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Aleksandra Ziober and Alessandro Boccolini

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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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INTRODUCTION

The occurrence of free elections within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth stands out as a distinctive and innovative political institution in early modern Europe. Following the demise of King Sigismund Augustus in 1572, the system evolved as a practical response to the complexities of royal succession in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Europe. Over the past two centuries, free elections have shaped the governance of the Commonwealth, introduced unparalleled transparency to foreign candidates, and left a lasting impression on European history.

The demise of Sigismund Augustus on July 7, 1572, presumably due to tuberculosis, left the Commonwealth without an heir, as he was the final ruler of the Jagiellonian dynasty. This loss posed immediate challenges to the state's stability. The king's health had been a concern for months, but no legal provisions for royal succession or administration during the interregnum had been established throughout his lifetime. Therefore, central offices and courts, which derived their authority from the monarch, were unable to function effectively. The absence of a definitive protocol exacerbated pre-existing regional rivalries and religious conflicts, as the Commonwealth was comprised of numerous provinces with diverse religious beliefs and political aims. In response, various magnate factions within the Polish Crown convened to establish a framework for electing a new king. The discussion revolved around the selection of a temporary steward of royal authority during the interregnum. While many supported the appointment of Primate Jakub Uchański, others favored Jan Firlej, the Grand Marshal of the Crown.These discussions extended to the method of electing the new monarch, with some advocating for electio viritim, a vote that was open to all members of the nobility, while others favored a more exclusive assembly of representatives.

The convocation Sejm, which convened on January 6, 1573, laid the foundations for the free election system. It was determined that every nobleman was entitled to participate in the election, which was scheduled to take place in close proximity to Warsaw. Furthermore, the assembly addressed religious tensions by drafting the Warsaw Confederation Act, a groundbreaking document that guaranteed freedom of religion and committed the Commonwealth to a policy of religious tolerance. This act, which was signed during a volatile period of interreligious conflict throughout Europe, exemplified the distinctive approach of the Republic to governance and coexistence.

Due to the openness of the free election system, the Commonwealth's throne became a prize coveted by dynasties across Europe. The possibility of installing a candidate on the Polish throne had profound implications for the continent's balance of power. Monarchs and princes from across Europe sought to influence the outcome, which led to an intricate web of diplomacy. Envoys and agents are engaged with the most influential citizens of the Commonwealth, attempting to secure the election of their preferred candidates. The Commonwealth's penness transformed the Commonwealth into a focal point of European geopolitics. Although the nobility held a high regard for their right to elect a king, foreign powers viewed these elections as an opportunity to expand their influence in Central and Eastern Europe. The elections of Henry of Valois in 1573, Stephen Báthory in 1575, and subsequent monarchs illustrate how domestic politics intertwined with broader European strategies.

The system of free election was a reflection of the Commonwealth's unique political identity as a noble republic committed to shared governance and religious tolerance. Nonetheless, it also presented obstacles such as factionalism, external interference, and the challenges of sustaining internal stability during an interregnum.These complexities are explored in the articles included in this volume, which examine the political, military, and diplomatic aspects of free elections and their significance in the broader European context.

Miguel Conde Pazos' article examines the Spanish monarchy's involvement in the Polish-Lithuanian royal elections during the 16th and 17th centuries. The Spanish intervention was closely coordinated with the Austrian Habsburgs, and was part of a wider strategy to maintain influence in Central Europe. Spanish diplomacy was initially focused on placing a Habsburg on the Polish throne to complete the absorption of the Jagiellonian legacy, but later shifted to a more pragmatic approach, prioritizing Spanish interests over dynastic expansion. Despite significant financial and diplomatic efforts, the Spanish Monarchy's involvement encountered obstacles such as limited financial resources, the intricate nature of Polish politics, and competition from other powers. Despite the fact that no Habsburg ascended the throne, Spanish-backed candidates often aligned with the Habsburgs, ensuring Spanish influence in the region. The article provides a detailed analysis of the Spanish monarchy's diplomatic strategies, including the challenges and costs of their interventions in the Polish-Lithuanian elections.

Kateřina Pražáková's article delves into the candidacy of William of Rosenberg for the Polish throne during the interregnum of 1574–1575. Despite his status as a vassal of Emperor Maximilian II, Rosenberg secretly pursued the throne, using a network of intermediaries to communicate with Polish magnates and gain their support. Pražáková explores how Rosenberg's efforts were marked by covert negotiations, financial support, and the involvement of foreign diplomacy, particularly the Emperor's agents. The article highlights the complex political landscape of the time, in which Rosenberg's candidacy, though backed by significant resources, ultimately failed due to a lack of widespread support and the Habsburgs' conflicting interests in the region.

The article by Justyna Gałuszka explores the political and military activities surrounding the third free election in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with a focus on Stanisław "Diabeł" Stadnicki. As a member of the pro-Habsburg faction, the Maximilianists, Stadnicki played a key role in supporting Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg's unsuccessful bid for the Polish crown in 1587. Despite his military contributions and efforts to disrupt opponents, the broader weaknesses of the Habsburg campaign – such as disunity, inadequate military resources, and strategic errors – led to defeat. Stadnicki's role as an enforcer and military leader highlights his importance within the faction, even though internal divisions and external challenges ultimately undermined their efforts.

The free election system in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth has often been viewed as a source of liberty for the nobility, but this view overstates the complex political realities of the time. Urszula Augustyniak examines this matter and demonstrates how, during the 16th and 17th centuries, the nobility's defense of viritim elections and the liberum veto frequently clashed with the interests of the magnates, who sought to limit the influence of the broader nobili. As the political

landscape shifted, the magnates, particularly during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa, proposed reforms that would confer greater authority on the Senate in the electoral process. The implementation of a two-stage voting system, aimed at reducing the direct influence of the nobility, encountered strong opposition. Augustyniak also examines how these political struggles were not merely about the election system but reflected deeper tensions between the royal court, the magnates, and the broader nobility. The article offers a nuanced view of the changing political dynamics and the evolving nature of power within the Commonwealth.

The following article, authored by Bartosz Staręgowski, shifts attention to the regional challenges of maintaining security during interregna in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It investigates how local assemblies (*sejmiki ziemskie*) in Greater Poland managed public safety in the absence of royal authority, focusing on the elections of the Vasa dynasty. Stargowski focuses on the creation and operation of county troops and noble levies, analyzing how these forces defended against threats such as banditry and foreign incursions. The text emphasizes the adaptability of local governance in safeguarding regional stability and places these efforts within the wider context of the Commonwealth's political and military organization.

In her insightful contribution, Dorota Gregorowicz scrutinizes the significance of the Holy See in the heated 1648 election, characterized by the rivalry between John Casimir and Charles Ferdinand Vasa. It examines the Vatican's strategy of maintaining neutrality while promoting Catholic unity during a period fraught with internal divisions and external pressures, including the Cossack uprisings. Gregorowicz uses diplomatic correspondence and papal records to illustrate the delicate balance the Holy See sought to achieve despite the ambitions of the Vasa princes and the involvement of other European powers. Her work highlights the interplay between local politics and international diplomacy, emphasizing the impact of papal decisions on the Commonwealth's trajectory during this crucial election.

Julia Paduch examines the 1648 Polish-Lithuanian election from the perspective of Charles Ferdinand Vasa, focusing on the factors that led to his failure. Despite his administrative expertise and religious devotion, Charles Ferdinand faced challenges due to his lack of military skill and his harsh character traits, which contrasted with the more favoured John Casimir, who possessed military expertise and seniority. Paduch highlights the significance of external diplomacy and the broader political crisis within the Commonwealth, which influenced the nobility's decision-making process. The article investigates how Charles Ferdinand's inability to gain the support of key factions, coupled with his overpromising and lack of military success, led to his eventual resignation. This analysis provides valuable insights into the electoral dynamics and the characteristics that ultimately determine a candidate's success or failure in the distinctive electoral system of the Commonwealth.

Alessandro Boccolini provides a thorough study of Virginio Orsini, the Cardinal Protector of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the reign of John Casimir Vasa. Orsini played an important role as a mediator between Rome, Warsaw, and other European powers, especially during the politically turbulent period following the abdication of John II Casimir in 1668. Boccolini meticulously reconstructs Orsini's diplomatic efforts to navigate the Commonwealth's interregnum, a period marked by internal instability and external threats, particularly from the Ottoman Empire,

by extensively utilizing archival sources. The study highlights the Commonwealth's significance as a bulwark of Catholicism (*antemurale Christianitatis*), its unique challenges as an elective monarchy, and the complexities of its relations with the Holy See and neighboring states.

The interregnum that followed John II Casimir's abdication in 1668-1669 presented a crucial opportunity for both the nobility and magnates to enhance their political influence within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Aleksandra Ziober's article delves into how diverse factions employed political propaganda, specifically pamphlets, to influence the nobility's perception during the election for the new king. These pamphlets highlighted the candidates' age, wealth, lineage, and political acumen, while also discrediting rivals through vivid rhetoric. Ziober examines how public debates and rhetorical strategies played a key role in shaping the election process, demonstrating that political persuasion was key to the outcome. By analyzing these texts, the article illuminates the significance of print media in influencing political decision-making and the manner in which the nobility's loyalty was shaped by strategic arguments. The study provides comprehensive insights into the mechanisms of political manipulation and the utilization of propaganda to secure power within the Commonwealth.

The candidacy of Prince Livio Odescalchi for the Polish throne during the 1696 interregnum is the focus of Jarosław Pietrzak's article, which examines this foreign attempt to secure the crown in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Despite his wealth and connections to the papacy, Odescalchi's campaign was marred by indecision and disorganization, eventually leading to his failure. His agents, including Giovanni Arigo Piccinardi and Carlo Maurizio Vota, were struggling to coordinate their efforts, and the prince's prolonged hesitation further undermined his prospects. Pietrzak's article explores these dynamics, shedding light on the challenges faced by foreign candidates and the internal and external factors that determined the outcome of the election. The article examines the complexities of the Polish electoral system and the difficulties of achieving success without a unified political strategy.

In the next article by Gaetano Platania, the turbulent period following John III Sobieski's death is examined, culminating in the election of August II Wettin as king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The article discusses how Wettin's Protestant faith and cautious stance toward the Turks raised significant concerns at the Holy See. It emphasizes Monsignor Fabrizio Paolucci's pivotal role as the extraordinary nuncio in Warsaw, tasked with unifying a divided kingdom and assessing the new ruler's early policies. This installment in the series draws on newly revealed correspondence between Paolucci and the Vatican's Secretariat of State, along with insights from Jesuit theologian Carlo Maurizio Vota.

Grzegorz Glabisz in his article examines the 1764 interregnum in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, focusing on the political struggle in the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships. He discusses how the middle-income nobility in these regions played a key role in the political mobilization between the Czartoryski 'Familia' and the republican factions. Despite the Czartoryski camp's ultimate victory, the article emphasizes the significant opposition from the local gentry and their efforts to push for reforms. Glabisz provides an insight into the political dynamics at the grassroots level, showing how the local elite influenced national politics. He also discusses

the Russian involvement that shaped the course of the interregnum. The article additionally examines the lasting impact of the reforms implemented during the 1764 Sejm and how they set the stage for future political shifts in Greater Poland.
The system of free elections in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with its distinctive combination of political autonomy and external influence, has had a significant impact on the history of Europe. This volume offers a rich exploration of the complexities surrounding these elections, highlighting the intricate interplay between local and foreign powers, as well as the political maneuvering within the Commonwealth's nobility. The articles presented herein, encompassing a diverse range of topics ranging from the significance of foreign diplomacy to internal struggles for power, provide a comprehensive comprehension of the operational functioning of the free election system. The collected studies in this book will provide novel insights into the political culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth within a broader European context. Each of these studies examines not only the political, but also the social and diplomatic aspects of these elections. By engaging with the diverse perspectives and research presented here, readers will acquire a greater understanding of the significance of free elections and their persistent impact on the political landscape of early modern Europe. We encourage you to explore these texts with the expectation that they will enhance your current comprehension of the electoral politics of the Commonwealth and contribute to ongoing scholarly discussions.

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THE SPANISH MONARCHY IN THE FREE ROYAL ELECTIONS IN POLAND: ASPIRATIONS AND DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIES (16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES)

ABSTRACT
This article analyzes the involvement of the Spanish Monarchy in the royal elections of Poland-Lithuania during the 16th and 17th centuries. Spanish intervention, closely coordinated with the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs, was framed within a family strategy to maintain influence in Central Europe. Spanish diplomats supported imperial candidacies, prioritizing the Emperor's interests over their own, which limited their autonomy in the process. Over these two centuries, diplomatic strategy shifted from dynastic expansion, aimed at placing a Habsburg family member on the Polish throne, to a more pragmatic policy that sought to secure Spanish interests by backing other favorable candidacies. Despite the diplomatic and financial efforts deployed, Spanish interventions faced significant obstacles, including distrust between the branches of the House of Austria and financial constraints. An analysis of the cost of these interventions reveals that, while a Habsburg never ascended the throne, most elected monarchs were aligned with the interests of the House of Austria, ensuring Spain's sustained influence in the region. This paper provides a comprehensive view of the diplomatic, financial, and political complexities surrounding Spanish intervention in the Polish-Lithuanian elections.

KEYWORDS: Spanish diplomacy; Poland-Lithuania; Elecions; Habsburg dynasty; Dynastic expansion.

INTRODUCTION

The Spanish Monarchy in the 16th and 17th centuries showed great interest in the elections of Poland-Lithuania. Each electoral convocation affected the political balance of Central-Eastern Europe, with the potential to alter the continent's hegemony. For the emperor, placing an allied king on the Polish-Lithuanian throne guaranteed the stability of the northeastern border of his hereditary territories. In contrast, for the French and the Turks, the elections represented an opportunity to undermine the Habsburgs and extend their influence in Eastern Europe. All of this led to increasing foreign interference in the royal elections, including intervention by Spanish diplomacy. This interference was proportional to the strength of the family alliance between the Habsburgs of Madrid and Vienna, the foundation of Spanish strategy in Central Europe. Moreover, Poland-Lithuania offered Spain the opportunity to recruit troops to fight France, as well as access to ports from which to disrupt the trade of the United Provinces. Thus, placing a king favorable to the House of Austria on that throne became a key objective of Madrid's northern strategy during these two centuries.

Studies on Spanish intervention in the royal elections have focused on particular cases[1]. Notably, the 1587 election, which brought Sigismund III to the throne, has been the subject of several studies, which is understandable, given that it was the moment when Spanish diplomacy deployed the most resources and showed the greatest commitment. However, comprehensive studies on Spain's overall participation in these events are practically nonexistent[2]. This work aims to provide a general overview of Spanish activity in the various elections, analyzing the common features of its intervention to offer a global perspective.

1 About the 1573 election, see: Raimundo A. Rodríguez Pérez, "Servir al Rey, servir a la Casa. La embajada extraordinaria del III marqués de los Vélez en Viena y Polonia (1572–1575)", in *La dinastía de los Austria: las relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio*, coord. José Martínez Millán, Rubén González Cuerva, vol. 1 (Madrid: Polifemo, 2011), 439-78. In the case of the royal election of 1575: Miguel Conde Pazos, "Diplomacia en la bancarrota: Felipe II ante la segunda elección real de Polonia-Lituania (1575–1576)", *Chronica nova: Revista de historia moderna de la Universidad de Granada,* 47 (2021): 139-67; Rubén González Cuerva, "La Monarquía al servicio de la dinastía: la Emperatriz María de Austria y la elección del rey de Polonia (1573–1590)", in *Gobernar, conservar y reformar. Agentes y prácticas en la Monarquía Hispana (siglos XVI-XVIII)*, eds. Guillermo Nieva Ocampo, Henar Pizarro Llorente, and Marcelo Paulo Corream (Salta: CIUNSa–La Aparecida, 2021), 41-62. In the case of 1587: Conde Pazos, Miguel, "The Hispanic Monarchy Facing the Accession of the Vasa Monarchy. Don Guillén de San Clemente's Embassy to Poland (1588–1589)", in *The House of Vasa The House of Austria. Correspondence from the Years 1587 to 1668*, ed. Ryszard Skowron (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2016), 95-115; Matylda Urjasz-Raczko, "La estrategia diplomática de Felipe II frente a la Tercera Elección Libre en La República Polaco-Lituana, 1586-1589", *Studia historica. Historia moderna*, 36 (2014): 213-32; Javier Hipólito Villanueva, "El trono de Polonia en disputa: el papel del archiduque Ernesto de Habsburgo, 1587-1592", *Tiempos modernos: Revista Electrónica de Historia Moderna*, 9/37 (2018): 123-47.; For the 1573 royal election: Miguel Conde Pazos, "La elección real de 1648 y la Monarquía de Felipe IV. Diplomacia en Polonia en un periodo de crisis", in *Actas de la XI Reunión Científica de la Fundación Española de Historia Moderna: comunicaciones*, eds. Antonio Jiménez Estrella, and Julián José Lozano Navarro, vol. 1 (Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada, 2012), 69-80; 1669 election: Miguel Conde Pazos, "Elección de Miguel I como rey de Polonia a través del embajador español en Viena, el conde de Castellar (1669)", in *De la tierra al cielo: Líneas recientes de investigación en historia moderna*, ed. Eliseo Serrano Martín, vol. 2 (Zaragoza: Fundación Española de Historia Moderna, Institución Fernando el Católico, 2012), 543-58, edición digital; 1674 royal election: Miguel Conde Pazos, "La misión diplomática de don Pedro Ronquillo en Varsovia con motivo de la elección de Juan Sobieski como rey de Polonia en 1674", *Pedralbes: Revista d'historia moderna*, 38 (2018): 187-227.

2 The main exception is: Matylda Urjasz-Raczko, "Diplomacia española ante las primeras elecciones libres en la República Polaco-Lituana. ¿Planificación o improvisación?", in *España–Europa Oriental: el alejamiento geográfico y la proximidad cultural. Seminario científico internacional de Hispanistas*, coord. Bohdan Chuma et al. (Lviv: Astroljabija, 2010), 11-25.

OBJECTIVES OF SPANISH DIPLOMACY

Historiography has tended to view Spanish action in the Polish-Lithuanian elections as an exotic and distant endeavor, always marked by failure. The fact that neither Ernest of Austria nor any other archduke obtained the Polish crown during the 16th century seems to reinforce this view, as this was the great objective of Spanish diplomacy in Poland during the reign of Philip II. Nor does Don Pedro Ronquillo's opinion of the 1673 election, which placed John Sobieski on the throne, offer a more optimistic outlook regarding the 17th-century elections. In a letter to the Marquis of Los Balbases following the election, Ronquillo summed up: «My lord, as bad as the election could have been, so it has turned out»[3]. However, before passing judgment, it is necessary to understand the general objectives of Spanish diplomacy in these elections: its maximum program, of course, but also its other objectives, which were often achieved through a realistic and pragmatic policy.

The Spanish Monarchy began to take an interest in the Polish-Lithuanian throne in the 1560s. After a period of withdrawal following Charles V's abdication, the Madrid court renewed its interest in the events of Central-Eastern Europe due to its confrontation with the Ottoman Empire and its search for new allies for the Holy League[4]. During these years, Spain sought to open a new land front in the Balkans and the Danube, with Poland being key due to its influence over Moldavia. By the end of the 16th century, both in Rome and Venice, and later in Madrid, there was a growing understanding of the impact of Cossack raids in the Black Sea, which diverted Ottoman naval resources from their operations in the Mediterranean. At the same time, the Commonwealth was seen as a battleground for confessional struggles, a "religious hell", according to a papal nuncio, where Catholicism was threatened by Calvinists and Lutherans[5]. The papacy urged Philip II to strengthen his position in the region and to engage more actively in the defense of the Catholic Church.

These two elements – the containment of the Ottoman threat and the defense of the Catholic faith – were very much on Philip II's mind when he decided to intervene in the first two elections (1573–1575)[6]. Shortly afterward, a third objective was added: control of the Baltic. The wars in this sea during the 1560s severely affected the economy of the Netherlands, further undermining its fragile stability. During the 1570s, some Spanish ministers advocated for a greater presence in the Baltic, from which the Dutch imported much of the food they consumed and where naval supplies could be acquired at low cost. This initiative, once again, was supported by

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3 D. Pedro Ronquillo to Marquis of Balbases, Warsaw, 16 V 1674, in Antonio Rodríguez Villa, *Misión secreta del embajador Don Pedro Ronquillo en Polonia (1674): según sus cartas originales al marqués de los Balbases, embajador a la corte de Viena* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Biblioteca de Instrucción y Recreo, 1874).

4 Matylda Urjasz-Raczko, *Rzeczpospolita wyobrażona dyplomacji Filipa II. Studium spotkania kultur politycznych* (PhD Thesis: University of Warsaw, 2015).

5 Paweł Jasienica, *The Commonwealth of Both Nations. The Silver Age* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1987).

6 AGS, Est., Leg. 674, "Minuta de despacho de Felipe II al conde de Monteagudo", Madrid 5 IX 1572, f. 61.

Vatican diplomacy, which during the papacy of Gregory XIII (1572–1585) increased its activity in Sweden, Poland-Lithuania, and Muscovy[7].

The candidacy of Archduke Ernest, promoted from Madrid during the first three elections, went far beyond these objectives. With Ernest on the Polish-Lithuanian throne, the House of Austria would have completed the absorption of the Jagiellonian legacy in Central-Eastern Europe, following the model of Hungary and Bohemia. Furthermore, had he won the throne in 1587, the possibility of further expansion into Muscovy, where there were also dynastic ambitions, would have opened up[8]. Thus, dynastic expansion became the primary objective of Spanish diplomacy during the three elections of the 16th century.

However, some nuance is necessary. Although Philip II was motivated by a dynastic spirit, he did so primarily in favor of his favorite nephew, Archduke Ernest, the only one he considered sufficiently committed to religion to guarantee the kingdom's stability and, at the same time, support the other objectives of the Monarchy in the region. By contrast, his commitment to his other nephews was always lesser, given their independent character and irenic education, and it even bordered on disapproval, as evidenced in the debates that took place in Vienna in 1587[9]. Philip II also did not support the election of Maximilian II as king in 1575, as he saw it as a threat to the region's stability: besides triggering a war with the Ottoman Porte at a time when the Monarchy lacked resources, it could have affected the internal situation of the hereditary territories[10]. Some observers might point to Philip II's support for Archduke Maximilian throughout 1587. However, this only occurred after Ernest's candidacy was dismissed, and primarily to support Maximilian's release by Jan Zamoyski. In other words, what was at stake was not the future of the Polish crown, but the prestige of the House of Austria.

The 1573 experience was the Spanish first contact with Polish reality. The 1575 election was the first time their diplomats realized how volatile the election could be, easily leading to civil conflict. It also made clear that there was a significant bloc of opposition to Habsburg candidacies in the Commonwealth and that a maximum program, such as dynastic expansion, could severely harm other Spanish interests in the region, such as the commitment to contain the Ottoman Empire or the stability of Hungary. This led the Marquis of Almazán, ambassador in Vienna, to adopt a realistic stance, suggesting the potential benefits of Stephen Báthory's rise to the throne, both for the Catholic faith – Báthory's good relationship with the Jesuits was

7 On Spanish interest in the Baltic and the Polish space, see: Radosław Skowron, "El mar Báltico en la estrategia española de guerra en los Países Bajos, 1568-1648", in *El Mar en los siglos modernos. Actas X Reunión Fundación Española de Historia Moderna*, coord. Isidro Dubert, and Hortensio Sobrado Correa, vol. 2 (Santiago-Ferrol: Xunta de Galicia, 2009), 345-59.

8 AHN, Est., Leg. 1417, s.f.: "Proposición de Lucas Pauli, enviado por Rodolfo II [...]", February 1588.

9 AGS, Est., Leg. 693, s.f., D. Guillén de San Clemente to Philip II, Prague 3 III 1587.

10 AGS, Est., Leg. 674, f. 159, Philip II to the Count of Monteagudo. Madrid 28 XII 1574.

well known – and for the fight against Ottoman expansionism[11]. In other words, he proposed sacrificing the dynastic expansion program in favor of other objectives of the Monarchy. However, his advice had little impact, and years later, in 1587, Philip II made his greatest effort in favor of Ernest's candidacy, mobilizing resources and diplomats.

The failure of that attempt, followed by the humiliation of Maximilian's imprisonment – coinciding with the disaster of the Spanish Armada – led to a change in Spain's strategic objectives. And once again, papal diplomacy was behind this shift. The reconciliation between Austria and the Vasa dynasty, established under the mediation of Ippolito Aldobrandini – future Clement VIII – inaugurated a new policy by Sigismund III, who, lacking support in Poland-Lithuania and after losing the Swedish throne, sought backing from the Polish Catholic hierarchy and Rome. In the medium and long term, this led to a rapprochement with the House of Austria at a key moment in European history, on the eve of the Thirty Years' War. Thus, both the Austrian and Spanish branches of the family saw that many of their objectives in the region could be pursued through support for the king and his family[12]. In this context, the dynastic expansion option, which had dominated Spanish strategy during the 16th century, was abandoned, and both in 1632 and 1648, the diplomacy of Philip IV supported the candidacies of Sigismund III's sons.

That strategy was reinforced by a policy of marital unions, which led Sigismund III's sons to align themselves with many of the Habsburgs' objectives in Europe. In particular, the election of Ladislaus IV as king was seen as a guarantee for Spanish projects in the Baltic and the Empire, as he had personally been supported by the Vasa family when he was a prince. The election of John Casimir Vasa in 1648 was more complicated, as he had shown little interest in Habsburg interests, and the Spanish diplomacy's preferred candidate was his brother, Charles Ferdinand. However, on this occasion, Spanish diplomacy refrained from pushing the candidacy of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, proposed from Vienna, as it was considered unrealistic and detrimental to other Spanish interests in the region. Instead of outright rejecting it, they simply ignored it, advising the archduke not to participate[13].

The 1648 election introduced a new problem that had been virtually neutralized since Henry III's flight in 1574: rivalry with France[14]. After the first election, the French had attempted to redirect their electoral strategy with little success. However, in 1648, Cardinal Mazarin's diplomacy pursued two parallel strategies. One, barely known, proposed the candidacy of Prince Condé for the throne, although this

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11 CODOIN, vol. 113, The Count of Monteagudo to Philip II, Prague 20 VIII 1575, p. 162.

12 Miguel Conde Pazos, *La quiebra de un modelo dinástico: Relaciones entre la Casa de Austria y los Vasa de Polonia (1635–1668)* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2022), 87-128.

13 AGS, Est., Leg., 2351, "Consejo de Estado", 23 IV 1648; AGS, Est., 2351, the Duke of Terranova to Archduke Leopold, Linz 27 VII 1648.

14 About this recovery of French diplomacy in Poland-Lithuania, see: Maciej Serwański, *Francja wobec Polski w dobie wojny trzydziestoletniej (1618–1648)* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1986).

option did not prosper[15]. The other strategy, very similar to Spain's, consisted of supporting one of Sigismund III's sons. In this case, the French decisively supported John Casimir, whose friendship they had cultivated since his time as a cardinal in Rome[16]. Thus, his election in November 1648, although it might have seemed like a French success, was not perceived as a failure for Spain[17].

Future elections took on new significance with the rise of France on the European stage. They became another front in which Spain fought against French hegemony in Europe. As the Marquis de La Fuente noted, Poland-Lithuania had been transformed into the «stage for the rivalries of others»[18]. The main objective of Spanish diplomats in the subsequent elections was to oppose French candidacies by supporting more viable contenders. In 1669 and 1674, this candidate was Charles of Lorraine. However, both elections were decided by the nobility of the Commonwealth in favor of native candidates. The first, in 1669, was a success for Spanish interests, as Michael I quickly married an Austrian archduchess[19]. The second, in 1674, which Don Pedro Ronquillo attended, was seen in Madrid as a disaster, not because a French prince ascended, but because John Sobieski, a Polish noble supported by Louis XIV, was elected.

At this point, French diplomacy experienced the same frustration that Spain had a century earlier: it was impossible to promote its own candidates and establish avenues for dynastic expansion. It was much more realistic to achieve objectives by supporting other candidacies. The French would learn this lesson again in 1697, with the failure of Prince Conti[20].

DEPLOYED STRATEGIES

From the earliest elections, Spanish diplomacy developed a series of strategies for intervening in the Polish-Lithuanian elections, tactics that were maintained for two centuries. Some of these were conditioned by the nature of the relationship between

15 Allegretti reported on this candidacy and the potential dangers it could pose to the House of Austria, as he could subsequently aspire to the crown of the Holy Roman Empire: AGS, Est. Leg 2430, "Razones del príncipe de Condé para el reino de Polonia".

16 Regarding the prince's attitude, see: Miguel Conde Pazos, "Entre franceses y españoles: el Cardenalato del príncipe Juan Casimiro Vasa y la diplomacia hispana en Italia (1643–1648)", *Libros de la Corte*, Extra 1 (2014): 33-51.

17 Marta Pilat Zuzankiewicz, "La elección y coronación de Juan Casimiro Vasa, rey de Polonia, en las relaciones de sucesos españolas", in *Las relaciones de sucesos en los cambios políticos y sociales de la Europa Moderna*, eds. Jorge García López, and Sònia Boadas Cabarrocas (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2015), 297-308.

18 AGS, Est., Leg. 2372, The Marquis de la Fuente, Gratz 9 VII 1660, f. 73.

19 Miguel Conde Pazos, "Miguel I de Polonia y la reconstrucción de la política de colaboración dinástica de la Casa de Austria (1669–1673)", *Tiempos modernos: Revista Electrónica de Historia Moderna*, 9/36 (2018): 331-54.

20 Aleksandra Skrzypietz, "François-Louis de Bourbon, prince de Conti: un prince du sang français sur le trône polonais?", *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles*, 18 (2021) [https://journals.openedition.org/crcv/19516?lang=en].

the Spanish Monarchy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was seen from Madrid as an extension of Vienna's sphere of influence. Although from the Republic the Spanish could plan actions against the Dutch, Swedes, and Turks, or recruit troops, the main party interested in the outcome of these elections was the Emperor, as he was the most affected. This meant that, in the context of the royal elections, Spanish diplomacy prioritized the interests of the Austrian branch of the Habsburg family. Thus, we can speak of a conditioned relationship. Regarding Spanish diplomatic activity during the elections, it was completely subordinated to the Emperor's interests. Spanish diplomats never acted independently nor pursued their own objectives. Their work focused on supporting the imperial diplomats, with whom they collaborated closely. They also did not attempt to build a support group among the Polish nobility to promote their own candidates but contributed to the formation of the candidacies of princes promoted by Vienna. In other words, Spanish representatives did not promote Spanish candidacies but rather favored the ascension of a joint candidacy of the House of Austria.

However, this does not mean that their role was entirely passive in favor of imperial diplomacy. Spanish weight and initiative in the creation of this family candidacy were decisive in most cases, although they varied depending on the moment and the people involved. Spanish influence was notable in the first three elections, partly due to the authority that Philip II exercised over his cousins and his ability to mobilize significant resources. His minister at the imperial court, the Count of Monteagudo, played a key role in designing Ernest's candidacy and selecting the imperial ministers responsible for defending it. Among his greatest achievements was the appointment, in 1573, of Wilhelm of Rosenberg and Vratislav of Pernstein as those in charge of promoting Ernest's candidacy, both known for their connection to the Spanish faction[21]. However, his success was more limited in the elections of 1574-75, when he attempted to exclude Andreas Dudith from the preliminary negotiations, considering him an apostate[22].

The opposite occurred in the elections of 1669 and 1697 when the Spanish opinion was hardly considered. Both cases occurred at times when Spanish influence in Vienna was weakened: the first, just a few months after the signing of the secret partition agreement of the Monarchy; the second, amid the conflict over the succession of Charles II, with the War of the Holy League still unresolved[23].

A key factor was the trust between the different members of the House of Austria, as well as between their ministers. Maximilian II distrusted Philip II's ambitions, which led him to reject, in 1573, the substantial subsidy that Philip offered to promote

21 To learn more about this group: Pavel Marek, *La embajada española en la corte imperial (1558–1641): Figuras de los embajadores y estrategias clientelares* (Praga: Karolinum, 2013).

22 AGS, Est., Leg. 673, Count of Monteagudo to Philip II, Prague 16 IX 1575, f. 92.

23 Luis Antonio Ribot García, "La sucesión de Carlos II: diplomacia y lucha política a finales del siglo XVII", in *Estudios en homenaje al profesor Teófanes Egido*, coor. María de los Ángeles Sobaler Seco, and Máximo García Fernández, vol. 1 (Valladolid: Caja Duero 2004), 63-99.

Ernest's candidacy, as he did not want to be indebted to him[24]. For his part, Philip II also did not trust the Emperor's promise to accept the Polish crown solely to pave the way for Ernest's succession, considering it impractical[25]. In 1587, the election revealed the conflict between the archdukes vying for the Polish throne and the lack of authority of Rudolf II over his brothers[26]. Part of the failure of that election was due to internal divisions within the family.

This trust issue persisted in the 17th-century elections. In 1648, the Duke of Terranova, Philip IV's ambassador in Vienna, questioned the maneuvers of the Empress Mother and the Tyrolean branch to get Ferdinand III to support John Casimir in exchange for a marriage promise. In fact, he felt relieved when he realized that Ferdinand III would not send any representative, as the Spanish ambassador opposed supporting John Casimir. However, the most serious case probably occurred in 1668, when the Spanish ambassador, the Count of Castellar, was not informed of the imperial diplomats' negotiations, believing until the last moment that Leopold I would support the candidacy of the Duke of Neuburg. This error was due both to the ambassador's lack of skill – particularly his unfamiliarity with court circles and the role of the Empress Mother – and to the extreme secrecy with which the imperial representative, Christoph Leopold Schaffgotsch acted in the election. This same secrecy would be repeated in the development of 1674 election, leading his Spanish counterpart, Don Pedro Ronquillo, to complain about the lack of information, as this made him feel disoriented[27].

This conditioned relationship affected how Spanish diplomacy planned its entire intervention in the elections, concentrating its efforts on the embassy at the imperial court. From there, Spanish diplomats obtained information about the Polish and Lithuanian electoral system, the various candidacies, and the existing noble factions in the kingdom. Many of the decisions were also made at the imperial court, in most cases in mutual agreement with the Emperor's ministers, reinforcing the idea that Spanish diplomacy was conditioned by imperial interests during the elections. The Spanish diplomats who intervened in the elections also operated from Vienna, where most of the financial aid was managed[28].

The role of Spanish diplomacy in the elections was mainly to support the candidates proposed by the king and the Emperor, projecting symbolic, political, and economic value. The Spanish crown was perceived as a wealthy and universal monarchy, capable of offering social promotion opportunities to Polish and Lithuanian electors[29]. The

24 AGS, Est., 1486, "Copia del memorial que el Marques mi señor embia dentro del pliego de su majestad sobre los negocios del señor Constantino Magno", f. 125.

25 AGS, Est., Leg. 675, Philip II to Maximilian II, Madrid 8 XII 1575, f. 85.

26 AGS, Est., Leg. 2449, Philip II to Don Guillén de San Clemente, Madrid 10 II 1587, f. 9.

27 Conde Pazos, "La misión diplomática de don Pedro Ronquillo".

28 Rubén González Cuerva, "The Spanish Embassy in the Empire, Watchtower of Poland (1590-1624)", in Skowron, *The House of Vasa*, 115-43.

29 BNM, Ms. 18768, "Summaria Relacion delo que contienen las oraciones de todos los embaxadores de los príncipes que pretendían el Reyno de Polonia en Abril y

possibility of opening new trade routes was also considered, although this point was rarely exploited in the electoral processes. However, what most interested the Polish-Lithuanian nobility were the financial subsidies. As the expressive Don Pedro Ronquillo succinctly put it: «this business is nothing but money, money, money»[30]. Spanish diplomats soon perceived the Polish-Lithuanian nobles as venal individuals, willing to sell their votes for large sums of money, making each election a very costly enterprise. In addition, Spanish diplomats sometimes acted as mediators between the imperial representatives and nobles of the Commonwealth. The Polish perception of German ministers was not always positive, so Spanish diplomats often recommended including Czech and Silesian nobles to defend the family's candidacies[31].

Another strategy used in the elections was to win the support of the Catholic Church and its hierarchy. This support was directed in two areas: the Polish ecclesiastical hierarchy and the Roman curia. As mentioned, the confessional issue was crucial in the early elections, and the sense of threat among members of the Catholic Church led many high-ranking ecclesiastics to support the House of Austria's candidacies, which were seen as a guarantee for their position. This sentiment was exploited by the Spanish, though not always with the best results. In the 1573 election, both the nuncio and much of the clergy favored the candidacy of Henry of Valois, skillfully presented as another defender of Catholicism. In the 1575 and 1587 elections, there was a division among the clergy. Although Spanish diplomacy hoped to create a united bloc within the Polish clergy, this never happened, and ecclesiastical figures of great authority, such as Archbishop Stanisław Karnkowski, played a key role in the rise of candidacies opposed to the House of Austria[32]. There were also important allied ecclesiastics in the 17th century, such as Archbishop Andrzej Leszczyński in 1648 or Primate Florian Czartoryski in 1674.

Spanish diplomacy also worked within the curia to win the papacy's support for its candidacies, especially by trying to secure the backing of the nuncios sent to the elections. These nuncios wielded great influence over the decisions of the Polish clergy, as demonstrated by Cardinal Commendone in 1573[33]. Spanish diplomats were successful in winning over several key nuncios, such as Hannibal de Capua

Mayo del año de 1573", ff. 171-73.

30 D. Pedro Ronquillo to the Marquis of Los Balbases, Warsaw 25 IV 1674, in Rodríguez Villa, *Misión secreta*, doc. 1.

31 AGS, Est., Leg. 670, Count of Monteagudo to Philip II, Vienna 14 II 1573, f. 100; Another strategy to gain votes was to emphasize Ernesto's Bohemian roots: Ibid., Leg. 668, "The proposal of Don Pedro Fajardo for the states of Poland", n.d., f. 43.

32 AGS, Est., Leg. 675, "De Cracovia a 24 de Abril. El Batory entro aqui el dia antes [...]", f. 107; Johan A. Pärnänen, *Sigismond Vasa et la succession au trône de Suède 1592–1594* (Väitöskirja: Helsingfors, 1912).

33 Dorota Gregorowicz, "The Role of Papal Diplomats in the Interregnum's Parliamentary Practice of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16th–17th centuries)", *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 1 (2016): 119-48.

in 1587 and Giovanni de Torres in 1648[34]. Although both nuncios remained firm in their loyalty to Rome, their support was crucial for the work of the Spanish diplomats[35].

This backing was essential for Spanish diplomacy in operational terms. The agents sent did not usually speak Polish, and their relationships with the imperial representatives were not always smooth. Much of the information that Spanish diplomats received about the election's progress and the Polish factions came from the nuncio's circle. Some of their secretaries even ended up collaborating with Spanish ministers[36]. In fact, some nuncios continued to provide information to Spanish authorities about Poland-Lithuania during their stay in the kingdom after the election.

Over time, Spanish diplomacy understood the importance of having a deep knowledge of Polish-Lithuanian reality if it wanted to succeed in the elections. The first election of 1573 is seen as a reunion between the Spanish Monarchy and Poland-Lithuania[37]. The failure of Ernest's first candidacy was attributed in part to the lack of knowledge of Polish customs. This election allowed the Monarchy to understand the functioning of the elective system, the limitations of royal authority, and the relevance of noble factions. From then on, Spanish diplomacy sought to identify the determining factors in the elections to exploit them. Among them were the internal differences between Poles and Lithuanians. The Lithuanian nobility was seen as more inclined toward the House of Austria's candidacies, and its aristocracy wielded more influence than in the Crown of Poland. Therefore, offering subsidies or promises to the leading Lithuanian lineages could be more effective than trying to win over the Poles. The promise of greater autonomy or the pacification of the Muscovite front were also considered potential cards to play. In 1575 and 1587, and even in 1674, the possibility of intervention from Lithuania was raised to force the election, compelling the Poles to accept an Austrian candidacy or break the union with the Lithuanians[38]. However, this long-term option proved unviable due

34 Ryszard Skowron, "Nuncjusz i ambasador. Korespondencja Annibala z Capui z Guillénem de San Clemente (1586–1591)", in *Od Kijowa do Rzymu: z dziejów stosunków Rzeczpospolitej ze Stolicą Apostolską i Ukrainą*, eds. Mariusz R. Drozdowski, Wojciech Walczak, and Katarzyna Wiszowata-Walczak (Białystok: Instytut Badań nad Dziedzictwem Kulturowym Europy, 2012), 453-67.

35 Ryszard Skowron, "Współpraca nuncjuszy apostolskich w Polsce z dworem madryckim w latach 1578–1598. W kręgu koncepcji politycznych i praktyki dyplomatycznej", in *Nuncjatura apostolska w Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, and Katarzyna Wiszowata-Walczak (Białystok: Benkowski Publishing & Balloons, 2012), 161-75.

36 AGS, Est., Leg. 2351, Nuncio Torres to the Duke of Terranova, "Chomin" 26 V 1648.

37 Ryszard Skowron "El espacio del encuentro de los confines de Europa: España y Polonia en el reinado de Felipe II", in *Felipe II (1527–1598): Europa y la monarquía católica*, dir. José Martínez Millán, vol. 1/2 (Madrid: Parteluz, 1998), 881-92.

38 An example in: AGS, Est., Leg. 675, the Marquis of Almazán to Philip II, Vienna 5 VI 1576, f. 52. On the attitude of Lithuanians in the elections of the 17th century: Aleksandra Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego wobec elekcji*

to Muscovy's opposition and the fragmentation of the Lithuanian noble bloc, which, like the clergy, did not act as a united group.

AMBASSADORS AND AGENTS

Of the eight elections that took place during the 16th and 17th centuries, Spanish diplomacy sent official representation to four of them, either in the form of extraordinary embassies or with lower-ranking agents. Besides being costly, these missions faced a series of challenges, which explains why diplomatic representation was not always sent. As mentioned, Spanish activity was monitored from the imperial capital, and in most cases, it was carried out by ministers within the circle of the Spanish ambassador[39]. It is not our intention to list all the diplomatic missions, but rather to address the common points and challenges they faced.

In the first election of 1573, Philip II opted to send an extraordinary embassy to demonstrate to the Poles the interest and respect he had for them. For this mission, Don Pedro Fajardo, the future 3rd Marquis of Vélez, a prestigious figure linked to the network of Don Luis de Requesens y Zúñiga, was selected. As mentioned, this mission served as a reencounter between the Spanish Monarchy and the Polish-Lithuanian world. During his stay in Warsaw, Fajardo gathered a large amount of documentation that would prove useful in future elections. However, his mission failed in part due to a lack of knowledge about Polish customs and traditions. Fajardo refused to yield precedence to other representatives who had arrived earlier, especially the French envoy. Additionally, the Poles' demands regarding the inheritance of Bona Sforza contributed to his eventual non-participation in the electoral parliament[40].

In 1587, Philip II again decided to send an extraordinary embassy, this time under the direction of the imperial ambassador himself, Don Guillén de San Clemente. This idea was not entirely new, as during the 1575 election, the imperial ministers had already suggested to the Count of Monteagudo that he travel to Poland-Lithuania to demonstrate Spain's commitment to the Habsburg candidacies. However, Monteagudo had little hope in these candidacies and considered it too risky to compromise his prestige[41]. San Clemente's mission in 1587 sought to demonstrate that Philip II had strengthened his support for these candidacies. As San Clemente himself noted in his letters, his arrival at the electoral diet caused great anticipation among the Poles and Lithuanians, who believed he brought large sums of money[42]. San Clemente, a Catalan by origin and part of the circle of Luis de Requesens and Juan de Zúñiga, faced an especially difficult task in Warsaw, as he attempted to promote Ernest's candidacy as a peaceful option to avoid civil conflict

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Władysława IV Wazy i Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2020).

39 González Cuerva, "The Spanish Embassy in the Empire".

40 Rodríguez Pérez, "Servir al Rey, servir a la Casa".

41 AGS, Est., Leg. 673, Count of Monteagudo to Philip II, Regensburg 24 X 1575, f. 78.

42 Conde Pazos, "The Hispanic Monarchy Facing the Accesion".

between Chancellor Jan Zamoyski's supporters and opponents[43]. However, this option did not succeed.

In the next election of 1632, Spanish diplomacy chose to maintain a low profile. This was due to the complex international situation and the presence of a significant group within Poland-Lithuania hostile to the Habsburgs. On previous occasions, Philip IV's envoys in Warsaw had warned of the danger for Prince Ladislaus Vasa to appear too closely aligned with Spanish interests, particularly ahead of his election[44]. Therefore, sending a delegation to support him could have been counterproductive. In contrast, the imperial diplomacy, while showing discreet support for the prince, was harshly criticized by the nobility[45]. In any case, Spanish diplomacy sent the Count of Siruela to congratulate the king as soon as his ascension to the throne was known.

In 1648, the initial intention of the Madrid court was to send an extraordinary embassy to demonstrate its commitment. To that end, the then-ambassador to Venice, the 1st Marquis de La Fuente, was appointed, receiving instructions directly from the king[46]. However, the appointment came too late, and the marquis faced economic difficulties in leaving Venice. Since the nobles of the Commonwealth wanted to conclude the election quickly due to the Cossack crisis, the Marquis de La Fuente ultimately did not travel to the region, although Spanish representation was still present, as we will see later[47].

In the next election, in 1669, there was no Spanish representation. By then, relations with the Viennese court had deteriorated, and the imperial embassy had remained vacant for months. Additionally, the fear of a diplomatic conflict with Louis XIV over matters of precedence, following the London incident of 1661, led Spanish diplomacy to reduce its presence at many European courts[48].

For the 1674 election, it was decided to send another extraordinary embassy. This decision was made due to the growing importance of collaboration with Vienna in Europe to contain Louis XIV's aggressive foreign policy and the need for Leopold I to have freedom of action on both the Polish-Lithuanian and Hungarian fronts to intervene on the Rhine[49]. The person chosen to travel to Warsaw was Don Pedro

43 About the ambassador: Javier Arienza Arienza, "Don Guillén de San Clemente, un embajador hispano en la Corte de Bohemia", in *Las relaciones checo-españolas*, coord. Josef Opatrný (Praga: Karolinum, 2007), 93-102.

44 AGS, Est. 2328, "La Junta del Báltico", Madrid 28 IX 1627, s.f.

45 BNE, Ms. 11262, "Discurso que el Conde de Henspergens, embajador de la Magestad Cessarea de Ferdinando Segundo, dijo al Reyno de Polonia, junto en Cortes, para que eligiesen por Rey al Serenissimo Vladislao, hijo de Segismundo Tercero", f. 35.

46 AHN, Est. Leg. 2661, "Al marqués de la Fuente, orden de lo que debe hacer en la jornada que hace a Polonia", Madrid 5 VIII 1648, f. 181.

47 AGS, Est. Leg. 2430, Marquis of la Fuente to Philip IV, Venice 19 IX 1648.

48 Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, "El incidente diplomático hispano-francés de 1661", *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 201/1 (2004): 97-160.

49 Silvia Z. Mitchell, *Reina, madre y estadista: Mariana de Austria y el gobierno de*

Ronquillo, a minister of noble lineage who, like Fajardo a century earlier, belonged to a family of great standing. At the time, Ronquillo was in the imperial capital conducting business for the king. His mission was marked by a lack of resources and the need to protect the interests of the widowed Queen of Poland, Archduchess Eleonore. Although Ronquillo was highly critical of the election's outcome, he held some hope regarding the elected monarch, John III Sobieski, whom he considered a valuable asset for the House of Austria if he could be drawn to their cause. This prediction by the Castilian nobleman proved to be quite accurate[50].

These embassies represented a significant expense for the Spanish treasury, as they mobilized considerable entourages, especially the one led by Don Guillén de San Clemente. However, they did not always generate the admiration expected. On the contrary, part of the nobility was suspicious of Spain's intentions and exhibited hostility. Additionally, some ministers used the elections to try to resolve pending disputes with Spain. In 1573, the most prominent issue was the inheritance of Bona Sforza, a conflict that had remained unresolved for years and whose resolution was demanded by the Poles from Don Pedro Fajardo. This problem would resurface in later elections. During the years of Madrid's rapprochement with the Vasa family, the Spanish court accumulated a series of debts and unresolved matters, including the return of the Wismar fleet, which the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth could demand[51]. Due to these circumstances, Spanish diplomacy sometimes opted not to send representation or to send a lower-profile agent.

The case of the 1575 election is difficult to define. Officially, Philip II did not send any representation, but the Count of Monteagudo did employ an unofficial agent, Constantino Magno, an Italian financier whom the Spanish ambassador had connected with the emperor and empress. Constantino lent large sums of money at low interest to support the Austrian candidacies in the election, hoping to win Philip II's favor and secure a position or pension in Italy for his family. He also sent periodic reports from Warsaw to the Count of Monteagudo, detailing the election's progress. He was even the first to inform of Maximilian's election, and his brother Carlo traveled to Spain to communicate the news to Philip II. However, his ambitions were frustrated when the Poles ultimately elected Stephen Báthory, and Philip II refused to reward his services, arguing that they had been in the emperor's interest, not his own[52].

In 1648, a lower-profile agent was chosen: Allegretto de Allegretti, a man close to Empress Maria, who in 1648 was appointed by the ambassador in Vienna, the Duke of Terranova, to travel to Warsaw[53]. Allegretti, of Ragusan origin, had an excellent

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España (Madrid: CEEH, 2023), 196-207.

50 Conde Pazos, "La misión diplomática de don Pedro Ronquillo".

51 Regarding Spanish Baltic policy during the Vasa period and the debts accumulated by the Austrian Habsburgs of Madrid: Ryszard Skowron, *Olivares, los Vasa y el Báltico: Polonia en la política internacional de España en los años 1621–1632* (Warszawa: DIG, 2008).

52 Conde Pazos, "Diplomacia en la bancarrota".

53 His instructions in AGS, Est., 2352, "Instruction and order given by the Duke of Terranova to Alegreto Allegreti, with a letter from the Duke dated on 6 VI 1648".

command of several languages, which allowed him to deal directly with the nobility of Poland-Lithuania. Initially, his mission was only to gather information and prepare the way for the eventual arrival of the Marquis de La Fuente. However, when the marquis did not travel, his mission gained greater importance, and he came to represent Philip IV's interests in the election. Allegretti fulfilled his task efficiently, providing the embassy with valuable information about Polish realities: the kingdom's main factions, the role of Queen Marie Louise Gonzaga, and Chancellor Jerzy Ossoliński[54]. Although he was later criticized for basing his reports mainly on information from Adam Kazanowski's circle, the truth is that, as he would demonstrate in later missions in Constantinople and Moscow, Allegretti was a sharp and competent observer[55].

THE COSTS OF SPANISH INTERVENTION

Determining the precise costs of the Polish-Lithuanian elections for Spanish diplomacy is complicated. The figures vary, and although large sums are sometimes mentioned, many of them were contingent on the nobles' effective support in the final vote, or even on the success of the candidacy, which limited the actual expenses. Naturally, mobilizing a large entourage also involved considerable costs. According to San Clemente, in 1587, he brought to Warsaw a retinue composed of sixty horses, dozens of nobles and servants, carriages, and tents[56]. However, this was likely an exceptional case, as in other instances, the entourages were smaller. The travel allowances available to us do not indicate large amounts either. For example, Don Pedro Fajardo, who after his first stay at the imperial court lacked sufficient funds, requested a travel allowance of 4,000 ducats for his mission to Poland in 1573[57].

Decades later, in 1648, the Spanish court approved a 6,000 escudos allowance for the Marquis de La Fuente, which proved insufficient for him to leave Venice in time or arrived too late to be used[58]. The same amount was approved for Don Pedro Ronquillo in 1674[59]. In general, these sums were insufficient to cover representation needs, and it was common for diplomats to complain about the lack of resources. In Ronquillo's case, his situation worsened due to his prolonged stay in Poland-Lithuania, where he accompanied the widowed queen to her court in Toruń, being forced to organize a series of costly festivities[60].

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54 We find many of Allegretti's reports in the "Consultas de Oficio de Alemania" at the Simancas Archive: AGS, Est., Leg. 2430.

55 Regarding this Ragusan agent, see: Miguel Conde Pazos, "Allegretto Allegretti: un diplomático de Ragusa al servicio de los Habsburgo", *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, 81/269 (2021): 621-50.

56 AGS, Est., Leg. 692, D. Guillén de San Clemente to Juan de Idiáquez, Prague 24 VI 1587, f. 99.

57 AGS, Est., Leg. 674, Philip II to the Count of Monteagudo, Madrid IX 1572, f. 58.

58 AGS, Est., Leg. 2352, "La Junta de Estado", 29 VII 1648

59 AGS, Est., Leg. 2393, The Marquis of Los Balbases, Vienna 5 V 1674, n.d.

60 AHN, Est., 1294, "Relación jurada y firmada de los gastos secretos y extraordinários

The expenses to win the favor of the Polish-Lithuanian nobles during the elections were significantly higher. As already mentioned, this aspect was considered crucial to ensure success. Spain's financial commitment depended entirely on the economic situation. In 1573, circumstances seemed favorable: the success of Lepanto was still recent, and the Spanish treasury seemed healthy, so Philip II was able to offer 100,000 escudos to support Ernest's candidacy, financed through a loan in Genoa. However, as mentioned earlier, Maximilian II was reluctant to use this money and did not request it until it was too late. According to Don Pedro Fajardo, the lack of funds was the main reason for Ernest's candidacy's failure in the first election, asserting that with 60,000 escudos, it would have been possible to change the course of the election[61].

Two years later, the financial situation had deteriorated significantly. By then, Philip II had declared bankruptcy, and the rebellion of the Genoese nobility had dismantled the Monarchy's credit circuits in Europe. As a result, the Spanish embassy in Vienna was left in virtual economic isolation. Despite this, the Count of Monteagudo managed to gather significant funds. Initially, he delivered 9,000 florins to Empress Maria, which later increased to 30,000, mainly intended for Lithuanian nobles. Additionally, Monteagudo mediated Constantino Magno to lend substantial sums to the imperial couple to support the candidacies. According to a document, the Milanese financier lent the Vienna Habsburgs a total of 130,000 florins, which they still owed him years later[62]. The Spanish embassy also owed him 30,000 escudos in 1582, probably the same amount the ambassador gave to the empress at the start of the election[63].

The 1587 election represented the greatest financial commitment. Initially, Philip II allocated 30,000 florins to gain the support of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility, but this amount increased considerably when the election became a conflict between Archduke Maximilian and Chancellor Jan Zamoyski. At the request of his sister, the Empress Mother, and the imperial ambassador, Philip II approved aid of 100,000 escudos, which was later doubled to 200,000 when Maximilian was captured[64]. However, it seems that not even the initial 30,000 florins were spent, as San Clemente refused to deliver them to Maximilian when he marched into the campaign[65].

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que yo Don Pedro Ronquillo he hecho por el real servicio de su majestad en el ministério de embiado extraordinário a Polonia desde primero de marzo de mil setecentos y tetenta y quatro que pase a aquel empleo hasta fin de mayo de 1675 que pase a Inglaterra", ff. 49 and ss.

61 AGS, Est. Leg. 670, "Extract of a letter from Don Pedro Fajardo to the Count of Monteagudo", n.d., f. 28.

62 AGS, Est., Leg. 675, Count of Monteagudo to Philip II, Wien 11 I 1576, f. 8.

63 AGS, Est., Leg. 1486, "Copia del memorial que el Marqués mi Señor embia dentro del pliego que su Majestad sobre los negocios del señor Constantino Magno", f. 125.

64 Sara Veronelli, and Félix Labrador Arroyo, *Diario de Hans Khevenhüller, embajador imperial en la corte de Felipe II* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2001), 338.

65 AGS, Est., Leg. 693, Don Guillén de San Clemente to Philip II, Prague 18

The financial commitment was much more modest in the following elections. In 1648, extraordinary spending of 14,000 escudos was approved for the election, a significant amount given the Monarchy's situation at the time, but totally insufficient to decisively influence the results[66]. At that same time, Baron de Auchy proposed promoting the candidacy of the Prince of Neuburg with a loan of between 200,000 and 300,000 escudos, noting that this was the minimum amount necessary to guarantee success[67].

The situation worsened even further during the 1674 election. Don Pedro Ronquillo mentioned only a payment of 3,000 Hungarian florins that he borrowed, and which were distributed once again among the Lithuanian nobles. To the ambassador's further displeasure, the imperial agents distributed these funds in the name of Leopold I, not Carlos II, which tarnished the prestige of the Spanish crown[68]. In any case, this sum was far from the amounts that, according to Ronquillo, were managed by Louis XIV's representative, who reportedly offered up to 400,000 livres to the Polish-Lithuanian nobles. We have no record of significant disbursements for the elections of 1669 or 1697.

Of course, money was not the only means used by Spanish diplomacy to win the support of the Polish-Lithuanian nobles. During the early elections, the possibility of promoting trade between the kingdoms and the formation of elites in Italy and Spain was discussed, although these aspects did not seem to interest the Poles very much. Instead, the perception among Protestant nobles that the King of Spain represented Catholic intolerance led many to distance themselves[69]. This image did not improve after Poland-Lithuania was consolidated as a Catholic kingdom, as the kings of Spain continued to be seen as absolutist monarchs opposed to the Polish system of liberties, an image that would later also be extended to Louis XIV of France. Other proposals to gain support included, for example, the bestowal of one or two Golden Fleece orders among the most influential nobles, an option Don Pedro Ronquillo suggested but was not approved in Madrid[70].

CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen, Spanish diplomacy engaged in intense activity during the successive royal elections of Poland-Lithuania. It did so within the framework of its family strategy of close collaboration with the Austrian branch – a strategy that, since the late 16th century, allowed the Madrid court to maintain an important position in Central Europe. During the elections, Spanish diplomats collaborated with imperial ministers in favour of a candidacy for the family as a whole, not just for a candidate

September 1587, f. 142.

66 AGS, Est., Leg. 2352, "La Junta de Estado" 29 VII 1648.

67 Auchy proposed using the town of Juliers as guarantee for this loan: AGS, Est., 2349, "Consejo de Estado", 31 X 1647.

68 AGS, Est., 2393, The Marquis of Los Balbases, Vienna 20 September 1674, n.d.

69 Janusz Tazbir, "La opinión polaca sobre España en los siglos XVI–XVIII", *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, 51/178 (1991): 559-87.

70 AGS, Est., 2393, D. Pedro Ronquillo, 22 II 1674, s. f.

of the King of Spain. This shaped much of their actions, prioritizing the emperor's interests in the region, who was truly the most affected by the outcome of the election. On the other hand, their activities had to navigate significant obstacles, beginning with the distrust between members of the House of Austria and the reluctance of imperial ministers toward those of the King of Spain.

Throughout these two centuries, the objectives of diplomacy in the elections evolved. During the 16th century, the goal was to place a member of the family on the Polish throne, thereby completing the absorption of the Jagiellonian legacy initiated at the beginning of the century. However, for Philip II, this goal went beyond promoting his favourite nephew and mere dynastic expansion. He also saw it as the best means to safeguard the Spanish Monarchy's interests in the region: containing Ottoman expansionism, defending the Catholic Church, and controlling Baltic trade. The failure in all three elections demonstrated the illusory nature of that project, as well as the danger it posed to other Spanish interests in the region. Therefore, from the 17th century onwards, a much more pragmatic and realistic policy was adopted, based on securing Spanish interests by supporting other candidacies. Papal diplomacy played an important role in this shift. The projects of dynastic expansion were abandoned, even when promoted from the imperial court. The possibility of an Austrian candidacy for the Polish throne was perceived by Spanish diplomats as a quixotic endeavour, potentially destabilizing for the House of Austria's interests. Time proved the wisdom of that judgment, especially when the French court attempted to elevate its princes to the Polish throne, resulting in similar failures.

Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, the diplomats sent by the Spanish Monarchy to the royal elections of Poland-Lithuania shared several characteristics that influenced the development of their missions. First, they usually belonged to prestigious noble families, such as Don Pedro Fajardo or Don Pedro Ronquillo, emphasizing the importance Madrid placed on these events. However, a constant limitation was their lack of knowledge about Polish-Lithuanian customs and internal politics, which sometimes led to diplomatic errors, such as Fajardo's protocol issues in 1573. Moreover, their actions were frequently subordinated to imperial diplomacy, prioritizing the interests of the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs, which limited their autonomy.

Despite this, Spanish diplomats demonstrated great mediation skills, acting as key intermediaries between imperial diplomats and Polish nobles. Nevertheless, their success largely depended on the financial resources available, as the Polish nobility, described as venal, demanded large sums of money to influence their electoral decisions. This dependency on capital proved to be a significant barrier, especially during times of financial crisis, such as in the 1587 and 1674 elections, which restricted the success of the candidacies Spain supported. In short, although Spanish diplomats skilfully negotiated, their lack of local knowledge and financial dependency limited the impact of their interventions in these electoral processes.

As for the costs of Spanish participation in the Polish-Lithuanian elections, they were significant and often exceeded what the Spanish Monarchy could sustain, especially during times of financial crisis. The resources allocated not only covered the usual diplomatic expenses, such as maintaining entourages, but also large sums used to win over the Polish nobles, who were willing to sell their support to the highest

bidder. For example, in the 1587 election, Philip II approved 30,000 escudos to support the candidacy of Ernest of Austria, although even the initial amounts were not fully spent due to the diplomats' caution. The lack of funds was a recurring issue, as evidenced in the 1674 election, where Don Pedro Ronquillo could only dispose of a very limited sum, which severely affected the ability to influence the outcome. Payments to nobles, travel allowances for diplomats, and lavish festivities to gain prestige amounted to significant expenses that were often inadequately covered, making the missions insufficient against the competition from other powers like France. Furthermore, Spain's economic instability, exacerbated by the bankruptcy at the end of the 16th century, further restricted its capacity for effective intervention in the Polish-Lithuanian electoral processes.

In conclusion, the Spanish Monarchy's diplomatic intervention in the royal elections of Poland-Lithuania during the 16th and 17th centuries was an ambitious effort but one limited by various factors, leading to a more realistic policy that secured Spanish interests in the region. And it was indeed successful. Although there was never a Habsburg monarch on the Polish-Lithuanian throne, the majority of the monarchs were sympathetic to the House of Austria, which ensured the Spanish Monarchy's influence in this eastern region.

ABBREVIATION

AGS: Archivo General de Simancas.
Est.: Estado.
AHN: Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid).
Est.: Estado
BNE: Biblioteca Nacional de España.
CODOIN: Colección de Documentos Inéditos de la Historia de España.

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THE SECRET CANDIDATURE OF WILLIAM OF ROSENBERG TO THE POLISH THRONE IN 1574 AND 1575

ABSTRACT
The chapter examines the negotiations carried out by the Bohemian magnate William of Rosenberg in the early 1570s. Following the death of Sigismund II Augustus, William, alongside Vratislaus of Pernštejn, led a mission to secure the Polish throne for a son of Emperor Maximilian II. Their efforts failed when Henry of Valois was elected king in spring 1573. Despite this, William impressed some Polish nobles, who re-established contact after Henry fled Poland in June 1574, suggesting William as a candidate for the vacant throne. Attracted by the opportunity, William covertly financed his supporters to promote his candidature. However, he had to keep his ambitions hidden, as Emperor Maximilian II sought the throne again for his relatives and would view William's ambitions as betrayal. A complex game of secret offers and negotiations began. The exchange of encrypted letters is particularly noteworthy. However, William of Rosenberg did not continue the negotiations until the electoral assembly, but withdrew his candidacy in summer 1575, before the electoral assembly took place.

KEYWORDS: William of Rosenberg; Polish elections; Encrypted letters; Diplomacy in the 16th century; Secret negotiations.

Soon after Henry of Valois left the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in mid-June 1574, the influential Bohemian magnate William of Rosenberg began to aspire to the throne. Although he could not declare his ambitions openly because they undermined the interests of emperor Maximilian II, of whom he was a vassal, his candidature became one of the strong ones in the second half of 1574[1]. This is one of the reasons why he deserves a special attention. Another reason is given by the remarkable communication and espionage situation that developed here in 1574 and 1575 thanks to Rosenberg's activity, which is also the subject of this study. Since he could not appear on his own and openly persuade his Polish supporters to give him their vote in free elections, he established a secret communication network. He involved various intermediaries who creatively passed on his letters and proposals. Despite the secrecy, the emperor learned much about his activities and responded by strengthening his own network of agents. These agents then tried to find out as much as possible about the plans of Rosenberg as well as other candidates who competed with the Habsburgs in Poland-Lithuania.
Ironically, Rosenberg's interest in the Repubblic was initially stimulated by

1 Jaroslav Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové. Velmoži české renesance* (Praha: Panorama 1989), 175.

Maximilian II himself, who, in the summer of 1572, entrusted him and Vratislav of Pernstein with a mission that should lead to the election of one of his sons to the vacant Polish throne. The Bohemian nobles were supposed to convince the Polish and Lithuanian nobility to prefer one of the Habsburgs to Henry of Valois, the brother of the French king. They should have especially promoted the second-born Ernest, who was 19 years old[2], since Rudolf, the eldest son of Maximilian II, was destined to become ruler of the Holy Roman Empire and king of Bohemia. In case, however, the Polish nobility had a problem with Ernest's Spanish education, the envoys should have immediately started to promote his younger brothers Matthias or Maximilian[3].

The candidature of Maximilian II's sons had many supporters among the Catholic clergy and various influential magnates[4]. On the other hand, the Habsburgs were distrusted by a significant part of the poorer Polish nobility[5]. Many regarded them as despots, recalling how harshly Ferdinand I of Habsburg had punished the Bohemian estates for revolting during the Schmalkaldic War[6]. And it was this objection that could best be refuted by members of the Bohemian nobility. Another advantage was the proximity of the Czech and Polish languages, which facilitated communication and confidential negotiations without the need for interpreters[7]. Rosenberg and Pernstein were also chosen because of the strong impression they must have made through their wealth, status, and family connections.

Vratislav of Pernstein was the High Chancellor of the Kingdom of Bohemia and a holder of the Order of the Golden Fleece, one of the most prestigious awards of

2 Ernest of Austria was considered the smartest of the Maximilian II's sons Almut Bues, *Die habsburgische Kandidatur für den polnischen Thron während des Ersten Interregnums in Polen 1572/73* (Wien: Verband der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs, 1984), 45.

3 Bues, *Die habsburgische Kandidatur*, 69-70. Matthias of Austria was about 15 and Maximilian of Austria 14 years old at that time.

