gold frame depicts a still life with various flowers and fruits. Below it, a doorway leads to another room with a similar painting above a double door. The right wall is covered in dark blue and gold damask wallpaper. A black floor-standing display stand is visible in the foreground. The floor is made of polished wood with a parquet pattern.

winterpalais

Originally built for Prince Eugene of Savoy as a magnificently furnished palace for both residential and representational purposes, the Winterpalais was later acquired by Empress Maria Theresa in the 18th century. It was then utilized as a court chamber, and more recently as the Austrian Ministry of Finance. Today this jewel of the Baroque has been turned into a place of art and culture. In the state-rooms, Baroque décor encounters exhibitions of both old and contemporary art.

Exhibition Rooms

-  Sobieski at a Glance
-  Sobieski's Path to the Throne
-  Sobieski in Private Life
-  Sobieski as Patron of the Arts and Sciences I
-  Sobieski as Patron of the Arts and Sciences II
-  Sobieski, the Battle of Vienna and the Tug-of-war between the Holy League and the Ottoman Empire
-  Sobieski's Return from Vienna. Royal Trophies and Votive Gifts in Churches in Poland
-  In Honor of Sobieski. The Example of Le Puy-en-Velay





John III Sobieski

A Short Biography

- 1629 John Sobieski is born on August 17 in Olesko on territory of present-day Ukraine. His parents are Jakub Sobieski and Teofila Sobieska, née Daniłowicz.
- 1641 John's future wife, Marie Casimire de la Grange d'Arquien, is born.
- 1646 John and his elder brother Marek set off on a two-year educational journey across Europe; they visit German cities, the Netherlands, France and England. The brothers spend almost one year in Paris. Their father dies on June 13.
- 1648 Due to the uprising led by Bohdan Chmielnicki, John and Marek return to their home country to enlist in the army.
- 1649 Two days before his twentieth birthday, on August 15, John Sobieski receives his baptism by fire at the Battle of Zborów (Zboriv).
- 1652 John's brother Marek is taken prisoner-of-war and beheaded on the order of Bohdan Chmielnicki following the Battle of Batoh (Batih).
- 1654 John Sobieski takes part in a mission to Constantinople (Istanbul). The journey offers him the chance to try out his Turkish language skills.
- 1655 In Warsaw John meets Marie Casimire, lady-in-waiting to the Polish Queen Marie Louise Gonzaga.

The Polish-Swedish War breaks out. Like many other representatives of the nobility, Sobieski refuses obedience to the Polish King John II Casimir, pledging loyalty instead to the Swedish King Charles X Gustav. For several months, he fights in the ranks of the Swedish army, collecting valuable military experience in one of the most modern armies of its time.

- 1656 Sobieski receives his first military rank from King John II Casimir, Standard-Bearer of the Crown. It is a symbolic act of forgiveness on the part of the monarch for Sobieski's temporary disloyalty.
- 1659 Sobieski takes part for the first time in a meeting of the Sejm (Parliament) as a delegate.
- 1661 John's mother dies on November 27.
- 1665 John Sobieski becomes Grand Marshal of the Crown. He succeeds Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski, whom he holds in high regard. The latter had made himself the leader of the opposition in a domestic conflict.

On May 14 John and Marie Casimire marry secretly during her period of mourning. Marie Casimire's first husband Jan (Sobiepan) Zamoyski had died on April 7. The official wedding takes place in Warsaw on July 5. The sacrament of marriage is given to them by the papal nuncio Antonio Pignatelli, who later becomes Pope Innocent XII.

- 1666 Sobieski becomes Field Hetman of the Crown. At the Battle of Mątwy against the rebels led by Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski, he nearly dies.

