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POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH.
POLITICAL GAMES, SOCIAL COMMUNICATION,
DIPLOMACY

Edited by
Aleksandra Ziober and Alessandro Boccolini



EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: LA RIVISTA

Il Comitato redazionale e scientifico è lieto di presentare al pubblico la rivista scientifica *Eastern European History Review*.

Con un carattere internazionale e interdisciplinare, una cadenza annuale e una fruibilità *open access* la rivista focalizza i propri interessi sulle dinamiche occorse nell'Europa Orientale durante tutta l'età moderna (XIV-XIX). *Eastern European History Review* è espressione del Centro Studi dell'Università della Tuscia CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna) nato nel 1997 per intuizione del Prof. Gaetano Platania, Direttore Emerito della Rivista.

L'iniziativa editoriale che presentiamo nasce dall'evidente mancanza in Italia di una rivista scientifica relativa alla storia dell'Europa centro-orientale in Età Moderna, nonostante la penisola abbia giocato un ruolo fondamentale per la Storia e la Cultura di una parte integrante del continente, a torto considerata come lontana e periferica.

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EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: THE JOURNAL

The Editorial and Scientific Board are proud delighted to present the *Eastern European History Review* under the aegis of Sette Città Editore.

The *Eastern European History Review* is an international and interdisciplinary annually online and open access peer-reviewed journal about studies on Central and Eastern Europe in the Modern Age (XIV-XIX). The Journal is also the expression of the Study Center CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna – Center Study on the Age of Sobieski and Modern Poland) of the University of Tuscia, born in 1997, from an idea of Prof. Gaetano Platania, today Director Emeritus of this journal.

It publishes articles with significant approaches and original interpretations in all research fields concerning Central and Eastern Europe, with specific attention to the History sciences.

The editorial initiative we present comes from the obvious lack of a journal, in Italy, concerning the history of Central and Eastern Europe during the Modern Age, this despite its fundamental role in the history and culture of that part of the continent, wrongly considered distant and peripheral.

Quite the contrary is true, in fact. Main objective of the journal is to create a space for reflection and discussion on topics pertaining to Central and Eastern Europe, but also relations with Continental Europe, encouraging dialogue between scholars and experts in the field, and between different approaches of scientific research.

The Editorial and Scientific Board

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**FABRIZIO PAOLUCCI: AN EXTRAORDINARY NUNCIO IN THE POST-INTERREGNUM
POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH (1697–1698)**

ABSTRACT

This article explores the aftermath of the tumultuous interregnum following John III Sobieski's death, culminating in August II Wettin's election as king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. His Protestant faith and perceived reluctance to conflict with the Turks raised significant concerns within the Holy See. In this context, the mission of Monsignor Fabrizio Paolucci, appointed as extraordinary nuncio to Warsaw, is crucial for understanding the efforts to unify a divided kingdom post-election and to assess the new sovereign's initial actions. The study primarily focuses on Paolucci's endeavours, drawing on previously unpublished correspondence between him and the Vatican's Secretariat of State, alongside insights from Jesuit theologian Carlo Maurizio Vota, who served as secretary to August II Wettin.

KEYWORDS: Fabrizio Paolucci; Holy See; Extraordinary nuncio; Interregnum; August II Wettin.

Following the tumultuous “interregnum” after John III Sobieski's death¹, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth elected Friedrich August Wettin, Elector of Saxony², as its new sovereign. This selection was complex, as the kingdom was deeply divided, raising concerns of a potential civil war. The Jesuit Carlo Maurizio Vota³, who previously served as theologian and secretary to the late Sobieski and was then confirmed in this role by the new king, had articulated these apprehensions in his correspondence with Cardinal Protector Carlo Barberini⁴.

1 The available literature on the period following the Sobieski interregnum is extensive, making it impractical to list it here. Therefore, I would direct to my forthcoming publication, *Roma e Varsavia. La diplomazia pontificia dall'interregno al regno (1696–1697)* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2025), for a more comprehensive exploration of these topics.

2 On the figure of the new Polish King, see: Jacek Staszewski, *August II Mocny* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1998). In particular, Stephan Flemmig, “Mit Konversion und Bestechung zur Krone. Die Bemühungen Augusts des Starken um den polnischen Thron”, *Neus Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte*, 90 (2019): 65–88.

3 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini”, Warsaw 9 VII 1697, f. 95r; BAV, Fondo Boncompagni-Ludovisi, F. 42, “Polonia. Memorie delle turbolenze di quel regno degli anni 1697 e 1698”, f. 16v.

4 Antonio Merola, “Carlo Barberini”, in DBI, vol. 6 (1964), 171–72.

The Saxon King-elect has declared me his Confessor and requires my presence near him, an honour I never dreamed of since I have never seen His Majesty. I have written to the Queen's Majesty, whom I am still serving and on whose will I depend, together with that of Our Father General⁵.

In the lead-up to the election, Rome maintained cautious expectations. The conversion issue of the Protestant Wettin to Catholicism – influenced more by pragmatic interests than by genuine conviction⁶ – left the Holy See lukewarm and awaiting clarification. However, this uncertain stance was unsustainable, particularly following August's decisive victory over his adversaries. On September 15 1697, this reality was solidified when the newly elected King formally received the crown during a religious ceremony at the cathedral of Krakow⁷. Cardinal Barberini directly received news of this event from Vota, who emphasized its significance by detailing the attendance of numerous influential figures who supported Wettin in his election and representatives from European countries who actively aided in his ascension to the throne. In addition, Vota underscored the connection between Wettin and Christian piety, noting the King's public reception of Holy Communion.

Your Eminence will receive from the Duke Bishop of Giavarino the following news: the coronation of the King was a resounding success, taking place on the 15th with the full participation of the Senate, twelve Deputies, and countless nobles. The Ambassador Cesareo served His Majesty with the envoys from Denmark, Lorraine, the Elector of Arnord, and various Princes of Saxony. Additionally, Prince Liesenstin, the Envoy of the King of the Romans, and the Duke of Saxony Mersburg, cousin of the King, were present. The event was marked by immense pomp and applause. His Majesty displayed exemplary piety, having publicly taken holy communion twice within eight days. The banquet held for all the Grandees of the Kingdom and the homage paid to them by the City was truly reflective of the occasion's grandeur⁸.

5 «Il Re eletto Sassone ha dichiarato me suo Confessore e mi chiama appreso di sé. Ed io che mai me lo sarei insognato poiché non ho mai veduta Sua Maestà. Ho scritto alla Maestà della Regina cui servo, dalla cui volontà debbo dipendere e da quella del Nostro Padre Generale». BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota a C. Barberini, Warsaw 30 VII 1697, f. 101v.

6 Cf. Augustin Theiner, *Storia del ritorno alla Chiesa Cattolica delle Case Regnanti di Brunswich e di Sassonia [...]* (Roma: Tipi della S. Congregazione di Propaganda Fide, 1849) See the cited work of Stephan Flemmig.

7 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6620, "Relazione dell'ingresso solenne in Cracovia e della susseguente incoronazione del re di Polonia Augusto Elettore di Sassonia", ff. 220r-221r. On the ceremony see also the Nuncio's correspondence: AAV, Segr. di Stato. Polonia, vol. 118, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Krakow 22 IX 1697, f. 486r.

