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**FROM THE LONG TURKISH WAR (1593-1606)
TO THE LIBERATION OF VIENNA (1683)**

Edited by
Alessandro Boccolini and Ovidiu Cristea



EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: LA RIVISTA

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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.

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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.

The Editorial and Scientific Board

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THE BATTLE OF KHOTYN IN 1621 IN THE ACCOUNTS OF PAPAL DIPLOMATS¹

ABSTRACT: The Polish-Ottoman confrontation that took place in 1621 at the walls of the fortress in Khotyn, which is considered by some historians as an episode of the Thirty Years' War, led to an understandable interest throughout Europe, including Rome. Papal diplomats staying in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth closely followed reports from the south of the country and then reported the course of the conflict to the Roman dicasteries. For the purposes of this publication, it has been possible to select reports by papal diplomats, previously unused in historiography, which contain references to the Battle of Khotyn. The aim of this publication is to analyse the aforementioned correspondence, verify the information it contains, and, in the longer term, introduce previously unknown manuscript material into research on both war and military history.

KEYWORDS: Turkish-Polish Relations; Khotyn campaign; Francesco Diotallevi; Holy See's Diplomacy; War reports.

In a general instruction to Giovanni Battista Lancellotti, the Apostolic Nuncio delegated to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, dated 14 December 1622, the Pope presented his assessment of the Polish-Turkish war that had ended a year earlier:

What most ruined the path to any treaty was the Poles' sluggishness in preparing their defence. Unable to find a way to gather forces of their levy of nobility, despite knowing the enemy's power, and seeing the danger the besieged army was in, too late they marched against the enemy, so that the king was unable to arrive in time to bring relief. Thus, the besieged, who had bravely resisted the enemy, seeing the scarcity of food and other necessities, and the aforementioned relief force too distant, trusted in treaties [...], burying all hopes for a league and alliances².

1 The publication is the result of research conducted as part of a project financed by the National Humanities Development Program: "Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's military efforts during the Reign of Vasas in the accounts of papal diplomats", number NPRH/F/SP/0013/2024/13, PU-2401-201.

2 "Quello che più dell'altre cose ha rotta la via ad ogni trattato, è stata la lentissima dispositione de Polacchi alla propria difesa, perché, non sapendo trovare il verso a prender l'armi nella spedizione generale del Regno, benché havessero il nimico a fronte potentissimo e vedessero posto in pericolo manifesto l'esercito che assediato negli alloggiamenti, ne sosteneva l'empito, furono sì tardi muoversi, che l'Re non poté al soccorso loro andare opportuno. Onde gli assediati che troppo più avevano ripresso e ributtato valorosamente il nimico che le loro forze non comportavano, vedutisi costretti dalle necessità de viveri e da altri bisogni, col medesimo soccorso troppo lontano, porsono orecchio al trattato d'accordo

The quoted fragment indicates that the Holy See viewed the Khotyn War primarily as a potential impetus for forming an anti-Ottoman coalition, bringing together Catholic states. In this context, the month-long siege of the Polish-Lithuanian positions near Khotyn was perceived in Rome not so much as a military success that prevented Osman II's army from advancing deeper into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but rather as a missed opportunity. This perception of the Roman dicasteries stemmed from reports sent from Poland to Rome by papal diplomats stationed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the summer of 1621. Such letters contained their observations on the Polish-Lithuanian state's preparations to repel Turkish aggression and the first days of fighting that took place on the banks of the Dniester.

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Although the military preparations and military operations conducted at Khotyn continue to arouse considerable interest among historians to this day³, papal correspondence, as a source, has not yet been considered in research on the aforementioned conflict. Meanwhile, for the period June-September 1621, 23 reports by papal diplomats residing in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth can be identified, containing content relevant to the issues we are interested in. These reports are stored in the Vatican Library, in the *Barberiniani latini* section, in volumes numbered 6579, 6580, and 6660. The purpose of this publication is to analyse this correspondence, verify the information contained therein, and, in the longer term, introduce previously unused manuscript material into research on war and military history.

For the Papacy, the main source of information on the Khotyn War were the reports of the titular bishop of Sant'Angelo and the apostolic nuncio to the Polish-Lithuanian

[...] togliendoci tutte le speranze di leghe e di unioni", Instruttione a Vostra Signoria Monsignor Lancellotti Vescovo di Nola destinato da Nostro Signore suo Nuntio ordinario in Polonia", Rome 14 XII 1622, in Tadeusz Fitych, *Struktura i funkcjonowanie nuncjatury Giovanniego Battisty Lancellottiego (1622-1627)* (Opole: Wydział Teologiczny Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2005), 235-36.

3 Józef Tretiak, *Historja wojny chocimskiej (1621)* (Poznań: Kurpisz, 2006); Ryszard Majewski, "Polski wysiłek obronny przed wojną chocimską 1621 r.", *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, VII/1 (1961): 3-39; Leszek Podhorodecki, Noj Raszba, *Wojna chocimska 1621* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1979); Id., *Chocim 1621* (Warszawa: Bellona, 2008); Jan Wimmer, "Wojsko i skarb Rzeczypospolitej u schyłku XVI i w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku", *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, XIV/1 (1968): 35-40; Mirosław Nagielski, "Kampania chocimska 1621 roku", *Wschodni Rocznik Humanistyczny*, 18/3 (2021): 7-25; Artur Goszczyński, "Nieszczęścia gorsze od wroga. Głód i niedostatki w armii Rzeczypospolitej podczas kampanii chocimskiej z 1621 r.", *Wschodni Rocznik Humanistyczny*, 18/3 (2021): 27-51; Artur Goszczyński, "O wpływie warunków atmosferycznych na przebieg bitwy pod Chocimiem w 1621 roku", *Radzyński Rocznik Humanistyczny*, 19 (2021): 7-16; Michał Paradowski, *The Khotyn Campaign of 1621. Polish, Lithuanian and Cossack amies against the Ottoman Empire* (Warwick: Helion & Company, 2023); *Od Cecory do Chocimia. Studia z dziejów wojny Rzeczypospolitej z Turcją 1620-1621*, eds. Zbigniew Hundert, and Paweł Tyszka (Warszawa: Arx Regia, 2024).

Commonwealth from 1614 to 1621, Francesco Diotallevi⁴. Unfortunately, by September 1621, this highly educated and comprehensively educated diplomat was already advanced in years, ailing, and discouraged, effectively ending his seven-year mission in Poland. During the fighting at Khotyn, Diotallevi decided to leave the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Fearing the journey through Moravia, controlled by the troops of the Duke of Krnov (Jägerndorf), John Goerge of Brandenburg⁵, he decided to return to Italy through the German states. At the end of September he left Warsaw and headed towards Poznań, losing access to current information, and soon after he died⁶.