- 1667 Jakub, the Sobieskis' eldest son, is born in Paris. His godparents are the King of France Louis XIV and the queen consort of England, Henrietta Maria.
- 1668 John Sobieski becomes Grand Hetman of the Crown and thus bearer of the highest military rank in the Commonwealth. Never before had the ministerial office of Grand Marshal of the Crown and the function of Grand Hetman of the Crown been occupied by one person.
- 1673 John Sobieski conquers the Ottoman troops at the Battle of Chocim (Khotyn). At the same time the reigning Polish king Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki dies.
- 1674 John Sobieski is elected king. Due to the fighting taking place against the Ottomans, he postpones the coronation ceremony. It takes place on February 2, 1676 in Wawel Cathedral in Kraków.
- 1676 Teresa Kunegunda, the Sobieskis' daughter, is born shortly after the coronation.
- 1677 John III Sobieski acquires the Milanów estate and has it converted over the following years by the architect and master builder Agostino Vincenzo Locci from a modest country house into a baroque summer residence. The *Villa Nova* is given the Polish name of Wilanów.
- Aleksander Benedykt, the Sobieskis' second eldest son, is born.
- 1680 Konstanty Władysław Sobieski is born.
- 1682 The Sobieskis' court painter, Jerzy Eleuter Szymonowicz-Siemiginowski, wins first prize for painting at the Roman Accademia di San Luca, the renowned European art academy.
- 1683 John III Sobieski enters into an alliance with Emperor Leopold I against the Ottomans. On July 18, he sets off from Wilanów in the direction of Vienna. Troops are then gathered in Kraków. His eldest son, 15-year old Jakub, accompanies him. The Relief of Vienna takes place on September 12. After further campaign fighting, John III and Marie Casimire meet up again in Stary Sącz on December 15.
- 1684 John III Sobieski enters into an alliance with the Holy League. He receives the honorary title of "Defensor Fidei" (Defender of the Faith) from Pope Innocent XI.
- 1696 John III Sobieski dies on June 17 in Wilanów aged 66.



1 Roman painter (?), Portrait of John III on Horseback, c. 1704

From 1674 to 1696, John III Sobieski ruled the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as the elected King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. Under his predecessor, King John II Casimir Vasa, Sobieski steadily rose through the military ranks until he was assigned command of the army, and thus advanced to become the most influential man in the state behind the king. The tipping point for his election to king came with the victory by the Polish-Lithuanian army over the Ottomans at Chocim (Khotyn) in the principality of Moldavia in 1673.

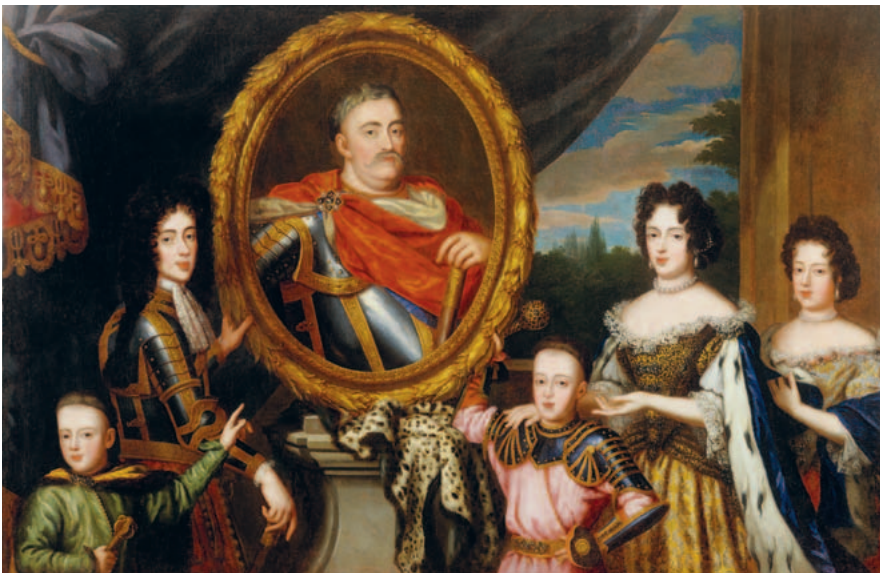
The apotheosis of John III is one of the most popular ways in which his personality is depicted. The king is shown in armor *all'antica*, and draped in a leopard skin. He holds a baton, and wears a helmet with a lion's jaw motif and an eagle on his head. Above him hovers the symbolic figure of Fama (Fame) with a trumpet, to which is attached a flag with an inscription in Italian that declares the king victor of the Battle of Vienna.

Henri Gascar, Portrait of the Family of John III Sobieski, 1691

At the center of the picture, an oval portrait of John III Sobieski stands enthroned on a plinth over which a leopard skin has been thrown. The laurel-wreathed figure shows the king in armor and a red mantle, which is held together at the shoulder with a clasp. Family members are gathered around the portrait: at the left, the eldest son Jakub holds the picture, as does Alexander at the right; while to the outer left stands the youngest, Konstanty. Behind Alexander are the queen Marie Casimire and her daughter, Theresa Kunegunda.