4 Ursula Augustyniak, *Historia Polski 1572–1795* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA 2008), 533.

5 Krzysztof Baczkowski, "Der polnische Adel und das Haus Österreich", in *Kaiser Maximilian II. Kultur und Politik im 16. Jahrhundert (=Wiener Beiträge zur Geschichte der Neuzeit, 19)*, eds. Friedrich Edelmayer, and Alfred Kohler (Wien-München: Böhlau Verlag, 1992), 74.

6 Fears of Habsburg despotism and comments on the Schmalkaldic War were frequently expressed in contemporary writings. For example, an anonymous pamphlet that was analysed by Václav Bůžek, "'Od Rakous a od Moskvy zbav nás, Pane Bože, všecky'. K projevům sarmatismu v polsko-litevské unii po vymření Jagellonců", *Acta Universitatis Carolinae. Studia Historica*, 4 (2003): 140.

7 The emperor Maximilian II himself, in a letter to the Nuncio Giovanni Delfino, explained his choice of William of Rosenberg and Vratislav of Pernste in primarily by their knowledge of the language. *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland nebst ergänzenden Aktenstücken*, 3: *Abteilung: 1572–1585*, vol. 6: *Nuntiatur Giovanni Delfinos (1572–1573),* ed. Helmut Goetz (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1982), 60.

the time[8]. While he possessed a large domain in eastern Bohemia and Moravia, Rosenberg owned primarily a large part of southern Bohemia. He held the office of the Supreme Burgrave of Bohemia and was considered the second most powerful person in the Kingdom of Bohemia after the emperor[9]. Further, both diplomats were related to the finest aristocrats, prince-electors and even members of the royal courts. In this respect, the splendour of Rosenberg was enhanced especially by his second marriage to Sophie of Brandenburg, who was a niece of the deceased Polish king Sigismund II Augustus. Although she had died in 1564, the widower was still regarded as a relative of the Jagiellons[10]. All these facts, which increased the prestige of Rosenberg as an honourable envoy, also played a role later in 1574 when judging his suitability as a candidate for the Polish throne.

Both Bohemian noblemen crossed the Polish border with a large suite at the end of August 1572[11]. In accordance with the emperor's wishes, they immediately began to visit influential magnates whom they hoped to win over to the Habsburg cause with the help of arguments, promises and relatively generous bribes[12]. These activities, however, were decisively interrupted by Polish senators, who forbade them to travel freely throughout the country and ordered them to stay in Urzędów until the beginning of the electoral diet[13]. Subsequently, from 1 December 1572 the Bohemian legation stayed in this small town about 42 km from Lublin[14]. Nevertheless, both envoys broke the strict restriction several times and secretly left Urzędów to visit some prominent individuals. On these visits, they were warmly welcomed and lavishly feasted[15]. Rosenberg and Pernstein, in return, presented their

8 Petr Vorel, *Páni z Pernštejna. Vzestup a pád rodu zubří hlavy v dějinách Čech a Moravy* (Praha: Rybka Publishers, 1999), 237-58.

9 On the previous brilliant career of William of Rosenberg, see Jaroslav Pánek, *Vilém z Rožmberka. Politik smíru* (Praha: Academia, 2011) 141-76.

10 On extraordinary prestigious marriages of William of Rosenberg, see Pavel Marek, and Kateřina Pražáková, "Sňatkové strategie se zahraniční šlechtou", in *Světy posledních Rožmberků*, ed. Václav Bůžek (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2011), 152-64.

11 Each of the envoys traveled with approximately 20 carriages and an entourage of 200 people. Goetz, *Nuntiatur Giovanni Delfinos*, 115. On the entourage of William of Rosenberg see: Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 166-67.

12 Bues, *Die habsburgische Kandidatur*, 55-62, Josef Macůrek, *Čechové a Poláci v 2. pol. XVI. století. Tři kapitoly z dějin česko-polské politické vzájemnosti* (Praha: Miroslav Stejskal, 1948), 217 and Kateřina Pražáková, "Habsburg Empire and French Kingdom in their Struggle for the Polish Crown", *Zeitsprünge. Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit,* 23 (2019): 88-90.

13 Bues, *Die habsburgische Kandidatur*, 88-9.

14 On the complicated journey to Urzędów, see Henryk Gmiterek, "Lublinská epizoda mise Viléma z Rožmberka do Polska v době bezkráloví v letech 1572-1573", in *Andros Probabilis. Sborník prací přátel a spolupracovníků historika prof. PhDr. Miloše Trapla, CSc. k jeho 70. narozeninám*, eds. Jiří Malíř, and Pavel Marek (Brno-Olomouc: Matice moravská-Univerzita Palackého, 2005), 405-06.

15 Gmiterek, "Lublinská epizoda", 409.

hosts with generous gifts to win them over to the Habsburg cause. These included weapons, valuable books, belts, jewels, but also horses and dogs[16]. These extremely valuable gifts were provided at their own expense. For example, the popular English greyhounds, which the Polish nobles were especially happy to receive, came from the breeding of Peter Vok, the younger brother of William of Rosenberg[17].
Generous gifts as well as a skilful diplomatic increased the popularity of Rosenberg, who was described by his Polish counterparts as polite, kind, gentle and willing to seek compromise solutions[18]. In the winter of 1572/1573 the negotiations proceeded in such a friendly spirit that in early 1573 the envoys believed that they might succeed in their mission and that the archduke Ernest would indeed ascend the Polish throne[19]. In the weeks that followed, however, they found out that the circle of the highly affluent they had made contact with represented only a fraction of the electorate. The numerous poorer nobles continued to express many doubts about the Habsburg candidature[20], and Rosenberg and Pernstein were also unable to allay their fears that the election of the emperor's son would lead to a long and devastating war with the Ottoman Empire[21]. Another important aspect was the presence of the French legation, which was led by an exceptionally capable bishop Jean de Monluc.

16 For example in a draft letter from the beginning of November 1572, William of Rosenberg asked an unknown addressee (maybe his brother or one of the senior officials at the manor) to send him several valuable books. SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/15, William of Rosenberg to unknown, Dańczów 6 XI 1572. In the early February 1573, William of Rosenberg promised to Mikołaj Maciejowski, the voivode of Lublin, to provide him with six carthorses. SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/21, William of Rosenberg to Mikołaj Maciejowski, Urzędów 9 II 1572.

17 SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/17A, William of Rosenberg to Peter Vok of Rosenberg, Urzędów 5 I 1573. Peter Vok had brought several English grey hounds from his cavalier journey and started breeding this valued race. Václav Březan, *Životy posledních Rožmberků*, II, ed. Jaroslav Pánek (Praha: Svoboda, 1985), 359.

18 Bues, *Die habsburgische Kandidatur,* 74.

19 On 7 February 1573, William urged his younger brother to prepare as he would soon be accompanying the newly elected king on his journey to Cracow. SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/18, William of Rosenberg to Peter Vok of Rosenberg, Urzędów 7 II 1573.

20 Baczkowski, "Der polnische Adel", 78, Henryk Gmiterek, "Czechy wobec starań Habsburgów o koronę polską w drugiej połowie XVI wieku", *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Sklodowska*, 50 (1995): 92.

21 On the relationship of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire at the time of the death of Sigismund II Augustus, see Andrzej Dziubiński, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-tureckie w latach 1500–1572 w kontekście międzynarodowym* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2005), 257-69. The impact of the fear of the Turks as an important factor in the free election of the Polish king was also mentioned by the Rosenberg chronicler Václav Březan. Václav Březan, *Životy posledních Rožmberků*, I, ed. Jaroslav Pánek (Praha: Svoboda, 1985), 244.

With the help of generous promises, he was gaining more and more influence[22]. During March and April 1573, both Rosenberg and Pernstein became aware that their mission was doomed to fail[23]. In addition to the difficulties mentioned above, Anna Jagiellon, the sister of deceased king, was increasingly leaning towards the candidature of Henry of Valois[24], and also high church officials indicated that they would support the French, as they did not consider the Habsburg cause to be viable[25]. Nevertheless, both diplomats continued to do their best to promote Ernest's candidature, which naturally included an active participation in the electoral diet that begun on 5 April 1573 in the village of Kamień near Warsaw. They arrived in advance, so they could observe the gathering of an impressive number of Lithuanian and Polish nobles accompanied by their servants[26]. In the early days of the diet, both diplomats probably attempted to carry on negotiations that might have supported the candidature of Ernest of Austria, but they obviously realised that they were defending a lost cause[27].

In this situation Rosenberg also delivered his speech on 9 May 1573, in which he tried to present the entire Habsburg family and especially the young archduke in the best possible light to the assembled Polish and Lithuanian nobility. In general, his speech was stylistically polished, and he even used many Polish expressions[28]. He was also very realistic and reasonable in his arguments. However, his presentation lacked a dramatic delivery, enthusiasm as well as unexpected and huge promises, which might have changed the balance of power in the last phase of the diet. Some participants of the electoral assembly also reported the fact that Rosenberg spoke rather quietly[29]. The most probable explanation was that he no longer believed in the success of his mission and was disturbed by the fact that he was praising the

22 In detail Maciej Serwański, *Henryk III Walezy w Polsce. Stosunki polsko-francuske w latach 1566–1576* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976), 68-85 and Pražáková, "Habsburg Empire", 93-4.

23 SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/22, William of Rosenberg to Peter Vok of Rosenberg, Urzędów 6 III 1573.

24 Maria Bogucka, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1964), 103.

25 Bues, *Die habsburgische Kandidatur*, 142-144.

26 In older literature, the total number of people assembled was estimated at 40,000 to 50,000. Walter Leitsch, *Sigismund III. von Polen und Jan Zamoyski. Die Rolle Estlands in der Rivalität zwischen König und Hetman* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 21. Contemporary estimates are more moderate, but still speak of an impressive gathering that may have included more than 30,000 people. Augustyniak, *Historia Polski 1572–1795*, 537.

27 Even the emperor himself was aware of the poor chances. SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/25, Maximilian II to William of Rosenberg, Vienna 5 V 1573.

28 SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/4, "The speech of William of Rosenberg", n. d.

29 Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 171.

qualities of the Habsburgs to those who did not trust them at all[30]. And he was right, for only two days later the diet elected Henry of Valois the new king of Poland.
When Rosenberg left Poland together with Pernstein, he was probably not fully aware of the strong impression he had left. Most likely he did not pay much attention to the fact that several participants in the electoral assembly, such as Stanisław Górka, were so impressed by his speech that they tried to give him their votes, although he himself did not admit any possibility of his own candidature at that time[31]. Both envoys were more concerned that Maximilian II would not blame them for the failure of the mission and that they should be compensated for at least some of the enormous costs they had incurred[32]. For example, for Rosenberg alone, the entire mission cost 38,662 guldens[33]. He did not expect to receive it all in gold, but counted on various favours and, among other things, the waiving of some of the taxes he paid from his large domain[34].

While Rosenberg was occupied with the expenses of the previous mission and the administration of his possessions after his return, the Polish and Lithuanian nobles were preparing for the arrival of Henry of Valois. His short reign, however, disappointed both sides, who had different expectations and views of how the court and government should be run. When Henry of Valois learned of his brother's death, he made a resolute decision and secretly fled the kingdom of Poland on the night of 18 to 19 June 1574 to claim the succession to the French throne, which was much closer to his heart[35]. This was a disgrace for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth[36], and in the first weeks after Henry's departure it seemed that one of previously recommended sons of Maximilian II would now have to be chosen[37]. However, other candidates also began to be considered, as the idea of a Habsburg on the Polish throne remained completely unacceptable to a significant number of

30 This is also indicated by the letter William of Rosenberg wrote to his brother on 5 May 1573. The letter gives a very depressed impression and shows that William was feeling mentally rather exhausted. SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/24, William of Rosenberg to Peter Vok of Rosenberg, 5 V 1573.

31 Pánek, *Vilém z Rožmberka*, 276; Macůrek, Čechové *a Poláci*, 69-70.

32 In fact, the emperor was praising Rosenberg and Pernstein during the entire mission and was convinced that they were doing their best. Bues, *Die habsburgische Kandidatur*, 98-9.

33 Pánek, *Vilém z Rožmberka*, 269.

34 William of Rosenberg proposed this to Maxmilian II in early November 1573. SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/28, William of Rosenberg to Maximilian II, Prague 2 XI 1573.

35 Serwański, *Henryk III Walezy*, 194-205.

36 On the derisive pamphlets that circulated about Henry's shameful escape from Poland, Kateřina Pražáková, and Tomáš Sterneck, "Die Ehrlosigkeit der Valois-Könige und die Würde Polen-Litauens. Eine Apologie des polnischen Adels in einer Schmähschrift von 1574", *Historisches Jahrbuch* 138 (2018): 172-97.

37 Christoph Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten und Interessen des Hauses Habsburg in Polen-Litauen während des zweiten Interregnums 1574–1576* (Wien: Universitätsverlag, 2001), 14-5.

Poles and Lithuanians[38].
Precisely in this situation several influential nobles turned their attention to Rosenberg. Particularly prominent among them was Stanisław Górka, a Lutheran voivode of Poznań who wanted to vote for the Bohemian magnate already in the spring of 1573. In Lesser Poland, the noblemans Konrad Krupka Przecławski and Stanisław Szafraniec took a particularly active part in the plan to elevate Rosenberg to the royal throne[39]. They started corresponding with him and recommending him to other nobles, many of whom, like them, were non-Catholic[40]. They greatly appreciated his religious tolerance, which had been evident during his stay in Poland and earlier in two marriages to non-Catholic imperial noblewomen.
As far as marriage was concerned, Rosenberg's widowhood naturally offered the argument that he might marry Anna Jagiellon after his election[41]. Presumably because of her advanced age, which would have prevented Rosenberg from obtaining the heir he desired[42], also another, less well-known suggestion arose. The South Bohemian magnate offered to marry the daughter of elector Augustus of Saxony (probably Dorothea, who was nearly 11 years old at the time) and then to support the Polish state treasury from the generous dowry he would receive[43]. Even if Rosenberg did not succeed in arranging this highly prestigious marriage, he promised to pay a substantial annual sum into the Polish treasury[44]. In addition to tempting promises of financial support, the adherents of the South Bohemian magnate also claimed that the Habsburgs would have considerably restricted the rights and freedoms of the Bohemian kingdom if Rosenberg had not been resolutely defending them[45]. This was an argument that was particularly close to the heart of Piotr Zborowski, who became another prominent member of this faction. He was the voivode of Krakow, and in addition to the power derived from his title, he could rely on his considerable family fortune and the support of his brothers who cooperated with him[46].

38 Almut Bues, "Die Beziehungen der Habsburger zu Polen in den Jahren 1572 bis 1574", *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 77 (1998): 27-42.

39 The edition of three letters of Konrad Krupka Przecławski from the summer 1574, Fedor Verzhbovsky, *Две кандидатуры на польский престол Вильгельма из Розенберга и эрцгерцога Фердинанда 1574–1575 гг. По неизданным источникам* (Варшава Тип. К. Ковалевскаго, 1889), No 1, 2 and 6, p. 3-8 and 13-4.

40 On the formation of the Rosenberg faction Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten*, 41.

41 Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 174.

42 To the two marriages from which Rosenberg had no children, and his growing desire for an heir, see Marek, and Pražáková, "Sňatkové strategie", 153-59.

43 Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten*, 63.

44 According to some sources, the sum was 200,000 guldens. Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten*, 63. However, this would have bankrupted the Rosenberg estate despite its size and wealth.

45 Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 174.

46 A statement by Peter Zborovsky on the suitability of Rosenberg's candidature as part of encrypted correspondence. SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/36.

Przecławski contacted Rosenberg as early as 19 June 1574, just one day after Henry's hasty departure, and hinted at the opportunities that suddenly appeared to the Bohemian nobleman[47]. Rosenberg must have responded favourably, and a further correspondence developed, which was also joined by Piotr Zborowski around the end of June and the beginning of July 1574[48]. It is impossible to determine exactly when they came to an agreement, as the Bohemian magnate made considerable efforts to keep his plans secret. If he had publicly announced his candidature for the Polish throne, Maximilian II could have immediately accused him of breaking his promise of fealty. As a very influential nobleman, he would not face the highest penalties, such as the loss of property or his neck, but the threat of losing all his offices would be very unpleasant, especially if it was not compensated by the gain of the Polish crown[49]. For this reason, Rosenberg attempted to conduct all negotiations in secret until he would be certain of success. On the other hand, if he felt that his candidature was not going well, he wanted to withdraw in a situation where Maximilian II could not prove anything to him[50].

Therefore, he corresponded with his Polish supporters in ciphers. He used quite a popular system, in which not only each letter was replaced by a sign, but also the names of all persons were substituted by agreed symbols[51]. If the cipher was broken, which was quite difficult, it was still quite a challenge to guess which persons were mentioned in the letter. However, Rosenberg did not fully trust the ciphers either and apparently destroyed the great majority of the letters after reading them. Although other persons referred to very active contacts between Rosenberg and Polish nobles from the summer of 1574 to the autumn of 1575, relatively few documents from this period have survived in the former archives of the Rosenberg family[52]. In addition to letters containing various proposals and promises, Rosenberg also entrusted the negotiations to a few confidants. He especially relied on his secretary, Jan Netolický of Turov, whom he sent to his supporters in Poland under cover of buying horses there[53].

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47 Verzhbovsky, Две кандидатуры, No 1, p. 3-5, the letter of Konrad Krupka Przecławski to William of Rosenberg, 19 VI 1574.

48 The first of the preserved letters is dated 10 VII 1574, but it does not seem to be the first contact. Verzhbovsky, Две кандидатуры, No 4, p. 11-12, the letter of William of Rosenberg to Piotr Zborowski, 10 VII 1574.

49 On the possible penalties see Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 175.

50 Rosenberg mentioned his efforts to conceal everything several times in his letters, for example on 23 January 1575 he wrote to Konrad Krupka Przecławski: «Secundo, hoc Imperatori etiam suspicandi aliquid occassionem facile praebere possit, quod hanc rem inco Maiestatem Suam celare volui, […]», Verzhbovsky, *Две кандидатуры*, No 22, p. 53.

51 This type of cipher had been used for example by some prominent personalities during the Schmalkaldic War. Anne-Simone Rous, *Geheimdiplomatie in der Frühen Neuzeit. Spione und Chiffren in Sachsen 1500–1763* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2022), 325-32.

52 They form a thin folder of encrypted documents. SOA Třeboň, Historica Třeboň, sign. 4834/36.

53 Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 175. According to the Rosenberg chronicler,

Jan Netolický's mission was successful and already in the summer months of 1574 Rosenberg became quite popular among the Polish nobility, especially in Lesser Poland. As early as 2 August 1574, Olbracht Łaski warned a Habsburg agent named Matthes Stolcz that «sehr viell weren d[a]rob, den von Rossenbergk hierinnen zu ersuchen und I[h]n auch zu einem Könige begeren»[54]. The wording suggests that Łaski assumed that the emperor had already heard something about Rosenberg's candidature, but was unaware of its extraordinary impact. The exaggerated warning should be taken with some caution, as this adventurous nobleman primarily wanted to get into the circle of Maximilian II's well-paid agents. On the other hand, it is certain that the accusation had a grain of truth. Maximilian II also considered the news to be quite important and tried to obtain more information or even intercept Rosenberg's letters[55].

To find out how dangerous a rival Rosenberg was, as well as the more important task of promoting his sons' candidacy, the emperor entrusted various agents. Unlike in the interregnum of 1572/1573, this time he did not send an official legation to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to promote one of his sons, but he delegated the matter to various confidants. Among them, Andrzej Dudycz, stood out for his diligence and activity[56], but also the above-mentioned Matthes Stolcz played his part[57]. With his agents, especially Dudycz, the emperor corresponded in code. He used a cipher system very similar to that of Rosenberg. He replaced each letter with a negotiated character, using Latin as the original language[58]. Sometimes he did not encrypt the whole letter, but only the important paragraphs[59]. The Habsburg's agents in Poland and Lithuania were also afraid of the disclosure of important information, and therefore they would have liked to communicate with their informants in code. However, as their correspondents were not skilled enough, they had to give up on the ciphers or, at best, be content with substituting the names for the nicknames[60].

Jan Netolický was sent to Poland for the first time on 10 VII 1574 to negotiate Rosenberg's candidature. Březan, *Životy posledních Rožmberků*, I, 268. Edition of several preserved letters that were exchanged between Rosenberg and his secretary, Verzhbovsky , Две кандидатуры, No 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, p. 16-18, 20-27, 29.

54 HHStA, Polonica 1574, carton 23, Matthes Stolz to Maximilian II, 2 VIII 1574.

55 Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 178.

56 On the early career of this remarkable personality: Lech Szczucki, "Andrzej Dudycz. Młodość i początki kariery", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 116 (2007): 5-17. On Dudycz's activity during the interregnum, especially: Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten*, 5-6, 30-31, 75-76 and more.

57 For example, Olbracht Laski did not want to deal with Dudicz, but with Stolcz. Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten,* 77.

58 HHStA, Polonica 1574, carton 23, Matthes Stolz to Maximilian II, 10 VI 1574, 7 VII 1574 and others.

59 HHStA, Polonica 1574, carton 23, Maximilian II to Andrzej Dudycz , 18 IV 1574, 6 V 1574 and others.

60 HHStA, Polonica 1574, carton 23, the correspondent P. M. to Stanisław Fogelweder, September (?) 1574.

In 1574, agents sympathetic to or paid by the Habsburgs were not only concerned about Rosenberg's candidature. They also monitored other personalities who were being considered by the faction that thought it best to elect a "Piast", i.e. a nobleman of Slavic origin. Moreover, the candidacies of both Alfonso II d'Este and Ivan the Terrible attracted some attention at the time, while the final winner of the free election, Stephen Báthory, was not mentioned much in the summer and autumn of 1574[61]. More than him, the Habsburg court was disturbed by the efforts of Henry of Valois, who, after his escape, was unwilling to give up the government and was sending appeals for obedience to Poland-Lithuania[62].

Rosenberg was not so worried about the activities of Henry of Valois, believing that the fugitive king would inevitably be deposed at the next diet. And that was the moment for which he was preparing. He assumed that in the spring of 1575, when the Polish nobles would gather in Stężyca, they would not only dethrone Henry of Valois, but also immediately proceed to the election of a new king. And he hoped that the desire for a quick decision to end the interregnum, as well as the strong opposition of many Poles and Lithuanians to the Habsburgs, would create a situation in which the assembly could proclaim him king. He would pretend to the Habsburg representatives that he was extremely surprised by the election and that he had made no effort to obtain it. Then he would negotiate with them, explaining that in the given situation it was impossible to elect a member of the Habsburg dynasty, but that it was better for them if someone who wanted to maintain good relations with them took over the government of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth than if it was one of their enemies[63].

With regard to this plan, it was of course advisable for Rosenberg to attend the diet in Stężyca in person. Nevertheless, if he had travelled there without any commission, he would have revealed his ambition. He would not have been able to explain to the emperor why he had undertaken such an arduous and expensive journey. In the autumn of 1574, however, a great opportunity seemed to arise for him to attend the diet with all dignity and with a suitable authorization. The Habsburg family became divided on the question who the candidate should finally be, whether the young archduke Ernest should not be replaced by his father Maximilian II. Suddenly also Ferdinand of Tyrol indicated his own candidature and contacted some Polish and Lithuanian nobles[64]. Rosenberg wanted to take advantage of the disunity, which was generally detrimental to Habsburg interests. He proposed to Ferdinand of Tyrol

61 There was a gradual increase in Bathory's influence, but not until 1575. Jerzy Besala, *Stefan Batory* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1992), 93-4.

62 The Habsburg family archive contains a considerable number of copies of letters and appeals sent by Henry of Valois to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. HHStA, Polonica 1574, carton 23 and 24.

63 At the end of January 1575, Rosenberg suggested that the emperor should be persuaded to accept the decision of the Polish nobility. Verzhbovsky, Две кандидатуры, No 21, p. 48-50, the letter of William of Rosenberg to Piotr Zborowski, 23 I 1575. More on this topic Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 178.

64 Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten*, 32.

that he could represent him in Stężyca[65]. Naturally, in this situation, in the autumn of 1574, Rosenberg was particularly concerned that his secret candidacy should not be revealed. He was particularly afraid that Martin Gerstmann, who had very good contacts in the Repubblic from his position as Bishop of Wroclaw, might reveal something[66].

Despite these efforts, Rosenberg certainly failed to conceal his candidature. It is unclear whether it was the suspicious Martin Gerstman or someone else who first began to report the matter, but as early as 15 October 1574, Emperor Maximilian II sent a letter to the Bohemian nobleman in which he indicated that he would reward him if he remained loyal. The danger that Rosenberg represented as a candidate was brought to the Emperor's attention not only by his agents in the Commonwealth, but also by some Czech nobles. Ladislaus III Popel of Lobkowitz, for example, informed the Habsburg court at the end of August 1574 of the large number of letters the Bohemian nobleman had received from some of the prominent figures of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth[67]. At the same time, he hinted that Rosenberg had high expectations of himself in the new royal election[68].

As reports of Rosenberg's secret negotiations with the Polish lords continued to circulate and even Dudycz began to mention them more frequently from the beginning of 1575[69], none of the Habsburgs, not even Ferdinand of Tyrol, appointed Rosenberg as his representative at the diet of Stężyca. As a result, he could not attend the assembly, from which he expected the election of a new king. Nevertheless, he sent considerable sums of money and probably some expensive gifts to his supporters before the diet began on 12 May 1575[70]. The course of the diet, however, disappointed him. The assembled nobles from various parts of Poland and Lithuania (despite the arrival of the French legation) made it quite clear that they no longer counted on Henry of Valois as king, but they did not proceed to elect a new

65 Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten*, 63.

66 «Cavete vobis, ne quid ab episcopis aut Podolski scribatur ad episcopum Vratislaviensem Gerstmannum et tua persona ne prodatur; esset valde male», Verzhbovsky , *Две кандидатуры*, No 14, p. 29, the letter of William of Rosenberg to Jan Netolický, 1 X 1574. Key data on Martin Gerstmann's career Kurt Engelbert, "Gerstmann, Martin von", *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 6 (1964), 328 [https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd102120242.html#ndbcontent (25. 5. 2024)].

67 «videtur mihi, quod aliquid aliud tractetur, ac si vellent dominum Guillhelmum de Rosis aliqui eligere, nam litterae ad ipsum perferuntur: ante quatuordecim dies nuntius ultra 8 litteras ex ea parte, uti mihi relatum, attulit a duce Ostroviensi et hic evocatur, […]», Verzhbovsky , *Две кандидатуры*, No 10, p. 19, the letter of Ladislaus III. Popel of Lobkowitz to Maximilian II, 20 VIII 1574.

68 «[…] et ipse dominus de Rosis videtur sibi in ea parte, si electio deberet fieri, non parum polliceri,[…]», Verzhbovsky , *Две кандидатуры*, No 10, p. 19, the letter of Ladislaus III. Popel of Lobkowitz to Maximilian II, 20. 8. 1574.

69 On the repeated reports of Dudycz, who began to draw attention to Rosenberg's popularity from the beginning of 1575, Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten*, 41.

70 Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 176 and Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten,* 63.

monarch. An election would have been undesirable for the Piast party in the given situation, as the Habsburg supporters had a strong position at the diet. In the end, the assembly dissolved with the proviso that a new diet would be held in the autumn of 1575 to elect a new king[71].

The tumultuous course of the Stężyca assembly and its dissolution indicated that the interregnum could last a long time and that the outcome was more than uncertain. For Rosenberg, this was the moment when he decided to give up his candidature. Although he continued to answer his supporters' letters in a friendly manner after the diet of Stężyca, he stopped sending money to Poland, which was crucial[72]. His resignation was so obvious that even the emperor Maximilian II soon learned of it. He did not try to accuse Rosenberg of anything, on the contrary, he welcomed the reconciliation of relations with one of the most influential persons in the Kingdom of Bohemia[73].

In general, Rosenberg's candidature represents a highly remarkable aspect of the interregnum that preceded the free elections of December 1575. The exceptionally wealthy and influential magnate found himself in a position to consider the royal throne. The opportunity was so tempting that he seized it, despite the risk of reprisals from the emperor himself and other members of the powerful Habsburg dynasty. For almost a year, complicated negotiations took place, full of hidden offers, ciphers, concealments, and denunciations. However, the failure of the diet of Stężyca resulted in a change of heart and the abandonment of bold ambitions. As a result, Rosenberg did not become an important candidate for the election at the end of 1575, but he also escaped any punishment.

71 Augustynowicz, *Die Kandidaten,* 65-69.

72 Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 176.

73 On the later reconciliation with the emperor and Rosenberg's activities as an advisor and diplomat in serious matters concerning Poland, Kateřina Pražáková, *Obraz Polsko-litevského státu a Ruska ve zpravodajství české šlechty (1450–1618).* (České Budějovice: Historický ústav Filozofické fakulty Jihočeské univerzity, 2015), 125-29.

ABBREVIATIONS

HHStA: Haus-, Hof und Staatsarchiv, Wien.
SOA Třeboň: Státní oblastní archiv v Třeboni.

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THE ROLE OF STANISLAW STADNICKI (C. 1551–1610) DURING THE THIRD FREE ELECTION[1]

ABSTRACT
The article discusses Stanislaw Stadnicki's role in the events surrounding the third election in 1587, focusing on his involvement in the camp of the Maximilianists, i.e. Habsburg supporters. The internal differences within this faction are shown, as well as Stadnicki's actions and his military significance in the context of the struggle for the throne between Maximilian Habsburg and Sigismund Vasa. The study highlights the importance of family connections in the politics of the time and Stadnicki's influence on the course of events, despite his lack of leadership position. Ultimately, the article assesses the effectiveness of Stadnicki's and the Maximilianists' actions, pointing out the reasons for their defeat.

KEYWORDS: Stanislaw Stadnicki; Sigismund Vasa; Third election; Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

This article examines a group of Polish-Lithuanian politicians whose common goal was to install a representative of the Habsburg monarchy on the throne, with particular emphasis on the role of Stanisław Stadnicki (c. 1551–1610) in the events surrounding the third free election. In Polish history, this group is commonly referred to as the "Maximilianists". Although they shared common goals and interests, they were internally strongly differentiated, both in terms of the position of individual members and their conception of policymaking. The internal situation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was plagued by numerous conflicts and forced to face the chaos of an interregnum for the third time in 14 years, was also considered. Stephen Báthory's death caused great surprise among his subjects. The royal secretary Reinhold Heidenstein compared the news of the monarch's death to a thunderbolt, which struck the Republic and caused fear among his subjects[2]. Although the monarch's ailments were not a secret, he was widely regarded as an active individual, capable of withstanding the rigors of military campaigns, and he preferred hunting over any form of courtly entertainment[3].

1 The article is the result of research carried out under the "PRELUDIUM" 17 project entitled: *Rebel and traitor or defender of the nobility's liberties? The political biography of Stanisław Stadnicki (c. 1551–1610)*. Project no.: UMO-2019/33/N/HS3/01883, funded by the National Centre for Science.

2 Reinhold Heidenstein, *History of Poland from the Death of Sigismund Augustus to 1594: Book XII*, eds. Janusz Byliński, and Włodzimierz Kaczorowski (Opole: Wydawnictwo i Drukarnia Świętego Krzyża, 2015), 509.

3 Dominik Kadzik, Agnieszka Pawłowska-Kubik, *Kulisy stanu zdrowia i*

Prior to presenting the events immediately preceding the Third Free Election, I would like to briefly delineate Stanisław Stadnicki during the second half of the 1580s. He was one of the most colorful figures of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, known as "the Devil of acut" by his contemporaries. He was born around 1551 into the family of a well-known infidel, Stanisław Mateusz Stadnicki and Barbara Stadnicka, née Zborowska. During the period of interest to us in this article, he was a member of the Zborowski party, which demonstrates how strong family connections were in politics of the time.

It appears that the third interregnum is a highly developed subject matter. Kazimierz Lepszy has given this period great attention[4]. For many years, his work was the only point of reference. In recent years, mainly thanks to the studies by Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula[5], Henryk Lulewicz[6], Anna Pieńkowska[7] and Maciej Pieńkowski[8], new threads and research questions have emerged, as well as voices calling for a revision of Kazimierz Lepszy's findings based on new archival sources[9]. It is widely acknowledged that this was the third attempt made by the Habsburgs to acquire the Polish crown. Historiography has already evaluated the Habsburg diplomatic actions towards free elections in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the death of Sigismund II Augustus in 1572 and during the first two interregnums[10]. The numerous failures of the Habsburgs in the subsequent elections (1573, 1575,

okoliczności śmierci Stefana Batorego, in *Konsylia Historyczno-Medyczne. Materials*, eds. Bożena Czwojdrak, and Marta Piber-Zbieranowska (Warszawa: Instytut Historii im. Tadeusza Manteuffla Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2022), 14.

4 Kazimierz Lepszy, *Oblężenie Krakowa przez arcyksięcia Maksymiliana* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, 1929); Id., *Walka stronnictw w pierwszych latach panowania Zygmunta III* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa, 1929).

5 Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula, *From hostility to friendship. The Austrian Habsburgs vis-à-vis Poland in 1587–1592* (Katowice: University of Silesia Press, 2019).

6 Henryk Lulewicz, *Gniewów o unię ciąg dalszy. Polish-Lithuanian relations in the years 1569-1588* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2002).

7 Anna Pieńkowska, *Conventions and assemblies of the interregnum period after Stefan Batory's death* (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, 2010).

8 Maciej Pieńkowski, *The difficult road to power in the Republic. The Coronation Sejm of Sigismund III 1587/1588 and the Pacification Sejm of 1589* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2021).

9 Joanna Choińska-Mika, "The political system of the 16th to 18th centuries– the state of research after 1989", in *Materiały pokonferencyjne. Spojrzenia w przeszłość*, vol. 1: *Średniowiecze, nowożytność. Konferencja Muzeum Historii Polski, Jadwisin, 25–26 października 2007*, eds. Paweł Skibiński, et al. (Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polski, 2009), 203-14.

10 See more: Stanisław Cynarski, "Uwagi w sprawie kandydatury habsburskiej w czasie pierwszych elekcji w Polsce", *The Sobótka Silesian Historical Quarterly,* 1-2 (1992): 63-8.

and 1587), despite their considerable political and financial efforts, were noted by Barwicka-Makula[11]. She correctly noted that the biggest problem was the inconsistent foreign policy vision of the members of the imperial family. After the heirless death of Jagiellon, the Habsburgs sent numerous envoys to the Commonwealth, contacted representatives of the senatorial-dignitary elite, and gave many tips to agents and informers. Their actions ended in defeat twice. The researcher identifies the rationale behind the failures in certain characteristics of Maximilian II Habsburg's character, such as his vacillation and inconsistency in his initiatives, the sluggishness and protracted activities of his diplomatic service, and ultimately, a lack of discernment in the selection of those accountable for the success of Habsburg policy on the Vistula.

The third attempt to acquire the Polish crown was already taking place under changed political conditions. Habsburg policy was led by a new ruler, Rudolf II, «the emperor with unfulfilled hopes»[12]. An interesting aspect of the battle to obtain the Polish crown for the Habsburgs is the detailed presentation of the attempt to build a pro-Habsburg party in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, consisting of dignitaries and representatives of the nobility. Its axis was undoubtedly the Zborowskis and their relatives, including Stanisław Stadnicki. The Zborowski brothers, court marshal Andrzej, the castellan of Gniezno Jan, and outlaw Krzysztof, led this group. Furthermore, we can mention Poznań voivode Stanisław Górka, referendary Stanisław Sędziwoj Czarnkowski (1526–1602), starosta of Śniatyń Mikołaj Jazłowiecki, the Stadnicki family (mainly Stanisław and Marcin), Spytek Jordan (†1596), grand lithuanian stolnik Aleksander Proński (†1595) and Kyiv bishop Jakub Woroniecki (†1588). The satirical work *Corpus Austriacum* shows the composition of the pro-Habsburg camp and mentions additional 'players'. The anonymous author, who was an opponent of the Austrian candidacy, used the metaphor of the human body. The individuals of the party were characterized by their assigned body parts. For example: head (*caput*) – Stanisław Górka, brain (*cerebrum*) Grand Marshal of Lithuania Albrycht Radziwiłł (1558–1592), nose (*nasus*) Voivode of Sieradz Olbracht Łaski (1536–1605), breast (*pectus*), soul (*anima*) Jan Zborowski, back (*dorsum*) Kostek, heart (*cor*) Krzysztof Zborowski, viscera (*intestina*) Andrzej Zborowski, hand (*manus*) representants of Stadnicki family, stomach (*stomachus*) Mikołaj Jazłowiecki, stomach (*venter*) Krzysztof Warszewicki, bladder (*vesica*) Prokop Pękosławski, ass (*posticum*) Mikołaj Kazimierski[13]. Research on the Maximilianist party in the Commonwealth is imperative, as it is without it we will not be able to comprehend the dynamics of the conflict and internal relations within the Polish-Lithuanian state. This was a diverse social, financial, and prestige-diverse group. Even the ironic overtone of the piece cited above testifies to the common belief that the Zborowskis were the heart and head of the movement. It is noteworthy to note that the Stadnickis were referred to as the "hands" of the party, which I believe to be quite accurate, given their significant executive role in it.

Stanislaw Stadnicki and his brother Marcin were present during the local council

11 Barwicka-Makula, *From hostility to friendship*, 21 and next.

12 Barwicka-Makula, *From hostility to friendship*, 67.

13 BCzart., 92, "Corpus Austriacum", p. 215; same reference in Ibid., 328, p. 38.

(*sejmik*), which was convened in Lviv on 7 January 1587 by Stanislaw Żółkiewski[14]. It lasted for almost two weeks and was not a peacefare[15]. Jan Zamoyski, perhaps mindful of his recent defeat at the local council of the Ruthenian Voivodeship in 1584, actively participated in the deliberations of the Lviv assembly. The event was attended by several senators and the political associates of the chancellor[16]. His legitimate concern must have been the "lesser brothers", i.e. the nobility. Despite the large attendance of senators with their military postings, it was not without conflict. Into a dispute with the chancellor came the Speaker of the Assembly, Mikołaj Jazłowiecki, who: «resisted the Chancellor, saying that they feared him so that he would not bring them the Voivode of Transylvania to Poland»[17]. As Reinhold Heidenstein noted, the assembled nobility was in the majority: hostile «to the Chancellor»[18] , and the Stadnickis manifested their influence and military power by arriving in the company of «several hundred riders»[19]. Although probably not all of Jan Zamoyski's opponents at the Sejm could be attributed to the Zborowskis' party, undoubtedly Jazłowiecki's strong position and his speech criticising the Chancellor's policy, supported by the Stadnicki's "argument of force", showed that Zamoyski's position in the Ruthenia Voivodeship was not unshakable. During the assembly, other representatives of the nobility also spoke in favor of limiting the Hetman's power and demanding the enactment of the exorbitance[20]. This indicates that Zamoyski was unsuccessful in subjugating the sejmiks, even in provinces that were traditionally under his strong influence.

Immediately following the conclusion of the proceedings in Lviv, the Stadnickis proceeded to the local council in Proszowice. It began its deliberations on 26 January. On the night preceding the assembly, a clash erupted between them and the armed forces of the Cracow starosta general, Mikoaj Zebrzydowski. The Stadnickis occupied his inn and, despite Zebrzydowski's warnings, refused to depart. They were to: "drink and shoot" to insult the late king and important politicians. The next day, in

14 "Confederation of the Ruthenian Voivodeship", Lviv 7 I 1587. See, A*kta grodzkie i ziemskie z czasów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej: z archiwum tak zwanego bernardyńskiego we Lwowie w skutek fundacyi śp. Alexandra hr. Stadnickiego*, t. 20: *Lauda sejmikowe*, t: 1: *Lauda wiszeńskie 1572-1648*, ed. Antoni Prochaska (Lviv: Wydawnictwa fundacyi Al. hr. Stadnickiego ogłaszane przez Towarzystwo Naukowe we Lwowie, 1909), 53.

15 BCzart., 92, "Discorso dell' Interregno di Polonia del Anno 1587 di Horazio Spannocchi", f. 855.

16 These included: Stanisław Żółkiewski, Przemyśl castellan Jan Fredro, Jan Sienieński, Halych castellan Mikołaj Herburt, Kyiv voivode Konstanty Vasyl Ostrogski. See, Heidenstein, *History of Poland*, 513.

17 BCzart., 328, "Niezgoda na sejmiku lwowskim między Zamoyskim a Jazłowieckim", ff. 107-09.

18 Heidenstein, *History of Poland*, 514.

19 Heidenstein, *History of Poland*, 514.

20 AGAD, APP, 6, "Votum p. Gabriela Świrski wygłoszone w Lwowie 13 stycznia 1586 r.", p. 120-27.

"thirty horses", they surrounded the church where the proceedings were customarily held. They were asked to send back their soldiers, but in a snide reply they agreed on condition that the starost would remove his troops from the town. Another of the nobles, Mikołaj Kaźmierski – a supporter of the Zborowskis – pointed out that the senators were to blame for the heated atmosphere at the assembly. He encouraged them to deliberate collectively, without regard to the positions and duties they held. The chance to do so was missed by the soldiers, possibly the Stadnickis, who fired in the direction of the starost who was entering the church[21].

In the middle of the difficult year of 1587, dispatches arrived from Prague offering hopes of the Habsburgs obtaining the Polish crown. The biggest obstacle may have been the lack of consensus among family members for vigorous diplomatic action. Several informants and observers of the situation at the time viewed the Habsburgs' Polish supporters negatively, citing their tendency to change their views and accept material benefits[22]. The course of the electoral *Sejm*, which commenced its deliberations on the final day of June 1587, failed to elicit any sense of optimism[23]. Discussions were held surrounded by armed troops, and many magnates arrived in military assistance. The assembly was divided into groups: supporters of the Habsburg candidacy (Archduke Maximilian), supporters of Tsar Fyodor I Rurykovich, for whom some Lithuanians were in favor, the "Piast", and the Swedish prince Sigismund Vasa. On 15 August, the starost of Wenden, Prokop Pieniążek, a *Zamojszczyk*, put forward Zamoyski's candidacy, but the assembled nobility completely ignored this vote[24]. After several days of interminable discussions, the election was polarized. On August 19th, the Swedish Prince was proclaimed, and three days later, Archduke Maximilian was elected. As stated by Walter Leitsch, Habsburg received 73 votes[25]. The diploma of election was confirmed by only seven senators and a limited number of representatives of the nobility[26]. Among this group, it is noteworthy to mention a dozen individuals, as I hold the belief that they constitute the core of the "Maximillianist" party in the Republic, but a thorough investigation is required. From the Crown, the act of election of the Archduke was signed by Stanisław Górka, Voivode of Poznań, the Zborowski brothers (Castellan of Gniezno Jan and Court Marshal Andrzej), Castellan of Kamień, Marcin Lwowski Ostroróg, and Jakub Woroniecki, nominate bishop of Kyiv, who was not a full senator

21 AGAD, APP, 6, "Acta die 26 januarii w Proszowicach w kościele na tymże sejmiku", pp. 50-9.

22 Barwicka-Makula, 94.

23 Jan Dzięgielewski, *Sejmy elekcyjne, elektorzy elekcje 1573–1674* (Pułtusk: Oficyna Wydawnicza Aspra-JR, 2003), 101.

24 "Diariusz elekcji 1587", in *Diariusze sejmowe r. 1587. Sejmy konwokacyjny i elekcyjny*, ed. August Sokołowski, vol. 11 (Kraków: Czcionkami Drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1887), 111.

25 Walter Leitsch, *Sigismund III. von Polen und Jan Zamoyski. Die Rolle Estland in der Rivalität zwischen König und Hetman* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 58.

26 BCzart., 92, "Diploma Elections in Regem Poloniae Maximiliani Archiducis Austriae", ff. 407-10.

(he also proclaimed Maximilian king). The court marshal published the document of election. The document also contains two signatures of senators from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: the bishop of Vilnius, cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł, and his brother, the Castellan of Troki, Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł "Sierotka". Next, among the nobility, it is worth noting the support of the Habsburg candidacy by as many as six representatives of the Stadnicki family: Stanisław *Diabeł*, Stanisław, Marcin, Samuel, Jan and Andrzej. This fact alone proves that they were a major force in the pro-Habsburg camp – no other family was so numerously represented. In addition, the document was signed by the Lithuanian pantler Aleksander Frydrychowicz Proński, the starosta of Śniatyń Mikołaj Jazłowiecki, the starosta of Sącz and the pantler of Kraków Spytek Jordan, the starost of Piotrków Piotr Dunin Szpot, the chamberlain of Mielec and, at the same time, the marshal of the pro-convocation circle Kasper Dembiński, and the royal secretaries Jan Zbigniew Ossoliński and Krzysztof Warszewicki. There were also signatures of the royal courtier Jan Szczęsny Herburt, Stanisław Pstrokoński and Prokop Pękosławski. It is worth noting that many of these people were related to each other (to Stanisław Górka: Jan Zbigniew Ossoliński, Marcin Ostroróg, family Stadnicki) and related (to the Zborowskis family were related to the Stadnickis, Jan Zbigniew Ossoliński, Marcin Ostroróg, Spytek Jordan, and Aleksander Proński).

The Stadnickis were thus linked through familial connections to three significant figures within this party. It is sometimes attempted to discredit his strength, but in my opinion this is wrong and not in keeping with the situation at the time. The Poznań Voivode had not only influenced in Greater Poland, but also a hereditary estate which secured his political activities. He did not hesitate to spend it on soldiers either. He accompanied a force of 3,000 foreign infantry to the battle. The Stadnickis, who also participated, were no less threatening. Jazowiecki was an important figure at the time, since he was in control of the castle in Kamieniec Podolski. Spytek Jordan also brought with him a 200-strong infantry rotation. As can be seen, the pro-Habsburg party was not short of wealthy men, ready for armed effort, politically influential and possessed of dignity. Of course, they undoubtedly expected financial gratification and further careers, but the same was true among the Swedish prince's supporters. I am of the opinion that in the case of the "Maximilianists", a significant role was played by a fervent desire for vengeance, specifically to compensate the Chancellor for the humiliations of recent years, and a fervent aspiration for a resumption of the political prominence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The army with which Archduke Maximilian entered the Republic consisted of mercenary troops drawn from various areas of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, as well as German infantry and bodyguards. During his march from Vienna, which he left on 14 September 1587, he was actively recruiting, and Jan Wimmer estimates his forces at around 5,000 men – poorly disciplined, lacking heavy siege artillery, and among whom there were too little infantry necessary for besieging cities[27]. At the end of September in Olomouc, the Archduke met with a delegation of his Polish supporters, received from them the diploma of election and took the oath of *pacta conventa*. Habsburg's supporters presented him with two alternative plans for

27 Jan Wimmer, *Odparcie najazdu arcyksięcia Maksymiliana w 1587–8 r.* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1955), 19 and ss.

assuming power. The first step involved marching by the shortest route to Krakow and seizing it by force to carry out the coronation. The second was to take control of Greater Poland, where the voivode of Poznań, Stanisław Górka (1538–1592), wielded considerable influence, coronate in Gniezno and stop Sigismund Vasa's march from Gdańsk to Kraków. The Archduke chose the first option – the less favorable one, which meant having to besiege the capital and confront the armies of the Swedish prince's supporters concentrated there. He set off from Olomouc on 29 September and, via Opava, Racibórz, Gliwice and Bytom, arrived at the border with the Republic on 10 October 1587. He was surprised to find that in his first town, Będzin, he was not greeted by a Polish messenger, and that the burghers of Olkusz, the next town he entered, did not want to swear an oath to him. Perhaps he was already beginning to realise that the people of the Commonwealth were not treating him as king-elect, but as an invader. In Olkusz, Maximilian's army was joined by his partisans with their troops. These included the Zborowskis with a force of 1,500 men, Spytek Jordan with 360 soldiers, and the troops of Śniatyń starost Mikołaj Jazłowiecki. Jan Wimmer calculates that at that time the Archduke could have had about 11,000 armed[28]. On their way to Kraków, they attempted to capture Rabsztyn, but despite two assaults they failed to defeat the castle defenders. Unfortunately, Maximilian did not realise the danger of leaving enemy troops in the rear of his own forces. The Archduke did not decide to give battle to the defenders of Kraków, even though his army greatly outnumbered the forces hastily assembled by Hetman and Great Crown Chancellor Jan Zamoyski (1542–1605). He made his way to Mogiła, near Kraków, where there was a Cistercian monastery which became the headquarters of Maximilian and his supporters – here he received envoys and sent his supporters to win him sympathisers among the inhabitants of the Republic. The reinforcements he was expecting from Moravia and Silesia fell victim to ambushes by the archduke's opponents. Stanisław Stadnicki stayed in the castle in Korzków near Kraków but had to surrender it to Jan Zamoyski's army. These setbacks weakened morale in Maximilian's camp. He expected more help from his Polish supporters and Emperor Rudolf II. The storming of Krakow on 23 November 1587 ended in defeat and the archduke's forces began a chaotic retreat.

CONCLUSION

During this period, Stanisław Stadnicki was very active in public affairs. He implemented the Zborowski political plans in many ways. His military activity is most often reflected in the sources; not only did he provide the Archduke with a large army, but he also took independent action, such as military operations in Wielkopolska or attacking Hetman's troops. We are unaware of his statements during the conventions, if any, due to the failure to preserve accounts or diaries. It appears that he favored resolving issues through force at the time. I have no doubt that, although it was the Zborowskis and Stanisław Górka who were Archduke Maximilian's closest political associates, his "armed hand" was Stanisław Stadnicki and his brothers. The question is still: Was it effective? Certainly, a threatening and oppressive one, if only due to the fact of constant, persistent harassment of the Swedish prince's supporters. I think that in a situation where the entire

28 Wimmer, *Odparcie najazdu arcyksięcia*, 29.

"Maximilianist" party would have been stronger, Stadnicki would have been more spectacularly successful.

By "stronger" I mean both the military and political aspects. I have tried to show that there were many reasons for the defeat of the Archduke in 1587. Among them, one can certainly point to the lack of unified cooperation within the Habsburg dynasty, their poor orientation in the internal affairs of the Commonwealth, communication and organizational problems of the pro-Habsburg party (among others, between the Crown and the Lithuanians, who under the direction of Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł and Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł "Sierotka" *de facto* constituted a separate pillar of the *faction*)[29]. The events of 1587, which had their bloody finale at Byczyna, also demonstrated the lack of military training among the Archduke's mercenaries. Although he had the support of domestic allies such as Stanisław Stadnicki, this was no substitute for the value of having a good and skilled army, mainly infantry, arquebusiers and cavalry. Maximilian also lacked siege artillery, and although he had military experience, his past campaigns against the Turks usually ended in failure. On the one hand, he too often delayed making decisions that could have changed the course of events and led to the capture of the capital, while on the other hand, when conferring with the commanders of the various formations before direct clashes, he often accepted the proposals put forward by his Polish adherents, who were pushing for combat and force solutions. I believe that the Archduke appreciated Stanisław Stadnicki's military skills, and above all his military effort. This is evidenced by the fact that he entrusted him, together with Krzysztof Zborowski and Erazm Lichtenstein, with the mission of stopping Sigismund Vasa's march on Krakow and, if possible, taking him prisoner. This plan failed, but this does not mean that none of Stadnicki's actions were successful. Leaving aside the validity of various actions (e.g. robbery and intimidation of the population) – he was successful in this. Similarly, he briefly succeeded in capturing Wieluń, so the Archduke could escape from epidemic-stricken Krzepice to safety.

Stanisław Stadnicki's role during the Third Interregnum was, against all appearances, significant. Although he was not a leading figure among the supporters of Archduke Maximilian Habsburg, his military capabilities, experience on the battlefield, ability to field sizable armed detachments and efficiency in reaching out to the assembling nobility were all reckoned with.

29 Kempa wrote about the distancing of the Radziwiłłs of Nesvizh to the Zborowskis, emphasising the conduct of contacts with the Prague court on their own or their different position regarding Maximilian's entry into the Republic. See: Tomasz Kempa, *Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł Sierotka - wojewoda wileński (1549–1616)* (Warszawa: Semper, 2000), 130, 259, 261-270.

ABBREVIATION

AGAD: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie.
PP: Archiwum Publiczne Potockich.
BCzart.: Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich w Krakowie.

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MAGNATE PROJECTS OF ELECTORAL REFORM DURING THE REIGN OF SIGISMUND III AND THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

ABSTRACT
Projects for reforming the mode of free election during the reign of the first Vasa dynasty were discussed in the literature in terms of the circumstances of their creation, but without final conclusions regarding the possibility of their implementation and effects. The author of this article dealt with the issue of the possibility of practical application of these projects, the conditions necessary for their implementation and their potential effects in terms of political changes (legalization of the transition from a republic to an oligarchy or full monarchy) and social changes (acceptance of the separation of the nobility as a separate state), considering the progressive decentralization of state management and relations between Poland and Lithuania in the period in question.

KEYWORDS: Sigismund III; Vasa Dinasty; Interregnum; Free election; Electoral reform.

It has become a cliché that free election in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the 16th and 18th centuries was idealized by the nobility as the source of their freedom. The entire political program of the nobility in this period was reduced to defending the election *viritim* and *liberum veto* against the attempts of the magnates, who wanted to exclude the masses of the nobility from influencing political decisions. This approach to the issue of elections is favored by the consolidation in Polish historiography of the simplified division into the nobility and the magnates in the classic work by Edward Opaliński, *The Political Culture of the Polish Nobility*[1], based on Crown sources, without considering the differences between the Polish and Lithuanian nobility and the changes within the nobility in the first half of the 17th century – economic stratification and degeneration of the "gołota" nobility (feeble nobility). In the light of more recent research, treating the nobility in formal and legal terms as a uniform estate throughout the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and contrasting it with the magnates as a whole[2], justified in the 1980s, is now anachronistic. Włodzimierz Kaczorowski, author of several studies on the discussion around the reform of free election in 1631–1632, rightly noted that:

1 Edward Opaliński, "Elekcje wazowskie w Polsce. Stosunek szlachty do instytucji okresu bezkrólewia", in Id., *Polska srebrnego wieku. Studia i materiały* (Piotrków Trybunalski: IHiSM, 2023), 211-26; (1° edition: "Elekcje wazowskie w Polsce. Stosunek szlachty do instytucji okresu bezkrólewia", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 92/3 (1985): 533-47).

2 Opaliński, "Elekcje wazowskie w Polsce", 211-26.

> the views of the nobility of that time on the manner of conducting a free election were not always uniform. [...] During the many years of discussion, the interests of various groups of magnates clashed, seeking for the favour of the noble masses, and despite the attempts made during the times of Sigismund Augustus, and later during the times of Stephen Batory and Sigismund III Vasa, no legal order for electing a new king was established. The nobility wanted their active participation in the election of the king, while observing the rules established during the election of Henry Valois.This kind of position held up virtually all reforms[3].

At the same time – after Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz – he pointed out that both of these institutions, considered until the end of the 17th century as a guarantee of freedom, were treated as its main threat in the "enlightened" next century[4], citing the opinion of Wincenty Skrzetuski that «free elections do not serve the freedom of the nobility, but on the contrary, they serve magnates for whom anarchy and disorder in the state were a means to achieve political goals and unlimited ambitions»[5]. The quoted statement is controversial because it is based on a generalization, without considering the circumstances of choosing the next ruler, which change over time and depend on the current political realities. Moreover, it is surprising that the statements of Jakub Sobieski, who was, in fact, a magnate, are regarded as a dependable representation of the opinions of the nobility society of the Vasa era, to which we shall return later[6]. Anna Grzekowiak-Krwawicz, who studies political

3 «nie zawsze zapatrywanie ówczesnej szlachty na sposób przeprowadzenia wolnej elekcji było jednolite. […] W czasie wieloletniej dyskusji ścierały się interesy różnych grup magnackich, zabiegających o względy mas szlacheckich, i mimo prób i usiłowań podejmowanych za czasów Zygmunta Augusta, a później za Stefana Batorego i Zygmunta III Wazy, nie ustalono prawnego porządku wyboru nowego króla. Szlachta pragnęła bowiem swojego odpowiednio aktywnego udziału w wyborze króla przy jednoczesnym najściślejszym przestrzeganiu zasad ustalonych w czasie elekcji Henryka Walezego. Tego rodzaju stanowisko wstrzymywało praktycznie wszystkie reformy». Włodzimierz Kaczorowski, *Sejmy konwokacyjny i elekcyjny w okresie bezkrólewia 1632 r.* (Opole: Instytut Śląski w Opolu, 1986), 47.

4 Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *Regina libertas. Wolność w polskiej myśli politycznej XVIII wieku* (Gdańsk: Słowo, obraz, teoria, 2006), 86.

5 «że wolne elekcje nie służą wolności szlacheckiej, ale wręcz przeciwnie, służą magnatom, dla których anarchia i nieład w państwie były środkiem do realizacji celów politycznych i niczym nieograniczonych ambicji». Wincenty Skrzetuski, *Mowy o główniejszych materiach politycznych*, vol. 1 (Warszawa: Drukarnia Pijarów, 1773); Id., *Prawo polityczne narodu polskiego*, voll. 1-2 (Warszawa: Drukarnia Pijarów, 1782/1784); Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, *Regina libertas*, 89, 98.

6 Opaliński, "Elekcje wazowskie w Polsce", 213; Kaczorowski, *Sejmy konwokacyjny*, 47. Sobieski was a court dignitary and a magnate! See: Zofia Trawicka, *Jakub Sobieski 1591–1646. Studium z dziejów warstwy magnackiej w Polsce doby Wazów*, vol. VI: *Magnat* (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2007), 235-46. «In the 1630s, when he bought Pomorzany, took over all the estate from Żółkiewski and part of the estate from the Daniłowicz family, he became an undisputed latifundist [....]», [«W latach trzydziestych XVII w., kiedy kupił Pomorzany, przejął cały

thought in the 18th century, looks at the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the early modern era through the eyes of 18th-century "reformers", most of whom didn't know or understand their political views.

The authors of numerous works devoted to the elections of Polish kings during the subsequent interregnum[7] limit themselves to presenting the events, reducing the motives of the competing factions to a fight for power and money of «various groups (or "camps") of magnates seeking the favour of the nobility masses»[8]. Even when they report on polemical texts written during the interregnum, they do not attempt to answer whether their authors intended to reform the elections or repair the Republic of Poland, posed by Władysław Konopczyński in the title of his source edition from 1949[9]. Only a few researchers noticed that these magnates, however, had some political program[10], and the senators – aspiring to transform into a separate estate – already during the first interregnum after Sigismund Augustus tried to reserve the right to choose the ruler for themselves and to limit the participation of non-senator nobility in it to a minimum.

In this article, I try to answer the question posed 75 years ago by Konopczyński, referring to the publications of Jan Seredyka[11], who supplemented Konopczyński's edition with new texts, and above all (unlike his famous predecessor, who in his edition, containing a subjectively selected set of texts, he attributed the initiative to present the outline of the electoral reform to the royal party). Seredyka attempted to present the arguments of both sides of the debate, namely the royalists (senators and some deputies) and the opposition, who were excluded from having an impact on decisions made at the Warsaw court, and the nobility, who were incorrectly deemed as their clientele.

By minimizing the account of events during the interregnum, I concentrate on the analysis of polemical works representing both sides and the reform programs discussed at the Sejms in 1631–1632. It provides a source for tracing the discussion around the concept of "free election" and its modification under the influence of changes taking place in nobility society and political thought from the end of the 16th century to the mid-17th century. I utilized texts by Stanisław Karnkowski

majątek po Żółkiewskim i część dóbr po Daniłowiczach, stał się latyfundystą niekwestionowanym [...]»), Trawicka, *Jakub Sobieski*, 235.

7 Lately: *Wolna elekcja w dawnej rzeczypospolitej. Procedura-przebieg-publicystyka*, ed. Aleksandra Ziober (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Piotr Kalinowski, 2014).

8 "różnych grup" (lub "obozów") magnackich", zabiegających o względy mas szlacheckich"; Kaczorowski, *Sejmy konwokacyjny*, 92.

9 Władysław Konopczyński, *Reforma elekcji czy naprawa Rzeczypospolitej (Wybór źródeł 1630–1)* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1949).

10 Adam Kersten, "Problem władzy w Rzeczypospolitej czasu Wazów", in *O naprawę Rzeczypospolitej w XVII–XVIII w. Prace ofiarowane Władysławowi Czaplińskiemu w 60 rocznicę urodzin,* eds. Józef Gierowski, et al. (Warszawa: PWN, 1965), 23-36.

11 Jan Seredyka, *Rzeczpospolita w ostatnich latach panowania Zygmunta III (1629–1632): zarys wewnętrznych dziejów politycznych* (Opole: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Opolu, 1978).

from 1573[12], Jan Zamoyski's election reform project from[13], and polemical texts and projects from 1630–1631, during the parliamentary struggle for the acceptance of the proposed proposal. On the eve of the imminent interregnum following the demise of the elderly and ailing Sigismund III Vasa, the "Modus interregni" reform initiative was launched, purportedly referring to the initiative undertaken by Chancellor Jan Zamoyski in 1589, with the objective of ensuring the succession of the throne by one of the king's offspring. However, the magnate projects mentioned in the title of the article are an essay by Jerzy Zbaraski written for the Sejm of 1630[14], a polemical text against the royal project impersonating Zamoyski's "Modus", written in the environment of the Lithuanian Field Hetman Krzysztof II Radziwiłł – the leader of the Protestant opposition in Lithuania after the spring Sejm of 1632 and Jakub Sobieski's speech at the local council of Wiśnia preceding the convocation Sejm in 1632[15]. Until now, these projects have received inadequate attention in the literature, lacking a comprehensive intertextual analysis that reveals the genuine, and not solely formally declared, motivations and objectives of the authors.

There is a discussion of the creation and evolution of the concept of free election from its inception in 1572 until the first ruler from the Polish Vasa dynasty took over in 1587 and a presentation of the magnates projects from 1630–1631.

PART I: PROLEGOMENA

It is worth starting by explaining the concept of a "free" election, associated – as I mentioned at the beginning – with an "arbitrary" election carried out by the masses of drunken nobility, bewildered by the magnates. The institution of viral election ("men to men") was established during the first interregnum after the death of Sigismund Augustus, ending the period of hereditary monarchy and beginning the times of the republican system of government in the Polish-Lithuanian mixed monarchy. The freedom of choice in this form of election was that it was to be made by free people – i.e. nobility with full civil rights, which in the Crown was conditioned

12 Stanisław Karnkowski, *Modus Et Ordo Electionis Novi Regis apud Warsoviam habitae* (Kraków: Mikołaj Scharffenberger, 1573).

13 Another copies: AGAD, AR, II, n. 7, "Modus Electionis Regis Poloniae. Na sejmie warszawskim od Jaśnie Wielmożnego) J.M.P. Jana Zamoyskiego Kanclerza i Hetmana W. Koronnego A. 1589 podany na Sejmie", AGAD, AR, II, n. 49, 186-203, "Modus sprawowania się in tempore interregni et electionis na sejmie warszawskim uprojektowany" (1589), 221-28. dissoluta, n. 340. This article uses the copy titled: AGAD, AR, VI, book 2, 186-203. (further: "Modus Zamoyskiego"). Włodzimierz Kaczorowski found 10 copies of this text from 17–18th centuries in: AGAD, Zakład Narodowy Ossolińskich in Wrocław, Biblioteka Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk in Cracow, and Biblioteka Kórnicka Polskiej Akademii Nauk, see Kaczorowski, *Sejmy konwokacyjny,* 81, footnote n. 133.

14 BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncept", 167-74.

15 AGAD, APP, n, 37, "Votum IMci Pana Jakuba Sobieskiego krayczego in Interregnum na sejmiku wiśnieńskim konwokacyą uprzedzającym in Junio Anno Domini 1632, kopia XVII-wieczna", 113-25. Copy from library of Stanisław Lubomirski (1789) (further: "Wotum" Sobieskiego).

by hereditary land ownership[16] and, in Lithuania, also by lease. The second criterion for assessing the election as free was the reference to the individual freedom of each nobleman, who had the right – but not the obligation – to participate in the election of the new ruler, having complete freedom to go (or not) to the election, without coercion and without anyone's impositions. Attempts to force people to go to the elections as part of a popular movement came to naught (as we will see).
At the same time, during the first interregnum, another institution was created, which was contested in later drafts of changes – convocation, i.e. a congress of senators and deputies from noble assemblies preceding the moment of election, which senators considered to be their traditional and exclusive prerogative. As Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz noted:

> Only the senatorial congress in Kaski (January 6–28, 1573), which was a forum where a compromise was reached between quarreling groups of senators, made an effective decision in this respect. Effective, that is, forcing temporary acceptance of the concept of joint discussion, but not necessarily welcomed by all meetings. Although some of them agreed to send deputies to the convocation, they did not accept this new institution, seeing it as an opportunity to strengthen the political position of senators[17].

Anti-senatorial sentiments meant that during the first convocation (January 6–28, 1573), «the agenda went far beyond the time and place of the election»[18]. According to the quoted researcher, the result of the knights' fear of the domination of the Senate – and not Jan Zamoyski's speech, contrary to another thesis thoughtlessly repeated in the literature - was the adoption of the principle of election *viritim* (men to men). This resulted from the belief that «the vote of each nobleman in the basic nobility law – election, has the same importance, regardless of his place within the estate»[19].
In practice, it turned out that the election agenda proposed as a result of the

16 Stanisław Grodziski, *Obywatelstwo w szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Kraków: UJ: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1963).

17 «Dopiero senatorski zjazd w Kaskach (6–28 stycznia 1573 r.), będący forum, na którym doszło do kompromisu między skłóconymi grupami senatorów podjął decyzję skuteczną w tej mierze. Skuteczną, to znaczy zmuszającą do tymczasowej akceptacji koncepcji wspólnej dyskusji, niekoniecznie jednak dobrze widzianą przez wszystkie zjazdy. Niektóre z nich zgadzały się wprawdzie na wysłanie posłów na konwokację, nie akceptowały jednak tej nowej instytucji, widząc w niej możliwość wzmocnienia politycznej pozycji senatorów»; Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Koronne zjazdy szlacheckie w dwu pierwszych bezkrólewiach po śmierci Zygmunta Augusta* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 1998), 225.

18 «program obrad daleko wykroczył poza ustalenia czasu i miejsca elekcji», Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Koronne zjazdy szlacheckie*, 227.

