

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.

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.

This Special Issue of *Eastern European History Review* deals with the history of diplomacy and its executors – diplomats (ambassadors, legates, nuncios, internuncios, agents and others) – in the seventeenth century's Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

As a state conglomerate culturally and politically, closely connected to Western Europe, and for its specific institutional form of a “noble republic”, the Commonwealth has created, in the field of diplomatic practice, institutions, principles and ceremonies unique in the European context.

The focus of the volume is the historiographic stream of the *New Diplomatic History*, without withdrawing from classic approaches that remain an important field of research.

Tracing the salient moments and facts of the complex history of the seventeenth century of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the volume – with the participation of authors from different parts of Europe and beyond – constitutes an international opportunity to reflect on issues and topics of old and new diplomatic history.

Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (XVII century) constitutes a result of the research activity and scientific collaboration inherent to the project directed by Dr Dorota Gregorowicz *The Holy See and the crisis of sovereignty of John II Casimir Vasa and Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki's election (1660–1669)*, n. 2018/28/C/HS3/00176, financed by the National Science Centre, Poland.

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DIPLOMATS AND DIPLOMACY

IN THE EARLY MODERN POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH (XVII CENTURY)

Edited by

Dorota Gregorowicz and Alessandro Boccolini



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Via Santa Maria in Gradi 4 – 01100 Viterbo
www.easterneuropeanhistory.eu
eehr@unitus.it

Edizioni **SETTE CITTA**
Via Mazzini 87 – 01100 Viterbo
t. +39 0761 303020 – info@settecitta.eu

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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.

Consapevoli di questo, il Comitato ha posto quale obiettivo primario della *Eastern European History Review* quello di offrire uno spazio di riflessione e di discussione su temi che appartengono alla storia dell'Europa centro-orientale, e insieme alle relazioni - politiche e culturali - che questa vasta area del Vecchio Continente ha avuto con l'occidente d'Europa, e l'Italia in particolare, incoraggiando il dialogo tra studiosi e esperti di settore, e tra differenti approcci della ricerca scientifica.

Il Comitato Redazionale e Scientifico

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.

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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.

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INTRODUCTION

The crisis of political history, particularly profound since the 1960s and the subsequent cultural turn, has penalised the scientific investigation of “international” relations¹ in the early modern period for many years². Over the last decades, though, there have been several calls for new methodological and conceptual approaches to diplomatic studies, some of them extraordinarily fruitful and inspiring³. Nowadays, as Tracey Sowerby observed, «the *New Diplomatic History*, no longer so new, has become a broad church. It has successfully integrated wider concerns into a field that was once dominated by the study of bureaucracy and foreign policy»⁴. Integrated, but not replaced, which is also essential to emphasise. That is mainly why scholars no longer consider diplomacy and foreign policy making as coterminous, but do assimilate plenty of different aspects diplomatic practice entailed.

One cannot notice that from the point of view of contemporary research on the early modern history of diplomacy, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth constitutes an interesting phenomenon that has not been sufficiently developed yet, especially in the international forum of researchers along with their various historiographical traditions. There are still many blank spots in exploring this topic, which remain open to a contemporary historian. This special issue of *Eastern European History Review* seeks to encourage a more profound reflection on particularities and significance of the Polish-Lithuanian diplomatic practice in the early modern period, especially during the seventeenth century, by conveying into conversation an international set of scholars from Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Australia, interested in various aspects of diplomatic history. By bringing consciousness of diplomatic agency to bear on various areas of cultural and political practice, our authors have pressed their research beyond the horizons of their “national histories” that continue to dominate most treatments of premodernity.

On the threshold of the early modern period, *Rzeczpospolita* found itself among the political entities that adopted the praxis of permanent diplomatic missions exchange very late (only in the eighteenth century), relying on the old system of extraordinary embassies, of medieval provenance. However, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was no exception on a European scale. The general rules for foreign relations’ conduct appeared similar in Portugal, Scotland, Hungary, Scandinavia (Sweden and Denmark), Switzerland, and several German states⁵.

Federico Chabod considered the permanent diplomatic service, next to the professional army and elaborated bureaucratic apparatus, as the basis for the affirmation of the “early modern state”⁶. *Rzeczpospolita* did not possess any of these elements, but can it be denied the character of statehood from a historical point of view⁷? Subsequently, for Matthew Smith Anderson, the history of early

1 I put the word “international” in quotation marks, considering the imperfection of this concept for the analysis of political relations in early modern Europe. Cf. Tracey A. Sowerby, “Early Modern Diplomatic History”, *History Compass*, 14, 9 (2016): 444.

2 Stefano Andretta, *L'arte della prudenza. Teorie e prassi della diplomazia nell'Italia del XVI e XVII secolo* (Roma: Binklink, 2006), 7.

3 Karl W. Schweizer and Matt J. Schumann, “The Revitalisation of Diplomatic History”, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 19, 2 (2008): 149-86; John Watkins, “Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe”, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38, 1 (2008): 1-14; Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, “A New Diplomatic History and the Networks of Spanish Diplomacy in the Baroque Era”, *The International History Review*, 36, 4 (2014): 603-18; Dorothea Nolde, “Was ist Diplomatie und wenn ja, wie viele? Herausforderungen und Perspektiven einer Geschlechtergeschichte der frühneuzeitlichen Diplomatie”, *Historische Anthropologie*, 21, 2 (2013): 180-98.

4 Sowerby, “Early Modern Diplomatic History”, 441.

5 Giuseppe Galasso, “Le relazioni internazionali nell’età moderna (secoli XV-XVIII)”, *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 111, 1 (1999): 10.

6 Federico Chabod, *Idea di Europa e politica dell’equilibrio* (Bologna: Mulino, 1995).

7 Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society. A Comparative Historical Analysis* (London-New York: Routledge, 1992), 185-86: «The kingdom of Poland had increased its power and influence by a dynastic union with Lithuania and expansion eastward, and had made itself the principal bulwark of Latin Christendom on the eastern marches. But the heterogeneous population, the dual governmental structure of Poland-Lithuania and the practice of elective monarchy prevented its consolidation into an effective stato». Cf. Jan Sowa, *Fantomowe ciało króla. Peryferyjne zmagania z*

modern diplomacy constituted a slow but increasingly evident evolution towards the system of permanent representation. He considered contacts between polities that failed to conform to that model «less developed ones, [...] where diplomacy was less important and diplomatic organisation more primitive». Anderson believed that from the point of view of diplomatic practice, one could speak of two “separate Europes” and that «between these two Europes there were as yet only slender links»⁸. Nowadays, historiography views the issue of permanent diplomatic posts in a significantly different way. As Riccardo Fubini suggests, the general deficiency of institutionalisation of the then diplomacy makes the equality of residency and modernity dubious⁹. Also, Sowerby appropriately stated that «the exchange of resident ambassadors did not extend across all of Europe. Rather, asymmetrical relations were not uncommon within Europe and continued to be so into the eighteenth century»¹⁰.

Therefore, nothing could be more erroneous than assuming the passivity of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on the “international” arena of early modern Europe. The young Polish Vasa dynasty, the more as it functioned within the elective monarchy, manifested a strong need to affirm its position on the European forum. Moreover, the necessity to maintain intensive contacts with foreign partners was caused by the continuous involvement of *Rzeczpospolita* in armed conflicts on various fronts. Due to its geopolitical position, the vastness of the territory and the leading role for the implementation of the Catholic Reform, Poland-Lithuania occupied a distinctive part in the entire system of “international” relations of early modern Europe. All the more so, its specific tradition and political practice concerning the implementation of foreign policy, conducting diplomatic activity outside its borders, as well as accepting foreign legations *in loco*, requires further attention of contemporary historiography.

The special issue of *Eastern European History Review*, *Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (XVII century)*, opens with a group of articles regarding some general institutional and technical aspects of the functioning of the Polish-Lithuanian diplomatic service.

Dorota Gregorowicz (*Diplomacy of the Commonwealth, Diplomacy of the King: the Peculiarity of Foreign Policy Making in the Seventeenth Century Poland-Lithuania*) deals with the topicality of research on the history of diplomacy in the early modern Poland-Lithuania, in the context of scant development of permanent diplomatic missions. The article presents considerations on the subjectivity of the *ius legationis* in *Rzeczpospolita*. Gregorowicz reflects on the competencies of the monarch and of the Commonwealth (personified in the *sejm* and Senate councils) in this matter. To this end, she primarily analyses the content of the sixteenth – and seventeenth-century parliamentary constitutions regarding the conduct of foreign policy. Moreover, the article refers to political practice as a determining factor for the legal structure of Poland-Lithuania.

The Union of Lublin (1569), as the basis for the execution of a joint diplomatic activity of the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, is analysed by Marius Sirutavičius (*Partnership in a Union with Diverging Interests: Cooperation between the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Diplomatic Activities at the Turn of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*). The author emphasises the initially divergent interests of both states in addressing the directions of the foreign policy of *Rzeczpospolita* (especially concerning contacts with Muscovy) and their influence on the functioning of the diplomatic service. Moreover, Sirutavičius draws attention to the evolution and gradual uniformisation processes of the Polish and Lithuanian visions of conducting foreign policy,

nowoczesną formą (Kraków: Universitas, 2011). According to Sowa, «the concept of the “ghost body of the King” [inspired by Ernst Kantorowicz] marks a notional horizon in which *Rzeczpospolita* presents itself as a non-existent state entity, or in the process of its disappearance, utterly unsuitable for any modern form of social, political and economic organisation, which took shape in Europe from the early modern age, with the nascent capitalism and parliamentarism» (285). Sowa’s perspective is certainly interesting, although historically not sustainable. Translation in English is of the author.