8 «Dal Signor Duca Vescovo di Giavarino riceverà Vostra Eminenza col presente espresso la nuova distinta della felice coronazione del Re seguita ai 15 del corrente col concorso del Senato, dodici Deputati e infiniti nobili [...]. Servirono pure Sua Maestà gli Ambasciatori Cesareo e di Brandeburgo co' gl'Inviati di Danimarca, Lorena, Elettore di Arnord e di vari Principi di Sassonia, com'anco il Principe Liesenstin Inviato del Re de' Romani e il Duca di Sassonia Mersburg cugino

This communication served as a clear signal to the Curia, which remained ambivalent and uncertain regarding the legitimacy of the Elector of Saxony's "abjuration". The abandonment of Protestantism in favour of Catholicism was a fundamental requirement for his election as sovereign of a kingdom predominantly aligned with the Church of Rome.

Various foreign powers' interventions significantly influenced the diplomatic negotiations, culminating in the election of Friedrich August as sovereign. This process unfolded amidst stark contrasts and evident misunderstandings⁹, ultimately leading to the new ruler assuming governance with a diminished consensus, particularly from Michał Radziejowski, the Primate of the Kingdom¹⁰. The anxiety surrounding the potential election of his rival – the candidate favoured by the Court of Versailles – prompted the Elector to forge alliances among traditionally anti-French princes within the Empire and with England and Low Countries¹¹. Notably, Brandenburg and Russia endorsed this coalition; this is substantiated by reports from ordinary nuncio Giovanni Antonio Davia¹² regarding the Russian resident Alexei Nikitin, who expressed strong opposition to the election of the Prince of Conti and even threatened war against Poland-Lithuania¹³. Moreover, Vota's

del Re. La pompa e il plauso sono stati grandissimi. Ma la pietà di Sua Maestà esemplarissima essendosi comunicata in otto giorni due volte pubblicamente con molta devozione assoluta sacramentalmente da me. Il banchetto a tutti i Grandi del Regno, l'omaggio resoli dalla Città ieri sono stati corrispondenti nello splendore. Non subito della somma consolazione di Sua Santità e di Vostra Eminenza» BAV. Barb. Lat.6564, C.M. Vota a C. Barberini, Krakow 17 IX 1697, f. 109r.

- 9 The nuncio assured Rome of the new Polish King's conversion, noting that most of Wettin's court ministers were Catholics, and the Electress would soon convert. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Warsaw 4 VII 1697, ff. 172r-174v.
- 10 On him, see: Krzysztof Rafał Prokop, *Polscy kardynałowie* (Kraków: WAM, 2001); Kazimierz Śmigiel, *Słownik biograficzny arcybiskupów gnieźnieńskich i prymasów Polski* (Poznań: WBP, 2002); Roman Kawecki, *Kardynał Michał Stefan Radziejowski (1645–1705)* (Opole: Świętego Krzyża, 2005).
- 11 Ludwig von Pastor, *Storia dei papi dalla fine del Medioevo [...]*, vol. XIV/II (Roma: Desclée, 1932), 498.
- 12 Davia arrived in Warsaw following John III Sobieski's death and served as nuncio for four years, tackling issues like the commendatory abbeys and the nuncio's role and prerogatives. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Roma 3 luglio 1696. On his nunciature see the following two volumes edited by Wojciech Kęder, *Acta Nuntiaturae Poloniae*, t. 37, vol. I: (13 II 1696–28 XII 1696) (Cracoviae: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2004), and vol. II: (23 VI 1696–18 V 1697) (Cracoviae: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona 2010).
- 13 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Warsaw 25 XI 1696, f. 106r. On the role played by the Tsar during the election of the new Polish sovereign, see Lucien Ryszard Lewitter, "Peter the Great and the Polish Election of 1697", *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. 12/2 (1956): 126-43. Amid

correspondence confirmed Tsar Peter's adamant stance through his representative in Warsaw, underscoring the potential for military intervention should Conti be elected – particularly given that the Tsar viewed him as a genuine “enemy of the Christian League”¹⁴.

A crucial moment in Roman-Polish relations transpired on January 13, 1698, when Pope Innocent XII Pignatelli retracted his previous reservations regarding the Elector of Saxony. Maintaining those reservations would have further risked Rome's interests. In a Consistory meeting, the Pope publicly retracted his earlier position on the new King, accompanied by August's correspondence from the previous year, manifesting his loyalty to the Church¹⁵. This shift was documented in a handwritten “Avviso” dated January 18, which also noted the appointment of Monsignor Fabrizio Paolucci as extraordinary nuncio, tasked with facilitating “pacification” between the newly sovereign ruler and the Primate, who had opposed Wettin's election.

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The Congregation of State convened on Monday to discuss the affairs of Poland, which can now be deemed concluded. His Holiness has appointed Monsignor Paolucci, currently the Nuncio in Cologne, as the Extraordinary Nuncio in that Kingdom and has conferred upon him the Bishopric of Ferrara¹⁶.

On the Roman side, perspectives evolved following an initial period of uncertainty. Jesuit Carlo Maurizio Vota emerged as the intermediary for this new direction, confirming the Elector's and the Court's satisfaction regarding the papal recognition of Wettin as the sole King of Poland

His Majesty expresses profound gratitude for the assistance provided to his Envoy during the public Audience and on all other occasions. He extends his heartfelt thanks to the Pontiff for the generous graces bestowed upon him, acknowledging him as King. In the Sacred Consistory, he delivered a discourse filled with Divine Spirit and celestial sentiments directed towards him and the entire Kingdom. He urges Your Eminence to confirm his deep appreciation for the goodness

this turmoil, Tsar Peter had arrived in Regiomonte to meet the Elector of Brandenburg «and observe our progress. Upon hearing the news of the double election, he said to the Elector: “Frederick, my brother, which of these do you approve of?” The Saxon replied the Elector. Immediately afterwards, the Tsar ordered a huge cup of wine to be brought and drank it to the health of the Saxon King» [«osservando questi nostri andamenti. Intesa la nuova d'ambe le elezioni disse all'Elettore così: *Federico fratello mio quale di questi approvi tu!* La Sassonica disse quell'Elettore. Allora il Czar comandò che si portasse una grandissima tazza di vino e la bevve alla salute del Re Sassone»]. BAV, Bar. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota a C. Barberini, Warsaw 16 VII 1697, ff. 96v-97r.

14 BAV, Bar. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota a C. Barberini, Warsaw 16 VII 1697, f. 97r.

15 BNVE, Fondo Avvisi Marescotti, vol. 789, Rome 1 II 1698, f. 253v.

16 «Si radunò lunedì la Congregazione di Stato sopra gli affari di Polonia quali rispetto a questa Corte possono dirsi terminati avendo, come si disse, Sua Santità destinato Nunzio Straordinario in quel Regno Monsignor Paolucci ora Nunzio in Colonia con avergli conferito il Vescovato di Ferrara». BNVE, Fondo Avvisi Marescotti, vol. 789, Rome 18 I 1698, f. 249r.

of His Holiness. He assures you that he will dedicate all his efforts to uphold the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, promote the glory of the Holy See, and fervently propagate the holy faith, even at the cost of his own life, against the common enemy¹⁷.