19 «głos każdego szlachcica w podstawowym prawie szlacheckim – elekcji, ma tę samą wagę, niezależnie od tego, jakie miejsce zajmuje w obrębie stanu»; Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Koronne zjazdy szlacheckie*, 230.

convocation sessions combined, on the one hand, the active participation of the entire nobility in the current election during the hearing by representatives of the nobility selected from individual voivodeships together with senators of foreign envoys proposing their candidates and then a discussion on candidacies within voivodeships, with the participation of local senators. Only at the next stage were senators and representatives of voivodeships to submit their candidacies in writing for the second session of the Senate in order to select one candidate from among several. If this did not happen, the voivodeships were to select from among themselves people who aroused general trust «[...] who would judge what is best for the Republic of Poland. These are to commit themselves with a special oath in front of everyone that they have no other special things, no need for benefits, only God's will alone, and His sincere glory to be multiplied among us [...]»[20]. If the candidacy selected by people of general trust was not accepted by the voivodeships and there were still several candidates, one of them was to be selected by voting[21]. As it follows, the first project of the so-called *viritim* election provided for a delegative (representative) mode of choosing the king, and not election by acclamation, which would give an advantage to the masses of the nobility.

This form of election was accepted by the most influential clerical senator at the time, Bishop Stanisław Karnkowski of Kujawy, who described the course and principles of the election of Henry Valois in a letter to Marcin Kromer[22]. Karnkowski recognized and praised the leading role of the primate and senators during the interregnum and election period. Among other things, he supported the initiative to hold a vote in individual voivodeships and lands on candidates previously presented by their deputies to the Senate, and then by senators and deputies in the voivodeships and lands. He accepted with approval the fact that the votes cast for individual candidates were recorded by the nobility present at the election and the submission of the prepared and sealed lists to the Senate. It is worth noting that due to the low level of literacy in that period, this solution favoured the wealthier and better educated nobility and there was no provision for verification of signatures "for compliance".

Karnkowski's description shows that Henry Valois received ¾ of the votes. However, this was not considered the final result, but following the Roman, Venetian and Greek model, three people were elected to represent the interests of each candidate, who then publicly agitated supporters for their protectors. In this way, the votes were transferred to Valois and finally, unanimity in the election was achieved. Karnowski therefore advocated general election *viritim*, voting within individual voivodeships

20 «[...] którzy mieliby dobrze rozsadzić, co jest najlepszego Rzeczypospolitej. Ci mają się osobliwą przysięgą zobowiązać przy wszystkich, iż nie mają żadnych innych osobliwych rzeczy, potrzeby pożytków, tylko samego Boga woli, a szczerej jego chwały między nami pomnożenia [...]». Biblioteka Czartoryskich, n. 81, "Artykuły Rzeczpospolitą dobrze opatrujące […]", 123-35, citation for: Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Koronne zjazdy szlacheckie*, 231.

21 Biblioteka Czartoryskich, n. 81, "Artykuły Rzeczpospolitą dobrze opatrujące […]", 123-35, citation for: Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Koronne zjazdy szlacheckie*, 231.

22 Karnkowski, *Modus et ordo,* 245-46.

and then agitation aimed at achieving universal consent[23].
Negative experiences with the election of rulers during the first two turbulent interregnums meant that already in the times of Stephen Báthory, the issue of improving the election appeared in the royal legation before the Sejm of 1582 in Grodno. At that time, it was the result of a request from the deputies themselves, presented to the king at the conclusion of the Sejm of 1581[24]. During the third interregnum, a split election resulted in the simultaneous election of two candidates – Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg and the Swedish prince Sigismund Vasa. The conflict was ultimately decided in favor of the Swede through armed combat, leading to the imprisonment of his unfortunate rival. This event made it clear that the existing method of electing Polish rulers needed to be modified and improved.
A new model of the election process was presented at the Sejm of 1589 by the Grand Chancellor and Grand Hetman of the Crown, Jan Zamoyski. Seemingly fully accepting the principle of free election, he linked the *viritim* election with the representative system, proposing a two-stage election. This two-stage system combined the concept of representative election of the king, which he supported already in 1572[25]. The project provided that after the list of candidates was established, senators in the presence of the nobility had priority, and then the nobles in individual voivodeships were to vote. The voting results should be announced in a joint circle of both estates. According to Zamoyski's project, 2/3 of the votes would determine the result of the vote. If the desired number of votes was not obtained, a second vote would be necessary, the result of which would depend on the majority. At a later stage, voivodeship deputies should vote for their candidates. The final result would be decided by a ¾ majority of votes, and if this was not achieved, by most votes of the representatives of both nations[26]. An important element of the project was the departure from the principle of unanimity and the election of the king by 2/3 of votes or a simple majority. The principle of *viritim* was theoretically maintained – but the growing advantage of the senate over the chamber of deputies and the magnates (both regalists and oppositionists) over the "ordinary", "landed" nobility, was clearly felt. Moreover, Zamoyski's project did not provide for convocation, which meant that the nobility lost the opportunity to submit complaints from noble electors about legal offenses during the reign of the deceased king and have them positively resolved before the election of the new one. This indicates the transformation of its author – a former "tribune of the noble people" – into a magnate, resulting, of course, not only from character changes, but from a real change in the balance of political and social forces, a definitive departure from the (officially proclaimed) equality of the nobility and intra-estate solidarity.

23 Karnkowski, *Modus et ordo,* 251-56. Halina Kowalska, "Karnkowski Stanisław", in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 12 (1966/67), 77-9.

24 *Źródła dziejowe*, vol. XI, ed. Adolf Pawiński (Warszawa: Księgarnia Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1882), 226.

25 Artur Śliwiński, *Jan Zamoyski, kanclerz i hetman wielki koronny* (Warszawa: Trzaska, Evert i Michalski, 1947), 262.

26 BK PAN, n. 340, 105-07.

PART II: THE REIGN OF SIGISMUND III VASA

All attempts to solve this issue during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa, who were formally obliged to solve the problems arising from the principle of *viritim* election in the recession of the coronation Sejm, referred directly or indirectly to the projects of changing the election mode discussed above. This issue, apart from the coronation Sejm, was raised several times at the Sejms and in the discussion before the parliament of 1605, and in Toruń in 1626, when the election *vivente rege* of one of the king's sons, Ladislaus or John Casimir, was discussed[27]. The nobility's reaction to this idea was clearly negative, as they sought to use the future interregnum to further limit royal power.

The final battle took place at the last Sejms during the reign of Sigismund III: the ordinary Sejm in August 1630, the extraordinary Sejm in March 1630, and then after the death of the king on January 30, 1632. Resumption of discussions on the reform of the modes of election of Sigismund III's successor under the guise of referring to Zamoyski's project and the need to ensure peace during the expected interregnum – while the idea was to eliminate the *viritim* election in its traditional form together with the institution of convocation – was risky in a situation when, after the failed experiment of forcing through the election of a successor during the king's lifetime, the government was against any changes not only the nobility, but even some senators – regalists. Among the strong opponents of the *vivente rege* election was Hetman Żółkiewski[28]. By making another attempt to discuss the problem of free election at the Sejm, they tried to protect themselves against expected protests by making the decision to raise this topic widely known with a significant delay. The first official message was sent to senators in a cedula for deliberation, sent on July 10 (a week after sending the universals on July 4 convening the local councils for September 4 and the Sejm for October 16). Sigismund III also forbade all addressees of the deliberatories from informing anyone about the issue of the free election before the universals were sent to the regional assemblies.

In creating maximum difficulties against the expected counteraction of opponents of the royal initiative[29], the royalist faction had a significant advantage over the nobility because it had control over the distribution of official pre-sejm communications, in the form of legations and senatorial letters, not to mention correspondence sent from the royal chancellery in the period preceding the Sejm sessions. Seredyka's opinion that Sigismund III acted decisively on his own initiative is doubtful because he was too old and sick to take his own action[30]. Nevertheless, in the legation to the

27 Konopczyński's information is false that this issue was also brought up again at the 1627 and 1628 *Sejm*s, Konopczyński, *Reforma elekcji,* 243.

28 "Introduction" to Stanisław Żółkiewski, *Początek i progres wojny moskiewskiej* (Warszawa: Państ. Instytut Wydawniczy, 1966), 55-88, reference to: 51-2.

29 Henryk Wisner, "Litwa i projekt reformy elekcji 1629–1631", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 64/2 (1973): 261.

30 Walter Leitsch, *Das Leben am Hof König Sigismunds III, von Polen*, vol. I: "Die Krankheiten der letzten Jahre" (Wien: Polnische Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste-Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-Historische Klass, 2009), 1030-36.

assemblies, a sharp criticism was formulated of the Sejm, «which is responsible for the losses and costs of the Crown citizens as the fourth plague»[31]. Such a ruthless attack on the Sejm, or more precisely on the Chamber of Deputies, announced the direction in which the royalist faction was heading, more precisely: a group of senators exercising real power and royal favourites (especially clergy) who felt threatened by the takeover of power by the most likely candidate for the throne – Prince Ladislaus Sigismund, considered in this environment to be a "false Catholic" who favours Protestants and Orthodox Christians. At that moment, Jerzy Zbaraski unexpectedly came to the king's aid, preparing the above-mentioned memorial[32] entitled *The Concept of His Majesty Jerzy Zbaraski, Castellan of Krakow, on the methods of electing Polish kings, in which foreign methods are appointed by force*.
As Anna Filipczak-Kocur rightly noted, «Reading this essay astonishes the reader who knows Jerzy's previous views»[33] – not only because of this powerful magnate, who, due to his birth, social position, wealth and education, felt predestined to play a leading political role in the country. «By criticizing and questioning the legitimacy of most royal decisions, he systematically rejected the monarch's requests for support. In short, he fought the royal policy, which he considered to be contrary to his own interest, but also to the interest of the Republic of Poland, with which he identified himself»[34] – and at the same time, he skillfully built his popularity among the nobility. However, the paths of the Krakow castellan and the "noble people", for whom supposedly was an "ideal senator"[35], diverged already in 1629, when the project of charging fees for goods sold and purchased, submitted by him at the Sejm, "did not protect the nobility"[36]. This does not mean that the Cracow castelan gave up the principle of his political program, which was the defence of the principles of the republican system, understood as government in accordance with the law established at the Sejm. Zbaraski's republicanism, however, did not mean acceptance of democracy (or more precisely: ochlocracy) of the nobility – as evidenced by his "Concept".

31 «który dla strat i kosztów obywatelów koronnych za czwartą plagę stoi»; *Instrukcja na sejmiki in anno 1630*, in Konopczyński, *Reforma elekcji*, 345.

32 Look at footnote n. 14.

33 «Lektura tej rozprawki wprawia czytelnika znającego dotychczasowe poglądy Jerzego w zdumienie»; Anna Filipczak-Kocur, *Jerzy Zbaraski 1579–1631. Szkic biograficzny. Korespondencja* (Warszawa: DiG, 2020), 60-1.

34 «Krytykując i podważając zasadność większości decyzji królewskich systematycznie odrzucał prośby monarchy o udzielenie mu wsparcia Jednym słowem, zwalczał politykę królewską, którą uważał za sprzeczną z interesem własnym, ale i Rzeczypospolitej, z którą się utożsamiał». Zbigniew Anusik, "Kasztelan krakowski Jerzy ks. Zbaraski (1574–1631). Szkic do portretu antyregalisty", *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych*, 9/1 (2010): 55-145.

35 Anusik, "Kasztelan krakowski", 134.

36 Anna Filipczak–Kocur, "Informacje o sejmach i sejmikach w korespondencji Sapiehów w centralnym państwowym historycznym archiwum w Kijowie", *Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego*, 9, 1 (2006): 245-46.

What is astonishing is the awkward form of this essay, which is far from the high standard of his other texts[37]. Of the fourteen pages of the text, half is devoted to a devastating criticism of the traditional form of *viritim* election. Already at the beginning, Zbaraski expresses the belief that the form of election, established when society was unanimous, is now insufficient due to the huge number of electors and the corruption of customs. Maintaining it would be contrary to reason, according to politicians, and to human nature, making it easier for foreign rulers to use corruption and intrigue[38]. The proof is the negative experiences from the times of the third interregnum, when the election turned into a fight between the leaders of magnate factions who «after 100, after 200 people of the nobility have contracted *eo praetextu* that they are not their servants, they are not their *beneficiarii*, they are not their *stipendiarii*, only the free nobility who are elected»[39].

It is not difficult to guess that this is the scenario the author envisages during the election after the death of Sigismund III, during which the number of participants may increase to 4 or 8 thousand people armed with guns and helmets, «and although it is difficult to maintain so many people for 6 weeks, they will find a sponsor (even the king's son), as was the case during the previous elections, in the hope of a future reward»[40]. Moreover, during the *viritim* election, it cannot be forbidden for everyone to come with an entourage of 20 people, noble or non-noble. And in the field, it cannot be ruled out that the participants will be persuaded and bribed (*corrupti*) by various foreign masters. The author of the "Concept" wants to prevent this – but this does not mean that «he was keen on the idea of reforming the elections in line with the intention of the royal project»[41]. The nature of his argument is completely unemotional, rational and secular. The Cracow castelan was aware of the need to adapt procedures to the changes in social and political realities that occurred over time, completely contrary to the alleged traditionalism of Old Polish politicians. He submitted an original, authorial project to reform the election mode, containing two ways of voting, the first one was extremely complicated and multi-stage, the second one was simplified.

The first project takes 4 pages of text[42]. At the beginning, the author explains that although the "Modus interregni" is described and was effective when everyone unanimously elected the king, now it needs to be changed to assume that all

37 Urszula Augustyniak, "'Wolę mieć religionem frigidam niźli nullam'. Jerzy i Krzysztof Zbarascy wobec rekatolicyzacji i zmiany systemu rządów w Rzeczypospolitej za Zygmunta III Wazy", *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, 58 (2014): 73-104.

38 BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncept", 167r-v.

39 «po 100, po 200 osób szlachciców zaciągnęli *eo praetextu*, że nie są ich słudzy, nie są ich *beneficiarii*, nie są ichm *stipendiarii*, tylko szlachta sobie wolna, która do elekcji należy». BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncpet", 169.

40 «i choć ciężka to rzecz utrzymać tylu ludzi przez 6 tygodni, znajdą sponsora (choćby syna królewskiego), jak było na poprzednich elekcjach w nadziei przyszłej nagrody». BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncept", 169v.

41 Anusik, "Kasztelan krakowski", 140.

42 BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncept", 171v-73.

senators and noble deputies from all voivodeships and lands of the Crown and Lithuania will be eligible for election in the usual manner of local councils votes, but in double or even triple numbers. Such representation would be consistent with the political principles of the Republic of Poland, in which two estates: senatorial and knightly have full power and law-making in the time of interregnum, assuming a third estate – royal (in subtext: subordinate to the first two). It is proposed to shorten the election period to five weeks, the first two of which are to be devoted to improving the laws, i.e. settling the exorbitance of outstanding debts from the previous Sejm and establishing the conditions that the new king should swear in. The rest of the election time will be taken up by the voting procedure, carried out in the form of a ballot, by drawing lots with gold and silver-plated knobs (balls), distributed from the "bania" standing in the middle of the large room where the king and senators deliberate. These balls are to be distributed to the voters by a boy «any of those standing in front of the room»[43], i.e. randomly and not selected, under the supervision of six secretaries (three clergy, three laymen) sworn to maintain impartiality.

The author himself considered the proposed voting procedure «a bit difficult and complicated»[44]. It is therefore not surprising that the authors of studies on the 1630 Sejm commented on it in one sentence. When deciding on a more detailed, although still as short as possible, discussion was guided by the desire to hypothetically explain, at least, what the purpose of the election mode was to include as many as 7 stages of voting, during which the number of participants in the election and then electors of the new king is reduced from 41 to 3 (!).

Moreover, and at each stage, it is proposed to separate the voters drawing the knobs in a separate room, excluding their contacts with other election participants sent to inns, as well as relatives and ancestors – which brings to mind a modern jury trial. However, full freedom of information was maintained for those excluded from active participation in voting as a result of the silver-plated knob being pulled out of the jar. They are informed by the grand secretary, i.e. an official of the crown chancellery, and then by an official (elected) called the director, about the current voting results. At the penultimate stage, it was also stipulated that there would be no "two from one family" among the electors. All this to exclude the possibility of falsification of the election results, which Zbaraski was apparently obsessively afraid of. As for the election, he proposed to resign from the election *viritim*. The king would be elected by senators and deputies by a majority of votes[45]. It excluded foreign candidates, but did not rule out royal children seeking the throne. The procedure for starting the electoral process would be as follows: first, a deputation from the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate is appointed to work out the details – and only then the discussion is transferred to the Sejm. In the entire project of the Cracow castelan, senators would play a key role as initiators and supervisors of the correctness of the ruler's election procedure. Zbaraski did not want to wait for the local councils for fear of the reaction of the nobility, whose responsibility included

43 «którykolwiek ze stojących przed pokojem». BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncept", 170.

44 «nieco trudny i zawikłany». BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncept", 171v.

45 BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncept", 60-1.

not only the assessment of his project but also the decision on the scope of the senators' powers, an attitude towards which he was a priori reluctant.
Answering the question of why such an experienced political writer and senator as Jerzy Zbaraski proposed such a complicated and tedious project – probably taken from an impossible-to-identify foreign papers, touching on the issues of elections that were fashionable at that time – it can be assumed that he wanted to show off his erudition and knowledge of "foreign customs" (or more precisely, the number of electors in the elections of European rulers: the election of the Christian emperor by seven electors, the pope by the college of cardinals, the Doge of Venice by the entire nobility (three thousand), or the master of the Order of Malta by a small number of nobility. However, a simpler explanation can be found. Perhaps the castelan of Cracow consciously he wanted to tire the readers and discourage them from more ambitious programs for the reform of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in order to finally return to the trivial and already known from Zamoyski's "Modus" project of elections by a 2/3 majority of senators and parliamentary deputies[46]. According to Jan Seredyka, Zbaraski represented a somewhat dualistic attitude and was a supporter of the election reform, but at the same time he could not imagine its adoption without the consent of the entire nobility[47]. I allow myself to be of a different opinion and consider the "Concept" to be anti-noble and anti-democratic, and the republicanism of the "Primate" of the secular part of the first Senate of the Republic of Poland to be apparent. The proof is that at all stages of the first draft, the representatives of the Senate have a decisive advantage, primarily the Grand Secretary, who announces the current voting results, without the possibility of checking whether his message corresponds to reality. Doubts are also raised about the criteria for selecting the secretaries guarding the "bania", from which potential electors drew knobs, and then the selected group of them drew pieces of paper with the names of the candidates for the king, or the "director" in charge of the voting, whose appearance was not explained by the author of the text. We have the same right as the author of the text to see the possibility of practices and intrigues even in such a carefully selected group.
The prosenatorial nature of the "Concept" is also indicated by the fact that its author did not mention a word about convocation and wanted to avoid shifting the assessment of the change in elections to the local councils because he was (rightly) afraid of the reaction of the nobility. Instead of *viritim* elections, he finally proposed an elective Sejm, which would be attended not by everyone, but only by those selected at the local councils. All in all, the explanation of the system of the Republic of Poland presented in his "Concept" is republican in spirit, but not democratic.
However, Seredyka's observation is correct that given such a serious evolution of Zbaraski's views, what is less surprising is the minimal number of opposition writings. One of them, unknown to Konopczyński, is «A script, titled Modus interregnum, was presented at the last Sejm in Warsaw: and this script in the form of the constitution, which has twenty and two leges[48] in itself, is being conceived,

46 BK PAN, n. 483, "Koncept", 170.

47 Seredyka, *Rzeczpospolita w ostatnich latach*, 111.

48 AGAD, Archiwum Branickich z Suchej, reference number in J. Czubek's

but there appears to be much opposed to the law and freedom of elections»[49], were created in the office of Krzysztof II Radziwiłł, the leader of the Protestant opposition in Lithuania, after the Sejm of 1630 in Warsaw on March 11–April 13, 1630, at which Zamoyski's old project was presented, and then the Senate (under pressure from the opposition) decided to send it back for discussion in the committee and then to the conclusions at the next Sejm. It was impossible to predict that the next parliament sessions would be held in a changed political situation, after the death of Sigismund III on April 30, 1632.

Seemingly, the "Script" is only an analysis of subsequent points (leges) of Zamoyski's project. However, some leges was treated only as a pretext for considerations about the system and the role of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in early modern Europe, going far beyond the concisely formulated points of the "Modus interregnum", which reduced the issue of electoral reform to organizational improvements. Despite the ostentatiously emphasized respect for Zamoyski, he questions the sense of the king's proposal to discuss his project, which he considers anachronistic – since "for more than forty years, as a bill presented at the Polish Parliament [...] until then, [...] has been lying [...] now a *post tantu(m) intervallu(m) temporis* is difficult to like"[50]. The value of antiquity, typical of the arguments of Old Polish political texts, was rejected here, and the adaptation of state institutions to current political realities was considered obvious. This is a unique attitude in the context of Old Polish journalism.

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catalog: S-38-M. Detailed overview in: Urszula Augustyniak, "Polemika z Jana Zamoyskiego projektem reformy elekcji. Przyczynek do poglądów politycznych opozycji za panowania Zygmunta III Wazy", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 104/3 (1997): 3-25.

49 «Skrypt jakiś, pod tytułem Modus interregnum, pokazał się beł na przeszłem sejmie w Warszawie: a ten in forma konstytucyjej, która w sobie ma dwadzieścia i dwie leges, koncypowany jest, ale między niemi zda się wiele być prawu i wolności elekcyjej przeciwnych». Zamoyski's "Modus" contained the following points (*leges*): introduction: "De modo interregni"; 1. "Announcement of the King's Death"; 2. "About the King's Equipment"; 3. "Securing the borders"; 4. "Action against transgressors in crossing the borders"; 5. "About foreign envoys"; 6. "Time and place of the election"; 7. "Courts and their execution"; 8. "Acceptance of subscriptions and proscription sub interregnum"; 9. "Abrogate Convocation"; 10. "Custom of Defense"; 11. "Hetman's duty"; 12. "Providing certain munitions"; 13. "Punishment of the wicked"; 14. "De calumniatoribus"; 15. "Court deputies"; 16. "Riding to the election"; 17. "Security of elections"; 18. "Order of elections"; 19. "Oaths at the election"; 20. "Order of voting and candidates"; 21. "On the neutralists". The order of *leges* given here corresponds to the numbering used by the author of the "Script", who omitted "De modo electionis" and therefore we will refer to it in the text; however, it differs from the full version of "Modus" used and discussed by Kaczorowski, *Sejmy konwokacyjny*, 81, annotation n. 33, 49 – where additional points were noted: "Who do not belong to the elective body", "Royal coronation", "Improvement of this order".

50 «więcej niż czterdzieści lat, jako beł na sejmie RP podany [...] do tego czasu leżał [...] teraz *post tantu(m) intervallu(m) temporis* trudno się ma podobać». "Skrypt", lex 21, 100.

The basic goal of the opposition – to undermine the value of the election reform project presented by the court party "under the name" of Jan Zamoyski – was attempted to be achieved by using various arguments. In combating the projects of opponents who actually wanted to change the election into a succession, it was an "imagination of an election, an initiation of some kind or coronation rather than election"[51] – attempts were made to demonstrate the hypocrisy and inconsistency of official slogans with actual intentions. The most serious accusation of "Skrypt" against the "false regalists" is the accusation of intentional distortion of Zamoyski's project and impersonation of his authority – justified, for example, by demonstrating the illogicality of individual fragments of "Modus", e.g. about double punishment (including the death penalty) for violators of universal peace during the interregnum. Moreover, the author of "The Script" tried to demonstrate that the version of Zamoyski's project presented by the regalists in 1630 was contrary to the essence of the chancellor's political concept of ensuring harmony and peace in the Republic of Poland – including religious peace. Moreover, it is indeed puzzling that the copies of "Modus" available to us contain in the formula of the royal oath a declaration of Roman Catholic faith, and therefore exclude a non-Catholic candidate. They are therefore pushing a principle that Jan Zamoyski strongly denied, which led to a conflict with Primate Stanisław Karnkowski in 1589 and rejection of the electoral reform project by the estates of the Sejm.

In general, the most characteristic features of the text in question are pragmatism, rationalism and knowledge of the international situation at that time. Its author apparently did not recognize Zamoyski's authority as indisputable, much less the regalists from Sigismund III's entourage impersonating him in the 1630s, striving to maintain their position after his death and eliminate competitors from politics at the central level – the "non-senatorial" magnates, the dominant in the provinces. He points out that during the almost half-century reign of Sigismund III, the principles of international policy changed. While the project of the electoral reform of 1589 provided for strict separation of the Republic of Poland from other states during the interregnum period, "Skrypt" considers this postulate absurd and contrary to the law of nations: «which considers all deputies, *etiam hostium*, as *sacrosanctos* [...]. Why do they not need Christian neighbours in Poland, nor Poles to guide them, both to their envoys and to private persons, they are free to trade among themselves, as well as to have access to each other's country»[52]. The Republic of Poland would result in retaliation from its neighbours. In modern Christian Europe, treated as a whole, the separation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: «is opposed to a free election,

51 «imaginacyja elekcyji, inicjacyja raczej jakaś albo koronacyja, niż elekcyja». "Skrypt", lex 21, 100-01.

52 «które posłów wszystkich, etiam hostium ma za sacrosanctos [...]. Dla czego nie potrzebują oni chrześcijańscy sąsiedzi w Polszcze, ani Polacy u nich glejtu tak posłom swym, jako i prywatnym osobom brać i dawać. Wolne mają między sobą jako insze komercyja, tak i przystęp jeden do drugiego państwa»; "Skrypt", lex 5: "Zatrzymanie posłów cudzoziemskich", 89-90; Hugo Grotius, *O prawie wojny i pokoju*., vol. 2, trans. Remigiusz Bierzanek (Warszawa: PWN, 1957), chapter XVIII: *O prawie poselstw,* points IV-IX: *O zasadzie nietykalności posłów i jej interpretacji*, 23-33.

the nature of which is such that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is permitted not only to choose its lord from all Christians, but also to choose Christian lords, apart from those who *legibus nostras exclusi* [i.e. Habsburgs – AU] [...] to strive for it *legitimis modis*, and thus to become related to the Polish Republic»[53].

The powers (majesty) of the Republic of Poland during the interregnum were placed in the discussed text much higher than regalia in the basic areas of operation of the royal office: law-making, judiciary (*ius capitale*), declaring wars and concluding covenants, even the right of pardon: «For whatever kings have, they do, and they can do, all this the interregnum has, does and can do it will cost him almost more than the kings: because without the Republic of Poland our kings cannot *leges ferre*, raise war, judge *capitalia iudicia* themselves, make covenants, and many other things: and the interregnum that is, the Republic of Poland *tempore interregni* has all this in its power without the king»[54]. The arguments used here were intended to justify the opposition's demand in 1631 – to extend the interregnum to a minimum of six weeks, as opposed to the permanent demand of the regalists – to shorten it to a maximum of two weeks. For the same reasons, the author of "Skrypt" protested against the proposals to eliminate (or at least shorten) convocation, as a period particularly favourable to unrest in the country. "Skrypt" presents the view that convocation is an integral part of the election procedure, necessary for the preparation of a peaceful election of a new ruler – therefore, if "Modus" wants to liquidate it, «it does so with the intention that the Polish Republic will never be able to repair itself»[55].

At the spring Sejm of 1632, the last one during the life of Sigismund III, the majority of senators supported the establishment of a senatorial and parliamentary deputation that would prepare a "*modus eligendi regis*", but only in the form of a draft to be considered at the local councils and the future parliament. Zbaraski was the first to come up with such a proposal as being consistent with the position of the two "upper" assemblies; he was supported by influential senators and dignitaries[56]. The

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53 «Przeciwna jest wolnej elekcyjej, której taka jest natura, że RPtej wolno nie tylko ze wszystkiego chrześcijaństwa pana sobie obierać, ale też panom chrześcijańskim, oprócz tych, którzy *legibus nostras exclusi* [tj. Habsburgów – UA] [...] o nie się *legitimis modis* starać, a tem się sposobem z RPtą spowinowacić»; "Skrypt", lex 4: "Postempek przeciwko wystempnym", 89. 69. "Skrypt", lex 5: "Zatrzymanie posłów cudzoziemskich", 89-90; compare: Grotius, *O prawie wojny i pokoju*, XVIII, points IV-IX: *zasadzie nietykalności posłów i jej interpretacji*, 23-33. "Skrypt", lex 3: "Opatrzenie granic", 87-8.

54 «Bo cokolwiek królowie mają, czynią i czynić mogą, to wszystko interregnum ma, czyni i czynić może (i niemal więcej się mu zejdzie niżli królom: bo królowie nasi bez RP nie mogą *leges ferre*, wojny podnosić, *capitalia iudicia* sami sądzić, przymierza zawierać, i innych wiele rzeczy: a interregnum, to jest RP *tempore interregni* to wszystko bez króla w swojej mocy ma»; "Skrypt", lex 21, 102.

55 «to tą intencyją czyni, aby się RPta nigdy naprawić nie mogła»; "Skrypt", lex 11, 92.

56 Chancellor and Grand Hetman of Lithuania Lew Sapieha, Grand Hetman of the Crown Stanisław Koniecpolski, voivode of Smolensk Aleksander Gosiewski, voivode of Bełsk Rafał Leszczyński, the voivode of Novgorod Michał Kazimierz Sapieha, Lithuanian vice-chancellors Hieronim Wołłowicz, Castellan of Ledzki Jan Łowicki– even though he was the brother-in-law of Chancellor of the Crown

position of the Chamber of Deputies was different[57]. On March 20, Marshal of the Sejm Marcin Żegocki and several deputies presented an extremely detailed project to secure a free election – "Modus electionis regis" dated 1632. It provided for the following dates for the activities of the interregnum: announcing it as a universal to the residents on the day of the king's death and conveying this information to the primate and the assemblies of all voivodeships and lands within four weeks of the king's death. The election is to take place 8 weeks later, its maximum duration is 8 weeks. The total duration of the interregnum was planned to be at most 14 weeks.
In accordance with the demands of Zamoyski's "Modus", the number of retinues was limited: the primate to a maximum of sixty people, the archbishop of Lviv, all bishops and voivodes to forty hetmans to thirty, castelans to 20, envoys and noblemen arriving individually to ten, envoys from cities participating in the election to six, foreign envoys to one hundred. Attempts were also made to separate foreign envoys from the nobility, assigning them a place to stay 16 miles from the electoral field, in a location near Wola, towards Błonie.

The most important points of this project are: abolition of convocation, deputies and nobility vote *viritim*, but with their own signatures on individual electoral lists, separate for each candidate; for the illiterate, a commission composed of a scribe and two deputies signs. Senators vote in their provinces; members of their retinues have one collective vote for each "court". In practice, servants of deputies and nobility do not have a vote because even though they vote, it is counted as one and in accordance with the lord's vote. Soldiers in the quartz army, two votes by deputies. No other military branches were mentioned at all. The king is to be elected by many precisely counted votes from all voivodeships, with a possible repetition of voting for those candidates who receive an equal number of votes. For most of the election participants, only voting was planned. The development of a constitution amending existing laws was entrusted to a commission composed of four senators and one deputy from each voivodeship and land, called the Deputation Court because it was also to function as an electoral tribunal. It was to be entitled to present draft constitutions to the future elect, including lists of exorbitants brought by the deputies.
The "marshal's" project was not original. It contained many ideas taken from Jan Zamoyski's proposal submitted (as already mentioned) to the Sejm in 1589. For supporters of, even only formal, democracy (republicans), it was unacceptable to abolish convocations, provincial confederations and hood courts, as well as the apparent desire to far-reaching limitation of powers of legislative acts of the elective Sejm. Some detailed regulations were considered impossible to implement, e.g. limiting the number of processions[58]. As Seredyka rightly noted, «In sum, it

Tomasz Zamoyski, Grand Secretary of the Crown Jakub Zadzik, who wanted to bring the matter to the attention of the Sejm of 1630 – and (probably) the voivode of Łęczyca, Stanisław Radziejowski, Brest-Kujawy Jakub Szczawiński, castellan Wojnicki Mikołaj Firlej and Crown Marshal Łukasz Opaliński (based on votive offerings).

57 Overview a: Seredyka, *Rzeczpospolita w ostatnich latach*, 180-84.

58 AGAD, APP, n. 37, "Votum JMci Pana Jakuba Sobieskiego krayczego koronnego na sejmiku przedkonwokacyjnym wiszeńskim 3 czerwca 1632", 117.

was supposed to be an election with the participation of estate owners, with the maximum elimination of all nobility, especially those in private service and in the state army. The provision that a nobleman attending an election individually must participate in it from the beginning to the end is highly encouraged, and it is known what expenses a multi-week stay in the capital entails and who can afford it»[59]. As it follows, the politically active, wealthy and independent nobility itself tried to cleanse the ranks of electors of the "gołota" nobility, dependent on the nobility, and was perfectly aware that maintaining the *viritim* mode worked not on behalf of, but against, the civic state.

The debate around the electoral reform projects at the last Sejm during the lifetime of Sigismund III, and de facto around changing the political form of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, turned out to be fruitless. The differences between senatorial, parliamentary and opposition projects proved impossible to overcome. Ultimately, the system was adopted. A compromise project appointed by a 20-person commission was presented on March 31. It abandoned all the proposals presented in the "Marshal's" project, retaining only the obligation for the nobility to gather in a popular movement in the voivodeships. The constitution was adopted unanimously after overcoming the resistance of the Lithuanians because it did not introduce anything new. An overview of all previous hoods and confederations established after the deaths of Sigismund Augustus and Báthory was presented, concluding with the statement that the constitution was of a temporary nature, valid until the new Sejm, and could not serve as the basis for establishing any novel method of election. The attempt to establish the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was unsuccessful on the eve of the crisis in the mid-17th century, during the period of interregnum.

THE TIME OF INTERREGNUM

In the universal for the local councils opening the interregnum after the death of Sigismund III, Primate Jan Wężyk postulated the need (sic!) to discuss the method of electing the king at the convocation Sejm, but he did not refer in detail to any of the known projects. Only in a vote addressed to the Środa local council[60] (a vote to the universal) he supports Chancellor Jan Zamoyski's project – "Modus electionis regis Poloniae", presented by him in 1589 for the estates' acceptance. At the same time, the Primate mentioned that already in 1630, he had spoken about the chancellor's project as the best solution to the sensitive issue of how to choose the king[61]. Wężyk was in favour of shortening the election Sejm and, in the future,

59 «W sumie więc miała to być elekcja z udziałem posesjonatów, przy maksymalnej eliminacji całej szlachty, zwłaszcza pozostającej w służbie prywatnej i w armii państwowej. Tendencji tej miał dodatkowo sprzyjać przepis, że szlachcic wybierający się indywidualnie na elekcję musi w niej uczestniczyć od początku do końca, a wiadomo, jakie koszty pociągał za sobą taki wielotygodniowy po byt w stolicy i kto mógł sobie na niego pozwolić»; Jan Długosz, Władysław Czapliński, *Życie codzienne magnaterii polskiej w XVII wieku* (Warszawa: Państ. Instytut Wydawniczy, 1966), 55-88, reference to: 51-2.

60 BK PAN, n. 345, "List arcybiskupa gnieźnieńskiego na sejmik średzki 28 V 1632 w Łowiczu", 29-32v – 6 days before the beginning of the local councils.

61 BK PAN, n. 345, "List arcybiskupa gnieźnieńskiego na sejmik średzki 28 V 1632 w Łowiczu", 32.

abolishing the convocation. Jakub Sobieski, crown carver, spoke against such a solution in a speech delivered at the Wisznia local council on June 28, 1632[62]. This speech is considered pro-noble and republican in spirit, and its author is treated in literature as a reliable exponent of the nobility's views. Below, we will try to prove that this is not necessarily true.

Sobieski's "vote" provides for shortening the convocation time to two weeks and election six weeks after the end of the convocation. Regarding the issue of free election, he sharply criticizes the principle of electing the ruler only after obtaining unanimity, as impossible to implement in practice – stating that «we only have this law on paper, and it has never happened in *usu*, we read in our history [...]»[63]. In the matter of elections, *viritim* proposes: «let anyone who wants to go to the election, but whoever wants to, and not under the threat of punishment – «because this is Libera Electio, that anyone can give a suffragium to the Kingdom of Poland for anyone they want, and they are allowed to go there and go home stay»[64].

He proposes that all the voters who turn up for the election be counted in voivodeships and poviats. Each of them would submit his name to the voivode, and the one who has assets in several voivodeships would choose the one from which he votes. Only then will the voivodeships and poviats "hatch" *ad regem eligendum*, and the election will be made by most three parts of these lines against the fourth. The question arises, who will check the voivodes to see if they have falsified the number of lines? Moving the election from the Sejm (Senate and Deputies) to the provinces, i.e. one floor below, increases the chance of the local magnates to decide on the king – against the centre and the Senate and the central dignitaries.

Sobieski's appeal to the equality of the nobility against projects favouring estate owners is clearly demagogic in nature: «It is *cardo libertatis nostrae* that both the poor and the rich should have a liberum for the king of *suffragium*, a gray dress as well as velvet, so that no one's *vox* would be oppressed»[65]. Rejecting the proposal to limit the number of post offices to twenty-thirty people because he opposes prohibiting members of magnates' retinues, "servants and friends" from participating – «it is difficult to prohibit people and our brother nobility from going to the elections because it is *aeliquate iures* all of them»[66].

As this discussion shows, in his vote Sobieski rejected all constructive changes proposed at the previous Sejm by Marshal Żegocki, representing the views of the wealthy crown nobility – i.e. full citizens of the Republic of Poland. Seemingly defending the equality of the nobility, he entrusts the registration of nobility

62 AGAD, APP, n. 37, 113-125, compare with footnote n. 15.

63 «u nas na papierze tylko to prawo, a *in usu* nigdy niebywało, w historyji naszey czytamy […]»; AGAD, APP, n. 37, 116.

64 «bo to jest *Libera Electio*, że każdy może *suffragium* dać na Królestwo Polskie na kogo chce, a wolno mu tam iechać y wolno doma zostać»; AGAD, APP, n. 37, 117.

65 «To jest *cardo libertatis nostrae*, żeby tak ubogi iako y bogaty miał *liberum* na króla *suffragium*, tak szara suknia iako y aksamit, żeby niczyja *vox* opprimowana nie była»; AGAD, APP, n. 37, 117.

66 «osobom samym i szlachcie braciej naszym jechać na elekcję trudno zabronić, bo *aeliquate iures* wszystkich»; AGAD, APP, n. 37, 118.

wishing to voluntarily participate in the election to voivodes without any indication of the possibility of checking the credibility of the lists they prepare. Although in the final part of his speech, entitled "Points needed for improvement", he demonstrates knowledge of the nobility's expectations regarding the modernization of internal policy[67] and emphasizes the importance of the interregnum for repairing the exorbitances accumulated during the reign of the deceased monarch, he cannot be considered a reliable representative of the nobility – citizens. His program, apart from the point about counting the nobility going to the elections, which is impossible to implement in practice, is anachronistic and repeats platitudes replicated in popular journalism, bringing nothing new.

The exception is the tenth point of the vote, omitted in earlier studies. It was proposed for the consideration of the participants of the Wisznia local council that Polish kings should not marry because a married king must consider the interests of his wife and offspring. Of course, "no harm is done". Of course, "no harm is meant", but it is worth remembering that after married kings, offspring rule. Therefore, let the listeners consider the consequences of the situation «when in a free Republic of Poland, in Regno electiva, royal houses multiply»[68]. Only here does Sobieski present himself as a true republican, a supporter of nobility democracy and an opponent of hereditary monarchy. The conclusion is a reference to the heritage of our ancestors that «We take the men we want, not the ones we have to»[69].

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the conclusions from the discussions between the royal court and the magnate opposition, it can be stated that a unanimous statement against limiting the number of "assistances" (posts) arriving for the election of officials and senators during the discussion around the project of election reform, which was in the years 1626–1632 – paradoxically linked to the defence of the principle of equality among

67 «1. Correctura iurium; 2. Compositio inter statu; 3. Modus interregni: siła ludzi nie pamięta interregnum przed Zygmuntem III – czemu nie spisać konceptu na piśmie?); 4 Modus konkluzyi sejmów; 5. Disciplina militaris, i króla (s. 121: Punkta, które osoby królewskiej dependet [s. 122 – 124/5]: O ekonomiach, o incompatibiliach (z 1530 r.) przeciw podwójnym urzędom i dygnitarstwom; 2. Iustitia iudicaria; 3. Mennica; 4. Sól – prawo z 1550 r. za Olbrachta; [s. 123] Saletra; 6. Jasny podział między królem a Rzeczpospolitą co do zapewnienia materiałów wojennych; 7. Podanie królowi, żeby dwór taki trzymał jak za przodków, tzn. zbrojny; 8. Włożyć w przysięgę królowi, żeby nic nie robił bez rady senatu – powołanie na precedensy, że bracia starsi nie mogli odpowiedzieć na pytanie młodszych (posłów) bo nie wzywano ich do rady; 9. Wykluczenie cudzoziemców z grona doradców królewskich "czy on świecki, czy duchowny; czarny czy biały", żeby nawet spowiednik królewski nie był cudzoziemcem – jak we Francji, Anglii, Hiszpanii – powołanie na pakta konwenta Zygmunta III, gdzie tak pisano o Szwedach przybyłych z nim do Rzeczypospolitej».

68 «kiedy się w Rzptej wolnej, in Regno electiva domy królewskie rozradzają»; "Wotum", 125.

69 «Tych Panów bierzemy, których chcemy, a nie tych, których musiemy»; "Wotum", 126.

the nobility. The belief in the inevitability and indispensability of servants and clients in the electoral field was expressed by both regalists and oppositionists, supporters and opponents of Jan Zamoyski's "Modus eligendi Regis Poloniae", which was then discussed again on the initiative of the royal party. For the author of "Skrypt", it was obvious that great people «will have many friends, relatives, servants, a fact who, having arrived as nobility, will bind themselves to their lord with their mail for the election, for this they will have their factions; whoever has more of this, even though he comes with only seventy heads, will be more powerful and will be able to win more in the election. Because it will not be the hajducs, not the Cossacks, but the nobility who will be giving suffragium there»[70]. It is interesting that almost identically formulated arguments in defence of equality among the nobility against the demands of the "Modus" limiting the number of lords' posts were quoted at that time by Jakub Sobieski and Jerzy Zbaraski, considered by historians to be regalists. Based on the analysis of the "Concept" and the entire political activity of the Cracow castelan, it can be assumed that from his point of view, the government of the senate corresponding to the government of the aristocracy (optimates) was closest to the ideal, in line with the Lipsian political doctrine, also adopted by other enlightened magnates of that period, e.g. Łukasz Opaliński[71].

The assertion that the views of prominent politicians were derived more from the practice of political games and comprehension of the realities of life in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth than from affiliation with a political (royalist or opposition) or a religious ideology (Catholic or Protestant). The opinions and warnings from outstanding crown dignitaries presented in this article can be treated not only as a propaganda activity and using the animosity between the nobility and the court for their own purposes, but sometimes as an obvious political provocation and an attempt to create a "magnate league" against the regalist party – especially during the three-decade war.

The polemical writing "Rationes contradictoriae conceptioni de securitate tempori interregni" proves that the nobility was well aware of the situation[72]. The court's reform project did not talk about security, but about the method of election. It concealed such a danger that «this constitution brought and would give birth to a statum aristocraticum»[73]. A popular uprising in the voivodeships during the interregnum has the potential to disrupt the cohesiveness of the nobility, rendering

70 «będą mieli wiele przyjaciół, pokrewnych, sług, fakt, którzy z pocztami swemu na elekcyję jako szlachta przyjechawszy każdy się do swego pana będzie wiązał, do tego będą mieli swoje fakcje; kto tego będzie miał więcej, ten, choć jeno w siedmdziesiąt głów przyjedzie, przecie potężniejszy będzie i więcej na elekcyjej Będzie mógł. Bo nie hajducy, nie kozaccy, ale szlachta będą tam suffragium dawali»."Skrypt", S-38-M, lex 22, 108.

71 See, Maria Olga Pryshlak Pryshlak (Ukr. Marija Olha Pryschljak), *Państwo w filozofii politycznej Łukasza Opalińskiego* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze Historia Jagiellonica, 2000).

72 DZA, Merseburg, Rep. 6, n. 39; for J. Seredyka, *Rzeczpospolita w ostatnich latach,* 190.

73 DZA, Merseburg Rep. 6, n. 39, "Relacja Bergmana i Wintera dla Jerzego Wilhelma z Gdańska", without date 316, 319.

joint meetings unfeasible. "Rationes" could have been created in the Lithuanian environment because it is known that Radziwiłł and other Lithuanians used the argument at the spring Sejm of 1631 that subordinating the nobility to voivodes during the interregnum would threaten democracy and could transform the Commonwealth into an aristocratic state[74]. The Zbaraskis' "Concept" can also be seen as anachronistic because of the confessionalization tendencies that were dominant in Europe at that time. Their activities and views can be seen as a phenomenon of exchange typical of early modern modernization of the state power elites. It is represented by the Zbaraski family, who enjoy financial power thanks to income from hereditary estates and authority resulting from their princely pedigree. New elite – "new Catholics" forming the royalist party, promoted during the long rule of Sigismund III. In the current state of research, the question remains unanswered whether they had a program consistent with the raison d'état of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and conducive to its modernization, presented in the only one of the magnate projects for the repair of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth discussed in this article – "Script" created in the office of Krzysztof II Radziwiłł.

74 DZA, Merseburg Rep. 6, n. 39, "Relacja Bergmana i Wintera dla Jerzego Wilhelma z Gdańska, without date", 235.

ABBREVIATION

AGAD: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie
AR: Archiwum Radziwiłłów
APP: Archiwum Publiczne Potockich
BK PAN: Biblioteka Kórnicka Polskiej Akademii Nauk
DZA: Deutsches Zentralarchiv Merseburg
"Modus" (Zamoyskiego): AGAD, AR, VI, book 2, "Modus sprawowania się in tempore interregni et electionis na sejmie warszawskim uprojektowany (1589)", 186-203.
"Wotum" (Sobieskiego): AGAD, APP, n. 37, "Votum IMci Pana Jakuba Sobieskiego krayczego in Interregnum na sejmiku wiśnieńskim konwokacyą uprzedzającym in Junio Anno Domini 1632, kopia XVII-wieczna", 113-25.
"Skrypt": AGAD, Archiwum Branickich z Suchej, sign. J. Czubka S-38–M., "Skrypt jakiś, pod tytułem Modus interregnum, pokazał się beł na przeszłem sejmie w Warszawie: a ten in forma konstytucyjej, która w sobie ma dwadzieścia i dwie leges".
"Koncept": BK PAN, n. 483, "Concep[t] Xcia JM Jerzego Zbaraskiego, kasztelana krakowskiego o sposobach Electiey Królów Poslskich, w którym cudzoziemskich sposobów siła mianuje", 167-74

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STATE ARCHIVE IN LUBLIN (POLAND)

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SECURITY OF THE GREATER POLAND DURING THE ELECTIONS OF THE POLISH VASA DYNASTY. MECHANISMS, ORGANIZATION AND LEGAL STATE

ABSTRACT
The interregnum is an exceptional time for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. During its duration, some institutions did not function as normal as the reign of the monarch, so it was necessary for the assemblies to develop certain rules of conduct at these times. One of the most important issues in this difficult period was security. In the resolutions of the province assembly, it was decided to establish own armed forces, which were to defend the local territory. The representatives of Vasa in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were elected three times. During each election, province assembly of Greater Poland, shared for the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships, appointed soldiers who were to guard Greater Poland. How large were these enlistments, what were their characteristics and who were their leaders, as well as many other issues will be explained by the author in the article.

KEYWORDS: Interregnum; Local assembly; County troops; Home defence; Greater Poland.

During the interregnum, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth operated in changed legal circumstances. The king not only embodied the majesty of the state, but was also the guarantor of the functioning of its basic elements, such as the justice system, military and administrative issues. The lack of a monarch on the throne resulted in a lack of continuity in the state's activities and, consequently, led to a number of problems that could have a particularly negative impact on the safety of its subjects[1]. In order to limit the negative effects of the interregnum as effectively as possible, the nobility tried to develop formulas that would allow them to ensure security in their nearest territory. It should be mentioned that both the interregnum and the confederation introduced a new legal status according to which the state was to function. During its validity, decisions regarding actions taken in connection with security were made at local assemblies (*sejmiki ziemskie*). Among numerous tax, economic, judicial, administrative, social and religious matters, much attention was paid to military issues[2]. They largely concerned local security and this article will focus on them.

1 Oskar Kanecki, *Sądy kapturowe Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego* (Sopot: Arche, 2020), 15; Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Koronne zjazdy szlacheckie w dwóch pierwszych bezkrólewiach po śmierci Zygmunta Augusta* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 1998), 7-8.

2 Wojciech Kriegseisen, *Sejmiki Rzeczypospolitej Szlacheckiej w XVII i XVIII w.* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1991), 80-1.

The main purpose of this article is to draw attention to the measures taken by the assembly, in this particular case the one from Greater Poland, in the field of internal security (*internae*) of the immediate territory during the three successive interregnums, after which the representatives of the Vasa dynasty were elected. Very often, in such situations, armed formations of the nobility's self-government were established – the county troops or the levy of nobility[3]. It is important to trace these three periods, so years 1587, 1632 and 1648, in terms of showing how the security of the immediate territory was ensured and what decisions were made regarding it.

THE STATE OF RESEARCH

Issues of local defence during the interregnum appear most often in monographs devoted to the interregnum itself. This topic is discussed by Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz[4], Stanisław Płaza[5] and Anna Pieńkowska[6]. An extremely important work showing the activities of the nobility during the interregnum is the one written by Emil Kalinowski, titled *Szlachta ziemi bielskiej wobec bezkrólewi w XVI–XVII wieku* [The Nobility of the Bielsko land towards the interregnum in the 16th–17th centuries][7]. It corresponds very closely to the subject of this article, although it concerns nobility assemblies from a completely different territory of the Commonwealth.

Research on armed troops established to ensure security also seems to be an important issue. Bartosz Staręgowski wrote about this topic and concerned on the nobility's self-government in Greater Poland, which correspond to the above-mentioned historical moments[8]. The topic of Greater Poland's local government armed formations also appeared in an article written by Jolanta Dworzaczkowa[9]. However, within the time scope covered by the topic, it only concerns those incurred during the interregnum after the death of Władysław IV Vasa. This issue also occasionally appears in work (county troops during the interregnum after the successive rulers of the Vasa dynasty) in the monograph by Dariusz Kupisz[10] and

3 Bartosz Staręgowski, *Formacje zbrojne samorządu szlacheckiego województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w okresie panowania Jana Kazimierza (1648–1668)* (Warszawa: DiG, 2022), 70-2, 285-89.

4 Dubas-Urwanowicz, *Koronne zjazdy*, 82.

5 Stanisław Płaza, *Wielkie bezkrólewia* (Kraków: Krajowa Agencja Wyd., 1988).

6 Anna Pieńkowska, *Zjazdy i sejmy z okresu bezkrólewia po śmierci Stefana Batorego* (Pułtusk: Wyd. Akademii Humanistycznej im. A. Gieysztora, 2010).

7 Emil Kalinowski, *Szlachta ziemi bielskiej wobec bezkrólewi w XVI–XVII wieku* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2021).

8 Bartosz Staręgowski, "W służbie województwom wielkopolskim i Rzeczypospolitej. Okoliczności sformowania i działalność pułku Bogusława Leszczyńskiego w latach 1648–1649", *Res Historica*, 44 (2017): 33-63; Id., *Formacje zbrojne*;

9 Jolanta Dworzaczkowa, *Sprawy wojska na sejmikach wielkopolskich w latach 1648–1668 in Pax et bellum*, ed. Karol Olejnik (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1993), 55-64.

10 Dariusz Kupisz, *Wojska powiatowe samorządów Małopolski i Rusi Czerwonej w latach 1572–1717* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2008).

the article by Albert Borowiak[11], while levy of nobility was mentioned in the book by Karol Łopatecki[12]. Information on military matters included in the resolutions of the Greater Poland local assemblies can also be found in the study by Stanisław Płaza[13].

THE NOBILITY ASSEMBLY OF GREATER POLAND PROPER – THE BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR A LOCAL SECURITY

At the beginning, it is worth explaining the principle of operation of the Greater Poland nobility assembly and the area in which it acted. The territory of Greater Poland, i.e. actually two voivodeships – Poznań and Kalisz, included the jurisdiction of a joint local assembly held most often in Środa (currently Środa Wielkopolska)[14]. It was one of the most influential noble gatherings in the Greater Poland province and even in the entire country. Other assemblies from neighbouring areas very often took into account the decisions of the one from Środa, or at least were greatly influenced by his decisions[15]. Both voivodeships were divided into smaller administrative units: nine counties (counties of the Poznań Voivodeship: Poznań, Kościan and Wałcz; counties of the Kalisz Voivodeship: Gniezno, Kalisz, Kcynia, Konin, Nakło and Pyzdry) and the Wschowa Land[16].

The sessions were most often held in Środa, but they also took place in other places, such as Poznań, Koło, Kalisz, Pyzdry, Poniec and Krobia. Despite so many places of local noble gatherings, Środa became the key place where most of the gatherings took place. Historically, these places were established during the times of King Casimir Jagiellon, when at the *Sejm* in Piotrków in 1459, two meeting places were designated for the Greater Poland nobility: Środa and Koło[17]. This was confirmed

11 Albert Borowiak, *Wojska powiatowe przed kampanią piławiecką w 1648 r. in Studia nad staropolską sztuką wojenną,* vol. 2, ed. Zbigniew Hundert (Oświęcim: Napoleon V, 2013), 129-60.

12 Karol Łopatecki, *Organizacja, prawo i dyscyplina w polskim i litewskim pospolitym ruszeniu (do połowy XVII wieku)* (Białystok: Instytut Badań nad dziedzictwem kulturowym Europy, 2013).

13 Stanisław Płaza, *Sejmiki i zjazdy szlacheckie województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego. Ustrój i funkcjonowanie (1572–1632)* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 1984).

14 Antoni Gąsiorowski, "Wielkopolska jako region historyczny", in *Dzieje Wielkopolski,* vol. 1, ed. Jerzy Topolski (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1969), 33.

15 Michał Zwierzykowski, *Samorząd sejmikowy województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w latach 1696–1732* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2010), 23; Władysław Konopczyński, "Wielkopolska w dobie Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej", *Roczniki Historyczne*, 1 (1925): 76.

16 Antoni Gąsiorowski, *Powiat w Wielkopolsce w XIV–XVI w. Z zagadnień zarządu terytorialnego i podziałów Polski późnośredniowiecznej* (Poznań: PWN, 1965), 83.

17 Zwierzykowski, *Samorząd sejmikowy,* 27; Michał Zwierzykowski, and Ewa Tacka, "Miejsca obrad sejmików województw Wielkopolski właściwej od XVI do XVIII wieku", *Res Historica*, 42 (2016): 76-7.

by the constitution of the Diet of 1496[18]. Derogations from these normal processes were influenced by extraordinary situations, such as an interregnum or rebellion. In the case of the rebellion, there was even phenomenon of a split assembly, when the rebels met in one spot and their opponents in the other place. Informally, there was also a custom that during the interregnum, an assembly was called to the capital of Greater Poland, Poznań, where resolutions were adopted to ensure the safety of the immediate area and stabilize the situation until the election of a new monarch.
Ewa Tacka and Michał Zwierzykowski explained the advantages of Środa that made it chosen as the meeting place. According to these two researchers, Poznań seemed to be a natural centre, conveniently located and with appropriate infrastructure that could accommodate many participants, it also had extensive socio-cultural facilities. However, the nobility from Kalisz complained about this location, as it was located slightly on the outskirts of the voivodeships and made them feel left out. Środa was a compromise, as it had the most central and convenient location to satisfy both the nobility of Poznań and Kalisz[19]. The collegiate church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was chosen as the venue for the assemblies sessions[20].
Local officials, including voivodes[21], castellans, and the general starost of Greater Poland, had a significant role in the administrative functioning of voivodeships, as well as in the formation of the army. The first two were mainly responsible for organizing the levy of nobility[22], but it was the third one who carried the greatest responsibility for local security. While in the case of ordinary town starost, the influence on military matters was small, but this one, commonly called "general", retained certain competences that allowed him to form and organize the armed forces of the local government[23]. It is important to note the fact that "general" was treated as key person in the process of ensuring security, as we learn from one of the resolutions of the local assembly: «that the *principaliter*, as our leader, should advise on our peace and security and take care of any subsequent danger *pro posse*»[24].

18 VC, t. 1: *(1493–1549)*, vol. 1: *(1493–1526)*, eds. Wacław Uruszczak, Iwona Dwornicka, and Stanisław Grodziski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), 77.

19 Zwierzykowski, *Samorząd sejmikowy,* 28; Id.-Tacka, "Miejsca obrad sejmików", 77.

20 Płaza, *Sejmiki i zjazdy,* 78; Zwierzykowski-Tacka, "Miejsca obrad sejmików", 91-7.

21 Jan Majchrowski, *Wojewoda w dawnej Polsce* (Warszawa: Sejmowe, 2019), 82.

22 Płaza, *Sejmiki i zjazdy,* 149; Marek Plewczyński, "Rotmistrz zaciężny na urzędzie ziemskim w XVI w.", in *Kultura–polityka–dyplomacja. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Jaremie Maciszewskiemu w sześćdziesiąta rocznicę Jego urodzin*, eds. Andrzej Bartnicki, et al. (Warszawa: PWN, 1990), 301-02.

23 Antoni Gąsiorowski, *Wielkopolska jako region*, 35; Andrzej Kamieński, "Rola kasztelanów w systemie obronnym Wielkopolski w XVI–XVIII wieku", *Czasy Nowożytne*, 28 (2015): 25-6; Plewczyński, *Rotmistrz zaciężny,* 302.

24 "Uchwała koła województwa kaliskiego na okazowaniu województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego pod Środą 17 IX 1613 r.", in ASWPiK, ed. Włodzimierz Dworzaczek, t. I: (1572–1632), part 1: (1572-1616) (Poznań: PWN, 1957), 425. In original: «aby principaliter o naszym pokoju i bezpieczeństwie jako wódz nasz radził i wszelkiemu następującemu niebezpieczeństwu pro posse zabiegał».

The reforms carried out in the years 1621–1624 gave the general starost even greater opportunities to create local armed forces. He received full authority over the local levy of nobility and county troops, which he could call up if necessary. His competences were further developed during the times of Stanisław Przyjemski (1628–1642)[25]. He was given the ability to call the nobility to arms in case of danger and then organize and lead them, while the competences of castellans and voivodes in this respect were limited only to issuing proclamations calling the nobility to arms[26].

THE FIRST ATTEMPTS TO CREATE LOCAL ARMED FORCES TO DEFEND THE TERRITORY – INTERREGNUM AFTER THE DEATH OF STEPHEN BATORY

The first opportunity to attempt to create a system for protecting the local territory appeared with the first free election. After the death of Sigismund Augustus –the last representative of the Jagiellon dynasty – the assembly made quite general decisions regarding security. They were to be provided by each local starost, but if their capabilities turned out to be insufficient, they were to be supported by the nobility itself, which should gather in a levy of nobility and face the people who would threaten order and security[27]. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly what the security measures taken after the escape of Henry Valois looked like because no resolutions from that period have survived[28].

Only the interregnum after the death of Stephen Batory brought several certain solutions of the system. Bishop Stanisław Piasecki described them in his chronicle as follows:

> After the death of King Stephen, Poland was in great turmoil... Due to this circumstance, when the knights' order [nobles]... gathered, each voivodeship unanimously reserved the security of its count from a possible attack. Such protection is usually carried out in a way that troops are stationed in voivodeships, especially those where the border area is suspicious, to keep a close watch on any danger [...][29].

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25 *Urzędnicy wielkopolscy XVI-XVIII wieku. Spisy,* ed. Antoni Bieniaszewski (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1987), 165.

26 Łopatecki, *Organizacja, prawo,* 395, 402-05; Kamieński, "Rola kasztelanów", 32.

27 ASWPiK, t. 1/1, "Uchwała zjazdu województw wielkopolskich w Kole 15 październik 1572 r.", 5-8.

28 ASWPiK, t. 1/1, 25-8.

29 Paweł Piasecki, *Kronika Pawła Piaseckiego, biskupa przemyślskiego*, ed. Julian Bartoszewicz (Kraków: Drukarnia UJ, 1870), 60. In original: «Po śmierci króla Stefana Polska pod ciężkim stękała rozruchem […] Z tej okoliczności gdy się stan rycerski […] zgromadził, każde województwo, naprzód bezpieczeństwo swego okręgu od mogącej się wydarzyć napaści rad jednomyślnie zastrzegło. Takowego zaś ubezpieczenia ten zwykle jest sposób, że po województwach, zwłaszcza tych, gdzie od pogranicza podejrzane jest sąsiedztwo, rozstawiają się załogi wojsk […], któryby na wszelkie niebezpieczeństwo […] pilnie czuwali».

The Greater Poland nobility decided to raise an enlisted force for home defence. At the session of the local assembly on 29 December 1587 in Środa, it was decided to raise the county troops and create several banners. The responsibility for organizing these soldiers fell on Hieronim Gostomski, chamberlain (*podkomorzy*) of Rawa. The designated pay was agreed as 30 zlotys per three months for horseman and one thaler per week for the infantryman. Gostomski, as a colonel, was to choose his captains (*rotmistrz*) and appear with them at the muster near Kalisz. Their service was to last one quarter (three months), during which they were advised to «keep guard» and «defend the crossings»[30].

The soldiers recruited by the local assembly were to support the levy of nobility, which was called to defend the election of Sigismund Vasa as king and to repel the attack of Habsburg troops intervening on behalf of their candidate Maximilian Habsburg. The field near Kalisz was designated as the place and time for the muster of the levy of nobility on 25 January 1588. The mobilization was to be preceded by two joint local assemblies, separate for the Poznań counties on 18 January near Poznań and the Kalisz counties on 21 January near Pyzdry[31]. Written confirmation signed by colonel Hieronim Gostomski and one of the *rotmistrz*, Jakub Bielawski, indicates that some banners were formed and ready for service[32]. Meanwhile, the expected joint muster of the levy of nobility from both voivodeships took place three days later than planned, because only on 28 January the nobility appeared near Kalisz. Delay was caused by unjustified procrastination, first in arriving at local meetings and then in reaching the muster place. Finally, a certain group arrived, and at the same time «a large part of the other brothers [nobles] stayed in the houses»[33]. Despite these organizational difficulties, a decision was made to march towards Silesia and join the forces of Hetman Jan Zamojski.

When the nobles of Greater Poland were slowly gathering their forces and deciding on further steps, the coronation of Sigismund Vasa took place in Cracow on 27 December. Later Hetman Zamojski defeated the forces of Maximilian Habsburg in the battle of Byczyna on 24 January 1588. The situation was brought under control and the Greater Poland levy of nobility was no longer needed, so was ordered to return homes. As a consequence, the services of the soldiers whom Gostomski was

30 ASWPiK, t. I/1, "Uchwała sejmiku województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Środzie 29 XII 1587 r.", 72-3. In original: «by straż trzymali» and «przepraw bronili».

31 ASWPiK, t. I/1, "Uchwała sejmiku województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Środzie 29 XII 1587 r.", 71-72.

32 ASWPiK, t. I/1, "Pokwitowanie dane przez Jakuba Bielawskiego, rotmistrza Stanisławowi Zebrzydowskiemu, poborcy powiatów kcyńskiego i nakielskiego, w Środzie 1 stycznia 1588 r."; "Pokwitowanie dane przez Hieronima Gostomskiego, podkomorzego rawskiego Stanisławowi Zebrzydowskiemu, poborcy powiatów kcyńskiego i nakielskiego, w Środzie 20 I 1588 r.", 73.

33 ASWPiK, t. I/1, "Uchwała zjazdu na pospolite ruszenie szlachty województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Kaliszu 28 I 1588 r.", 74-5. In original: «braci drugiej wielka część w domiech została».

supposed to recruit were also discontinued[34], because the nobility had returned, and the dangers connected with their absence for the levy of nobility muster was no longer the issue.

The interregnum and the election of the first Vasa to the Polish-Lithuanian throne are important in the context of the discussed topic. For the first time, the nobles of Greater Poland decided to raise an enlisted force to defend their territory. The danger appeared in connection with the organization of the levy of nobility and the possibility of its departure outside the area of two voivodehsips. This meant a significant weakening of security and public order, which is why such new process was developed. We can consider those enlisted soldiers as a prototypes of the county troops established in 1619, i.e. a local government armed formation, an equivalent of the former territorial self-defence. Soldiers within it were called up both for home defence, i.e. the immediate territory, and to support the state army. The process of establishing county troops lasted between 1613 and 1619, with Marcin Broniewski, a political activist from Greater Poland, lobbied very strongly for them[35]. Discussions and work on the formula of the county troops ended in 1619, when a constitution that was crucial from the point of view of this formation was adopted. It specified the rules for forming and financing such government soldiers by the local assemblies within a period of one year, calculating funds for count soldiers from local taxes, and selecting officers and tax collectors who were to be elected at local assemblies. Therefore, this armed formation was given a specific shape and was placed within the legal framework of the Polish-Lithuanian state, according to which it should function in the future[36].

During the reign of Sigismund III Vasa, another important decision was made regarding the defence of the local territory. In 1624, it was decided to implement a procedure defined by K. Łopatecki as "declaring martial law". It included situation, when each time Diet accepted a resolution of the local assembly establishing home defence based on the levy of nobility, county troops or both formations at the same time due to the security threat, and then the appropriate point was entered into the Diet's constitution. The state of emergency remained in force until the next Diet, when a decision was made to suspend or continue it[37]. The general starost played

34 Karol Olejnik, *Obrona polskiej granicy zachodniej od końca XIV do schyłku XVIII w.* (Poznań: Wid. Naukowe UAM, 1985), 285-87; Tadeusz Nowak, and Jan Wimmer, *Historia oręża polskiego 963-1795* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1981), 361-66; Jan Wimmer, "Wojsko i skarb Rzeczypospolitej u schyłku XVI i w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku", *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, 14 (1968): 7.