In his correspondence, Bishop Sant'Angelo outlined the situation preceding the battle, in particular: the Polish preparations to repel the Ottoman aggression, the advance of the enemy army, and a description of the clashes fought in early September near the walls of the Khotyn fortress. The nuncio relied on various sources of information⁷. The most valuable were the reports of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, reaching the court from Khotyn, to which the papal envoy undoubtedly had access. It is worth noting that the Grand Hetman of Lithuania had at his disposal an experienced network of intelligence agents, inherited from Stanisław Żółkiewski⁸. Diotallevi was delighted with the capabilities of the agents and claimed that they

- 4 More about F. Diotallevi see: Matteo Sanfilippo, "Diotallevi, Francesco", in DBI, 40 (1991), 224-26; Henryk Litwin, *Chwała Północy. Rzeczpospolita w polityce Stolicy Apostolskiej 1598-1648* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2018), 129-39; Henryk Damian Wojtyśka CP, *Nuncjusze papiescy w Polsce od XVI do końca XVIII wieku. Materiały pozostawione do publikacji przygotował do druku i wydał bp Jan Kopiec* (Gliwice: Studio Impreso, 2020), 185-94.
- 5 Radek Fukala, *Dramat Europy. Wojna trzydziestoletnia (1618-1648) a kraje Korony Czeskiej* (Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT-Wrocławskie Wydawnictwo Oświatowe, 2015), 128-44; Peter Hamish Wilson, *Wojna trzydziestoletnia 1618-1648. Tragedia Europy* (Oświęcim: Napoleon V, 2017), 318-20.
- 6 It most likely took place at the beginning of 1622, when Gregory XV began to manage Diotallevi's benefices, see Litwin, *Glory*, 39. Therefore, it is doubtful that Diotallevi died in May, as his biographer states, see Sanfilippo, "Diotallevi Francesco".
- 7 For more on how nuncios obtain information, see: Wojciech Tygielski, "Źródła informacji papieskich dyplomatów", in *Nuncjatura Apostolska w Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, and Katarzyna Wiszowata-Walczak (Białystok: Wydawnictwo "Benkowski Publishing & Balloons" sp. z o.o. and Uniwersytet w Białymstoku, 2012), 75-92; Paweł Duda, "Wojenne źródła informacji nuncjuszy apostolskich rezydujących w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów na przykładzie konfliktów z pierwszej połowy XVII wieku – zarys problematyki", in *Nuncjatury apostolskie w systemie nowożytnej dyplomacji (XV-XVIII w.). Rzeczpospolita – Europa – świat/ Nunziature apostoliche nel sistema diplomatico della prima età moderna (secc. XV-XVIII). Rzeczpospolita – Europa – mondo*, eds. Dorota Gregorowicz, Paweł Duda, and Janusz Smołucha (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2025), 263-79.
- 8 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 61; Krzysztof Rożek, *Wywiad Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów. Dyplomacja i wojskowość* (Kraków: Wydaw. Avalon, 2021), 114-15.

even reached the Sultan's tents⁹. Over time, Chodkiewicz's reports ceased to reach Warsaw, and the papal diplomat's main source of information became letters sent to the Crown Equerry, Krzysztof Zbaraski, who was residing in the city¹⁰. The nuncio also had access to other reports reaching the court¹¹. Furthermore, he maintained contact with individuals in the monarch's inner circle, allowing him to learn their own assessments and forecasts regarding the ongoing conflict. His court informants included Archbishop of Gniezno, Wawrzyniec Gembicki, Archbishop of Lviv, Jan Andrzej Próchnicki, Bishop of Płock, Henryk Firlej, and other representatives of the elite. Thanks to them, Diotallevi even had access to the content of the monarch's secret meetings with selected nobles¹². Another source of information for the papal representative were people arriving from Turkey, who, while traveling along the Danube, had the opportunity to observe the concentration of Turkish troops and then share their observations in Warsaw. In the literature on the subject, one can encounter figures such as Jerzy Worocki and a certain Szachniewski¹³. In his correspondence, Bishop Sant'Angelo mentions two others, whose names are still unknown: Baradka¹⁴ and Gołdepski¹⁵.

Diotallevi did not have the opportunity to meet his successor, Cosimo de Torres¹⁶. On his way to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, he stopped in Vienna for almost three months¹⁷. This unforeseen stop resulted from fear of Protestant troops rampaging through Moravia¹⁸. As a result, the Archbishop of Adrianople only

- 9 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 9 VII 1621, f. 140r.
- 10 Zbigniew Anusik, "Książęta Jerzy i Krzysztof Zbarascy wobec problemów południowo-wschodniego pogranicza Rzeczypospolitej w drugim i trzecim dziesięcioleciu XVII wieku", *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych*, XV/2 (2016): 146.
- 11 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 27 IX 1621, f. 227r.
- 12 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 3 IX 1621, f. 190v.
- 13 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 71-2.
- 14 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 25 VI 1621, f. 129r-30v.
- 15 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 6 VIII 1621, f. 158r.
- 16 More about C. de Torres, see: Pietro Messina, "De Torres, Cosimo", in *DBI*, 39 (1991), 473-75; Jerzy Pietrzak, "Nuncjusz Cosmas de Torres w Polsce (1621-1622)", *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka*, 30/2 (1975): 243-53; Monika Stachowiak, "Działalność Cosmo de Torresa na urzędzie kardynała protektora Polski przy Stolicy Apostolskiej w latach 1623-1631", *Śląskie Studia Historyczne*, 10 (2003): 31-52; Litwin, *Chwała*, 155-63; Wojtyńska, *Nuncjusze*, 195-207.
- 17 Henryk Damian Wojtyńska CP, "Da Roma a Cracovia. I viaggi degli inviati pontifici in Polonia nei sec. XVI-XVIII", in *Viaggio in Italia e viaggio in Polonia*, eds. Danuta Quirini-Popławska, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace Historyczne*, 1128/110 (1994), 105; Pietrzak, "Nuncjusz", 244.
- 18 Tomáš Černušák, "Nejisté poměry po Bílé hoře (Zprávy papežských nunciů k situaci na Moravě a v Uhrách v létě roku 1621)", in *Iter Romanum MMIX-MMXXIV. Kniha česko-italských vědeckých studií Českého historického ústavu v Římě*, eds. Tomáš Černušák, Petr Vorel et al. (Praha: Historický ústav, 2024), 132-34. Paweł Duda, "Viaggio niekoniecznie buono. Problemy i dylematy

continued his journey after organizing an armed escort. He crossed the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in early October and was in Cracow a week later, although he did not reach the Warsaw court until 12 December¹⁹, two months after the end of hostilities. Apart from a single mention, his correspondence lacks an account of the actions taking place at the walls of Khotyn, but it does contain information about the conclusion of the treaty²⁰.

