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**Krzysztof Latawiec, *Sandomierska Brygada Straży Granicznej 1889-1914* [‘The Sandomierz Frontier-Guard Brigade, 1889–1914’], Wydawnictwo Armoryka, Sandomierz, 2010; 239 pp.**

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Protection of the Congress Kingdom frontiers has by far been marginalised and little known as a research area. The so-far-few publications have approached the issue at random, the primary reason being scarce source base potentially available to the researchers. The sources are scattered across Polish and foreign archives; most of them are stored in Russian archives, whereto access is hindered for procedural reasons. The archival funds preserved in Poland prove incomplete and dispersed. Krzysztof Latawiec was aware of this state-of-affairs when he commenced his studies on the Sandomierz Brigade of the Frontier Guard in the period 1889–1914. He eventually has produced Poland’s first study concerning the history of a Frontier Guard brigade in the Kingdom-of-Poland area. Not only the history of the brigade is described but also, an excellent presentation is provided of the influences on the town itself and on its dwellers exerted by the stationing of an FG brigade within its area. The relics are still identifiable – for instance, with the old barracks buildings integrated into the town’s architectural landscape.

The book comprises an introduction, five chapters, and extensive annexes spanning more than a half of the volume and forming an integral part thereof. A list of sources, a bibliography and a set of illustrations appear at the book’s end. Together with the annexes, illustrations, list of sources and bibliographic items, the volume contains 239 pages; its composition is chronological.

Part one deals with ‘Polish frontier formations in Sandomierz and its vicinity before 1851’. The services protecting the order in the vicinity of Sandomierz appeared following the First Partition of the Commonwealth, with the border with the Habsburg Empire set along the Vistula River. The period’s formations were primarily tasked with guarding the border against smuggling. An end was put to their operations in Sandomierz and thereabouts by the Third Partition of Poland, with the town being incorporated into the Habsburg monarchy. At the time, Sandomierz ceased functioning as a frontier town. The French-Russian war of 1809 resulted in the Third

Austrian Partition lands (the Departments of Krakow, Lublin, Radom and Siedlce) being annexed to the Duchy of Warsaw. Sandomierz was again made a border-area town. Although plans were made to establish formations protecting the Duchy's frontiers, they were never delivered owing to the young state's decline. Once the Kingdom of Poland was set up, Sandomierz remaining within its limits, the Russian authorities commenced establishing a customs protection along the border. These endeavours were crowned by a customs offices law of 1823.

The author has put considerable effort in seeking the sources enabling to reconstruct the way FG functioned in the period. Sandomierz was the seat of the superior-guard to whom a customs guard unit reported. Mr. Latawiec describes in detail the rules of functioning of customs offices which ceased operating resulting from the outbreak of the November Insurrection (1830–1), and resumed their activity after the uprising fell. Notably, the FG has retained its Polish character even in the period of intensified Russification under Viceroy (*Namiestnik*) Ivan Paskevich.

The situation changed with liquidation of the Congress Kingdom's customs autonomy, the reasons for this decision of Tsar Nicholas I being economic as well as political. Elimination of the Kingdom's customs autonomy implied the imposition of a Russian customs administration and a Russian frontier guard within its area. This is discussed in chapter 2, entitled 'The Russian frontier guard in the vicinity of *Sandomierz, 1851–89*'. A new customs structure was established for the Congress Kingdom effective 1851, with Sandomierz being included in the Zawichost Customs District. The author quite aptly explains why it was Zawichost and not Sandomierz where the district's headquarters was established. Most probably, the history of Sandomierz was at stake, as it evoked unambiguous associations with the history of Poland. Using the example of the thus-established Zawichost Frontier-Guard Brigade, the author precisely presents the inner organisation of the period's frontier guards – while remarking that this formation had by then been made Russian, similarly to the entire FG in the Kingdom of Poland. Until the January Insurrection (1863–4), it was tasked with protecting the frontier, mainly against smugglers. During the uprising, FG operations were often disturbed. Since the formation was meant to protect the border against smugglers, rather than defend it militarily, the guardians often proved unable to efficiently face the insurgents. After the Insurrection's fall, the Zawichost Frontier-Guard Brigade Staff was moved to Sandomierz (in 1865). This implied the initiation of a number of projects locally, such as establishment of an elementary school for children of the customs service clerks and lower-rank FG functionaries. The following years saw changes in the organisation of the FG structures, including liquidation of the Zawichost Customs District and subjection of the Sandomierz Customs House and the Zawichost Frontier-Guard Brigade to the Radziwiłłów Customs District in 1883. This meant a significant degradation of the town's role.