35 VC, t. III: (1611–1640), vol. 1: *(1611–1626)*, eds. Wacław Uruszczak, Iwona Dwornicka, and Stanisław Grodziski (Warszawa: Sejmowe, 2010), 118; Janusz Byliński, *Dwa sejmy z roku 1613* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo UWr, 1984), 40, 79, 82-3; Janusz Byliński, *Marcin Broniewski–trybun szlachty wielkopolskiej w czasach Zygmunta III* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo UWr, 1994), 137; Kupisz, *Wojska powiatowe,* 34-52.

36 VC, t. III/1, 246-47.

37 Janusz Dorobisz, *Sejm nadzwyczajny z 1624 roku* (Opole: OTPN, 1996), 51, 57; Marta Pietrusiewicz, "Konstytucje sejmowe wobec konfederacji wojskowych w latach panowania Zygmunta III", in Bartnicki et al., *Kultura-Polityka-Dyplomacja,* 296-97; Łopatecki, *Organizacja, prawo*, 394-95.

a key role in the entire system, who, together with voivodes and castellans, was to seek the king's consent to organize a levy and issue letters of recommendation for count captains. The royal consent for the recruitment of count officers was the most important condition set by the monarch to make it possible to organize a regular troops by the local nobility self-governments[38]. Such a provision appeared in the constitution of the extraordinary Diet in Warsaw of 1624. It was point 7 entitled: *Laudum of the Poznań, Kraków, Kalisz, Sieradz, Wieluń lands*[39]. The resolution mentioned here were to be the appropriate determinant of the form of defence during future interregnums.

DANGER "...AT THE BORDER OF THE GREATER POLAND LANDS..." – HOME DEFENCE DURING THE INTERREGNUM AFTER THE DEATH OF SIGISMUND III

In the years 1627–1632, the nobles of Greater Poland several times utilised their options to create home defence. It was generally decided to enlist count soldiers for defence, but the possibility of mustering the levy of nobility was also considered. At the last Diet before the death of Sigismund Vasa, one of the points of the constitution read:

> [...] that the border wars have not calmed down yet [...] at the border of the Greater Poland lands [...] we summarize in *toto* the constitution of the last Diet on the home defence of the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships [...][40].

Interestingly, the expenses of noble local governments spent on the troops they raised were to be covered by the state treasury from the revenues from alcohol tax (so called *czopowe*)[41]. This was quite an unusual decision, considering the monarch's unfavourable attitude towards county troops as such, not to mention the financing itself.

At the time of the death of Sigismund III Vasa in 1632, the interrex Primate Jan Wężyk immediately issued a proclamation addressed to all noble gatherings in the country, asking them to ensure "home security" against bandits and people illegally crossing the border[42]. In accordance with what was offered to them by the procedure adopted a few years earlier, the nobles of Greater Poland considered two options. One of them was to raise the levy of nobility, another to enlist county troops.

38 ASWPiK, t. I/2, "Uchwała sejmiku przedsejmowego województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Środzie 13 I 1624 r.", 168-69; Byliński, *Marcin Broniewski,* 169.

39 VC, t. III/1, 336-37.

40 VC, t. III, vol. 2: (1627–1640), eds. Wacław Uruszczak, Stanisław Grodziski, and Marcin Kwiecień (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2013), 139-40. In original: «[…], iż się wojny pograniczne do tych czasów jeszcze nie uspokoiły […], przy granicy krajów wielkopolskich […] konstytucją sejmu przeszłego, o obronie domowej, poznańskiego i kaliskiego województw *in toto* reasumujemy […]».

41 Jan Seredyka, *Rzeczpospolita w ostatnich latach panowania Zygmunta III (1629–1632). Zarys wewnętrznych dziejów politycznych* (Opole: WSP im. Powstańców Śląskich w Opolu, 1978), 174.

42 VC, t. III/2, 149-150; Piasecki, *Kronika Pawła Piaseckiego,* 355.

General starost Stanisław Przyjemski issued a proclamation in which he informed the nobility about the king's death and called on them to mobilize militarily, be ready to respond to the call of the voivodes and react to any possible threats[43].
The key decisions were made by the congress of the Greater Poland nobility in Poznań on 10 May 1632. It was unanimously decided to implement the security procedure of 1624, as confirmed in 1627 and 1631. The possible decision to gather levy of nobility was to be made by Stanisław Przyjemski, as the main defence coordinator. Moreover, it was decided to maintain in force the provisions of the constitution of 1631 regarding the establishment of three 50-horse Cossack cavalry banners for defence purposes, supervised by the general starost, supported by the city garrison, chosen infantry (*wybraniecka*) and possibly the levy of nobility. However, detailed decisions on this subject were postponed to the next meeting. In addition, it was decided to provide additional powers to individual starosts in the scope of protecting the borders against illegal attempts of foreigners crossing them and to immediately report each such attempt to the general starost or the interrex. Customs guards and the chosen infantry supporting them were to ensure the integrity of the border lines[44]. A few days after the meeting in Poznań, Stanisław Przyjemski issued a proclamation in which he asked the land tenants to provide infantrymen to the chosen infantry so that they could effectively secure the borders of the voivodeship «from where the greatest danger should be feared»[45].
Further important decisions regarding defence were made at the local assembly on 3 June 1632. It was preceded by a proclamation from Primate Jan Wężyk, who, in addition to indicating the date of the convocation Diet, made an urgent appeal to make decisions regarding defence and security during the interregnum[46]. At the assembly, it was decided that the recently mentioned 150-horse Cossack cavalry unit would be joined by another one in the same strength with a pay of 30 zlotys per horseman per quarter of service. The place and date of the musters were to be determined by Stanisław Przyjemski or his deputy, chosen from among three people: Adam Olbracht Baranowski, Tyburcy Złotnicki and Stanisław Stryjkowski. During his absence, the selected person was to manage the count home defence force. The assembly also elected commissioners whose task was to supervise the musters and record the number and personnel of the banners. The following were elected commissioners: Wacław Ossowski, Jan Kiełczewski, Maciej Niegolewski

43 "Uniwersał Stanisława Przyjemskiego marszałka nadwornego, starosty generalnego Wielkopolski, ogłaszający bezkrólewie–Konin, 2 maja 1632 r.", in ASWPiK 1632–1655, eds. Michał Zwierzykowski, Robert Kołodziej, Igor Kraszewski, and Andrzej Kamieński (Poznań: Wyd. Naukowe FNCE, 2022), 3-4.

44 ASWPiK 1632-1655, "Laudum zjazdu województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Poznaniu, 10 maja 1632 r.", 4-7; VC, t. III/2, 112; Seredyka, *Rzeczpospolita w ostatnich latach*, 126-27.

45 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Uniwersał starosty generalnego Stanisława Przyjemskiego do szlachty województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego, Poznań 13 maja 1632", 8-9. In original: «skąd nawiętszego niebezpieczeństwa obawiać się trzeba».

46 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Uniwersał prymasa Jana Wężyka zwołujący sejmik przedkonwokacyjny województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Środzie na dzień 3 czerwca 1632 r. Warszawa 5 maja 1632 r.", 10-2.

and Stanisław Kobierzycki. In turn, Prokop Stogniew, Remigian Dembiński, Krzysztof Szczodrowski and Jerzy Chełmski became captains (*rotmistrz*) of the Cossack cavalry. The strength of individual banners was also changed, from now on they were to consist of 75 horses each. The tasks of the established force included protecting the border with Silesia against the invasion of troops participating in the Thirty Years' War and fighting criminals and demobilized soldiers who could cause destruction in the Greater Poland voivodeships[47].

In addition, the resolution ordered the organization of a 150-men strong Polish infantry banner, its task being to support customs guards. Command over them was entrusted to the general starost. An additional 50 infantrymen were sent to reinforce the Zbąszyń garrison. It was left to Stanisław Przyjemski to designate the remaining places that needed increased protection. Money from the heart tax of 10 groszy from all cities and villages, including clerical, royal and noble estates, was allocated to pay for the cavalry banners and the infantry unit. Stefan Korzeniewski in Poznań and Mikołaj Mieszkowski in Kalisz were appointed tax collectors. Tax gathering was to begin on 24 June (St. John's Day) and to be carried out within two weeks. The money should then go to Stanisław Przyjemski or his deputies. It was also forbidden for soldiers to leave the count borders of the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships, and even more so the borders of the Commonwealth[48]. The deputies sent to the convocation Diet were to seek approval of all the above-mentioned forms of defence[49].

The situation was so serious that the convocation Diet was extremely quick to confirm the decisions of the Greater Poland assemblies[50], and even the primate himself declared financial support from the funds of his own diocese[51]. Due to his function as a Court Marshal and the need to stay at court, Stanisław Przyjemski appointed Adam Olbracht Przyjemski, a Crown Camp-master, as his deputy for the duration of his absence. For his part, he was to decide on the organization of the county troops, but he could also call the levy of nobility. He even issued a proclamation for this purpose[52], but this formula was ultimately rejected in favour of an enlisted county troops.

The county troops actively defended the borderland, which is confirmed in local

47 BUWr, 1949/439, "Uniwersał sejmiku średzkiego subinterregio o obronie i rządzie domowym poznańskiego i kaliskiego województw Proclamation of Środa province assembly during subinterregio about defence and local government poznański and kaliskie voivodeships", ff. 277-78.

48 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Laudum sejmiku przedkonwokacyjnego województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Środzie, 3 czerwca 1632 r.", 17-20.

49 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Instrukcja dana posłom na konwokację z sejmiku województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Środzie, 3 czerwca 1632 r.", 21-34.

50 Włodzimierz Kaczorowski, *Sejmy konwokacyjny i elekcyjny w okresie bezkrólewia 1632 r.* (Opole: Instytut Śląski w Opolu, 1986), 128.

51 Seredyka, *Rzeczpospolita w ostatnich latach,* 136.

52 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Uniwersał Adama Olbrachta Przyjemskiego obożnego koronnego, ogłaszający wici jedne za dwoje na pospolite ruszenie do obrony województw przed zagrożeniem z zagranicy. Miejska Górka, 27 IX 1632 r.", 42-3.

assembly resolution of 13 September 1632[53] and the official written complaint by Jan Szczucki[54]. The accounts presented at the Środa local assembly in December 1632 by collectors Korzeniowski and Mieszkowski confirm the names of the captains of the Cossack cavalry banners, as well as the infantry units of Stanisław Przyjemski and the Castellan of Śrem, Abraham Ciświcki, who was to take care of the garrison in Zbąszyń. In the Poznań Voivodeship, it was collected 12,341 zlotys of the hearth tax and in the Kalisz Voivodeship 11,434 zlotys, of which 2,350 was paid to Krzysztof Szczodrowski, 4,350 to Remigian Dembiński and 4,700 to Jerzy Chełmski. 5,837 zlotys was spent on the general *starosta*'s infantry under the command of Lieutenant Wyganowski and 4,000 zlotys on Abraham Ciświcki's infantry. However, no payment was planned for Prokop Stogniew but we know that he was also in command of the count soldiers, as his name was mentioned in Jan Szczucki's complaint, mentioned above. Some of the officers served two quarters (Chełmski, Dembiński) while others just one (Szczodrowski and perhaps Stogniew)[55]. The coronation Diet in 1633 approved all the local assembly's decisions regarding defence during the interregnum[56].

During the second interregnum, after the death of Sigismund III, significantly more decisions were made regarding defence of the region. In addition to the count Cossack cavalry banners with a total of 300 horsemen, also chosen infantry and Polish infantry banners formed by the assembly were used to defend the borders and the town of Zbąszyń. This time the threat resulted from the Thirty Years' War that had been ongoing near the Polish borders since 1618. It led to troops from both warring sides crossing the borders of the Greater Poland Province. Enlister troops were mainly deployed to counter this threat.

THE INTERREGNUM AFTER THE DEATH OF LADISLAUS IV – A CRITICAL MOMENT FOR THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH

The death of Ladislaus IV coincided with an extremely unfortunate moment for the state. The largest Cossack uprising in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian state broke out in the south-eastern borderlands. Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the newly elected Cossack leader, managed to defeat two of the three groups of the Crown army in the battles of Korsun and Yellow Waters, and soon also neutralized the third one. The hetmans were captured, and the situation of the army seemed critical. Worrying signals reached Greater Poland, even though it was far from the endangered regions[57]. Therefore, the general starosta, Bogusław Leszczyński, sent his proclamation to the inhabitants of Greater Poland, informing about the king's death, the defeat of the army at Korsun and calling on the nobility to «be as diligent

53 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Laudum sejmiku deputackiego województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Środzie, 13 września 1632 r.", 39-40.

54 APPozn., Gr. Pozn., 677, "Protestacja Jana Szczuckiego Jan Szczucki's protest", f. 545-45v.

55 BUWr, 1949/439, "Rachunki poborców z wydatków na wojsko sejmikowe", 14 XII 1632, f. 309v.

56 VC, t. III/2, 196, 218.

57 Staręgowski, *Formacje zbrojne*, 73-74.

as possible in readiness, so that...all dangers can be prevented early»[58]. Together with the Voivode of Poznań, Krzysztof Opaliński, they also summoned the nobility to an extraordinary assembly in Poznań on 8 June 1648[59].

At the assembly, it was agreed that the inhabitants of Greater Poland would form a large force of the county troops divided into three regiments composed of harquebusiers cavalry and hussars, and one of dragoons under the command of Colonel Jacek Rozdrażewski. These forces, numbering 2,200 soldiers, were to be sent to support the state army fighting against the Cossacks[60]. Considering the topic of this article, the most important paragraph of the resolution concerned the establishment of home defence during the interregnum. For the safety of the local territories, it was decided to recruit an additional regiment under the command of the general starosta himself. It was supposed to involve the service of three captains, each of whom was to enlist a banner of 100 horses of harquebusiers cavalry. A pay of 50 zlotys per quarter of service was to be offered to each soldier, and 1,000 zlotys of special pay (so called *kuchenne*) for captains. In the absence of the general starosta, supervision over the forming home defence regiment was to be taken over by commissioners: Krzysztof Mielżyński, Władysław Strykowski, Aleksander Kobierzycki and Chryzostom Jaskólski. In addition, it was intended to supplement the local defence with private troops of the local officials. Voivode of Poznań, Krzysztof Opaliński, declared that he would send banner of 100 infantry and 60 dragoons, Castellan of Poznań, Franciszek Czarnkowski, would send 100 infantrymen to defend the border count of Międzyrzecz, and the starost of Wschowa, Wojciech Gajewski, would send 150 infantrymen to defend the Wschowa land. Soldiers assigned to home defence were prohibited from crossing the state borders[61]. Voivode Krzysztof Opaliński wrote to his brother Łukasz about the forces raised the assembly and his own participation in ensuring the security of Greater Poland: «[...] three hundred men as mounted service to defend the local borders, of whom one and a half hundred are under my regiment, [while – B. S.] Rucki will be stationed to guard here from Głogów, along with my infantry and dragoons [...]»[62]. At the

58 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Uniwersał Bogusława Leszczyńskiego starosty generalnego Wielkopolski, informujący o śmierci króla. Przygodzice 27 maja 1648 r."; "Uniwersał Bogusława Leszczyńskiego starosty generalnego Wielkopolski, wzywający do gotowości do obrony Rzeczypospolitej. Przygodzice 28 maja 1648 r."; "Uniwersał starosty generalnego Wielkopolski. Pierzchno 7 czerwca 1648 r.", 432-33, 436. In original: «w gotowość wszelaką jako najpilniej się usposabiali, tak żeby […] wszelakim niebezpieczeństwom wcześnie zabieżeć mogło».

59 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Uniwersał Bogusława Leszczyńskiego starosty generalnego Wielkopolski zwołujący nadzwyczajny zjazd do Poznania, na dzień 8 czerwca 1648 r., Przygodzice, 29 maja 1648 r."; "Uniwersał Krzysztofa Opalińskiego wojewody poznańskiego do województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego, ogłaszający termin zjazdu w Poznaniu, na 8 czerwca 1648 r. Sieraków 30 maja 1648 r.", 434-35.

60 Staręgowski, *Formacje zbrojne,* 75.

61 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Laudum nadzwyczajne zjazdu w Poznaniu, 8 czerwca 1648 r.", 439, 441.

62 "Krzysztof Opaliński do brata Łukasza, Sieraków 12 VI 1648", in *Listy Krzysztofa*

pre-convocation assembly in Środa on 25 June 1648, it was decided that Zygmunt Twardowski will be chosen as the commissioner to muster the home defence regiment[63]. Due to the absence of "general" Leszczyński in Greater Poland, who was at that time at the general convocation, the commissioners took over his duties to ensure that the Greater Poland Voivodeships were properly protected against dangers and soldiers coming from "foreign corners".

The document issued by the commissioners contained clear rules of conduct for soldiers and officers. Horsemen from harquebusiers cavalry were to be stationed at their banners and the officers were to be responsible for order and compliance with military articles. Severe punishments were to be issued to those who did not comply with these regulations, because efforts were made to ensure that «[...] human tears did not follow these banners [...]». The soldiers were to ensure security at the borders and roads, but only in the area of both voivodeships. The following patrol areas were assigned to the home defence banners: Stanisław Rucki –the area from the northern border and Czaplinek under the Brandenburg border up to Międzyrzecz, Jan Szlichtyng – the area of Kościan Count from Święciechowa to Poniec, and Jerzy Chełmski – the Silesian border from Bystrzewa to Poniec. These officers were advised to pay for all services provided to their soldiers, not to be burden for the local cities and towns and to prevent their men from hurting the local population. Supply areas for each banner were also designated. Chełmski was assigned clerical and secular estates in the Konin and Pyzdry counties of the Kalisz Voivodeship, also all areas in the vicinity of Dubica. Szlichtyng was granted clerical and royal estates in the Kościan count and, additionally, the area of Wschowa land. Rucki was assigned to counties in the Poznań Voivodeship and additionally in the Kalisz, Kcyński and Nakło Voivodeships[64].

On 14 July, Bogusław Leszczyński issued recruitment letter to Samuel Szlichtyng and Stanisław Rucki, in which he obliged them to enlist banners of 100 horses harquebusiers cavalry or Cossack cavalry, for the period of one quarter. If they resigned from harquebusiers cavalry in favour of Cossack cavalry, they were to «[…] raise Cossacks with three guns, in 'quarter army' style, in mail, *misiurka* helmet and arm-guards, and good sabre […]». With this banner they were to appear before Zygmunt Twardowski, *surogator*[65] of Poznań[66]. Muster took place near Śrem on

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Opalińskiego do brata Łukasza 1641–1653, ed. Roman Pollak (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1957), 413-14. In original: «ludzi trzystu także konną służbę na obronę tutecznych granic, z których pułtorasta pod moim regimentem Pan Rucki mój stawiwszy pilnować tu od Głogowa będzie przy piechocie moich i draganach».

63 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Laudum sejmiku przedkonwokacyjnego województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w Środzie, 25 czerwca 1648 r.", 459.

64 ASWPiK 1632–1655, "Dyspozycje komisarzy sejmikowych w sprawie dyscypliny, lokacji i prowiantów do czasu wymarszu na Ukrainę. Poznań, 15 lipca 1648 r.", 467-68.

65 In Commonwealth he was special deputy of the local starosta, chosen by Diet.

66 APPozn., Gr. Kal., 273, "List przypowiedni starosty generalnego Bogusława Leszczyńskiego dla Stanisława Ruckiego. Przygodzice 14 VII 1648", ff. 443-45;

31 July 1648. According to Commissioner Twardowski, the assigned quarters of Rucki were changed so that his banner would not choose them from the positions designated for Jakub Rozdrażewski's regiment[67].

The home defence regiment was established to protect the territory of the Greater Poland voivodeships against possible Swedish aggression, in case if Swedes would want to take advantage of the time of the civil war in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, at that time there was simply no such threat. This was confirmed by Krzysztof Opaliński himself, when he was assuring the security of the voivodeships and justifying it with the declarations of the Swedish governor residing in Pomerania, who gave him his personal word of the inviolability of Polish borders[68]. Taking into account the above-mentioned circumstances, after serving three months, the home defence banners were disbanded and the soldiers returned home[69].

SUMMARY

The activities undertaken during the subsequent interregnum to ensure the security of the local territories of Greater Poland were very diverse. The period of three consecutive elections, after which the Polish Vasas were elected is a good illustration of their diversity. In all these periods, the county troops were recruited, being the armed formation of the local government seen as best suited to the task of defending its territory. Sometimes attempts were made to support it with the levy of nobility or other formations, such as chosen infantry, but the count cavalry banners were always the pillar of defence.

In 1624, both voivodeships guaranteed the possibility of organizing their own defence in parliamentary constitutions. The procedure for declaring a state of emergency allowed them to defend themselves with the help of the county troops or levy of nobility. Over the years, the effectiveness of these methods and the dangers itself has varied. In case of the lack of the latter, banners served for a very short time, usually only one quarter. It is important to highlight though, that the people of Greater Poland tried to organize defence formations to guard their internal security, which seems pretty obvious, considering the nobility's concern for their property and peace.

ASWPiK 1632–1655, "List przypowiedni Bogusława Leszczyńskiego starosty generalnego dla Samuela Szlichtynga na rotmistrza roty arkebuzerskiej województw wielkopolskich. Przygodzice 14 lipca 1648 r.", 466. In original: «[...] wystawić kozaka z trojgiem strzelb, trybem kwarcianym, w pancerzu, w misiurce z karwaszami i z szablą dobrą […]».

67 APPozn., Gr. Kal., 273, "Uniwersał surogatora poznańskiego Zygmunta Twardowskiego do mieszkańców województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego. Śrem 31 VII 1648", f. 445r-v.

68 "Krzysztof Opaliński do brata Łukasza 12 VI 1648", in Pollak, *Listy Krzysztofa Opalińskiego*, 414; Alojzy Sajkowski, *Krzysztof Opaliński. Wojewoda poznański* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1960), 98.

69 APPozn., Gr. Kal., 273, "Manifestacja chorągwi Stanisława Ruckiego", 24 IX 1648, f. 540v.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASWPiK: *Akta sejmikowe województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego.*
ASWPiK 1632–1655: *Akta sejmikowe województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego.* Lata 1632-1655.
BUWr: Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu.
APPozn.: Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu.
Gr. Pozn.: Księgi grodzkie poznańskie.
Gr. Kal.: Księgi grodzkie kaliskie.
VC: *Volumina Constitutionum*.

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THE HOLY SEE TOWARDS THE CONTENTION FOR THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN THRONE BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VASA DYNASTY: JOHN CASIMIR AND CHARLES FERDINAND (1648–1649)

ABSTRACT
On 21 May 1648, the apostolic nuncio Giovanni De Torres reported from Słonim on the death of Ladislaus IV Vasa, announcing at the same time that the royal half-brothers John Casimir and Charles Ferdinand would be the most serious candidates for the throne. The papal diplomats frequently emphasised the universal wish of the nobility for a dynastic continuation within the Polish Vasas. At the same time, this was the first time brothers competed for the throne in early modern Poland-Lithuania. It could have caused concern, as everything pointed to a lack of agreement between the contenders, especially in the context of the then-ongoing conflict with the Cossacks. In this article, the policy pursued by the Holy See towards the election of 1648 is analysed, revolving not only around the personal choice of the monarch but also the issues of the war in Ukraine, the revindication of the Swedish crown, relations with France, Habsburgs and Brandenburg as well as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's religious policy. The diplomatic letters exchanged between the nuncio and the papal Secretariat of State, the correspondence of the Vasa princes with Innocent X and the *sejm* accounts constitute the historical basis for the study.

KEYWORDS: Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; Royal election; Diplomacy; Apostolic nunciature; Papacy.

SORROWFUL NEWS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH

As early as 21 May 1648, the apostolic nuncio Giovanni de Torres reported from Slonim on the death of Ladislaus IV Vasa (who had passed away the day before in Merecz, in Lithuania), also announcing that the most serious candidates for the crown would become the younger Vasa princes, children of Sigismund III Vasa and his second wife, Constance of Austria: John Casimir (1609–1672, military, ex-Jesuit and a former cardinal) and Charles Ferdinand (1613–1655, bishop of Wrocław)[1]. The Roman curia was aware of the nobles' traditional affection for the ruling dynasty. Katarzyna Kosior noted appositely that

> the Jagiellonians [and, after them, their direct descendants –Vasas] had become a formidable myth. No longer able to cause a dynastic threat to the monarchy's electiveness, they were remembered primarily in a positive light as one of the forces that had shaped the Commonwealth's republican system of government[2].

1 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of Giovanni de Torres to Giacomo Panzirolo, Słonim 21 V 1648, f. 182r.

2 Katarzyna Kosior, "Anna Jagiellon: A Female Political Figure in the Early Modern

It had already been noted by a contemporary of the events described, Ladislaus IV's resident envoy in Madrid, Francesco Bibboni, who stressed that, despite the principle of free royal election, Polish-Lithuanian nobility historically tended to favour the candidature of a son or relative of the defunct monarch[3]. The king's death, this time with detailed reactions from Queen Marie Louise and potential claimants to the throne, was subsequently reported by the nuncio from Kościan on 29 May[4]. Almost contemporarily, Innocent X was informed of the vacancy of the Polish-Lithuanian throne by Maciej Łubieński in his letter of 6 June, in which the primate entrusted the matters of the new election to papal prayers[5].

The apostolic nuncio's presence in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during an *interregnum* was not legally defined and had already caused controversies in the past[6]. On the one hand, shortly after the monarch's death, De Torres met with primate Łubieński, who asked the papal representative for the Holy See's intercession and protection during the throne's vacancy, as well as prayers for the success of the upcoming election and other state affairs. On the other hand, the nuncio took steps to inquire about his actual status during an *interregnum*, wanting to assure and systematise his position. He looked for traces about this topic in the Crown

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth", in *A Companion to Global Queenship*, ed. Elena Woodacre (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018): 70-2.

3 Mirosław Nagielski, "'Konsyderacyje około elekcyi króla polskiego' barona Francesca Bibboniego posła polskiego przy dworze hiszpańskim w 1648 roku", in *Rzeczpospolita, Europa i świat. Interakcje dyplomatyczne i dworskie w epoce nowożytnej (XVI–XVIII w.). Studia dedykowane Profesorowi Ryszardowi Skowronowi*, red. Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula, Paweł Duda, Dorota Gregorowicz, and Oskar J. Rojewski (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Cum Laude, 2023), 356-57. See also Zbigniew Wójcik, *Jan Kazimierz Waza* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1997), 53.

4 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Kościan 29 V 1648, f. 154-55.

5 Letter of Maciej Łubieński to Innocent X, Warsaw 5 VI 1648, in VMPL III, 449. Theiner erroneously dated this letter to 6 June.

6 During all the *interregna*, the apostolic nuncios found themselves in a peculiar situation with regard to their legal position in the Polish-Lithuanian state. Since Poland-Lithuania was an elective monarchy, with the death of the monarch, to whom a papal representative was accredited, his diplomatic mandate actually expired. In the case of a change of government in any hereditary monarchy, the nuncio would be required to obtain accreditation with the new sovereign as soon as possible. In the Polish-Lithuanian context, during *interregna* lasting for many months, this proved impossible. See Charles Keenan, "The Limits of Diplomatic Ritual: The Polish Embassy of Giovanni Francesco Commendone (1572–1573) and Criticism of Papal Legates in Early Modern Europe", *Royal Studies Journal* III (2016): 106; Dorota Gregorowicz, *Tiara w grze o koronę. Stolica Apostolska wobec wolnych elekcji w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w drugiej połowie XVI wieku* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2019), 218-19; Gregorowicz, "Una protezione ben accetta? La nobiltà polacco-lituana nei confronti dell'impegno pontificio nelle elezioni dei re (1572–1587)", *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae,* 55 (2021): 123-48.

Chancellery, from which research he drew the surprising conclusions: «There is no sign [about it] as if there had never been a nuncio here»[7]. It is an interesting observation in perspective of any possible use of the records produced by the Chancellery for the study of the history of diplomacy in the early modern Poland-Lithuania – it surprisingly lacked documents relating to one of the few *de facto* permanent foreign embassies functioning at the Polish-Lithuanian court of the time[8].

Information about the king's death reached Rome on 17 June 1648. Almost one month had thus elapsed, a surprisingly long time for such important news as the vacancy of a Catholic kingdom's throne. This fact indicates that, for unknown reasons, the information about Ladislaus IV passing away was entrusted to the traditional mail services rather than to a special courier. Cardinal Secretary of State Giacomo Panziroli attested to the papal grief in his response, asking the nuncio to offer his condolences to those De Torres deemed it appropriate[9]. Traditionally, the nuncio was to use the tool of papal briefs for this purpose[10].

BETWEEN THE TWO BROTHERS

According to the Holy See's diplomats, the forthcoming election of the new Polish-Lithuanian monarch looked fairly peaceful. It seems to be indeed a rather peculiar position, given the war situation in Ukraine and, as Adam Andrzej Witusik put it, «the mood of general panic»[11]. It was, after all, an election in the time of open war

7 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 17 VI 1648, f. 172: «Non vi è segno, come a punto se non vi fosse mai qui stato Nuntio». All the translations present in the text are made by the author.

8 Cf. Marta Szymańska, "Kilka uwag o organizacji służby dyplomatycznej w czasach panowania Władysława IV Wazy (1634–1648)", in Barwicka-Makula, et al., *Rzeczpospolita, Europa i świat*: 276-77.

9 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 178, Letter of Panzirolo to De Torres, Rome 17 VI 1648, f. 94.

10 See for example letter of Innocent X to John Casimir, Rome [1648], in VMPL III, 450-51.

11 Adam Andrzej Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza w 1648 roku", *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio F, Nauki Filozoficzne i Humanistyczne,* 17 (1962): 122: «Nastrój powszechnej paniki». Interestingly, it was not an isolated opinion, reducing the election of 1648 to a simple choice between the Vasa princes, both half-brothers of the deceased ruler, which is also confirmed by the opinion of some historians, according to whom the beginning of the interregnum, including the convocation assembly, was a time of calm among the nobility and free of major internal political conflict. See Mikołaj Jemiołowski, *Pamiętnik dzieje Polski zawierający (1648–1679)*, ed. Jan Dzięgielewski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2000), 55; Maciej Franz, "Wolna elekcja w czasach wojny. O okolicznościach elekcji króla Polski w 1648 roku", in *Wokół wolnych elekcji. O znaczeniu idei wyboru–między prawami a obowiązkami w państwie polsko-litewskim XVI–XVIII wieku*, red. Mariusz Markiewicz, Dariusz Rolnik, and Filip Wolański (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2016): 280; Edward Opaliński, "Elekcje wazowskie w Polsce. Stosunek szlachty do instytucji okresu bezkrólewia", *Kwartalnik Historyczny,* XCII/3 (1985): 547.

– a campaign against the Cossacks that was fractured and fraught with difficulties, during which two commanders of the Commonwealth's army had recently been taken prisoner: grand hetman Mikołaj Potocki and field hetman Marcin Kalinowski. Nevertheless, the nuncio was dismissive of any possibility of conflict for the crown between the aspiring Vasa brothers and of the emergence of severe political divisions among the nobility. In any case, in such a contingency, De Torres pointed to the possibility of the election of Prince Philip William of Neuburg, husband of Anna Catherine Constance Vasa, or Archduke Leopold Habsburg[12].

Political intuition, however, failed – De Torres was wrong. For as early as 24 June 1648, the nuncio reported that the clergy and other Catholic senators were inclined to support the aspirations of Charles Ferdinand, while John Casimir seemed to be pushed by the protestant party. The dividing line, however, was not solely related to the issue of faith. It can be said that John Casimir soon received the support of the 'conciliatory party' in the Commonwealth, in which chancellor Jerzy Ossoliński played the leading role. At the same time, Charles Ferdinand headed the so-called 'war party', aiming for a showdown with the Cossacks, led by Jeremi Wiśniowiecki. Nevertheless, as De Torres stated at the time, it was only the convocation assembly that would only lighten the nobility's mood on the forthcoming election[13].

Meanwhile, both Vasa princes made efforts to gain papal support in their rivalry for the Polish-Lithuanian crown, which was a common practice on such occasions. John Casimir appealed to the nuncio to obtain for him the official and exclusive support of the Holy See, as had happened in the case of Urban VIII and Ladislaus IV in 1632, through the intermediary of the then nuncio Onorato Visconti (this was a precedent in which the pope deviated from his usual position of *padre comune* in situations in which Catholic princes competed with each other in political matters)[14]. At the same time, John Casimir asserted his gratitude for the cardinal

12 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Słonim 21 V 1648, f. 182r. See also AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 1 VII 1648, f. 194: «Io per me credo, che l'elettione non possa cadere in altri, che in questi Serenissimi Principi, e massime se fra di loro non si disuniranno, et in tal caso penso che s'havrebbe mira del Prencipe di Neoburgo, cognato loro, e doppo questo a qualched'uno degli Arciduchi fratelli dell'Imperatore, o vero d'Inspruch»; AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 29 VII 1648, f. 197.

13 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 24 VI 1648, f. 183r.

14 About papal involvement in the election of 1632 see Włodzimierz Kaczorowski, "Stanowisko Stolicy Apostolskiej wobec elekcji królewicza Władysława", *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, XXIX (1984): 155-66; Paweł Duda, *Krzyż i karabela. Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w ocenie dyplomacji papieskiej 1623–1635* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2019), 179-96. On the papal concept of neutrality towards the Polish-Lithuanian royal elections see Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 95-110; Ead., "Problem papieskiej neutralności wobec rywalizacji o tron w Rzeczypospolitej w wyniku abdykacji Jana Kazimierza Wazy", in *Sztuka roztropności. Dyplomacja Stolicy Apostolskiej wobec Rzeczypospolitej, Europy i świata*, red. Krzysztof Ożóg, and Ryszard Skowron (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2020): 141-61. In any

dignity he had received in 1646, justifying his controversial departure from Rome[15]. In addition, he sent a letter to Innocent X, written in Italian, in which he lamented his unsuccessful attempts to reclaim his Swedish patrimony, together with his empty royal title, asking for papal prayers for success in Scandinavian affairs[16].

Charles Ferdinand opted for a slightly different way of seeking papal support, sending his trusted servant (*Abbate di Plosca*) to the nuncio with a letter addressed directly to the pope, in which the bishop of Wrocław sought the Holy See's patronage in view of the forthcoming election[17]. Some historians believe that Charles Ferdinand also asked in Rome for the possibility of withdrawing from the priesthood in the event of a successful election for himself[18]. There is hardly any source confirmation of a similar theory; the bishop of Wrocław had, after all, only received the diaconate and had never opted for higher priestly ordination[19].

In response, De Torres approached both princes in very general terms, exalting the virtues of the members of the Vasa dynasty, their devotion to the Holy See and the Catholic faith[20]. The pope addressed to both John Casimir and Charles Ferdinand, but also to the senate of the Commonwealth, briefs of condolence appropriate to the occasion, traditionally extolling the virtues of the deceased Ladislaus IV, in particular by lauding his activity in the field of battles against the Cossacks, the Tartars and the Ottoman Empire. In the same letters, Innocent X expressed his hope for a concordant course of the *interregnum* and care for the affairs of Catholicism, assuring of the papal protection to Poland-Lithuania[21].

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case, the grand chancellor of the Crown, Jerzy Ossoliński, informed De Torres that Visconti, by order of Urban VIII, endorsed the Vasa dynasty in general words, and it was only when support for Ladislaus proved to be widespread and did not augur any problems for his acclamation that the Holy See decided to back him by name at the election *sejm*. De Torres pointed out, however, that in 1632, an exceptional situation of consensus about the candidate had taken place, while in the case of the 1648 election, it would be necessary to maintain a far-reaching neutrality towards the competition of the Vasa brothers. See AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 22 VII 1648, f. 215-16.

15 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 1 VII 1648, f. 184.

16 Letter of John Casimir to Innocent X, Warsaw 15 VII 1648, in VMPL III, 450.

17 Letter of Charles Ferdinand to Innocent X, Warsaw 27 VI 1648, in VMPL III, 449. See also AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 1 VII 1648, f. 184.

18 Ludwik Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński* (Warszawa: Księgarnia Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1924), 305.

19 Władysław Czapliński, "Karol Ferdynand (Waza)", in *Internetowy Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, [https://www.ipsb.nina.gov.pl/a/biografia/karol-ferdynand-waza-1613-1655-biskup-wroclawski-i-plocki, (access: 11 II 2024)].

20 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 1 VII 1648, f. 184.

21 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of Innocent X to Charles Ferdinand, Rome 25 VII 1648, f. 253; AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of Innocent X

According to papal diplomacy correspondence, at the beginning of July 1648, Charles Ferdinand's affairs in the Commonwealth were better than John Casimir's. In the nuncio's eyes, the bishop of Wrocław enjoyed more support among the nobility, and it was in him that De Torres saw the most serious candidate for the throne[22]. The younger prince also enjoyed the important support of the imperial court[23]. As already mentioned, the episcopate was on Charles Ferdinand's part too (except, according to De Torres, of the bishop of Warmia Wacław Leszczyński)[24]. On the other hand, the nuncio admitted that

> the affairs of His Majesty [King of Sweden, John Casimir] cannot be said to be hopeless, as he also has many leading knights in his faction, even if they say they are duty-bound. The French are doing their part, hoping to retain the Most Serene Queen [Marie Louise], even though she says she wants to retire to some monastery[25].

De Torres repeatedly emphasised John Casimir's French contacts. He reported that the prince had met with the French ambassador in a private forum in the apartments of Marie Louise[26]. According to the papal diplomat's opinion, John Casimir was, however, more interested in revindicating his rights to the Swedish crown and initially did not show particular commitment to the project of assuming the Polish-Lithuanian throne, which opinion quickly proved to be illusory[27].

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to John Casimir, Rome 25 VII 1648, f. 254; Letter of Innocent X to senators, Rome 25 VII 1648, in VMPL III, 450.

22 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Słonim 21 V 1648, f. 182r: «Concorreranno più degli altri a questo Reame il Principe Casimiro, il quale forse, che hora assumerà il titolo di Re di Suetia, ma non ha affetto, né stima di sorte alcuna nella Republica; anzi che ha molti Senatori contrari. Il Principe Carlo si crede che sia per haver maggior seguito, come ha maggior credito, e perciò havrà ancora più forte fattione». Also AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 1 VII 1648, f. 185; AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 7 VII 1648, f. 193.

23 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 15 VII 1648, f. 196.

24 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 5 VIII 1648, f. 198.

25 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 29 VII 1648, f. 197: «Le cose però di Sua Maestà [John Casimir] non può dirsi, che habbino per disperare, poiché anch'essa fra la sua fazione è di molti cavalieri principali, se pure dicono da dovero. Li Francesi ne fanno le loro parti, sperando di rimaritargli la Serenissima Regina, ancorché questa vada dicendo che si vuol ritirare in qualche monastero».

26 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 7 VII 1648, f. 193.

27 De Torres informed the Secretariat of State that John Casimir had accepted the title of King of Sweden as hereditary, see AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 24 VI 1648, f. 176.

In any case, in July 1648, the papal diplomat acknowledged the problem of the unstable political mood among the Polish-Lithuanian nobility, who, according to De Torres, «can change entirely during one feast»[28]. In the opinion of the nuncio, only the moment of the election *sejm* and the election act itself was to reveal the definite political sympathies of the respective electors[29].

De Torres perceived an apparent and long-standing lack of cordiality between the Vasa brothers. «Prince Charles has twice invited the King of Sweden to the dinner after His Majesty's return [from Rome], and he has never accepted» – the nuncio reported[30]. According to the papal diplomat's account, it was John Casimir who sowed the seeds of discord, envying his brother's extensive contacts and accusing him of winning supporters to the disadvantage of his own name[31]. The elder prince was even to express that, in the event of an unsuccessful election for himself, he would support the Sultan rather than his brother[32]. On the other hand, Charles Ferdinand was said to have ignored the presence of a French ambassador in the Commonwealth as a sign of contempt for the *Roi très chrétien* support for John Casimir[33].

In such circumstances, De Torres dissuaded the pope from going beyond the canon of *padre comune* conduct and officially giving papal support to any of the candidates, as had had place in the case of their older half-brother Ladislaus[34]. «Now, there is no more certainty of one than of another. If, in the meantime, one of the brothers was to be discovered greater than the other, I would present the briefs that I had in the express and specific recommendation of one of them [...]; but in either case, it would have to be done with secrecy»[35] – the nuncio reported. In any case, traditionally, the official

28 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 7 VII 1648, f. 194: «In un banchetto si può mutar tutta».

29 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 7 VII 1648, f. 194.

30 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 1 VII 1648, f. 185: «Il Principe Carlo ha due volte invitato il Re di Suetia al desinare dopo il ritorno di Sua Maestà, né l'ha mai accettato».

31 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 7 VII 1648, f. 193.

32 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 29 VII 1648, f. 197: «Il Re di Suezia si lascia intendere, che non riuscendo adesso il diventar Re, che più tosto vuol chiamar un Turco, che cada in persona del Principe Carlo suo fratello».

33 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 29 VII 1648, f. 197.

34 Gregorowicz, "Problem papieskiej neutralności", 141-61.

35 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 7 VII 1648, f. 194: «Hora non vi è più sicurezza di uno, che non di un altro. Se fra questo mentre si scoprisse maggiore la fattione di uno, che dell'altro de' fratelli, in tal caso io presentarei li brevi, che havessi in raccomandatione espressa e specifica di qualcheduno di loro […]; ma nell'una e nell'altra maniera dovrebbe esser con segretezza».

briefs were not to be presented until the election *sejm*, on the occasion of a public audience of a papal diplomat[36].

At the convocation assembly (which lasted from 16 July to 1 August 1648), with a fairly poor attendance, there was a majority favouring Charles Ferdinand. As already stated, he enjoyed strong support from a major part of the nobility and the episcopate. On the other hand, John Casimir was supported by the Protestants, especially the Prussian cities and Gdańsk, as well as the Orthodox in Ruthenia[37]. Pre-electoral writings cited arguments both for and against both brothers. John Casimir's supporters pointed primarily to his seniority, hereditary right to the Swedish crown and military experience. Charles Ferdinand was valued for his positive character traits, which were to distinguish him favourably from his elder brother.

De Torres' initial serenity was soon disturbed by the growing conflict between the competing brothers and, above all, by the worsening political situation in the Commonwealth. Moreover, the unsettled situation in Ukraine adversely affected the presence of Lithuanians and Ruthenians at the election *sejm* and even cast doubts on its convening[38]. As early as July 1648, the nuncio presented his concerns that the forthcoming election might bring an armed domestic conflict in the Polish-Lithuanian state[39].

TOWARDS THE ELECTION SEJM

As for the final position of the Holy See on the threshold of the election *sejm*, the official instructions to the nuncio were very general. Innocent X believed in the effectiveness of primate Łubieński's support for the interests of the Catholic Church in the Commonwealth, expressing his hope for the speedy election of a Catholic monarch[40]. The papal diplomatic correspondence nevertheless reveals a clear preference for the aspirations of Charles Ferdinand, who was also supported by Emperor Ferdinand III[41]. It is impossible not to assume that the episode of

36 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 12 VII 1648, f. 193-94.

37 Tadeusz Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Śląsk, 1984), 58. See AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 12 VIII 1648, f. 199-200; AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 19 VIII 1648, f. 204.

38 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 15 VII 1648, f. 196.

39 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 7 VII 1648, f. 194; AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 15 VII 1648, f. 196.

40 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 178, Letter of Panzirolo to De Torres, Rome 18 VII 1648, f. 95; AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 178, Letter of Panzirolo to De Torres, Rome 10 X 1648, f. 99r. In reality, the primate's advanced age and his health ailments largely prevented Łubieński from appearing in 1648 as a strong political mediator of internal dissent, see Franz, "Wolna elekcja w czasach wojny", 283.

41 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 134; Aleksandra Ziober, "The Role and Use of Religion in the Politics of Candidates to the Polish Throne in the 17th

John Casimir's Roman adventures concerning his interrupted Jesuit novitiate and, in rather scandalous circumstances, his relinquished cardinal's hat did not harm the elder prince in terms of gaining support from the Holy See for the election of 1648. Indeed, the episcopate, but also the Jesuits, clearly supported the endeavours of Charles Ferdinand[42]. Moreover, Rome could not be pleased with the Prussian support for John Casimir[43], which cost the prince the 'Assurance' of September 1648 that, in the event of his election, provided the Elector with many advantages: granting Frederick William and his successors the right to pay fief tribute through deputies, to have part the senate and to vote at the election[44]. Similar resentment must have been aroused by Swedish support for John Casimir. Likewise, Innocent X, breaking with the pro-French policy of Urban VIII, viewed the elder prince's close ties with the French court unfavourably[45]. Finally, on the sidelines of his reflections on the rivalry between the Vasas, De Torres also described the comity between the Cossack Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky and the Voivode of Transilvania George I Rakoczy, as well as the latter's son's (Sigismund's) aspirations for the Polish-Lithuanian throne[46]. The conflict between the brothers steadily escalated towards the autumn. According to De Torres' account

> the King of Suetia [John Casimir] says he does not wish to hear of any conciliation if this Realm will not be given to him. Prince Charles seems to think that he already has it for sure, nor does he think less of being able to give it up, so there is more and more fear of division and turmoil[47].

According to the nuncio, the acute conflict between the Vasa brothers might have turned into a risk of the election of a third, less-expected candidate[48]. De Torres

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Century", *Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Historycznej*, 13 (2018): 119.

42 Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, 307.

43 Frederick William officially sided with John Casimir on 12 June 1648. See Barbara Szymczak, "Działalność dyplomacji brandenburskiej w okresie bezkrólewia w Rzeczypospolitej w 1648 r.", *Przegląd Historyczny,* 89/1 (1998): 39.

44 Szymczak, "Działalność dyplomacji brandenburskiej", 40.

45 Hanna Osiecka-Samsonowicz, *Polskie uroczystości w barokowym Rzymie 1587-1696* (Warszawa: Instytut Historii Sztuki PAN, 2012), 171-72.

46 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 1 VII 1648, f. 194: «Il Transilvano d'Ungheria, avvicinandosi con buon numero di gente alli confini di Cracovia, fa credere che egli habbia qualche pensiero di voler concorrere con gli altri, per essere eletto Re»; AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 3 X 1648, f. 211-12.

47 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 26 IX 1648, f. 210: «Il Re di Suetia [John Casimir] dice di non voler sentir, che gli si habbi di alcun temperamento, quando non gli si dia questo Reame. Il Signor Principe Carlo, parendogli di haverlo già di sicuro, né meno stima di potergli cedere, onde sempre più si può temer di divisione e di tumulti».

48 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 12 IX 1648, f. 208.

feared that this could have been Rakoczy, who, in his view, was a major threat to Polish-Lithuanian Catholicism. The nuncio's involvement around the election was thus focused in this direction: «I do not leave my part to abolish from the minds of Catholics these pernicious concepts and resolutions for our Holy Catholic Religion»[49].

The election *sejm* of 1648 deliberated from 6 October to 20 November. Despite the recent defeat in the battle against the Cossacks at Piławice (20–23 September) and a significant weakening of the so-called 'war party', it seemed that Charles Ferdinand remained a favourite at the opening of the electoral assembly. His campaign's leader was then led by the vice-chancellor of the Crown, bishop of Chełmno Andrzej Leszczyński[50]. De Torres also pointed to the support of the Lithuanian vice-chancellor Kazimierz Leon Sapieha as a considerable asset for Charles Ferdinand's candidacy, given the extent of his influence in the Grand Duchy and his financial capabilities[51]. However, due to the severe defeats on the Cossack front, a group of John Casimir's supporters gradually reinforced. The fact that Filip Kazimierz Obuchowicz, a supporter of the elder prince, became elected marshal of the election *sejm* was also not without significance. Finally, John Casimir's party was strengthened by the death of George I Rakoczy, whose son the Polish-Lithuanian non-Catholics, and above all the Cossacks, had hitherto sympathised with. It occurred just on the threshold of the *sejm* (11 October 1648)[52].

In such circumstances, De Torres was just about being afraid to present the electoral briefs on behalf of Innocent X:

> In the meantime, I will not share the content of these briefs with anyone. [...] I also have great doubts that these two brother princes will not be satisfied with the candour and affection of His Beatitude towards their Royal House since each of them claims the offices of His Holiness for himself, and the King of Sweden openly told me so[53].

49 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 31 X 1648, f. 226-27: «Non lascio di far le mie parti per abolir degli animi de' Cattolici questi pernicciosissimi concetti e risolutioni per la nostra Santa Religion Cattolica».

50 Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie*, 58-61. See AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 26 IX 1648, f. 210.

51 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 12 VIII 1648, f. 199-200. Sapieha changed his position during the election *sejm*, shifting to support John Casimir. See Ziober, "Dwie ostatnie elekcje Wazów jako przyczynek do awansu majątkowego i urzędniczego wybranych rodzin Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego", in *W kręgu myśli Władysława Czaplińskiego. Wrocławskie prace z Historii Nowożytnej*, t. 1, red. Filip Wolański, and Leszek Ziątkowski (Wrocław: Chronicon, 2016), 131.

52 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 145.

53 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 3 X 1648, f. 211-12: «Fratanto io non publicherò con alcuno il contenuto di detti brevi, […] dubito anche grandemente, che questi due Principi fratelli non si appagheranno di questa candidezza et affetto di Sua Beatitudine verso la Casa

Thus, as in previous cases of royal elections, the papal attitude of *padre comune* could not satisfy either side. As the nuncio noted, «if the Kingdom preaches as just and most holy the resolution of His Holiness to recommend both princes, they will not be satisfied, having declared themselves beforehand. Therefore, the blame will be laid upon me, imputing it to my actions and industry»[54]. De Torres also requested instructions in the event of a possible split election[55].

According to De Torres, considering the ongoing fighting in Ukraine, postponing the election would have been more advantageous. However, the nuncio was aware of the irrevocability of the convocation assembly's decision on the matter[56]. On the other hand, contradicting his argument somewhat, De Torres stressed that the absence of a monarch worsened the situation of the Commonwealth in the face of the conflict with the Cossacks and that only royal authority would be able to restore domestic peace[57]. The nuncio's position on this issue, therefore, diverges from the essential points of the debate taking place at the election *sejm* around the proposal by the bishop of Kuyavia Mikołaj Wojciech Gniewosz to proceed as soon as possible to the election of a monarch without waiting for the enactment of the exorbitances. The proposal was supported by the vice-chancellor of the Crown, bishop of Chełmno Andrzej Leszczyński, voivodes of Volhynia Adam Aleksander Sanguszka, Mazovia Stanisław Warszycki, Vitebsk Paweł Jan Sapieha, and Bracław Adam Kisiel. However, once again, the nobility's fear of overstepping the customary law and creating a dangerous precedent prevailed in this matter – the election of the monarch was not accelerated[58].

As for the presence of foreign representatives in the Commonwealth during an *interregnum*, they were traditionally unwelcome by the nobility[59]. Interestingly, doubts about the legitimacy of the nuncio's presence in Warsaw during the election *sejm* of 1648 arose among members of the episcopate, too. For example, they were to be expressed by the bishop of Kuyavia Mikołaj Wojciech Gniewosz. At that time, the vice-chancellor of the Crown, bishop of Chełmno (and later primate) Andrzej Leszczyński was said to have defended De Torres, claiming that «there was no law or

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loro Reale, poiché ciascuno pretende per se gli uffici di Sua Santità, et il Re di Suetia me lo disse apertamente».

54 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 3 X 1648, f. 211-12: «Se bene il Regno predicherà per giusta e per Santissima la risolutione presa da Sua Santità di raccomandare ambedue i Principi, questi però non se ne chiameranno sodisfatti, essendosene dichiarati prima. Perciò sopra di me si caricherà la colpa, imputandosi ad opera e manifattura mia».

55 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 3 X 1648, f. 211-12.

56 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 19 IX 1648, f. 278r.

57 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 24 X 1648, f. 330.

58 See Opaliński, "Elekcje wazowskie", 541-42.

59 See Gregorowicz, "Una protezione ben accetta?", 123-48.

custom by which the Apostolic Nuncios had to be absent from the city [of Warsaw] at the time of the election»[60]. Primate Łubieński also opposed the proposal to dismiss De Torres. Filip Kazimierz Obuchowicz, marshal of the *sejm*, then took up a discussion on the subject in the senate; in the end, the senators decided to recognise and confirm a special regard for the representative of the Holy See. Interestingly, as the nuncio reported, «the heretics themselves voted with such deference in favour of the Holy See, that it is incredible to say»[61].
On 30 October, on the eve of his public audience at the election *sejm*, De Torres visited John Casimir in Nieporęt, and Charles Ferdinand in Jabłonna (the residences of the princes located near the city of Warsaw):

> I consigned to His Majesty the brief of Our Lord in answer to the information of having assumed the title of King of Sweden. I then informed both of these Most Serene Princes about His Beatitude's resolution to perform his offices for the Royal House without expressing them more to one of them than to the other because His Holiness was persuaded that the Realm would go to one of them, and that he wanted it for each, without any distinction of affection[62].

The nuncio furthermore informed the princes of the planned content of his electoral oration, which was favourably received by both[63]. According to Ludwik Kubala, a few days before De Torres' public audience, the papal diplomat was supposed to have personally persuaded Charles Ferdinand to concede to his elder brother[64], but this does not seem likely and has not yet been clearly confirmed by historical sources.
The nuncio's public audience at the election *sejm*[65] occurred on 31 October 1648[66].

60 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 10 X 1648, f. 317-18: «Non vi era né legge, né consuetudine, per le quali i Nuntii Apostolici si debbono assentare da città nel tempo della elettione».

61 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 10 X 1648, f. 317-18: «Gli stessi heretici votarono con tanto ossequio verso la Santa Sede, ch'è incredibile a dirsi».

62 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 31 X 1648, f. 333: «Resi a Sua Maestà il breve di Nostro Signore, responsivo alla parte datagli d'havere assunto il titolo di Re di Svetia. Partecipai poi ad ambedue questi Serenissimi Prencipi la risolutione presa da Sua Beatitudine di far suoi offici per la Casa reale, senza espressione più d'uno, che dell'altro, perché si persuadeva la Santità Sua, che non fosse per uscire il Reame da uno di loro, e che a ciascuno lo desiderava singolarmente senza distintione d'affetto».

63 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 31 X 1648, f. 333.

64 Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, 320. See also Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 147.

65 Cf. Dorota Gregorowicz, "Audiencja publiczna nuncjusza apostolskiego Galeazza Marescottiego na sejmie elekcyjnym 1669 r. Znaczenie i ceremoniał", *Res Historica*, 52 (2021): 109-40.

66 Janusz Dąbrowski, *Diariusz Sejmu Elekcyjnego 1648 roku* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Historia Iagellonica", 2013), 118-20.

De Torres arrived in a traditional setting, escorted by carriages sent by nobles, senators, and the French ambassador. The delegation arriving at the papal diplomat's residence consisted of the bishop of Lutsk Andrzej Gembicki, bishop of Chełmno Andrzej Leszczyński, and the grand secretary of the Crown, bishop of Cracow Piotr Gembicki. Upon arrival near the site of the election (De Torres gives a distance of an Italian mile, equal to about one and a half kilometres), there was a welcoming from the part of four marshals and the secretary of the election *sejm*, but also many bishops and other senators. The nuncio was then escorted to the 'circle' (Polish: koło), where he was given a central seat between the archbishops of Gniezno and Lviv. Then, he handed over two papal briefs: one for the senators and the other for the deputies of the nobility. The letters were collected by primate Łubieński and handed over to secretary Gembicki, who read them aloud to universal applause[67]. De Torres then made his speech[68]. He was answered by Łubieński, who thanked him for the traditional papal protection of the Commonwealth and emphasised the role of the principle of unanimity in the tradition of Polish-Lithuanian elections. In the nuncio's opinion, this last detail was to cause particular satisfaction to Innocent X. The audience was thus concluded, and De Torres, accompanied by the same retinue that had brought him to the venue, was escorted back to his residence[69].

From Rome, awaiting news of the election's final result, it was continuously written in a similar fashion: «We expect to hear from you soon about the successful election of the new king»[70]. The Holy See expressed the hope that the election of a new monarch would successfully resolve the internal conflicts and the Cossack affair[71]. However, the protracted deliberations of the *sejm* and the ever-growing political tensions were causing increasing concern at the papal court. Innocent X, therefore, in November 1648, addressed the nobility in accusing terms, expressing his dissatisfaction and appealing for the preservation of internal peace[72]. Moreover, in one of his letters addressed to John Casimir, the pope directly admonished the prince, emphasising how significant a threat to the position of Catholicism was posed by the ongoing conflict over power in the Commonwealth[73]. The papal briefs also show that in November, it was decided at the papal court that Scipione Pannocchieschi, archbishop of Pisa and the then apostolic nuncio to the imperial

67 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 182, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 31 X 1648, f. 89v-90.

68 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Electoral speech of apostolic nuncio Giovanni de Torres delivered on 31 X 1648, f. 336-40.

69 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 182, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 31 X 1648, f. 89v-90.

70 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 178, Letter of Panzirolo to De Torres, Rome 24 X 1648, f. 99v: «Presto aspettiamo d'udire da lei felice successo dell'elettione del nuovo Re».

71 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 178, Letter of Panzirolo to De Torres, Rome 31 X 1648, f. 100r.

72 Letter of Innocent X to senators, Rome 28 XI 1648, in VMPL III, 451-52.

73 Letter of Innocent X to John Casimir, Rome 28 XI 1648, in VMPL III, 452.

court, was to travel to Poland-Lithuania as extraordinary nuncio and supporter of De Torres' actions[74]. Such a letter was sent by Innocent X before news of John Casimir's election reached Rome so that, in the final resolution, Pannocchieschi's planned mission proved unnecessary and did not materialise.

In the end, it was primarily the support of the Lithuanians, followed by the arrival of Bohdan Khmelnytsky at the walls of Zamość and the presentation of his readiness to conclude peace on condition of John Casimir's election, that determined the choice of the new monarch[75]. As a result of the settlement subsequently concluded between the princes, John Casimir was to receive the crown, while Charles Ferdinand was to obtain the abbeys and the Duchy of Opole and Racibórz[76]. Already during the sejm, Charles Ferdinand used to be visited by numerous delegations aiming to persuade him to make concessions to his elder brother, seeing in bishop of Wrocław such an inclination[77]. At the time, however, the nuncio was distrustful of similar rumours that the younger of the princes would be disposed to withdraw his aspirations to the throne in favour of calming the situation in the Commonwealth: «I have found that none of these Princes is wary of their advances, on the contrary, each one is sure to secure the kingdom for himself»[78]. Finally, on 14 November 1648, a letter from Charles Ferdinand was read to the electoral assembly in favour of his elder brother's election. The nomination of the new monarch took place on 20 November, and the election sejm concluded its deliberations five days later[79].

The election of John Casimir was conveyed to Innocent X by primate Łubieński in a letter of 23 November 1648, expressing gratitude for the papal protection and the service of the apostolic nuncio present in Poland-Lithuania, asking for further support for both the new king and the Commonwealth[80]. According to custom, following the election, John Casimir also personally informed Innocent X of his success, acknowledging the papal prayers and intercession and asking for a blessing

74 Letter of Innocent X to Łubieński, Rome 28 XI 1648, in VMPL III, 451. In Ibid., Letter of Innocent X to senators, Rome 28 XI 1648, 451-52; Letter of Innocent X to nobility, Rome 28 XI 1648, 452; Letter of Innocent X to John Casimir, Rome 28 XI 1648, 452.

75 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 146, 150-51; Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie*, 64-66.

76 Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie*, 66.

77 On 1 November 1648, a meeting of the episcopate was held at the primate's residence. As a result, a delegation of two bishops – Wacław Leszczyński of Warmia and Stanisław Pstrokoński of Chełm – was sent to the princes. Its main task was to reconcile the two candidates for the throne, but it sought, above all, to have Charles Ferdinand withdraw from the rivalry, as he seemed inclined to step down. See Wójcik, *Jan Kazimierz*, 61-62.

78 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 31 X 1648, f. 266-67: «Io ho trovato, che niuno di questi Principi diffida de' suoi avanzamenti, anzi che ciascuno si tien sicuro per sé il Regno».

79 Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie*, 67; Wójcik, *Jan Kazimierz*, 63-4.

80 Letter of Łubieński to Innocent X, Warsaw 23 XI 1648, in VMPL III, 454.

on his upcoming reign[81]. A separate dispatch was sent by John Casimir to Cardinal Secretary of State Giacomo Panziroli[82].

THE HAPPY (?) OUTCOMES

Shortly after the election, the nuncio met with the newly elected monarch. De Torres congratulated the king-elect, assuring him of papal support. He also launched efforts to direct the new monarch's nomination policy, as well as the affairs of the Eastern Churches' Union[83]. During this first audience, John Casimir revealed to De Torres his intention to marry the Queen dowager, Marie Louise, expressing hopes for papal dispensation, as the project of marrying his brother's widow was classified as an incestuous act and not permitted by canon law[84]. The nuncio then presented the royal argumentation on the issue in Rome:

> That the Commonwealth, especially in these calamitous times, would not and could not provide a living for two Queens, that the King himself and the Queen dowager can hardly now be sustained because of the inclemency of revolutions and wars, that in the present strait of the Kingdom. Neither the King nor the Commonwealth would have subjects who could make the expenses of bringing a new Queen from distant countries. That since the King and Queen are much advanced in age, this marriage would satisfy Prince Charles [Ferdinand] and his adherents in the hope of succeeding to the crown. Otherwise, one might fear, seeing him [the King] marrying some young Princess, that they would disturb the peace of the Kingdom or conspire against his Royal Person. That His Majesty does not think of giving jealousy to any Catholic Prince so since this Queen, who is already here, is Italian rather than French or Austrian, he is persuaded that all the parties would be conciliated. That if he [the King] were to have many offspring, it would be necessary for him to see them in a state of poverty because the Commonwealth would not allow him to provide for those princes especially, as it finds its treasury very poor. All these reasons have been suggested to me by the King, who desires and begs an answer to them with extraordinary solicitude and all the greater celerity[85].

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81 Letter of John Casimir to Innocent X, Warsaw 4 XII 1648, in VMPL III, 454-55.

82 Letter of John Casimir to Panzirolo, Warsaw 4 XII 1648, in VMPL III, 455.

83 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 28 XI 1648, f. 379.

84 See Wójcik, *Jan Kazimierz*, 69.

85 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 28 XI 1648, f. 231-32: «Che la Republica massime in questi tempi calamitari non darebbe e non potrebbe dar da vivere a due Regine, che l'istesso Re e la Regina Vedova difficilmente posson hora vivere per le inclemenze delle revolutioni e delle guerre, che nelle presenti strettezze del Regno non havrebbe né il Re, né la Republica, soggetti che potessero far queste spese di andar a levar una nuova Regina da lontani paesi. Che essendo il Re e la Regina assai inanzi con l'età, con questo matrimonio si conservarebbe sodisfatto il Signor Principe Carlo con li suoi adherenti con speranza di poter succedere a questa corona, potendosi temer altrimente, se vedessero, che si maritasse con qualche giovane Principessa, che non intorbidassero questi la quiete del Regno e non cospirassero contro la sua

This passage is particularly interesting and confirms the motivations known to historians, which guided the king and the nobility in John Casimir's decision to take Marie Louise as his spouse. Nonetheless, it is surprising to see the king (and later the nuncio) portraying her as a 'neutral' Italian, leaving her French connections aside in silence.

News of the successful election has reached Rome relatively late, at the turn of the year. The first unofficial information of 'Casimir IV's elevation arrived in the Eternal City as the Viennese *avvisi* of 26 December 1648[86]. In Panziroli's letter to De Torres of 2 January 1649, the Cardinal Secretary of State reported that «Our Lord's Holiness took great delight and joy in this, hoping and promising us from His Majesty's singular piety and zeal every success for the profit and increase of our Holy Faith and the Catholic Religion in these Kingdoms»[87].

As early as 28 December 1648, liturgical celebrations in honour of the new ruler of the Commonwealth were held at the Church of St Stanislaus in Rome. In the temple, appositely decorated for the occasion, the Mass was celebrated by the canon of Warmia Domenico Roncalli in the presence of the Cardinals Francesco Barberini and Virginio Orsini, who belonged to the French party in the College of Cardinals. Also present were the Ambassador of the *Roi très chrétien*, prelates, nobility and aristocracy sympathetic to Poland-Lithuania. Traditionally, the *Te Deum* anthem was sung on the occasion. There was also an illumination of the surrounding buildings, a fireworks display, and mortar shooting. It should be noted, however, that Innocent X himself did not particularly celebrate John Casimir's electoral success. It cannot be denied that the king-elect was not received very warmly in Rome, given the events of 1643–1646 concerning his Jesuit novitiate and later his cardinal dignity, out of which emerged a scandal reflecting negatively on the Holy See's relations with Ladislaus IV. The pro-Habsburg Innocent X was also reluctant about John Casimir's apparent links with the French court[88].

Nevertheless, a papal brief congratulating the king-elect was issued on 9 January 1649[89]. On 23 January, Innocent X addressed the senators, expressing his joy for the outcome of the election, praising the nobility's 'unanimity', and appealing for the

Real Persona. Che Sua Maestà non pensa di dar gelosia a niun Principe Cattolico, onde essendo questa Regina già in casa Italiana più che Francese, o Austriaca, si persuade che si rimovebbero tutti li rispetti di più inclinatione ad uno, che ad altro. Che se gli succedesse di haver molti figli, gli converebbe vedergli in stato di povertà, perche la Republica non consentirebbe di proveder quei Principi, e massime che trovano poverissimo il proprio erario. Tutte queste ragioni mi sono state suggerite dal Re e ne desidera, e ne prega la risposta con straordinaria premura, e con ogni maggior celerità».

86 AAV, Segr. Stato, Avvisi, vol. 101, Vienna 26 XII 1648, f. 32r. See Osiecka-Samsonowicz, *Polskie uroczystości*, 171.

87 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 178, Letter of Panzirolo to De Torres, Rome 2 I 1649, f. 103r: «La Santità di Nostro Signore ne ha preso contento, e allegrezza grande, sperandone, e promettendoci dalla singola pietà, e zelo della Maestà Sua ogni buono successo in profitto e acrescimento della nostra Santa Fede, e della Religione Cattolica in cotesti Regni».

88 Osiecka-Samsonowicz, *Polskie uroczystości*, 171-72.

89 Letter of Innocent X to John Casimir, Rome 9 I 1649, in VMPL III, 456.

interests of the Catholic Church in the Commonwealth to be protected[90].
John Casimir's coronation took place in Cracow on 17 January 1649 without the participation of foreign envoys[91]. The new monarch granted the first post-coronation audience to De Torres on 2 February. Papal briefs were handed over during this meeting, and mutual courtesies were exchanged. In addition, the marriage of the new monarch to the Queen widow, Maria Louise, was discussed once again[92]. Afterwards, in the spring of 1649, John Casimir received a papal dispensation to marry his late brother's wife[93]. The royal wedding took place on 30 May in Warsaw.

