

## POLISH CUSTOMERS OF LE PAGE'S MANUFACTORY

## Summary

In the library of the Army Museum in Hôtel des Invalides in Paris a document is kept related to the history of French gunsmithing that is also of considerable value to Polish military researchers. That document is *Livre de Commande de Octobre 1796 à Octobre 1825 (Le Page)*, no. 381, Bibliothèque des Archives – i.e. the ledger of orders placed with the workshop of Le Page over thirty years at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The archives of the Army Museum have a dozen or so gunsmiths' order ledgers, the oldest of which is the above. Jean Le Page was one of the leading Parisian gunsmiths of the age; he began working in the trade in the second half of the eighteenth century in his father's workshop.

*Livre de Commande...* is a 4° ledger (fig. 1), possibly missing the first page, containing 177 sheets of handmade lined paper hand-numbered *par folio*. The orders all seem to have been entered by one person, probably Le Page himself. It is not a book of accounts, but comprises a body of systematically kept notes written in the first person, evidently for personal use.

This order ledger is worthy of study owing to the considerable number of Polish names among those ordering weapons from the renowned gunsmith over the period 1796–1825, and it is this aspect of the source that this analysis covers. The following Polish names figure in *Livre de Commande...* (in order of entry): Mochetinsky, Krasinsky, Stanislaw Prosczkura, Dulski, Zoltinsky, Branicki, Martin Tarnowski, Isidore Sobański, Louis Sobański, Joseph Gorayski, Komar, Francois Potoski, Edouard Starzynski, Francois Sobański, Alexandre Russanowski, D. Dobienski, Maurice Szymanowski, Moczenski, Leon Baykofs [!], Artur Potosky, Alex. Sobański, Benisławski Alexsandre, Moczenski. Beside some of the names are Le Page's notes explaining the client's connections with other Poles he already knew, or the annotation "Polonais". In a few instances it has been possible to identify the client, despite the extreme paucity of the information for the most part (e.g. "married to ...", "owner of the estate in ..."). Others are doubtful, while the remainder are not mentioned in any other sources with which the author is familiar.