8 Matthew S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy 1450–1919* (London-New York: Longman, 1993), 27–8.

9 Riccardo Fubini, *La “residentialité” de l’ambassadeur dans le mythe et dans la réalité: une enquête sur les origines* (Paris: PUF, 1998); Id., “Diplomacy and government in the Italian city-states of the fifteenth century (Florence and Venice)”, in *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, eds. Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 26–8.

10 Sowerby, “Early Modern Diplomatic History”, 442.

which took place in the initial period of the reign of Sigismund III Vasa, pointing to the multilateral origins of those developments.

The problem of the source material's characteristics for studying the history of diplomacy is discussed by nunciatures' specialists Henryk Litwin and Paweł Duda in a joint article *Correspondence of Warsaw Nuncio Antonio Santa Croce with Roman Catholic Bishops from 1629 – Frequency, Intensity and Content*. The researchers focused on the analysis of "internal" correspondence maintained by the apostolic nuncio with hierarchs of the Polish-Lithuanian Catholic Church, underlining its parallel importance in relation to the mainstream canals of diplomatic information exchange (between the Polish-Lithuanian periphery – nunciature's chancellery and Roman centre – Secretariat of State).

Finally, the first part of the book includes the reflection of Michał Salamonik on some non-institutional structures and mechanisms of diplomatic activity in the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, along with the case study on the diplomatic context of the postal and news-spreading duties of the Gdańsk merchant and postmaster Francesco Gratta [1613–1676] (*News Agents and Postmasters: Background Figures or Active Diplomats?*).

The second part of this book is devoted to diplomacy as to the art of great politics' conduct and to the geopolitical position of Poland-Lithuania in seventeenth-century Europe. The advantages of diplomatic negotiations as an alternative to pursuing *Rzeczpospolita's* foreign policy in the military field are highlighted here. This group of articles may seem of a more traditional topicality. Still, it is significant to accentuate its emphasis on the multilateral character of early modern diplomatic relations, strongly including the subject of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Miguel Conde Pazos analyses the impact of the Catholic Monarchy's diplomacy on the involvement of *Rzeczpospolita* in the pan-European conflict (*Spanish Diplomats in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Thirty Years' War*). This example perfectly illustrates the breadth of political, economic and dynastic interactions that were determined by the diplomatic activities of all major European countries, even those geographically distant from each other. Conde Pazos also draws attention to the personal profile of diplomats sent on specific missions and to their respective political culture, experience, and preparation for dedicated charges.

The role of political nuances and, at first glance, of less important elements in conducting a diplomatic activity is treated by Ryszard Skowron (*Palatinate: the Key to Europe. On the Art of Diplomacy of Władysław IV Vasa*). The author points to the role of a seemingly secondary German state, as well as to the complicated system of ties between single European states at that time, in the perspective of the implementation of the great political and dynastic plans of the Polish-Lithuanian monarch, primarily related to his efforts to reclaim the Swedish throne. In fact, it is worth observing how the interests represented and defended through early modern diplomatic negotiation were primarily dynastic, typical of the sovereign families that divided the European spaces between themselves¹¹. In his article, Skowron has distinguished two basic categories defining Władysław IV's foreign policy: peace tactics (diplomatic activity and matrimonial policy) and war (military involvement in connection with the events of the Thirty Years' War).

The English point of view on the last years of the Polish Vasas' rule and on the election of 1669 is presented by Aleksandra Ziober (*The Last Years of the Reign of John Casimir Vasa and Interregnum after his Abdication in the Light of Reports of Francis Sanderson and Robert Yard*). The author shows how the image preserved in diplomatic accounts of various backgrounds' services allows us to recreate the historical narrative for many research topics with more detail. Thus diplomacy becomes a way of acquiring knowledge about single courts and state entities. Ziober also refers to the degree of understanding of the particular form and functioning of the Polish-Lithuanian political structures in seventeenth-century Europe.

The universalist-political dimension of the Holy See's diplomats' activity during the short reign of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669–1673) is discussed by Alessandro Boccolini (*Diplomacy and Papal Politics during the "Unfortunate" Reign of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki*). The author analysed the

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Claudio Rosso, "Burocrazia, fiscalità, diplomazia", in *Storia d'Europa e del Mediterraneo. Dal Medioevo all'età della globalizzazione*, sez. 5: *Età moderna (secoli XVI–XVIII)*, vol. XII: *Popoli, stati, equilibri di potere*, ed. Roberto Bizzocchi (Salerno-Roma: Salerno Editrice, 2013), 43.

activity of the then apostolic nunciature primarily in the context of the relations between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, as well as the papal vision of *Rzeczpospolita* as *Antemurale Christianitatis*.

As Barbara Stollberg-Rillinger observed, «another major theme within recent reassessments of early modern diplomacy has been non-verbal communication. The early modern diplomatic ceremonial was essential to the expression of hierarchies»¹². In fact, in the third part of the book, we deal with a set of texts referring to the issues of diplomatic ceremonial, as «in early modern European diplomacy, the relationship between the ceremonial symbols and the mechanisms of power was closer and carried more weight»¹³.

In Marta Szymańska's article, *The Ceremonial of Receiving of Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł and his Stay at the Courts of Western Europe as a Royal Envoy during the Journey of Prince Władysław Vasa 1624–1625*, the diplomatic role of the Lithuanian magnate, member of the Vasa Prince's retinue during Władysław's educational trip around Europe, as well as the diplomatic dimension of the entire enterprise, seemingly unrelated to the implementation of the Polish-Lithuanian foreign policy, are discussed. One of the key aspects of the study is how the ceremonial applied to the Prince's retinue members indicated the diplomatic nature of the expedition.

Mariusz Sawicki (*The Coronation Parliament of John III Sobieski in French-Language Reports Sent to London*) presents a picture of the anointing act and then the entire coronation *sejm* (1676) of the later victor from Vienna. The author shows the image that French diplomats, present at that time in Poland-Lithuania, created in their reports on the events of Sobieski's coronation: its political, social and ceremonial aspects. Interestingly, those reports were sent in London and not in Paris. Sawicki shows himself fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of historical interpreting similar creation that any external observers could create.

Ewelina Sikora (*Feasting and Fasting in Moscow: Peace Negotiation Between Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy as Seen Through Eating and Drinking Customs*) takes up the theme of feasting as an essential element of Polish-Lithuanian diplomatic practice during the missions to Muscovy. The article constitutes an important contribution for developing further research on material culture in the field of the history of diplomacy¹⁴, also in the context of ceremonial treatments and traditional usages.

Finally, Gaetano Platania draws attention to the institution of obedience missions that Polish-Lithuanian kings traditionally sent to the papal court in order to certify their loyalty to the Catholic Church and its superior (*Michał Radziwiłł's Obedience Embassy in the Rome of Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi between Diplomacy and Ceremonial*). The author presents a case study, a picture of the *Rzeczpospolita's* envoy's entry to the Eternal City in 1680, putting Michał Radziwiłł's mission in the large political context of the Holy League's organisation. The ceremonial becomes here an authentic baroque, theatrical representation, still, by no means deprived of its political importance.

The last part of the book is devoted to a series of outstanding personalities of diplomats operating in the context of seventeenth-century *Rzeczpospolita*. Many scholars have adopted an actor-centred approach to inquiry early modern diplomacy, and such career case studies result as extremely useful. Placing ambassadors at the heart of the analysis offers a rich research perspective regarding the relationships they cultivated, their contacts and personal capacities, as well as the individual factor in conducting foreign policy that has always accompanied the great policy's sketches.

Uładzimir Padalinski develops the topic of the diplomatic activity of Mikhayla Haraburda (*Diplomatic Activity as the Basis of Political Advancement and Material Reward in the Sixteenth-Century Grand Duchy of Lithuania: The Case of Mikhayla Haraburda*). It is a specific case study of a multiple envoy of

12 Barbara Stollberg-Rillinger, "Zeremoniell, Ritual, Symbol: Neue Forschungen zur symbolischen Kommunikation in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit", *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 27, 3 (2000): 389-405. Cf. Sowerby, "Early Modern Diplomatic History", 445.

13 Jan Hennings, "The Semiotics of Diplomatic Dialogue: Pomp and Circumstance in Tsar Peter I's Visit to Vienna in 1698", *The International History Review*, 30, 3 (2008), 515.

14 Cf. Harriet Rudolph, "Entangled Objects and Hybrid Practices? Material Culture as a New Approach to the History of Diplomacy", in *Material Culture in Modern Diplomacy from the 15th to the 20th Century*, eds. Rudolph and Gregor M. Metzger (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2016), 1-28.

the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to Muscovy and Crimea. Padalinski shows the dynamics with which the involvement in the implementation of foreign policy could determine both the political career and the social status of a diplomat in the noble context of *Rzeczpospolita*. His study also provides an outstanding example of the Lithuanian ambassador's *cursus honorum*.