The Roman Court, adapting to political realities, aimed to restore its previously strained relations with Poland-Lithuania, seeking alignment on conventional diplomatic paths¹⁸. Consequently, Saxony announced the appointment of Count Jerzy Stanisław Dzieduszycki as extraordinary ambassador to the Pope and various courts in Italy to announce the election officially¹⁹.

Following this, Father Alessandro Salaroli of the Theatine Order was dispatched by the newly elected King to negotiate crucial matters with the Curia concerning several abbatial nominations traditionally held by the King but contested by Rome²⁰. However, Dzieduszycki's visit did not meet the expectations of the papal Court. Complaints arose regarding perceived disrespect shown by the Pole, particularly towards Carlo Barberini, the Kingdom's protector, who subsequently communicated his grievances to the Primate²¹. Nuncio Monsignor Davia was inadvertently embroiled in the ensuing diplomatic tensions between Rome and Warsaw, threatening personal interactions with Father Vota²². To mitigate the incident's severity in Rome, Davia endeavoured to portray to Barberini that the offence stemmed from the young ambassador's ignorance of proper protocol rather than intentional disrespect, emphasizing the necessity to avoid further conflicts²³. Conversely, Barberini upheld his position, asserting that the affront had been severe and directly affecting his role within the Curia and his protective actions for the

17 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Warsaw 4 III 1698, f. 143r-v.

18 AAV, Lettere di Principi, vol. 128, August II Wettin to Innocent XII, Warsaw 20 II 1698, ff. 30r-31v. Copy BAV, Barb. Lat. 6573, f. 103r-v.

19 BNVE, Fondo Avvisi Marescotti, vol. 789, Rome 25 I 1698, f. 251r.

20 In a printed "Avviso", we read that the Pope received Salaroli on 27 December 1698. AAV, Fondo Albani, Avvisi a stampa, vol. 64, "Relations veritables [...]", Rome 16 I 1699, 51-52. On January 10, 1699, Spada wrote to Warsaw informing the nuncio of Salaroli's arrival in Rome and of the meeting with the pontiff. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 112, F. Spada to G.A. Davia, Rome 10 I 1699, f. 68r-v.

21 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6653, C. Barberini a M. Radziejowski, Rome 18 IV 1699, ff. 219r-20r.

22 The Jesuit informed the protector that Wettin had reconfirmed him as his confessor. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6657, C.M. Vota a C. Barberini, Krakow 7 VIII 1697, ff. 411r-12r.

23 The incident was not to be attributed to the will of the new King. On the contrary, in the first days of February, the Jesuit Vota wrote to Barberini, to whom he sent a personal letter signed by August Wettin to be delivered «to His Beatitude accompanied by expressions of zeal and favour for the Catholic Religion» [«a' piedi di Sua Beatitudine e accompagnare delle sue espressioni circa il vero suo zelo e favore della Religione Cattolica»]. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Warsaw 18 II 1698, f. 142r.

Kingdom. In a letter, he communicated to Wettin his disapproval, lamenting the incident as a substantial insult to the “sacred person of the pontiff”²⁴. In truth, what Barberini did not accept was the perseverance of the Polish envoy who, once back home²⁵, continued to support his own beliefs.

While seemingly minor, the Barberini/Dzieduszycki clash was a source of considerable concern for the Holy See²⁶. Monsignor Davia assessed the incident as urgent, comparable to other pressing issues facing the Commonwealth. Consequently, he took the initiative to mediate between the conflicting parties, communicating to the Protector that he had engaged in a serendipitous meeting with Dzieduszycki to seek a resolution for the common good²⁷. August II was acutely aware of the situation²⁸; the king personally intervened by sending a letter of commendation to the Protector, explicitly condemning the actions of his envoy²⁹. On May 24, 1698, Spada informed the extraordinary nuncio Paolucci of a communication he received from Protector Barberini, which conveyed Wettin’s decision to revoke Dzieduszycki’s diplomatic powers³⁰. Despite resolving this awkward confrontation, the underlying tensions between the Polish and papal courts remained pronounced. Under August II, Rome was mainly focused on ensuring that the new political trajectory of the Commonwealth maintained a favourable orientation towards Western alliances and did not pivot towards the influence of Peter’s Russia. This concern was

24 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6653, C. Barberini to August II Wettin, Rome 18 IV 1699, ff. 221r-22r.

25 Before returning to Warsaw, the Polish representative visited various cities and capitals of Italy. The Barberini papers preserve a detailed account of this tour. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6620, “Relazione del giro fatto per l’Italia dopo la partenza da Roma del conte Dzieszdoszicki. Inviato straordinario di Augusto II re di Polonia alla Santa Sede et alli Principi di Fiorenza, Lucca, Modena, Venezia, Mantua e Parma per dar parte alli medesimi della sua elezione al detto regno”, ff. 260r-72r.

26 For this reason, Barberini wrote to the Jesuit Vota to «be grateful for his protection for the justice that I ask of His Majesty and to implore pardon if, in this state of affairs, my dignity obliges me to see the King repair so many burdens and prejudices towards my person» [«essergli favorevole della sua protezione nella giustizia che ne demando a Sua Maestà et impetrar condono se in tale stato di cose il proprio mio decoro m’obliga a vederlo riparare da tanti aggravii e pregiudizi infertimi»]. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6653, C. Barberini to C.M. Vota, Rome 18 IV 1699, ff. 220v-21r.

27 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6644, G.A. Davia to C. Barberini, Warsaw 24 III 1699, ff. 160r-161r.

28 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 24 V 1698, ff. 288r-89r.

29 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6620, August II Wettin to C. Barberini, Warsaw 24 V 1699, f. 85r. Vota also wrote to the protector confirming the King’s censure of his envoy, BAV, Barb. 6564, C.M. Vota a C. Barberini, Gdańsk 25 III 1698, f. 149r. Later, the King confirmed that his envoy’s diplomatic faculties had been revoked. Ibid., Warsaw 24 IV 1698, f. 155r.

30 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 24 V 1698, ff. 288r-89r.

underscored by the meeting in Rawa at the close of 1698 between Wettin and the Tsar, highlighting Augustus II's ambition to influence the younger Peter. Intimately, the Saxon sovereign aspired to expand his control over an empire that extended from Saxony through Poland-Lithuania to the opposite shore of the Baltic³¹.

The meeting in Rawa marked a crucial opportunity for August Wettin to increase his political stature and realign his strategic focus towards the Baltic region, thereby undermining the longstanding anti-Turkish policy of the Commonwealth, which held significant importance for the Holy See. This occasion deepened relations between Warsaw and Moscow, laying the groundwork for a joint Baltic initiative. Evidence of this newfound alliance was reflected in the warm reception the two sovereigns afforded each other³², as indicated by correspondence from Vota to the cardinal protector.