Until the arrival of the new nuncio, the papal representative's duties were assumed by Giuseppe Frentanelli, who had previously served as Diotallevi's auditor. His correspondence with the Secretariat of State from 26 September to 5 November 1621, concerns primarily ecclesiastical matters and marginally touches on the Chocim War, although this collection also contains interesting references to military operations²¹. The inter-nuncio relied primarily on reports sent to the Crown Equerry Zbaraski. Like his predecessor, he attributed the lack of news from Chodkiewicz to the activity of the Tatars, who were attacking couriers sent from Khotyn and disrupting the flow of information between the fortress and the rest of the country²². Only in October did he inform his superiors of the hetman's death²³.

Another source of information for the Roman dicasteries was Antonio Riatti. This enigmatic figure carried out diplomatic tasks for various political entities, including the Holy See and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Moreover, he was quite well-versed in the realities of the latter. In September 1621, Riatti was in Cracow, from where he sent two extensive letters to the Eternal City, detailing the Polish side's preparations to repel the attack and the beginning of hostilities²⁴.

dyplomatów papieskich podczas podróży tzw. via ordinaria di Moravia w XVI-XVII w.", *Rocznik Filozoficzny Ignatianum*, 31/3 (2025): 73-93.

- 19 From the correspondence of C. de Torres we know, that on 4 October he arrived at Tyniec, see: BAV, Barb. Lat. 6581, C. de Torres to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 7 X 1621, f. 31r-v. On 12 December, the nuncio made a ceremonial entry into Warsaw, see: BAV, Barb. Lat. 6581, C. de Torres to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 13 XII 1621, f. 114r; Pietrzak, "Nuncjusz", 245.
- 20 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6581, C. de Torres to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 22 X 1621, f. 47r-v.
- 21 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6580, G. Frentanelli to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 1 X 1621, f. 10r-11r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6580, G. Frentanelli to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 8 X 1621, f. 25r-v.
- 22 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 17 IX 1621, f. 211r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 27 IX 1621, f. 227r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6580, G. Frentanelli to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 1 X 1621, f. 10r. Cf. Goszczyński, "Nieszczęścia", 34-5.
- 23 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6580, G. Frentanelli to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 19 X 1621, f. 45r. The fact of Chodkiewicz's death was also noted by de Torres, see: . BAV, Barb. Lat. 6581, C. de Torres to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 15 X 1621, f. 33v. See also: Artur Goszczyński, "Zdrowie i kondycja psychiczna hetmana wielkiego litewskiego Jana Karola Chodkiewicza w czasie kampanii chocimskiej 1621", in *Od Cecory*, 78-82.
- 24 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 2 IX 1621, f. 5r-6v; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 7r-11r.

The failure of Stanisław Żółkiewski's expedition to Moldavia and the conviction that a Polish-Turkish conflict was inevitable led papal diplomats to closely monitor reports from the south, preparations initiated by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth authorities, and the general public mood prevailing in Warsaw in the summer of 1621. It seems that initially, many people, including a large group of the nuncio's interlocutors, were unaware of the real scale of the danger²⁵. The threat was ignored, the enemy's military potential was downplayed, and information reaching the court was freely interpreted. It was widely believed that no fighting would occur. Instead, there was expectation of yet another Tatar incursion inspired by the sultan²⁶, or even the signing of a suitable agreement²⁷. This sentiment was also shared by Diotallevi, who reported to his superiors in June: "It seems very possible to me that even if some Turkish troops arrive at the border, some kind of agreement will eventually be concluded, as has happened on other occasions"²⁸. Many of the nuncio's interlocutors shared this view.

At the same time, all rumours of any sort of Turkish failures were met with euphoria. For example, the news that Osman II had fallen from his horse while hunting and broken his leg sparked joy, leading to speculation that he would not personally participate in the expedition²⁹, instead handing over command to the vizier and individual pashas³⁰. It was also assumed that the campaign itself would be delayed, not occurring until late August at the earliest³¹, which, in turn, raised hopes that the enemy would be forced to fight in the unfavourable autumn weather³². The animosity within the Turkish command was noted with satisfaction³³.

There was indeed conflict between the sultan and Khan Janibek (Canibek) Giray, who also had to contend with his own opponents³⁴. Hopes were also pinned on Persia's stance, hoping that Abbas I would resume hostilities against Turkey; moreover, reports of specific clashes even appeared at court³⁵. There were also

25 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 60-1.

26 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 25 VI 1621, f. 129v-30r.

27 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 28 V 1621, f. 101r-v; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 4 VI 1621, f. 104r-05r.

28 "Mi par molto possibile quando anche venghi qualche essercito de' Turchi verso i confini, che finalmente si concluda qualche accordo, come si è fatto altre volte", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 11 VI 1621, f. 111r.

29 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 4 VI 1621, f. 105r. At the end of August, the Bishop of Lviv, J.A. Próchnicki, convinced the nuncio that the sultan had returned to Adrianople, see: BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 3 IX 1621, f. 190v.

30 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 30 VII 1621, f. 154r.

31 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 25 VI 1621, f. 129r-30r

32 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 25 VI 1621, f. 129r-30r.

33 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r.

34 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 93-4.

35 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 28 V 1621, f. 101r; BAV,

dissenting voices, signalling the possibility of an attack by Gábor Bethlen³⁶ and Muscovy³⁷, but these were initially viewed with scepticism.