Krzysztof Zbaraski's Constantinopolitan mission is examined by Tetiana Grygorieva (*The "Decisive Embassy" of Prince Krzysztof Zbaraski to Constantinople (1622–1623) and European Diplomacy amidst the 'Thirty Years' War*). The article rejects the bilateral vision of Polish-Lithuanian and Ottoman diplomatic contacts, presenting the image of Zbaraski's expedition in a broad European context, including, *inter alia*, political relations of both countries with Transylvania, as well as their involvement in the events of the Thirty Years' War.

Peter P. Bajer presents a diplomatic career as a path of personal development and one of the ways to build a social position in the early modern *Rzeczpospolita*. The author observes the case of foreign newcomers or/and their families (based on the example of Scottish immigration), the desirable result of who was usually obtaining a noble status in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*The Career of Jerzy (George) Bennet, the Scottish Agent of the Radziwiłł Family*)¹⁵.

The diplomatic mission as a field for the realisation of personal interests of a diplomat, in addition to the tasks provided by representing his political superior, is presented by Aleksandra Skrzypietz (*Between the King's Instructions and the Ambassador's Ambition. Cooperation Between Melchior de Polignac and Polish Magnates*). The author shows how diplomatic feedback could have influenced the evolution of the instructions entrusted to ambassadors and, consequently, had a direct impact on their political activity. Skrzypietz presents Polignac not only as a performer but as a co-creator of the French political program towards the *Rzeczpospolita* ruled by John III Sobieski. Finally, she explains the difficulties encountered by ambassadors of foreign countries in approaching the complex political and social context of the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The activities of diplomats of Pope Innocent XI in Poland-Lithuania and at the imperial court, as well as the nature of their regular contacts with the Roman Curia, are presented by Claudia Curcuruto (*Francesco Buonvisi and Opizio Pallavicini. Correspondences and Activities of Two Apostolic Nuncios in the Service of Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi. 1676–1689*). The author focuses on the communicative aspects of the activities of the apostolic nunciatures. She presents diplomats as mediators between radically different (geographically, politically, culturally) realities (not only on the line of the royal/imperial court and the papal court but also between local bishops and the Bishop of Rome – the pope). Finally, the issue of mediation, as one of the crucial elements of early modern diplomatic practice, is presented by Béla Mihalik on the example of the activity of a relative of the Polish-Lithuanian monarch Augustus II the Strong (1697–1706, 1709–1733) – Bishop of Győr, Christian August (*The King's Cousin, the Emperor's Bishop. Christian August of Saxe-Weitz as Mediator between Poland and the Holy See*). It is another text that highlights the problem of the personal interests of diplomats in carrying out their missions. In the case of Wettin, these were primarily the efforts to obtain the cardinal's hat. As observed by John Watkins, «the time has come for a multidisciplinary reevaluation of one of the oldest, and traditionally one of the most conservative, subfields in the modern discipline of history: the study of premodern diplomacy»¹⁶. Contemporary research on the history of diplomacy in the early modern *Rzeczpospolita* is doing quite well, but it still requires a reorientation and innovation of methodological approach. The history of diplomacy should no longer be seen as an abstract account of negotiations and treaties, disconnected from parallel social, economic and cultural aspects. Indeed, as this collection of studies demonstrates, historiography is continually discovering new research fields in matter. Among those contained in the presented volume, we can indicate: legal and institutional forms of early modern “international” relations, nature of diplomatic sources and character of the narrative present in the documents, multilaterality and complexity of the early modern interstate connections,

15 Recently on similar issues: Michał Salamonik, *In Their Majesties' Service. The Career of Francesco De Gratta (1613–1676) as a Royal Servant and Trader in Gdańsk* (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2019); Wojciech Tygielski, *Dylematy włoskiego emigranta. Giovanni Battista Jacobelli (1603–1679), śpiewak i kapelan nadworny, kanonik warmiński* (Warszawa: Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 2019).

16 Watkins, “Toward a New Diplomatic History”, 1.

their religious and confessional nature¹⁷, diplomatic ceremonial and non-verbal communication, tools and techniques used by ambassadors, *people* as direct implementers of the “art of diplomacy”, their *cursus honorum* and mechanisms of social advancement, cultural image expressed in diplomatic documents, social, economic, commercial and dynastic causes that determined political choices, as well as material culture in diplomacy¹⁸. This volume will undoubtedly contribute to the further development of contemporary analysis of these issues. We would like to continue to engage in new methods, ask additional questions, and rethink how early modern Polish-Lithuanian diplomacy is currently being studied.

Dorota Gregorowicz
University of Silesia in Katowice

¹⁷ Cf. *Confessional Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Roberta Anderson and Charlotte Backerra (London-New York: Routledge, 2021).

¹⁸ Cf. Daniela Frigo, “Politica estera e diplomazia: figure problemi e apparati”, in *Storia degli antichi stati italiani*, eds. Gaetano Greco and Mario Rosa (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1996), 117.

Mihalik Béla Vilmos**INSTITUTE OF HISTORY, RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES,
EÖTVÖS LORÁND RESEARCH NETWORK (HUNGARY)****THE KING'S COUSIN, THE EMPEROR'S BISHOP. CHRISTIAN AUGUST OF SAXE-ZEITZ
AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN POLAND AND THE HOLY SEE¹****ABSTRACT**

Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz played a decisive role in the election of his cousin, Augustus II to King of Poland, when he converted Augustus to Catholicism in 1697. Christian August, also a convert, gained the sympathy of the Holy See in the early 1690s, and became Bishop of Győr in Hungary in 1696. After the conversion and the turbulent election of his cousin, the bishop tried to mediate toward the Holy See and helped to consolidate the rule of Augustus II. In return a hope was growing, that Christian August will be elevated to cardinalate with the support of his cousin and the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I. Although Augustus II earlier nominated Johann Philipp von Lamberg, the Bishop of Passau as Polish candidate, the aging Pope Innocent XII admitted also that the cardinalate of Christian August would be “the coronation of his pontificate”. The paper examines the intermediary activity of Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz and his failed nomination to cardinalate.

KEYWORDS: Diplomacy; Holy See; Poland; Conversion; Election.

INTRODUCTION

The *interregnum*, which followed the death of John III Sobieski in 1696 and then the election of a new king in 1697 is a well researched period in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth². The thoroughly explored wide-ranging diplomatic manoeuvres shed lights on several protagonists and background actors, who formed the final decision. One of the episode characters stepped in the spotlight, when Frederick Augustus, the Elector of Saxony had to convert to Catholicism for the sake of his election to the Polish throne. This actor was his second cousin, Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz, then the Bishop of Győr³ in Hungary and an increasingly important and influential figure of the Viennese court. Christian August was the prelate, in whose presence Frederick Augustus abjured the Lutheranism and accepted the Catholic creed on 1 June 1697 in the Loretto Chapel in Baden, near Vienna⁴.

The conversion of Augustus was a key moment for his election, but his cousin seemingly disappeared from the scene. Still his role was not marginal in the following period, because the sincerity of Augustus' conversion became a major issue. The Polish laws ruled out the election of a non-Catholic sovereign, and many of the participants at the Election *sejm* doubted the conversion. Of course this dubiety was fuelled by the oppositionist party and especially its leader, Cardinal Michał Stefan Radziejowski, Primate of Poland, who supported the French candidate, François Louis, Prince de Conti, a distant nephew of Louis XIV, from a cadet branch of the House of Bourbon⁵.

1 This article was supported by the János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

2 Gaetano Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit. Dai Sobieski ai Wettin. La diplomazia pontificia nella Polonia di fine Seicento* (Cosenza: Periferia, 1992), 125-71.; Markus Milewski, *Die polnische Königswahl von 1697* (Wien: Studienverlag, 2008); Francesca De Caprio, *Il tramonto di un Regno. Il declino di Jan Sobieski dopo il trionfo di Vienna* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2014) 291-37.

3 Győr was known in contemporary sources as Raab in German, Giavarino in Italian and Jaurinum in Latin.

4 De Caprio, *Il tramonto di un Regno*, 313. Baden is known today as Baden bei Wien.

5 Milewski, *Die polnische Königswahl*, 142, 149-50.



In this delicate situation it was crucial whether the Holy See will approve the conversion of Augustus. At this point the apostolic nuncio, Gianantonio Davia had a decisive role, because *sejm* requested him to confirm the conversion⁶. Abbot Melchior Polignac, the French ambassador to Poland made no scruples to write a denunciative letter to the Cardinal Secretary Fabrizio Spada, that Gianantonio Davia, the apostolic nuncio to Poland supported Augustus almost openly, thus passing the Catholic country into the hand of a heretic⁷.

The question of the Polish succession obviously was not an indifferent issue in Vienna as well. Although the relation with Sobieski was rather cold in the last decade of his reign, the maintenance of the anti-Ottoman Holy League with Poland and Venice was a crucial question for the Habsburgs. Emperor Leopold I found himself in a two-front war in 1688, when Louis XIV attacked the Holy Roman Empire. After 1691, the campaigns against the Ottoman Empire were mostly unsuccessful, turning into a static warfare. From 1695, Frederick Augustus was the supreme commander of the imperial army against the Ottomans, but his efforts were unsuccessful. During the tense days of the election in Poland, the peace negotiation had been already in progress between the Habsburgs and Louis XIV. But the Viennese court obviously needed a friendly ally on the Polish throne, who did not pose a threat on the Habsburgs and continue the war against the Ottomans more vigorously than John Sobieski in his last years⁸.