CONCLUSIONS

The Holy See followed the events of 1648 in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with great interest and equally serious concern. The war in Ukraine, the death of Ladislaus IV, and then the problem of the throne vacating at a time of deep military and internal crisis in the state could have posed a real threat to the political position of Poland-Lithuania on the map of Europe at the time, and thus significantly destabilised the local Catholic Church, straining the interests of the Holy See. Cardinal Secretary of State Giacomo Panziroli, therefore, cited the pacification of the Cossack uprising, the successful election of a new monarch and the maintenance of the strong position of the Catholic Church as the main objectives in papal policy towards the *interregnum* in the Commonwealth[94].

The apostolic nuncio in Poland-Lithuania at the time, Giovanni de Torres, seemed to be moderately involved in the political games of the *interregnum*. The political mediocrity and passivity of the then representative of the Holy See in the Commonwealth is attested by external testimonies. Wojciech Miaskowski, chamberlain of Lviv, wrote with a great deal of criticism that «Giovanni de Torres, of mediocre intellect and great ambition, was ready to do anything just to get the scarlet [hat]»[95]. However, the nuncio's activities clearly intensified in the autumn of 1648, during the election *sejm*. De Torres reported that at that time, he was in particularly intense contact with bishop of Cracow Piotr Gembicki, who provided the nuncio's main source of information[96], as foreign diplomats were not allowed to

90 Letter of Innocent X to senators, Rome 9 I 1649, in VMPL III, 456.

91 Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie*, 71.

92 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 57, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Cracow 6 II 1649, f. 27.

93 Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie*, 73.

94 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 178, Letter of Panzirolo to De Torres, Rome 4 XI 1648, f. 100-01.

95 "Relacya legacyi P. Miaskowskiego podkomorzego lwowskiego do Ibrahima i Amuratha cesarzów otomańskich roku 1641", in Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Zbiór pamiętników historycznych o dawnéy Polszcze [...],* t. V (Puławy: Breitkopf i Haertel, 1840), 33: «Jan de Torres, miernego rozumu, wielkiej ambicyi, gotów był wszystko uczynić, byle tylko purpury dostąpił».

96 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 14 XI 1648, f. 360.

participate in the political debates (except on the occasion of a public audience)[97]. De Torres was dedicated to the non-introduction of new legislation during the electoral *sejm*, particularly against the implementation of the demands of dissenters against the interests of the Catholic Church. He was later pleased to report that no similar amendments had taken place[98]. The nuncio was moreover committed to his speech in the public audience, weighing his words and acting with a great deal of political sensitivity in the face of the hanging risk of civil war. Despite the Holy See's rather obvious preference for the aspirations of Charles Ferdinand, the papal diplomatic service staked its claim on the neutrality of the *padre comune* of all the Catholic princes, adopting a conciliatory and mediating stance. Both De Torres and his Roman superiors were relieved by the news of John Casimir's election, which nonetheless dismissed the prospect of political disaster for the Polish-Lithuanian state.

On the sidelines of reflections on the interest and involvement of papal diplomacy in the election of the new monarch after the death of Ladislaus IV, the nuncio's observations on the electoral procedure of 1648 are interesting. According to De Torres, given the political divisions in the Commonwealth, primate Łubieński was then said to have favoured holding the election «by a plurality of votes, even though he was first declared that he would sooner leave the senate than to acclaim [the king] if there were not the consent of all»[99]. This motion caused a negative stir among the nobility and was rejected as incompatible with customary law in the Commonwealth, detrimental to the vaunted idea of unanimity, and therefore all the less appropriate in a conflict situation[100]. It is, however, an essential reference enriching our knowledge of the nobility's attitude to state reforms in the seventeenth century, particularly the glorious but paralysing rule of unanimity in Polish-Lithuanian parliamentarism[101].

97 Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 247-49; Gregorowicz, "Audiencja publiczna", 109-40.

98 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 56, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 14 XI 1648, f. 360.

99 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 19 IX 1648, f. 209: «Secondo la pluralità de voti, ancorche prima si fusse dichiarato di voler più tosto uscir dal Senato, che di acclamarlo, non essendovi il consenso di tutti».

100 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 53, Letter of De Torres to Panzirolo, Warsaw 19 IX 1648, f. 209.

101 Władysław Konopczyński, *Liberum veto. Studium porównawczo-historyczne* (Kraków: Krzyżanowski i Wende, 1918), 150.

ABBREVIATION

AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano
Segr. Stato: Segreteria di Stato

VMPL III: *Vetera monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae gentiumque finitimarum historiam illustrantia: maximam partem nondum edita ex tabularis Vaticanis deprompta collecta ac serie chronologica disposita*, t. III: *A Sixto PP. V usque ad Innocentium PP. XII. 1585–1695*, edidit Augustin Theiner. Romae: Typis Vaticanis, 1863

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ELECTION 1648 FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHARLES FERDINAND VASA

ABSTRACT
Within the framework of the following article particular stages of Prince Charles Ferdinand Vasa's fight for the Polish and Lithuanian crown will be presented. They can be considered as a contribution for the analysis of his failure. It will be possible thanks to this analysis to recognize manner in which independent events in the country and abroad impacted on the elections' ultimate result. Various elements of candidate's means of persuasion and their impact on a change of the nobility's opinion will be analyzed as well. The choice of unsuccessful candidate's perspective can help observe what kind of features and mistakes could discredit candidates for the crown in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

KEYWORDS: Election 1648; Charles Ferdinand Vasa; John Casimir Vasa; Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; House of Vasa.

The interregnum in 1648 in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was considered, inter alia by historian Edward Opaliński, as «the most tragic among the interregnum under the Vasa dynasty»[1]. The death of Vladislaus IV Vasa in May 1648 was preceded by a battle loss of Zhovti Vody, when the Polish troops had been defeated by Zaporozhian Cossacks[2]. In addition, directly after the king's passing another loss took place (Battle of Korsuń in which two Polish hetmans Mikołaj Potocki and Marcin Kalinowski had been taken prisoner). News of these consecutive, alarming events have reached different parts of the country in very small intervals.
Within the framework of this article interregnum of 1648 will be presented from the perspective of one of the most considerable candidates for the Polish throne namely Prince Charles Ferdinand Vasa. In the Polish historiography already exist works concerning the election of 1648; however, they are concentrated on his brother John Casimir's point of view as well as his final victory. It can be mentioned, inter alias, Maciej Franz's[3], or Adam Andrzej Witusik's works[4]. A failure case study remains,

1 Edward Opaliński, "Elekcje wazowskie w Polsce. Stosunek do instytucji okresu bezkrólewia", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 92/3 (1985): 536.

2 AGAD, AR, II, 14, "Relacia Iednego niedobytka Muszkietera zpod Regimentu P. Henryka Denhoffa Obersztera o pogromie P.P. Hetmanów pod Korszuniem", 22 V 1648, 102-111.

3 Maciej Franz, "Wojna elekcja w czasie wojny: o okolicznościach elekcji króla Polski w 1648 roku", in *Wokół wolnych elekcji w państwie polsko-litewskim XVI-XVIII wieku: o znaczeniu idei wyboru–między prawami a obowiązkami,* eds. Mariusz Markiewicz, Dariusz. Rolnik, and Filip Wolański (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2016), 279-92.

4 Adam Andrzej Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza w 1648 roku", *Annales*

nevertheless, an interesting question. It exists also Polish historian Władysław Czapliński's article regarding Charles Ferdinand's election, however, it was his bishop election in 1625[5].

Diarist Bogusław Kazimierz Maskiewicz wrote that «on 19th of June came the news about king Vladislaus IV's death. One week before hetmans' massacre»[6]. According to another diarist Nathan ben Moses Hannower, «at the same day when the Polish army with both of hetmans were captured, arrived news about king Vladislaus's death»[7]. On 5th of June the message about Mikołaj Potocki's army rout in the Battle of Korsuń reached Warsaw[8]. The fact that even regional assembly's documents from the western part of the country underlined the necessity to save the Commonwealth indicates the seriousness of this situation[9]. Pope Innocent X via nuncio Giovanni de Torres incited to rapid election and agreement due to threat of the state[10].

In this difficult situation two Vladislaus IV's half-brothers fought for the crown. The first one, Charles Ferdinand served as Bishop of Wrocław and Płock. However, he was never ordained to the priesthood, most probably because of his hope of obtaining the Polish crown[11]. According to diarist Mikołaj Jemiołowski, courtesy and piety could be seen as its advantages from the standpoint of the nobility[12].

Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, 17 (1962): 119-53.

5 Władysław Czapliński, "Elekcja ostatniego polskiego biskupa wrocławskiego w roku 1625", *Rocznik Zakładu Narodowego imienia Ossolińskich*, 3 (1948): 251-89.

6 Bogusław Kazimierz Maskiewicz, "Diariusz Bogusława Kazimierza Maskiewicza", in *Zbiór pamiętników historycznych o dawnej Polszcze wydanych oraz z listami oryginalnemi królów i znakomitych ludzi w kraju naszym,* t. 5, ed. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Haertel, 1840), 99.

7 Natan Hanower, *Jawein Mecula tj. Bagno Głębokie kronika zdarzeń z lat 1648–1652 napisana przez Natana Hannowera z Zasławia i wydana po raz pierwszy w Wenecyi w r. 1653*, ed. Majer Balaban (Lviv: Drukarnia Jakubowskiego, 1912), 21.

8 Artur Goszczyński, "Adam Kazanowski wobec powstania Chmielnickiego", in *Patrimonium. Studia z historii nowożytnej w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej, Wczesnonowożytny człowiek: przestrzeń-władza-prawo w XVI–XVII wieku,* t. 1, eds. Witalij Mychałowski, Jarosław Stolicki (Kyiv, Cracow: Lotus, Historia Iagiellonica, 2015), 259.

9 AGAD, AR, II, 14, "Laudum Województw Wielkopolskich pod zjazd pro die 4. Junii do Poznania tempore moderni Interregni 1648", 4 VI 1648, 41-9.

10 Wawrzyniec Jan Rudawski, *Historja Polska od śmierci Władysława IV aż do pokoju oliwskiego, czyli dzieje panowania Jana Kazimierza od 1648 do 1660* r., t. 1 (Saint Petersburg, Mogilev: Bolesław Maurycy Wolff, 1855), 47.

11 Tadeusz Fitych, "Charakterystyka biskupów polskich w okresie nuncjatury Giovanniego Battisty Lancelottiego i Onorato Viscontiego", *Częstochowskie Studia Teologiczne*, 27 (2000): 263.

12 Mikołaj Jemiołowski, *Pamiętnik Mikołaja Jemiołowskiego. Towarzysza lekkiej chorągwi, ziemianina województwa bełzkiego obejmujący dzieje Polski od roku 1648 do 1679 spółcześnie, porządkiem lat opowiedziane*, ed. August Bielowski (Lviv: Zakład Narodowy Ossolińskich, 1850), 9.

The seventeenth-century historian Wawrzyniec Jan Rudawski also pointed to his religiousness as an asset during the election[13].
However, descriptions of this candidate's personality were not unanimous. They indicate contradictory character traits of Sigimund III Vasa's son. According to apostolic nuncio Horatio Visconti description, his appearance was not making a good impression – he was characterized by dark complexion, tall height and frail body. In addition, the nuncio presented Charles Ferdinand's character features in an even less favorable light. He considered him to demonstrate personality traits such as: severity, obstinacy, unchangeable opinions regardless of the circumstances as well as impetuosity even towards very devoted collaborators[14].
Despite this clearly negative assessment of the bishop's character, Visconti paid attention to one positive prince's feature which could particularly appeal to the nobility during the time of big crisis, namely his thriftiness, attentive disposal of fortune as well as a model of living, which significantly differed from standards of courtly life[15]. He started for instance to take an interest in the diocese of Breslau to a much greater extent once it had generated lower revenues due to the war destruction[16].
However, this would not necessarily be positive monarch's characteristic, because according to historian Anna Filipczak-Kocur, although his brother Vladislaus IV is regarded as lavish ruler, he remained destitute in comparison to other monarchs[17]. Spending larger amounts of money was, nevertheless, necessary to maintain royal prestige and to foster political plans[18]. Charles Ferdinand gained experience, what should be emphasized, managing two dioceses, property in Żywiec (Silesia) as well as since 1645 Duchy of Cosel[19].
Charles Ferdinand's education can be also considered as his advantage. In addition to basis of canon law and theology, he had mastered few foreign languages (for instance Latin and German) also he knew a thing about art, especially music[20]. Both of brothers obtained the knowledge of German through upbringing by Ursula Meyerin[21]. He appreciated Italian music as well as his father and brothers: Vladislaus

13 Rudawski, *Historja Polska,* 43.

14 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 132.

15 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 133.

16 Fitych, "Charakterystyka biskupów", 263.

17 Anna Filipczak-Kocur, "Skarbowość Rzeczpospolitej lat 1587-1697: (stan badań, źródła i postulaty)", *Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego*, 8 (2003): 42.

18 Filipczak-Kocur, "Skarbowość Rzeczpospolitej", 42.

19 Józef Mandziuk, "Postacie śląskiego Kościoła katolickiego w czasach nowożytnych", *Saeculum Christianum: pismo historyczno-społeczne*, 17/1 (2009): 111.

20 Mandziuk, "Postacie śląskiego Kościoła", 110.

21 Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula, "Tacierzyństwo i samotne ojcostwo. Zygmunt III i jego dzieci w latach 1593–1605", *Wieki stare i nowe*, 18 (2023): 18.

IV and John Casimir[22]. He continued his commitment to development of Carolinum Jesuit gymnasium in Neisse[23].
On the other hand, according to tsarist ambassador Kulikov's report, John Casimir had started before his brother's death efforts in Vatican to return to secular status[24]. After Vladislaus IV's demise, he became titular king of Sweden, he owned Duchy of Opole and Racibórz as well. According to 17th-century historian Wawrzyniec Jan Rudawski, he seemed to be more suitable, because of his seniority and military skills, which he gained during the war with Moscow[25]. In the spring of 1648, French ambassador Louis d'Arpajon's secretary informed French diplomacy about plans related to John Casimir's departure to Italy[26].
Both candidates were actively trying to get support outside the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Charles Ferdinand as well as John Casimir strived for good relations with France, since marrying one of candidates for the Polish crown with Marie Louise Gonzaga has remained one of the important goals of French diplomacy[27]. It was therefore essential to gain her support, which indicated intensity of their efforts. Charles Ferdinand maintained contact with French diplomacy. He has already sent his secretary to diplomatic mission to France in May 1647[28]. He drafted three letters to French diplomacy in June 1648. According to French ambassador Nicolas de Brégy, Charles Ferdinand could be considered as more projesuit and prospanish[29]. It seems that exactly this opinion of French diplomacy about Bishop of Wrocław caused noticeably smaller enthusiasm in Paris, despite numerous attempts to receive the support.
His opponent fighting for the throne had established contact with France extremely early, which can be considered as an advantage within this rivalry. His letters or a mission, moreover, very quickly began to concern quite specific issue. At the beginning of 1647, John Casimir had a talk with French ambassador in the Republic of Poland de Brégy regarding the succession of his ill brother, as he had decided to come back from Rome. He was probably talking with de Brégy about his wedding

22 Barbara Przybyszewska-Jarmińska, "The Polish contribution to Central European Musical Culture in the Seventeenth Century. The Case of Marcin Mielczewski", *Musicological Annual*, 40 (2004): 142-43.

23 Józef Mandziuk, "Biskupie księstwo nysko-otmuchowskie", *Saeculum Christanum: pismo historyczno-społeczne*, 19/2 (2012): 49.

24 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 133.

25 Rudawski, *Historja Polska*, 43.

26 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Louis d'Arpajon to Jules Mazarin, Gdansk 7 V 1648, 233.

27 Karol Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów naszych 1646–1648*, t.2 (Lviv: published by the author himself, 1865), 175.

28 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 8, Charles Ferdinand Vasa to Jules Mazarin, 15 V 1647, 278-79.

29 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas de Brégy to Jules Mazarin, Gdansk 26 VI 1648, 314-18.

in January 1648[30]. De Brégy wrote directly that John Casimir «remains related to France» in February 1648[31]. According to this diplomat, John Casimir was likely to talk with Ladislaus IV to convince him to French policy[32].
John Casimir in a letter to France in May 1648 paid attention to the Vasa dynasty's situation after his brother death and underlined the fact that Charles Ferdinand as a clergyman cannot ensure continuity of the dynasty[33]. This type of argumentation could be work in favor of older brother as potential Queen Louise Marie Gonzaga's husband. According to de Brégy, John Casimir collaborated with Louise Marie in February 1648[34]. He contacted her by letter in July 1648 (the French diplomacy was informed on this)[35]. De Brégy has written already after the election in December 1648 that «it is still outstanding problem, if she will become two brothers' wife whether she will have power which she deserves and which we wish for»[36].
D'Arpajon underlined John Casimir's positive attitude towards France in May 1648[37]. One month later French diplomacy was counting on him to lead the army to the victory[38]. It can be stated that in addition to the military skills of this prince noticed in Paris, he was seen as more secure ally in international relations. However, French court did not have enough money to support his candidate. John Casimir, moreover, was complaining to Mazarin that De Brégy encourages Charles Ferdinand[39].
According to speech of viscount d'Arpajon, French ambassador, the nobility should have chosen John Casimir, as he has been blessed with military talent and due to his seniority[40]. D'Arpajon came accompanied by voivode of Brześć Jan Szymon Szczawiński as well as castellan of Brześć Jan Szymon Dąmbski to pay homage to Ladislaus IV's corpse together with senator's assurance about French friendship «accompanied by numerous well-chosen noblemen»[41]. On the other hand, de Brégy underlined that hereditary title of Swedish king held by John Casimir could be

30 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas de Brégy to Jules Mazarin, 15 I 1648, 31-42.

31 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas De Brégy to Jules Mazarin, 19 II 1648, 99-102.

32 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas De Brégy to Jules Mazarin, Warsaw 15 I 1648, 31-42.

33 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, John Casimir Vasa to Jules Mazarin, Cracow 8 V 1648, 223-25.

34 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas De Brégy, Warsaw, 5 II 1648, 76-84.

35 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 10, Nicolas, De Brégy, 3 VII 1648, 15-9.

36 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas De Brégy, 11 XII 1648, 453-54.

37 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Louis d'Arpajon to Jules Mazarin, Gdansk 22 V1648, 241-44.

38 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Louis d'Arpajon to Jules Mazarin, Gdansk 12 VI.1648, 283-84.

39 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 136.

40 Rudawski, *Historja Polska*, 50-1.

41 Karol Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów naszych 1646–1648*, t. 2 (Lviv: published by the author himself, 1869), 176.

useful for the Commonwealth if it would like to reclaim Livonia[42].
According to historian Karol Szajnocha, Swedish court opted for John Casimir's election[43]. In a letter to Lord High Chancellor of Axel Oxenstierna from October 1648 Queen Christina wrote, as far as she knew, about increasing popularity of Charles Ferdinand in the Commonwealth, but at the same time she was concerned about his victory[44]. A secretary Lars Cantersten was sent to the Commonwealth in September this year to keep eye on Swedish interests during the election[45]. Despite distrust towards Charles Ferdinand on her part, he asked Christina about the encouragement in October 1648[46].
Swedish diplomacy was also interested in other groups supporting particular candidates. Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna sent a courteous letter to Ossoliński before the election[47]. According to Swedish Chancellor, John Casimir was supported by the most important magnates and bishops, while Charles Ferdinand by medium and catholic nobility. Oxenstierna presented John Casimir's faction as more numerous. Swedish Chancellor also underlined John Casimir's ability as a soldier[48].

It seems that the Apostolic See did not favour any side. According to nuncio's speech, both princes «they are two wonderful offsprings of Sigismund III Vasa's house and each of them represents their father merits thanks to divine fortune»[49]. At the end of October, the nuncio abandoned Charles Ferdinand and urged him to resign in favor of the brother[50]. According to Karol Szajnocha, John Casimir could count on German emperor's support[51]. In de Brégy's opinion Charles Ferdinand had hoped, though, for neutrality of Emperor's diplomacy[52]. Bishop of Breslau maintained good enough relations with the Habsburgs (from which originated the mother of both brothers) that he replaced imperial ambassador during the wedding celebration of Ladislaus IV and Marie Louise[53].
After Polish king's death diplomat from Brandenburg Johann von Hoverbeck proposed Elector Frederick Wilhelm's candidacy, however, he received advise to

42 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas De Brégy to J. Mazarin, 26 VI 1648, 314-18.

43 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów naszych 1646–1648*, t. 2, 293.

44 RA, E 582, n. 4029 Christina Vasa to Axel Oxenstierna, Stockholm 9 X 1648, 1-2.

45 RA, E 582, n. 4027, Christina Vasa to Axel Oxenstierna, Uppsala 10 IX 1648, 1-2.

46 RA, E 536, n. 1773, Axel Oxenstierna to Christina Vasa, Tidö 10 X 1648, 1-6.

47 RA, E536, n. 2895 Axel Oxenstierna to Jerzy Ossoliński, Stockholm 15 IX 1648, 1.

48 RA, E 536, n 1773, Axel Oxenstierna to Christina Vasa, Tidö 10 X 1648, 1-6.

49 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów naszych 1646–1648*, t. 2, 293.

50 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 147.

51 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów*, 293.

52 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas De Brégy, 18 VII 1648, 340.

53 Jean Le Laboureur, *Histoire et relation du voyage de la reine de Pologne et du retour de Madame la Maréchale de Guebrian, Ambassadrice extraordinaire et Surintendante de sa conduite [...],* t. 1 (Paris: VVe J Camusat, 1647), 194.

support other candidate[54]. At the beginning of June a diplomacy of Brandenburg indicated John Casimir as a favorite due to French support[55].According to historian Adam Andrzej Witusik, the diplomacy of Brandenburg (Adersbach) was mistaken about crucial magnates' affection[56]. The elector favored John Casimir because of his more positive attitude towards Lutherans[57]. Ambassadors of Count Palatine of Neuburg only recommended to respect royal blood[58]. Prince of Transylvania George I Rákóczi intended to gain the Polish throne for son, yet he had died in October[59]. According to French ambassador de Brégy, this has facilitated the election of John Casimir[60].

It can be therefore concluded that Charles Ferdinand received less support from other European rulers than his older brother. A lot of states remained quite neutral in this case and did not encourage explicitly any of candidates. France can be considered as an exception and Charles Ferdinand sought noticeably their support. However, his rival has started very early the concrete negotiations with the diplomacy from this country. He combined them, moreover, with cooperation with the Queen Louise Marie. Election 1648 coincided with the beginning of the Fronde in Paris[61] therefore internal factors can be considered as crucial within this election.

Internal support in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was likewise important or even more crucial. Therefore, attention should be paid to Bohdan Khmelnytsky's attitude towards both candidates due to the Polish-Cossack War. John Casimir has established relationships with the leader of the rebellion in August 1648. Bohdan Khmelnytsky officially backed him in Lviv. On 6th of November nearby Zamość Khmelnytsky claimed that the election of John Casimir is the one guarantee for the Cossacks[62]. According to Jan Wawrzyniec Rudawski, «Khmelnytsky in the letters to the Senate and to private indivuals expressed intensively his wish to elect John

54 Andrzej Kamieński, "Kandydatury Hohenzollernów Brandenburskich do tronu polskiego od XV do końca XVII wieku. Realny cel czy też gra polityczna?", in *Między Zachodem a Wschodem. Etniczne, kulturowe, religijne pogranicza Rzeczpospolitej w XVI–XVII wieku,* eds. Krzysztof Mikulski, and Agnieszka Zielińska-Nowicka (Toruń: Grado, 2005), 31-2.

55 "Peter Bergmann an den Kurfürsten", Gdańsk 5 VI 1648, in *Urkunden und Actenstücke zur Geschichte des Kurfürsten Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg*, I: *Politische Verhandlungen*, vol. 1, ed. Georg Reimer (Berlin: B. Erdmannsdörffer, 1864), 249.

56 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 137.

57 Barbara Szymczak, "Działalność dyplomacji brandenburskiej w okresie bezkrólewia w Rzeczypospolitej w 1648 r"., *Przegląd Historyczny*, 89/1 (1998): 30.

58 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejó*w, 301.

59 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejó*w, 304.

60 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas de Brégy, 11 XII 1648, 453-54.

61 Richard Bonney, "Cardinal Mazarin and the Great Nobility during the Fronde", *The English Historical Review*, 381/96 (1981): 818.

62 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 149-50.

Casimir»[63]. Bohdan Khmelnytsky can be, paradoxically, considered as the most important ally within the fight for the crown in the Commonwealth regarding the extent of the uprising and panic caused by the Cossacks troops (battle of Pyliavtsi)[64]. However, Charles Ferdinand initially received the support from many various groups in the country. According to Wawrzyniec Jan Rudawski, «was encouraged by powerful factions and he expected the promotion by will of free states »[65]. He was supported by Catholic nobility from Mazovia[66]. This was primarily due to exercise of the episcopal function in Płock. The support of the nobility from region had substantial impact because of their large number[67] as well as their short distance to the place of election. Charles Ferdinand at his own expense brought many destitute representatives of nobility from Mazovia to vote at the place of election[68]. The Mazovian nobility was also the most numerous there because of the threat in the east[69]. It can be therefore concluded that the concept of the younger Sigismund III Vasa's election remained popular among the destitute nobility.

In the initial period after Ladislaus IV's death, persons performing the most function in the state were active in the Charles Ferdinand's faction. The Court Marshall Adam Kazanowski belonged to the Charles Ferdinand's faction[70], as he had condemned John Casimir's character traits. Kazanowski was conflicted with the Ruthenian voivode Jeremi Wiśniowiecki what could be to the detriment of whole faction. He was hoping, moreover, for raising of his own influence at Crown Deputy Chancellor Jerzy Ossoliński's expense[71]. A clergyman and Crown Deputy Vice-Chancellor Andrzej Leszczyński postulating the resolute policy towards the Cossacks[72] was also Charles Ferdinand's follower[73].

63 Rudawski, *Historja Polska*,45.

64 Janusz Kaczmarczyk, *Bohdan Chmielnicki* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2007), 76-7.

65 Rudawski, *Historja Polska,* 43.

66 Witusik, "*Elekcja Jana Kazimierza",* 135.

67 Jolanta Choińska-Mika, *Sejmiki mazowieckie w dobie Wazów* (Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1998), 5.

68 Ryszard Zieliński, "Województwo płockie w bezkrólewiach i elekcjach. Część III- Na przełomie-elekcje 1632 i 1648 r"., *Notatki płockie, Kwartalnik Towarzystwa Naukowego Płockiego*, 14/4 (1959): 30.

69 Michał Kopczyński, "Obywatele czy tłum? Elektorzy władców Rzeczypospolitej z województwa mazowieckiego w latach 1632–1764", *Przegląd historyczny*, 61/1 (2015): 122.

70 Władysław. Czapliński, and Adam Przyboś, "Kazanowski Adam", in PSB, vol. 12 (1966/67), 251.

71 Goszczyński, "Adam Kazanowski", 265-66.

72 Władysław Czapliński, "Andrzej Leszczyński h. Wieniawa", in PSB, vol. 17 (1972), 105-07.

73 Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława Radziwiłła,* vol. 2., ed. Edward Raczyński (Poznań: K.A Pompejusz, 1839), 327.

As part of the legation of Charles Ferdidand's when he was negotiating with his opponent participated: Bishop of Kiev Stanisław Zaręba, Prince Adam Sanguszko[74], Castellan of Chełm Albrecht Czyrski, Castellan of Inowrocław Andrzej Ruszkowski[75], Castellan Teodor Potocki, Warrant Officer of Bełsk Stefan Niszczycki and Izydor Zasławski[76]. Lack of Lithuanians among the representatives caused certain indignation[77]. Charles Ferdinand's faction at the beginning of interregnum was so strong that John Casimir was thinking he will lose the rivalry for the Polish throne. He probably even mentioned to Ambassador of Brandenburg Johann von Hoverbeck that he would rather see the Elector of Brandenburg or Transylvanian prince as a king[78]. It can be noticed that Charles Ferdinand could count on the support of other bishops, who were senators at the same time.

On the other hand, Chancellor Jerzy Ossoliński was one of the most important senators supporting John Casimir[79]. Jerzy Ossoliński previously wished to elect the Elector of Brandenburg Frederick William, but he decided to choose older of Vasa's brothers hoping for own domination in the Commonwealth's policy under his rule[80]. In autumn, he reduced his activity, being aware of his unpopularity. However, he could remain in contact with Bohdan Khmelnytsky[81]. A voivode of Bracław Adam Kisiel collaborated with Jerzy Ossoliński in aid of John Casimir's election[82]. The Ruthenian voivode Jeremi Wiśniowiecki had to support John Casimir under pressure of his soldiers[83] what made John Casimir's faction diverse. His allies were divided over the issue of Khmelnytsky's.

According to Karol Szajnocha, John Casimir was supported by the whole Lithuania[84]. However, Field Hetman of Lithuania Janusz Radziwiłł discussed the conditions of John Casimir's encouragement with Lithuanian Protestants at the

74 Witold Kłaczewski, "Sanguszko Adam Aleksander", in PSB, vol. 34 (1992/93), 465.

75 Włodzimierz Kaczorowski, "Ruszkowski Andrzej", in PSB, vol. 33 (1991/92), 188.

76 *Historia panowania Jana Kazimierza przez nieznajomego autora napisana*, t.1, ed. Edward Raczyński (Poznań: Księgarnia Walentego Stefańskiego, 1840), 18.

77 Wespazjan Kochowski, *Pamiętniki do panowania Zygmunta III, Władysława IV i Jana Kazimierza*, vol. 2, ed. Kazimierz Władysław Wóycicki (Warsaw: S. Orgelbrand, 1846), 24.

78 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 141.

79 Władysław Czapliński, "Jerzy Ossoliński h. Topór (1595–1650)", in PSB, vol. 24 (1979), 405.

80 Goszczyński, "Adam Kazanowski wobec", 265.

81 Witold Kłaczewski, *Jerzy Ossoliński. Wielki kanclerz Rzeczpospolitej* (Lublin: WSS-P, 2011), 313-15.

82 Jakub Sytniewski, "Działalność polityczna Adama Kisiela w 1648 roku", *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace Historyczne*, 149/4 (2022): 661.

83 Jemiołowski, *Pamiętnik Mikołaja Jemiołowskiego,* 9.

84 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów*, 293.

beginning of November because of George I Rákóczi's death[85]. Despite everything, Charles Ferdinand was trying to receive the support in Lithuania, and he contacted for instance the Great Chancellor Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł to ask him for help regarding his fight for the crown, but he claimed that «I responded him *indifferenter* at this point»[86].

At the beginning «princes were negotiating with each other so that one to another do not bother in the election for king. As part of the John Casimir's legation participated: Bishop of Samogitia Jerzy Tyszkiewicz, voivode of Mazovia Stanisław Warszycki, voivode of Bełsk Krzysztof Koniecpolski[87], voivode of Cracow Stanisław Lubomirski[88], starost of Lviv Adam Hieronim Sieniawski[89] as well as referendary of the Crown Wojciech Łubieński, the Presiding Bishop's nephew»[90].

Military issues can be considered as crucial during this election due to Khmelnytsky's Uprising. According to historian Mirosław Nagielski, a lot of military men were active in both candidates' factions[91]. Within the John Casimir's faction warrant officer Aleksander Koniecpolski[92], starost of Lviv Adam Hieronim Sieniawski as well as Tomasz Kazimierz Sapieha, cavalry captain in 1648, could be classified as active soldiers[93]. Andrzej Potocki[94] and chamberlain of Halicz Jan Teodoryk Potocki[95] can be attributed to Charles Ferdinand's faction[96]. According to Mieczysław Nagielski, «it is highly probable that cavalry regiment of J. Wiśniowiecki participated at the place of election»[97].

Both of candidates as in other election used various means of persuasion to influence the nobility's opinion[98]. Charles Ferdinand touted the system of election

85 Aleksandra Ziober, "The political attitudes of Krzysztof and Janusz Radziwill towards the election of Wladyslaw IV and Jan Kazimierz. Outline of the problem", *Open Political Science*, 1/1 (2018): 200.

86 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława,* 294.

87 Adam Kersten, "Koniecpolski Krzysztof", in PSB, vol. 13 (1967/68), 521.

88 Władysław Czapliński, "Lubomirski Stanisław", in PSB, vol. 18 (1973), 44.

89 Mirosław Nagielski, "Sieniawski Adam Hieronim", in PSB, 37 (1996/97), 104.

90 Raczyński, *Historia panowania*, vol. 1, 18.

91 Mirosław Nagielski, "Udział wojskowych w sejmie elekcyjnym 1648", *Wieki stare i nowe*, 17/12 (2017): 15.

92 Andrzej Rachuba, "Sapieha Tomasz Kazimierz", in PSB, vol. 35 (1994), 155-56.

93 Raczyński, *Historia panowania*, vol. 1, 18.

94 W. Majewski, "Potocki Andrzej", in PSB, vol. 27 (1982), 770.

95 Maria Sipayłło, "*Potocki Jan Teodoryk*", in PSB, vol. 28 (1984), 28.

96 Raczyński, *Historia panowania*, vol. 1, 16.

97 Raczyński, *Historia panowania*, vol. 1, 18.

98 Aleksandra Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego wobec elekcji Władysława IV Wazy i Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego* (Cracow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2020), 153.

as «hereditary jewel of freedom» in a letter to deputational sejmik in Środa. He underlined his royal blood as well as desire to serve his country. He tried to convince at the time that he is not derived by the ambition or greed[99].
He was making also promises according to which he declared to equip 10,000 soldiers at his own expenses and offered sanctuary for exiles from Ukraine in his dioceses of Wrocław and Płock[100]. In addition, Charles Ferdinand during the civil war which has already lasted, had supplied 900 soldiers at his own expense[101]. However, using ecclesial funds was widely criticized by inter alias chamberlain of Różańsk Aleksander Petrykowski[102] who told that «the Polish Kingdom has already become a market and clerical goods are distributed. He is very generous when it comes to someone's else possession»[103]. However, according to an article from "Gazette de France", John Casimir has promised to equip 3000 soldiers against the Cossacks and fight with them as a commander[104].
Both of candidates were looking out for the support by writing letters or meeting with often the same senators, John Casimir asked for the support of a voivode of Malbork Jakub Wejher[105]. Charles Ferdinand also wrote a letter to the voivode of Malbork at the same month «I asked vice-chancellor to convince you to my candidature» [106]. Charles Ferdinand still wanted to fight and meet in Jabłonna the voivode of Malbork on 23th October[107]. In addition, Louise Marie probably gave several loans to John Casimir in exchange for marrying her. A voivode of Mazovia Stanisław Warszycki presumably spent large sums of money to convince the nobility to elect John Casimir[108].
Charles Ferdinand had more money at his disposal to spend on persuading the nobility to vote for him. Building at his expense a tavern in Jabłonna where he offered for the nobility free food and alcohol can be considered as an interesting example of his electoral activity[109]. This kind of generosity had to probably appeal to the nobility, in particular to their Mazovian poorer representatives.

99 AGAD, AR, II, 14, "A copy of His Majesty Prince Bishop of Płock Charles' letter to sejmik in Środa",15 VII 1648, 160-61.

100 Raczyński, *Historia panowania*, vol. 1, 18.

101 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów naszych 1646–1648*, vol. 2, 293.

102 Jan Dzięgielewski, "Petrykowski Aleksander", in PSB, vol. 25 (1980), 708.

103 Wespazjan Kochowski, *Pamiętniki do panowania Zygmunta III, Władysława IV i Jana Kazimierza*, vol. 2., ed. Kazimierz Władysław Wóycicki (Warszawa: Orgelbrand 1846), 24.

104 "Gazette de France", n. 108 (1648), 928.

105 BK PAN, 1318, [The documents and letters from 1648–1668] John Casimir Vasa to Jakub Wejher, 2 VIII 1648, 5.

106 BK PAN, 1318, Charles Ferdinand Vasa to Jakub Wejher, Warsaw 4 VIII 1648, 12

107 BK PAN, 1318, Charles Ferdinand Vasa to Jakub Wejher, 23 X 1648, 20.

108 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 145.

109 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisław*, 332-33.

Local council before election Sejm were convened at the request of the Primate 25th June, while a date of the convocation Sejm was fixed on 16th July 1648[110]. A letter from the Cossacks to a king was read in the Senate on 17th June[111]. Ladislaus IV's corpse was escorted from Grodno to Warsaw on 22th June and both of the brothers went riding out to honour it[112]. Ambassador de Brégy predicted at the beginning of June that John Casimir's arrival at the end of the month will change the middle nobility's affinities supporting the younger brother thus far[113]. It has been reported that letters of the deceased king are written by unauthorized people at the of August[114]. The country remained unceasingly threatened during this period and the Primate Maciej Łubieński as interrex were sending conscript proclamations to the cavalry captains as well as colonels on 25th August[115]. The Sejm session began on 6th October[116].

The election Sejm began on 24th October and according to Wawrzyniec Jan Rudawski, it was feared that the quarrels would impede the war against the Khmelnytsky's troops therefore the magnates were to prone to reach an agreement[117]. A newly elected king as well as Divine Providence were considered as the only hope of being rescued. Certain individuals (including the Queen Louise Marie de Gonzague) were considering escaping from Warsaw to Gdansk due to the sense of danger caused by the Cossack's attacks. However, the panic reaction was not so spread and, ultimately, wojski of Lithuania of Mozyr Filip Obuchowicz[118] was elected Marshal of the Election Sejm[119]. Protestants initiated complaints during the parliament[120]. Bogusław and Janusz Radziwiłł as well as well Gerard Denhoff were considered as main protectors of Protestantism[121].

110 *Uniwersał Prymasa Macieja Łubieńskiego*, Łowicz 26 V 1648, in *Volumina Legum*, vol. 4, ed. Jozafat Ohryzko (Saint Petersburg: Jozafat Ohryzko, 1859/60) 72.

111 "Dyaryusz konwokacyi warszawskiej podczas bezkrólewia od 16 lipca do 1 sierpnia 1648 odprawiającej się", in *Jakuba Michałowskiego wojskiego lubelskiego a później kasztelana bieckiego księga pamiętnicza* (Cracow: Drukarnia C.k. uniwersytetu, 1864), 104.

112 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława*, 293-94.

113 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, 9, Nicolas De Brégy to Jules Mazarin, 26 VI 1648, 316.

114 F.G. Montal to Virginio Orsini, Warsaw 26 VIII 1648, in *Elementa ad fontum editiones*, VII: *Repertorium rerum polonicarum ex Archivo Orsini in Archivo Capitolino Romae II Pars,* ed. Wanda Wyhowska de Andreis (Cracow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1962), 202.

115 Jemiołowski, *Pamiętnik Mikołaja Jemiołowskieg*o, 6.

116 Nagielski, "Udział wojskowych", 9.

117 Rudawski, *Historja Polska*, 42.

118 Adam Przyboś, "Obuchowicz Filip Kazimierz", in PSB, vol. 23 (1978), 234-36.

119 Kochowski, *Pamiętniki do panowania*, 21.

120 Raczyński, *Historia panowania Jana Kazimierza*, vol. 1, 16.

121 Kochowski, *Pamiętniki do panowania*, 22.

A disgracefully defeat of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth army namely the Battle of Pyliavtsi should be recognized as a turning point during this election when first indications of changing an ounce of sympathy the candidates, as Charles Ferdinand's supporter Jerzy Ossoliński had designated war commissioners. The nobility claimed that he advised Prince Dominik Zasławski-Ostrogski to flee from the battle entirely as well[122].

According to Chancellor Stanisław Albrycht Radziwiłł, Charles Ferdinand's supporters «have changed their intention after the loss in Pyliavtsi». According to Edward Opaliński, the political situation was complicated by demands to punish persons responsible for the defeats, in particular of Pyliavtsi. This elevated the discussion into divisions even among the allies (for instance Dominik Zasławski, voivode of Sandomierz, and Jeremi Wiśniewiecki, voivode of Ruthenia – both advocates of the Cossack's question military solution[123].

Already in the mid-October it has been believed that one of princes should resign in the battle for the crown for the country's sake[124]. On 19th October Chancellor Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł together with Marshall, Vice-Chancellor Kazimierz Leon Sapieha and Lithuanian Treasurer have begun to convince Charles Ferdinand at dinner in Jabłonna for resignation for the brother[125]. A deterioration of highly disadvantageous military situation counted against Charles Ferdinand lacking military skills.

In addition, after George I Rákóczi's death, his supporters led by Prince Janusz Radziwiłł were reluctant to encourage the candidate so closely associated with the Catholic church[126]. When the news about him arrived, Charles Ferdinand was abandoned by the Starost of Greater Poland Bogusław Leszczyński, Bishop of Kujawy Mikołaj Wojciech Gniewosz and Vice-chancellor Andrzej Leszczyński was having second thoughts[127]. The Lithuanian nobility have decided to support John Casimir at the end of October, if the Polish nobility was not convinced to Charles Ferdinand[128].

On 9th October after previous speech of Charles Ferdinand supporters, John Casimir's followers could perform such as Bishop of Samogitia Jerzy Tyszkiewicz, voivode of Bełsk Krzysztof Koniecpolski, starost of Lviv Hieronim Sieniawski, warrant officer of Sieradz Wojciech Łubieński and Tomasz Sapieha, John Casimir's courtier[129]. On 29th October Bishop of Poznan Andrzej Szołdrski and Polish Cupbear Mikołaj Ostroróg changed their minds and supported John Casimir as

122 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 143-44.

123 Opaliński, "Elekcje wazowskie", 536.

124 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława*, 326.

125 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława*, 334.

126 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza",145.

127 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława*, 327.

128 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 146.

129 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława*, 336.

well as Dominik Zasławski[130]. It can be concluded that at the end of October 1648 Charles Ferdinand's faction was almost broke up as a result of fear the country's future caused by shameful loss of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth troops in Pyliavtsi. The unity and instant king's election was expected, focusing on the candidate with military experience.

Abandoned by many supporters Charles Ferdinand has begun to be urged to withdraw his candidacy recalling the difficult situation of the state. The Presiding Bishop Maciej Łubieński, Great Chancellor of Lithuania Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł, Vice-Chancellor of Lithuania Leon Kazimierz Sapieha, Great Treasurer of Lithuania Michał Tryzna, among others, arrived in Jabłonna for this purpose[131]. On 2nd of November Queen Louise Marie invited senators and asked them to persuade Charles Ferdinand to resign[132]. However, such acts as well as abandonment by many crucial supporters have not convinced Charles Ferdinand to resignation.

On 3rd November Jeremi Wiśniowiecki arrived and announced that he does not intend to get involved in the proceedings, but request equipment of 60,000 soldiers[133]. Great military needs of the country made that pressure on Charles Ferdinand was increasing. However, he wanted to convince the nobility and the most important senators. This day, more and more desperate Charles Ferdinand started to make quite unrealistic promises - equipment of 10,000 soldiers at his own expense, donation of his property in Żywiec for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth along with his land in the Duchy of Opole and Racibórz[134].

The unfulfillable promises destroyed this candidate's image in the nobility's eyes; however, the worst impression caused a pledge which was openly ridiculed and totally discredited Charles Ferdinand in the fight for the throne. Bishop of Wrocław's declaration that he is «ready to go into battle and shed his blood» was considered as unserious. According to the nobility, «the prince had been raised rather to piety and devotion and not to a war»[135]. Exactly this opinion in the face of defeat in the battle of Pyliavtsi can be seen as deciding about Charles Ferdinand's loss.

All participants of the election were getting impatient, thus the pression on the younger Vasa brother were growing. On 5th November resistance emerged because according to the previous agreement on 4th November a king should have been elected - many nobleman in the dispute were drunk[136]. John Casimir's supported remained indignant as they knew that he holed an advantage at this moment and demanded his swiftly election. On 6th November, in light of the altered circumstances, older Sigismund III Vasa's son wrote a letter to his opponent «[…] if I were a younger brother, I would not disturb Your Royal Highness, but I would

130 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 14.

131 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława*, 334.

132 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 148.

133 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów naszych 1646–1648*, vol. 2, 300.

134 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława*, 336.

135 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 149.

136 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisław*a, 337.

help with all my strength achieve this happiness […]» [137]. A response to this letter remained negative at that time.

Charles Ferdinand's faction, led by hesitating for more than a week Vice-Chancellor Andrzej Leszczyński, met at a conference following day which has not resulted in any concrete ideas[138]. Ultimately, on 11th November Charles Ferdinand, according to his friends' advice, resigned in an attempt to fight for the election and in exchange he was to receive from his brother the Duchy of Opole and Racibórz as well as help with obtaining revenues from two abbeys[139]. Charles Ferdinand's delegate Stanisław Rakowski, parish priest from Pułtusk, passed on the news that he called for «resignation from the competition for the Polish crown as well as declare to support the brother Prince Casimir»[140].

Charles Ferdinand went to Nieporęt to announce his decision at a meeting with his brother accompanied by Bishop of Chełmno Andrzej Leszczyński, Bishop of Kiev Stanisław Zaremba, Bishop of Chełm Stanisław Pstrokoński, voivode of Ruthenia Jeremi Wiśniowiecki, Great Marshal of the Crown Łukasz Opaliński and Court Marshal of the Crown Adam Kazanowski[141]. On 13th November priest Rakowski passed his letter from Jabłonna in which he announced his resignation in favour of his brother and promised to equip 800 soldiers at his expense as well as he expressed his adherence to the homeland[142]. The letter has been well received by the nobility. Charles Ferdinand could thanks to this decision enjoy popularity among the nobility, despite the unsuccessful attempt to get the throne as well as count on support his further activity by John Casimir. Royal brother's assistance was also associated with material gains.

According to Wespazjan Kochowski, the nobility claimed that a quest for peace, brotherly love or resentful pride caused by criticizing his promise to give refuge to the exiles from Ukraine and related to this allegation of inadequate disposal of ecclesiastical money were the reasons of his decision. According to this diarist, the scale of the problems and the crisis the Commonwealth was facing at this moment could discourage him therefore he desired to live a calmer life concentrated on his religious career «he has changed his intention perceiving ungrateful Poles as well as learning of nefarious events in Pyliavtsi […] he preferred to lead a life as a clergyman than put himself in obvious danger for the Crown and getting into constant troubles»[143].

Bishop of Kujawy Gniewosz expressed his thanks to Charles Ferdinand that in the difficult situation of the country, he did not obstruct the election[144]. The following

137 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 149.

138 Witusik, "Elekcja Jana Kazimierza", 149.

139 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów*, 304.

140 Kochowski, *Pamiętniki do panowania*, 26.

141 Goszczyński, "Adam Kazanowski", 267.

142 Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów,* 307.

143 Kochowski, *Pamiętniki do panowania*, 26.

144 Kochowski, *Pamiętniki do panowania*, 26.

day, the bishops as well as secular senators voted *viritim* for John Casimir[145]. Charles Ferdinand's lack in the army experience can be considered as the reason of his failure facing expectations to solve the conflict with the Cossacks in military way. His brother's seniority can be seen as Bishop of Wrocław's disadvantage. He neither was supported by external powers (except certain strictly Catholic groups). He was primarily not supported by Bohdan Khmelnytsky. Trying to regain the nobility's support, Charles Ferdinand kept making more and more exaggerated promises undermining his credibility. After Charles Ferdinand's loss during the election 1648, the brothers' further cooperation can be considered as quite harmonious, for instance, he was involved in king John Casimir's affaires in Rome[146].

145 Radziwiłł, *Pamiętniki Albrychta Stanisława*, 341.

146 John Casimir Vasa to Virginio Orsini, Warsaw 12 III 1650, in *Elementa ad fontium editiones*, III: *Repertorium rerum Polonicarum ex Archivo Orsini in Archivo Capitolino Romae I Pars,* ed. Wanda Wyhowska de Andreis (Cracow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1961), 4.

ABBREVIATION

AGAD: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie:
AR: Archiwum Radziwiłłów
AMAEF: Archive Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Développement international République Française à Paris
CP: Correspondance Politique
BK PAN: Biblioteka Kórnicka Polskiej Akademii Nauk
PSB: Polski Słownik Biograficzny
RA: Riksarkivet (Stockholm)

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THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OF VIRGINIO ORSINI, CARDINAL PROTECTOR OF THE KINGDOM IN THE TIME OF JOHN CASIMIR VASA, LAST KING OF THE VASA DINASTY IN POLAND

ABSTRACT
In June 1669, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki's election as the new sovereign of Poland marked the end of a complex interregnum initiated by the abdication of John II Casimir Vasa in September 1668. This period of political instability for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had attracted the attention of major powers, including France, the Empire, Muscovy, and the Holy See, which viewed Poland as a bulwark of Christianity. This article uses sources from the Capitoline and Vatican archives to examine the figure and role of Cardinal Virginio Orsini, Protector of the Kingdom of Poland, during this interregnum period. It explores Orsini's position, interests, and connections to the French court, positioning him at the heart of intricate political and diplomatic negotiations among Warsaw, Rome, and Paris, all aimed at securing the new king's reaffirmation of his Protectorate.

KEYWORDS: Holy See; Poland; Interregnum; Cardinal Protector; Virginio Orsini; Diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, strategically positioned and deeply intertwined with Latin culture, was paramount to the Holy See. The papacy perceived this distant kingdom of the European Sarmatians as a formidable bulwark – an Antemurale Christianitatis – against the encroaching Protestant factions, schismatic Orthodox Christians, and the Ottoman Turks. The Papal Nuncio, operating under explicit directives from the Secretary of State, served as the diplomatic liaison between Rome and Warsaw. His primary responsibility entailed providing regular, detailed reports on his activities within the Commonwealth. Complementing the Nuncio's role was the Cardinal Protector of the Kingdom, a unique figure appointed by the Polish king to safeguard the country's interests within the College of Cardinals. This position was vital for addressing conflicts between Rome and Warsaw, particularly concerning the appointments of abbots and bishops, the presentation of monarchal requests, and advocacy for candidates during the interregnum.
Among those who undertook the role of Protector[1], Cardinal Virginio Orsini[2], who

1 From 1519 to 1795, since the first mission of a papal representative in Poland to the Third Partition, 14 cardinals were appointed as Protectors. *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae*, vol. I, ed. CP Henrik Damian Wojtyska (Romae: Institutum Historicum Polonicum Romae, 1990), 66-70.

2 Irene Fosi, "Virginio, Orsini", in DBI, vol. 79 (2013), 715-19.

held the office from 1650 until he died in 1676[3], exemplifies the intense diplomatic relations between Poland-Lithuania and the Holy See. The extensive documentation preserved in the Capitoline Archive of Rome regarding his tenure in the Republic constitutes a valuable historiographic source for investigating the history of this region in Europe. Recent scholarly work has rekindled interest in Cardinal Orsini's mediation role[4]. Notably, Irene Fosi's research has concentrated on the relationships and influence exerted by the cardinal during the early years of King John III Sobieski's reign. On such academic inquiries, the present study seeks to illuminate a historically significant phase that has received insufficient attention – namely, the events surrounding King John II Casimir's abdication in 1668, which signalled the decline of the Vasa dynasty[5] and set the stage for a contentious interregnum leading to the election of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki[6]. Focusing on Cardinal Orsini's contributions, this analysis offers a novel perspective on a transformative historical juncture for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its intricate relationships with Rome and neighbouring European powers. This period was critical for the political future of a fragmented Europe, particularly in light of the threats posed by the Ottoman Empire.

3 He was appointed Protector on 9 April 1650 and became effective a few months later. Letter of confirmation in AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 63, John II to V. Orsini, Warsaw 29 X 1650, c. 0037). It is worth noticing that Orsini had already been the co-protector of the kingdom since 1647, appointed by Władysław IV to support Cardinal Gaspare Mattei. (AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, c. 0343). He was appointed Protector of Sweden due to the Polish-Swedish royal title linked to the Vasa dynasty, a position he held until 1672 (AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 63, John II to to V. Orsini, Lviv 17 VIII 1653, c.0124). After John II Casimir's death, the Swedish Protectorate became the prerogative of Queen Christina of Sweden, his cousin, who was exiled to Rome.

4 Irene Fosi, "Il cardinale Virginio Orsini e la "Protezione" del regno di Polonia (1650–1676): note e documenti dall'Archivio Orsini', in *Per Rita Tolomeo, scritti di amici sulla Dalmazia e l'Europa centro-orientale*, eds. Ester Capuzzo, Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi, and Francesco Guida (Venezia: La musa Talia, 2014), 229-44.

5 The Swedish Sigismund III started the Vasa dynasty in Poland when he became king of the Commonwealth in 1587 and king of Sweden in 1592. He was forced to leave the throne of Stockholm because he was already king of Poland-Lithuania. See: Henryk Wisner, *Zygmunt III Waza* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991. Despite this, the Vasa dynasty in Poland would still claim – and boast – the title of King of Sweden until John II Casimir's death, as established in the Treaty of Olive signed in 1660. Norman Davies, *God's Playground. A History of Poland*, vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 327-54.

6 On the complex personality and kingdom of the new sovereign, see: Adam Przyboś, *Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, 1640–1675* (Kraków-Wrocław: Wyd. Literackie, 1984); Id., "Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki", in PSB, vol. 20 (1975), 605-09; Ilona Czamańska, *Wiśniowieccy. Monografia rodu* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007).

2. THE EVE OF THE ABDICATION OF JOHN II CASIMIR: THE CARDINAL ORSINI BETWEEN THE COURTS OF WARSAW, ROME AND FRENCH INTERESTS

The history of the Vasa dynasty has significantly influenced the relationships between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Holy See, and the broader European context[7].

This investigation is rooted in a specific historical benchmark: 1667 when the Cardinal's Chancellery began the systematic collection of outgoing diplomatic correspondence from Cardinal Virginio Orsini in bound volumes[8]. However, it is essential to recognize that the foundation of this investigation can be traced back to 1666. This pivotal year marked the Tartar invasion of the Commonwealth, signalling the potential for future incursions by Ottoman forces. Additionally, it was the year in which Pope Alexander VII expressed intentions to proceed with the "Promotion of the Princes" [*Promotione de' Principi*], facilitating the appointment of select individuals to the cardinalate suggested by Europe's crowned heads. These circumstances propelled the court of Warsaw into the political and military forefront, necessitating the direct involvement of the Cardinal Protector to advocate for the interests of the Poland-Lthuania both in Rome and throughout Europe. The alarming reports regarding the Tartar invasion of Ukraine at the end of 1666, which plunged the kingdom into chaos, were communicated to Cardinal Virginio Orsini via a letter from Ludovico Fantoni[9], a reliable secretary for Italian affairs of the king and Orsini's representative in Warsaw.

> In Ukraine, the Tartars want to become masters of that province. It is highly probable that they collaborate with the Turks, who will surely want to take advantage of the internal disagreements between the nobility of the kingdom, blind to the danger that is weighing on the homeland[10].

The Polish monarchs promptly called upon the Cardinal to report on the critical situation in Poland, emphasizing the urgent need to transfer resources to Warsaw for reinvestment to confront the impending danger. A missive dated 4 January 1667,

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7 Robert Frost, *After the Deluge: Poland-Lithuania and the Second Northern War, 1655–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, Press 1993).

8 The volumes of his diplomatic correspondence go from 1667 to 1676: AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, volls. 225-259.

9 Ludovico Fantoni was agent of the Cardinal Protector Orsini since 1668, and Intimate Secretary for the *cose d'Italia* of Władysław IV, John II Casimir and Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki. From 1655 to 1681 was appointed canonic of Vilnius and Dean of the Cathedral of Heilsberg. Karolina Targosz, *Uczony dwór Ludwiki Marii Gonzagi 1646-1667. Z dziejów polsko-francuskich stosunków naukowych* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1975), 72-3.

10 «Li Tartari in Ukraina mostrano di volersi render padroni di quella provincia et si ha luogo di sospettare che se l'intendino col Turco che vorrà facilmente approfittare delle discordie e sconcerti che regnano fra la nobiltà che si mostra cieca di non vedere li apparenti pericoli dell'interito della patria», AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 224, L. Fantoni to V. Orsini, Warsaw 28 XII 1666, c. 0295.

sent by Cristoforo Masini, the king's Intimate Secretary, issued a warning about the situation.

> the Turks have unveiled their plan through their Tartars, who, supported by some Cossack troops, defeated 17 companies and 11 others who had come to the rescue […]. It is said that when the Tartars have secured the province, another and larger army will come to make an greater destruction[11].

The entry of the Tartar troops into the Kingdom, apparently backed by the Ottoman Empire, compelled the Polish court to seek assistance from neighbouring countries. Masini noted in his correspondence that this led the Monarchs to dispatch extraordinary delegates to various European courts[12].

To grasp the gravity of the situation and Warsaw's strategic responses, it is essential to consider the correspondence between the Cardinal Protector and Fantoni in the early days of January 1667. A letter dated January 4 provided an extensive postscript from the Secretary, offering detailed insights into the occupation and anticipating future injustices against the Kingdom[13]. In a subsequent letter dated January 11, the discourse shifted to the rationale behind John II Casimir's decision to send royal delegates to multiple European courts, soliciting support to defend «against the Common Enemy threatening the bastion of Christianity»[14]. Despite Poland's vigorous diplomatic efforts, pleas for assistance from European powers essentially went unaddressed. Warsaw's last hope rested on the Holy See potentially responding favourably, akin to past support during the Deluge period when the Papacy had allocated 100,000 florins[15]. However, the Papal Court dismissed a reasonable and legitimate request from the Kingdom, opening a political crisis between Warsaw and the Vatican.

It is necessary to consider that, despite itself, Warsaw was entangled in a broader and more serious rift involving Rome and Paris at that time, particularly Pope Alexander VII and Louis XIV. Their relationship, never particularly harmonious, had suffered further strain following the incident involving Charles III de Blanchefort-Créquy, the Ambassador of the *Christianissimo*, in Rome.

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11 «il turco si è affatto smascherato per mezzo dei suoi tartari, i quali con alcune truppe di Cosacchi hanno tagliato a pezzi 17 compagnie di cavallerie et altre XI, che andavano in rinforzo, sono state disperse […]. Dicono che quando questi con la preda saranno in sicuro, un altro esercito verrà per fare una grande distruttione», AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 225, C. Masini to V. Orsini, Warsaw 4 I 1667, c. 0453.

12 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 225, C. Masini to V. Orsini, Warsaw 4 I 1667, c. 0453.

13 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 226, L. Fantoni to V. Orsini, Warsaw 4 I 1667, c. 0181

14 «contro l'inimico comune che pare risoluto di attaccare questo Antemurale di Christianità», AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 226, L. Fantoni to V. Orsini, Warsaw 11 I 1667, c. 0165.

15 See: Gaetano Platania, *Rzeczpospolita, Europa e Santa Sede tra intese e ostilità* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2000), 84-6.

The pro-French party's presence in Poland-Lithuania was firmly established during the reign of John II Casimir, particularly in the Polish Court. Following the arrival of Marie Louise Gonzaga de Nevers, the widow of King Ladislaus IV, John II Casimir's brother, who died in 1648, the influence of this faction significantly increased[16]. The party was actively engaged in discussions aimed at amending the country's Constitution to enable the appointment of a French heir to the Polish throne – specifically, Louis II de Bourbon, Prince of Condé – "vivente rege". This manoeuvring manifested the pronounced pro-French policy pursued by the Vasa Dynasty during the 1660s, ultimately weakening Warsaw's standing with the Chigi Pope, a traditionally and previously enjoyed favour.

The request for papal allowance soon after the Tartar invasion became entangled with the more complex issue related to the "Promotion of the Princes". John II Casimir sought Pope Alexander VII's promotion of a candidate from the Warsaw court. Through the intercession of Cardinal Orsini – operated soon following a visit to Paris[17]- the Polish monarchy received this grant from Rome. Nevertheless, sovereigns had nominated not a Polish candidate but the Bishop of Beziers – the Italian Pietro Bonsi[18] -the French ambassador in Poland.

Pope Chigi rejected this appointment, asserting that the bishop did not meet the impartiality standards necessary to become a cardinal, particularly as he was perceived to depend on the French royal court and the gratitude owed to it[19]. The situation's complexity extended beyond the relationship between Alexander VII

16 On the French influence in Poland: Gaetano Platania, "Alcuni significativi episodi dei rapporti franco-polacchi nel Seicento", in *Gli archivi della Santa Sede e la storia di Francia*, eds. Giovanni Pizzorusso, Oliver Poncet, and Matteo Sanfilippo (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2006), 137-61.

17 As maintained by Fosi, Orsini travelled to France to meet Louis XIV after the Duke of Crequy was injured in an accident. One of the matters discussed was the Polish king's appointment of a French candidate to the cardinalate in the *Promotione de' Principi* (Fosi, "Virginio Orsini", 718). Documents on the Orsini's journey in AC, I, Miscellanea Pressutti, vol. 49, "Articolo di lettera del P.re Gismondi sul trattamento fatto al Cardinal Orsini di Bracciano da Sua Mestà Christianissima", ff.nn.

18 Born Piero Bonsi, Louis XIV's faithful clergyman and politician had been in Poland as ambassador for many years (AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 81, Avvisi, Warsaw 24 October 1668, f. 426r). He was later proclaimed by the *Christianissimo* Extraordinay Ambassador for the Diet of Election (AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 81, Avvisi, Warsaw 26 IX 1668, f. 387v). In 1667 John II Casimir proposed him as Cardinal. He was eventually created Cardinal by Clement X on 22 II 1672. See: *Hierarchia Catholica medii et recentioris aevi*, vol. V *(1667–1730)*, ed. by Remigium Ritzler, and Pirmin Sefrin (Patavii: Il Messaggero di Sant'Antonio, 1952), 7; Umberto Coldagelli, "Piero Bonsi", in DBI, vol. 12 (1971), 388-95.

19 «in order to become Ambassador of the Christianissimo, or to be appreciated and benefited by that Royal Court, and consequently to profess dependence on it, for the gratitude he owes it» [«per essere Ambasciatore del Re Christianissimo, o per essere amato e beneficato da quella Regia Corte, e conseguentemente per professare com'egli deve per gratitudine dipendenza da quella»], AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 64, John II Casimir to V. Orsini, Warsaw 17 V 1667, c. 0346.

and Louis XIV, as it also involved broader interests concerning the organization of the Papal Court. Galeazzo Marescotti[20], the nuncio to Poland a couple of years later, grasped the implications of this delicate matter when Warsaw submitted a new nomination for the Bishop of Béziers to Pope Clement IX Rospigliosi. Marescotti recognized the potential consequences of a papal concession's transfer between monarchs, cautioning that such actions could inflict significant harm by undermining the principle of equal treatment between European Catholic countries[21]. This situation threatened to disrupt the internal balance of the College of Cardinals, particularly in light of Louis XIV's claims to promote a candidate directly indicated by the French monarchy.

The first to advance the two requests - subsidies and nomination - was the cardinal protector of the kingdom. Reached previously by two royal letters, with an extraordinary one at the end of January 1667, Orsini immediately informed the Polish court about the developments of the affairs. However, he did not hide the difficulties that would be encountered, particularly regarding the nomination[22]. Unable to speak with the Pope because he was ill, the protector briefly met the Cardinal Nephew, Flavio Chigi. During this meeting, Orsini urged Chigi to facilitate the Pope's approval for a financial subsidy. About the nomination, Orsini acknowledged that the Roman Court desired a list of candidates from which Alexander VII would subsequently select the nominee.

If the missed audience with the Pope had been officially justified on the ground that the Pope was not well, the Protector well understood that behind Alexander VII's refusal of the meeting was a planned strategy to delay the official presentation of Beziers's candidature from Warsaw. Consequently, the request for subsidies against the Tartars and Turks was also delayed. His guessing was, therefore, immediately notified to John II Casimir, to whom he confessed that in Rome, the affaire of Beziers was far from being secret. On the contrary, it had instead gone public since Cardinal Vidoni and Majesty's Agent in Rome Mancini had already been informed from Warsaw, and the news had been spread at the Roman Court[23]. Then, Orsini added that this publicity would cause significant damage because the Pope would be prepared to face any opposition.

It must be stressed that the Protector, though not so farsighted, had well grasped the political agenda of the Pope and the Secretary of State about the appointment, to the point of considering the audience denied by Pope Alexander VII as the manifestation

20 Nuncio in Poland until 5 March 1670; he had "Solemny Entry" in Warsaw on 5 June 1668 (AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, Warsaw 6 VI 1668, c. 0154). For a more exhaustive bibliography: Wojtyska, *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae,* vol. I, 267-68; *Viaggio politico, viaggio materiale: Monsignor Galeazzo Marescotti nunzio a Varsavia*, ed. Alessandro Boccolini (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2015).

21 «what is denied a country is given to another, so infringing the principle of an equal treatment» [«ciò che si toglie ad una natione si accresce all'altra, con pregiuditio di quella egualità»], AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Marescotti to G. Rospigliosi, Warsaw 8 VIII 1668, f. 316r.

22 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, V. Orsini to John II, Rome 22 I 1667, f. 0019r.

23 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, Orsini to John II, Rome 22 I 1667, f. 0019r.

of his willingness to delay, as much as possible, the official presentation of the Polish candidate. Even more, Orsini warned that the Promotion would take place within the first forty days of the year, and it was now already Carnival when, in Rome, nothing was being discussed[24]. Orsini's perspective is demonstrated by the exchange at the same time between the Secretary of State – Cardinal Chigi – and the nuncio in Poland – monsignor Pignatelli. Rome had asked his representative to inform John II that an eventual recommendation for a "Prince's minister" would require mature reflection[25].

His conjecture became reality when, at the same time as the arrival of the secret letter to the Protector about the Polish appointment of Beziers, another letter arrived in Rome, sent by Pignatelli. In this missive, the Nuncio claimed the promotion to the cardinalate for himself by the activities performed during the seven years of his stay in the Commonwealth. It was too much of a coincidence for the Protector, who explained to Masini that the Pope had carefully planned this second candidacy. The Roman Court aimed to relieve the King of the recommendation of the "French", eventually leading him to accept the appointment of the Nuncio as Minister of the Holy See[26].