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The Tsar arrived at lunchtime the following morning, August 10, without any formalities as he preferred. After being conducted to his lodgings, the King promptly visited him. The exchange between them was filled with tenderness, embraces, kisses, and profound expressions of love that can hardly be believed. The Tsar, driven by profound esteem and sympathy for the King, established a friendship beyond brotherly bonds. He continuously embraced and kissed the King, expressing his intention to place himself under his care and pledging his unwavering support. Lunch took place in the King's room, attended by both Majesties, General Fort and the Grand Chancellor of Moscow, along with ambassadors, the Prince Bishop of Javarin, and the Duke of Wirtsenburg, general of the King's armies. The King and the Tsar dined alone in the evening, showcasing even more signs of friendship. In the ensuing days, the Tsar was entertained in various ways, which included a review of the Royal Guards regiment and multiple battalions featuring military exercises and mock combats³³.

31 Riccardo Picchio, *L'Europa orientale dal Rinascimento all'Età Illuministica* (Milano: Vallardi editore, 1970), 358.

32 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6672, Avvisi pubblici e privati, Lviv 20 VIII 1689, f. 192r.

33 «Il Zar arrivò solo la mattina seguente 10 agosto all'ora del pranzo. Fu condotto senza in-contro e senza formalità di cerimonie com'egli bramava al suo alloggiamento. E dopo brevi momenti fu visitato dal Re. Non sono credibili le tenerezze, li abbracciamenti, li baci, e l'espressioni d'amore che si fecero. Prevenuto il Zar della stima del Re e portato da simpatia, strinse subito con esso un'amicizia più che fraterna non cessando d'abbracciarlo e baciarlo a ogni tratto e dicendoli ch'era venuto quasi solo con pochissimi de' suoi a' porsi nelle di lui mani e fidarli la sua vita essendo pronto altresì a servirlo in suo bisogno con cento e più mille combattenti. Il pranzo fu nella stanza del Re. Sedettero con ambi le Maestà, il general Fort et il Gran Cancelliere di Mosca, ambasciatori col principe vescovo di Giavarino el duca di Wirtemberg generalissimo degli eserciti del Re. La sera il Re et il Zar cenarono soli con perpetui segni di amicizia più che fraterna. Nei giorni seguenti che furono due, si diedero divertimenti al Zar in più maniere e si fece la rassegna del re-gimento delle guardie regie e d'alcuni battaglioni». BAV, Barb. Lat. 6672, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Rawa 11 VIII 1698, ff. 185r-186r. The Jesuit also informed the Secretary of State, Cardinal Spada, of the Moscow Tsar's arrival in Rawa. See, Augustin Theiner, *Monuments historiques relatifs aux règnes d'Alexis Michaélowitch, Féodor III et Pierre le*

Furthermore, nuncio Davia reported to Rome about the amicable dialogue he engaged in with Tsar Peter³⁴, which the Holy See interpreted as a genuine overture from the Tsar to reestablish direct diplomatic relations with Rome³⁵. By the conclusion of 1698, the Turkish front had stagnated for an extended period, highlighting the increasing indifference of the Saxon sovereign towards this issue. In the ongoing conflict against the Ottoman Turks, the Confederates employed a strategic approach characterized by alternating military engagement and diplomatic overtures³⁶. Reports from Jan Paweł Gomoliński³⁷, the Polish envoy to the Viennese court, indicated persistent rumours regarding Leopold of Habsburg's willingness to pursue peace with the Sultan³⁸. Such a development would yield significant advantages for Vienna, which sought to extricate itself from the Ottoman problem to further its dynastic claims on the Spanish throne³⁹, currently occupied by the ailing Charles II of Habsburg-Spain. This objective was increasingly pressing for Vienna as it aimed to curtail the burgeoning ambitions of Louis XIV, who, disillusioned by the outcomes of the Congress of Rijswijk on September 20, 1697, viewed the acquisition of the Madrid throne as a crucial opportunity for France's political rehabilitation. Consequently, the potential for a diplomatic confrontation between Paris and Vienna raised critical concerns regarding the stability of European peace, thereby underscoring the necessity for Rome to resolve the Wettin question in the east and to restore internal order within the Commonwealth. In this context, Pope Pignatelli, in February 1698, had decided to place alongside the Ordinary Nuncio Davia, Fabrizio Paolucci, as "extraordinary, then papal representative in Cologne"⁴⁰.

Grand [...] (Rome: Imp. Du Vatican, 1859), 382-385, and Evgenij Šmurlo, Rossiya i Italija: sbornik istoriceskih materialov i izsledovanij [...] (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografija imperatorskoj akademii nauk, 1911), t. III/1, doc. n. 652, 515-17.

- 34 The meeting between the Tsar and the nuncio Davia took place in Princess Zamoyska's castle. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Lviv 19 VIII 1698, f. 452r-v. Copy in APF, Scritture riferite nei Congressi: Moscovia, Polonia e Ruteni, vol. 2, ff. 576r-78v.
- 35 Davia questions whether to recognize Peter as Tsar, a title historically held by Moscow's princes, adding that the imperial court and Polish authorities (later also Venice) had acknowledged it. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Lviv 19 VIII 1698, f. 455v.
- 36 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Warsaw 4 XI 1698, f. 557r-v.
- 37 Adam Przyboś, "Jan Paweł Gomoliński", in PSB, vol. 8 (1959-1960), 270.
- 38 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Lviv 26 VIII 1698, ff. 456r-66r. In November, Gomoliński highlighted Leopold of Habsburg's intentions to seek peace with the Sultan. The news was transmitted to Cardinal Spada by the nuncio Davia, who, on the contrary, had expressed Wettin's will to continue the fight against the Turks. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Warsaw November 1698, f. 557r-v.
- 39 BAV, Urb. Lat. 1695, "Ragioni dell'imperatore Leopoldo sopra la successione del Re di Spagna al Sommo Pontefice Clemente XI", ff. 27r-48r.
- 40 On the nunciature in Cologne, see Lèon H. Halkin, *Les Archives des Nuntiatures*

Monsignor Paolucci was characterized by various opinions regarding his capabilities and intentions. To some observers, he was viewed as a shrewd and diplomatic politician; to others, he was seen as a purely ambitious individual. This last opinion, in particular, was expressed by Abbot Baglioni to the cardinal legate of Bologna, Giacomo Boncompagni⁴¹; above all, however, by Orazio d'Elci, a well-known "arcade" and author of the collection "Le vite de' cardinali"⁴². In his analysis, d'Elci posits that Paolucci's political success is more contingent upon the influence of his uncle, a cardinal, and the patronage of Monsignor Carlo Agostino Fabroni⁴³, the formidable secretary of Propaganda Fide than on Paolucci's intrinsic abilities⁴⁴. Paolucci's ecclesiastical career commenced with significant roles, reflecting a trajectory marked by early and notable achievements. On April 9, 1685, Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi appointed him as bishop of Macerata, subsequently transitioning him to oversee the administration of Fermo. His subsequent assignments included the nunciature in Cologne and an extraordinary mission in Warsaw, aimed primarily at restoring internal peace within the kingdom following the complex election of Augustus II Wettin⁴⁵. This mission commenced in Cologne, where Pope Innocent XII issued *Instructions* for Paolucci to proceed to Warsaw expeditiously, emphasizing the necessity of fostering devotion to the Church of Rome among the new monarch's advisors⁴⁶.