In that complex international situation the diplomatic activity of Christian August, Bishop of Győr gained smaller attention, but in terms of the consolidation of the rule of Augustus II. was not irrelevant. Christian August's role in the conversion of the king made him important in the trilateral relations between Rome, Warsaw and Vienna and it might had been decisive in the later career of the bishop. Therefore, first we briefly look over the early phase of his career, then we examine Christian August's diplomatic role in 1697, and finally we explore the background of his nomination as cardinal-candidate in 1699–1700.

THE EMPEROR'S BISHOP

Christian August was born on 9 October 1666 in Moritzburg as a younger son of Duke Maurice of Saxe-Weitz and Dorothea Maria of Saxe-Weimar, thus a member of the Wettin dynasty. Although Christian August was the first cousin of John Georg III, Elector of Saxony, the father of Augustus II, the two princes were in the same age, as Christian August was only four years senior to the future Polish king. As the Electors of Saxony were the heads of the Corpus Evangelicorum in the Holy Roman Empire, the Wettin dynasty was a strictly Lutheran family. However, Christian August had already begun to sympathise with Catholicism in his young age, which did not avoid the attention of his guardian, the Duke of Saxe-Eisenach, who ordered Lutheran preachers to oversee the young prince. The duke also threatened Christian August that if he convert to Catholicism, he will lose his inheritance⁹. Anyway as a younger son, Christian August would not had got too much hope for a remarkable inheritance and therefore initially he was interested in a military career. He joined the Christian armies that marched against the Ottomans and he fought in the siege of the Hungarian capital, Buda, in 1686. Three years later he already was at the western front to fight against the French armies. Despite his military career his interest in Catholicism did not disappear. In 1689, after he attended a homily held by a Jesuit priest in Aschaffenburg, he finally decided to convert. His conversion took place in Frankfurt at the Carmelites on 14 July 1689, but for some years he still kept it in secret in regard to his family¹⁰.

6 De Caprio, *Il tramonto di un Regno*, 320.

7 Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 140.

8 Béla Vilmos Mihalik, "Catholics, heretics and the "common enemy". Papal diplomacy and the Great Turkish War during the papacy of Innocent XII, 1691–1700", in *Confessional Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Roberta Anderson and Charlotte Backerra (London-New York: Routledge, 2021), 40, 44–5.

9 Lakatos Adél, "Sachsen-Zeitz Keresztély Ágost", in *Esztergomi érsekek 1001–2003* [Archbishops of Esztergom], ed. Beke Margit (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2003), 326.

10 Kelemen Atanáz, *Keresztély Ágost herceg katolikus restaurációs tevékenysége a győri egyházmegyében* [Prince Christian

Two years later, probably in relation to the death of his cousin, Elector John George III of Saxony, Christian August publicly converted to Catholicism in Cologne in the presence of the Elector-Archbishop Joseph Clemens of Bavaria. At the same year he was admitted to the priest seminary of Cologne¹¹. With his conversion he gained attention immediately both in Vienna and in Rome. Gianantonio Davia, then the apostolic nuncio to Cologne, highly recommended Christian August to Cardinal Secretary Fabrizio Spada, suggesting that Pope Innocent XII (Antonio Pignatelli) should demonstrate his grace toward the young prince with granting him different indulgencies through the *Dataria gratis*¹². During Christian August's tour to Rome in 1692–1693 the pope also issued in his favour a breve of eligibility. Although he was not ordained to priesthood until 1695, beside the Chapter of Cologne he gained in the following years canonry in Liège (Lüttich), Breslau (Wrocław) and Münster also¹³.

Christian August came into consideration as a possible Grand Master of the Teutonic Order in 1694. He had connections with the Order already in the 1680s, because according to the testament of his father, he succeeded the duke in the evangelical Bailiwick of Thuringia, a territorial unity of the Teutonic Order. Following his conversion Christian August lost immediately his incomes from the bailiwick. In early 1694, Ludwig Anton of Pfalz-Neuburg, then the Grand Master of the Order tried to help the Prince of Saxe-Weitz to regain the administration and the income in Thuringia, but he died before the resolution¹⁴. Following the death of Ludwig Anton, Christian August told Gianantonio Davia, the nuncio to Cologne, that even the Palatinate family had recommended him to Emperor Leopold, although a younger brother of the late Grand Master, Franz Ludwig of Pfalz-Neuburg, then the Bishop of Breslau (Wrocław) had a stronger chance to be the successor. Christian August expected himself to be the next Grand Master, considering that the family of the Elector of Palatinate suffered from the lack of children, and therefore, if Franz Ludwig had to marry, he could not have obtained a papal dispensation as Grand Master¹⁵.

Although finally Franz Ludwig became the Grand Master, the good relationship between Christian August and Pfalz-Neuburgs provided him fructuous connections to the Viennese court. Christian August as an offspring of a Lutheran dynasty had a lack of network of supporters in the Catholic establishment. But his friendly connections with the Pfalz-Neuburg family meant an entry to the Habsburg court, since Ludwig Anton and Franz Ludwig were brother-in-laws of the Emperor through their sister, Empress Eleonore Magdalene of Pfalz-Neuburg. This connection opened the door for a further ecclesiastical career, though not as much in the Holy Roman Empire as in Hungary¹⁶.

After the bishopric see of Győr became vacant in 1695, Emperor Leopold I asking of Hungary nominated Christian August¹⁷. In Vienna it was said to be that the royal nomination was in accordance with the

August's Activity for the Catholic Restoration in the Diocese of Győr] (Pannonhalma: s.n. 1931), 11. Other historians disputed the inner urge and personal conviction of Christian August for his conversion, and emphasized the role of major opportunities for a career as Catholic: William Fischer, "Cardinal Herzog Christian August zu Sachsen-Weitz und die Deutschordensballei Thüringen", *Mitteilungen des Altertumsvereins zu Plauen im Vogtland*, 3 (1882–1883): 18.

11 Kelemen, *Keresztély Ágost herceg*, 11.

12 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Colonia*, vol. 72, Gianantonio Davia to Fabrizio Spada (cipher), Cologne 20 April 1692, f. 47r.

13 Jochen Vötsch, "Christian August von Sachsen-Weitz", in *Sächsische Biografie*, hrsg. vom Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde e.V. Online edition: <http://www.isgv.de/saebi/> (27 March 2021). Christian August stayed in Rome in April 1693, mostly managing ecclesiastical affairs: Friedrich Noack, *Das Deutschtum in Rom seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, vol. I. (Berlin-Leipzig: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1927) 175.

14 Fischer, "Cardinal Herzog Christian August", 15–7.

15 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Colonia*, vol. 77, Gianantonio Davia to Fabrizio Spada, Cologne 23 May 1694, ff. 399r–400r. Most of the brothers from the Pfalz-Neuburg family entered a church career, while Elector Johann Wilhelm II was childless, and his younger brother, Charles Philip had only one daughter.

16 Alessandro Cont, *La Chiesa dei principi. Le relazioni tra Reichskirche, dinastie sovrane tedesche e stati italiani (1688–1763)*, con prefazione di Elisabeth Garms-Cornides (Trento: Provincia autonoma di Trento, 2018) 140–41.

17 The former Bishop of Győr was the influential Viennese statesman, Cardinal Leopold Kollonich, who became Archbishop of Esztergom and thus the Primate of Hungary in 1695: Mihalik Béla Vilmos, "Kollonich Lipót esztergomi érseki kinevezése és Francesco Maria de' Medici bíboros-protector" [The Cardinal-Protector Francesco Maria de' Medici and the Nomination of Leopold Kollonich as Archbishop of Esztergom], *Magyar Sion*, XIV (2020): 323–38. Francesco Maria Abbati, the auditor of the Viennese nunciatur reported the nomination to Rome on 21 April 1696: AAV, *Segreteria di Stato*.

papal intentions, and even the auditor of the nunciature suggested that in case of Christian August they might be able to dispense with the usual personal examination of the candidate¹⁸. But after the prince arrived to Vienna, he personally asked Abbati to conduct the usual examination to not to become unworthy in the eyes of Pope Innocent XII. The only problem was his age, because he was still under 30. Abbati also proposed to remit all the fees (*annata*) due to the circumstances of the diocese of Győr¹⁹. After the new nuncio, Andrea Santacroce arrived to Vienna, Christian August visited him, and they had a really friendly and confidential conversation, where the new bishop expressed his sincere appreciation toward the Holy See. Nuncio Santacroce also assured the new bishop from the support of the pope, emphasizing that his rapid ascension, his conversion, the priesthood, and then the episcopal title show that God has great plans for him²⁰.

THE KING'S COUSIN

Shortly after the conversion of Christian August the hopes increased that other members of the Saxon electoral dynasty would follow his example. He assured Davia, the nuncio to Cologne, that his brother, Moritz Wilhelm, Duke of Saxe-Weitz would convert to Catholicism, and only the political circumstances hindered him²¹.

While this hope had ultimately not fulfilled, the conversion of the Elector of Saxony seemed much more unexpected. Although the unexpectedness of his conversion quite questionable. Presumably as early as February 1697, Augustus's plan for the candidacy for the Polish throne may have been known in a smaller circle²². This coincides with the information that Abbot Paolo della Stufa wrote to his lord, Cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici, the protector of the Austrian Habsburg countries a month after the conversion. According to his report, Christian August had obtained secretly a papal faculty for converting any heretics, months before the conversion²³. The information of Abbot Stufa coincided with a report written by Franz Pröller, the Jesuit confessor of Christian August, which claimed, that the thought of conversion had arisen in the elector about a quarter year earlier²⁴. Probably it was a version of the attestation issued by Christian August to the election *sejm*, and which was first validated by the Gianantonio Davia, then nuncio to Warsaw and which authenticity was questioned by Cardinal Radziejowski²⁵.