Only three sons and one daughter of the royal couple reached adulthood. Contrary to the habits of the period, the children grew up at court in close contact with their parents; family life was shaped by group activities and being together every day.

The portrait was presumably commissioned by Cardinal Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, ambassador in Warsaw of the French King Louis XIV, and the Bishop of Beauvais, who had supported Sobieski's candidature for the Polish throne. The artist may have depicted the king in the robes of antiquity wearing armor and with a laurel wreath in line with his wishes. Laurel wreaths, to which victors were entitled, thus appear here twice—in the portrait, and around the frame. The leopard skin is also one of the attributes of a heroic military commander.





3

**Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto, Wilanów Palace
seen from the South, 1777**

Depicted here is the Sobieskis' preferred abode, the Wilanów summer residence, which at the time still lay outside of Warsaw, and today is part of the Polish capital.

The estate was developed in several phases, changing from a modest country house to a typical baroque summer residence. The palace's iconographic program, which was created with the monarch's assistance, celebrates the virtues of the owner and his wife, representing them as the ideal ruling couple in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Royal Castle in Warsaw's city center can be seen on a hill on the left-hand side of the picture.

This painting is part of a series of 22 *vedute* or city views of Warsaw and its surroundings, which Bernardo Bellotto painted as a commission from King Stanislaw Augustus between 1767 and 1780. The pictures were then housed in the king's palace in Warsaw in a room that was then called the Prospect Room, and today is known as the Canaletto Room. The importance that Stanislaw Augustus attributed to the Wilanów residence, which was so closely linked to King John III, is demonstrated by the fact that no fewer than four pictures from the series show the palace and its immediate surroundings. No other place was so honored.



4

Anonymous painter, Portrait of Jakub Sobieski, c. 1640/46



5

Polish painter, Portrait of Teofila Sobieska, née Daniłowicz, Mother of King John III Sobieski, end of the 17th century

Jakub Sobieski, the father of King Jan III Sobieski, is depicted in the long, red, heavily buttoned garment and furred cloak of traditional Polish aristocratic attire. While his left hand rests on the handle of his weapon, his right hand touches a green-covered table almost imperceptibly. From this body language can be read an awareness of both his status and his own person, evidence of the subject's secure station in life. A highly educated man and prominent politician, Jakub Sobieski occupied the highest offices in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the spring of 1646, shortly before his death, he was appointed castellan of Kraków by King Władysław IV.

Teofila Sobieska, the mother of King John III Sobieski, is shown in mourning robes, which she wore after the death of her beloved son Marek in 1652. Marek, brother of the future king, was taken prisoner-of-war after the unsuccessful battle against the Tatars at Batoh (Batih) and beheaded. Teofila Sobieska was the granddaughter of the well-known Polish general Stanisław Żółkiewski, who had died during the retreat following a battle against the Ottoman-Tatar army at Cecora (Tutora), which the Poles lost. In the tradition maintained by the family, Żółkiewski was held up as an exemplary soldier and citizen. The patriotic cult surrounding his person—probably driven by the mother—is said to have played a significant role in the upbringing of the young John Sobieski.



Daniel Schultz, Portrait of King John Casimir, c. 1659



Daniel Schultz, Portrait of Queen Marie Louise, before 1667

King John II Casimir of the Swedish Vasa dynasty (in Polish, Waza) ascended to the Polish throne in 1648 and abdicated twenty years later. In line with the accepted method of depiction in European painting since the mid-sixteenth century, he is shown as a sovereign and a warrior. The career of John Sobieski, one of his subjects, ascended steeply during the final years of his reign.

Marie Louise Gonzaga's second husband was King John II Casimir, the marriage lasting from 1649 to 1667. Before that she had been the wife of his brother King Władysław IV from 1646 to 1648.

The queen is depicted here as a half-length figure in a black dress with white lace collar and similar cuffs. Her right hand rests on a crown on the small table beside her.

Marie Louise Gonzaga was an active and energetic woman with ambitious political plans. After the death of her first husband, she contributed to the crowning of his brother, John II Casimir, who had promised her marriage in return. One of her court ladies, Marie Casimire de la Grange d'Arquien, was to marry John Sobieski.