It is also worth noting that the Cardinal attempted to explain to John II Casimir the machinations behind the simultaneous candidacies from Poland. Orsini suggested that, most probably, when he asked for an appointment for the Polish crown the previous year, the Pope quickly asked Pignatelli to submit his request because he feared a "French" candidate might emerge for Warsaw[27]. Likely, the Pope believed that John II Casimir could replace the ambassador of the *Christianissimo* when faced with Nuncio's nomination. Orsini thought Alexander VII and the Nuncio collaborated, possibly with Cardinal Vidoni, since Pignatelli had closer ties to him than the Protector[28]. With this, Orsini suggested the existence of an alternative plotting network, casting doubt on Vidoni. Orsini noted that Vidoni was respected in Poland-Lithuania, having served as Nuncio from 1652 to 1660, allowing him to connect with many Polish leaders. The Protector also mentioned to Fantoni that Vidoni was against the appointment of Beziers, even though he seemed to support it[29].

Meanwhile, after several audiences had been denied to him, the Protector could finally report about the audience with the Pope regarding the appointment

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24 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, Orsini to Fantoni, Rome 12 II 1667, f. 0083v.

25 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, F. Chigi to A. Pignatelli, Rome 19 I 1667, f. 0003r.

26 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, Orsini to John II, Rome 22 I 1667, f. 0019v.

27 The Secretary of State, Cardinal Chigi, authorized the nuncio to promote in Poland his promotion. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, F. Chigi to A. Pignatelli, Rome 23 II 1667, ff. 6v-7r.

28 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, V. Orsini to C. Masini, Rome 22 I 1667, f. 0021v. Orsini shows a more intricate plot woven by the Pope, the Nuncio, Cardinal Vidoni and the agents of the Polish king in Rome, Mancini and Giannuzzi.

29 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, V. Orsini a L. Fantoni, Rome 5 II 1667, f. 0056r.

and allowances. However, a fleeting meeting had been accorded to him after a Consistory[30]. He found Alexander VII in pain of the present situation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but, unfortunately, the Pope could not bestow any allowances upon it because he was forced to help the Venetians due to the siege of Candia. The many tragic events involving Christianity had, therefore, moved to make targeted choices. So, being answered negatively by the Pope, Orsini reminded him that the Polish fortress of Kamieniec Podolski was a frontier crossing point for Ukraine, and its fall could mean losing the whole Commonwealth. This depiction of the danger, though, did not undermine the certainties of the Pope, who, infuriated against him, cut it short. He told the Protector that, upon no occasion, the Pope answered to a Cardinal and that the answer would be sent in a letter addressed to the Nuncio.

Following the conclusion of the Consistory, the Cardinal immediately took the opportunity to discuss the matter of the appointment with Alexander VII, getting a new negative response. On that occasion, the Pope illustrated the many difficulties. He mentioned, in particular, a procedural flaw in the letter from Warsaw and the king of Poland's recommendation of a sole candidate[31]. According to Alexander VII, it would have been more appropriate to submit a list of candidates, leaving the choice to the Pope, according to the "jus of Promotion"[32]. These were all motivations to which Orsini promptly responded. At the time of the request for a Polish candidate, the Protector recalled that the Pope had only asked for a worthy person to be recommended. For Orsini, Béziers was not only a capable and worthy person for the cardinalate, but being Italian, he would be more faithful to the Holy See than to France. The Protector's reasons, though based on some logic and past examples, went unheard by the Pope, who also reiterated that «upon no occasions, the Pope answers to a Cardinal»[33].

The meeting between the Holy Father and the protector was undeniably tense. Orsini, in a "separate leaflet" intended for John II Casimir, explicitly outlined the nature of the problem. He reported that after the audience, Alexander VII stated, with a clear hint of derision, that Poland could seek support for its troubles from France, with which it had extensive correspondence and friendship.

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30 On this audience: AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, V. Orsini to John II Casimir, Rome 10 II 1667, ff. 0073-77r.

31 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, V. Orsini to C. Masini, Rome 8 II 1667, f. 0056r.

32 The Promotion involved Orsini during the reigns of Wiśniowiecki (AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, "Scrittura mandata di Polonia dal Nuntio al Sig.r Cardinale Orsino nel principio del mese di giugno 1672", c. 167) and John III Sobieski, as Polish kings continued to transfer appointments to the French. In 1676, Orsini had to inform Sobieski on behalf of the Pope that the Promotion favoured European monarchies as institutions, not a right of the Princes as persons. (AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, V. Orsini to John III Sobieski, Rome 10 IV 1676, c. 0082).

33 «in nessun caso si risponde a' Cardinali», AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, V. Orsini to John II Casimir, Rome 10 II 1667, ff. 0073-77r.

> [The Pope answered] with derision that the King of Poland, who has so much confidence and friendship (I do not remember well the word used) with the king of France, should ask for money from the king of France, who has so many millions […] and so many soldiers – stressing that the excesses of the Duke of Créquy had cost three million[34].

With these words, the Pope gave the Cardinal his final negative answer as proof that the question of the allowances – certainly more legitimate and justified – was somehow connected with the closeness or friendship existing between Louis XIV and John II Casimir, something Alexander VII could not accept. Not even the mission to Rome as the extraordinary delegate of Abbot Paolo Doni – the King's resident in Rome and based in Naples as Internuncio, then[35] – could affect the determination of the Pope.

Though ill and feeble[36], Pope Chigi spent the whole day of 12 March officiating the Promotion of the Princes, with no satisfaction for Poland-Lithuania. This was an outrageous insult for John II Casimir, who threatened the Holy See to expel the Papal Nuncio from the Republic after Orsini had informed him of the Promotion's result[37].

> the nuncio will leave the kingdom, and his successor will not reenter so easily. From there, the Abbot Doni will return to his internunciature according to our royal order, and every diplomatic relationship with the court of Rome will be interrupted, being able to live like good Catholics without these useless and disgusting relations[38].

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34 «per modo di irrisione perché il Re di Polonia che ha tanta corrispondenza e intrinsichezza o amicitia (che non mi ricordo bene la parola) con il Re di Francia non si fa dar denari dal Re di Francia lui che ha tanti milioni […] et tanta soldatesca, tanto che tra l'altre cose le pazzie del duca di Crequy ci sono costate 3 milioni». AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, V. Orsini to John II Casimir, vol. 245, Roma 8 II 1667, c. 0077v.

35 Research on Paolo Doni is only at the beginning. He went to Poland very young and remained there until 1657: first, he went to Rome as a Polish resident and then to Naples as an internuncio to deal with issues related to the inheritance of Bona Sforza (Neapolitan Sums). His instruction in: AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, "Instruttione a Monsignor l'Abbate Paolo Doni […]", c. 0350, 1-7. Also: Alessandro Boccolini, "Un agente diplomatico a Roma per la Rzeczpospolita: l'abate Paolo Doni al servizio di Jan II Kazimierz Waza", in *Gli agenti presso la Santa Sede delle comunità e degli Stati stranieri*, vol. I, eds. Matteo Sanfilippo, and Péter Tusor (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2020), 227-52.

36 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, V. Orsini to L. Fantoni, Rome 12 III 1667, f. 0139v.

37 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 245, *V.* Orsini to John II Casimir, Rome 12 III, f. 0134r.

38 «Monsignor Nuncio esca dal Regno, et il Successore non ci metterà il piede così facilmente [continuando che] di costà partirà l'Abbate Doni per ritornare alla sua Internuntiatura secondo l'ordine nostro regio, che se gli manda, e si

Some important events kept diplomatic relations between Rome and Warsaw from breaking down. These include the deaths of Queen Maria Louisa on May 10[39], Alexander VII on May 22, and the Truce of Andrusovo between Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy[40]. This truce, in particular, allowed the Commonwealth to strengthen its military on the southeastern front and defend against Tartar threats. When Clement IX, also known as Giulio Rospigliosi, became Pope on June 20, 1667, the political situation had changed significantly. Further changes were coming soon, especially with John II Casimir's abdication of the Polish throne the following year.

3. THE RACE TO THE POLISH THRONE AND THE RECONFIRMATION OF THE OFFICE OF PROTECTOR OF THE KINGDOM

On 16 September 1668, King Vasa, deeply grieved by the passing of his beloved wife – who had wielded considerable influence over governance[41] – formally presented his intention to withdraw from public life and abdicate the throne to the Sejm. This decision posed significant institutional and political challenges[42], particularly given the absence of a suitable male heir for succession. While Poland-Lithuania operated under an elective monarchy, it had historically accommodated the hereditary right of the Crown, a principle that facilitated the Vasa dynasty's tenure in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth since 1587, following the election of Sigismund III, the father of John II. After an interregnum lasting approximately one year, a national representative was elected in June 1669. Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, an unknown yet well-connected young man, gained the backing of Andrzej Olszowski, Bishop of Kulm, who authored the influential booklet *Censura Candidatorum*[43]. This strategic

troncarà ogni corrispondenza con la corte Romana, potendosi anche vivere da buon cattolici senza quest'inutile e sempre disgustosa occupatione», AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 64, John II Casimir to V. Orsini, Warsaw 5 IV 1667, c. 0367. The King also sent similar letters through Masini to the Cardinals Vidoni and Santacroce, co-Protector of the Kingdom, and the Sacred College, (AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b .64, Warsaw 5 IV 1667, cc. 342; 343; 344).

39 BAV, Barb. Lat. 5259, "Relazione de' funerali celebrati in Cracovia alla Maestà di Ludovica Maria regina di Polonia e Svezia", ff. 577r-79r.

40 Zbigniew Wójcik, *Traktat andruszowski 1667 roku i jego geneza* (Warszawa: Panstwowe wydawnictwo naukowe, 1959); Platania, *Rzeczpospolita*, 74-8

41 After the queen's death, the nuncio reported that she «had held the reins of power in her hands» [«alle di cui mani erano con piena autorità le redini del Governo»]. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 81, "Discorso sopra l'abdicazione di Sua Maestà", f. 155r.

42 ASR, Archivio Odescalchi, III/A/5/, n. 25, "Scritture concernenti l'abdicazione di Giovanni Casimiro Re di Polonia 1668", ff. n.n.

43 The booklet attributed to Olszowski aimed to discredit candidates, presenting Wiśniowiecki as the preferred national choice. This book reached Rome through Protector Orsini, who informed Fantoni in Warsaw. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 249, ff. 211v-12r. It was fully published: Andrzej Olszowski, *Censura Candidatorum Sceptri Polonici. Ocena kandydatów do tronu polskiego*, eds. Casimir Przyboś, and Adam Perłakowski (Kraków: Księg. Akademicka, 2014).

move effectively excluded numerous prominent foreign candidates from succession, including the Prince of Condé and Philip William of Neuburg, both of whom were supported by Louis XIV; Charles V of Lorraine, backed by the Emperor; and the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich's second-born son, who enjoyed limited support from a segment of the Lithuanian nobility[44].

This analysis operates within a simplified framework that acknowledges the exclusion of "minor" candidates and allows for a focused examination of Virginio Orsini's role and actions as Protector of the Kingdom. Orsini's position thrust him into a series of complex political and diplomatic challenges that, given the questionable nature of his abilities, may have been beyond his capacity to navigate effectively. The dynamics originating in Warsaw had broader implications for all of Europe and notably involved the Holy See, which maintained a vested interest in the affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In an elective monarchy like the Commonwealth, where kings could be chosen from national and non-national candidates, the Protector's role became inherently enmeshed in intricate political machinations. This involvement often required the Protector to either support a candidate aligning with the interests of Rome or fulfil directives from Warsaw to present specific requests to the papacy. Moreover, personal motivations significantly influenced the Protector's engagement in the Polish electoral process. Primarily, Orsini sought to safeguard his interests, which had been cultivated over time through his protective role, a position contingent upon confirmation by the newly elected king. Consequently, driven by the imperative to maintain his appointment, the cardinal aligned his political strategy with these interests. He manoeuvred to advocate, overtly or covertly, for a favoured candidate, often in divergence from the policies set forth by the Secretariat of State. Recognizing this potential for independence, the Secretariat strategically relied on its nuncio's active presence and initiatives *in loco*.

If John II Casimir's decision to abdicate was dictated, at least officially, by the emotional turmoil he experienced following the death of Maria Louise[45], it was also profoundly rooted within a series of political defeats that had characterized the final years of his reign. Significant among these failures was the already mentioned controversial appointment of the Bishop of Beziers to the cardinalate, combined with his proposal to establish a successor, *Vivente Rege*, for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in person of the French Prince of Condé or his son, Henri-Jules de Bourbon, Duke of Enghien[46]. Notably, this latter contributed to the dissolution

44 A faction of the Lithuanian nobility, attracted by the Great Duke's promises to restore their losses from the Treaty of Andruszow, backed the Muscovite's second-born. Royal Secretary Masini's report highlights concerns about the potential election of an Orthodox candidate. AAV, Miscellanea, Armadio I, vol. 84, "Relazione di Polonia", ff. 161r-70v.

45 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 81, "Discorso sopra l'abdicatione di Sua Maestà", f. 155r.

46 The *Vivente Rege* during the kingdom of John II was raised around 1650 after the two little king's children died (Princess in 1651, and Prince in 1652. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b.63, cc.0024; 0053; 0078; 0079). The kings attempted to find a crown heir (a French one); this issue opened a political crisis soon after the

of the Sejm in 1667 without any resolutions being reached. Moreover, the Holy See closely monitored these developments, tasking Nuncio Pignatelli with overseeing and reporting the growing rumours surrounding John II Casimir's potential abdication. Such indiscretions became apparent during the new diet convened in January 1668, which, despite initial optimism[47], exacerbated the rift between the king and the nobility. On March 7th, Pignatelli communicated the breach within the Sejm to Rome and indicated the likelihood of the king's abdication. In this correspondence – one of the last he sent before being succeeded by Marescotti – the nuncio depicted a sovereign increasingly isolated and embroiled in conflict with the nobility, who were pressing for the expulsion of foreign ministers, particularly the French representatives.

> The King told them he was fed up with their extravagances, as they were part of his government. After this answer, the King stopped. He was confused and remained silent for almost an hour and a half, giving the impression of wanting to abdicate[48].

On 22 February, an anonymous disclosure, which was extraordinary in its content, had reached Cardinal Orsini, anticipating the official communication sent from Warsaw by the Nuncio at the beginning of March.

> The King has decided to abdicate. […]. If he does not regret it before July, France will support the Duke of Neuburg. Only God knows the consequences of this. I beg your Eminence not to point me as the author of this message. I do not think the nuncio knows anything[49].

The evidence indicates that approximately ten days prior, the Protector had already been informed about the King's intention to abdicate, along with intelligence regarding France's support for the Neuburg candidate, effectively sidelining its "historical candidate", the Prince of Condé. The communication from the Protector was likely delivered by an individual within the sovereign's inner circle, most plausibly

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Treaty of Oliva. As early as 1660, the difficulties of the monarchs were stated in an "aviso" that reported the nobility claiming its right to elect the king by the Country's constitution. AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol., 402, "anno 1660", c. 0209.

47 AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, Warsaw 25 I 1668, c. 144.

48 «disse loro […] che già siate satij abastanza del mio governo, come son'io molto più di voi altri per le tante vostre stravaganze. Fermatasi, doppo questa risposta la Maestà Sua in un certo modo sospesa, come se havesse voluto dar loro qualche segno di Abdicazione, rimase in un profondo silenzio per lo spazio quasi di un'hora, e mezza». AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 81, A. Pignatelli to G. Rospigliosi, Warsaw 7 III 1668, f. 59 r. Orsini received information about the diet from Fantoni on the same day, AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 228, L. Fantoni a V. Orsini, Warsaw 7 III 1668, c. 0567.

49 «Il re ha risoluto l'abdicatione. […] è certo che se non si pente da qui alla fine di luglio la Francia porterà il Duca di Neoburgo, con che eventi solo Dio lo sa. Supplico Vostra Eminenza di non farmene autore. Non credo che il Nunzio lo sappia», AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, Warsaw 22 II 1668, c. 0148.

one of the Italian secretaries, Masini or Fantoni, with whom Orsini maintained ongoing correspondence. They apprised the Cardinal of Jan's unsuccessful attempts to garner support from the minor nobility, who sought to compel him to endorse a Constitution mandating the departure of foreign ministers, particularly the French, from Warsaw, alongside a call for a general mobilization of the chivalry to safeguard the kingdom[50].

While the identity of the author of the anonymous message directed to the Protector is not critical for comprehending subsequent events, it is instrumental in elucidating the nature of Orsini's relationship with Poland-Lithuania and his conduct during the interregnum. Notably, the confidential information received must have originated from the "political creatures" associated with John II Casimir and his late wife, Maria Louise, who had been integral to their court for many years, fulfilling essential roles for the sovereigns of the Republic[51]. Officers that Nuncio Pignatelli described well, introducing a Polish king besieged by these individuals.

> The King is too besieged by these French ministers and by those few of his court who are around him and who are subordinate and salaried by the French. They never leave him, isolating him completely, even from his confessor. If someone has the opportunity to talk to the King, but he has said unpleasant things, he will not have a second chance to meet him[52].

"Subordinated" and "salaried" by Paris, these royal secretaries functioned as instruments of Louis XIV's ministries, clearly exemplifying the strength of French power at the court of Vasa. This influence did not disturb Orsini, who was known to be closely aligned with France, where he had been appointed co-protector[53] and

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50 AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, Warsaw 15 II 1668, c. 0146, and Warsaw 22 II 1668, c. 0147.

51 During the *Potop*, the Polish monarchs sent the Italian secretaries as extraordinary delegates to the most important European courts. Masini was sent to Wien for an anti-Swedish League (AAV, Segreteria di Stato. Polonia, vol.68, Avvisi, Warsaw 6 V 1658, f. 234v); Girolamo Pinocci to the United Provinces and England (Alessandro Boccolini, "L'ambasciata in Olanda e in Inghilterra del lucchese Girolamo Pinocci, segretario regio (1658-1659)", *Il Veltro*, LXI/1-6 (2017): 47-69); Fantoni had been destined as a delegate in France (AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 71, Avvisi, Warsaw 29 February 1660, f. 138v.)

52 «troppo assediato da questi ministri francesi, e da quei pochi della sua Camera che gli stanno d'intorno subordinati, e stipendiati da loro, i quali non gli lasciano respiro, e tengono indietro tutto e fino il proprio confessore [tanto che] se per avventura vi è chi arrivi una volta a dirle qualche cosa contraria al genio, e volontà degl'Interessati, non vi può al certo tornare la seconda», AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, A. Pignatelli to G. Rospigliosi, Rome 20 VII 1667, ff. 188v-89r.

53 Orsini's French predilection was so well known that John II Casimir, as soon as elevated to the throne and not yet supporting the French party, was forced to remind him that the role of the Protector should be neutral regarding the disputes between France and the Empire. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 63, John II Casimir to V. Orsini, Warsaw 1 VIII 1650, c. 0026.

where he had been favourably received with all the honours just a couple of years before[54].

The correspondence with the figures, closely connected to the influential ambassadors dispatched from Paris[55], served as the primary source of intelligence regarding Polish affairs for the Cardinal. The correspondence with the influential figures, closely connected to the ambassadors dispatched from Paris, served as the primary source of intelligence regarding Polish affairs for the Cardinal. This situation originated a limited view of the entire interregnum in him, which posed a significant risk to his interests, above all, to the reconfirmation of the Protectorate by the forthcoming monarch.

It is evident that, in correspondence dated just days before the election of the new king, the Cardinal still assumed the success of the French Candidate was a certainty[56]. Orsini's belief was rooted in information received from the Polish Court; nothing had shifted for him since he received the anonymous message in February, throughout the entirety of the interregnum. This viewpoint is further reinforced by the last letter sent to the Cardinal before the election by the French ambassador, Bishop of Beziers, who outlined a shortlist of three candidates: the Neuburg, the Lorraine, and the Muscovite[57].

> I cannot believe that Poland chose the Muscovite, both for reasons of religion and politics. Lorraine can compete, but if the election is well-considered, Newburgh will be the best candidate. A more peaceful election will not be possible[58].

Later events demonstrate how far the Protector was from the truth, so distracted as he was by the certainty (and indeed, his secret hope) of seeing the French candidate on the throne. Eventually, he lost track of the political schemes regarding potential candidates for the Polish crown[59], such as Queen Christina of Sweden, suggested

54 AC, AO, I, Miscellanea Pressutti, vol. 49, "Articolo di lettera", c. 0006.

55 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, A. Pignatelli to G. Rospigliosi, Warsaw 31 V 1667, f. 180r.

56 Regarding the election, Orsini wrote to Masini that all the hopes were for the Duke of Neuburg ahead of the other competitors, the Muscovite and the Lorraine. To Fantoni, he communicated that the "prophecy" to see the election of Neuburg was becoming true. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 249, V. Orsini to C. Masini, Rome 1 VI 1669, f. 189v.; Ibidem, V. Orsini to L. Fantoni, Rome 1 VI 1669, f. 190r

57 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 229, P. Bonsi a V. Orsini, Marienwerder 18 III 1669, c. 0218. Orsini firmly believed that the Neuburg would be elected, as evidenced by his letter to Beziers. (AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 249, V. Orsini a P. Bonsi, Rome 27 April 1669, f. 132r).

58 «Del moscovita non posso credere che la Polonia sul fatto ci si risolva, tanto per ragione di religione che di politica, Lorena in un principio puol correre la sua lancia ma se si fa l'eletione con le dovute ponderationi resterà meglio Neoburgo et più pacifica elettione non mi pare possa darsi della sua», AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 229, P. Bonsi to V. Orsini, Marienwerder 18 III 1669, c. 0218.

59 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia vol. 82, G. Rospigliosi to G. Marescotti, Rome 15 VI

by the Holy See shortly before the election, or a "Piasto" as a national candidate, but also the option proposed by Piccinardi – Marescotti's secretary[60] – at the end of 1668 regarding Alessandro Farnese as a neutral mediation candidate[61].
On May 30, 1668, John II officially communicated his decision to abdicate to Orsini[62], thereby formally initiating the interregnum for the cardinal. Recognizing the uncertainty surrounding his reappointment as Protector, Orsini promptly activated a series of correspondences from his household secretariat directed at influential figures within Polish affairs. He drafted a letter to the abdicating king, articulating a request for safeguard in his role as Protector[63]. Additional letters were dispatched to various prominent individuals in Poland-Lithuania, including royal secretaries Masini and Fantoni, Canon Lupini, secretary to the Archbishop of Gnesna, the Kingdom's Primate, and Prince Lubormiski, as well as to the papal nuncio, Galeazzo Marescotti. Furthermore, Orsini extended his correspondence to France, addressing Louis XIV, the Bishop of Lyon, and Monsignor de Beziers, the ambassador of the *Christianissimo* in Warsaw. He also reached out to the Prince of Condé, whom both in France and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth still viewed as the "ideal successor" to John II Casimir[64].
The responses from all recipients demonstrated a marked courtesy towards the cardinal. Notably, the reassurances the soon-to-be-abdicated King John II provided were considerable appreciation from Orsini.

> We have always cordially considered how much authority and generosity Your Lordship exercised the office of Protector of this Kingdom [...]. You can believe that, as far as it is in our power and authority, we will not leave anything unattempted to reconfirm the Protection[65].

1669, f. 112r.

60 If Piccinardi, along with Galeazzo Gualdo Priorato, played a key role in Rinaldo d'Este's candidacy during the interregnum before John III Sobieski's ascension, he previously suggested an "Italian election" following John II Casimir's abdication. Correspondence from 1668-1669 in the State Archive of Parma reveals discussions between Piccinardi and Ranuccio II Farnese regarding Prince Alexander Farnese's potential candidacy as a mediator among factions. ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero. Polonia, vol. 119, G.L. Piccinardi to Ranuccio II Farnese, Warsaw 26 November, 1668, f. 253v. See, Alessandro Boccolini, "The unsuccessful election of Rinaldo d'Este to the throne of Poland (1674)", in *I Barberini e l'Europa*, eds. Id., and Péter Tusor (Viterbo: Sette Città, 202), 77-98.

61 ASP, Carteggio Farnesiano Estero. Polonia, vol. 119, G.L. Piccinardi to Ranuccio II Farnese, Warsaw 26 II 1668, f. 253r.

62 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 64, John II Casimir to V. Orsini, Warsaw 30 V 1668, cc. 0033, 01-03.

63 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 247, *V. Orsini to John II Casimir*, Rome 14 VII 1668, ff. 18r-v.

64 The letters to Poland, all dated 14 VII 1668: AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 247, ff. 16-24r.

65 «Habbiamo sempre considerato cordialmente con quant'autorità, amore, e

While John II Casimir was reassuring Orsini about the matter, it must be noticed that in the same letter, dated 30 May, the king asked him to present the Pope two new requests, so thorny that could undermine the confirmation of the Protectorate. So, he was forced to carry out a twofold mission: he had to renew the plea for the promotion to the cardinalate of the Bishop of Beziers to the new Pope, Clement IX Rospigliosi, and ask the Pope to send a Papal Legate to Poland-Lithuania to supervise and monitor in Diet the election[66]. Two tasks indeed not easy to perform, officially dragging the Cardinal into the political games and exposing him to the crossfire of his detractors or those who ambitiously aspired for his office.
Bonsi's appointment – elected in 1672 – revealed the same dynamics concerning the diplomatic clash in 1667 in a new diatribe between Beziers and the new Nuncio. This time, though, Marescotti claimed the Polish post, asking Orsini to support his proposal with John II. The position of the Protector was well-balanced between Bonsi and Marescotti, hiding, however, an apparent partiality for the "French" candidate. If, on the one hand, Orsini reassured the Nuncio of his actions to assist him[67],, on the other, the Cardinal was ready to act secretly in favour of Beziers, as revealed to Fantoni. To the royal secretary, Orsini confessed that he could only be a witness in this conflict. However, he would assist the Bishop of Beziers with great pleasure, staying faithful to the *Christianissimo* king's policy[68]. The Papal Court avoided a new conflict between Rome, Paris, and Warsaw, officially deciding to leave the issue pending the definition of John II Casimir's status after the election of his successor[69]. Considering what had happened in the previous years, this resolution reassured the Protector, who could concentrate on John II Casimir's second request. Concerning the demand to send the Legate, the old king had expressly asked Rome for the presence in Warsaw of a high representative of His Holiness who could monitor the election, mentioning the risk of a possible election of the Schismatic Muscovite. Many manuscripts, "News" from Warsaw, confirmed the Tsar's possible candidacy in January 1668, illustrating its strengths based on the promises of the return of the Ukrainian properties and the other provinces occupied in the last war.

generosità Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ha esercitato la carica di Protettore di questo Regno […]. Può perciò credere, che per quello che sarà di arbitrio, et autorità Nostra non lasceremo alcuna parte per incontrare il suo gusto non solo in ordine alla detta Prottettione», AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 64, John II Casimir to V. Orsini, Warsaw 18 IX 1668, c.0333.

66 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 64, John II Casimir to V. Orsini, Warsaw 30 V 1668, cc. 0033, 01-03.

67 AC, AO, I serie, Corrispondenze […], vol. 248, V. Orsini to G. Marescotti, Rome 3 VIII 1669, cc. 63v-64r. Marescotti had sent his brother to meet Orsini to discuss his appointment. The meeting took place at Palo, near Bracciano, in March 1669, AC, AO, I, Correspondence, vol. 249, V. Orsini to G. Marescotti, Rome 12 III 1669, c. 74v.

68 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 248, V. Orsini to L. Fantoni, Rome 27 July 1669, c. 51v.

69 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Rospigliosi to G. Marescotti, Rome 19 I 1668, f. 3r.

> The faction in favour of the Muscovite grows progressively. If he promises the nobility the return of the properties of Ukraine and the other provinces occupied in the last war, he can hope to conquer the throne. We cannot see other candidates who can offer so much[70].

The document entitled *Relazione di Polonia* [Report on Poland][71], preserved in the Apostolic Vatican Archives and drafted – not surprisingly – by the king's secretary, Masini, clearly articulates that the promises made by the Tsar posed a considerable temptation for a significant portion of the Lithuanian nobility. These nobles could be easily attracted by the Tsar's assurances of financial compensation and the return of properties and lands ceded to Muscovy by the Commonwealth through the Peace of Andrusóvo in 1667[72].

It is reasonable to assert that John II Casimir's request for the dispatch of a Cardinal Legate was motivated by a desire to mitigate the threat posed by the Muscovites during the election process. However, it was evident to astute observers that this explicit anti-Muscovite policy would significantly benefit the French candidate, who represented the most capable opposition to the Great Duke Mikhailovich's influence at that juncture[73].

The Nuncio Marescotti comprehended this perspective and communicated his insights to the Secretary of State as early as the summer of 1668. He reported that the anti-French faction expressed doubts regarding whether the King had indeed solicited the Legate Cardinal's assistance on behalf of the court of Paris to advocate for its interests[74]. This suspicion reflected a legitimate concern that positioned John II Casimir's demands within the broader context of pro-French political manoeuvres. The presence and stature of the Legate Cardinal had the potential to not only impede the advance of the Schismatic but also to neutralize the actions of the same Nuncio, accused of pro-imperial sympathies since his initial arrival in Poland-Lithuania[75].

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70 «La fattione a favore de Moscoviti sempre più cresce, e s'è vero come ha del probabile, che promettano alla Nobiltà la restitutione de Beni dell'Ukraina, e delle altre Province occupate nell'ultime guerre, certo, che ponno sperare di far gran colpo, non vedendosi qual altro potentato possa offerire tanto, che sia equivalente a tali promesse», AC, AO, I, Avvisi, vol. 402, Warsaw 25 I 1668, c. 144.

71 AAV, Miscellanea, Armadio I, vol. 84, "Relazione di Polonia", ff. 161r-170v.

72 Platania, *Rzeczpospolita*, 72-3; 85.

73 The Czar ensured the return of properties post-Treaty of Andruszów, while Condè committed to increasing the army's income and constructing key fortresses. In contrast, Charles of Lorraine only promised to build a stone bridge over the Vistula. Cfr. Bernardo Zaydler, *Storia della Polonia fino agli ultimi tempi* (Lugano: C. Storm e L. Armiens, 1839), p. 200.

74 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 81, G. Marescotti to G. Rospigliosi, Warsaw 13 August 1668, f. 274r

75 By the end of 1668, the Nuncio had been accused – through a public demonstration during the diet – of working in favour of the Prince of Lorraine against the Muscovite and French candidates. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 81, G. Marescotti to G. Rospigliosi, Warsaw 12 XII 1668, f. 540v). This was why Marescotti, in the conclaves in which he took part, never had the support of the

On June 30, Orsini formally submitted a request to the Legate in Rome[76]. However, he promptly communicated to his Polish correspondents the intrinsic challenges the Papal court might face in deliberating such a crucial and time-consuming matter. The Cardinal expressed concerns regarding the multitude of pretenders in Rome and the extensive discussions surrounding this issue, particularly about the most credible cardinals for this position[77]. Orsini's particular interest in this matter underscored his deep concern for what he valued most – the reconfirmation of the Protectorate. This apprehension was fueled by the prospect that whoever was appointed as Legate and subsequently sent to Poland-Lithuania could potentially gain an advantage for himself or others in the coveted role of protector of the kingdom. Following his request to the Holy Father, Orsini endeavoured to discern whom Clement IX might select, even suggesting a list of candidates he submitted to Secretary Masini in an encrypted letter[78]. Although there is no documented evidence of this missive in the family archive, subsequent correspondence with Poland suggests the identities of those who could aspire to the office of Legate. Notably, candidates included Cardinals Santacroce, co-protector of Poland[79]; Pietro Vidoni, a former nuncio in Poland esteemed for his knowledge of the country and negotiating skills[80]; and Bishop Pignatelli, the previous papal representative in Warsaw who was now based in Vienna. Of particular interest was the information Orsini had received regarding an impending elevation to the cardinalate of Pignatelli and, subsequently, his appointment as Legate[81].

While this latter possibility appeared unrealistic given the timing, Orsini had no reason to fear Vidoni, whom he had assisted in attaining the cardinalate eight years prior[82]. Conversely, Santacroce represented the most significant source of concern

"French" cardinals. Particularly in 1691 (ASR, Fondo Corvisieri, Nunziatura e Avvisi, b. 9, "La Giostra Papale. Discorso pubblico sopra li candidati nella sede vacante di Alessandro VIII", ff.nn.), and in 1700 (ASR, Camerale II, *Conclavi e Possessi,* ff.nn.).

76 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 247, V. Orsini to John II Casimir, Rome 6 VII 1668, f. 6r.

77 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 247, V. Orsini to C. Masini, Rome 14 VII 1668, f. 16v.

78 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 247, V. Orsini to C. Masini, Rome 4 VIII 1668, f. 48v.

79 Santacroce was the Co-Protector of the Kingdom since 1654. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 63, John II Casimir to V. Orsini, Warsaw 6 VI 1654, c. 0143.

80 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Marescotti to G. Rospigliosi, Warsaw 25 VII 1668, f. 294v.

81 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 247, V. Orsini to C. Masini, Rome 28 VII 1668, f. 38v.

82 The correspondence exchanged between the Secretary of State and the Nuncio Marescotti, testify that the Protector had proposed Vidoni as possible Legate. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Rospigliosi to G. Marescotti, Rome 30 VI 1668, ff. 25v-26r.

for Orsini. This anxiety is corroborated by Orsini's inquiries to Marescotti, in which he questioned whether Santacroce had sought to usurp the Protectorate during the election phases[83]. The extent to which the co-protector may have covertly worked against Orsini to secure personal advantage remains unclear. Nevertheless, the pervasive mistrust that Orsini harboured toward Santacroce is a prominent theme evident throughout all correspondence relating to the interregnum period.

While the Protector grappled with identifying an eligible candidate for the role, communicating to the King that the Pope seemed inclined to proceed with the appointment[84], the cardinal overlooked a crucial aspect. The Secretariat of State discreetly sought Marescotti's opinion – without Orsini's knowledge – regarding the necessity and efficacy of dispatching a high-ranking papal representative from Rome[85]. Marescotti's response arrived promptly; by the end of August 1668, the nuncio had submitted an extensive letter to the Secretariat advising against the Legate's departure. He highlighted numerous challenges that would encounter the Legate in Warsaw, including potential ceremonial conflicts with the Primate of the Kingdom, the Archbishop of Gnesna, and, more critically, the impracticality of functioning effectively given that, due to his status, he would be lodged in a villa outside the Polish capital, far from the court and the senators[86]. The arguments presented by Marescotti were convincing enough that the Secretariat of State. In the last days of October 1668, the Secretary of State informed the nuncio of the decision not to send the Cardinal Legate and requested that this be kept as a secret from John II and the Polish court to bide time while awaiting further developments[87].

In reality, there was a precise, much more complex anti-French strategy behind this decision. Examination of the coded correspondence between the Secretariat of State and the nuncio Marescotti exchanged in the summer/autumn of 1668 reveals Rome's intent to support the imperial candidate, Charles V of Lorraine. However, the prevailing influence of the French faction within Poland-Lithuania necessitated immediate and extensive action, executed with prudence to safeguard the Holy See's interests. The nuncio already stationed in the Republic could adequately address this requirement, in contrast to a Cardinal Legate, whose elevated status and delayed arrival in Warsaw would hinder effective diplomatic engagement. On August 4, Rome issued explicit directives to Marescotti[88], directing him to support the imperial candidate while simultaneously working to undermine the Muscovite's

83 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 248, V. Orsini to G. Marescotti, Rome 27 VII 1669, f. 49v.

84 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 247, V. Orsini to John II Casimir, Rome 6 VII 1668, f. 6v.

85 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Rospigliosi to G. Marescotti, Rome 30 VI 1668, f. 26r.

86 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Marescotti to G. Rospigliosi, Warsaw 25 VII 1668, ff. 294r-299v

87 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Rospigliosi to G. Marescotti, Rome 20 X 1668, ff. 63r-v.

88 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Rospigliosi to G. Marescotti, Rome 4 VIII 1668, ff. 38v-40r, and Ibid. 40-41r.

candidacy by any means necessary. The diplomatic manoeuvres orchestrated by the nuncio effectively contributed to Rome's objectives during the interregnum. Although the election of Charles V of Lorraine ultimately did not materialize, Marescotti's adept diplomatic strategies played a crucial role in neutralizing the Muscovite threat[89] and facilitating the emergence of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki as a practicable alternative candidate.

Unbeknownst to him, Orsini became a pawn in the strategy orchestrated by the Secretariat of State alongside the nuncio. This circumstance was so evident – and at times almost absurd – that, by mid-January 1669, Orsini reiterated the request for the Legate's mission during an audience with the Pope. Although Clement IX had yet to deliver a definitive negative response, Orsini had already learned that the mission would likely not materialize[90]. Shortly thereafter, the Pope formally communicated the decision not to send a Legate, citing concerns regarding the effectiveness of such an action based on timing and logistical issues[91].

Upon receiving this papal refusal, Orsini felt compelled to inform his Polish correspondents of the resolution. He promptly communicated the news to Masini, John II Casimir, and the Archbishop of Gnesna. Notably, in his correspondence with Secretary Fantoni, the cardinal expressed apprehension that the failure of this initiative could undermine his credibility in the eyes of the King and the primate, risking the confirmation of the Protectorate[92].

At this critical juncture, Orsini realized he had been merely an instrument of the policies the Secretariat of State executed. By March 1669, now conscious of having disappointed those who had placed their hopes in his mediation, he admitted to Fantoni that there had been plots and negotiations of which he had remained oblivious regarding the Legate's appointment[93]. He further highlighted the nuncio's role, deducing that Marescotti had actively worked from Warsaw to advise Rome against dispatching the cardinal Legate. Fearing that this scenario might compromise their esteem for him in Poland-Lithuania and his position as Protector of the Kingdom, the Roman cardinal had no choice but to wait and hope that the King's election would fall to a French "friend".

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89 Marescotti neutralized the Muscovite by securing secret oaths from bishops and zealous Catholics who would never vote for him. In early January 1669, the Bishop of Krakow revealed this secrecy, leading the pro-French party to accuse Marescotti of favouring Charles V of Lorraine. Condè and Neuburg sought exclusion at that time due to having actively plotted for the crown in the previous years and "vivente rege". On this matter, the nuncio had sent a long letter to the secretary of state explaining the dynamics in detail. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 81, G. Marescotti to G. Rospigliosi, 12 XII 1668, ff. 538r-544v. Copy of the secret oath, Ibid. 5 XII 1668, ff. 523r.

90 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 249, V. Orsini to P. Doni, Rome 12 I 1669, f. 26r.

91 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 249, V. Orsini to C. Masini, Rome 19 I 1669, f. 36r.

92 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 249, V. Orsini to L. Fantoni, Rome 19 I 1669, f. 37r.

93 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 248, *V. Orsini to L. Fantoni*, Rome 23 III, ff. 80r-v, and Ibid., f. 81r.

CONCLUSION

On June 19, 1669, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki was elected, and the news reached Rome through an express package sent by the Nuncio. Inside, Marescotti included a message addressed to the Cardinal.

> Finally, God's Mercy has fulfilled the prayers of the Holy Father, making Duke Visniovieschi the new king of this kingdom with the unexpected and unanimous consent of all the electors[94].

Orsini promptly responded to the nuncio, expressing gratitude for the letter that informed him about the election[95]. However, to his closer acquaintances and Polish correspondences, the Cardinal's preoccupation with the confirmation of the Protectorate was evident. This concern stemmed from the recent developments in Polish affairs, particularly the failure of the pro-French faction and the unexpected rise of a third national candidate to the throne. After John II Casimir and his secretary Masini left Warsaw, Orsini found himself without influence in Poland-Lithuania. He conveyed his apprehensions to Fantoni, requesting him to send a congratulatory letter to the new King[96], emphasizing his support for the appointment as Protector of the Kingdom[97].

Despite reassurances from the Papal representative and the Bishop of Beziers, Orsini began to worry about the King's prolonged silence regarding his appointment. In a message to Fantoni, he speculated that the delay in the correspondence to the Roman court was likely due to the numerous official letters that needed to be delivered through Vienna, Venice, and other stops en route to Rome[98].

Unfortunately, Orsini misinterpreted the situation. The Secretary of State understood that the absence of royal letters was linked to the Republic's constitution and protocol, as the King was required to wait for the coronation ceremony[99]. Eventually, the awaited official communication from Rome arrived in early August

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94 «Si è finalmente degnata la Divina Misericordia di esaudire le fervorose suppliche di Nostro Signore col concedere a questo Regno il Signor Duca Visniovieschi in nuovo Re con inaspettato unanime consenso di tutti», AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 229, G. Marescotti to V. Orsini, Warsaw 19 VI 1669, c. 0036.

95 After communicating with the nuncio, Orsini received a long letter from Fantoni about the election. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 229, L. Fantoni to V. Orsini, 19 VI 1669, c. 0610.

96 In his first letter to the new king, Orsini confidently congratulated him on his election and explicitly requested the honour of being appointed as the Cardinal Protector of Poland. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 248, V. Orsini to M.K. Wiśniowiecki, Rome 6 VII 1669, f. 8r.

97 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 248, V. Orsini to L. Fantoni, Rome 6 VII 1669, ff. 8v-9r.

98 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 248, V. Orsini to L. Fantoni, Rome 6 VII 1669, ff. 9v-10r.

99 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 82, G. Rospigliosi to G. Marescotti, Rome 27 VII 1669, f. 116v.

1669, containing a letter for the Holy Father and another for Cardinal Orsini. In this correspondence, the King formally confirmed Orsini's position as Protector of the Kingdom[100]. Wiśniowiecki stated that the notification had been dispatched after he took the oath and his royal investiture on July 7 at St. John's Collegiate Church in Warsaw. With his confirmation as Protector, Orsini could finally write an official letter to the new King, congratulating him on his election and reminding Wiśniowiecki of his duties as a Catholic monarch. The Cardinal emphasized the necessity of fighting against the infidel Turk, who threatened Poland for the kingdom's glory, traditionally referred to as Antemurale Christianitatis[101].

Regrettably, Wiśniowiecki's election did not lead to the anticipated improvements; his reign proved challenging for the country[102]. The initial optimism surrounding his unanimous election soon dissipated[103] due to internal political fragmentation and discord, compounded by the advancing Ottoman Empire army led by Michele Kaplan Pachâ[104]. This force would soon invade Poland-Lithuania, capturing Kamieniec Podolski and ultimately forcing the new sovereign to sign the Treaty of Buchach on October 16, 1672[105].

Due to the challenges faced soon after Wiśniowiecki's election and his untimely death, Orsini never cultivated a close relationship with the King. His connection with the new king differed significantly from his two-decade rapport with John II Casimir. Even with the election of John III Sobieski, Cardinal Orsini, although confirmed in his role[106], did not have the opportunity to forge a closer bond with the future hero of Vienna. The Protector of the Kingdom passed away two years later, just as John III returned to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after his successful campaigns and assumed the throne.

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100 AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 64, M.K. Wiśniowiecki to V. Orsini, Warsaw 8 VII 1669, c. 0275.

101 Orsini emphasized the urgent need to combat the Turkish army, arguing for creating a Christian princes' alliance to confront the Ottomans, who were vulnerable due to prolonged conflicts in Candia. This was the only possibility of victory against the Common Enemy. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 248, V. Orsini to M.K. Wiśniowiecki, Rome 17 VIII 1669, ff. 100-01v.

102 Platania, *Rzeczpospolita*, 79-85.

103 Even if unexpected, as Cardinal Protector Orsini observed, the election of Wiśniowiecki was agreed upon by all the parties and realized with quiet for the country. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, vol. 248, V. Orsini to L. Fantoni, Rome 6 VII 1669, f. 9v.

104 BAV, Barb. Lat., 2595, "Relazione breve e Fedele della presa di Caminiez fatta dai Turchi nell'anno 1673 stesa da Stefano Gradi per relazione di Mattia Gondola, testimone oculare", ff. 30-33r. On the Podolia under the Turks, see: Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ejalat Kaminiecki. Podole pod panowaniem tureckim (1672-1699)* (Warszaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Polczek, 1994).

105 Platania, *Rzeczpospolita*, 105.

106 On 4 February 1676, John III Sobieski, having recently returned from his two-year campaign against the Turks, reaffirmed Orsini's position as Protector of the Kingdom in a Latin letter. AC, AO, I, Corrispondenza, b. 64, c. 0157.

ABBREVIATION

AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano.
Segr. Stato: Segreteria di Stato.
AC: Archivio Capitolino.
AO: Archivio Orsini.
ASR: Archivio di Stato di Roma.
ASP: Archivio di Stato di Parma.
BAV: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.
DBI: Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani.
PSB: Polski Słownik Biograficzny.

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THE ART OF PERSUASION AND POWER: PROFILES OF CANDIDATES FOR THE POLISH THRONE AFTER THE ABDICATION OF JOHN II CASIMIR IN THE LIGHT OF PAMPHLETS[1]

ABSTRACT
The article explores the art of persuasion during the royal elections in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth following John II Casimir's abdication in 1668. Special attention is given to pamphlets, which served as key tools for shaping public opinion, often highlighting or discrediting candidates based on attributes like lineage, military experience, wealth, and political alliances. The study examines how cultural expectations, such as the Baroque emphasis on sensory impact, influenced communication strategies. It also highlights the interplay between political power and noble attitudes, as elites sought to preserve their privileges while selecting a ruler capable of ensuring the Commonwealth's stability. By studying these elements, the article sheds light on the dynamics of political persuasion and the broader cultural and social factors that shaped the election process.

KEYWORDS: Royal Elections; Polish-Lithuanian; Commonwealth; Baroque Culture; Interregnum; Pamphlets.

The interregnum represented a crucial moment in the socio-political landscape of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The opportunity presented itself for the nobility and the magnates to vigorously engage in political maneuvers, potentially leading to personal advancement and enhanced socio-economic standing. Frequently referred to as a period fraught with peril, it left the nation without a monarch, who was crucial for ensuring political stability[2]. Therefore, it was an ideal time for the nobility to intensify their activities, as they saw the interregnum as an opportunity to expand their political influence, enrich themselves, and obtain lucrative offices. Since various candidates were claiming the throne, a complex political game began between factions supporting specific individuals. However, it is important to remember that in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the greatest political influence was held by the magnates, who exerted a significant impact on the political attitudes of the middle and lower nobility.

1 The article results from research conducted as part of the SONATA 17 project titled "Social and economic clientele of Jan Stanisław Sapieha: A study of the history of factions in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania" (project no. 2021/43/D/HS3/01419) financed by the National Science Centre in Kraków.

2 Compare with: Urszula Augustyniak, *Wazowie i "królowie rodacy". Studium władzy królewskiej w Rzeczypospolitej XVII wieku* (Warszawa: SEMPER, 1999), 68; Felicia Rosu, *Elective Monarchy in Transylvania and Poland-Lithuania, 1569–1587* (Oxford: Oxfrod University Press, 2017), 4.

The primary objective of this article is to scrutinize which attributes were deemed most significant in the candidates for the throne from the perspective of the Polish-Lithuanian elite, and how these attributes were utilized by both supporters and opponents of the various pretenders. This research seeks to understand how opinions regarding the ideal monarch's characteristics shifted depending on the interests of different social and political groups. In the context of public debates and political propaganda, particular consideration will be accorded to the arguments employed in the political struggle for support among the nobility. We will also examine how candidates leveraged their political, material, and cultural positions to garner favor from the elites and the nobility. The significance of this is undeniable. This issue is especially important because no comprehensive study has been conducted on the characteristics of the candidates for the throne following John Casimir's abdication, especially in the context of public debates and political propaganda. The choice of the next monarch carried profound significance for the future of the Commonwealth, influencing both its internal framework and political representation. It is possible to gain a more profound understanding of the political mechanisms that shaped the decisions of the elites, as well as the methods employed to influence the opinion of the nobility. Through the lens of age, lineage, wealth, and upbringing, it becomes clear that different factions attempted to shape the debate on the future ruler and which persuasion techniques were used in this struggle for power. This analysis of the arguments and strategies used to garner support from the nobility reveals that the political persuasion and mobilization techniques played a crucial role in the political game within the Commonwealth.

To analyze the aforementioned matter, I shall refer to the election held in 1668–1669, subsequent to the demise of John II Casimir. The primary sources for this investigation are the numerous pamphlets, tracts, and political writings that circulated during the interregnum following John Casimir's death. These pamphlets, often commissioned by magnates or political factions, were key tools in shaping public opinion regarding the potential candidates for the Polish throne. These works were written in a style that was accessible to the nobility and functioned both as political manifestos and tools for persuasion, aimed at influencing the decision-making process of the electoral diet. Each of these writings reflected the diverse interests of various factions, with each text presenting arguments in favor of their preferred candidate while challenging the credibility and suitability of rival contenders. Although the majority of these pamphlets emphasized the individual candidates' strengths, such as their age, wealth, political acumen, and cultural comprehension, a few also engaged in ad hominem attacks and attempts to discredit the opposition. The writings used vivid metaphors, allegorical references, and rhetorical devices to get strong reactions from the readers. In this particular context, these pamphlets not only reflected the political realities of the time but also served as a crucial instrument for contesting and shaping political power. Therefore, they form the core of the sources that provide insight into the political strategies, ideals, and ambitions that governed the election process. We can gain a deeper understanding of how political narratives were constructed and how the nobility's loyalty was influenced by the strategic deployment of political rhetoric during this pivotal moment in Polish history by analyzing these texts.

THE IMPACT OF ATTITUDES ON POLITICAL OUTCOMES DURING POLISH ROYAL ELECTIONS IN THE 17th CENTURY

Over the years, the nobility has devised strategies aimed at streamlining the administration of the Commonwealth and strengthening it against external adversaries. During the interregnum, the challenge of electing a new ruler was a significant concern, leading to a surge in political activity among the nobility, especially the magnates. They perceived the election of their preferred candidate to expand their political clout, acquire new offices, and secure profitable economic opportunities. The interregnum frequently led to increased tensions and rivalries between different noble factions. Each faction attempted to exploit the power vacuum, which resulted in a dynamic and often volatile political scene. The absence of a central authority also contributed to the vulnerability of the Commonwealth to foreign interference, as neighboring states attempted to influence the election in order to align with their own interests. The interregnum period also demonstrated the ingenuity and resilience of the Polish-Lithuanian political system. Despite the absence of a monarch, the system successfully navigated these power vacuums through intricate negotiations and strategic alliances. The uncertainty, though perilous, was a testament to the ability of the Commonwealth's political structures to adapt and endure amidst challenges. The interregnum, therefore, was not only a period of peril, but also a time of significant political creativity and innovation within the state[3].

The concept of attitudes played a crucial role in the early modern Commonwealth's political influence during royal elections. As defined by various scholars, attitudes encompass the relatively stable dispositions towards evaluating objects or individuals and reacting (sometimes) emotionally towards them. During the interregnum periods, the attitudes of the nobility and magnates were significantly agitated, leading them to actively engage in political maneuvers aimed at influencing the outcome of elections[4].

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3 Edward Opaliński, "Elekcje wazowskie w Polsce. Stosunek szlachty do instytucji okresu bezkrólewia", *Kwartalnik Historyczny,* 42/3 (1985): 533; Wojciech Tygielski, and Andrzej Pośpiech, "Społeczna rola dworu magnackiego XVII–XVIII wieku", *Przegląd Historyczny,* 69/2 (1978): 232; Id., "Klientela: więzi społeczne-grupy nacisku", in *Władza i społeczeństwo w XVI i XVII w. Prace ofiarowane Antoniemu Mączakowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, eds. Marcin Kamler, et al. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe 1989), 261-82; Henryk Lulewicz, *Elita polityczno-społeczna Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w połowie XVII wieku*, PhD Thesis kept in the Library of the Historical Institute of the University of Warsaw (Warszawa, 1984), 240; Aleksandra Ziober, "Dwie ostatnie elekcje Wazów jako przyczynek do awansu majątkowego i urzędniczego wybranych rodzin Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego", in *W kręgu myśli Władysława Czaplińskiego. Wrocławskie prace z Historii Nowożytnej*, vol. 1, eds. Filip Wolański, and Leszek Ziątkowski (Wrocław: Stara Szuflada, 2016), 123; Aleksandra Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego wobec elekcji Władysława IV Wazy i Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego* (Kraków: Wyd. Księgarnia Akademicka, 2020), 11.

4 Gerd Bohner, and Michaela Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitudes change* (London: Psychology Press, 2002), 5-7; Elliot A. Aronson, Timoty D. Wilson, and Robin M. Akert, *Social Psychology* (Boston-London: Pearson Education Limited, 2016),

The election period was marked by intense political activity, where the attitudes of nobles were often influenced by their interests and ambitions. These attitudes were not merely passive states but were actively expressed through behaviors and strategic alliances. The cognitive component of attitudes, which involved beliefs and knowledge about the candidates, played a fundamental role in shaping the electoral choices of the nobility. They gathered information, evaluated the candidates' merits, and strategized on how to advance their own status and influence through the election of a favorable candidate. Sometimes, the nobles and magnates were driven by feelings of loyalty, ambition, fear etc. Candidates' emotional reactions could include admiration or distrust, which were crucial in forming coalitions and supporting bases. Their affective component often translated into passionate speeches, public endorsements, and even propaganda in order to influence others' opinions. Behaviorally, these attitudes manifested themselves in active campaigning, negotiations, and sometimes even bribery or coercion. Attitudes were influenced by concrete actions such as organizing support among other nobles, participating in political gatherings, and using economic resources to influence votes. This period required nobles to be highly proactive and engaged, leveraging their attitudes to navigate the complex political landscape[5].

Throughout the electoral process, the attitudes of the nobles were influenced by both historical experiences and current political realities. Furthermore, precedents, such as previous kings' policies and their impacts, informed their attitudes towards contemporary candidates. Additionally, their attitudes and actions were influenced by their immediate political context, including alliances and rivalries among magnates[6].

These attitudes were stable over time, as they were deeply ingrained in the political culture of the nobility. However, they could also adapt to changing circumstances, showing both the stability and flexibility of political attitudes. This adaptability was essential for nobles to maintain their influence and navigate the changing political landscape of the interregnum. The concept of attitudes in the context of 17th-century Polish elections demonstrates the complex interplay between cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components in political influence. The nobility's involvement in the electoral process was driven by their attitudes, which were shaped by a mix of personal ambitions, historical experiences, and current political dynamics[7].

190-91; Dolores Albarracin, Blair T. Johnson, Mark P. Zanna, and Tarcan T. Kumkale, "Attitudes: Introduction and Scope", in *The Handbook of Attitudes*, eds. Dolores Albarracin, Blair T. Johnson, and Mark P. Zanna (New York-London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2005), 3-15.

5 See more: Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 11 and next.

6 I wrote more about this topic in a monograph, where I compared the circumstances of the interregnum after the death of Sigismund III Vasa and the abdication of John Casimir Vasa: Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 53-71.

7 Bogdan Wojciszke, *Psychologia społeczna* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR, 2011), 200; Elliot A. Aronson, Timothy D. Wilson, and Robin M. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, 2006), 314; Bohner, and Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitudes change*, 7; Mark P. Zanna, and John K. Rempel, "Attitudes: A New Look at an Old Concept", in *The Social*

The primary challenge regarding literature whose aim was to influence attitudes does not lie solely in its arguments, but rather in its dissemination scope. It is arduous to discern which pieces gained greater momentum and consequently exerted greater influence on attitudes, whether eliciting immediate shifts or instilling long-term convictions. We rarely encounter direct references or accounts discussing specific literature or the arguments they convey. Despite the possibility of gleaning fragmentary insights from correspondence, it is evident that such narratives fail to encompass broader perceptions within the noble society. Equally crucial is the consideration of quantity, format variations (printed versus handwritten), and the dissemination channels employed for propaganda literature. Despite meticulous research efforts, the responses to crucial inquiries regarding noble sentiments towards throne candidates and the impact of propaganda writings remain elusive. We lack clarity on which writings garnered the most attention, eliciting positive or negative responses from the nobility. Given the raging insights from the social sciences, we can attempt to draw tentative conclusions, but definitive answers to these inquiries remain elusive.

The creators of propaganda writings employed diverse strategies to garner support from the nobility. One strategy involved cultivating a favorable perception of the sender among readers. Typically, authors abstained from disclosing their authentic identities, cognizant of the potential harm to their work's credibility, particularly if they were associated with a particular political faction. Consequently, these writings frequently utilized various pseudonyms to elicit favorable responses from readers. The degree of trust engendered in the author was correlated with the likelihood that readers would identify with them and embrace the arguments presented. Consequently, the pseudonyms selected were frequently obscure and implicitly associated with the rhetorical customs of the aristocracy, evoking sentiments of patriotism and camaraderie. Titles such as *Political Dialogue of a Native Landowner*, *A Replica of a Cordial Correspondence between Friends*, or *Polish Citizen to Another Polish Citizen* were commonly used, fostering a sense of familiarity and closeness between the author and the reader. It was crucial to create an impression that anyone could have authored the document or that it was the work of an educated individual. This was simple, yet effective tactic ensured that readers, unaware of the author's identity, were uncertain about the political affiliations or arguments presented in the literature[8].

Psychology of Knowledge, eds. Daniel Bar-Tal, and Arie Kruglanski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 315-34; Gerd Bohner, and Norbert Schwarz, "The Construction of Attitudes", in *Intrapersonal Processes (Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology)*, eds. Abraham Tesser, and Norbert Schwarz (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2001); Gerd Bohner, and Nina Dickel, "Attitudes and Attitude Change", *Annual Review of Psychology,* 62 (2011), 392-94; Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 289 and next.

8 BNF, Bibliotèque de l'Arsenal, Ms-4783, ff. 1-3; "List poufałego przyjaciela de Piasto eligendo", in *Pisma polityczne z czasów panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy 1648-1668. Publicystyka-egzorbitancje-projekty-memoriały*, vol. 3: *1665–1668*, ed. Stefania Ochmann-Staniszewska (Wrocław-Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991), 278-84; "List do poufałego przyjaciela albo raczej respons na awizy", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 285-93; "Respons na list jednego poufałego

THE IDEAL QUALITIES OF A FUTURE RULER

The election of a monarch during the era of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth required not only consideration of political and international alliances but also a detailed analysis of the candidates' personal qualities. In this text, we will examine the key criteria that were important to the nobility and the most common expectations placed on prospective rulers. During the election process, various aspects were considered, which could determine whether a particular candidate was capable of ensuring the state's stability, security, and the protection of its liberties.

THE MILITARY EXPECTATIONS OF THE POLISH NOBILITY

During the interregnum following the abdication of John II Casimir, the future ruler's martial abilities and military experience were a crucial topic of debate. The Sarmatian cultural ideal of the noble knight as protector of the homeland heavily influenced this perception of the monarch's role. These traditions were deeply ingrained in the mindset not only of the Commonwealth, but also of the wider European community. The monarch was expected to be prepared to lay down his life for his nation, using his abilities to safeguard the state[9].

Gottfried Leibniz, who advocated for Philip William of Neuburg, emphasized the prince's capacity to lead conflicts without seeking them. His military prowess, proven in battles against the Elector of Brandenburg, was well respected, and his calm demeanor during peace negotiations highlighted his balanced nature. Philip William was also commended for his horsemanship, considered essential for a war leader. He has been compared to King Ladislaus IV, who was successful in ending several wars early in his reign. This makes him an ideal ruler for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, some opponents, particularly those supporting the Moscow candidacy, downplayed his military achievements, dismissing comparisons to Ladisalus IV as misguided[10].

Louis de Condé, despite his negative reputation, was recognized for his military skills. Condé's prowess on the battlefield was acknowledged by Andrzej Olszowski, the Crown Vice-Chancellor, but he doubted his ability to adapt to the Polish military system and political environment. Henry, Condé's son, was criticized for inheriting

przyjaciela", in Ibid., 295-301; Aronson, et al., *Psychologia społeczna*, 328-37; Wojciszke, *Psychologia społeczna*, 217-19.

9 Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 239; Janusz Tazbir, "Wzorce osobowe szlachty polskiej w XVII wieku", *Kwartalnik Historyczny,* 83/4 (1976): 787; Joanna Orzeł, "System wartości obywatelskich w kulturze szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku", in *Parlament–konstytucja–demokracja w edukacji historycznej i obywatelskiej,* eds. Stanisław Roszak, Małgorzata Strzelecka, and Agnieszka Wieczorek (Toruń: Stowarzyszenie Oświatowców Polskich, 2013), 234; Urszula Świderska-Włodarczyk, *Mentalność szlachty polskiej XV i XVI wieku* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Świętego Wojciecha, 2003), 202-03; Edward Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej w latach 1587–1652. System parlamentarny a społeczeństwo obywatelskie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1995), 55.

10 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, trans. Tadeusz Bieńkowski (Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo PAN, 1998), 157, 159; "Respons jm. p. kasztelana liwskiego p. Łusczewskiemu", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 275.

his father's flaws without his virtues. Leibniz argued that Conde's warlike nature would endanger the Commonwealth, which needed peace to rebuild[11].
Charles of Lorraine also gained admiration for his military expertise, particularly his participation in the conflicts against the Turks[12]. In contrast, the Florentine prince was rejected due to his lack of military experience («In wars, and having no spirit or inclination for war and military matters»), as the Commonwealth needed a ruler capable of recovering lost territories[13]. Similarly, doubts were raised regarding the sons of the Russian Tsar, Alexei, due to their youth and lack of proven military leadership[14].
The nobility, especially in Lithuania, was concerned about further destruction from wars and was keen to secure peace, which led to support for a Muscovite candidate. Several opponents expressed concern that the selection of a Russian prince could potentially result in conflicts with Sweden, Turkey, and the Tatars[15].
Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki was praised for his military heritage, being the son of the famous commander Jeremi Wiśniowiecki, although this was largely propaganda as Michał had little military experience[16]. Nonetheless, the emphasis placed on military capabilities during the debates underscored the nobility's expectation that the future king would ensure external security, particularly for Lithuania, in the face of persistent threats[17].

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN THE FUTURE RULER'S IDENTITY AMIDST THE CONFESSIONAL LANDSCAPE OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The perspectives of the elites on the future ruler's stance towards religious tolerance should be examined against the backdrop of a widespread political movement

11 Andrzej Olszowski, *Censura candidatorum sceptri polonici. Ocena kandydatów do tronu polskiego*, eds. Kazimierz Przyboś, and Adam Perłakowski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Księgarnia Akademicka, 2014), 49, 51.

12 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, vol. 35, "Reflexions qui la serenissime Republique de Pologne dois faire sur la personne qu'elle choisira pour son Roy, brak miejsca, 1668", f. 138r; AGAD, Nabytki oddział I, sign. 199, "Dostateczna próba i ratie, któremi Xiążę Je. Msc Lotharińskie Carol, nad inszych concurentów, do Korony Polskiej miałby bydź przy wolnych głosach Conclusii królem obrany", f. 7or; LvNB, f. 4 (Zbiór rękopisów Biblioteki Baworowskich), op. 1, nr. 266, ff. 7-8r; Mirosława Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała Wiśniowieckiego* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2006), 109.

13 «in bellis i żadnego do wojny animum et exertilium nie mający». VUB, f. 5, A27, nr 4753, "Konkurenci do sceptrum polskiego z cudzej ziemi którzy na przyszłej da Pan Bóg elekcjej przez posłów swoich konkurować i fakcjami certować będą naprzód", f. 1.

14 AMAEF, CP, Pologne, vol. 35, "Reflexions", ff 118v-19.

15 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, Robert Yard to NN, Gdańsk 1 IV 1669, f. 21r-v.; "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 279.

16 Olszowski, *Censura Candidatorum Sceptri*, 95.

17 Marian Chachaj, "Młodość Michała Tomasza Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego przyszłego króla polskiego", *Czasy Nowożytne*, 28 (2015): 109; Tadeusz Korzon, *Dola i niedola Jana Sobieskiego*, vol. 2 (Kraków: Akad. Umiejętności, 1898), 146.

opposing dissenters, particularly after the abdication of the last Vasa monarch. This movement was particularly prominent in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where the Pac family led vigorous opposition against dissenters, specifically targeting Bogusław Radziwiłł. During the interregnum, the Grand Chancellor and the Grand Hetman of Lithuania attempted to introduce several measures aimed at limiting the influence of dissenters. These efforts encompassed issuing directives to local assemblies and attempting to exclude the prince from the Chamber of Deputies. During the electoral parliament, Michał Kazimierz even referenced the Horodło privilege from 1413, granted by Ladislaus Jagiełło, to demand that the future monarch not award titles to non-Catholics. This period was marked by significant political division in Lithuania. One part of the nobility favored a monarch who would safeguard the rights of dissidents, whereas others sought a monarch who would curtail their privileges and revoke their positions of authority[18].

The environment supporting the candidacy of Prince of Neuburg was aware of the prevailing sentiments in the Commonwealth and, despite its association with the Calvinist Bogusław Radziwiłł, sought to present its candidate as an exemplary yet tolerant Catholic. Leibniz observed that Philip Wiliam displayed considerable understanding of religious matters. His second wife, Elisabeth Amalie of Hesse-Darmstadt, converted to Catholicism before their marriage through his intervention, demonstrating his moderation and tolerance towards dissenters and his skill in converting them. Philip Wiliam's religiosity was also evident in the upbringing of his sons, some of whom were destined for ecclesiastical service[19].

In the Commonwealth, numerous untrue narratives circulated regarding the Condé family's lack of reverence for religion. Olszowski claimed that Prince d'Enghien, Henry, exhibited disrespect towards God and did not adhere to «the Christian humility of faith». It was also alleged that Condé disapproved of Catholicism and was intrigued by religious novelties[20]. The view that "Non est cum Deo, qui favet Condeo" became widely accepted. Condé was also accused of violating the commandments by alleging that he consumed meat during a Friday meal in Paris with the Calvinist Bogusław Radziwiłł. This was intended to undermine both Condé and his favored candidate, the Prince of Neuburg. Leibniz also expressed unfavorable sentiments towards the religious beliefs of the Condé family, alleging a lack of tolerance and referring to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre[21]. Despite such criticisms, propaganda pieces depicted Condé as a reasonable Catholic[22].

18 AGAD, AR, IV, nr 838, Jerzy Billewicz to Boguslaw Radziwiłła, Poroszeny [?] 22[?] October 1668, ff. 20-3; Ibid., Jerzy Billewicz to Bogusława Radziwiłła, Poroszeny [?] 20 I 1669, f. 24; Konrad Bobiatyński, *W walce o hegemonię. Rywalizacja polityczna w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w latach 1667–1674* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2016), 59-60.

19 Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 158.

20 «chrześcijańskiej pokorze wiary». Olszowski, *Censura Candidaorum Sceptri*, 49.

21 Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 68.