Germania, vol. 233, *Foglio d'avvisi*, f. 269r-v.

18 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 233, *Francesco Maria Abbati to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 5 May 1696, f. 299r.

19 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 233, *Francesco Maria Abbati to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 2 June 1696, f. 340r-v. The city of Győr situated near Vienna, and the diocese extended along the Austrian and Hungarian border. Contrary to Abbati's claim, the diocese of Győr was one of the richest among the Hungarian dioceses. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the episcopal title of Győr could be the top of the ecclesiastical career in Hungary beside the archdiocese of Esztergom: Molnár Antal, *Magyar hódoltság, horvát hódoltság. Magyar és horvát katolikus egyházi intézmények az oszmán uralom alatt* [Ottoman Hungary – Ottoman Croatia. Hungarian and Croatian Catholic ecclesiastical institutions under Ottoman rule] (Budapest: BTK TTI, 2019) 226, 246.

20 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 233, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 14 July 1696, ff. 430r-31r.

21 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Colonia*, vol. 72, *Gianantonio Davia to Fabrizio Spada*, Cologne 30 March 1692, f. 44r-v. The duke finally converted only in 1717, shortly before his death: Jochen Vötsch, "Moritz Wilhelm von Sachsen-Weitz", in *Sächsische Biografie*, hrsg. vom Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde e.V. Online edition: <http://www.isgv.de/saebi/> (29 March 2021)

22 De Caprio, *Il tramonto di un Regno*, 311.

23 ASF, Archivio Mediceo del Principato, *Francesco Maria de' Medici*, b. 5725, *Paolo della Stufa to Francesco Maria de' Medici*, Rome 20 July 1697. The cardinal quickly reported that information to the influential Jesuit, Pietro Giuseppe Ederi in Vienna: ASF, Archivio Mediceo del Principato, *Francesco Maria de' Medici*, b. 5647, *Francesco Maria de' Medici to Pietro Giuseppe Ederi*, Florence 27 July 1697.

24 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Narratio Conversionis ad Catholicam Fidem Serenissimi Saxoniae Electoris*, f. 516r-v.

25 De Caprio, *Il tramonto di un Regno*, 319. Davia defended his action that the elector seemed to have lived as a secret Catholic, even if he had not won the Polish throne. Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 133. But it is also true that Davia was obligated to the Elector of Saxon, who had just arranged in these months to ransom the nuncio's nephew

However the conversion seemed to be a surprise in the Viennese court. At the end of June the nuncio informed Rome with noticeable disappointment that the Saxon and Danish troops marched toward Poland to help the election of Augustus instead of joining the forces in Hungary²⁶. Nuncio Andrea Santacroce were informed only on this very same day's morning by the Jesuit confessor of Christian August about the conversion of Augustus. In his ordinary report he just mentioned that Father Pröller visited him and told him that the bishop had met twice with Augustus in early June, they had three hours long meeting each time. The Jesuit father promised that the bishop will inform the nuncio soon about very gratifying developments²⁷. But on the same day Santacroce wrote a cipher to the Cardinal Secretary, in which he already informed the Roman court about the conversion of Augustus based on news from Poland. As former nuncio to Warsaw, Santacroce expressed his fears that such a questionable change of faith will cause dangerous turmoils in Poland²⁸. The Holy See also expressed its concerns about the double election, but in his first reactions the pope praised the Bishop of Győr and the conversion of the Elector of Saxony. No doubts or questions about the conversion were written to the Viennese nuncio in the answers of the Cardinal Secretary²⁹.

Santacroce seemed to be more relieved after he talked personally with Christian August, who secured the nuncio, that the elected king is showing clear signs of being a good Catholic. But in Saxony there was a fear and mistrust about what will cause the conversion of their elector in the religious matters. According to Christian August some Saxon statesmen asked him to travel to Saxony, and also the Emperor asked him upon this³⁰. In Saxony the political situation went indeed upside-down. The Saxon estates resisted to obey to Prince Anton Egon von Fürstemberg, who was deputed as governor in Dresden, and they required Christian August instead of Fürstemberg. The Viennese nuncio was dubious how sincere the request of the Lutheran Saxon estates was, because the bishop was a zealous Catholic and he was the most important actor in the conversion of the Elector. Christian August was urgently called by his cousin to Warsaw, therefore the request of the Saxon nobility could not be fulfilled at the summer of 1697³¹.

The departure of Christian August caused a problem to the Viennese nuncio, because Rome requested Santacroce to acquire an authentic account from the bishop, which described in detail the form of the abjuration and the profession of the Catholic faith made by Augustus³². The hesitancy of the Roman court was caused most probably by the intervention of the French resident, Cardinal Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, who tried to discredit nuncio Davia and the authenticity of Augustus' conversion³³. On the other hand the imperial court was puzzled about the hesitation of the Holy See over the Polish election, if Christian August had already sent a handwritten account to nuncio Davia in June³⁴.

from Tatar captivity with a Turkish pasha who was captured by the Elector: AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 20 April 1697, ff. 299r-300r.

26 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 29 June 1697, ff. 479r-80r. Augustus as appointed chief commander of the Christian forces left Vienna to Dresden two weeks earlier, promising the emperor, that he would come back soon: AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 15 June 1697, ff. 438r-39r.

27 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 29 June 1697, f. 475r-v.

28 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 221, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada* (cipher), Vienna 29 June 1697, f. 401r-v.

29 ASR, Archivio Santacroce, b. 1169, *Fabrizio Spada to Andrea Santacroce* (in two letters), Rome 13 July 1697.

30 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 13 July 1697, ff. 559r-60v.

31 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 221, *Foglio d'avvisi*, Vienna 20 July 1697, ff. 474r-75r. Christian August left Vienna to Cracow in the first days of August: AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Foglio d'avvisi*, Vienna, 3 August 1697, f. 611r-v.

32 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 43, *Fabrizio Spada to Andrea Santacroce*, Rome, 20 July 1697, ff. 284v-85r. The nuncio answered the Cardinal Secretary that all the acts of Augustus, and mostly the public abjuration and profession had clarified the situation and therefore he had not yet wrote to Christian August for requiring another authentic account: AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, 10 August 1697, f. 630r-v.

33 Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 141. Finally in autumn 1697, after the coronation of Augustus and the disembarkment of Prince de Conti in Gdańsk, the Holy See ordered Davia to leave to Varmia, to avoid any involvement in the tense domestic political situation: De Caprio, *Il tramonto di un Regno*, 324.

34 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 221, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna, 3 August 1697, ff. 493v-94r. The

The irresolution of the Holy See did not change in the following period either. Although in late July the Cardinal Secretary wrote to Santacroce that the arriving news from Vienna had made the pope and the court to believe in the conversion of Augustus, they still waited for further signs of the new sovereign's filial submission toward the Holy See³⁵. It is hardly surprising that in August Santacroce informed with some satisfaction the Cardinal Secretary through an extraordinary courier that the king's ambassador was on his way to Rome. Augustus II sent his adjutant, Le Jay to Rome, and was ready to assure the pope that he will support the Catholic cause not just in Poland, but also in Saxony. Augustus sent his envoy with letters not only to the pope and the Cardinal Secretary, but other prominent cardinals in Rome, trying to persuade the Sacred College about his conversion and to win their support as well³⁶.

Christian August met nuncio Santacroce again after he had returned from Cracow. The bishop informed Santacroce that the Polish estates wanted him to stay in Poland and be a mediator between the king and the nobility. However Christian August refused it, arguing that as a bishop he was responsible for his diocese³⁷. With this argument he might have wanted to gain the nuncio's support for his request on a papal permission, which allows him to stay away from his diocese for a longer time. Christian August probably already knew by this time that the king had further plans with him, as Augustus II had sent him to Saxony before the coronation in September. At the end of August 1697 the pope issued a faculty to Christian August that let him a six months long absence from the diocese of Győr³⁸.

On the same day the Cardinal Secretary sent an instruction in cipher to nuncio Santacroce, requesting again an authentic account signed by Augustus II, that reflects on his abjuration and the profession. But the Holy See seemingly lowered the demands, because as Cardinal Spada wrote, it would have been enough a letter or a detailed attestation by Christian August, if he could not obtain a signed document from the king. Spada emphasised, that they needed this letter only to keep it in the Secret Archives to prove in present and in future the glorious conversion of Augustus II. Spada also expressed that the Holy See and its representatives must have taken an indifferent position in the tense political situation, which followed the double election. Even Pope Innocent XII showed himself indifferent when he received the envoy of Augustus II. He expressed his joy over the king's conversion, but did not take any sides in the political dispute³⁹.