8 Jan van Huchtenburgh, *Battle of Chocim (Khotyn)*, last quarter of the 17th century

The picture shows the two-day battle—10 and 11 November 1673—between the Polish-Lithuanian army led by the Hetman and later King John Sobieski, and the Ottoman army, led by Hussein Pasha, which had captured the Chocim fortress. In the foreground, the Polish Hetman can be seen with raised baton and seated on a white horse during the decisive assault. Farther back we can spot a pontoon bridge collapsing under the weight of people fleeing, the only path of retreat for Hussein Pasha's escaping units. On the other river bank, the Ottoman camp is stretched out at the foot of the fortified castle of Chocim. Due to this attack launched by the Polish army, the Ottoman defense was crushed and Chocim reconquered.

Chocim castle is depicted here quite close to its reality. The commissioner was in all likelihood the Polish King John III Sobieski himself, as the victory at Chocim paved his way to the throne. However, we cannot rule out that the battle panorama could have been produced for Prince Eugene of Savoy, for whom Jan van Huchtenburgh had painted several scenes of other well-known battles, too.





**9 Polish painter, Coffin Portrait of Elżbieta Gorzeńska,
née Sobieska, c. 1698**

“Likeness of deceased persons,” as coffin portraits were once called, represent a highly unusual type of portrait. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, coffin portraits enjoyed great popularity in the Commonwealth. The portraits were attached to the head of each coffin concerned, resulting in the characteristic six- or eight-cornered form. The deceased were depicted very realistically in these portraits, and always with open eyes, so that symbolically they could “take part” in their own funeral. The portraits were painted in oil, mostly on copper, lead or tin. The background generally remained undefined, thereby symbolizing timelessness in accordance with the medieval tradition.

Elżbieta Gorzeńska was the daughter of Barbara and Ludwik Sobieski, whereby she came from a branch of the family related to the king. On her coffin portrait Elżbieta is pictured in a red dress with a relatively large, laced décolleté. The decorative nature of the portrait is emphasized by the pinned-up hair that had become fashionable at the end of the seventeenth century, the luxuriant wave of hair over the forehead, and the locks on the temples—not to mention the saucy lace bonnet *à la fontange*.



Andreas Stech (?), John III Sobieski, King of Poland, c. 1680/90

King John III Sobieski is depicted here as a Roman ruler and general wearing scale armor and a purple cloak. He holds a commander's baton in his hand, and wears a laurel wreath on his head. The shoulder armor in the form of a lion's jaw alludes allegorically to the courage of the mythological demigod Hercules.

With his circular-shaped hair-cut, bushy moustache and scale armor, the king presents himself in the tradition of Sarmatism (or Sarmatianism). Sarmatism is the term used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to describe the culture of the Polish nobility, which traced its genealogical origins back to the ancient Sarmatian people. One of the visible phenomena of the Sarmatian-based culture of the Commonwealth is the scale armor or coat of mail. The height of its popularity occurred during the reign of John III Sobieski, and from the end of the seventeenth century numerous portraits of this kind were in circulation. Scale armor, which consists of overlapping small steel plates riveted into a leather undergarment, forms a link with ancient suits of armor, which were worn by the early Sarmatians from the third to first centuries BCE. Scale armor of this kind is also on display in the exhibition.



Jerzy Eleuter Szymonowicz-Siemiginowski, Portrait of Queen Marie Casimire with Children, c. 1684

This portrait, created soon after the Battle of Vienna, reveals the political ambitions of John III Sobieski. His wife, Queen Marie Casimire, is depicted here in an allegorical manner, as if she were the mother of gods and the founder of the new Sobieski dynasty. During the king's frequent absences, Marie Casimire acted as his "representative" in the state. Sobieski always kept his wife informed about events in the war zone, and left it to her to prepare news coming from him in such a way as to ensure the welfare of his family back home.

The ingenious staging of Marie Casimire is underlined by the attributes of virtues surrounding her children, as for example, the lion standing for strength and power by Alexander and Konstanty. The eldest son's red cloak, as well as the eagle that envelopes both his mother and him within its large wings, show Jakub as his father's successor to the throne. John III Sobieski himself is present in the form of a bust with laurel wreath.

The painting represents one of the most successful baroque portraits both in artist Jerzy Eleuter Szymonowicz-Siemiginowski's oeuvre and all the painting of the Commonwealth in the seventeenth century. Evidence of the artist's sound training, which he had enjoyed at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, can be seen in the sophisticated picture composition, coloring, and modeling of the figures.