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Let the personalities most trusted by His Majesty be observed so [the nuncio] recognizes their inclinations and ensures that the King utilizes those with piety and veneration towards the Apostolic See, particularly in matters of religion, while keeping away those who lack these qualities⁴⁷.

(Bruxelles-Rome: Bibliothèque de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome/Academia Belgica, 1968), 63-4.

- 41 BAV, Fondo Boncompagni-Ludovisi, E. 119, Baglioni to G. Boncompagni-Ludovisi, Rome 15 I 1698, ff. 306r-07v.
- 42 BAV, Vat. Lat. 7440, "Orazio d'Elci. Vite de' Cardinali viventi nell'ultimo anno di pontificato di PP. Innocenzo XII (1699)", ff. 1-300r. Copies in Ibid. Vat. Lat. 13078, Vat. Lat. 13659, Ottob. Lat. 2686, and Urb. Lat. 1631.
- 43 On him Pietro Messina, "Carlo Agostino Fabroni", in DBI, vol. 44 (1994), 12-7.
- 44 BAV, Vat. Lat. 7440, "Vite de' Cardinali", f. 289r.
- 45 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia. Additamenta, vol. 4, s.l., s.d, ff. n.n.
- 46 AAV, Fondo Albani, vol. 193, "Istruzione data dalla Segreteria di Stato a Monsignor Paolucci vescovo di Ferrara destinato nunzio straordinario in Polonia per l'elezione del nuovo re dopo la morte di Giovanni III", ff. 11r-4r.
- 47 «[...] ben'osservando quelli che nodriscono le persone più confidenti alla Maestà Sua affinché riconosciuta la loro inclinazione s'apra a lei l'adito d'insinuar e far opera che massime nelle materie di religione si prevaglia la Sua Maestà di soggetti esemplari per la pietà e per la venerazione verso la Sede Apostolica tenendo da sé lontani quelli ne' quali o non concorrono sì fatti pregi o cada alcun dubbio della rettitudine delle loro intenzioni» AAV, Fondo Albani, vol. 193, "Istruzione", ff. 11-2r.

On February 9, 1698, while in Cologne, Paolucci confirmed receipt from the Secretariat of State of a bill of exchange amounting to 22,730 Polish florins, along with additional instructions that would enable him to undertake his diplomatic mission more effectively.

Furthermore, he acquired letters from Rome designated for the ordinary nuncio Davia, in addition to several papal briefs and letters of introduction for the Polish sovereign and key figures at court⁴⁸. Paolucci declared his readiness to depart for Warsaw, thoroughly equipped for his journey⁴⁹. Numerous reports sent to Cardinal Spada, the Secretary of State, provide detailed accounts of Paolucci's journey⁵⁰. He travelled through Frankfurt to the Abbey of Fulda, located 80 kilometres from Kassel⁵¹, made a stop in Erfurt⁵², and proceeded to visit the courts of the three princes of Saxony – Eisenach, Gotha, and Weissenfels⁵³.

On March 9, he was in Breslau, welcomed by Francesco-Luigi, bishop and count palatine of Pfalz-Neuburg, and by his brother Karl-Philip. Here, Paolucci received a letter from Cardinal Spada dated March 1, in which the Pope expressed satisfaction regarding Paolucci's previous engagements in Cologne and urged him to expedite his journey to Warsaw⁵⁴. On March 18, Paolucci entered the Polish capital⁵⁵, where he was reverently welcomed by the local nobility, who remained in the city without the king, who had relocated to Danzig⁵⁶. Paolucci expressed disappointment at

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48 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Cologne 9 II 1698, f. 1r-v.

49 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Cologne 9 II 1698, ff. 2r-3v.; Ib., Fabrizio Paolucci to F. Spada, Frankfurt 17 II 1698, ff. 8r-v.

50 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Frankfurt 17 II 1698, f. 8r-v.

51 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Erfurt 24 II 1698, f. 9r-v.; Ib., AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Lipsia 28 febbraio 1698, f. 10r-1r.

52 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Erfurt 20 II 1698, f. 9r-v.

53 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Leipzig 28 II 1698, f. 10r-1r.

54 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 187, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 1 III 1698, f. 3r-v. Paolucci hoped to arrive in Warsaw at least in eight or nine days. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Bratislava 9 marzo 1698, f. 15r-v.

55 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 18 III 1698, f. 16r-v. An "Avviso" from the kingdom also reports the news of the court's absence from the capital. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6672, Avvisi pubblici e privati, Warsaw 25 III 1698, f. 239r-v.

56 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6565, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Gdańsk 25 III 1698, ff. 149r-50v. On the same subject, Ib., Barb. Lat. 6626, August II Wettin a C. Barberini, Warsaw 6 V 1698, f. 18r-v. See also, BAV, Barb. Lat. 6672, Avvisi pubblici e privati, f. 139r-v.

the absence of Augustus II⁵⁷, as he had anticipated initiating discussions with the sovereign to address the pressing issues at hand⁵⁸.

His determination and eagerness to embark on his diplomatic mission were particularly commended by the Secretariat of State, which firmly believed in Paolucci's potential to mediate between the positions of the king and the Primate, thereby fostering peace in the region⁵⁹.

Paolucci's diplomatic mission in Poland, while ultimately successful, was fraught with challenges from the outset. Initial rumours suggested his close ties to the pro-French faction, positioning him as unsympathetic to the requests and stances of the newly appointed king.

You, too, will have received the inventions against your person. In particular, and despite your role as extraordinary nuncio, you would be a faithful minister of France and, as such, have never done a good service for His Majesty and the peace of the Kingdom. Although unfounded and improper, these rumours have brought bitterness to Our Lord. His Beatitude, although he is persuaded that at the first meeting with the King, these rumours will dissipate – also by making known the orders received – invites everyone to join the party of Obedience to the King⁶⁰.

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In Rome, however, Paolucci relied on steadfast support from his long-time associate Fabroni and the backing of the Pope and Cardinal Spada, the Secretary of State⁶¹. Conversely, d'Elci seized every opportunity to critique Paolucci's efforts

57 AAV, Segr. di Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 23 III 1698, f. 18r-v.

58 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 8 IV 1698, f. 28r.

59 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6672, Avvisi pubblici e privati, Warsaw 18 III 1698, f.137r-v.

60 «Anche a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima saranno senza dubbio pervenute alla notizia le invenzioni che si sono poste in campo contro di lei medesima, cioè che possa essersi rappresentato a cotesto Re ch'ella sebene è mandata e comparsa costà col carattere di nunzio straordinario di Nostro Signore, ad ogni modo in sostanza sia Vostra Signoria Illustrissima un vero ministro per la Francia e come tale non mai abbia d'affatigarsi per buon servizio della Maestà Sua e per la quiete del regno. Questi concetti, benché insussistenti et impropri, hanno recato contuttociò qualche amarezza all'animo zelantissimo di Nostro Signore il quale, se bene si persuade che al primo abboccamento con Sua Maestà possa aver conosciuto la medesima e la volontà di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, e gl'ordini precisi et inculcati di Sua Beatitudine, perché ella sia intieramente del Re e procuri con tutta l'industria et efficacia possibile di tirar quelli che non vi sono al partito ed alla ubbidienza della Maestà Sua ch'è l'unico fine per cui l'ha mandata costà». AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 3 V 1698, f. 286r-v.