22 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, Robert Yard to NN, Gdańsk 31 III 1668, ff. 17rv; LvNB, f. 4 (Zbiór rękopisów Biblioteki Baworowskich), op. 1, nr. 266, ff. 60-2r; AGAD, Nabytki oddział I, nr 199, "Rationes contra Moscum", ff. 41-4;

In general, Charles of Lorraine was regarded as a virtuous Christian. According to Olszowski, he was a Catholic who was influenced by the piety of his forefathers. Furthermore, he was not interested in religious novelty, and his ancestors had participated in the Crusades. Many in noble society appreciated his education, which he primarily received in Jesuit schools during his youth. This fact was often emphasized in literature supporting his candidacy[23].

Candidates from non-Catholic denominations attracted considerable attention among the nobility, especially regarding the Brandenburg candidacy, which was criticized for the elector's Protestant faith. The candidature of the Moscow tsar, along with that of his sons Aleksey and Fyodor, was particularly noteworthy. Moscow statements claimed that Michailovich had promised to convert his son to Catholicism, and that he frequently highlighted the potential for a union of Christian denominations. The doctrine faced considerable promotion, as reflected in numerous opposing writings and reports from foreign envoys who expressed concern about its implications. According to documents from the period, including one by the pseudonymous author H. Zdanowicz, Lithuanian nobles were considering offering the crown to the tsar if he agreed to adopt Roman Catholicism and fulfill other conditions. However, skepticism regarding Michailovichs assurances regarding his son's conversion and the feasibility of a union remained prevalent among the noble society. As emphasized by Andrzej Olszowski, the most formidable opponent of the Moscow candidacy was the Holy See. He argued that the tsar would never be a true Catholic, and the Church did not trust the tsar's plans for union, as demonstrated by the concerns of Apostolic Nuncio Galeazzo Marescotti.

It was evident from the existing legal provisions that the Polish-Lithuanian elites held towards the future king's religion that he must adhere to the Catholic faith. The situation was slightly different in dissident circles, where entirely different traits and values were considered, with political faction affiliation serving as a strong stimulus for attitudes. The apparent strong support for the Moscow candidacy in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania may have been more about political maneuvering by the Pac family than a genuine desire to assist the tsar in gaining the Polish crown.

THE INTERREGNUM DEBATE: SAFEGUARDING NOBLE LIBERTIES

The preservation of noble rights and freedoms was a crucial matter during the interregnum that ensued following the demise of John Casimir. The discussions surrounding the introduction of *absolutum dominium* and its implications for noble

"Respons jm. p. kasztelana liwskiego p. Łusczewskiemu", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 272-77; "Zwierciadło na elekcyją króla polskiego wystawione in casu abdicationis anno 1668, w którym w Polszcze trzeba has necessitates candidatos comitantes upatrować", in Ibid., 314-16; Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała*, 49, 93-5.

23 AGAD, Nabytki, oddział I, nr 199, "Dostateczna próba i ratie", f. 70; LvNB, f. 4 (Zbiór rękopisów Biblioteki Baworowskich), op. 1, nr. 266, "Prabatio sufficiens et rationes firmissimae quiby sermy princeps Lotharingaiae Carol Hyacinthus potior esse deberet caeteris, qui concurrunt ut in regem eligantur â liberis vociby Polonorum", ff. 9-10; Olszowski, *Censura Candidatorum Sceptri*, 57.

liberties became increasingly prominent in propaganda writings[24].
Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz raised objections against the French candidacy and the proposal for an election *vivente rege* (election during the reigning king's lifetime). He argued that the candidate supported by Versailles sought the throne even before John Casimir's abdication, and that Philip Wiliam, a potential candidate, respected the customs of the Commonwealth by waiting for the king to step down. Leibniz noted: «Though others pursued him, he did not cease to win minds, as far as it could be done without political intrigues»[25]. Concerns about candidates from absolutist regimes were prevalent, with particularly directed fears directed toward French pretenders and the Muscovite Tsar, as citizens associated them with tyranny and the loss of noble freedoms. Lacki, representing Lithuanian nobility, poignantly cautioned that:

> For if we submit our necks to the Frenchman,
> Say farewell to freedom, for the proud Gallus[26].

Despite his warnings, Lacki did not perceive the Muscovite Tsar as a imminent threat, indicating a complex perception of potential rulers[27]. The majority of authors of the writings shared the sentiment that the emergence of a tyrant was linked to candidates from absolutist states, posing a risk to the liberties of the nobility[28]. The need to preserve existing freedoms emerged as a crucial argument supporting particular candidates, alongside considerations of faith. One pamphlet warned: «Gentlemen Poles, a tyrant is attempting to take us and our state by force»[29]. The interconnectedness of candidates with influential patrons was another common concern, as it could jeopardize noble interests. Particularly concerning was the perception that candidates from France, such as Prince de Conde and Charles de Lorraine, were under the control of Louis XIV, which prompted apprehensions regarding the potential erosion of Commonwealth autonomy[30].
Despite the elite's flexibility regarding candidate selection, they opposed any concessions that might expand royal power or alter the existing political structure. The reluctance to relinquish influence over central authority meant that any agreements extending royal prerogatives were dependent upon alignment with noble interests. The Polish and Lithuanian magnates maintained a careful balance,

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24 Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 256-57, 259.

25 «że inni go ubiegają, nie ustawał jednak w zjednywaniu sobie umysłów, o ile to można było zrobić bez intryg politycznych». Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 69, 159; Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała*, 97-8.

26 «Gdyż jeśli Francuzowi swe karki poddamy, Pożegnać się z wolnością, bowiem Gallus hardy». Juliusz Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce. Dwaj królowie rodacy*, ed. Stefan Nieznanowski (Warszawa: Pax, 1980), 8.

27 Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 260.

28 Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 260-61.

29 «Panowie Polacy, że nas gwałtem i nasze państwo wziąć usiłują tyrana nie pana prowadzą». LMAVB, f. 17, nr 12, ff. 249-62.

30 LMAVB, f. 17, nr 12, ff. 249-62.

unwilling to allow any candidate to undermine their established rights. Interestingly, while the nobility (especially the Lithuanians) showed favorable sentiments toward the Muscovite candidacy, which had associations with cruelty and despotism, this support stemmed more from political maneuvering than from a genuine belief in the merits of Muscovite candidates.

The debates and conflicts that transpired during this turbulent period exemplified the intricate issues pertaining to noble rights, the political terrain of the Commonwealth, and the profound apprehensions regarding the balance of power and authority within the state. The nobility's attempts to safeguard their freedoms shaped their reactions to potential candidates and their willingness to engage in the electoral process, underscoring the fragility of their privileges in a rapidly changing political environment.

THE ROLE OF AGE, HEALTH, AND FAMILY IN THE POLISH THRONE SUCCESSION

The issue of age, health, and family background among the candidates for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth reveals a complex landscape of preferences and concerns among the nobility following John Casimir's abdication. The nobility showed a favorable attitude towards young, unmarried candidates, in order to ensure that a new king could forge a marital alliance that would benefit the Republic or enhance its international standing. Nobleman Andrzej Olszowski emphasizes that this was a significant factor in the selection of Henry of Valois, Stephen Báthory, and Sigismund Vasa, noting that even subsequent kings such as Ladislasus Sigismund and John Casimir were also without wives at the time of their election.

Advocates for young candidates argued that individuals of mature age (often referred to in Latin as *maturum*) were already set in their ways, making it challenging to change ingrained habits. The concern was that such candidates might conflict with the nobility's expectations, which could lead to tensions with the new ruler. There was even a fear that choosing an older candidate would lead to governance issues, as expressed in the sentiment: «we would rather defeat him than improve his bad habits». In contrast, a young king, who was not accustomed to governance practices, could be molded to fit the nobles expectations and customs. The idea was that a younger ruler would assimilate the traditions of the Commonwealth and learn the laws and statutes faster. However, it was believed that a young monarch would be more capable of learning Polish, even if he had no prior exposure to the language[31].

Contrary to popular opinion, some voices argued against selecting a candidate who was too young. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz argued that a good ruler should be able to govern independently, which would be impossible for a minor. This scenario would result in the regents assuming power, prolonging a period of interregnum. Leibniz's perspective primarily focused on the candidacy of a Moscow prince, emphasizing the significant drawback of his sons' youth[32]. Others echoed these sentiments, expressing that a minor cannot be entrusted with the authority of the state, leading to governance challenges[33].

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31 «wprzód go zagryziemy, niżeli we złych nałogach poprawiemy». "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 280.

32 Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 55-6.

33 "Respons jm. p. kasztelna liwskiego p. Łusczewskiemu", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol.

Philip Wiliam, the candidate from Brandenburg, was subjected to severe criticism regarding his age and health. His capability to govern effectively due to his advanced years suggests that he might not be on the throne for long before another interregnum ensues. Various works indicated his frail health, with assertions like «his vigor is fading». Similar sentiments were echoed in *Reasons Against the Conspiracy of Duke Neuburg Against the State* and *A Landowner's Discourse on the Candidates for the Polish Crown* ["Rationes przeciwko conjuratiey X. neyburskiego na państwo" and "Discurs ziemianina o kandydatach Korony Polskiej"], which lamented that the near 60-year-old Neuburczyk was on the brink of death, unable to bear the burdens of leadership. Jakub Dąbski further criticized Prince of Neuburg, stating that at fifty-eight, he was not only mature but "rotten", implying he was unfit for the role[34].

Adam Oborski pointed out, however, that Philip Wiliam was only a few years younger than the abdicated king and, therefore, could soon succumb to fate, which would lead to another interregnum. Meanwhile, others suggested that a mature candidate could be more reliable than a very young one who would struggle with independence in ruling. Oborski also refuted the notion that Neuburg would be incapable of handling military obligations, asserting that his numerous sons would be willing to lend their assistance and shoulder the associated responsibilities[35].

Neuburg's supporters stressed his commitment to health and his opposition to harmful drinking and pleasures[36]. They pointed to his healthy offspring, even noting that his wife had given birth to another son just three months prior, despite him being 53 at the time. This was considered a testimony to his lifestyle of purity and temperance. Leibniz posited that a man's fertility signified his health, youthfulness, and was a sign of a prolonged lifespan. The author emphasized that he maintained physical and mental vigor comparable to younger rivals, not relying on medicines, but engaging in hunting and other noble pursuits to preserve his health[37].

Leibniz defended the Neuburg candidacy against age-related allegations by asserting that wisdom and prudence were more crucial attributes for a ruler than mere physical health. It was stressed that physical strength could be delegated to others, while mental leadership could not be easily replaced. He warned against the impulsiveness often found in younger candidates and advocated for selecting someone more mature. His arguments particularly favor Neuburg over the Moscow and Lorraine candidates[38].

Concerns regarding the health of Louis de Condé also emerged. Olszowski critiqued him for being "exhausted from hardships and weakened by youthful debauchery", further noting that he was often carried in a litter. Furthermore, he raised doubts

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3, 274.

34 Philip William was actually 53 years old in November 1668; "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 281.

35 "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 275.

36 Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 157.

37 Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 56-57, 157.

38 Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 57-9; Olszowski, *Censura Candidatorum Sceptri,* 49, 53, 59; Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała*, 98.

about the mental health of Condé son, suggesting a hereditary risk. The 26-year-old Charles de Lorraine was viewed with admiration for his youth, believing he would quickly pick up Polish and adopt customs.

Family size and marital status were crucial factors in evaluating candidates. Charles de Lorraine stood out as he had no children or wife, which was seen favorably by the nobility. There were discussions regarding a potential union with Eleonore Maria Josefa of Austria or Sophia Alexeyevna Romanova, which were deemed advantageous alliances. This was especially appealing to Lithuanian nobles, who were aware of the potential benefits of such ties[39].

Philip Wiliam's eleven children, however, caused considerable concern among the nobility, who feared the financial burden of supporting them. The notion of electing a candidate with many offspring was fraught with worries over the potential financial strain on the Commonwealth, as expressed by the author of *Mirrors on the Election of the King of Poland* ["Zwierciadła na elekcyją króla polskiego"], fearing that many state properties might have to be pledged to secure funding Leibniz, aware of the prevailing sentiments, countered the arguments against Wittelsbach, emphasizing the utility of having many children to assist in physical endeavors. He asserted, «it is beneficial for a candidate to be of mature age and especially to have sons», arguing that a childless ruler would merely be a caretaker, while a ruler with offspring would ensure the prosperity of the Commonwealth, safeguarding its future through his heirs[40]. Several polemical writings lauded the youth of Alexis, the fifteen-year-old son of the Moscow tsar, despite Dębski's attempts to misrepresent his age, claiming he was twenty. There were hopes of marrying him to Eleonora, further strengthening ties with the Habsburgs and dissuading adversaries such as the Swedes. However, the younger son, Fyodor, was considered too young at only eight years old[41]. Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki was viewed positively due to his lack of numerous relatives.

In conclusion, the preferences regarding the age and family of candidates were complex. While the nobility sought to elect a monarch who was neither too old nor too young, strategic marital alliances with influential European dynasties were of utmost importance, particularly with Habsburg daughters. This highlights the intricate interplay between personal traits and political imperatives in the selection of a ruler[42].

ELECTION IN THE SHADOW OF WEALTH: HOW AFFLUENCE INFLUENCED ROYAL CHOICES

After the abdication of John Casimir in 1668, the social-political position and wealth of the candidates were crucial factors in the selection of the next king. Distributed writings emphasized the necessity of an affluent ruler who could contribute his wealth to the needs of the Commonwealth. On the contrary, there were apprehensions regarding candidates possessing excessive power, as they could

39 Olszowski, *Censura Candidatorum Sceptri*, 59, 61; AGAD, Nabytki, oddział I, nr 199, "Dostateczna próba i ratie", f. 70.

40 "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 283; Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 61.

41 "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 280.

42 Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 267.

potentially jeopardize the rights and liberties of the nobility while broadening royal prerogatives. Political influence was often associated with dependence on key European players, such as France or the Habsburgs, which was generally viewed unfavorably in propaganda texts. As a consequence, efforts were made to discredit certain candidates by disseminating information about their alleged poverty or low social standing. It was intended to portray potential contenders as independent of foreign powers, thus ensuring the protection of the Republic from external threats[43]. Aleksander Teodor Lacki argued that the Tsar of Russia offered the most significant material benefits for both the state and the nobility. He stated:

> My advice is that they take the Tsar,
> For with him old coin will return to us,
> Silver and gold coins, sword talers,
> Pearls, lynxes, sables, and other goods[44].

However, the economic benefits that would arise from electing the Tsar son as king were only highlighted in a few supportive writings. These texts asserted that Mikhailovich would be willing to return the lands of Zaporozhye and Siewierz, as well as other Lithuanian territories he had seized, and that an alliance with Moscow would aid in countering the Republic's adversaries and even reclaim Livonia. Nevertheless, opponents of the Muscovite candidacy argued that such benefits were merely illusory, as the Tsar would not be obliged to fulfill them, and his election might lead to numerous wars, ultimately resulting in "subjugation to tyrant". Some emphasized that the Tsar's sons had no wealth of their own, relying solely on their father's riches[45].

It is also believed that Alexei Mikhailovich did not demonstrate enough initiative in the struggle for the Polish throne, and the candidacy of his sons faltered even before the electoral diet began. The wealth of a candidate was of utmost importance, as they were expected to offer substantial sums of money in exchange for support during the election. Mikołaj Jemiołowski remarked that the Tsar did not make enough efforts to secure a throne for his son, stating that «he did not corrupt anyone», leading to the belief that his candidacy was «in vain». Similarly, Aleksander Hilary Połubiński expressed in a letter to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł that «there is some inclination towards the Muscovite, but he himself lazily makes an appearance, and not all votes concur on this»[46].

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43 Augustyniak, *Wazowie i "królowie rodacy"*, 56; Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa*, 273.

44 «Moja rada, że wezmą sobie cara, Bo z nim do nas powróci i moneta stara, Srebrne i złote dzięgi, mieczowe talary, Perły, rysie, sobole i inne towary». Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna*, 8.

45 "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 279; "Respons jm. p. kasztelana liwskiego", in Ibid., 273-74.

46 Mikołaj Jemiołowski, *Pamiętnik dzieje Polski zawierający: (1648–1679)*, ed. Jan Dzięgielewski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2000), 181; Zbigniew Wójcik, "Pacowie wobec kandydatury rosyjskiej na tron polski w latach 1668–1669 (misja Połkowa na Litwie, 1668)", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 60/1 (1969), 145; Id.,

Various writings also addressed the wealth of other candidates for the throne. Lacki mocked the material contributions of the French contender, Conde, suggesting he would not brine the throne.

> What fruits will we get from the Frenchman? We will have leagues, Ribbons, flounces, flounders, and exotic figs[47].

Philip William's candidacy was often criticized for its lack of political influence and poverty. The first argument was based on the size of his family and the need for substantial funds for their support. Leibniz observed that Neuburgs small holdings could be seen as an advantage since the duke would not be able to bring foreign troops to the Republic, which was a concern for the nobility who feared they would have to support such forces from their own resources[48].

Charles of Lorraine also faced criticism for not having adequate financial resources. One article even argued that there was no guarantee that he would inherit Lorraine from his uncle Charles IV, given that Louis XIV may assert claim to those territories. Additionally, it was claimed that the prince proposed lower sums of money for the Republic than Neuburg. Others, however, argued that the Lorraine would inherit a vast estate from his uncle, which could be used to restore the currency and raise an army. It should be noted that poverty was also attributed to the duke of Parma[49]. Olszowski believed that it would be beneficial to elect Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki as king, who, after dealing with his affairs beyond the Dnieper, would allocate resources for the soldiers. Supporters of the election of the "Piast" argued that although the native king was not wealthy and lacked significant international standing, this did not affect his chances of being elected, since the financial obligations of kings outlined in the *pacta conventa* were generally not fulfilled. They believed that his lack of extensive political influence was beneficial, as it meant that he would not violate the rights and freedoms of the nobility. Like foreign rulers, any money he got would go to the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom instead of going abroad[50]. It appears that the attitudes of both the Crown and the Lithuanian nobility regarding the wealth and social position of the future king were similar. In general, there was a desire for the next monarch to replenish the treasury of the Republic or allocate certain amounts for military recruitment. However, the Lithuanian elites certainly did not want a "Piast" king who lacked significant financial resources and possibly

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Między traktatem andruszowskim a wojną turecką. Stosunki polsko-rosyjskie 1667–1672 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1968,) 142.

47 «Z Francuza co za frukta? Będziemy mieć ligi, Wstążki, perki, fląderki i zamorskie figi». Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna*, 8.

48 "Rationes przeciwko conjuratiey", f. 92; "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 281-82; Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 135.

49 AGAD, Nabytki oddział I, nr 199, "Concurrenci do sceptrum polskiego z czudzey ziemi ci są y przez posłów na elekcijej da P Bóg przyszłej concurować y factiami certować będą", f. 192r.

50 Olszowski, *Censura Candidatorum Sceptri,* 84-91; "List do poufałego przyjaciela albo", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 298.

the means to acquire them. Similar to the Crown nobles, Lithuanians also did not want a ruler who was too powerful and significant on the international stage. Such a ruler could threaten their rights and freedoms, intending to introduce absolute rule.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE ELITES TOWARD THE UPBRINGING AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF THE COMMONWEALTH AMONG CANDIDATES FOR THE THRONE

Following the demise of John Casimir, a significant attribute sought in the future ruler was his upbringing and familiarity with the culture of the Commonwealth. Special attention was paid to the ability to speak Polish. According to the dominant claims in the literature, deficiencies in this area could lead to difficulties in communicating with the new ruler and the need for a translator. This could result in numerous misunderstandings. In this respect, the Slavic cultural background of the Moscow candidate was emphasized, suggesting that the Tsar's son would quickly master the Polish language. Supporters of the candidate from Lorraine claimed that he knew as many as eight European languages and that, being young and talented at acquiring foreign vocabulary, he would soon be able to communicate with the inhabitants of the Commonwealth[51].

Several writings mention that Polish should not be a mandatory requirement for candidates to the throne. This was notably argued by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in his *Model of Political Evidence* where he contended that the most important language in Europe was Latin, which any potential candidate for the throne should master. However, it became apparent that the more languages the future king knew, the better. Leibniz cited the Duke of Neuburg as someone who fulfilled all these criteria, claiming he was fluent in Latin, Italian, German, French, Spanish, and Dutch, and additionally "knows and likes the Polish language". He also asserted that there was nothing convincing in the argument that the presumed "Piast" knew the native language, as the future ruler could function in the Commonwealth equally well without it[52].

Andrzej Olszowski also placed a significant emphasis on the education of the future ruler in his work. He believed that Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki was the ideal candidate for the throne, who, after his father's death, came under the care of the Bishop of Wrocław, Carol Ferdinand Vasa, and later Queen Marie Louise Gonzaga, who provided him with education worthy of a future ruler. Nevertheless, this assertion was not entirely accurate, as Wiśniowiecki, unlike numerous other representatives of the magnate families, did not receive a proper education abroad. Nonetheless, Olszowski supported his argument with the queen's words, who allegedly stated during a private conversation with the chancellor that Prince Michał «was considered worthy of the throne»[53].

Olszowski also emphasized the young Wiśniowiecki's excellent knowledge of

51 AGAD, Nabytki oddział I, sign. 199, "Dostateczna próba i ratie", f. 71; J.(?) Gacki, "Obraz elekcyi króla Michała (ks. Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego)", *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 4 (1846): 325; "List do poufałego przyjaciela albo", in *Pisma polityczne*, vol. 3, 297; Chachaj, *Młodość Michała Tomasza*, 108.

52 Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, 55, 134, 156-57.

53 «był uznany za godnego tronu». Olszowski, *Censura Candidatorum Sceptri*, 95; Chachaj, *Młodość Michała Tomasza*, 109.

languages, although this opinion seems exaggerated. Władysław Konopczyński was particularly critical, stating that Michał Korybut, although he knew eight languages, had nothing interesting to say in any of them. The multilingualism of the elected prince is confirmed by letters written in Warsaw in June 1669 by Jan Ludwik Piccinardii Costa to Prince Ranucci II Farnese of Parma. In one of them, the envoy stated that Wiśniowiecki, in addition to many other virtues and skills, had an excellent command of ten languages – «la perizia perfetta di dieci linguaggi diversi»[54]. According to French envoy Pierre de Bonzy, the new king spoke French, Italian, and German well. Johann Christian von Boineburg, on the other hand, believed that Wiśniowiecki only had a solid command of the first two languages. Hence, it can be inferred that his proficiency in German was rather limited. It is difficult to determine which languages Michał Korybut was proficient in, and to what extent. According to Marian Chachaj, he was proficient in French, Italian, Latin, and possibly German[55].

Of course, a key argument for the "Piast" was his upbringing and knowledge of the culture of the Commonwealth, which none of the foreign candidates could boast of. It is worth emphasising that all "Piasts" were expected to have a thorough understanding of all the privileges and rights of the nobility, as well as the complexities of the political system[56].

Regrettably, it has not been feasible to obtain comprehensive assessments from the elite of the Grand Duchy regarding the upbringing, comprehension of the culture, and proficiency in the Polish language of the prospective heir to the throne. However, it appears that these attitudes were similar to those presented in writings. It is probably that they desired a ruler who could speak Polish or, at the very least, one who could swiftly acquire it to a level that would facilitate free conversation, which would undoubtedly facilitate communication with the new king during sessions of the Sejm. The introduction of a translator may indeed pose numerous challenges. A proficient comprehension of the rights and freedoms of the nobility, as well as the fundamental principles of the functioning of the Commonwealth's system, was also viewed favorably. This could be complicated for a newcomer, especially from a Western European cultural background. The candidacy of the "Piast" fulfilled these criteria; however, it did not result in an increase in its popularity among Lithuanians, who may have been more concerned about the potential rise in the political influence of the Crown nobility in the event of a Pole being elected as king.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the royal election of 1669 reveals the intricate political landscape of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the pivotal role that public discourse, conveyed through printed writings and distributed manuscripts, played in shaping

54 Chachaj, *Młodość Michała Tomasza*, 108

55 BCzart., Ms. 2247/IV, "Copie de la lettre de Mr. l'evesque de Beziers, en datte de Warsovie le 21 juny 1669", f. 187; Chachaj, *Młodość Michała Tomasza*, 108-09; Władysław Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, vol. 2, ed. Mirosław Nagielski (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1986), 47.

56 Olszowski, *Censura Candidatorum Sceptri*, 89, 95.

the electoral process. The debates over the qualifications of the various candidates – ranging from their age, health, and wealth to their cultural understanding and military capacity – demonstrate that the nobility's preferences were not solely driven by immediate political needs, but also by broader concerns about preserving their liberties and avoiding monarchical absolutism. These criteria were framed and contested within a rich body of polemical literature, underscoring the importance of rhetorical strategies in influencing the outcome of the election.

By analyzing these pamphlets, it becomes evident that the political elites employed diverse and at times contradictory arguments to defend their preferred candidates, reflecting the fluidity and complexity of political alliances. The intersection of personal attributes with broader geopolitical concerns, such as relations with Moscow, France, or the Habsburgs, further illustrates how external and internal pressures shaped the discourse.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a more profound understanding of the mechanisms of political persuasion in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, emphasizing the significance of communication strategies in the political decision-making process. It also highlights the need for further research into the ways in which printed texts and manuscripts influenced noble opinion and political outcomes, offering a valuable perspective on the role of media in shaping the Commonwealth's electoral politics.

ABBREVIATION

AGAD: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie.
AR: Archiwum Radziwiłłów.
AMAEF: Archives Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International République Française à Paris.
CP: Correspondance Politique.
BCzart.: Biblioteka im. Książąt Czartoryskich w Krakowie.
BNF: Bibliotèque Nationale de France.
LMAVB: Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka.
LvNB: Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv [Львівська національна наукова бібліотека України імені В.Стефаника].
TNA: The National Archives – London.
SP: State Papers Foreign.
VUB: Vilniaus Universiteto Biblioteka.

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LIVIO ODESCALCHI AND HIS CANDIDACY FOR POLISH THRONE BETWEEN 1696 AND 1697

ABSTRACT
In historiography, the circumstances of Prince Livio Odescalchi's candidacy have been recalled, but so far there has been no comprehensive approach to the topic. The period after the death of King John III Sobieski was a time when many competitors appeared among the candidates for the royal crown. The nephew of Pope Innocent XI, he was undoubtedly associated with the great idea of the anti-Turkish campaign and the involvement of the Papacy in financing the activities of the Holy League. Therefore, it potentially enjoyed fame and became a guarantee of further assurances from the Holy See regarding subsidizing the war. However, malicious people whispered that he was unable to offer anything to the Republic of Poland except an art gallery or saints' relics. The work aims to determine what the actual plans of the Papacy and Prince Odescalchi himself to claim the Polish crown were. Did the papal or imperial diplomacy really want to support his candidacy? The analysis of Vatican and Polish sources created during the interregnum of 1696/1697 will probably provide answers to the question of how the European powers responded to his candidacy, how the agitation was conducted to support him and what the Polish nobility thought about his candidacy.

KEYWORDS: Odescalchi family; Livio Odescalchi; Election; Candidacy; Interregnum.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to outline the circumstances of the candidacy of Prince Livio Odescalchi, during the *interregnum* following the death of king John III in 1696–1697. This matter has already been the subject of several works[1] but in the Author's opinion it has not been thoroughly discussed or fully exposed. Therefore, I would like to consider such issues as the reasons behind the Prince Livio Odeschalci's claims to the Polish throne, and then discuss his agents' methods of winning the favour of Polish magnates and government officials, as well as representatives of foreign diplomacy, i.e. of the Emperor, Pope and Brandenburg. A not insignificant role was also played by Queen Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska, whose favour

1 Ludwik Boratyński, "Don Livio Odescalchi kandydatem do korony polskiej", *Przegląd Polski*, 42 (1908), 11 (t. 169, nr 503): 207-39; 12 (t. 169, nr 504): 484-513; Gaetano Platania, "La candidatura di Livio Odescalchi al trono di Polonia e "l'acquisito" del Ducato di Sirmio", in *Scritti minori (Saggi di storia sobiesciana)* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2021), 285-323; Roberto Fiorentini, *Livio Odescalchi, nipote di papa Innocenzo XI. Interessi famigliari e strategie di ascesa nella stagione dell'antinepotismo* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2022) 239-49.

and assistance were sought by the prince's deputies. Next, I would like to look at two important factors in winning votes, i.e. money, through which supporters were hoodwinked and support was bought, and occasional literature, a form of propaganda which created the candidate's image in the minds of the nobility. Finally, I would like to consider the reasons for the defeat of the prince's candidacy in the electoral contest.

ITALIAN CANDIDACIES TO POLISH THRONE IN XVI AND XVII CENTURIES

According to the principle of free election (*viritim*), which was a key element of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's political system, every nobleman had the right to participate in the electoral convention and election[2]. The passive right to stand for the Polish throne included not only nobles born from the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but also the aristocracy and representatives of European ruling houses. The freedom and independence of the vote meant that any candidate could be elected king, unless there was an exclusion of either foreigners or "Piast"[3]. Candidacies of Italian princes for the Polish throne were usually treated as a curiosity, or even an exotic phenomenon. Meanwhile, although such endeavours were always inferior to the politically stronger Habsburg, French, Swedish and Muscovite endeavours, they were by no means episodic. In the first phase of the 1574–1575 election, the candidacy of Cosimo I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, was discussed and, emboldened by this, Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio, put forward his own proposal, supporting his efforts with generous gifts[4]. During

2 See: Dariusz Makiłła, *Artykuły henrykowskie (1573–1576). Geneza–obowiązywanie–stosowanie. Studium historyczno-prawne* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wyższa Szkoła Finansów i Zarządzania, 2012); Adam Szabelski, "Projekty elekcji vivente rege w Rzeczypospolitej, a węgierskie doświadczenia z elekcją vivente rege", in *Wolna elekcja w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej. Procedura–przebieg–publicystyka*, ed. Aleksandra Ziober (Wrocław: Wyd. Piotr Kalinowski, 2014), 96-108.

3 From the wording of the first provision of the "Henrician Articles", it should literally be inferred that the elect was guaranteed the election of one of his descendants, since it was envisaged that neither Henry de Valois nor his descendants would seek to crown his successor during his lifetime and use the title of heir. This provision was later changed by removing the wording on royal successors in favour of successors (following kings) in the *pacta conventa* of Ladislaus IV Vasa in 1632. In this way, the assumption was made that any candidate could be elected king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, unless an exclusion was made, whether of foreigners or of "Piast", see: Urszula Augustyniak, *Wazowie i "królowie rodacy". Studium władzy królewskiej w Rzeczypospolitej XVII wieku* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Semper, 1999), 45-52; Iwona Lewandowska-Malec, "Prawo do elekcji króla Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1587–1648", in *Historia testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, nuntia vetustatis: księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Profesorowi Włodzimierzowi Kaczorowskiemu*, eds. Ewa Kozerska, Marek Maciejewski, and Piotr Stec (Opole: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2015), 255-69; Ewa Kozerska, "Wolna elekcja króla Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów", *Z dziejów prawa*, 12 (2019): 147-62.

4 Zbigniew Cieszkowski, "Don Alfonso d'Este kandydatem do korony polskiej i jego poseł poeta Guarini w 1575 r.", *Przegląd Polski*, 11/10 (1887): 195-211; Vincenzo

the ensuing interregnum of 1587, Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua sought the Polish crown, wishing to become independent of imperial influence. Despite immense financial support from his agent Leone de' Sommi, he failed to create a unified party and his person came to the attention of the wider circle of noble electors gathered on the electoral field[5]. In the same third election, the possibility of the Polish throne being taken by the Duke of Ferrara – Alfonso II d'Este, then by the Duke of Parma and Piacenza – Alessandro Farnese, and finally by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Francesco de'Medici. The ruler of Ferrara was considered somewhat elderly, while the Duke of Parma was young and brave soldier. The Duke of Farnese, however, lacked the political standing and cash to do so. He could therefore not be considered as a serious candidate. Medici was favoured because of his personal qualities: his goodness, his many qualities, his just rule and his wealth[6]. In the 17th century, during the election of 1668/69, another Medici, Ferdinand II, appeared among the candidates for the Polish crown and won the favour of the nobility because of his wealth. Panegyric literature pointed out that his wealth could be turned to cover the costs of recovering the lands lost by the Republic and paying the arm[7]. The disadvantages of this choice were also recognized. Among these, a lack of commanding talent was pointed out, and, as Samuel von Pufendorf wrote: «The Tuscan would bring us again that evil, that French disease which afflicts him and from which we have barely freed ourselves [i.e. the short reign of Henry de Valois and the interference of Louis Marie Gonzaga d'Nevers in matters of politics – author's note]. Abroad, as if in voluntary exile, he seeks a peace that he does not have at home. An excellent prince indeed, but what has an Italian – a compatriot of Machiavel, a Florentine accustomed to despotic rule with a secretive disposition, fond of a comfortable life»[8]. The idea, therefore, was to discredit the Tuscan ruler by threatening his dependence on France, his attempt to introduce absolutism and to perpetuate the stereotypical image attributed to Italians as lazy, greedy, power-hungry and intriguers by nature. Alternatively, the possibility of the candidacy of the Grand

Pacifici, "La candidatura di Alfonso II d'Este al Regno di Polonia", in *Résume des communicationes présentées au Congrès VII*, ed. Tadeusz Manteuffel (Warszawa: Comité organisateur du Congrès, 1933), 148-53.

5 Cecil Roth, "Un consorzio ebraico mantovano e l'elezione al trono di Polonia nel 1587", *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 28/11 (1962): 494-99; Daniel Jütte, *Das Zeitalter des Geheimnisses Juden, Christen und die Ökonomie des Geheimen (1400–1800)* (Göttingen-Bristol: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012) 2nd edition, 246.

6 Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula, *Od wrogości do przyjaźni. Habsburgowie austriaccy wobec Polski w latach 1587–1588* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2019), 88-90; Danuta Quirini-Popławska, "Dwór medycejski i Habsburgowie a trzecia elekcja w Polsce", *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, 42 (1998): 121-32.

7 Mirosława Chmiewlewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego 1669 roku* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2016), 118-19.

8 Samuel de Puffendorf, *De rebus gestis Friderici Wilhelmi Magni, electoris Brandenburgici, commentariorum libri novendecim* (Berolini: Impensis Jeremiae Schrey [et] hered. Henrici Johannis Meyeri, 1695), 710.

Duke's son Cosimo III or the Duke of Parma, Ranuccio III Farnese, was asserted[9]. Towards the latter, it has been ridiculously said that Parmesan, recommends its authority because of its milk, cheese and butter, but these are not dishes worthy of a king or the delicacies that Italy can offer[10]. At the very end, the candidacy of the Duke of Mantua, Charles IV Gonzaga, was submitted for consideration, but due to his small income, he was not seriously considered[11]. After the death of King Michał I in 1673, the Duke of Modena, Rinaldo d'Este, joined the competition for the Polish crown, and although he was supported by papal diplomacy and his candidacy was presented as a remedy to calm the feuds in the Republic, he was unsuccessful[12].

LIVIO ODESCALCHI – ESSENTIAL BIOGRAPHY

Livio Odescalchi, was born in Como in 1655 as the only son of Carlo Odescalchi and Beatrice Cusani. His uncle was Cardinal Benedetto Odescalchi, to whose he cared, along with his sibling brother Giovanni and sister Paola Beatrice, passed after his father's death in 1670. Four years later, Livio Odescalchi left Lombardy for Rome to complete his education. With his uncle's election to the throne of Peter in 1676, Livio, as papal nepot, received the Ceri estate, which was elevated to the status of a duchy. From then on, Innocent XI floated plans for his marriage first to Giovanna, daughter of Carlo Borromeo Arese and then Giovanna Gallio. Over time, in order to raise his nephew's status and establish him in the circle of Roman aristocracy, the names of representatives of the Cusani, d'Adda, Pamphilli, Barberini, Ludovisi, Gonzaga and Salviati families began to be mentioned, but none of these plans lived to see fruition. Throughout the years 1677–1679, the Pope sought to send him to the Spanish court as his representative, and when this plan failed, he sought to confer on him the cardinal purple. Both of these plans failed badly, in view of the strong

9 Chmiewlewska, *Sejm*, 119.

10 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Wzorzec dowodów politycznych*, ed. Waldemar Voisé (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Świadectwo, 1969), 124.

11 Chmielewska, *Sejm*, 119.

12 Gaetano Platania, "Włoska dyplomacja i nieudany 'interes' Rinalda d'Este księcia Modeny, kandydata do tronu polskiego (1674)", *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny. Sobótka*, 47/1-2 (1992): 99-115; Miguel Conde-Pazos, "La misión diplomática de don Pedro Ronquillo en Varsovia con motivo de la elección de Juan Sobieski como rey de Polonia en 1674", *Pedralbes*, 38 (2018): 187-227; Krystyn Matwijowski, *Pierwsze sejmy z czasów Jana III Sobieskiego* (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1976), 18; Anna Czarniecka, "Informacja i propaganda podczas kampanii elekcyjnej 1673/1674 roku", in *Studia z historii kultury staropolskiej. Studia ofiarowane Urszuli Augustyniak*, eds. Agnieszka Bartoszewicz, Adam Karpiński, Maciej Ptaszyński, and Andrzej Zakrzewski (Warszawa: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2020), 135-54. The circumstances of the Duke of Modena's candidacy were reminded to Don Livio Odescalchi by his agent Michelangelo del Negro regarding his intentions, see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, Michelangelo del Negro to Livio Odescalchi, Vienna 18 III 1697, 113-18 [Excepts from the Archivio Odescalchi in Rome made by Ludwik Boratynski in the 1930s from references 11/D/1, 11/D/4, 11/D/8, 11/D/9, 29/D/6].11/D/1, 11/D/4, 11/D/8, 11/D/9, 29/D/6].

anti-nepotistic tendencies then taking shape within the Roman Curia[13]. Even before his uncle's death in 1689, the Livio had acquired the title of "Gonfaloniere di Santa Sede", which meant giving him command of the troops of the Apostolic State[14]. The duke's good fortune was linked to his immense fortune, which was calculated at 60,000 Roman skuds of annual annuity in 1685, and his participation in commercial transactions, which he continued after his father with contractors in Milan, Rome, Naples, Genoa, Venice, Amsterdam, London and Madrid[15]. This allowed him, after the death of his uncle, to continue accumulating landed possessions, as exemplified by the purchase of the Marquisate of Roncofreddo and the County of Montiliano between 1683 and 1685, and the estate of Bracciano and the fortress of Palo purchased from the Orsini in 1696, thanks to the support of Pope Innocent XII[16]. It is calculated that his immovable and movable assets brought him around 20 million Roman scuds[17]. His uncle's fame, and probably his attempt to keep the Church State in the Holy League against the Turks, led Emperor Leopold I to grant him the title

13 Antonio Ippolito Menniti, "Nepotisti e antinepotisti. I conservatori di Curia ei pontefici Odescalchi e Pignatelli", in *Riforme, religione e politica durante il Pontificato di Innocenzo XII (1691–1700)*, ed. Bruno Pellegrino (Lecce: Congedo, 1994), 233-48.

14 Fiorentini, *Livio Odescalchi*, 35-171. See: Sandra Costa, "Livio Odescalchi", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 79 (2013), [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/livio-odescalchi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/ dostęp: 27.03.2024].

15 Livio Odescalchi, together with his uncle Innocent XI, financially supported the actions of the imperial army against the Turks between 1683 and 1689 and the armed action of the stadtholder of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, William III of Orange, against James II Stuart between 1686 and 1689, for more on this see: Gaetano Platania, *Mamma li Turchi! La politica pontificia e l'idea di crociata inetà moderna* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2009); Id., "Innocenzo XI Odescalchie l'idea di "Crociata" al tempo della liberazione di Vienna", *Est Europa*, 2 (1986), 69-106; Id., "L'Europa "di centro" e il pericolo turco nella seconda metà delXVII secolo tra conflitti e compromessi, attraverso alcune carte d'archivio ineditee/o rare", in *Conflitti e Compromessi nell'Europa di centro fra XVI e XX secolo*, ed. Id. (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2001), 185-222; Jan Jerzy Sowa, *Nervus belli czy finansowe jarzmo Ligi Świętej? Skarb hibernowy a finansowanie wysiłku wojennego Korony 1685-1700*, in *Jarzmo Ligi Świętej? Jan III Sobieski i Rzeczpospolita w latach 1684-1696*, ed. Dariusz Milewski (Warszawa: Muzeum Pałacu Króla Jana III w Wilanowie, 2017), 137-61; Stefano Villani, *Un papa "protestante". Innocenzo XI e l'Inghilterra di Giacomo II Stuart*, in *Innocenzo XI Odescalchi. Papa, politico, committente*, eds. Richard Bösel, Antonio Menniti, Ippolito, Andrea Spiriti, Claudio Strinati, and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Roma: Viella, 2014), 145-66.

16 Vincenzo Celletti, *Gli Orsini di Bracciano. Glorie, tragedie e fastosità della casapatrizia più interessante della Roma deisecoli XV, XVI, XVII* (Roma: Fratelli Palombi, 1963); Fernando Bucci, *Il castello Orsini-Odescalchi di Bracciano. Storia, tesori e segreti* (Vecchiarelli: Roma, 2017), 118-31; Eugenio Mariani, *L'acquedotto Odescalchi di Bracciano* (Ronciglione: Centro Ricerche e Studi di Ronciglione, 2003); Platania, *La candidatura*, 290-91.

17 Boratyński, *Don Livio*, 212.

of Prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1689[18].
Livio Odescalchi was undoubtedly one of the greatest collectors of fine arts, including paintings, sculptures, engravings, books, gems and a medal, which he acquired from purchases made by agents in the cities of Italy, Madrid, Paris, Amsterdam and Vienna. In addition, Prince Odescalchi played the role of a great patron of artists such as Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Salvatore Rosa, Gaspar van Wittel, Jacob Ferdinand Voet, Carlo Fontana, Andrea Pozzo and Ottone Hamerani. Moreover, after 1685, Odescalchi, following the example of Cardinals Ottoboni and Pamphilli, became the patron of musicians and authors of musical dramas performed at l'*Oratorio del Santissimo Crocifisso in Chiesa Nuova*, *Arciconfraternita dell'Annunziata nell'Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia a Roma*, Odescalchi's palace in Rome and the Duke's villa behind the Porta del Popolo and the castle of Bracciano. His library collection was augmented by volumes from the library of Queen Cristina of Sweden, who died in 1689, worth 2,500 Roman skuds. Finally, it is worth mentioning that Duke Livio Odescalchi was the patron of one of the most important organisations for Roman intellectuals, namely the *Accademia dell'Arcadia*, and from 1701 the *Arcadia Nova*[19].

18 Fiorentini, *Livio Odesclchi*, 171.

19 David Armando, "Aristocrazia e vita culturale a Roma alla fine del Settecento: il caso degli Odescalchi", in *Alfieri a Roma. Atti di Convegno nazionale. Roma 27–29 novembre 2003*, eds. Beatrice Alfonzetti, and Novella Bellucci (Roma: Bulzoni, 2006), 71-106; Sandra Costa, *Dans l'intimité d'un collectionneur. Livio Odescalchi et le faste baroque* (Paris: Comite Des Travaux Historiques Etscientifiques, 2009); Ead., "Livio Odescalchi (1658–1713). Un appassionato d'arte alla corte pontificia", in *Innocenzo XI Odescalchi. Papa, politico, committente*, Richard Bösel et al., 411-27; Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, "Tracing the Collection of Duke Livio Odescalchi – from Rome to Ilok and Zagreb", *Scrinia Slavonica: Godišnjak Podružnice za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje Hrvatskog instituta za povijest*, 15/1 (2015): 57-87; Cristiana Canuzzi, "Livio I Odescalchi, Gaspare Vanvitelli e il Galata Ludovisi", *Studi di Storia dell'Arte*, 17 (2006): 197-200; Stefano Pierguidi, "Monnot, Livio Odescalchi e il "Gladiatore" dei Musei Capitolini", *Bolletino dei Musei Comunali di Roma*, 28 (2014): 53-60; Marco Pizzo, "'Far Galleria'. Collezionismo emercato artistico tra Venezia e Roma nelle lettere di Quintiliano Rezzonico a Livio Odescalchi (1676–1709)", *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova*, 89 (2000): 43-84; Marco Pizzo, "Livio Odescalchi e i Rezzonico. Documenti su arte e collezionismo alla fine del XVII secolo", *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte*, 26 (2003): 119-53; Marcel Roethlisberger, "The Drawnings Collection of Prince Livio Odescalchi", *Master Drawnings*, 23/24 (1985–86): 5-30; Michael Mahoney, "Salvator Rosa Provenance Studies: Prince Livio Odescalchi and Queen Christina", *Master Drawings*, 3/4 (1965): 383-89; Stefanie Walker, "The sculpture gallery of prince Livio Odescalchi", *Journal of the History of Collection*, 6 (1994): 189-219; Saverio Franchi, "Il Principe Livio Odescalchi e l'oratorio "politico", in *L'oratorio musicale italiano e isuoi contesti (sec. XVII–XVIII), Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Perugia, 18–20 settembre 1997)*, ed. Paola Besutti (Firenze: Olschki, 2002); Enrico Noè, "Le medaglie di Livio Odescalchi", *Medaglia*, 17/24 (1989): 83-6; Ivan Mirnik, "Livio Odescalchi on medals", *Medals*, 25 (1995): 50-5.

LIVIO ODESCALCHI'S CANDIDACY TO POLISH THRONE

At the outset, it is important to ask when and why the candidature of Prince Livio Odescalchi was proposed. Let us note that the affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its struggle against the Turks were very well known to the Prince[20]. In addition, he maintained contact with Cardinal Jan Kazimierz Denhoff, who sent the prince courteous, occasional greetings[21]. In 1691, Giovanni Arrigo Baron Piccinardi, who was used by the Prince in his contacts with the Imperial Court and thus resided permanently in Vienna, pointed out to another advisor of the Duke, Michelangelo del Negro, that if Prince Jakub Sobieski or Prince Charles Philip Wittelsbach of the Pfalz-Neuburg line or Prince Friedrich Casimir Kettler were unsuccessful, the person of Prince Odescalchi would gain support. In his opinion, the prince's strengths were the living memory of Pope Innocent XI, as the initiator of the Crusade, financially supporting the victories of the Polish army, the fact of the family's wealth and Odescalchi's celibacy, which made it possible to hope that he would marry the widow of King Michał and Duke Charles of Lorraine, Eleonora Habsburg. For this reason, Piccinardi was already suggesting the preparation of promissory notes granting money to the Polish nobility in exchange for votes of suport[22]. In 1696 the prince was again advised to enlist the support of Primate Michał Stefan Radziejowski, although the latter was a declared supporter of the French candidacy[23]. Meanwhile, after the death of John III in June 1696, the possibility of reaching for the Polish crown was brought to the Prince's attention by the Jesuit Father Carlo Maurizio Vota, the late King's confessor[24]. Prince Livio Odescalchi continued to adopt a wait-and-see attitude and indecision, despite the fact that his name – as a potential winner – was mentioned in November 1696 in one of the occasional writings of literary works. At the time, he was considered to have a chance as one not linked to the interests of any European power[25], opponent

20 Platania, *La candidatura*, 291.

21 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, Jan Kazimierz Denhoff to L. Odescalchi, Rome 1687/1689/1690, p. 278, [orig. ASR, FO, 29/D/6].

22 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, M. del Negro to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 18 III 1691, pp. 113-18, [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/1].

23 Boratyński, *Don Livio*, 217.

24 Vota provided information on the general course of political events in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including the attitude of Queen Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska and her relations with Prince Jakub Sobieski, his journey to Silesia and further to Passau, the activities of the military confederations of Piotr Bogusław Baranowski in the Crown and Grzegorz Ogiński in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the activities of foreign diplomats, among others, the Bavarian father Pompeo Scarlatti, and the chances of the other candidates, including the Duke of Neuburg and the Duke of Baden. Only once, in April 1697, did illness prevent him from following events, see: ASR, FO, 11/D/7, C.M. Vota to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 27 I 1697, ff. nn. For more on his activities, see: Maria Letizia Sileoni, "Politica e religione nell'Europa centro orientale: la figura del gesuita Carlo Maurizio Vota tra luci e ombre", in *Politica e religione nell'Europa centro-orientale (sec. XVI–XX)*, ed. Gaetano Platania (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2002), 235-55.

25 Like Rinaldo d'Este in 1674, Livio Odescalchi was portrayed as someone willing to

of absolutism and the eventual husband of Queen Eleonora. According to the anonymous author, in a Polish climate, the prince would become familiar with the craft of war and acquire a warrior spirit: «[...] and such is his love for us that he will take care of our customs and language with immeasurable diligence. He speaks and lives in Polish, as the Italians are capable, and nothing is difficult for those who want it. Why should the *Rzeczpospolita*, mindful of the benefits of Innocent XI, not repay him by returning the sceptre to his nephew? He is of similar customs, equal piety and magnanimity, a faithful image of his uncle»[26]. Baron Piccinardi assured Prince that relations were going extremely well and that a plan should be made for full action on the royal election in Poland. In addition, he indicated that he had come into possession of letters about arrangements between the Prince Françoise Louise de Bourbon Conti and the Turks through Bishop Melchior de Polignac, with which he was prepared to discredit his rival[27].

Prince Livio Odescalchi was not initially convinced to take part in the electoral struggle. Even his immediate family was not certain of his success in confronting Prince Jacob Sobieski, Duke of Neuburg, Louis William Duke of Baden and Leopold of Lorraine. His sister pointed out with caution that: «In truth, the notices have spoken a great deal about Your Lordship, and the nomination of Poland has caused much talk in Milan, and in Como they say that Your Lordship has received letters, some say from the Queen widow and some only from the Cardinal, but I do not know what they believe me because Your Lordship does not give me reasons. When, as I believe, there is nothing else, it is a great honour, and one that I hope will be to your credit. Your Lordship only see to it that you keep it at all costs, because God makes you do it, but it takes study even to keep it well»[28]. Arguably, two factors

reconcile the feuding magantes, see: ASR, FO, 11/D/7, Giovanni Arrigo Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 10 III 1697, ff. nn.

26 Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich in Wrocław, sign. A2, *Nobilis Poloni epistoloa ad Dnum Regis Galliarum in Polonia legatum, refutans ipsius responsum datum Illum. Episcopum Cuiaviensi, Posn.[aniae] 20. Decembris M.DC.XCVI.* (Varsaviae: Druk. Schol. Piarum, 1696).

27 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione da barone Giovanni Arrigo Piccinardi", 23 III 1697, ff. nn.; B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 10 III 1697, p. 205-209. Piccinardi had been persuading the duke since late 1696 to submit his candidature, see: Ibid., G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Königsberg 14 XII 1696, and 24 XII 1696, ff. nn. In March 1697 Piccinardi met with the lawyer Montecatini and Magliabeck in Warsaw in order to present them with instructions on how to proceed during the election, to recruit supporters, to weaken the candidacy of the Duke of Conti, to work for the exclusion of the "Piast", and finally to concretise the possible proposals of the Duke, see: Ibid., G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 23 III 1697, ff. nn.

28 «Veramente li avvisi hanno parlato assai di Vostra Signoria, e la nomina di Polonia fa fare gran discorsi in Milano, ed in Como dicono che Vostra Signoria habbia havuto lettere, chi dice della Regina vedova e chi solo del cardinale, però non so quello mi creda perché Vostra Signoria non me lo motiva. Quando come credo non ci sia altro è un honore grande, e che spero che sia per farle credito. Vostra Signoria procuri solo di conservarselo a tutto costo, perché Dio lo fa fare,

influenced the Prince's change of this decision in March/April 1697[29]. The first was the mirage of a royal crown that would give the prince an advantage over other Roman families and the second was encouragement from his agents operating in Vienna and Warsaw. Cesare Borsatti, who wrote, was the most prominent of those who tried to seduce the prince with the glitter of the crown and the glory of it: «Serene Prince, please heard the news about your election to the Kingdom of Poland and I pray to God that your head will be crowned with a crown of laurel and that you will be crowned with a royal crown»[30]. In a similar vein, Gabriele Vecchi expressed himself by giving the Duke's election a mystical form: «The crown being destined in Heaven, of God and the Holy Spirit is expected you»[31].

"The staff" preparing the prince's candidacy and working to secure his support consisted of many people[32]. In the first place, mention should be made of Baron Giovanni Arrigo Piccinardi, secretary to the nuncios Galeazzo Marescotti and Francesco Nerli from 1668 to 1671[33], then an imperial agent, used in secret missions at the Viennese and Brandenburg courts, including in connection with arranging the marriage of Charles Philip Wittelsbach to Ludwika Karolina Radziwiłłówna in 1691[34]. Other important persons were the Genoese Angelo del Negro, the main

ma ci vuole del studio anche proprio per ben custodirlo», see: ASR, FO, 3/F/9, Paola Beatrice Odescalchi to L. Odescalchi, Como 8 X 1698, ff. nn.

29 This date is supported, inter alia, by a letter written by Duke Livio Odescalchi to the Italian princes requesting assistance and free passage for his deputies to Poland-Lithuania, see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, p. 203 [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/9 and a passage from Piccinardi's stating: «Si deve applicare […] almeno alla strepitosa e plausibile condotta e ben incaminata, che sia plaudito, ricevuto e non rifiutato [...] almeno si facci comparire con plauso, che sia discorso [...] e giovara à miei interessi quà [...] si habbia tutti li atti di maggior gloria, che si possono essigere» [It must be applied [...] at least to the sensational and plausible conduct and well examined, that it be applauded, received and not rejected [...] at least let it appear with applause, that it be discoursed [...] and be useful to my interests here [...] let it have all the acts of greater glory that can be demanded] see: ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn.

30 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, Cesare Borsatti to L. Odescsalchi, Vienna 10 V 1697, ff. nn, «Ser.me Princeps hic incubuit rumor de tua electione in Poloniae Republicem et Deum curixe praecor tuum caput laurei diademe te pedimetur et regia corona exornatus merecor rezenazi Vivat Rex Poloniae D. Livius Odescalcus ubique laureum elementis celebrat».

31 «La corona essendo destinate nel Cielo, di Dio e del Spirito Santo s'aspettano», see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, Gabriele Vecchi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 1 VI 1697, p. 105 [orig. ASR, FO 11/D/8].

32 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Relazione al Serenissimo Principe Odescalchi del maneggio de' suoi Ministri per la corona del Polonia dove fu nel 4 loco nomato per candidato fra gli ingfrascritti pretendenti al soglio nella Dieta", ff. nn..

33 Alessandro Boccolini, *Viaggio politico, viaggio materiale: Monsignor Galeazzo Marescotti nunzio a Varsavia* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2015), 125.

34 Boratyński, *Don Livio*, 215-16.

promoter of the duke's candidacy, and the duke's resident Antonio Feliciano Monte-Catini, a priest and consistory lawyer[35], who was assisted by an Italian with Polish indigeneity, Gabriele Vecchi, and Magliabecchi, brother of the former auditor during the nunciature, Francesco Martelli, and librarian at the Grand Duke's court in Florence, Cesare Borsatti, titled *gimnasium gramaticus Braccianensi*, author of propaganda writings and letters and participant in talks with Polish magnates, the court administrator of Gdańsk and former servant of William III of Orange, Gotrfyd Keckenbart[36], sent to represent Gdańsk at the election and his son Charles Henry and the nephew of Baron Giovanni Arrigo the young Angelo Piccinardi, as *cavaliere d'honore*, both in the retinue of Montecatini[37]. The persons responsible for conveying messages to Prince Odescalchi were Marco Bellini[38] and acting independently of the other Members was an Italian settled in Warsaw, Racchetti[39]. The aforementioned Jesuit Carlo Maurizio Vota was of separate assistance and information to the Prince, although he was treated with reserve. On the basis of preserved archives, it is known that he sent news until the end of September 1698 and also later, episodically acting as an intermediary between Augustus II and Prince Odescalchi[40].

The primary thing was to make a proposal to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Baron Piccinardi advised the Duke to appeal constantly to the feelings of the Poles and their adoration of glitter and exoticism, to pay lavishly for their votes, to recall the assistance rendered by Pope Innocent XI in connection with funds for the fight against the Turks, which would have the additional advantage of winning the support of the Republic of Venice[41]. The Duke promised that he would marry in accordance with the will of the states and place the reformation due to his wife at the disposal of the *Rzeczpospolita*, pay the Queen's widow Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska her due, furthermore that he would establish a college in Rome for 50 (later 25) sons of

35 ASR, FO, 7/G/1, "Relazione dell'elezione a Re di Polonia nella persona di Livio Odescalchi", ff. n.n.; Ibid., 7/E/6, "Procura fatta da Don Livio I Odescalchi duca di Bracciano Principe del Sacro Romano Imperio nella persona del conte Antonio Feliciano Montecatini a rappresentarlo nei comizi della nazione polacca onde fosse eletto in Re di Polonia", ff. nn.

36 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, Keckenbart to L. Odescalchi, Gdańsk 15 II 1697, pp. 282-83; Boratyński, *Don Livio*, 229-30.

37 Boratyński, *Don Livio*, 499.

38 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Königsberg 14 XII 1696, ff. nn.

39 Platania, *La candidatura*, 297-299.

40 After acquiring the duchy, Sirmio Odescalchi wrote to Augustus II congratulating him on his royal election and requesting that he be titled "Highness". The Polish king agreed, but on condition that the duke in Rome celebrate his coronation with fireworks display in front of the family seat. In 1702, the prince renewed his solicitations for the titular title by showing a copy of the imperial letters in which the title was used against him. The Polish king also sought to borrow money from the prince and even hoped to buy one of his galleys, see. ASR, FO, 11/D/7, C.M. Vota to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 12 X 1697, ff. nn., and C.M. Vota to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 2 II 1704. ff. nn.

41 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn.

nobility and donate to the Commonwealth the sum of one million Roman scuds. Probably just before his election, in June 1697, the Duke agreed to set aside 200,000 thalers, then 550 red golds, and the bequest of the estates of Bracciano, Ceri, the fortress of Palo, the marquisate of Roncofreddo and the county of di Montiliano, as donations to the Republic. For this reason, the Monte Catino asked for copies of the property deeds and the donation bequest to be sent from Rome, to be issued to the Polish side after the election. He also promised to pay the army a sum of eight million zlotys, to free Elbląg at his own expense from the pledge of the Elector of Brandenburg, to recover Kamieniec and other properties seized by the Turks, to reform the currency, and – in the event that there were no descendants – to bequeath the equipment that had once belonged to Queen Christina of Sweden, his own arsenal and a private collection of works of art[42]. As Ludwik Boratyński summed it up: «These proposals may have made a certain impression, for it is evident from them that the candidate, whole with soul and body, with all his property, and even with his celibacy, which he sacrificed on the altar of the Republic, was giving himself to Poland»[43]. The duke's fortune, estimated at 20,000 zlotys, did not, however, attract the applause of the Polish nobility.

However, before the battles on the electoral field took place, representatives of Prince Livio Odescalchi sought to build a party associated with the most prominent personalities of the *Rzeczpospolita*. To begin with, he was advised to write letters to the Polish nobility assuring them of his knowledge of their customs and bravery, and assuring them of his respect for the Most Serene Republic, and further expressing his desire to make his own sacrifice and to wear the crown only for the benefit of those who would assign it to him with their free votes. With this, the prince assured that he wanted only the favour of the *Rzeczpospolita* and would not be dependent

42 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, A.F. Monte Catino to L. Odescalchi, b.m. i. d., p. 235-36 [orig. Archivio Odescalchi, 11/D/9]. *Conf.* Biblioteka Kórnicka Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Kórniku, 00398, "Xiąże Odeschalki [Livio Odescalchi] kandydat. Propositiones illius ad [...] Pol. Remp. [...] ", ff. 230r-31v. Apostolic Nuncio Gioavanni Antonio Davia summed them up as generous but insufficient: «The proposals are received with great applause by many of the lesser nobility, although most read them with derision, as it seems unheard of that Poland should, for the sole reason of having some money, resolve to accept a king who has not yet made himself known in any part of Christianity» [Da molti della nobiltà minore vengono gli propositioni ricevute con grand'applauso, benche da i più sieno lette con derisione, parendo inudito che'l solo motivo d'haver qualche denaro debba la Polonia risolversi ad accettar un Ré, che finoranon si è fatto conoscere in veruna parte della Christianità] and in other letter: «Prince Don Livio's application is heard with contempt and derision, who they say has neither the necessary substance to raise the Republic, nor the appropriate capacity to govern it» [Vien udita con disprezzo e derisione la domanda del principe Don Livio, che dicono non haver nè le sostanze necessarie per sollevar la Republica, nè la capacità opportuna per governarla], see: AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 118, G.D. ad Secretarium Statum, Avviso, Warsaw 28 V 1697 and 18 VI 1697, ff. 281r-82v. Gaetano Platania, on the other hand, considered the sum offered by Prince to be small, see: Platania, *La candidatura*, 305.

43 Boratyński, *Don Livio*, 495.

on any foreign influence. Piccinardi listed 31 important personalities, secular and clerical officials, singling out those who had the greatest influence on political life. Piccinardi believed that 50 letters should be issued with the title "Excellency" and an equal number with the title "His Lordship", and that 25,000 skugs should be distributed to each, as a form of generosity[44].

In the second half of May, Father Vota began talks with Primate Michał Stefan Radziejowski, and although the hierarch assured his respect for his papal nephew, he was not – in the eyes of the Jesuit – interested in supporting his candidacy[45]. It was no secret that the Primate had remained a supporter of the French candidacy even before John III's death, and remained true to his convictions. However, this did not deter Prince Odescalchi's deputies from renewing their efforts to win Radziejowski's favour, who was tried to convince him with gifts: «Cardinal Primate Ragiozcki [Radziejowski – author's note], who owes a fortune to Your Highness, who was a party to the event of Monday, but who would have been pleased, my lawyer Montecatini, I have a direct card with a stick in my hand in admiration of the court, and he came too late to make this offer, so that it might be [--] ingenious. If the ministers will be able to assent to this, they will see to it that the Cardinal is told that on the day of the arrival at the palatine election the name and merit of Your Serene Highness is worthy of it. But that it is certain that the king will leave at midday to give the palatine as you can see from my gazette and the fact that it will be invoked by many of the world's leaders is undoubtedly indulged, that Serene Cardinal would have made a great impression and the crown would belong to Your

44 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn. Copies of letters to dignitaries of the Republic dated 29 IV 1697, see: ASR, FO, 11/D/7, ff. nn.

45 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, C.M. Vota to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 27 I 1697, p. 59 [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/1]. During the election on 26 June 1697, Radziejowski omitted the Prince Odescalchi altogether: «At least out of gratitude it was held to be undoubted by all the purer nobility of Poland that the Card. Primate [...] was to appease so many differences by merely reflecting [...] the generous proposals of the aforesaid Prince Odescalchi [...] The Holy Cardinal had to make the appointment, as promised, at the fatal point» [Almeno per gratitudine si teneva per indubitato da tutta la nobiltà più purgata della Polonia, che il Card. Primate […] fosse per acquietare tante differenze con solo mettere in riflesso [...] le generose propositioni del sudetto principe Odescalchi […] Dovea il S. Cardinale sul fatto e nel punto fatale fare la nomina, come promises], see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, C.M. Vota to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 27 VI and 7 IX 1697, p. 79, 81, [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/1]. The same information was sent by Cesare Borsatti: «If the ministers [...] had endeavoured to insinuate to the Holy Cardinal that he would deign, at least on the day of the election, to remember (sic!) the name and merit of Your Highness Serma [...] there is no doubt that the Holy Cardinal would have made a great impression and the crown would belong to Your Highness» [Se i ministri [...] havessero procurato d'insinuare al S. Cardinale, che si degnasse, almeno nel giorno della elettione arricordare (sic!), a palatinate il nome e il merito di V. A. Ser.ma [...] è indubitato, che il S. Cardinale havrebbe fatto gran colpo e la corona sarebbe di V. A.], see: ASR, FO, 11/D/7, C. Borsatti to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 1 IX 1697, ff. nn.

Serene Highness because the ministers would be aroused by the companiere»[46]. The vote of Primate Radziejowski was also sought through the presentation of rich gifts – perfumes and Roman accessories – to a person closely related to him in terms of family and emotions, i.e. the castellan of Łęczyca, Katarzyna Towiańska, née Niszczycka, the cardinal's cousin[47].

In a similar way, attempts were made to win the votes of other allies of the Prince de Bourbon-Conti, including the Grand Marshal of the Crown Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, his brother Hieronim Augustyn Lubomirski, the Treasurer of the Crown, and their wives, who had a considerable influence on political life and agitated for the French candidate[48]. Separate talks were held by Racchetti, but these took place without the knowledge or consent of Baron Piccinardi. Among those persuaded to side with the Prince of Odescalchi were Franciszek Załuski, Voivode of Czernichów, Jan Chryzostom Odrowąż-Pieniążek, Voivode of Sieradz, Kazimierz Szczuka, Abbot of Paradyż, Franciszek Prażmowski, Bishop of Łuck, Kazimierz Michał Pac, scribe of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Mikołaj Wiktoryn Grudziński, Starosta of Golub, Jan Jakub Potulicki, Starosta of Borzechów, and Izabela Sapieżyna, née Tarłów Sapieżyna, wife ot the Treasurer of Lithuania[49]. The latter, in the plans of Italian agents, could persuade her husband Benedykt Paweł, brother-in-law of the Vilnius voivode and Grand Hetman of Lithuania Kazimierz Paweł Sapieha, and brother Karol Tarło, the Crown Vice-Chancellor, to leave the camp of the Duke of

46 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Relazione al Serenissimo Principe Odescalchi del maneggio [...]", ff. nn.

47 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, ff. nn., L. Odescalchi to Katarzyna Konstancja Towiańska, without place and date. *Conf.* Jarosław Pietrzak, "Kobieta z drugiego planu. Katarzyna Konstancja z Niszczyckich Towiańska i jej polityczna działalność w burzliwych czasach przełomu XVII i XVIII w.", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 64/3 (2023), 326.

48 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Instrumento per il S. March. Angelo del Negro per Vienna a di 22 Marzo 1697", ff. nn.; B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 10 III 1697, p. 208-09. Stanislaw Herakliusz Lubomirski assured his confidence and congratulated Prince Odescalchi on his merits, but these were merely courteous assurances of support, see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 1 V 1697, p. 284 [orig. Archivio Odescalchi, 11/D/9]. More on the pro-French faction, see: Aleksandra Skrzypietz, *Francuskie zabiegi o koronę polską po śmierci Jana III Sobieskiego* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2009), 117-22, 136-42; Ead., *Franciszek Ludwik, ksiażę de Conti – "obrany król Polski". Saga rodu Kondeuszów* (Katowice: wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2019), 281-94; Ead., "Damy polskie wobec kandydatury księcia Conti podczas elekcji w 1697 roku", in *Dyplomacja, polityka, prawo. Księga ofiarowana profesorowi Henrykowi Kocójowi w siedemdziesiąta rocznicę urodzin*, red. Idzi Panic (Katowice: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2001), 117-23.