Diotallevi's correspondence indicates that it was only at the turn of July and August that he began to perceive a real danger threatening the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This change undoubtedly reflected the mood prevailing at court. Chodkiewicz's reports, confirming the Turkish army's march from Adrianople towards the Danube, influenced the nuncio's revision of his views. While the hetman did not provide any information regarding the enemy's numbers, the nuncio warned in a letter to Rome that the Commonwealth must prepare for "exceptional resistance"³⁸. Another dispatch from the papal representative indicates that at the same time, a certain Gołdepski, a Pole who had previously resided in the Ottoman Empire and then, using an Imperial passport, entered the Commonwealth, arrived in Warsaw. Upon arriving at court, this unidentified figure reported on the Turkish preparations for war, which he had observed during his stay in Adrianople. According to Gołdepski, the sultan had no intention of concluding any peace treaty with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; on the contrary, he intended to attack Kamianets-Podilsky³⁹. Moreover, he estimated the Turkish forces at 200,000 soldiers. Later accounts by papal diplomats increased the number of enemies. Diotallevi pointed out that the Tatars, whom he estimated at 80,000 men, should also be added to the Turkish forces⁴⁰, while Riatti claimed: "The Turkish forces exceed 300,000, and the Tatars at least 100,000"⁴¹. These figures are, of course, exaggerated. It is estimated that the Turkish forces, together with the troops of their vassals, may have numbered approx. 90,000-100,000 soldiers⁴².

Chodkiewicz's subsequent reports caused concern at court, dashing hopes for a bloodless end to the conflict. This was reflected in Diotallevi's August dispatches. Reporting on the Polish-Lithuanian preparations to repel the invasion, the nuncio criticized them – for example, in a letter dated 13 August, he stated: "Here, preparations are not being made sufficiently to oppose [the enemy]"⁴³. A week later, he pointed out that these preparations were being carried out very slowly due to the widespread belief that war would not occur: "No one ever believed in the arrival of

Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 11 VI 1621, f. 111r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 25 VI 1621, f. 129r-30r.

36 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 18 VI 1621, f. 122r-23v; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 6 VII 1621, f. 145r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 6 VIII 1621, f. 158r.

37 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 25 VI 1621, f. 129r-30r.

38 "Per straordinaria resistenza", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 23 VII 1621, f. 148r.

39 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 6 VIII 1621, f. 158r.

40 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r.

41 "Quello delli Turchi passava 300 milla, li Tartari da 100 milla", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 7r.

42 Nagielski, "Kampania", 12.

43 "Qui non ci è preparatione in alcun modo bastante per resistere", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166v.

the Great Turk, nor in his decision regarding this war”⁴⁴.

In the opinion of Bishop Sant’Angelo, the most problematic issue was the excessively slow pace of troop concentration, and consequently, their insufficient number in the camp near Khotyn⁴⁵. While Sigismund III had planned to raise 50,000 soldiers for the upcoming war and issued recruitment letters to that effect in April⁴⁶, the slow mobilization prevented the king’s plan from being implemented. In a letter written at the end of May, Diotallevi reported that the Poles had approximately 12,000 soldiers at their disposal at that time⁴⁷. Throughout the summer, the Polish court conducted activities aimed at increasing the army’s strength. In August, the main forces crossed the Dniester and stationed themselves in the Khotyn camp. The defenders were to be supported by *lisowczy* mercenaries, dismissed from the Imperial service. In June, the nuncio reported that approximately 2,000 of those soldiers had entered the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, committing looting and atrocities during their march. Likely impressed by reports of their activities, the court initially considered disbanding them or sending them to Hungary, a move previously sought by Habsburg diplomacy⁴⁸. Ultimately, the monarch issued recruitment letter for 1,300 *lisowczy*⁴⁹. Cossacks were also expected to join the ranks. At the end of July, a Cossack embassy, led by Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny, arrived in Warsaw to present the monarch with terms for the Cossacks to participate in the fight⁵⁰.

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44 “Non è stata mai creduta la venuta del Gran Turco, né la seria risoluzione da lui havuta circa questa guerra”, BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 20 VIII 1621, f. 171v.

45 Information about the slow build-up of troops appears in many other dispatches from the papal diplomat, see: BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 11 VI 1621, f. 111r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 2 VII 1621, f. 135r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 3 IX 1621, f. 190v.

46 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 58.

47 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 28 V 1621, f. 101r; Nagielski, “Kampania”, 12.

48 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 4 VI 1621, f. 104v; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 18 VI 1621, f. 122r-v. See also, Zygmunt III Waza to Ferdynand II Habsburg, Warsaw [8] I 1621, in *The House of Vasa and the House of Austria. Correspondence from the years 1587 to 1668*. Part 1, *The Times of Sigismund III, 1587-1632*, vol. 1, ed. Ryszard Skowron (Katowice, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2016), n° 334, 714-15.

49 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 25 VI 1621, f. 129r-30r.

50 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 30 VII 1621, f. 155r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 6 VIII 1621, f. 158r. See also: Jerzy Pietrzak, *Po Cecorze i podczas wojny chocimskiej* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1983), 121-22. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 30 VII 1621, f. 155r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 6 VIII 1621, f. 158r. See also: Jerzy Pietrzak, *Po Cecorze i podczas wojny chocimskiej* (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1983), 121-22.

According to the nuncio's account, recruitment of Tatars was also considered⁵¹. High hopes were pinned on Royal Prince Ladislaus Sigismund, who was to personally lead a strong military contingent to the front⁵². Correspondence from Diotallevi, who closely monitored the royal son's preparations for the expedition to the south of the country, indicates that it was delayed, and ultimately, young Vasa did not leave Warsaw until 6 July⁵³. The departure was preceded by a service held in the Collegiate Church of St. John, during which the standard of the Court hussar banner (company) was consecrated⁵⁴. Ladislaus' division, formed primarily of mercenaries recruited in Prussia and the German states, was estimated by the nuncio at 9,000–10,000 soldiers⁵⁵. Furthermore, according to the diplomat, the prince brought with him approximately 20 cannons, which were intended to provide significant support for the defenders of Khotyn, who possessed just a few cannons themselves⁵⁶. Ultimately, these forces did not reach the camp until the first days of September. As the nuncio rightly noted, the delay was caused by the need to rebuild the broken bridges on the Dniester⁵⁷.