That kind of politics of the Holy See proved to be sufficiently far-sighted soon. Although Augustus was crowned in Cracow by the Bishop of Cuiavia on 15 September 1697, his reign was still unsolid. Two weeks later the French candidate, Prince de Conti arrived to Poland with a small army, but his case was already lost by that time. The internal tensions and uncertainties were much bigger problem for the new king. Cardinal Radziejowski still opposed his election, and Augustus II could not count on the diplomatic support of the Holy See in this situation⁴⁰. That lack of support from the papal

nuncio did not speak personally with Emperor Leopold I about the Polish election, he heard the Emperor's sentiments from the imperial Capuchin confessor, Marco d'Aviano. Santacroce was also a bit surprised about the conduct of the Roman court that he expressed in a private letter to his brother: ASR, Archivio Santacroce, b. 1226, *Andrea Santacroce to Antonio Santacroce*, Vienna 3 August 1697. Cardinal Secretary Fabrizio Spada defended their position that in Rome they had not received any authentic report about the conversion: AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 219, *Fabrizio Spada to Andrea Santacroce*, Rome 17 August 1697, ff. 369v-70r.

35 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 43, *Fabrizio Spada to Andrea Santacroce*, Rome 27 July 1697, ff. 293v-94r.

36 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 13 August 1697, ff. 637r-40r. Santacroce mentioned in this letter that Christian August of Saxe-Weitz arrived back from Cracow to Vienna on that same day (13 August), but it is not clear, whether he travelled together with the king's envoy, Le Jay. The envoy most probably brought the letter of Augustus written on 6 August, that was answered by the pope only in January 1698: Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 148.

37 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 17 August 1697, ff. 654r-56r.

38 AAV, *Epistolae ad Principes, Registri*, vol. 82, *Innocent XII. to Christian August*, Rome 31 August 1697, ff. 43r-4v.

39 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 219, *Fabrizio Spada to Andrea Santacroce* (cipher), Rome 31 August 1697, ff. 372v-73r.

40 De Caprio, *Il tramonto di un Regno*, 325-26. Nuncio Santacroce in October 1697 informed his brother about such news that in Poland a conspiracy was revealed by the supporters of Augustus II. The originator of the conspiracy was said to be Cardinal Radziejowski. Santacroce did not want to report this to the Cardinal Secretary, because the news were insecure,

diplomacy was balanced only partly by the good connections of Christian August in Rome.

The bishop was also a mediator of Augustus toward the imperial court. Although Vienna initially supported other candidates⁴¹, the Emperor was absolutely satisfied with the outcome of the election according to the nuncio to Vienna. Santacroce wrote to his brother, that the Viennese court had been behind the successful election of Augustus II, and beside him only Emperor Leopold I and Count Franz Ulrich Kinsky, the Chancellor of Bohemia had known the plans, which were kept in absolute secret⁴².

As it was mentioned in the introduction, the most important aim of the Habsburgs was the election of a candidate, who was not a Francophile, but willing to support the Holy League's war against the Ottomans. This became an important issue in Polish-Habsburg relations in the autumn of 1697, after the coronation of Augustus II. The Viennese court was still indebted to Augustus with the service pay of the Saxony military fought on the Hungarian front. They sent the 30'000 florins with Christian August to Poland in September⁴³. After the bishop returned from Poland, nuncio Santacroce assumed that Augustus II sent his cousin back to Vienna for negotiating about the Turkish war⁴⁴. However, Christian August should have discussed in the imperial court mostly about the still labile political situation of the king. But it was clear that the French intrigues hindered Poland to turn against the Ottomans with significant forces. According to Santacroce, it was a real reason of France to help out the failing Ottoman forces⁴⁵. Just in autumn 1697, the Treaty of Rijswijk ended the Nine Years' War that let the Habsburgs to turn against the Ottomans with all their forces. Four days before the coronation of Augustus, the Christian armies led by Prince Eugen of Savoy delivered a devastating blow to the Ottoman forces at Zenta. In 1698, there was no major military movement in Hungary, and in the autumn preparations for peace talks began, which led to the Treaty of Karlowitz in January 1699⁴⁶.

The French and Ottoman threaten noticeably bothered Augustus II, whose letters were still unanswered by the Holy See. According to his information, Prince de Conti had been prepared to disembarkment in the Ottoman Empire, and reach Poland from that direction. Through his envoy to Rome, the king tried to explore, what would be the position of the pope in such case. Abbot Paolo della Stufa, the agent of Cardinal de' Medici reported to his lord, that he had spoken with two cardinals, who claimed that the seemingly neutral position of the papal court was derived from the personal pressure from Louis XIV. The abbot heard that a request of Christian August for apostolic missionary faculties were denied by the Holy See, which in della Stufa's view would have been a clear sign of the complete questioning of Augustus' conversion⁴⁷.

and due to his former conflict with Radziejowski as nuncio in Poland he would have made his report look as simple allegations against the Primate of Poland: ASR, Archivio Santacroce, b. 1226, *Andrea Santacroce to Antonio Santacroce*, Vienna 26 October 1697.

41 The main candidates supported by the Habsburg court were the younger brother of the Emperor, Charles of Pfalz-Neuburg and the nephew of the Emperor, Charles of Lorraine. But even in Vienna they were considered as candidates with lesser chance: Milewski, *Die polnische Königswahl*, 38.

42 ASR, Archivio Santacroce, b. 1226, *Andrea Santacroce to Antonio Santacroce*, Vienna 6 July 1697. Santacroce's information should be treated with caution. In an instruction sent on June 22, three days before the election, Emperor Leopold ordered his ambassador to Poland, Johann Philipp von Lamberg, Bishop of Passau, to support the candidacy of Margrave Louis William of Baden also: Milewski, *Die polnische Königswahl*, 321.

43 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 7 September 1697, ff. 709r-10r. The nuncio described in detail the grave financial situation of the Habsburgs, they had to lend money from Don Livio Odescalchi, the nephew of the late Pope Innocent XI to be able to pay out Augustus II. In exchange they gave to Don Livio the Duchy of Syrmia in South Hungary (now part of Serbia).

44 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 19 October 1697, f. 815r-v. The bishop arrived back to Vienna on 18 October.

45 ASR, Archivio Santacroce, b. 1226, *Andrea Santacroce to Antonio Santacroce*, Vienna 26 October 1697.

46 Mihalik, "Catholics, heretics and the *common enemy*", 44-6. Poland regained the fortress of Kamianets (Kamieniec) and the Podolia region.

47 ASF, Archivio Mediceo del Principato, *Francesco Maria de' Medici*, b. 5725, *Paolo della Stufa to Francesco Maria de' Medici*, Rome 16 November 1697.

However della Stufa's information was probably a bit exaggerated, because the frozen relationship between Augustus II and the Roman court began to melt. We do not want to overstate the role of Christian August, but his negotiations with the Viennese nuncio in mid-October may have played a role in the slow change in the diplomatic relations. After the Bishop of Győr returned in October from Poland to Vienna, his main task was probably not the negotiations about the Turkish war, but to somehow dissolve the indifference had been shown by the papal court toward the king. Santacroce gave him an excellent floor for this, because the first point on their – otherwise friendly and confident – meeting was the signed formal abjuration that the Cardinal Secretary demanded in late summer. Christian August informed the nuncio that the king's letter about his abjuration and a signed profession of the Catholic faith had been already on their way to Rome by the courier. The bishop did not tergiversated, but stormed Santacroce with relentless openness about the complaints against the papal court. He claimed that the pope had never shown out his approving blessing toward the king, neither indirectly, nor directly, at least through a papal breve sent to Christian August. What is more, the letter of Augustus II to Pope Innocent XII remained unanswered and was simply forwarded to France. Even after the coronation, the Holy See did not want to treat Augustus II as king, until he and Cardinal Radziejowski would not come to terms. Christian August angrily claimed, that even a vile man's conversion would meet a greater applause from Rome. Santacroce tried to defend the papal court's politics of neutrality, because the pope as the common father of Christianity, like his predecessors, cannot support either side publicly, until the political turmoil is over in Poland. Santacroce emphasized that Prince de Conti was not treated as a king either for the same reasons, and the papal court gave no such signs toward France in this regard. The Viennese nuncio also tried to explain that the letter of Augustus was not sent to France with bad intentions, but it probably had become known in Paris, due to the usual exchange of information between the nuncios. Slightly calmed down, the bishop was willing to accept the nuncio's arguments about the political direction of the papal court, but he still questioned the almost offensive silence they had experienced about the king's conversion. Finally Christian August suggested that the pontiff would have issue a breve to him, which would refer kindly to the conversion of his cousin as well⁴⁸.

The bishop's proposal was heard, and Pope Innocent XII issued a breve to Christian August in mid-November, which extended his permission to stay away from his diocese, but the pontiff praised the conversion of the Polish king for an unusually long time⁴⁹. This was already a noticeable shift on the part of the papal court, which was also appreciated by the other side. Even the imperial ambassador, Count Georg Adam von Martinitz, who had an increasingly bad reputation at the papal court, thanked the pope for his breve sent to Christian August⁵⁰. The Bishop of Győr wrote to Santacroce a week before Christmas that the papal breve was not just a simply great honour, but caused in the court of Augustus II inexpressible joy⁵¹. In the meantime the king sent two envoys to Rome. Alessandro Salaroli, a Theatin friar was commissioned to negotiate in ecclesiastical affairs. Jerzy Stanisław Dzieduszycki led the "embassy of obedience", although his conduct disappointed the papal court, and mostly Cardinal Carlo Barberini, the protector of Poland⁵².

Eventually the ice was broken and in January 1698 the pontiff sent a letter to Augustus, in which

48 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 221, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada* (cipher) Vienna 26 October 1697, ff. 624r-25v, 628r-30r.