The biblical scene takes place in an idyllic landscape. John the Baptist holds his sermon in front of a small group of listeners. Among his attributes are a cross-staff and a lamb.

This work—possibly produced by the author himself— is a reproduction of a painting by Jan Reisner that can be found in the Camaldolese church in Kraków. The artist was sent to Rome to study by King John III Sobieski, where he was accepted into the Accademia di San Luca, and was decorated with a medal by Pope Innocent XI. Reisner remained Sobieski's court painter up until the king's death. Along with Jerzy Eleuter Szymonowicz-Siemiginowski, he was the most outstanding representative of Roman tendencies in Polish painting towards the end of the seventeenth century.

While no sources exist providing evidence that John III Sobieski donated the depiction of St. John to the Camaldolese church, it does seem highly probable. The king visited the church of this Catholic hermit order before the Battle of Vienna to pray for victory. He may also have donated a painting with a depiction of the royal namesake to the monastery in Bielany, a district of Kraków, in gratitude for his victory in the battle.





13

**Anonymous painter, Portrait of Marie Casimire d'Arquien,
third quarter of the 17th century**

Marie Casimire, née d'Arquien, came from an old but impoverished French noble family. As a small child, she had come to Poland with the royal household of Marie Louise Gonzaga, the later wife of Sobieski's predecessor in office, King John II Casimir. Jan Sobieski and Marie Casimire met in 1655 at the royal court in Warsaw. For political reasons, however, the young woman was initially married to the Polish nobleman John (Sobiepan) Zamoyski. Soon after his death she was then able to marry her great love, John Sobieski, in 1665.

Marie Casimire wears a loosely falling blue dress, her pose is informal—slightly inclined to the right, resting her head on her left hand, her long dark hair falling over her shoulders.

Her youthful age and the lack of royal attributes suggest that the picture was created at a time when Marie Casimire was still the wife of Zamoyski, or in the early stages of her marriage with John Sobieski.

Marie Casimire was not only the beloved wife, but also an important political partner of her husband. Among her informal tasks was that of spreading news of his successes throughout the land, in order to achieve common political goals. The most important of these—a hope probably cherished since the coronation of the couple, and certainly following the victorious Battle of Vienna—was the dream of a long reign on the Polish throne by the Sobieski dynasty.



Ferdinand van Kessel, Europe, 1689



Ferdinand van Kessel, America, 1691

The Flemish painter Ferdinand van Kessel created several paintings for the Polish court. The two allegories of the continents, *Europe* and *America*, belong to a series of depictions of the four continents, which the Antwerp-born artist created according to the model set by the works of his father Jan van Kessel.

Sixteen small copperplates with city views are arranged in a joint frame around a central painting on canvas. However, the main role in these *vedute* does not fall to the cities but to animals, some of which are typical of the country concerned, and some completely fantastical.

The continent of Europe is characterized by the objects presented in the main picture as a place of Catholicism, of art (including martial art), science and scholarship. As little was known about America, there are hardly any original objects from the New World depicted in the painting.

Ferdinand van Kessel tailored both allegories to the Polish king in terms of their contents: on the wall in the background of *America*, we can see the Sobieski coat of arms with crossed sword, scepter and crown, in front of a heraldic mantle that is only dimly recognizable.

Van Kessel can turn the depiction of Europe into political reality by illustrating in its background current representatives of the state and the church such as Emperor Leopold I and Pope Innocent XI. The coats of arms of important European powers, including the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, can also be seen.

Daniel Schultz, Portrait of Johannes Hevelius, Astronomer, Brewer of Beer, and City Councilor of the Old Town of Gdańsk, 1677

The portrait depicts the native of Danzig and astronomer, Johannes Hevelius, in his study. Hevelius sits at a cloth-covered table. In his left hand, he holds a quill; on the table, a manuscript and inkpot can be seen. His right hand rests on a celestial globe. The attributes provide information about the character of his work and his qualities as a good observer. The image also references the role of astronomy, which is meant to serve the purpose of discovering God's work.