Diotallevi estimated that the Khotyn camp ultimately contained 30,000 soldiers, which the papal diplomat considered insufficient⁵⁸. Riatti, who had no access to Hetman Chodkiewicz's reports, estimated the Polish-Lithuanian forces at 100,000⁵⁹, including 40,000 Polish regulars, 10,000 Germans, and 50,000 Cossacks⁶⁰. According to the latest research, the Khotyn camp contained approximately 50,000–55,000

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- 51 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 23 VII 1621, f. 148r.
- 52 On the participation of Royal Prince Ladislaus Sigismund in the Khotyn War, see: Mirosław Nagielski, "Udział królewicza Władysława w kampanii chocimskiej 1621 r.," in *Od Cecory*, 85-102; Paweł Duda, "Władysław IV – warrior king? Between real achievements and court propaganda", in *The House*, Part II: *The Times of Władysław IV, 1632-1648*, ed. Ryszard Skowron (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2024), 92-5.
- 53 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 11 VI 1621, f. 111r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 2 VII 1621, f. 135v; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 9 VII 1621, f. 140v. Cf. Goszczyński, "O wpływie", 10, footnote 18.
- 54 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 9 VII 1621, f. 140r. Cf. Stanisław Kobierzycki, *Historia Władysława, królewicza polskiego i szwedzkiego*, eds. Janusz Byliński, Włodzimierz Kaczorowski (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2005), 327.
- 55 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 3 IX 1621, f. 190v.
- 56 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 17 IX 1621, f. 211r.
- 57 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 10 IX 1621, f. 199r. Cf. Goszczyński, "O wpływie", 10-1.
- 58 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 23 VII 1621, f. 148r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r.
- 59 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, 7r.
- 60 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 2 IX 1621, f. 6r.

soldiers and likely several thousand of armed camp servants⁶¹. Additionally, reserves were stationed in Cracow and Kamianets-Podilsky.

Over the time, papal diplomats became convinced that a levy of the nobility from the Crown voivodeships could tip the scales of victory in the Commonwealth's favour. This levy was to gather on 4 October near Lviv and serve as a strategic reserve⁶². It was assumed that immediately after the Sejm session, Sigismund III and his subordinate units would march to Lviv and then, along with the assembled nobility, march to Khotyn⁶³. Riatti presented an interesting assessment of the levy in his correspondence. Although he was impressed by the military potential of the nobility, which he estimated at 150,000–200,000 men [sic]⁶⁴, he was nevertheless sceptical about their actual combat value and commitment. He predicted that “the currently cruel weather due to the incessant rains and numerous, exceptionally cold days will make them want to return home quickly”⁶⁵. He assumed that the concentration of the noble masses could be exploited by those hostile to the king to express their dissatisfaction, but he also reassured them that the monarch, with his forces of supporters and 12,000 reiters and German musketeers, would be able to keep the noble masses in check. Finally, he speculated that the levy of nobility could be used not only against the Turks but also against their own soldiers, should they wish to form a confederation after the fighting ended⁶⁶.

Ultimately, Sigismund III set out from Warsaw only on 26 September, while intense fighting was underway near Khotyn⁶⁷. Frentanelli recorded the monarch's departure, noting that Queen Constance accompanied him on the journey to Lviv,

61 Nagielski, “Kampania”, 11; Id., “Kozaczyzna Zaporoska w dobie kampanii chocimskiej”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace Historyczne*, 143/2 (2016): 281.

62 For more on the organization of relief force, see: Paradowski, *The Khotyn campaign*, 187–89.

63 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 20 VIII 1621, f. 171r.

64 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 2 IX 1621, f. 5v; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 9r.

65 “Questa staggione qua hora cativissima per le continue pioggie, et fredti moltissimi, straordinari, li farà desiderar di tornare tosto alle lor case”, BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 9r.

66 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 9r. Riatti referred to the Muscovite Confederation, which the Secretariat of State followed through the reports of Nuncio Lelio Ruini, see: Paweł Duda, ““Nie jest łatwe żadnym sposobem ugaszenie tego ognia”. Problem konfederacji lwowskiej z 1622 r. w korespondencji nuncjusza Cosimo de Torresa z Sekretariatem Stanu Stolicy Apostolskiej”, in *Między obowiązkami, przywilejami a prawem Rzeczypospolitej XVI-XVIII w. Konfederacje staropolskie*, eds. Adam Perłakowski, Dariusz Rolnik, and Filip Wolański (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Księgarnia Akademicka, 2022), 88–9.

67 Marek Wrede, *Itinerarium króla Zygmunta III 1587–1632* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 2019), 282.

and that he was to be joined by the levy of nobility. The inter-nuncio provided a rather detailed estimate of the forces the ruler led: 1,700 German infantrymen, 300 Irish infantrymen, 700 Hungarian haiduks, over 300 cossacks cavalry, 200 reiters, and 500 hussars. The calculations by Gregory XV's representative do not differ from current research⁶⁸. According to the papal envoy, these forces were paid from the king's private funds. Furthermore, 12 cannons were to follow the monarch, but due to a lack of horses, only eight lighter cannons were despatched. In the opinion of the papal representative, the relief, although it gave hope, was a belated action⁶⁹.

The slow pace of concentration and the shortage of soldiers were not the only problems facing the Polish-Lithuanian side. Diotallevi pointed to the soldiers' low level of discipline. In his opinion, disputes often erupted between them, which escalated into fights, and robberies. It seems this was indeed a pressing problem, as Chodkiewicz, suffering from a shortage of soldiers, decided to execute several of the ringleaders in an effort to maintain discipline⁷⁰. The papal envoy repeatedly noted in his correspondence the shortage of supplies. For example, he cited Chodkiewicz's negative opinions on gunpowder, writing: "The gunpowder sent is terrible and difficult to ignite"⁷¹. On the eve of the battle, the nuncio informed his superiors: "The Hetman laments the slow pace of the soldiers' arrival at the camp [...] and also complains about the discord among those gathered, the indisposition among the soldiers, and the shortage of food"⁷².

In addition to the Polish-Lithuanian military preparations, the court, and consequently the Papal Nuncio, was preoccupied with the activity of Tatars and the advance of Turkish troops. In June, the Nuncio reported to Rome that approximately 16,000 Tatars had invaded the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Troops that were guarding the border were initially surprised and lost three standards, but later the soldiers reorganised, repelled the attack, and recovered their flags, inflicting significant losses on the enemy. According to the papal envoy, many Tatars were killed, and important commanders were captured⁷³. In July, a strong Tatar cavalry, according to the Nuncio numbering approximately 4,000 horsemen, crossed the

68 It is estimated that Sigismund III brought 3,000 soldiers with him to Lviv, see: Nagielski, "Kampania", 23; Przemysław Gawron, "Wojska zaciągu cudzoziemskiego w czasie wojny chocimskiej 1621 roku", in *Od Cecory*, 120-21.

69 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6580, G. Frentanelli to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 1 X 1621, f. 10v.

70 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r. Cf. Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 83.

71 "La polvere mandatele fosse molto cattiva, e molto difficil a pigliar fuoco", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 10 IX 1621, f. 199r. Cf. Goszczyński, "Nieszczęścia", 35-6.