49 AAV, *Epistolae ad Principes, Registri*, vol. 82, *Innocent XII. to Christian August*, Rome 31 August 1697, ff. 52v-53r.

50 ASF, Archivio Mediceo del Principato, *Francesco Maria de' Medici*, b. 5638, *Georg Adam von Martinitz to Francesco Maria de' Medici*, Rome 30 November 1697.

51 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 235, *Christian August to Andrea Santacroce*, 18 December 1697, f. 52r.

52 Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 149. The offensive behaviour toward Cardinal Barberini may have been related to Augustus' view of the cardinal as a friend of France. Christian August in early November told Santacroce that the king did not want Barberini to be the cardinal protector anymore: ASR, Archivio Santacroce, b. 1226, *Andrea Santacroce to Antonio Santacroce*, Vienna 2 November 1697. Eventually Augustus retained Cardinal Barberini in his post. About Barberini's role as cardinal protector: Gaetano Platania, "Carlo Barberini protettore della Polonia e suoi difficili dossier", in *Gli "angeli custodi" delle monarchie: I cardinali protettori delle nazioni*, eds. Matteo Sanfilippo and Péter Tusor (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2018), 177-98.

Innocent XII praised his conversion and acknowledged him as King of Poland⁵³. The pope soon sent another letter to Christian August and to the king, in which Innocent XII announced, that he send Fabrizio Paolucci, then nuncio to Cologne, as an extraordinary nuncio to Poland⁵⁴. Paolucci was urged by the Secretariat of State in an instruction to cooperate with Christian August in every important matters, but especially for the conversion of the electress, and for the Catholic upbringing of the son of Augustus II. The main task of Paolucci was to reach a compromise between Cardinal Radziejowski and the king. The nuncio was successful and in May 1698 the Primate and Augustus II. signed an agreement⁵⁵.

The conversion of the wife of Augustus II, Christiane Eberhardine of Brandenburg-Bayreuth was a hard nut to crack. Christian August admitted to nuncio Andrea Santacroce already in summer 1697 that the electress is a stubborn Lutheran, and there is little hope for her conversion⁵⁶. The Polish estates wanted to crown her as their queen, but they required her conversion to Catholicism before. Therefore in late summer, Christian August was expected to travel to Saxony to convince the electress to attend the coronation in Cracow and probably to convert⁵⁷. Although news popped up from time to time, there was little hope of Catholicization of Christiane Eberhardine⁵⁸. Although Augustus II admitted to Paolucci that there is only small chance for the conversion of her wife⁵⁹, the king commissioned Christian August to obtain a retrospective dispensation on their marriage with the electress, because they were close relatives, which would have been a canonical obstacle in Catholic marriage law⁶⁰. According to the news arrived from Warsaw, Christian August and nuncio Paolucci became friends⁶¹, and they most probably cooperated in the question about the conversion of Christiane Eberhardine as the papal instruction commissioned. However their intention remained unsuccessful, and in this regard the mission of Paolucci was inefficient. Nevertheless, after his return to Rome Paolucci was created cardinal. But he left behind one more open question: the cardinalate for Christian August⁶².

THE POPE'S CARDINAL?

Already in the summer of 1697, rumours had it that Augustus II would nominate his cousin as cardinal. Abbot Stufa, the well-informed Roman agent of Cardinal de' Medici reported his lord that at the next expected cardinal creations the new Polish king will ask the Holy See to grant Christian August the red hat⁶³. It was clear, mostly in the first phase of his reign, that Augustus needed to form a political counterpoint against Cardinal Radziejowski, the Primate of Poland, who opposed his election. Therefore it might have not been practical to nominate his cousin, a bishop of the Emperor. Later the Bishop of Cuiavia, Stanisław Kazimierz Dąbski was mentioned as a potential candidate,

53 AAV, *Epistolae ad Principes, Registri*, vol. 82, *Innocent XII. to Augustus II*, Rome 18 January 1698, ff. 64r-5r.

54 AAV, *Epistolae ad Principes, Registri*, vol. 82, *Innocent XII to Augustus II. and Christian August*, Rome 22 January 1698, ff. 70r-v and 72r-v

55 Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 163, 222-24.

56 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 13 July 1697, ff. 559r-60v. About the family relationships of Augustus II after his conversion: Karl Czok, *August der Starke und seine Zeit. Kurfürst von Sachsen, König in Polen* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1997) 90-2.

57 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 234, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 17 August 1697, ff. 654r-56r.

58 BAV, Barb. Lat., 6565, *Maurizio Vota SJ to Carlo Barberini*, Warsaw 1 July 1699, ff. 55r-6v. Father Vota informed Cardinal Barberini that the king was expected to visit Saxony, and they hoped that it would have given a chance for the conversion of his wife.

59 Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 167.

60 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 235, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada*, Vienna 20 December 1698, ff. 994r-95v. We do not have any source about whether the dispensation was issued later.

61 AC, Archivio Capranica-Scarlatti, b. 1181, *Foglio d'avvisi*, Warsaw, 1 May 1698,

62 Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 165-66.

63 ASF, Archivio Mediceo del Principato, *Francesco Maria de' Medici*, b. 5725, *Paolo della Stufa to Francesco Maria de' Medici*, Rome 20 July 1697.

although the name of Christian August also remained on the agenda⁶⁴. Bishop Dąbski was a leading opposer of Cardinal Radziejowski, and he had a decisive role in the election, then in the coronation of Augustus II, thus he would have been a suitable “counter-cardinal” against the primate.

By the beginning of 1698, the situation had changed. Augustus nominated as Polish king the Bishop of Passau, Johann Philip von Lamberg, who was the Emperor’s special envoy to the election *sejm*⁶⁵. It was not unusual that a sovereign recommended a foreign prelate to cardinalate⁶⁶. The French Cardinals d’Estrées and Bonzi were nominated by Poland in 1671 and 1673 respectively⁶⁷, and John III Sobieski also nominated his French father-in-law, Henri Albert de la Grange d’Arquien. However, the cardinalate of the latter caused diplomatic issues with the imperial court⁶⁸. It is hardly surprising that the Holy See had to awkwardly pay attention to the balance between the nominations of the great powers of Europe. Mostly during the Thirty Years’ War, the activity of the “national” cardinals became more and more violent in the Roman politics that affected the popes’ policy about creating new cardinals⁶⁹. In the case of Lamberg, his nomination by the Polish king was also a sensible question due to the European political situation and the controversial circumstances of Augustus II. Therefore, Pope Innocent XII answered Carlo Barberini, the cardinal protector of Poland, that there was not an appropriate time and place for creation of new cardinals of the crowns, because he created cardinals on the recommendations of the sovereigns in July 1697⁷⁰. Augustus II argued that the Holy See took in consideration the nomination made by his predecessor, and he expected the same⁷¹. However his efforts proved futile. Finally, the Viennese court took over Lamberg’s nomination, and so he was created cardinal on the consistory of 21 June 1700⁷².

Initially therefore, Augustus II wanted his cousin to be created as cardinal by the pope’s own initiative (*di suo proprio moto*)⁷³. However, the Holy See should have handled the case of Christian August also very carefully, like the nomination of Lamberg. According to some unconfirmed information, Christian August has even felt offended that the king had not nominated him from the Polish crown⁷⁴. However, by the beginning of 1700 it became clear that Augustus did not have enough influence in Rome to carry out his will to create cardinal from Lamberg. Officially, Bishop Lamberg renounced his nomination, and it opened the way to an official recommendation of Christian August by the Polish crown⁷⁵.

Only four days after the renouncement of Lamberg, Christian August sent a short account to the pope about his episcopal activity and the reformation of his diocese⁷⁶. On the very same day, he sent a letter to Lamberg, in which he expressed his thanks for Lamberg’s help and he wished him all the

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- 64 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 221, *Andrea Santacroce to Fabrizio Spada* (cipher), Vienna 17 August 1697, f. 534r-v.
- 65 BAV, Barb. Lat., 6647, *Johann Philipp von Lamberg to Carlo Barberini*, Passau 22 March 1698, ff. 85r-6r.
- 66 About the crown cardinals: Péter Tusor, “Prolegomena zur Frage des Kronkardinalats”, *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 41 (2003): 51-71.
- 67 Joseph Bergin, “Cardinals as National Politicians”, in *A Companion to the Early Modern Cardinal*, eds. Mary Hollingsworth, Miles Pattenden and Arnold Witte (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2020) 213.
- 68 Platania, *Venimus, vidimus et Deus vicit*, 166.
- 69 Gianvittorio Signorotto, “The Squadrone Volante. “Independent” Cardinals and European Politics in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century”, in *Court and Politics in Papal Rome 1492-1700*, eds. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002) 183.
- 70 BAV, Barb. Lat., 6653, *Carlo Barberini to Augustus II*, Rome 13 April 1698, ff. 36r-7r.
- 71 BAV, Barb. Lat., 6626, *Augustus II to Carlo Barberini*, Warsaw 6 May 1698, ff. 18r-9v.
- 72 ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung. Rom, Korrespondenz*, Kart. 80, f. 96r.
- 73 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Principi*, vol. 128, *Augustus II to Innocent XII*, Warsaw 26 February 1698, ff. 44r-5r. On the same day the king wrote a letter to the cardinal protector, Carlo Barberini, also: BAV, Barb. Lat., vol. 6626, *Augustus II to Carlo Barberini*, Warsaw 26 February 1698, ff. 8r-v.
- 74 AC, Archivio Capranica-Scarlatti, b. 1181, *Foglio d’avvisi*, Warsaw 10 June 1698.
- 75 ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung. Rom, Varia*, Kart. 15, *Augustus II to Innocent XII*, Warsaw 14 April 1700, f. 107r-v.
- 76 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Prelati*, vol. 92, *Christian August to Innocent XII*, Vienna 27 March 1700, f. 50r-v.