61 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, Additamenta, vol. 4, Anonymous to Bishop Fabroni, s.d., s.l., ff. n.n.

in Poland-Lithuania. The Arcadian accused the extraordinary nuncio of failing to meet specific objectives and suggested that Paolucci's ambition to return to his homeland compromised his ability to protect the interests of the Church of Rome in the Commonwealth⁶². This assessment of Paolucci's performance is unjust. A thorough examination of his actions reveals his significant contributions towards achieving the primary goal of his mission⁶³. Upon his arrival in Poland-Lithuania, Paolucci immediately dedicated himself to fostering internal reconciliation within the kingdom, skillfully mediating between the new king and the Primate⁶⁴. He consistently updated the Secretariat of State on his progress. For instance, on April 16, he reported his success in convening a preliminary committee for the general diet – Pacification – held in the royal palace, attended by representatives from Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the Marshal of the Crown⁶⁵. Moreover, Paolucci established direct communication with Cardinal Radziejowski⁶⁶, dispatching his auditor, Abbot Bernardino Guinigi, to articulate the conditions necessary for achieving national Pacification. A central demand placed upon the Primate was to inform the king of France and Prince Conti regarding the necessity of recognizing Wettin as Poland's sole sovereign⁶⁷. Subsequently, Radziejowski needed to pledge loyalty, as many senators of the kingdom had already done⁶⁸. Despite his acknowledgement of the urgency of taking decisive actions, the Primate expressed grievances concerning the court's decision to confiscate the properties of individuals associated with his political faction.

The Polish Cardinal perceived this action as a personal affront to his dignity as

62 BAV, Vat. Lat. 13659, "Vite de' Cardinali", ff. 119v-122r. Lorenzo Cardella, *Memorie storiche de' Cardinali della Santa Romana Chiesa*, vol. 8 (Roma, Stamperia Pagliarini, 1747), 75-76.

63 AAV, Fondo Albani, vol. 193, "Istruzione", ff. 12v-13r.

64 The instruction clearly stated that it would be necessary to restore peace and reconciliation between Wettin and that part of the nobility who did not «concur in the election of His Majesty and who are admitted and received into His Royal Grace, especially Cardinal Radziejowski as Primate of the kingdom» [«concorse nell'elezione della Maestà Sua sian ammessi e ricevuti nella sua real grazia, specialmente il Signor Cardinale Radziejowski col dovuto riguardo alla dignità cardinalizia e autorità di primate»]. AAV, Fondo Albani, vol. 193, "Istruzione", ff. 12v-13r.

65 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 22 IV 1698, ff. 52r-7v. August II Wettin entered Warsaw on April 15, intending to attend the so-called Pacification Diet. Paolucci thus had the opportunity to speak to him privately, and he was well-received by the King. AAV, Segr. di Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 15 IV 1698, ff. 42r-4v.

66 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 3 V 1698, ff. 9v-10r.

67 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 6 V 1698, f. 233r.

68 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 1 V 1698, f. 309r-v.

an ecclesiastic and the Primate. While Paolucci verbally assured Radziejowski of his commitment to resolving the matter⁶⁹, his efforts are well-documented in his correspondence. The mediation process proved challenging and intricate; nevertheless, the diplomatic endeavours conducted, both publicly and privately, culminated in signing an agreement between the king and his opponents. This agreement was subsequently ratified in Łowicz⁷⁰, where August II Wettin and Michał Radziejowski laid out the terms of their accord⁷¹. The long-awaited agreement was met with great jubilation throughout the Warsaw court, prompting the Jesuit Vota to inform Cardinal Barberini of the joyful announcement of the *Gaudium Magnum*, the pacification made in Lovicz⁷². Vota urged the cardinal to notify Pope Pignatelli about this significant development.

The King instructs Your Eminence and Cardinal Spada to convey his gratitude to His Holiness, reserving to elaborate it further in a subsequent correspondence. Your Eminence will undoubtedly find great satisfaction in this acknowledgement, reflecting the esteem the King holds for an esteemed Protector of Our Kingdom⁷³.

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Despite the evident satisfaction with the agreement⁷⁴, several issues remained unresolved. Primary among these were the disputes between the Primate and Monsignor Stanisław Dąbski, the bishop of Kuiavia, and the ongoing conflicts within the Lithuanian nobility involving certain magnates and the Sapieha family. These

69 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 15 IV 1698, f. 298r-v.

70 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 13 V 1698, f. 261r-v; Ibid., vol. 117, “Diario delle Sessioni tenute in Lowitz per l’unione universale della Polonia il mese di maggio 1698”, ff. 311r-19v, (in Latin at ff. 322r-32v.). On May 27, the nuncio informed Rome, reporting in detail, on the reconciliation. Ibid., vol. 120, “Minuta della Relazione”, Warsaw 27 V 1698, ff. 108r-111r.

71 Paolucci noted that the key details of the agreement include the nobility’s recognition of the King as legitimate, with His Majesty renouncing any hereditary claim to the crown. Other points address private matters, electoral promises, and various claims to be discussed at the next diet. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 20 V 1698, f. 273r.

72 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Warsaw 17 V 1698, f. 16or.

73 «Il Re prega Vostra Eminenza et insieme il Cardinale Spada a rendere grazie a’ piedi di Sua Santità a suo nome riserbandosi di scriverlene più ampiamente coll’ordinario prossimo. So che Vostra Eminenza n’avrà una gran consolazione come Protettore d’un Regno che tanto le deve e anco vedo d’un Re che tanto la stima venera e ama». BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Warsaw 17 V 1698, f. 16or.

74 The agreement was celebrated with a lavish banquet in Wilanów, attended by many nobles and the extraordinary nuncio. Paolucci’s detailed account highlighted Wettin’s courtesy towards him, reflecting gratitude towards the Holy See. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, “Minuta di una relazione”, Warsaw 27 V 1698, f. 109r-v.

issues demanded Paolucci's attention; failure to address them posed the risk that the Lithuanian army might not adhere to the directives from the Warsaw court»⁷⁵. On June 24, 1698, Paolucci reassured Cardinal Fabrizio Spada that he had taken steps to address these matters, successfully facilitating a confrontation among the involved parties⁷⁶. Nevertheless, a resolution was still needed regarding Wettin's insistence that the Primate swear obedience through a public act – a request met with resistance from Radziejowski, who, while not dismissing the possibility, opposed the public ceremonial context in which such an oath would be administered.

The promise of fidelity demanded of the cardinal was a prominent issue, possessing significant political ramifications that could risk the stability of the agreement between the Primate and the new sovereign. The supporters of Wettin had advocated for the oath, and although the ecclesiastic expressed a willingness to proceed, he deemed the “private form” a critical precondition⁷⁷. Through the mediation of Paolucci, August II recognized the necessity of not overly burdening the Primate and accepted the ecclesiastic's stipulation. This moment marked a crucial point for the nation, which, having established internal peace, could redirect its focus toward addressing pressing concerns, particularly the anti-Turkish commitments previously undertaken by John III Sobieski. To emphasize the significance of this undertaking and to acknowledge the diplomatic accomplishments of the extraordinary nuncio, August II awarded Paolucci a diamond cross valued at 8,000 scudi⁷⁸ during a banquet held at Wilanów, the residence cherished by the late John III⁷⁹.