72 "Il Generale si dole grandemente della tardanza de' soldati in concorrere al campo [...], si dole inoltre della discordia di quelli, che si trovano radunati, dell'indispositioni fra quanti, che corrono fra di essi, e della carestia di vettovaglie", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 3 IX 1621, f. 190v.

73 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 18 VI 1621, f. 122r-23v.

border but was quickly defeated by a Polish detachment of 10,000 men⁷⁴. Indeed, from June onward, Tatar troops were very active. In addition to plundering, they also sought information and to capture prisoners. However, the incursions usually ended in failure⁷⁵.

In the context of the Turkish advance, it was rightly believed that a successful crossing of the Danube would be crucial to the invasion. Chodkiewicz's agents had been monitoring the situation along the river since spring. Based on the information they gathered, Diotallevi reported in late May that the Turks had begun massing ships on the Danube to quickly create a pontoon bridge upon crossing. Furthermore, artillery was being assembled, which the nuncio estimated at 200 cannons⁷⁶. According to his account, Chodkiewicz sent a reconnaissance force of a thousand horsemen next to the river, to observe enemy movements and, if an opportunity arose, to seize the artillery, but the planned action did not materialize⁷⁷. Simultaneously, the main Turkish forces were concentrating in Adrianople. Information about the enemy's gathering was obtained from five Turkish spies, who were captured, tortured, and then executed⁷⁸.

On 7 June 1621, Osman II's army left Adrianople and headed for the Danube, arriving in early July. The slow pace of the march can be attributed to weather conditions⁷⁹. The crossing began on 11 July near Isaccea⁸⁰ and lasted a week. According to Diotallevi's account, while the Danube was still being crossed, Osman II sent a force of 10,000 men against the Poles⁸¹. This was most likely the vanguard, which included cavalry from Rumelia and Anatolia⁸². According to nuncio's report, Chodkiewicz sent 15,000 soldiers against these forces⁸³. In a letter dated 20 August, the diplomat reported that the Turkish crossing of the Danube had been successful⁸⁴. While the main Turkish forces were crossing, the hetman's agents confirmed that the Ottoman army numbered around 200,000 soldiers, not including the Tatars. A concerned Diotallevi reported: "The enemy is now so powerful that unless extraordinary measures are taken, it will be impossible to oppose such a force"⁸⁵. In response,

74 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 23 VII 1621, f. 148r.

75 Maurycy Horn, "Chronologia i zasięg najazdów tatarskich na ziemie Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1600-1647", *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, VIII/1 (1962): 37-8.

76 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 28 V 1621, f. 101r.

77 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 28 V 1621, f. 101r.

78 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 4 VI 1621, f. 104v.

79 Tretiak, *Historia*, 24-5; Goszczyński, "O wpływie", 9.

80 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 70-1.

81 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r.

82 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 76.

83 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r.

84 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 20 VIII 1621, f. 171r.

85 "Il nemico è hora tanto potente, che se non si faranno provisioni straordinarie

Chodkiewicz sent letters to the vizier proposing negotiations. According to the papal representative, this was a ruse intended to provide the Polish-Lithuanian side with the time necessary to prepare a defence. Bishop Sant'Angelo did not believe this action would bring any success and even predicted that the Turks, aware of their superiority over the enemy, would reject the proposal⁸⁶. In a later letter, he assumed that the Turkish army would immediately advance towards the border with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, intending to bring about a decisive battle⁸⁷. Chodkiewicz, mindful of the disproportionate forces, wanted to avoid such a scenario and intended to defend the fortified camp and harass the enemy with cavalry and infantry attacks. The hetman's tactical plan was appreciated by the nuncio, who argued that he should avoid battle and persevere in the siege until relief arrived or the end of October, when the autumn weather would discourage the Turks from continuing the fighting⁸⁸.

Contrary to Bishop Sant'Angelo's predictions, the Turkish advance from the Danube to Khotyn proceeded rather slowly, largely due to the actions of the Cossacks, who ravaged the area and harassed enemy forces⁸⁹. A description of one such clash can be found in the nuncio's report of 3 September. It indicates that the hetman, most likely in mid-August, sent a reconnaissance force that surprised a hundred-men Turkish patrol. The captured commander confessed that: "after the Ottoman army crossed the Danube and began its march toward the border, the sultan decided to send the pasha [...] with 50,000 soldiers ahead to launch the first attack on the Poles"⁹⁰. The information obtained from the prisoner does not seem credible and was most likely a form of disinformation intended to intimidate the enemy. In a later letter, the nuncio noted yet another clash, this time between Cossacks and Tatars⁹¹. In early September, Chodkiewicz's reports from 25, 27 and 30 August reached the court, in which the hetman reported that enemy forces were steadily approaching the Polish camp⁹².

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In September, the court awaited with apprehension news of a Polish-Turkish confrontation. Diotallevi also shared this concern; given the shortage of soldiers and artillery, as well as the lack of discipline in the Polish-Lithuanian army, he did

sarà impossibile il poter resistere a tanta forza", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 13 VIII 1621, f. 166r.

86 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 20 VIII 1621, f. 171r.

87 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 27 VIII 1621, f. 174r.

88 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 27 VIII 1621, f. 174r.

89 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 77-8.

90 "Doppo la passata del Danubio dell'essercito Ottomano, et incaminamento di esso alla volta de' confini; haveva il Gran Turco risoluto d'inviar avanti un bassa [...] con 50 mila soldati per dar a' Polacchi il primo assalto", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 3 IX 1621, f. 190r.

91 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 10 IX 1621, f. 199r.

92 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 3 IX 1621, f. 190r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 10 IX 1621, f. 199r.

not think the Polish-Lithuanian side had much chance of success⁹³. Riatti was more optimistic. He predicted that due to the terrible weather conditions, both sides would have enormous problems obtaining food, which would limit the Polish-Turkish confrontation to only a few skirmishes: “The land cannot support so many people; the Turks go foraging for food within a radius of eight and ten miles; our people have little food, yet they eat more than the Turks and Tatars”⁹⁴. In mid-September, Zbaraski received reports from the first days of fighting. Based on these accounts, Diotallevi wrote:

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On the third [day] of this month, the Turk [Sultan] decided to attack the Polish forces, boasting that he wanted to dine at their camp that day. However, later convinced by his advisors, who had obtained information from two Wallachian spies about the impracticality of this plan, he decided to first attack the Cossacks, who bravely repelled the first, second, and third assaults on the third, fourth, and fifth of this month. After that, on Sunday, the sixth day, the Turk remained calm⁹⁵.