best and success for the imperial nomination⁷⁷. Thereafter Christian August travelled in hurry to Poland to negotiate about his cardinalate, and Augustus II sent his nomination to Rome two weeks later⁷⁸. They sent the letters with the Jesuit confessor of Christian August, Father Franz Pröller to Cardinal Barberini, who represented the nomination to the pope and the Cardinal Secretary during an audience on 18 May. The pope expressed his deep and honest sentiments toward the Bishop of Győr, and expressed his happiness about his nomination, although the aging pontiff was worried about his own fragile health, whether it would have made possible another consistory for creation of cardinals⁷⁹. A few days later, Innocent XII also answered Christian August's report on the diocese of Győr, praising his effort for the restoration of the parishes and counter-reformation activity⁸⁰. Even Emperor Leopold I wrote to Cardinal Barberini to support the Polish nomination for Christian August⁸¹. The Emperor also ordered his ambassador, Leopold Joseph von Lamberg to assist the Polish nomination of the bishop in every possible way⁸². Despite all the favourable signs, the consistory of 21 June yielded a disappointing result. Although Johann Philipp von Lamberg, the imperial candidate won the red hat, Christian August was not among the new cardinals⁸³.

On the advise of the imperial ambassador Lamberg, the confessor of Christian August, Father Pröller asked for an audience at the pope. Returning to the former standpoint, the Jesuit father supposed to the pontiff, that the Bishop of Győr could have been an individual creation by the pope himself, on his own initiative. Pope Innocent XII answered Pröller that he could write to his lord that the cardinalate of Christian August «would have been the crown of our pontificate»⁸⁴. However, the pope admitted that even he was ready to promote Christian August to the cardinalate, he had to be circumspect, since the bishop was already privy councillor of the Emperor, therefore his creation would have angered the other crowns, especially France⁸⁵. The Venetian ambassador to Rome also protested against the promotion of Christian August, presumably because of French pressure and of other political controversies between the Republic and the Viennese court. The imperial diplomats still hoped that probably he was already a cardinal, but reserved *in pectore*⁸⁶. However, the announcement of the two cardinals *in pectore* never took place. The pope was already dying by the end of summer 1700, and there was less and less hope of convening another consistory. All sides were preparing for the papal election conclave; in this situation the counter-interested parties sought to prevent a change in the composition of the Sacred College of the cardinals. Eventually, Pope Innocent XII died on 27 September 1700, without creating cardinal from Christian August of Saxe-Weitz.

- 77 Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv, Familienarchiv Lamberg, *Akten*, Kart. 67/368, *Christian August to Johann Philipp von Lamberg*, Vienna 27 March 1700, ff. 10r-1v.
- 78 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Germania*, vol. 222, *Foglio d'avvisi*, Vienna 8 May 1700, ff. 588r-89r.
- 79 BAV, Barb. Lat., 6654, *Carlo Barberini to Christian August*, Rome 22 May 1700, ff. 33r-4r.
- 80 AAV, *Epistolae ad Principes, Registri*, vol. 82, *Innocent XII. to Christian August*, Rome 22 May 1700, ff. 303v-04r.
- 81 ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung. Rom, Hofkorrespondenz*, Kart. 17, *Leopold I to Carlo Barberini*, Vienna 5 May 1700, ff. 107r-08r.
- 82 ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung. Rom, Korrespondenz*, Kart. 82, *Leopold I to Leopold Joseph von Lamberg*, Vienna 5 May 1700, f. 32r-v. The ambassador was a distant cousin of the Bishop of Passau, who was nominated by the Viennese court.
- 83 The new cardinals were, nominated by the three crowns (France, the Holy Roman Empire and Spain): Louis-Antoine de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, Johann Philipp von Lamberg, Bishop of Passau and Francisco de Borja, canon of the cathedral chapter of Toledo. ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung. Rom, Korrespondenz*, Kart. 80, f. 96r.
- 84 ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung. Rom, Korrespondenz*, Kart. 80, *Leopold Joseph von Lamberg to Leopold I*, Rome 26 June 1700, ff. 75r-82v.
- 85 ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung. Rom, Korrespondenz*, Kart. 80, *Leopold Joseph von Lamberg to Leopold I*, Rome 24 July 1700, ff. 105r-10v. Christian August became imperial privy councillor after he resigned as Chancellor of Saxony in the summer 1699: ASF, Archivio Mediceo del Principato, *Francesco Maria de' Medici*, b. 5695, *Foglio d'avvisi*, Vienna 8 August 1699.
- 86 ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung. Rom, Korrespondenz*, Kart. 80, *Leopold Joseph von Lamberg to Leopold I*, Rome 14 August 1700, ff. 133r-38v. The pope created several cardinals in November 1699, but he reserved two *in pectore*, who were never announced. Many in Rome believed that one of them would have been Christian August.

CONCLUSIONS

Christian August had begun his ecclesiastical career in an internationally taut situation. Although the Nine Years' War ended in 1697, the Habsburg-Bourbon conflict did not come to an end with the Treaty of Rijswijk. For the Austrian Habsburgs it became a matter of life and death to avoid a pro-French king on the Polish throne. Therefore, Christian August gained quickly an important role not just in the conversion of Augustus II, but also in the consolidation of his reign. However, the Holy See tried to take an indifferent neutral position, at least as long as the French candidate Prince de Conti had a minimal chance to reverse the outcome of the election. As the situation became clear, Augustus was acknowledged by the pope without any further particular objection.

The inner consolidation of the reign of Augustus II, and a possible promotion of Christian August were related with each other. Until Cardinal Radziejowski was a relentless opponent of the king, Augustus tried to counterweigh the Primate's position with the nomination of another Polish bishop. But as soon as the Holy See acknowledged his reign, a compromise would be expected with the Primate, which opened the path for other ecclesiastical actors. Most probably the nomination of the Bishop of Passau came from Vienna, therefore a promotion for Christian August was only possible if Augustus II tried to affect the pope's sympathy toward his cousin. However, the Holy See did not want to accept the nomination by the Polish crown, and thus the Viennese court took over the nomination of Lamberg.

But in the background there was a much larger game of the European powers. By the end of the 1690s, the succession of the childless and sick Spanish king Charles II overwrote everything, and the pope was also very old, a papal election was expected soon. Both France and the Austrian Habsburgs tried to strengthen their positions, including in Rome and in the Sacred College. This was also a burning issue for Vienna, because Cardinal Leopold Kollonich declared at the end of 1699 that he would not travel to the conclave because of his age⁸⁷. That would make Vincenzo Grimani the only "Austrian" cardinal in a future conclave. Therefore, the promotion of Bishop Lamberg became a minimal political goal in the following months, and a cardinalate for Christian August would have been a great success for Vienna.

As the identity of the two *in pectore* cardinals remained a secret, any guess on their person can only be a theory. Whether one of them was Christian August or not, the possibility of his cardinalate caused interventions from the opposite side. During the seventeenth century it became a usual political debate in Rome almost in every case of a new nomination. That made the popes to frequently use the *riserva in pectore* promotions⁸⁸. In 1700, the European politics were fragile, and the Holy See should have observed carefully to keep a balance. Even if Christian August had been indeed one of the *in pectore* cardinals in November 1699, the situation did not let to announce his elevation to cardinalate, either Pope Innocent XII sympathized with him, or it was only a political simulation. Otherwise these years, the Polish election, his intermediation between Rome and Warsaw and his nomination for cardinalate gave to his career a boost. Charles II died on 1 November 1700, and the War of Spanish Succession broke out. In the first years, Christian August fulfilled an important diplomatic mission in the vacillant Cologne, where the archbishop-elect was driven to the French side⁸⁹. Finally in 1706, Christian August received the red hat, and in the next year he succeeded Cardinal Kollonich as Primate of Hungary⁹⁰.

87 ÖStA, HHStA, *Staatenabteilung, Venedig, Dispacci di Germania*, vol. 182, *Francesco Loredan to the Venetian Senate*, Vienna 12 December 1699, pag. 308

88 Signorotto, "The Squadrone Volante", 183.

89 Hans Gerig, *Der Kölner Dompropst Christian August Herzog von Sachsen-Zeitz, Bischof von Raab. Seine diplomatische Tätigkeit am Niederrhein zu Beginn des spanischen Erbfolgekriegs im Dienst der Politik Kaiser Leopolds I. 1701–1703* (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid, 1930)

90 Lakatos, "Sachsen-Zeitz Keresztély Ágost", 328.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano.
AC: Archivio Storico Capitolino–Roma.
ASR: Archivio di Stato di Firenze.
ASR: Archivio di Stato di Roma.
BAV: Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana.
Barb. Lat.: *Fondo Barberino Latino*.
ÖStA: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv.
HHStA: Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

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- Archivio Mediceo del Principato, *Francesco Maria de' Medici*, bb. 5638, 5647, 5695, 5725.

ASR

- Archivio Santacroce, b. 1226.

AC

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