The scientist found in John III Sobieski a great patron, who several times paid him a visit in this studio and showed keen interest in the progress of his works. For years Johannes Hevelius observed the stars, his intention being to publish an astronomical catalog and atlas that would show the constellations of the northern and southern hemispheres. In 1683 the drawings of the stellar constellations for the sky atlas were ready. Under the title *Firmamentum Sobiescianum*, these were brought out posthumously in 1690 in the book *Prodromus astronomiae cum Catalogo fixarum et Firmamentum Sobiescianum*. Various new constellations could be found in this volume, which, with partial modifications, formed the division of the sky that is still valid to this day. Hevelius dedicated one stellar constellation near the celestial equator to the monarch, naming it *Scutum Sobiescianum* (Shield of Sobieski) in his honor.



Anonymous painter, Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, c. 1680

The painting shows the Viennese city commander Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, who commanded the defense forces during the weeks-long siege of the imperial capital by the Ottoman Army in 1683. Cautiously cooperating with the civil authorities, he rapidly placed the city on a state of defensive alert, and led it throughout the privation-filled weeks of besiegement. For example, in preparation for the Ottoman assault, the battlements were fortified under his command, and the strategic decision reached to destroy the surrounding villages so as to impede the enemy's preparations for attack.

The full-length figure is part of a comprehensive series of large-format depictions of members of the Starhemberg dynasty, commissioned by Konrad Balthasar von Starhemberg, father of the city commander. It shows the commander, aged about forty at the time, before the historical event that was to shape his life and subsequently bring him many honors. Hence the inscription in the cartouche as yet reports nothing of Starhemberg's outstanding role in the defense of the city, with which he had been entrusted since 1680.





Martino Altomonte, Relief of Vienna on September 12, 1683, 1685

Martino Altomonte is among the pioneers of Austrian High Baroque painting. He created the frescoes in the Marble Hall and in the State Bedroom in the Lower Belvedere. Before Altomonte came to Vienna around 1700, he had already lived for well over a decade in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and worked for John III Sobieski. The Polish king employed Altomonte especially as a painter of battles and portraits.

In this picture Altomonte shows King John III Sobieski in the foreground wearing a splendid suit of armor; he leads the attack together with armored cavalry against the Ottomans, forcing the latter to flee. Behind this scene we see the Turkish tent city; and in the background, the allied troops push forward to Vienna from the slopes of the Kahlenberg, while the city itself is fiercely fought over.

Altomonte used great care in his depiction of the details of the battleground such as weapons, riding equipment, armor, and tents. The artist could have seen and sketched these objects from among the plundered pieces at Sobieski's court. His comprehensive studies are contained in a sketchbook kept in Melk Abbey. The large-format quill drawing exhibited here is considered to be the drawing made directly prior to the oil sketch. John III Sobieski still holds a saber here, which is replaced in the painting by a commander's baton.



Anonymous painter, Portrait of Kara Mustafa, 18th century



Anonymous painter, Portrait of King John III Sobieski, 18th century

Both small portraits show the generals of the opposing forces at the Battle of Vienna in 1683. John III Sobieski is shown in scale armor with a furred cloak thrown over his shoulder. On his head he wears a fur cap with a pin and feather.

The portrait of Kara Mustafa is modelled on a copperplate engraving from 1604, which, in fact, does not depict the Ottoman Grand Vizier, but instead the Persian ambassador Zainal Khan at the court of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague. This argument is based on the general pictorial composition as well as various details of appearance. Kara Mustafa Pasha had already been executed in the same year as the lost battle on the Kahlenberg, 1683, on the order of Sultan Mehmed IV.

Although both images are based on different models, there is no doubt that the portrait of Kara Mustafa acts here as a counterpart to that of King John III. The small formats suggest that they could possibly have been parts of a larger overall composition—perhaps a series of portraits of the participants of the Battle of Vienna. They present an apt example of the fame—in this case already posthumous—of John III as the conqueror of the Ottoman Empire near Vienna, or—in a broader sense—of the echo of the Battle of Vienna that was still felt throughout the European continent.



**Anonymous painter, Portrait of Stanisław Jan Jabłonowski,
last quarter of the 17th century**

Stanisław Jan Jabłonowski is depicted in plate armor with a lynx fur around his hips, holding a general's baton in his right hand, while with his left he points to the sign of the Hetman. The painting was very likely created following the victorious campaign on Chocim (Khotyn) in 1673, when Hetman Jabłonowski led the Polish Hussars, whose attack led to the decisive conquest of the fortress. The term Polish Hussars refers to the heavy cavalry whose task it was to smash enemy troops in a massive attack, and thus forcing them to flee. The Hussars' most important victory was achieved in 1683 at the Battle of Kahlenberg, led by King John III Sobieski.