In Rome, Pope Innocent XII, through Secretary of State Spada, expressed considerable satisfaction with the resolution of the affair⁸⁰. His approval was mainly directed at

75 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 24 VI 1698, f. 149r.

76 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 24 VI 1698, f. 149r-v. The Secretariat of State responded to the extraordinary nuncio's letter dated July 12, expressing satisfaction with Paolucci's mediation on the problem that had arisen within the Lithuanian nobility and urging the nuncio to reach a solution soon. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 187, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 12 VII 1698, f. 22r-v.

77 The primate's counter-proposal had caused some perplexity, so much so that the Council, which had already been set, was postponed to a date to be determined. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, “Minuta di Relazione”, Warsaw 27 V 1698, f. 109r-v.

78 Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica [...] da S. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni*, vol. 51 (Venezia: Tipografia Emiliana, 1851), 145; Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, vol. XIV/II, 479, 498-500; Giuseppe Pecci, *La casa dei Carboli. Saggio storico-genealogico* (Roma: Fratelli Treves Editori, 1934), 153.

79 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, “Minuta della Relazione”, Warsaw 27 V 1698, f. 109r-v.

80 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 187, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 7 VI 1698, ff. 16r-17v. Father Vota also informed the protector of the kingdom's “pacification” and the meeting between the sovereign and the cardinal primate. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Warsaw 20 V 1698, ff. 162r-63v.

the complex political and diplomatic endeavours executed by his extraordinary nuncio. Consequently, Paolucci's mission, hailed as being "admired as an Angel of Peace"⁸¹, was effectively concluded, prompting his preparations for return to Italy. Furthermore, Vota corroborated the excellent performance of the papal representative, who was deemed "full of merit and glory" as he departed Warsaw⁸². At the same time, Orazio d'Elci once again criticized the timing of Paolucci's departure⁸³. It is important to acknowledge that while the nuncio was eager to return to Italy, his instructions originated from the Secretariat of State, which, on behalf of Pope Pignatelli, requested his presence in Vienna to meet with the Emperor. In Rome, an appointment as cardinal awaited him; Spada himself proposed this advancement as a reward for his exemplary work in a nation teetering on the brink of civil strife⁸⁴.

The resolution of ongoing tensions between the papal and Polish courts rested firmly in the hands of nuncio Davia and cardinal protector Carlo Barberini. Their efforts were further bolstered by the involvement of the Jesuit Vota, who served as theologian, confessor, and personal secretary to August Wettin, thereby positioning him as a key intermediary between Rome and Warsaw⁸⁵. Among the pressing issues requiring attention was the contentious matter of abbey appointments⁸⁶, with particular emphasis on the royal request to elevate the king's cousin, Christian August von Sachsen-Weitz, bishop of Giavarino, to the cardinalate. Though consistent with the established tradition of "crown nominations", this request was met with circumspection by the Holy See. The recent memory of the controversies surrounding prior cardinal nominations – including those concerning Henri de

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- 81 Coronelli documented the electoral diploma from the primate of the kingdom, dated Warsaw 26 June 1699, noting the significant appreciation shown towards nuncio Paolucci. Vincenzo Maria Coronelli, *Biblioteca universale sacro-profana* [...], vol. 7 (Venezia: a spese di Antonio Tivani, 1706), 258-59.
- 82 In the same letter, the Jesuit informed Barberini of the King's desire to move quickly to quell the conflicts in Lithuania and the movement of the troops quartered waiting to clash with the Turks. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Lviv 22 X 1698, f. 193r. The king's plan would have changed after learning of the presence of the troops of the Elector of Brandenburg in the vicinity of Elbing. Ibid., Lviv 28 X 1698, f. 198r.
- 83 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 16 VIII 1698, ff. 191r-93v.
- 84 AVV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 187, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 30 VIII 1698, f. 34r. Paolucci would later be named cardinal of the title of SS. Pietro e Paolo. Cf., Cardella, *Memorie*, 55-59.
- 85 Vota will congratulate Barberini for his work in the service of the King of Poland. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Lviv 14 X 1698, f. 192r.
- 86 In his correspondence from July 1, 1698, Paolucci asserts that the criticisms of his failure to address all issues stem from pressure from Vota. He clarifies that the unresolved matters fall under the responsibility of the ordinary nuncio. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 1 VII 1698, ff. 162r-63r.

la Grande d'Arquien, the father of Marie Casimire Sobieska⁸⁷, and the bishop of Beauvais, a representative of Louis XIV at the Sejm of 1674 during the election of John III Sobieski⁸⁸—significantly influenced the Holy See's cautious stance.

Despite the recognition of Paolucci's commendable efforts by the pontiff, his tenure as nuncio was marred by significant criticisms, particularly regarding unresolved abbey appointments. The extraordinary nuncio consistently attempted to convey that this matter fell outside his jurisdiction, asserting it as a responsibility designated to the ordinary nuncio and not addressed within the instructions he received prior to his assignment in Poland-Lithuania. The Cardinal Secretary of State further corroborated this stance⁸⁹. Orazio d'Elci emerged as a principal critic of Paolucci's handling of affairs, with numerous curia members expressing dissatisfaction with the nuncio's performance. Noteworthy complaints included allegations of Paolucci's premature departure from Warsaw without adequately addressing pressing matters, such as ongoing conflicts in Lithuania and disputes between the Primate and the Bishop of Kujavia. However, the most pressing concern revolved around the unresolved abjuration of Protestantism by Electress Christina Eberardina of Brandenburg-Bayreuth⁹⁰ and the expectation that the young heir to the electoral throne would follow his father's path toward Catholicism. As late as June 1698, uncertainty continued to shroud the Electress's decision-making process. Paolucci exerted considerable effort to facilitate a resolution favourable to Rome, even engaging King August II in discussions about the issue. He was unsuccessful despite the king's attempts to persuade his wife to convert and join him in Warsaw as a Catholic.

His Majesty has sincerely confided that he does not see at present any disposition close to the conversion of the Queen. The king doubts that it will be easy to introduce her, thereby remaining in Saxony, but he would be inclined to have her

87 Gaetano Platania, *Polonia e Curia Romana. Corrispondenza di Maria Kazimiera Sobieska [...] con Carlo Barberini protettore del regno (1681–1699), e il soggiorno romano di una famiglia polacca in esilio* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2016), 51–66.

88 Gaetano Platania, "Polska, Francja, Stolica Apostolska i złożone „negozio” w sprawie kapelusza kardynalskiego dla Jansona de Toussaint, biskupa Beauvais, w nieopublikowanych dokumentach archiwum Barberinich", in *Polska-Francja-Europa. Studia z dziejów Polski i stosunków międzynarodowych*, eds. Macieja Koryckiego, Agnieszki Jakuboszczak, et al. (Poznań: UAM, 2011), pp. 118–136,

89 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Forlì 13 XI 1698, f. 296r.