The appearance of illegal immigrants, increasing in number, and mainly of a criminal profile, inflowing from the Russian Empire territory, caused the tsarist authorities to revise the frontier protection system. 1889 saw a reorganisation of frontier guard structures in that nine FG brigades guarding the western border of the Russian Empire were replaced by sixteen new ones. It was then that the Sandomierz FG Brigade was established, a story of which is told in chapter 3 – ‘The rise, organisation, and tasks of the Sandomierz Frontier-Guard Brigade’. The formation functioned till the outbreak of World War 1, guarding a lesser section of the frontier than the Zawichost FG Brigade. There were changes made to the jurisdiction of FG brigades. Heads of customs districts ceased supervising them as from 1899; instead, they were subject to the managers of the Autonomous Frontier-Guard Corps. The Sandomierz Brigade was then made part of the Corps’ 4<sup>th</sup> District. As the new units were established, the structure and tasks of FG were altered too. All these elements are described in detail in the study under review.

Frontier guardians as such are described in chapter 4 – ‘Officers and functionaries of the Sandomierz Frontier-Guard Brigade’. The moment the Brigade was set up a vast majority of its officers were originally military officers with various armed forces. A lion’s share were Orthodox by confession, albeit there were Lutherans too, and Muslims, scarce in number. This state of affairs was due to a schematic identification of confession, or religion, with nationality: those professing Orthodox faith were regarded as Russians, Lutherans – as Germans, whilst Roman Catholics were seen as Poles. Most of the officers were of nobility estate – with some exceptions of bourgeois or clergy representatives. As for frontier guardians, most of them were recruited by conscription and they did their compulsory military service with the formation. A majority were Orthodox by religion; a definite majority were peasants, often illiterate. Efforts were made to solve this latter problem by introducing learning and reading classes for frontier guardians.

Chapter 5 is on ‘The infrastructure of the Sandomierz Frontier-Guard Brigade’. Quite a focus is put on the role of Sandomierz as the Brigade’s location site. This produced considerable implications for the town’s importance – the numerous consequences including construction projects. Subsequent buildings emerged over the years for the use of the FG Brigade. Thus, some locals of Sandomierz had their jobs provided. To make the reader better aware of it, the author quotes extensive contracts for construction or lease of buildings for the FG Brigade of Sandomierz.

The last, sixth, chapter is titled ‘Customs Orthodox churches in Zawichost and Sandomierz’. Described is the role played by the Orthodox Church, with an emphasis on its quite deep penetration into the lives of each official or clerk. This was true also with customs and frontier service employees. First, an Orthodox church in Zawichost was formed; after the Brigade moved to Sandomierz, the church was moved there as well. Religious activity of frontier guardians consisted mainly in participa-

tion in church services. Officers acted sometimes as church *starosts*. Moreover, once a parish custodial committee was established, affiliated to the church, ordinary functionaries were among those involved in its activities. A soberness brotherhood which propagated a life without alcohol was also established.

Extensive annexes attached at the book's end complement the volume's content. The first is 'Profiles of officers and medical doctors of the Sandomierz Frontier-Guard Brigade in 1889 to 1914', presenting bios according to the pattern: confession/religion; date and place of birth; social background; institutions of completed education; officer's ranks, and when obtained; the course of the services; state decorations received; marital status – all in all, information as contained in personal files. There are a total of 173 bios of officers, 13 of medical doctors, and 8 of veterinarians.

The second annex is 'Profiles of parish priests, deacons and psalmists of the Orthodox church in Zawichost and *Sandomierz, 1851– 1914*'. *The bios encompass: first name and surname; date and place of birth; social background; state institution of completed education; clerical institution of completed education; date of deaconate orders; date of priestly orders; date the title of *protoyerei* was granted; course of service; functions/positions held in the diocesan and decanate administration; functions/positions held in the governmental and clerical schooling/education system; marital status; children; prizes/awards received; date and place of death.* There are ten bios in sum. Next, this same annex presents the profiles of nineteen Orthodox-Church deacons and psalmists of the Orthodox church in Zawichost and Sandomierz.

The tables that follow (nine in total) contain the data related to the Zawichost/Sandomierz Frontier-Guard Brigades' full-time jobs, structure, number of parishioners, officers, or lease of premises. Photographs and illustrations complement the volume.

The author has queried Polish and foreign archives, in: Sanki-Petersburg, Moscow, Lviv, Vilnius, Warsaw, Łomża, Kielce, Jędrzejów, Sandomierz, Lublin, Łódź, Płock, Radom, Suwałki, Włocławek, Zamość, searching through parish and Civil-Records-Office archives. Also, he has made use of numerous printed sources in Russian, the press, memoirs, and internet resources. This strenuous many-years job has enabled Krzysztof Latawiec to collect the materials for his book, which has filled a considerable gap in the historiography of the Congress Kingdom.