As a proponent of pro-French policies, Jabłonowski was in continual close contact with the royal court—initially with John II Casimir and Marie Louise Gonzaga, and then with John III Sobieski. He was bound to the latter by long-standing friendship, both in the military and political spheres.



Cape, Ottoman Empire and Poland, 16th/17th century (before 1683) as well as end of the 17th to 19th century

The cape was sewn from an Ottoman red-ground material and bears a silver-colored, green-contoured pattern. The impressive pattern consists of several highly stylized cloves arranged over one another with small leaves set horizontally and in pairs. Decorative motifs were already very popular from the 16th century onwards, and therefore the dating cannot be narrowed down any further.

Presumably John III Sobieski donated the velvet brocade to the Chapel of St. John Cantius near the church of Saints Catherine and Margaret in the southern Polish town of Kęty. The canonized John Cantius was a priest in the Kraków diocese and professor of theology at the Jagiellonian University there. His surname of Cantius is derived from the Latinized version of his town of birth, Kęty. John III Sobieski had already greatly venerated John Cantius during his time as a student in Kraków. The story handed down, according to which Sobieski is said to have given the Ottoman cloth to the chapel after the Battle of Vienna, seems very likely. Following the battle, the ruler likewise donated important votive gifts for the grave of John Cantius in the Church of St. Anne in Kraków.





**“Sign of the Hetman” belonging to King John III Sobieski,
in use during the Battle of Vienna, Poland, before 1683**

The rank of Hetman derives from the late Middle High German term for captain. In the Commonwealth, the Hetman was the commander of the army as appointed by the king.

The original preserved fragment of the “Sign of the Hetman” is shaped as a narrow wing made up of several rows of short, metal feathers, and attached to a staff. This sign of grandeur, which is added to by a row of long eagle-wing feathers, is meant to evoke the wing of a bird in its appearance. Directly below it, a plume of ostrich feathers was attached. The “Sign of the Hetman” was carried by John III Sobieski during the Battle of Vienna, and can be seen behind the king in Martino Altomonte’s battle pictures.

According to archival sources, Prince Jakub Sobieski had gifted a royal standard in the form of an eagle’s wing to the Pauline Monastery at Jasna Góra, which was used during the Vienna campaign by his father. We can assume that this military symbol of majesty had already been made during Sobieski’s time as Hetman, and later accompanied him during the battles he fought as king, too.



Pierre Vaneau (Vanneau), John III, 1683/87

Shortly after the victory in Vienna in 1683, word of John III Sobieski's glory spread throughout all of Europe. The news of the triumph over the Ottomans moved Bishop Armand de Béthune to honor the Polish king in the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Armand de Béthune's brother was the brother-in-law of Queen Marie Casimire, the wife of King John III Sobieski.

The interior of the cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay was to be furnished with an impressive memorial to John III. The statue of the king as well as sculptures of prisoners-of-war were made as parts of this unfinished monument. The sculptor Pierre Vaneau received the commission to execute this work. The individual elements of the memorial, carved from wood, were intended to produce a complex, iconographic program, which would signify various aspects of the reign and activities of John III. Slightly larger than life, the sculpture of the Polish king, which stages him in armor *all'antica* as a conqueror, was planned as the crowning element of the monument.

The most important elements of the memorial were still being executed by Pierre Vaneau from 1683 to 1687, yet the artist was presumably unable to complete all of the components prior to his early death. At present, single parts of the monument are held in various collections in France and Poland.

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Exhibition

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CFO: Wolfgang Bergmann
Curators: Maïke Hohn, Konrad Pyzel

Exhibition and collection management:
Stephan Pumberger
Exhibition production: Eszter Vályi
Educational and visitor services:
Susanne Wögerbauer
Communications and new media:
Monika Voglgruber
Restoration support: Stefanie Jahn

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(Royal Łazienki Museum, Warsaw)
Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie
(Museum of King John III's Palace
at Wilanów, Warsaw)
Zamek Królewski w Warszawie – Muzeum
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Zamek Królewski na Wawelu – Państwowe
Zbiory Sztuki (Wawel Royal Castle –
State Art Collections)



winterpalais

Booklet

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