The pause in hostilities that occurred on Sunday, 5 September, was the result of heavy rains that forced Osman II to abandon his planned attack⁹⁶. The enemy attempted another assault on 6 September. As the nuncio reported: “However strong the new assault launched the next day, the Cossack resistance, supported by numerous hetman’s soldiers, was even greater; thus the Turks were repulsed with numerous losses”⁹⁷. Riatti described the first days of fighting in a similar manner:

From the first day of September, troops began their approach [...]. The Turks were so certain of victory that their prince promised to God that he would not eat on 10 September unless they prepared food for him in the captured camp. On 3 September, he sent a large number of his men against the Cossacks, who were in a separate camp, separated from the main forces. Because the pagans were extremely numerous, they surrounded and attacked them, and each attack was

93 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 17 IX 1621, f. 211r.

94 “Il tereno non potrà sostantare tanto numero di popolo, et li Turchi vanno a cercare la vettovaglia otto, et dieci leghe, et le nostre ancora hanno puoco da viver, massime che mangiano assai più che li Turchi et Tartari”, BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 2 IX 1621, f. 6v.

95 “Il Turco, per quanto col mezzo accennato si è inteso risoluto di assaltare a’ 3 del corrente l’essercito Polacco, si era vantato di voler pranzar in quel giorno nel campo loro. Ma persuaso di poi con l’informatione di due spie Valacche da’ suoi consiglieri dell’impossibilità del disegno, risolve far assaltar prima i Cosacchi, i quali valorosamente sostennero e ribatterono il primo, secondo e terzo assalto a’ 3, 4, e 5 del corrente, doppo che il sesto giorno di domenica il Turco restò quieto”, BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 17 IX 1621, f. 211r.

96 Goszczyński, “O wpływie”, 12. It is worth noting that F. Diotallevi mixed up the dates in his account, as Sunday fell on 5 September.

97 “Ma quanto fu più gagliardo il nuovo assalto del giorno seguente, tanto maggior fu la resistenza de’ Cosacchi, soccorsi da buon nervo di gente dal General del Regno, onde furono i Turchi ributtati”, BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 17 IX 1621, f. 211r.

always repelled; these attacks took place on the third, fourth, and sixth of this month. Finally, the Turks and Tatars received orders to destroy the Cossack camp at all costs by launching a major assault. The Cossacks [...] expected an attack during which they would not only repel the enemy but also push them towards the Polish camp, from which volunteers had set out to help. Encouraged by this, the Cossacks launched a major battle, during which the Turks were cut down⁹⁸.

The accounts of Diotallevi and Riatti, although quite general, coincide with the findings of the modern historiography⁹⁹.

In their accounts, both papal correspondents clearly exaggerated the enemy's losses. Diotallevi reported 20,000 Turkish casualties, while Riatti estimated them at 40,000. The nuncio also reported losses suffered by the defenders, which were estimated at around 1,000 Zaporozhians. Both diplomats agreed that numerous enemy prisoners had been captured, including two important pashas, and that artillery had been captured. Riatti's account indicates that these were eight heavy cannons¹⁰⁰.

The setbacks suffered in the first days of fighting did not discourage the aggressors; on the contrary, they motivated them to undertake further assaults. A description of these assaults can be found in Riatti's correspondence, which states: "After the eighth day, i.e., the ninth and tenth, the Turk, disregarding the Christians' previous successes, ordered his men, under penalty of death, to attack the larger camp of Poles, who were awake and motivated, and since it was a violent attack, the victory was bloody"¹⁰¹. After repelling the attack, some of the servants, contrary to the

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98 "Dal primo giorno di settembre cominciano ad avvicinarsi li esserciti [...]. Turchi tenevano così sicura la vittoria, che il lor Principe fece votto al suo Machometto di non voler mangiare il 10 del presente se li suoi non li preparavano il cibo nel nostro campo. Il dì terzo spinsero gran numero de' suoi contro Cosacchi, quali in campo separato dall'essercito grosso alloggiavano, et perché li pagani erano di numero straordinario, li circondarono et assaltandoli da ogni banda furono sempre ributati; quest'assalti furono il terzo e quarto, sesto di presente, in ultimo venendo commandamenti alli Turchi et Tartari che a tutti li modi disfacessero il campo de' Cosacchi, dietro l'assalto maggior. Li Cosacchi [...] aspettano l'assalto, il che seguendo non solo ributano l'inimico, ma ancora se li fecero con il ferro la strada di passare al campo Polacho, li quali ancora, cioè li venturieri si disposero di andarli in soccorso, sì che animati li Cosacchi attaccano una grossa scaramuzza, nella quale li Turchi furono ben pesti", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 7r-v.

99 Podhorodecki, *Chocim*, 109-16; Nagielski, "Kampania", 14-6; M. Paradowski, *The Khotyn campaign*, 132-49.

100 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 17 IX 1621, f. 211r; BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 7v.

101 "Dopo li otto, cioè il 9, et 10 del corrente disdegnato il gran Turco di tali progressi felici a' Christiani, commandò alli suoi sotto pena della vita che tutti andavano all'assalto del campo grande delli Polachi, quali non dormivano, et già erano più animati, et essendo l'assalto troppo impetuoso, la vittoria ancora all'incitere fu sanguinosa", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 7v-8r.

orders of Chodkiewicz and Royal Prince Ladislaus, attacked the Turkish camp, looted a large number of tents, set them on fire, nailed many of the cannons, and returned with the loot¹⁰². It is highly probable that the description of the attack on the Ottoman camp cited by the nuncio took place on 7 September¹⁰³. The first week of fighting resulted in the Turks withdrawing from the vicinity of the Polish entrenchments. The papal diplomat was most likely deceived by Polish propaganda and cited improbable casualty figures, estimating that 15,000 of the defenders and 60,000 Turks and Tatars had fallen, although there were also claims of 100,000 enemy casualties¹⁰⁴. In conclusion, Riatti stated, not without satisfaction, "The Turk, who wanted to dine in the Polish camp, sent a large number of his men to dine in the devil's house"¹⁰⁵.