90 On the Electress of Saxony, Franz Otto Stichart, *Galerie der sächsischen Fürstinnen; biogr. Skizzen sämtlicher Ahnfrauen des kgl. Hauses Sachsen* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1857); Franz Blanckmeister, *Kurfürstin Christiane Eberhardine von Sachsen: eine ev. Bekennerin* (Barmen 1892); Johannes Meyer, *Frauengestalten und Frauenwalten im Hause Wettin* (Bautzen: Weller, 1912); Paul Haake, *Christiane Eberhardine und August der Starke: eine Ehe tragödie* (Dresde: Heinrich, 1930).

come here even before her conversion⁹¹.

The indecision exhibited by Christina generated significant anxiety among the Polish nobility, notably concerning Primate Radziejowski, who opposed the presence of a heretical queen in Poland-Lithuania. The failure of the Electress to convert would necessitate the protection of her followers' rights to practice their religion, potentially threatening the Catholic faith in the Country⁹².

While Paolucci indicated a desire to return to Rome, he was nonetheless compelled to confront this critical issue, pending explicit instructions from the Secretariat of State. In light of the challenges, August II proposed a pragmatic solution whereby his wife could arrive in Warsaw with the stipulation of practising heresy privately, a plan extending to the Saxon ministers accompanying her. Paolucci regarded the king's proposal as an appropriate response to the complex political landscape. Conversely, Primate Radziejowski viewed this situation as an opportunity to critique the new sovereign, insisting on a discussion within the General Diet. His proposals were met with substantial resistance from Wettin⁹³.

Compounding the situation was the issue of young Frederick, who had been educated in the Lutheran faith under his mother's guidance, having been born before his father's conversion. The Saxon court regarded August's conversion with unease, perceiving the proposed abjurations of both the Electress and Frederick as substantial threats to future Saxon interests⁹⁴ and the stability of Protestantism⁹⁵.

Rome maintained a keen interest in the unfolding dynamics between Christina Eberardina and Augustus II⁹⁶, recognizing that the outcome would have far-reaching

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91 «La Maestà Sua mia ha con tutta sincerità confidato che non vede per ora disposizione prossima alla conversione della Regina e che dubita che restando in Sassonia né pur sarò facile d'introdurla, che però inclinerebbe a farla venir qua ancor prima della sua conversione». AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 1 VII 1698, ff. 162r-63r.

92 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 24 VI 1698, ff. 342r-44r.

93 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 24 VI 1698, ff. 342r-44r. After Paolucci's departure, nuncio Davia reported that the nobility was agitated with the sovereign for allowing the influx of Saxons into the kingdom. Davia also indicated that the Primate might reignite the conflict with the sovereign regarding the religion of the Saxons. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 4 XI 1698, f. 361r-v.

94 Karl Czok, "August der Starke und Kursachsen. Aufgeklärter Absolutismus und kirchlich-religiöse Toleranzpolitik bei August dem Starken", in *Sachsen und die Wettiner. Chancen und Realitäten (Sondernummer der Dresdner Hefte)* (Dresden: Eigenverlag, Kulturakademie des Bezirkes Dresden, 1990).

95 The Holy See had made Wettin aware of the need to authorize opening a place of worship in the electoral territory intended for Catholics only. In December 1699, a compromise was reached: the Elector authorized Catholics to practice their worship but only in the palace's private chapel in Dresden. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6571, Avviso di Polonia, Warsaw 22 XII 1699, f. 312r-v.

96 See: Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, "Enlightenment, Emancipation, and the Queen

implications for the Commonwealth and the Electorate of Saxony. Consequently, Paolucci was tasked with advocating for the conversion of Christina and her son to Catholicism. Although this issue would ultimately be resolved for Frederick several years post-Paolucci's return to Italy, it provided additional fodder for Orazio d'Elci's criticisms of the nuncio's performance.

Fabrizio Paolucci would undoubtedly have served God, the Holy See and the interests of that country very well, if the rush to return to Rome, hoping to become a cardinal, had not left some questions unresolved. Above all, the possibility of reintroducing the Catholic faith in Saxony, recognizing the Elector as king of Poland without any promises⁹⁷.

242 Despite Paolucci's inability to fulfil this final objective, it is noteworthy that Rome acknowledged his efforts to foster internal peace within the kingdom.

Following the order to depart⁹⁸, he journeyed to Krakow, subsequently traversed Olmütz⁹⁹, and ultimately arrived in Vienna on the evening of September 28, 1698¹⁰⁰. In correspondence with Secretary of State Spada, he reported that Monsignor Paolucci was received amicably by Leopold I of Habsburg-Austria and the imperial court. This account contrasts the observations of Count Elci, who stated that Paolucci's reception in the imperial capital was tepid, as he was perceived to be overly aligned with French interests¹⁰¹. Regardless of the differing assessments, Paolucci seized the opportunity in Vienna to engage publicly with the emperor and the nuncio Santacroce while meeting privately with several ministers to circumvent the ceremonial delays¹⁰².

Following his departure from Vienna, Paolucci took the longer yet more manageable

Consort", in *Enlightenment and Emancipation*, eds. Susan Manning, and Peter France (Lewisburg: Buchnell University, 2006), 119-25.

97 «Certo è che Fabrizio Paolucci averebbe fatto in Polonia ottimamente il servizio di Dio, della Santa Sede e di quella Patria se per la soverchia furia di tornare a Roma con l'evidente speranza d'esser subito promosso alla Sacra Porpora non gli avesse fatto precipitare quei negozi, quali per l'accelerata partenza restorono imperfetti perciocché concerneva la manutenzione della nostra Santa Fede Cattolica in quel regno e suoi stati adiacenti, come ancora per la riparazione della medesima in Sassonia, dove si sarebbe potuto far molto in onore della incoronazione e patteggiato Re, come doveva, tanto più per essere la Maestà Sua benissimo intenzionata». BAV, Vat. Lat. 13659, "Vite de' Cardinali", ff. 119v-22r.

98 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Krakow 16 IX 1698, f. 273r.

99 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 187, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 11 XI 1698, f. 36r-v.

100 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Vienna 4 X 1698, f. 277r-v.

101 BAV, Vat. Lat. 13659, "Vite de Cardinali", ff. 119v-122r.

102 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Vienna 4 X 1698, f. 277r.

route through Tyrol¹⁰³. On October 28, he communicated from Mantua¹⁰⁴, then proceeded to Forlì, where he paused to await the arrival of his luggage. By November 13, after learning that his belongings had arrived in Ferrara, he resumed his journey to Rome, arriving shortly thereafter to present himself before the Pontiff¹⁰⁵.

103 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Vienna 4 X 1698, f. 277r-v.

104 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Mantua 28 X 1698, f. 286r.

105 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Forlì 13 XI 1698, f. 296r.

ABBREVIATION

AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano.

Segr. Stato: Segreteria di Stato.

APF: Archivio Storico della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide.

BAV: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

Barb. Lat: Barberino Latino.

Ottob. Lat.: Ottoboniano Latino.

Vat. Lat.: Vaticano Latino.

BNVE: Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele" di Roma.

DBI: Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani.

PSB: Polski Słownik Biograficzny.

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