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In reporting on this stage of the battle, Riatti referred to the massacre of the Moldavians living near the castle, citing information that Chodkiewicz had uncovered a plot to set fire to the Polish camp, thus signalling the Turks to launch an assault. The conspirators, under torture, revealed their intentions¹⁰⁶. The alleged Moldavian plot was indeed uncovered and executed, but it appears to have been a plot by soldiers to seize food supplies belonging to the victims; moreover, the event took place on 5 September¹⁰⁷. Riatti also drew attention to the sabotage operations conducted by the Tatars, who were ravaging the southern borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth¹⁰⁸, reporting an incursion by a 30,000-strong cavalry force [sic] that had ventured into the vicinity of Jarosław. At the same time, the papal diplomat appreciated the military talents of Tomasz Zamoyski, who skilfully stopped the attack of Tatars on 7 September near Tarnopol¹⁰⁹.

102 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 8r.

103 Letter of J. Sobieski to K. Zbaraski, obóz pod Chocimem 22 IX 1621 in *Korespondencja Krzysztofa księcia Zbaraskiego koniuszego koronnego 1612-1627*, ed. Anna Filipczak-Kocur (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2015): 98 (no. 15).

104 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 8r.

105 "Il Turco che voleva pigliar il pranzo nel campo Polacho, mandando tanto numero delle sue a cenare in casa del Diavolo", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 8r.

106 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 8v.

107 Jakub Sobieski, *Pamiętnik wojny chocimskiej, xiąg troje*, ed. Władysław Syrokomla (Petersburg: Bolesław Maurycy Wolff, 1854), 32-3; Goszczyński, "O wpływie", 12; M. Paradowski, *The Khotyn campaign*, 143.

108 Horn, "Chronologia", 39-40.

109 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 8r-v. Cf. Marta Kupczewska, "Pomiędzy interesem prywatnym a dobrem publicznym – zaangażowanie wojewody kijowskiego Tomasza Zamoyskiego w organizację i przebieg kampanii chocimskiej 1621 roku", in *Honestas et turpitudine. Magnateria Rzeczypospolitej w XVI-XVIII wieku*, eds. Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, Marta Kupczewska, Karol Łopatecki, and Jan Urwanowicz (Białystok: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 2019), 349.

Accounts of the subsequent fighting, which took place around Khotyn, appear sporadically in papal correspondence. In a dispatch dated 1 October, inter-nuncio Frentanelli provided a rather general description of the fighting that took place on 13 and 14 September:

On the eve of the feast of the Holy Cross, the army of the Kingdom bravely withstood a new attack of the Turks, and on the feast of the Holy Cross itself, the Cossacks fought with the Turks for many hours, suffering heavy losses, and managed to push them back to their tents; in this notification [we received] it is added that the victory was bloody, due to the heavy losses suffered by the Cossacks¹¹⁰.

Frentanelli also noted the serious supply problems faced by the defenders of Khotyn, particularly the lack of food for the soldiers and fodder for the horses, which caused a significant number of them to starve. According to the papal representative, animals were also slaughtered by Poles who did not want them to suffer from hunger¹¹¹. It is unknown whether the information cited by the inter-nuncio is true, but other sources also confirm the enormous losses amongst horses¹¹². In the analysed Vatican resources, a brief note was also found, most likely concerning the clashes that took place on 27 and 28 September. De Torres noted the heavy and numerous clashes, from which the defenders emerged victorious¹¹³. The information obtained by papal diplomats meant that their reports to Rome, specifically concerning the military operations, were quite optimistic. Diotallevi's initial concerns, even if not ultimately dispelled by the reports of the Crown Equerry Zbaraski, gave way to hope for ultimate success for the Polish-Lithuanian side¹¹⁴. Riatti was almost certain of victory, assuming that the Turks would be hindered by the harsh winter and possible rebellions within the enemy ranks. He placed great hopes in the relief effort led by Sigismund III, which, in his opinion, would boost the defenders' morale¹¹⁵. Furthermore, likely aware of the Holy See's foreign policy priorities, he appealed

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- 110 "La vigilia di Santa Croce l'esercito del Regno sostenesse valorosamente un nuovo assalto del Turco, ma che il giorno stesso della festa di Santa Croce da' Cosacchi si combattesse per molte hore con gran mortalità de' Turchi e che ardissero ributtarli in dietro sin alli padiglioni, et in questo avviso si aggiunge, che la vittoria è stata sanguenosa, per esservi restato ucciso grosso numero de' Cosachi", BAV, Barb. Lat. 6580, G. Frentanelli to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 1 X 1621, f. 10r-v.
- 111 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6580, G. Frentanelli to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 1 X 1621, f. 10v.
- 112 Jan Czapliński, a participant in the battle, mentioned 50,000 dead horses, see. "Kopia listu od pana Czaplińskiego do Jerzego Radziwińskiego 1 octobris z obozu pisanego", in Hanna Malewska, *Listy staropolskie z epoki Wazów* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1977), 209. See also: Goszczyński, "O wpływie", 15; Id., "Nieszczęścia", 39; Nagielski, "Kampania", 16.
- 113 BAV, Barb. lat, vol. 6581, C. de Torres to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 15 X 1621, f. 33r.
- 114 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6579, F. Diotallevi to L. Ludovisi, Warsaw 17 IX 1621, f. 211r.
- 115 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 9r-v.

for the resumption of efforts to establish an anti-Ottoman league, despite numerous previous failed attempts, demonstrating that the evolving political situation favoured this project¹¹⁶.

It can be assumed that the reports sent to the Eternal City by Diotallevi, Frentanelli, and especially Riatti significantly influenced the papal assessment of the Khotyn War and the Holy See's position on Polish-Turkish relations, including the ratification of the Khotyn Treaty¹¹⁷. The messages conveyed by papal diplomats residing in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the summer and autumn of 1621 raised the hopes of the Papal dicasteries, which were ultimately dashed by the signing of the treaty, as a result of which: "Our Lord feels great sorrow because such a magnificent opportunity has been lost, not only to inflict defeat on the Turk, who could no longer resist murder, mortality, and food shortages, but also to forge the desired alliance to expand the victory that had begun"¹¹⁸.

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116 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6660, A. Riatti to L. Ludovisi, Cracow 26 IX 1621, f. 10v-11r.

117 For more on this topic, see: Paweł Duda, *Krzyż i karabela. Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w ocenie dyplomacji papieskiej w latach 1623-1635* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2019), 23-35.

118 "Gran dolore ne senti Nostro Signore, perché una bellissima occasione si perde, non solo di mettere all'hora in sconfitta il Turco che più non poteva resistere all'uccisioni, alle mortalità et alla penuria de' viveri, ma di stabilire la desiderata confederatione, per proseguire l'incominciata victoria", Fitych, *Struktura*, 236.

ABBREVIATIONS

BAV: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

Barb. Lat.: Barberiniani Latini

DBI: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani).

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