49 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Vera e giusta relazione", ff. nn.; B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, Keckenbart to L. Odescalchi, Gdańsk 15 II 1697, pp. 282-83 [orig. Archivio Odescalchi, 11/D/9].

Conti[50]. Particularly much was promised after Baron Piccinardi met with Jan Jerzy Przebendowski, Castellan of Chelmno, in April 1697 and gave him the sum of 1,000 ducats in exchange for the issue of propaganda prints[51]. It is difficult to believe that any of the above-mentioned magnates would have been convinced by Odescalchi's candidacy, although, as Gabriele Vecchi reported, in Poland it was possible to find noblemen dedicated to the Duke's cause and willing to support his efforts[52]. However, it is thought that these were poor and middle-income nobles whose support was bought with Italian skugs. Closer to the start of the election, most of the governors declared their support for Wettin[53].

Italian diplomats also tried to gain the support of Queen Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska. The importance of her favour was already pointed out by the Jesuit Carlo Maurizio Vota in January 1697[54]. In mid-May of that year, the envoy travelled to Gdańsk and the intention was certainly to make contact with the Queen and to conclude a deal with her. Prince Odescalchi was keen to secure the votes of Prince Sobieski's party, which would stand behind his candidature in the event of his defeat. Probably connected with this was the secret visit of the lawyer Montecatini to Prince Jakub Sobieski before he left for Gdańsk[55]. The price of support was to host the queen in Rome at the Odescalchi palace, in connection with her plans to leave the Republic after the election[56]. As reported later by an unnamed sender, the prince was willing to comply with the prince's request and encourage his partisans to flip

50 Aleksandra Skrzypietz, "Sapiehowie wobec elekcji księcia Conti (1697)", in *Sapiehowie epoki Kodnia i Krasiczyna*, ed. Krzysztof Stępnik (Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2007), 357-72; Mariusz Sawicki, "Partia francuska na Litwie w latach 1696–1697 w świetle dokumentów i rachunków dyplomatów Ludwika XIV. Przyczynek do dziejów elekcji Augusta II", in *Wokół wolnych elekcji w państwie polsko-litewskim XVI–XVIII wieku. O znaczeniu idei wyboru– między prawami a obowiązkami*, eds. Mariusz Markiewicz, Dariusz Rolnik, and Filip Wolański (Katowice: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2016), 373-88.

51 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 18 VI 1697, ff. nn.

52 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, G. Vecchi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna, 1 VI 1697, p. 103 [orig. ASR, FO 11/D/8].

53 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, C. Borsatti to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 7 VII 1697, ff. nn.

54 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, C.M. Vota to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 27 I 1697, ff. nn. Vota paid a visit to the Queen at the beginning of the month, as reported by Prince Aleksander Sobieski's informant, and may have discussed Prince Odescalchi's case with Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska, see: Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Warszawie, 76, Jan Kosmowski to Prince Aleksander Sobieski, Warsaw 7 I 1697, f. 158v.

55 B. PAU-PAN, Teki Augusta Cieszkowskiego, 8706, Girolamo Alberti to Republic of Venice Senate, Warsaw 4 VI 1697, pp. 140-42. Prince Odescalchi sent a separate letter to Queen Marie Casimire d'Arquien of Sobieska, asking for support, see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, L. Odescaslchi to Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska, without place, 29 IV 1697, pp. 251-53 [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/9]

56 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Relazione al Serenissimo Principe Odescalchi del maneggio", ff. nn.

votes to him, especially as the plan met with the queen's approval: «The Most Serene Prince Jakub promised to donate his party to Your Highness in the event that he saw that the Crown was in despair for him: and the Queen made a similar promise, but His Majesty was not revered by them when they returned from Warsaw, and one of them, through Father Vota, was trying to be auditor to His Majesty when he came to Rome, and this was the main negotiation»[57]. This announcement seems unlikely, as it is not supported by other source data. However, such a scenario is not entirely impossible, given the Queen's previous frequent changes of mind in relation to her support for the candidates vying for the crown[58].

In addition to the support of the nobility and the Queen, the envoys of Prince Odescalchi tried to appeal for help from foreign courts. Baron Piccinardi was not initially sympathetic to this idea, trying to convince his principal that it was only necessary to secure the favour of the Imperial, Brandenburg and Swedish courts, assuring them of his friendship but not to enter into any dealings with them[59]. However, the prince's agent realized that the support of the imperial envoy and the papal nuncio would make a great impression on the multitude of nobility. He suggested that it was necessary to enlist the help of imperial envoys and promise them significant sums. Moreover, it was believed that Emperor Leopold I, for the sake of former friendly relations related to Odescalchi's efforts to acquire the principality of Carinthia and the loan, eventually granting him the title of Prince of the Reich,

57 «Il Serenissimo Principe Jacopo haveva promesso di donare a Vostra Altezza il suo Partito, in caso, che havesse veduto disperata per lui la Corona: e simile promessa fece pure la Regina, ma Sua Maestà nel ritorno che fecero di Varsavia l'Intervenienti di Vostra Altezza non fu da essi riveriti, e pure uno di essi per via del Padre Votta procurava di essere Auditore di Sua Maestà cosa fosse venuta a Roma, e questo era il maggior Negozio», see: ASR, FO, 3/B/6, Unknow to L. Odescalchi, without place, 15 XI 1697, p. 1.

58 Let us recall that the queen was in conflict with Prince James from the time of John III's death in June 1696 until April 1697. At that time, it was claimed that Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska supported Prince Aleksander Sobieski or her brother-in-law – Maximilian II Emanuel Wittelsbach, Elector of Bavaria, see: Aleksandra Skrzypietz, *Królewscy synowie. Jakub, Aleksander i Konstanty Sobiescy* (Katowice: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2011), 249-93; Ead., *Królewicz Jakub Sobieski* (Poznań: Wydaw. Poznańskie, 2015), 221-34; Zbigniew Goralski, "Zur Kandidatur des bayerischen Kurfürsten Maximilian Emanuel für die polnische Krone (1696–1697)", *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte*, 34/1 (1971): 390-96; Michał Komaszyński, "Die Kandidatur des bayerischen Kurfürsten Maximilian Emanuel im polnischen Thronfolgestreit", *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte*, 53/2 (1990): 313-27; Stanisław Orszulik, "Kandydatura elektora bawarskiego Maksymiliana II Emanuela do korony polskiej po śmierci Jana III", *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka*, 29/2 (1974): 231-48. This was also noticed by the representatives of Prince Odescalchi, as was the fact that the imperial, Brandenburg and French diplomacies were seeking the Queen's vote, see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, A. del Negro to L. Odescalchi, without date and place, p. 127 [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/9]; ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn.

59 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn.

through his efforts to the Polish throne. Disappointment came with the news of Gabriele Vecchi, who arrived in Vienna from Genoa in May 1697 and found that the emperor had only offered Odescalchi words of well-being, but nothing more[60]. Over time, Piccinardi, who was convinced of the support of the imperial court for Prince Jakub, came to a similar conclusion[61]. However, hope was not lost as it was believed that some imperial diplomats, such as Count František Oldřich Kinsky and Karl Ernst von Waldstein, were able to serve the prince's cause and mediate in contacts with the court of Elector Frederick III of Hohenzollern[62].

The main point of support was sending envoy to the court in Berlin, because the consent of the elector Frederick III to the candidacy of the Prince Odescalchi – in Baron Piccinardi's calculations – could influence the possible help from England, the Northern Netherlands, Sweden and Moscow, which then remained neutral towards the electoral events in Poland[63]. This was probably the purpose of Piccinardi's departure to Königsberg in May 1697 and his subsequent return to

60 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, G. Vecchi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 11 IV 1697, p. 122 [orig. ASR, FO 11/D/8]

61 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn.; Ibid., C. Borsatti to L. Odescalchi, Wrocław 1 VII 1697, ff. nn. Prince Jakub Sobieski sought the support of Emperor Leopold I and his wife Eleonora. Many believed that Sobieski would receive real help from Vienna. Marie Casimire assumed that Habsburg could support her candidates for the crown, first of all Charles Philip von Pfalz Neuburg or Leopold of Lorraine, and then Louis of Baden. Meanwhile, imperial diplomacy supported Prince Jakub in the decisive phase of the election, see: Skrzypietz, *Królewscy synowie*, 293-95; Ead., "Królewicz Jakub Sobieski i jego kontakty z dworami europejskimi do wybuchu wielkiej wojny północnej", *Wieki Stare i Nowe*, 4/9 (2012): 34-5; Adam Perłakowski, "Dyplomatyczne aspekty bezkrólewia po śmierci Jana III Sobieskiego (1696–1697) w świetle doniesień i relacji Andrzeja Choyanckiego", in *Polska wobec wielkich konfliktów w Europie nowożytnej. Z dziejów dyplomacj i stosunków międzynarodowych w XV–XVIII wieku*, ed. Ryszard Skowron (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2009), 443-56; Jacek Staszewski, "Elekcja 1696/1697 r.", *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. AUNC. Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne. Historia*, 259/28 (1993): 73-92; Kazimierz Piwarski, "Das Interregnum 1696/1697 in Polen und die politische Lage in Europa", in *Um die polnische Krone. Sachsen und Polen Während des Nordischesn Krieges 1700–1721*, eds. Johannes Kalisch, and Jan Andrzej Gierowski (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1962), 9-44.

62 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn.; Ibid., "Instrumento per il S. March. Angelo del Negro", ff. nn.

63 Piccinardi attached importance to careful contacts with Sweden, fearing that the Polish nobility would accuse the candidate of trying to fraternize with the enemy, as was done in the case of Prince Jakubs' contacts with the court of Charles XI, see: Michał Komaszyński, "Zabiegi królewicza Jakuba o pomoc Szwecji w walce o tron po Janie III", in *Strefa bałtycka w XVI–XVIII w. Polityka–społeczeństwo–gospodarka. Ogólnopolska sesja naukowa zorganizowana z okazji 70-lecia urodzin Profesora Edmunda Cieślaka*, ed. Jerzy Trzoska (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1993), 105-15; Gustav Jonasson, "Polska i Szwecja za czasów Jana III Sobieskiego", *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka*, 35/2 (1980): 237-43.

Vienna at the end of the same month. Piccinardi's mission must have pleased him, since the elector's ministers Nikolai Danckelman and Paul Fuchs told the Italian that if the candidacy of Prince Louis of Baden encountered difficulties, their lord would support the Italian. They also assured that the elector's envoy in Warsaw – Johanes von Hoverbeck – would receive instructions on this matter[64].

Papal diplomacy was characterized by hostility towards the candidacy of Prince Livio Odescalchi. Although the former papal nepot had extensive contacts in the Roman Curia, Innocent XII's pro-French policy was in opposition to the prince's intentions[65]. This did not mean that the prince's envoys completely gave up trying to convince nuncio Giovanni Antonio Davia to support the Italian's efforts. Conference with the representative of the Papal States were started in May by Carlo Maurizio Vota and then in June 1697 by the lawyer Montecatini[66]. However, both failed to convince the diplomat, who believed that Odescalchi's efforts were consistent with the candidacy of the Elector of Saxony: «[…] like the reason of money, they can't think about it. You couldn't believe how much spirit S.[ignor] Avvocato Montecatini works with, of which I don't have enough. To give me the attention that he appreciates from the Royal Household and every other respect, so that even if it

64 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, A. del Negro to L. Odescsalchi, without date and place, p. 1 [orig. ASR, FO 11/D/8]; Ibid., 8 V 1697, p. 134; Ibid., A.F. di Monte Catino to L. Odescalchi, b.m. i d., p. 234. Even during John III's lifetime, Brandenburg invariably declared support for the election of Jakub Sobieski. Seeing Austria's inclination towards Jakub Sobieski, Frederick III did not have the courage to openly oppose him. However, he was afraid of cooperation between Austria, Sweden and Russia in this matter. The Brandenburg court, through Johann von Hoverbeck, closely monitored the situation, but did not interfere in the course of events. Frederick III did not betray his sympathies. For this reason, he was credited with acting on behalf of Louis of Baden, Charles of Neuburg or Jakub Sobieski. He tried to consolidate his influence in Poland-Lithuania by reaching an agreement with the Sapieha family and possibly the Lubomirski family. For Brandenburg, the best ruler would be someone very weak – Louis of Baden, with strong ties to Berlin, or 'Piast', i.e. one of the Polish lords. Let us add that Jakub Sobieski, apparently supported by Frederick III, did not actively seek his help. The ruler of Brandenburg finally accepted Wettin's choice, see: Skrzypietz, *Królewscy synowie*, 293-94; Stanisław Salmonowicz, "Związki polsko-niemieckie 1697/1701–1763", in *Polacy i Niemcy wobec siebie. Postawy, opinie, stereotypy (1697–1815): próba zarysu*, ed. Stanisław Salmonowicz (Olsztyn, Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. W. Kętrzyńskieg, 1993), 9; Andrzej Kamieński, *Polska a Brandenburgia-Prusy w drugiej połowie XVII wieku. Dzieje polityczne* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pozańskie, 2002), 377-78; Skrzypietz, *Królewicz Jakub Sobieski*, 35-6; Maciej Swobodziński, "Gdańsk a Brandenburgia–Prusy w latach 1697–1698. Misja gdańskiego sekretarza Johanna Georga Schimmelpfenniga na dworze Fryderyka III w Królewcu w 1698 roku w sprawie tzw. 'negotium gallicum'", *Komunikaty Warmińsko-Mazurskie*, 4/314 (2021): 570-97.

65 The times of Innocent XI's pontificate were marked by conflict with France and Louis XIV, see: Fiorentini, *Livio*, 148-64.

66 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, C.M. Vota to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 21 V 1697, ff. nn.; Ibid., A.F. de Montecatini to L. Odescalchi, b.m. i d., p. 229 [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/1].

happens that D.[on] Livio remains excluded, His Honor must have the obligation to have brought things with great decorum to leadership of the ranks of his rank, I as much as I value competing with applause for this crown in the company of so many Serene Candidates, is much more than being General of Pontifical Galeries»[67]. Right after the election of Frederick Augustus I, Davia recognized the validity of his conversion, which made it clear that he had previously been involved in the election of the Saxon elector and did not maintain the expected neutrality[68].

To gain support required an appropriate fee, hence the envoys of Prince Odescalchi presented various amounts and forms of remuneration. An Italian aristocrat with a high income could successfully pay his supporters. Baron Piccinardi conservatively estimated that approximately 25,000 scuds should be spent on noble votes[69]. He considered it an expression of great generosity, just like the silver pledges that he was to distribute among the Poles[70]. In turn, another representative of Prince Angelo del Negro counted every penny. Because of this, there was irritation among the servants. Piccinardi also asked the prince to issue his bond for the amount of 100,000 scuds, which is higher than the forecast, so that he could start paying supporters before the election[71]. The problem was that neither this sum nor the money that Prince

67 «[…] si como l'intessa ragione del denaro, ne posono, che pensano al. Sig. D. Livio Odescalchi. V.M. non potrebba credere con quanto spirito s'adopra lui S. Avvocato Montecatini, di cui non poso bastante. Lo darmi l'attenzione, che egli gratia visi la Casa Regia e l'ogni altro rispetto, onde quando anche succeda che il Sig.e D. Livio resti escluso dovrà Sua S. havergli obbligo d'avero portate le cose con gran decoro à dirizione degli alli del suo grado stimande, io quant à me il concorrere con applauso à questa corona in comapgnia di tanti Sere.mi Candidati, sia più assai che l'essere Generale di S. Chiesaò delle Galere Pontifici», see: AAV, Fondo Albani, 193, "Copia d'articolo di lettera in data de 25. Giugnio da Varsavia", ff. 15r-v.

68 Wojciech Kęder, "Tajemnice dyplomacji watykańskiej–udział nuncjusza Giovanniego Antonia Davii w elekcji Fryderyka Augusta Wettyna na króla Polski", *Rocznik Filozoficzny Ignatianum*, 28/1 (2022): 77-88. More on the attitude of nuncios in the last interregnum and the Catholic faith as a condition of support for the candidate, see: Dorota Gregorowicz, "The Role of Papal Diplomats in the Interregnum's Parliamentary Practice of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16th–17th centuries)", *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 1 (2016): 119-48; Ead., "Problem papieskiej neutralności wobec rywalizacji o tron w Rzeczypospolitej w wyniku abdykacji Jana Kazimierza Wazy", in *Sztuka roztropności. Dyplomacja Stolicy Apostolskiej wobec Rzeczypospolitej, Europy i świata*, eds. Krzysztof Ożóg, and Ryszard Skowron (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2020), 141-61; Paweł Duda, "Nuncjatura apostolska w Warszawie i w Wiedniu wobec elekcji Władysława IV Wazy–przyczynek do badań nad czwartym interregnum", in *Wokół wolnych elekcji*, 257-78; Aleksandra Ziober, "The Role and Use of Religion in the Politics of Candidates to the Polish Throne in the 17th Century", *Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Histroycznej*, 13 (2018): 115-32.

69 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Relazione al Serenissimo Principe Odescalchi del maneggio", ff. nn.

70 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn.

71 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, "Informazione", ff. nn.

Odescalchi promised to transfer to Poland-Lithuania could be realized, because no banking house could fulfill the transfer. Innocent XI's nephew considered three paths. The first was a loan from Genoese bankers, in particular the del Grillo family, and the payment of sums by Amsterdam and Gdańsk merchants to the prince's envoys in Warsaw[72]. The second one was the execution of the transfer by the Rezzonico family banking house, but they had no branches or contacts in the Commonwealth [73]. The last, third solution was the withdrawal of money by bankers residing in Vienna - Bartolomeo Tinti and Karol Bertolo, but they also had no contacts with Warsaw banking houses[74].The prince's money finally arrived in Warsaw, but on June 29th, 1697, so after the election thanks to Marco Bellini[75]. Meanwhile, it is worth adding that Angelo del Negro issued a bond for representatives of nine voivodeships in the first days of the election for a total amount of 50,000 zlotys. For this reason, after the election, even though the prince's candidacy was lost, interested parties approached del Negro, who resided at the Rachetti inn, demanding payment. Moreover they regularly visited the place and threatened to use sabers to enforce the payments and even surrounded the house, del Negro and his servants slipped out of the inn to – as planned – sail down the Vistula to Toruń and from there to Brandenburg. To confuse his pursuers, the Italian rented a carriage belonging to Johann von Hoverbeck and got out of Warsaw[76].

The last factor influencing the candidate's choice was the propaganda contained in leaflets sketching the image and presenting the candidate's figure and character. The writings took various forms: panegyrics, lampoons, letters, prophecies, the so-called mirrors, political poems, etc. Those dedicated to Prince Odescalchi, as well as to Maximilian II Emanuel, Charles, Duke of Neuburg, or the princes of Lorraine or Baden, belonged – also in terms of quantity – to the minority in the total number of works of the interregnum. When sketching the ideal image of a candidate for the Polish crown, many elements were pointed out, including: origin, character, military merits, political achievements, attitude towards law and freedom, fidelity to the Catholic faith, etc[77].

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72 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 10 III 1697, ff. nn.

73 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, Unknown to L. Odescalchi, Rome 27 IV 1697, ff. nn.; M. Pizzo, *Livio Odescalchi e i Rezzonico*, 119-53.

74 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, Carlo Bartelo to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 8 VI 1697, pp. 285-86 [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/9]; Ibid., Bartolomeo Tinki to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 8 VI 1697, p. 287, [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/9].

75 ASR, FO, 3/C/11, Marco Bellini to L. Odescalchi, without place, 3 VII 1697, b.p.

76 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 14 XII 1697, ff. nn.

77 Aleksandra Skrzypietz, "Portret kandydata do tronu polskiego w pismach politycznych z lat 1696/1697", in *Hominem quaerere. Człowiek w źródle historycznym*, eds. Stanisław Rosik, and Przemysław Wiszewski (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2008), 151-65; Stanisław Orszulik, "Kultura polityczna szlachty w świetle pism politycznych bezkrólewia 1696/97", *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny. Sobótka*, 37/3-4 (1982): 207-18; Henryk Suchojad, "Wizerunek cudzoziemskich kandydatów do korony polskiej w czasie bezkrólewia z lat 1572–1573 w oczach szlachty", in *Między Lwowem a Wrocławiem*.

At the beginning of his thoughts about the prince's attempts to win the Polish crown, his advisors tried to create a literary image of the nephew of Pope Innocent XI in order to present him to the Polish nobility society. At the request of Baron Piccinardi, a brochure was prepared and printed in Königsberg, which "depicted" the advantages of the Italian candidate. The "Letter of a Polish Nobleman" points out the prince's manners and dignity, as well as the fact that he lent the Apostolic Chamber the sum of 50,000 piasters to finance the activities of the Holy League against Ottoman Empire[78]. Subsequent prints were created as the election date approached. With letters addressed to Poles, he showed the prince as a rich and generous aristocrat who spared no expense on his magnificent residences, where – according to the author – he created residences worthy of Julius Caesar himself[79]. Antonio Feliciano Montecatini tried to portray the prince in an equally laudatory tone in the commissioned work *A Conversation of a Pole with the Imperial Ambassador about Don Livius* [orig. "Rozmowa Polaka z ambasadorem cesarskim o Don Liwiuszu"][80]. The prince's fame and the desire to elect him were also proclaimed in works written in Polish circles. A short poem written in the sylva of Jan Stanisław Jabłonowski is undoubtedly worth attention: «Whoever wants a soldier will take a Lorraine, whoever wants a devil will take Conte, whoever is proud and a flask will take Baden, whoever is careless will take a Neuburger, whoever wants a man will take Odescalchi»[81]. The prince's few supporters also composed an unsophisticated couplet: "Duke Odeschalch / good this time"[82].

However, not all writings and works were favorable to the Italian prince, regardless of his wealth, kinship with the pope and independence from European powers. Satirical works used Odescalchi's love of art as an argument against his candidacy, contrasting Mars with Apollo, and in the context of the ethos of the Sarmatian knight, it disqualified the Italian. In the song "Speculum candidatorum ad coronam Regni Poloniae" he was accused of not following the camp of Mars, but following art: "Not the camp of Mars/ I followed but of art"[83]. In turn, the prince's proposals

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Księga jubileuszowa Profesora Krystyna Matwijowskiego, eds. Bogdan Rok, and Jerzy Maroń (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2006), 393-408.

78 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, G.A. Piccinardi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 25 III 1697, ff. nn.

79 ASR, FO, 11/D/7, C. Borsatti to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 10 V 1697, ff. nn.

80 B. PAU-PAN, sign. 8461, vol. 121, A.F. di Montecatini to L. Odescalchi, without date and place, p. 231 [orig. ASR, FO 11/D/1] In the same letter, Montecatini asked for four medals with the prince's image to be sent to strengthen visual propaganda.

81 «Kto chce mieć żołnierza, to weźmie Lotaryngczyka, kto diabła, to Contego, kto pysznego i flaszę, to Badena, kto niedbałego, to Neuburczyka, kto człowieka, to Odescalchiego», see: "Ułamki Dziennika Jana Stanisława Jabłonowskiego", *Kronika Rodzinna*, 14 (1889), p. 443.

82 «Dux Odeschalch/ Dobryby vice hac», see: Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie, 142, p. 256.

83 «Non castra Martis/ Sequi sed artis», see: Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie, 6646/III, "Dux Odeschalcus Lechicum diadema petendo", f. 124r.

to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth mocked all forms of material assistance addressed to Poles: «Wanting to win the scales over to the Polish side,/ The power of Italy promises, Prince Odeschalci / Millions and silver, students in Rome, / Pictures and mirrors, other secular items / Estates in Naples, Rome and Madrid, / Which are worth nothing when he will turn her upside down. / The Italian's character is very sophisticated, but they know him here, / because the Poles won't pay a crown for it»[84]. As mentioned above, the prince's proposals were not welcomed by the Poles. Perhaps the minor nobility had some hopes of bringing the prince's significant and rich estate to the not very wealthy farm of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but for the magnates this was not a condition at all. It seems that ridicule became a weapon in the hands of French diplomacy, which tried to discredit the prince[85]. In March 1697, a letter circulated around Poland stating that Odescalchi was giving the Republic of Poland 30 million Polish zlotys, but that this estate consisted only of paintings and sculptures of the most beautiful Italian works of art – Giulio Romano, Titian, Annibale Caracci[86].

On June 26, 1697, in the electoral field, contrary to the later claims of the prince's envoys, there were a few votes in favor of Prince Odescalchi, but it was a really small group[87]. Many people, out of a sense of loyalty and solidarity with their principal,

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84 «Chcąc zemknąć na swą stronę polskich zdania szalki,/ Siła Włoch obiecuje, książę Odeschalki/ Miliony i srebra, w Rzymie alumnaty,/ Obrazki i zwierciadła, inne świeckie graty/ Zapisy w Neapolim, w Rzymie i Madrycie,/ Które za nic, kiedy jej wywróci na nice./ Frant Włoch bardzo misterny, ale go tu znają,/ Bo Polacy korony za to nie przydają», see: Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie, 6646/ III, "Na propozycyje księcia jmci Liviusza Odeschalkiego, wnuka (sic!) s<ancti> p<atris> Innocentego XI papieża", f. 424r.

85 The secretary of the French embassy wrote directly that: «The mockers said that this prince offered to Poland 20 bodies of saints and over 20 million, which were settled as follows: 100,000 for an original painting by Raphael, 200,000 for another one, a million for an ancient statue, etc. The fact is that in the proposals that the priest Montecatini printed on his behalf at the end of the Diet, Don Livio pledged, among other things, to leave his goods to the Republic in the event of his childless death, mentioning the countless statues, paintings, vases and other extraordinary curiosities, difficult to count, of which he boasted of possessing. His envoy could also prove conclusively that he had goods worth over 20 million Polish livres», see: Michelle de Mongrillon, *Pamiętnik sekretarza ambasady francuskiej w Polsce pod koniec panowania Jana III oraz w okresie bezkrólewia i wolnej elekcji po jego zgonie (1694-1696)*, ed. Łucja Częścik (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Ossolineum, 1982), 83-4. *Conf.* Grzegorz Trościński, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna okresu bezkrólewia po śmierci Jana III Sobieskiego* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2019), 414-15.

86 Boratyński, *Don Livio*, 495-96.

87 Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie, 3522, f. 56v; Archiwum Państwowe w Toruniu, Akta miasta Torunia, kat. II, XIII-34/1, Andrzej Choynacki to Daniel Krzysztof Janitzen, Warsaw 18 VI 1697, f. 45b; ASR, FO, 11/C/7, "Copia di articolo lettera in data de' 25 giugno da Varsavia", ff. nn.; Opis elekcji w dniach 26-28 VI 1697, in *Theatrum Europeaum*, vol. 15 (Frankfurt am Main 1707), 303. *Conf.* Francesca de Caprio, "Varsavia, l'Europa e l'interregno nella Rzeczpospolita del

expressed their regret over the prince's defeat, although they did not deny that the Poles were impressed by his conservative actions[88]. Gabriele Vecchi even stated that it was wickedness on the part of the Pope to recognize the election of the Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus, as a fresh convert, with such open disapproval of the nephew of Innocent XI. The same author was certainly interested in Saxony and resolutely asked Davia in Poland for the favor of Saxony and excluding any other sign such that he had already been elected King[89]. However, there are many indications that the prince's envoys themselves neglected the matter of choosing the prince, especially Montecatini, who was no longer summoned to any meetings before the election, among others to the French embassy, because he had run out of funds to privateer supporters.

There are many reasons for the defeat, but at the very beginning it is worth taking a look at the attitude of the prince's deputies themselves, who began to look for people among themselves responsible for the electoral defeat. Baron Piccinardi left Warsaw just before the beginning of the election session, seeing that the deputies were acting against his recommendations and slandering him, calling him a traitor and even an

dopo Sobieski", in *L'Europa di Giovanni Sobieski. Cultura, politica, mercatura e società*, ed. Gaetano Platania (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2005), 376; Urszula Kosińska, "W kręgu mitów, czyli o tym co nie zdecydowało o wyborze Augusta II na tron Polski w 1697 roku", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 79/4 (2022): 800.

88 ASR, FO, 11/D/7,C.M. Vota to L. Odescalchi, Varsavia, 27 VI 1697, ff. nn.; B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, A. del Negro, Warsaw [?] VII 1697, p. 140 [orig. ASR, FO 11/D/1]; ASR, FO, 3/C/11, M. Baellini to L. Odescalchi, without date and place, ff. nn. Stanisław Dąmbski, the bishop of Kujawy, was the only one to send his letter, full of compliments to the prince, he tried to console him after the loss, see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, Stanisław Dąmbski to L. Odescalchi, Warsaw 15 VII 1697, pp. 292-93 [orig. ASR, FO 11/D/9].

89 «The Pope [Innocent XII – Author's note] himself declared to Davia in Poland that he was in favour of Saxony and excluded any other sign such that he was already elected King» [Il Papa [Innocent XII–Author note] medesimo dicerto s'interesso per Sassonia mento ad esso risoluti dichiereti al Davia in Polonia ci favore di Sassonia e excluso d'ogni altro il segno tale ch'era giú eletto Ré], see: B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol. 121, G. Vecchi to L. Odescalchi, Vienna 6 VII 1697, p. 161 [orig. ASR, FO 11/D/8]. For more on the Pope's recognition of the election of Augustus II, see: Jacek Staszewski, *August II Mocny* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1998), 60-5; Jacek Staszewski, *Stosunki Augusta II z Kurią Rzymską w latach 1704–1706 (Misja rzymska)* (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, 1966); Gaetano Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski. Fasti e miserie di una famiglia reale polacca tra Sei e Settecento* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 1990), 43-56; Wojciech Kęder, *Tajenmice*, 77-88; Kęder, "Kardynał Giovanni Antonio de Via (Gianantonio de Via)–nuncjusz w Rzeczypospolitej (1696–1700)", *Studia Sandomierskie*, 26 (2019): 42-4; Bela Vilmos Mihalik, "Catholics, heretics, and "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 Andersson, and Charlotte Backerra (London, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2020), 39-54; Id., "The King's Cousin, the Emperor's Bishop. Christian August of Saxe-Zeitz as Mediator between Poland and the Holy See", *Eastern European History Review*", 4 (2021): 241-54.

intruder. Del Negro resented him for granting a loan of 200 ducats to purchase silver. Del Negro brought a lawsuit against the baron for both the sum and the printing of the ephemera. Moreover, the Genoese accused Keckenbert of spending money intended to pay the prince's supporters on luxurious goods purchased in Toruń. In turn, Piccinardi complained about del Negro's stinginess. Similar accusations were made against him by Cesare Borsatti, who after the election, together with Montecatini, went first to Gdańsk, then went to Wrocław and then to Vienna. After many adventures and almost complete poverty, due to attacks and robberies of his belongings, he managed to return to Bracciano. Livio Odescalchi for his service, obtained for him the position of canon of the collegiate church. The prince also did not believe Piccinardi's and Borsatti's revelations about del Negra's stinginess. It even seems that the prince could have been grateful to him for saving his estate from ruin[90].

There was also much resentment towards the lawyer Montecatini. Cesare Borsatti and Baron Piccinardi mocked him for being more suitable for the consistory process than for the electoral fight for the Polish crown. They both claimed that Montecatini was too proud and extremely cowardly and therefore incapable of performing such an important function. He was blamed for his ignorance of languages, ceremonies and even drunkenness, which he fell into during a feast at the Primate's, so much so that he attacked the bishop of Kujawy and tore his cassock. However, it is difficult to say whether this event took place at all or whether it was created to discredit Montecatini in the eyes of the prince. The fact is, however, that del Negra's miserliness contributed to the modest presentation of the prince's representative during the parliamentary hearing of foreign delegates. According to Borsatti, Montecatini could only purchase a miserable carriage driven by lame horses. Placing his page in the carriage next to the envoy was also said to cause scandal. Montecatini, who probably did not have a very clear conscience and was not very energetic in agitating for his master, was neither accused of anything else nor punished by Livio Odescalchi.

Prince's Odescalchi form of consolation after losing the election was to grant him the principality of Sirmio (Sremska Mitrovica), located in the Kingdom of Hungary in the basins of the Drava, Sava and Danube rivers, near Belgrade, on the border with the Ottoman Empire[91]. Agreements regarding the granting of the duchy to Livio

90 After the election, various amounts were given that the prince was to spend to pay for his election. It was mentioned that it was 15 or 20,000 or even 50,000, see L. Odescalchi, *Don Livio*, 510.

91 Angelo Tamborra, "Gli studi di storia dell'Europa Orientale in Italia nell'ultimo ventennio", in *La storiografia italiana negli ultimi venti anni*, ed. Luigi De Rosa, vol. 2 (Milano: Laterza, 1972), 1042; Raoul Guèze, "Livio Odescalchi e il Ducato di Sirmio", in *Venezia, Italia, Ungheria fra Arcadia e Iluminismo*, eds. Béla Köpeczi, and Péter Sàrközy (Budapest: Fondazione Giorgio Cini di Venezia, 1982), 45-7; Marco Pizzo, "Il Sirmio, gli Odescalchi e la seta: un tentativo imprnditoriale non riuscito", in *Conflitti e compromessi nell'Europa di centro fra XVI e XX secolo*, ed. Gaetano Platania (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2001), 211-22; Ulrike Seeger, "Quellen zu Schloss Ilok aus dem Archiv der Familie Odescalchi", *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, 38 (2014): 93-102; Marco Jacov, *Il Ducato di Sirmio tra il Regno d'Ungheria, gli Ottomani, gli Absburgo, e gli Odescalchi* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2014).

Odescalchi were made already in 1687, and a year later he sent his representative Giovanni Giani to Vienna to finalize them[92]. Due to the negotiations over the sum of the sale, the resistance of the subjects to the rule of the foreigner and the still uncertain status of the lands that had just been taken from the Turks, the case ended in success only in 1697[93]. On August 21, for the price of 300,000 ducats, the prince formally acquired the new estate and received a diploma from Emperor Leopold I confirming his ownership rights to the estate of Arva, Tersacz in Croatia and the principality of Sirmio[94]. However, only after losing the election in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the prince was able to develop his economic plans in the newly acquired estates. For this purpose, he delegated two of his representatives, the abbot Giovanni Boini and Gabriele Vecchi, to search, prepare inventories of goods and take possession of the Ilok fortress, which tasks they performed in the years 1698/1699–1702[95]. The purchase of the principality should be considered not only in terms of the prince's attempt to enrich himself and his good contacts with the imperial court, but above all in terms of plans to revive the anti-Ottoman crusade, the visible symbol of which, immediately after the Vienna victory, was the retaking of Belgrade in 1689.

CONCLUSION

The candidacy of Prince Livio Odescalchi was one of the weakes one among the group of stronger candidates. It is difficult to even assume that the prince's envoys would be able to harm Prince Conti or Prince Jakub Sobieski with their actions. In this respect, the prince's position did not differ compared to the candidacies of other Italian princes during previous elections. The prince waited too long to officially declare his candidacy, wavering between the dream of a crown that would raise his status and his disbelief in the success of the venture. Certainly, the fate of Rinaldo d'Este, a faithful servant of Prince Angelo del Negro, was not a clear warning to the Prince Odescalchi. At this point, it is necessary to briefly enumerate what contributed to the electoral defeat of Prince Livio Odescaslchi. First of all, we should mention the lack of support from Emperor Leopold I, who was involved in supporting Prince Jakub Sobieski. Secondly, the actions of the prince's envoys were chaotic. Giovanni Arrigo Piccinardi's ideas and designs were met with complete criticism from other representatives of the prince, including: Angelo Feliciano Montecatini

92 B. PAU-PAN, 8461, vol 121, Giovanni Gianni to L. Odescalchi, Vienna, 12 IX 1688, p. 254 [orig. ASR, FO, 11/D/9].

93 Fiorentini, *Livio*, 233-38.

94 Jacov, *Il Ducato*, 13. The diploma granting the estates of the Duchy of Sirmio was received in Vienna by Queen Marie Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska in December 1698 and handed to Prince Livio Odescalchi after his arrival in Rome in March 1699. More about contacts between Prince Livio Odescalchi and Imperial court in Vienna and their officers, see: Gernot Mayer, "Das Geschäft mit der Ehre. Bildergeschenke von Don Livio Odescalchi an Dominik Andreas von Kaunitz zwischen Freundschaftsgabe und Bestechung", in *Travelling Objects. Botschafter des Kulturtransfers zwischen Italien und dem Habsburgerreich,* eds. Gernot Mayer, and Silvia Tammaro (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2018), 65-88.

95 Platania, *La candidatura*, 309-21.

and Michele del Negro. The Jesuit Carlo Maurizio Vota and the merchant Racchetti also acted autonomously. The action of printing propaganda magazines and buying noble votes was uncoordinated. It was therefore difficult to expect positive effects of such actions. Disagreements between the prince's envoys, their own interests and disputes not only excluded joint actions, but also resulted in mutual accusations. In this atmosphere, the prince's proposals, apart from the fact that they were ridiculed, were not taken seriously, just like the envoys themselves. The last third issue was the indecision of Prince Livio Odescalchi himself, who hesitated for too long and the intensification of the electoral campaign just before the actual election turned out to be his serious mistake.

ABBREVIATION

AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano.
Segr. Stato: Segreteria di Stato.
ASR: Archivio di Stato di Roma.
FO: Fondo Odescalchi.
B. PAU-PAN: Biblioteka Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności-Polskiej Akademii Nauk.

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

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

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

Following the tumultuous "interregnum" after John III Sobieski's death[1], the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth elected Friedrich August Wettin, Elector of Saxony[2], as its new sovereign. This selection was complex, as the kingdom was deeply divided, raising concerns of a potential civil war. The Jesuit Carlo Maurizio Vota[3], who previously served as theologian and secretary to the late Sobieski and was then confirmed in this role by the new king, had articulated these apprehensions in his correspondence with Cardinal Protector Carlo Barberini[4].

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

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

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

4 Antonio Merola, "Carlo Barberini", in DBI, vol. 6 (1964),171-72.

> The Saxon King-elect has declared me his Confessor and requires my presence near him, an honour I never dreamed of since I have never seen His Majesty. I have written to the Queen's Majesty, whom I am still serving and on whose will I depend, together with that of Our Father General[5].

In the lead-up to the election, Rome maintained cautious expectations. The conversion issue of the Protestant Wettin to Catholicism – influenced more by pragmatic interests than by genuine conviction[6] – left the Holy See lukewarm and awaiting clarification. However, this uncertain stance was unsustainable, particularly following August's decisive victory over his adversaries. On September 15 1697, this reality was solidified when the newly elected King formally received the crown during a religious ceremony at the cathedral of Krakow[7]. Cardinal Barberini directly received news of this event from Vota, who emphasized its significance by detailing the attendance of numerous influential figures who supported Wettin in his election and representatives from European countries who actively aided in his ascension to the throne. In addition, Vota underscored the connection between Wettin and Christian piety, noting the King's public reception of Holy Communion.

> Your Eminence will receive from the Duke Bishop of Giavarino the following news: the coronation of the King was a resounding success, taking place on the 15th with the full participation of the Senate, twelve Deputies, and countless nobles. The Ambassador Cesareo served His Majesty with the envoys from Denmark, Lorraine, the Elector of Arnord, and various Princes of Saxony. Additionally, Prince Liesenstin, the Envoy of the King of the Romans, and the Duke of Saxony Mersburg, cousin of the King, were present. The event was marked by immense pomp and applause. His Majesty displayed exemplary piety, having publicly taken holy communion twice within eight days. The banquet held for all the Grandees of the Kingdom and the homage paid to them by the City was truly reflective of the occasion's grandeur[8].

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

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

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

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

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

Various foreign powers' interventions significantly influenced the diplomatic negotiations, culminating in the election of Friedrich August as sovereign. This process unfolded amidst stark contrasts and evident misunderstandings[9], ultimately leading to the new ruler assuming governance with a diminished consensus, particularly from Michał Radziejowski, the Primate of the Kingdom[10]. The anxiety surrounding the potential election of his rival – the candidate favoured by the Court of Versailles – prompted the Elector to forge alliances among traditionally anti-French princes within the Empire and with England and Low Countries[11]. Notably, Brandenburg and Russia endorsed this coalition; this is substantiated by reports from ordinary nuncio Giovanni Antonio Davia[12] regarding the Russian resident Alexei Nikitin, who expressed strong opposition to the election of the Prince of Conti and even threatened war against Poland-Lithuania[13]. Moreover, Vota's

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

9 The nuncio assured Rome of the new Polish King's conversion, noting that most of Wettin's court ministers were Catholics, and the Electress would soon convert. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Warsaw 4 VII 1697, ff. 172r-174v.

10 On him, see: Krzysztof Rafał Prokop, Polscy kardynałowie (Kraków: WAM, 2001); Kazimierz Śmigiel, Słownik biograficzny arcybiskupów gnieźnieńskich i prymasów Polski (Poznań: WBP, 2002); Roman Kawecki, *Kardynał Michał Stefan Radziejowski (1645–1705)* (Opole: Świętego Krzyża, 2005).

11 Ludwig von Pastor, *Storia dei papi dalla fine del Medioevo […],* vol. XIV/II (Roma: Desclée, 1932), 498.

12 Davia arrived in Warsaw following John III Sobieski's death and served as nuncio for four years, tackling issues like the commendatory abbeys and the nuncio's role and prerogatives. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Roma 3 luglio 1696. On his nunciature see the following two volumes edited by Wojciech Kęder, *Acta Nuntiaturae Poloniae,* t. 37, vol. I: *(13 II 1696–28 XII 1696)* (Cracoviae: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2004), and vol. II: *(23 VI 1696–18 V 1697)* (Cracoviae: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona 2010).

13 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Warsaw 25 XI 1696, f. 106r. On the role played by the Tsar during the election of the new Polish sovereign, see Lucien Ryszard Lewitter, "Peter the Freat and the Polish Election of 1697", *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. 12/2 (1956): 126-43. Amid

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

A crucial moment in Roman-Polish relations transpired on January 13, 1698, when Pope Innocent XII Pignatelli retracted his previous reservations regarding the Elector of Saxony. Maintaining those reservations would have further risked Rome's interests. In a Consistory meeting, the Pope publicly retracted his earlier position on the new King, accompanied by August's correspondence from the previous year, manifesting his loyalty to the Church[15]. This shift was documented in a handwritten "Avviso" dated January 18, which also noted the appointment of Monsignor Fabrizio Paolucci as extraordinary nuncio, tasked with facilitating "pacification" between the newly sovereign ruler and the Primate, who had opposed Wettin's election.

> The Congregation of State convened on Monday to discuss the affairs of Poland, which can now be deemed concluded. His Holiness has appointed Monsignor Paolucci, currently the Nuncio in Cologne, as the Extraordinary Nuncio in that Kingdom and has conferred upon him the Bishopric of Ferrara[16].

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

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

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

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

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

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

> of His Holiness. He assures you that he will dedicate all his efforts to uphold the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, promote the glory of the Holy See, and fervently propagate the holy faith, even at the cost of his own life, against the common enemy[17].

The Roman Court, adapting to political realities, aimed to restore its previously strained relations with Poland-Lithuania, seeking alignment on conventional diplomatic paths[18]. Consequently, Saxony announced the appointment of Count Jerzy Stanisław Dzieduszycki as extraordinary ambassador to the Pope and various courts in Italy to announce the election officially[19].
Following this, Father Alessandro Salaroli of the Theatine Order was dispatched by the newly elected King to negotiate crucial matters with the Curia concerning several abbatial nominations traditionally held by the King but contested by Rome[20]. However, Dzieduszycki's visit did not meet the expectations of the papal Court. Complaints arose regarding perceived disrespect shown by the Pole, particularly towards Carlo Barberini, the Kingdom's protector, who subsequently communicated his grievances to the Primate[21]. Nuncio Monsignor Davia was inadvertently embroiled in the ensuing diplomatic tensions between Rome and Warsaw, threatening personal interactions with Father Vota[22]. To mitigate the incident's severity in Rome, Davia endeavoured to portray to Barberini that the offence stemmed from the young ambassador's ignorance of proper protocol rather than intentional disrespect, emphasizing the necessity to avoid further conflicts[23]. Conversely, Barberini upheld his position, asserting that the affront had been severe and directly affecting his role within the Curia and his protective actions for the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kingdom. In a letter, he communicated to Wettin his disapproval, lamenting the incident as a substantial insult to the "sacred person of the pontiff"[24]. In truth, what Barberini did not accept was the perseverance of the Polish envoy who, once back home[25], continued to support his own beliefs.

While seemingly minor, the Barberini/Dzieduszycki clash was a source of considerable concern for the Holy See[26]. Monsignor Davia assessed the incident as urgent, comparable to other pressing issues facing the Commonwealth. Consequently, he took the initiative to mediate between the conflicting parties, communicating to the Protector that he had engaged in a serendipitous meeting with Dzieduszycki to seek a resolution for the common good[27]. August II was acutely aware of the situation[28]; the king personally intervened by sending a letter of commendation to the Protector, explicitly condemning the actions of his envoy[29]. On May 24, 1698, Spada informed the extraordinary nuncio Paolucci of a communication he received from Protector Barberini, which conveyed Wettin's decision to revoke Dzieduszycki's diplomatic powers[30]. Despite resolving this awkward confrontation, the underlying tensions between the Polish and papal courts remained pronounced. Under August II, Rome was mainly focused on ensuring that the new political trajectory of the Commonwealth maintained a favourable orientation towards Western alliances and did not pivot towards the influence of Peter's Russia. This concern was

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

underscored by the meeting in Rawa at the close of 1698 between Wettin and the Tsar, highlighting Augustus II's ambition to influence the younger Peter. Intimately, the Saxon sovereign aspired to expand his control over an empire that extended from Saxony through Poland-Lithuania to the opposite shore of the Baltic[31].
The meeting in Rawa marked a crucial opportunity for August Wettin to increase his political stature and realign his strategic focus towards the Baltic region, thereby undermining the longstanding anti-Turkish policy of the Commonwealth, which held significant importance for the Holy See. This occasion deepened relations between Warsaw and Moscow, laying the groundwork for a joint Baltic initiative. Evidence of this newfound alliance was reflected in the warm reception the two sovereigns afforded each other[32], as indicated by correspondence from Vota to the cardinal protector.

> The Tsar arrived at lunchtime the following morning, August 10, without any formalities as he preferred. After being conducted to his lodgings, the King promptly visited him. The exchange between them was filled with tenderness, embraces, kisses, and profound expressions of love that can hardly be believed. The Tsar, driven by profound esteem and sympathy for the King, established a friendship beyond brotherly bonds. He continuously embraced and kissed the King, expressing his intention to place himself under his care and pledging his unwavering support. Lunch took place in the King's room, attended by both Majesties, General Fort and the Grand Chancellor of Moscow, along with ambassadors, the Prince Bishop of Javarin, and the Duke of Wirtsenburg, general of the King's armies. The King and the Tsar dined alone in the evening, showcasing even more signs of friendship. In the ensuing days, the Tsar was entertained in various ways, which included a review of the Royal Guards regiment and multiple battalions featuring military exercises and mock combats[33].

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

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

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

Furthermore, nuncio Davia reported to Rome about the amicable dialogue he engaged in with Tsar Peter[34], which the Holy See interpreted as a genuine overture from the Tsar to reestablish direct diplomatic relations with Rome[35]. By the conclusion of 1698, the Turkish front had stagnated for an extended period, highlighting the increasing indifference of the Saxon sovereign towards this issue.
In the ongoing conflict against the Ottoman Turks, the Confederates employed a strategic approach characterized by alternating military engagement and diplomatic overtures[36]. Reports from Jan Paweł Gomoliński[37], the Polish envoy to the Viennese court, indicated persistent rumours regarding Leopold of Habsburg's willingness to pursue peace with the Sultan[38]. Such a development would yield significant advantages for Vienna, which sought to extricate itself from the Ottoman problem to further its dynastic claims on the Spanish throne[39], currently occupied by the ailing Charles II of Habsburg-Spain. This objective was increasingly pressing for Vienna as it aimed to curtail the burgeoning ambitions of Louis XIV, who, disillusioned by the outcomes of the Congress of Rijswijck on September 20, 1697, viewed the acquisition of the Madrid throne as a crucial opportunity for France's political rehabilitation. Consequently, the potential for a diplomatic confrontation between Paris and Vienna raised critical concerns regarding the stability of European peace, thereby underscoring the necessity for Rome to resolve the Wettin question in the east and to restore internal order within the Commonwealth. In this context, Pope Pignatelli, in February 1698, had decided to place alongside the Ordinary Nuncio Davia, Fabrizio Paolucci, as "extraordinary, then papal representative in Cologne[40].

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

34 The meeting between the Tsar and the nuncio Davia took place in Princess Zamoyska's castle. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Lviv 19 VIII 1698, f. 452r-v. Copy in APF, Scritture riferite nei Congressi: Moscovia, Polonia e Ruteni, vol. 2, ff. 576r-78v.

35 Davia questions whether to recognize Peter as Tsar, a title historically held by Moscow's princes, adding that the imperial court and Polish authorities (later also Venice) had acknowledged it.AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, *G.A. Davia to F. Spada,* Lviv 19 VIII 1698, f. 455v.

36 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Warsaw 4 XI 1698, f. 557r-v.

37 Adam Przyboś, "Jan Paweł Gomoliński", in PSB, vol. 8 (1959–1960), 270.

38 AAV, *Segr.* Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Lviv 26 VIII 1698, ff. 456r-66r. In November, Gomoliński highlighted Leopold of Habsburg's intentions to seek peace with the Sultan. The news was transmitted to Cardinal Spada by the nuncio Davia, who, on the contrary, had expressed Wettin's will to continue the fight against the Turks. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, G.A. Davia to F. Spada, Warsaw November 1698, f. 557r-v.

39 BAV, Urb. Lat. 1695, "Ragioni dell'imperatore Leopoldo sopra la successione del Re di Spagna al Sommo Pontefice Clemente XI", ff. 27r-48r.

40 On the nunciature in Cologne, see Lèon H. Halkin, *Les Archives des Nuntiatures*

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Monsignor Paolucci was characterized by various opinions regarding his capabilities and intentions. To some observers, he was viewed as a shrewd and diplomatic politician; to others, he was seen as a purely ambitious individual. This last opinion, in particular, was expressed by Abbot Baglioni to the cardinal legate of Bologna, Giacomo Boncompagni[41]; above all, however, by Orazio d'Elci, a well-known "arcade" and author of the collection "Le vite de' cardinali"[42]. In his analysis, d'Elci posits that Paolucci's political success is more contingent upon the influence of his uncle, a cardinal, and the patronage of Monsignor Carlo Agostino Fabroni[43], the formidable secretary of Propaganda Fide than on Paolucci's intrinsic abilities[44]. Paolucci's ecclesiastical career commenced with significant roles, reflecting a trajectory marked by early and notable achievements. On April 9, 1685, Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi appointed him as bishop of Macerata, subsequently transitioning him to oversee the administration of Fermo. His subsequent assignments included the nunciature in Cologne and an extraordinary mission in Warsaw, aimed primarily at restoring internal peace within the kingdom following the complex election of Augustus II Wettin[45]. This mission commenced in Cologne, where Pope Innocent XII issued *Instructions* for Paolucci to proceed to Warsaw expeditiously, emphasizing the necessity of fostering devotion to the Church of Rome among the new monarch's advisors[46].

> Let the personalities most trusted by His Majesty be observed so [the nuncio] recognizes their inclinations and ensures that the King utilizes those with piety and veneration towards the Apostolic See, particularly in matters of religion, while keeping away those who lack these qualities[47].

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

41 BAV, Fondo Boncompagni-Ludovisi, E. 119, Baglioni to G. Boncompagni-Ludovisi, Rome 15 I 1698, ff. 306r-07v.

42 BAV, Vat. Lat. 7440, "Orazio d'Elci. Vite de' Cardinali viventi nell'ultimo anno di pontificato di PP. Innocenzo XII (1699)", ff. 1-300r. Copies in Ibid. Vat. Lat. 13078, Vat. Lat. 13659, Ottob. Lat. 2686, and Urb. Lat. 1631.

43 On him Pietro Messina, "Carlo Agostino Fabroni", in DBI, vol. 44 (1994), 12-7.

44 BAV, Vat. Lat. 7440, "Vite de' Cardinali", f. 289r.

45 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia. Additamenta, vol. 4, s.l., s.d, ff. n.n.

46 AAV, Fondo Albani, vol. 193, "Istruzione data dalla Segreteria di Stato a Monsignor Paolucci vescovo di Ferrara destinato nunzio straordinario in Polonia per l'elezione del nuovo re dopo la morte di Giovanni III", ff. 11r-4r.

47 «[…] ben'osservando quelli che nodriscono le persone più confidenti alla Maestà Sua affinché riconosciuta la loro inclinazione s'apra a lei l'adito d'insinuar e far opera che massime nelle materie di religione si prevaglia la Sua Maestà di soggetti esemplari per la pietà e per la venerazione verso la Sede Apostolica tenendo da sé lontani quelli ne' quali o non concorrono sì fatti pregi o cada alcun dubbio della rettitudine delle loro intenzioni» AAV, Fondo Albani, vol. 193, "Istruzione", ff. 11-2r.

On February 9, 1698, while in Cologne, Paolucci confirmed receipt from the Secretariat of State of a bill of exchange amounting to 22,730 Polish florins, along with additional instructions that would enable him to undertake his diplomatic mission more effectively.
Furthermore, he acquired letters from Rome designated for the ordinary nuncio Davia, in addition to several papal briefs and letters of introduction for the Polish sovereign and key figures at court[48]. Paolucci declared his readiness to depart for Warsaw, thoroughly equipped for his journey[49]. Numerous reports sent to Cardinal Spada, the Secretary of State, provide detailed accounts of Paolucci's journey[50]. He travelled through Frankfurt to the Abbey of Fulda, located 80 kilometres from Kassel[51], made a stop in Erfurt[52], and proceeded to visit the courts of the three princes of Saxony – Eisenach, Gotha, and Weissenfels[53].

On March 9, he was in Breslau, welcomed by Francesco-Luigi, bishop and count palatine of Pfalz-Neuburg, and by his brother Karl-Philip. Here, Paolucci received a letter from Cardinal Spada dated March 1, in which the Pope expressed satisfaction regarding Paolucci's previous engagements in Cologne and urged him to expedite his journey to Warsaw[54]. On March 18, Paolucci entered the Polish capital[55], where he was reverently welcomed by the local nobility, who remained in the city without the king, who had relocated to Danzig[56]. Paolucci expressed disappointment at

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the absence of Augustus II[57], as he had anticipated initiating discussions with the sovereign to address the pressing issues at hand[58].
His determination and eagerness to embark on his diplomatic mission were particularly commended by the Secretariat of State, which firmly believed in Paolucci's potential to mediate between the positions of the king and the Primate, thereby fostering peace in the region[59].

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

> You, too, will have received the inventions against your person. In particular, and despite your role as extraordinary nuncio, you would be a faithful minister of France and, as such, have never done a good service for His Majesty and the peace of the Kingdom. Although unfounded and improper, these rumours have brought bitterness to Our Lord. His Beatitude, although he is persuaded that at the first meeting with the King, these rumours will dissipate – also by making known the orders received – invites everyone to join the party of Obedience to the King[60].

In Rome, however, Paolucci relied on steadfast support from his long-time associate Fabroni and the backing of the Pope and Cardinal Spada, the Secretary of State[61]. Conversely, d'Elci seized every opportunity to critique Paolucci's efforts

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

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

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

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

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

in Poland-Lithuania. The Arcadian accused the extraordinary nuncio of failing to meet specific objectives and suggested that Paolucci's ambition to return to his homeland compromised his ability to protect the interests of the Church of Rome in the Commonwealth[62]. This assessment of Paolucci's performance is unjust. A thorough examination of his actions reveals his significant contributions towards achieving the primary goal of his mission[63]. Upon his arrival in Poland-Lithuania, Paolucci immediately dedicated himself to fostering internal reconciliation within the kingdom, skillfully mediating between the new king and the Primate[64]. He consistently updated the Secretariat of State on his progress. For instance, on April 16, he reported his success in convening a preliminary committee for the general diet – Pacification – held in the royal palace, attended by representatives from Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the Marshal of the Crown[65]. Moreover, Paolucci established direct communication with Cardinal Radziejowski[66], dispatching his auditor, Abbot Bernardino Guinigi, to articulate the conditions necessary for achieving national Pacification. A central demand placed upon the Primate was to inform the king of France and Prince Conti regarding the necessity of recognizing Wettin as Poland's sole sovereign[67]. Subsequently, Radziejowski needed to pledge loyalty, as many senators of the kingdom had already done[68]. Despite his acknowledgement of the urgency of taking decisive actions, the Primate expressed grievances concerning the court's decision to confiscate the properties of individuals associated with his political faction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

an ecclesiastic and the Primate. While Paolucci verbally assured Radziejowski of his commitment to resolving the matter[69], his efforts are well-documented in his correspondence. The mediation process proved challenging and intricate; nevertheless, the diplomatic endeavours conducted, both publicly and privately, culminated in signing an agreement between the king and his opponents. This agreement was subsequently ratified in Łowicz[70], where August II Wettin and Michał Radziejowski laid out the terms of their accord[71]. The long-awaited agreement was met with great jubilation throughout the Warsaw court, prompting the Jesuit Vota to inform Cardinal Barberini of the joyful announcement of the *Gaudium Magnum*, the pacification made in Lovicz[72]. Vota urged the cardinal to notify Pope Pignatelli about this significant development.

> The King instructs Your Eminence and Cardinal Spada to convey his gratitude to His Holiness, reserving to elaborate it further in a subsequent correspondence. Your Eminence will undoubtedly find great satisfaction in this acknowledgement, reflecting the esteem the King holds for an esteemed Protector of Our Kingdom[73].

Despite the evident satisfaction with the agreement[74], several issues remained unresolved. Primary among these were the disputes between the Primate and Monsignor Stanisław Dąbski, the bishop of Kuiavia, and the ongoing conflicts within the Lithuanian nobility involving certain magnates and the Sapieha family. These

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69 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw15 IV 1698, f. 298r-v.

70 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 119, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 13 V 1698, f. 261r-v; Ibid., vol. 117, "Diario delle Sessioni tenute in Lowitz per l'unione universale della Polonia il mese di maggio 1698", ff. 311r-19v, (in Latin at ff. 322r-32v.). On May 27, the nuncio informed Rome, reporting in detail, on the reconciliation. Ibid., vol. 120, "Minuta della Relazione", Warsaw 27 V 1698, ff. 108r-11r.

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

72 BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Warsaw 17 V 1698, f. 160r.

73 «Il Re prega Vostra Eminenza et insieme il Cardinale Spada a rendere grazie a' piedi di Sua Santità a suo nome riserbandosi di scriverlene più ampiamente coll'ordinario prossimo. So che Vostra Eminenza n'avrà una gran consolazione come Protettore d'un Regno che tanto le deve e anco vedo d'un Re che tanto la stima venera e ama». BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Warsaw 17 V 1698, f. 160r.

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

issues demanded Paolucci's attention; failure to address them posed the risk that the Lithuanian army might not adhere to the directives from the Warsaw court»[75]. On June 24, 1698, Paolucci reassured Cardinal Fabrizio Spada that he had taken steps to address these matters, successfully facilitating a confrontation among the involved parties[76]. Nevertheless, a resolution was still needed regarding Wettin's insistence that the Primate swear obedience through a public act – a request met with resistance from Radziejowski, who, while not dismissing the possibility, opposed the public ceremonial context in which such an oath would be administered.

The promise of fidelity demanded of the cardinal was a prominent issue, possessing significant political ramifications that could risk the stability of the agreement between the Primate and the new sovereign. The supporters of Wettin had advocated for the oath, and although the ecclesiastic expressed a willingness to proceed, he deemed the "private form" a critical precondition[77]. Through the mediation of Paolucci, August II recognized the necessity of not overly burdening the Primate and accepted the ecclesiastic's stipulation. This moment marked a crucial point for the nation, which, having established internal peace, could redirect its focus toward addressing pressing concerns, particularly the anti-Turkish commitments previously undertaken by John III Sobieski. To emphasize the significance of this undertaking and to acknowledge the diplomatic accomplishments of the extraordinary nuncio, August II awarded Paolucci a diamond cross valued at 8,000 scudi[78] during a banquet held at Wilanów, the residence cherished by the late John III[79].

In Rome, Pope Innocent XII, through Secretary of State Spada, expressed considerable satisfaction with the resolution of the affair[80]. His approval was mainly directed at

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

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

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

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

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

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

the complex political and diplomatic endeavours executed by his extraordinary nuncio. Consequently, Paolucci's mission, hailed as being "admired as an Angel of Peace"[81], was effectively concluded, prompting his preparations for return to Italy.
Furthermore, Vota corroborated the excellent performance of the papal representative, who was deemed "full of merit and glory" as he departed Warsaw[82]. At the same time, Orazio d'Elci once again criticized the timing of Paolucci's departure[83]. It is important to acknowledge that while the nuncio was eager to return to Italy, his instructions originated from the Secretariat of State, which, on behalf of Pope Pignatelli, requested his presence in Vienna to meet with the Emperor. In Rome, an appointment as cardinal awaited him; Spada himself proposed this advancement as a reward for his exemplary work in a nation teetering on the brink of civil strife[84].
The resolution of ongoing tensions between the papal and Polish courts rested firmly in the hands of nuncio Davia and cardinal protector Carlo Barberini. Their efforts were further bolstered by the involvement of the Jesuit Vota, who served as theologian, confessor, and personal secretary to August Wettin, thereby positioning him as a key intermediary between Rome and Warsaw[85]. Among the pressing issues requiring attention was the contentious matter of abbey appointments[86], with particular emphasis on the royal request to elevate the king's cousin, Christian August von Sachsen-Zeitz, bishop of Giavarino, to the cardinalate. Though consistent with the established tradition of "crown nominations", this request was met with circumspection by the Holy See. The recent memory of the controversies surrounding prior cardinal nominations – including those concerning Henri de

81 Coronelli documented the electoral diploma from the primate of the kingdom, dated Warsaw 26 June 1699, noting the significant appreciation shown towards nuncio Paolucci. Vincenzo Maria Coronelli, *Biblioteca universale sacro-profana […]*, vol. 7 (Venezia: a spese di Antonio Tivani, 1706), 258-59.

82 In the same letter, the Jesuit informed Barberini of the King's desire to move quickly to quell the conflicts in Lithuania and the movement of the troops quartered waiting to clash with the Turks. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Lviv 22 X 1698, f. 193r. The king's plan would have changed after learning of the presence of the troops of the Elector of Brandenburg in the vicinity of Elbing. Ibid., Lviv 28 X 1698, f. 198r.

83 AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 117, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 16 VIII 1698, ff. 191r-93v.

84 AVV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 187, F. Spada to F. Paolucci, Rome 30 VIII 1698, f. 34r. Paolucci would later be named cardinal of the title of SS. Pietro e Paolo. Cf., Cardella, *Memorie*, 55-59.

85 Vota will congratulate Barberini for his work in the service of the King of Poland. BAV, Barb. Lat. 6564, C.M. Vota to C. Barberini, Lviv 14 X 1698, f. 192r.

86 In his correspondence from July 1, 1698, Paolucci asserts that the criticisms of his failure to address all issues stem from pressure from Vota. He clarifies that the unresolved matters fall under the responsibility of the ordinary nuncio. AAV, Segr. Stato. Polonia, vol. 120, F. Paolucci to F. Spada, Warsaw 1 VII 1698, ff. 162r-63r.

la Grande d'Arquien, the father of Marie Casimire Sobieska[87], and the bishop of Beauvais, a representative of Louis XIV at the Sejm of 1674 during the election of John III Sobieski[88]– significantly influenced the Holy See's cautious stance.

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Despite the recognition of Paolucci's commendable efforts by the pontiff, his tenure as nuncio was marred by significant criticisms, particularly regarding unresolved abbey appointments. The extraordinary nuncio consistently attempted to convey that this matter fell outside his jurisdiction, asserting it as a responsibility designated to the ordinary nuncio and not addressed within the instructions he received prior to his assignment in Poland-Lithuania. The Cardinal Secretary of State further corroborated this stance[89]. Orazio d'Elci emerged as a principal critic of Paolucci's handling of affairs, with numerous curia members expressing dissatisfaction with the nuncio's performance. Noteworthy complaints included allegations of Paolucci's premature departure from Warsaw without adequately addressing pressing matters, such as ongoing conflicts in Lithuania and disputes between the Primate and the Bishop of Kujavia. However, the most pressing concern revolved around the unresolved abjuration of Protestantism by Electress Christina Eberardina of Brandenburg-Bayreuth[90] and the expectation that the young heir to the electoral throne would follow his father's path toward Catholicism. As late as June 1698, uncertainty continued to shroud the Electress's decision-making process. Paolucci exerted considerable effort to facilitate a resolution favourable to Rome, even engaging King August II in discussions about the issue. He was unsuccessful despite the king's attempts to persuade his wife to convert and join him in Warsaw as a Catholic.

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

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

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

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

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

come here even before her conversion[91].

The indecision exhibited by Christina generated significant anxiety among the Polish nobility, notably concerning Primate Radziejowski, who opposed the presence of a heretical queen in Poland-Lithuania. The failure of the Electress to convert would necessitate the protection of her followers' rights to practice their religion, potentially threatening the Catholic faith in the Country[92].
While Paolucci indicated a desire to return to Rome, he was nonetheless compelled to confront this critical issue, pending explicit instructions from the Secretariat of State. In light of the challenges, August II proposed a pragmatic solution whereby his wife could arrive in Warsaw with the stipulation of practising heresy privately, a plan extending to the Saxon ministers accompanying her. Paolucci regarded the king's proposal as an appropriate response to the complex political landscape. Conversely, Primate Radziejowski viewed this situation as an opportunity to critique the new sovereign, insisting on a discussion within the General Diet. His proposals were met with substantial resistance from Wettin[93].
Compounding the situation was the issue of young Frederick, who had been educated in the Lutheran faith under his mother's guidance, having been born before his father's conversion. The Saxon court regarded August's conversion with unease, perceiving the proposed abjurations of both the Electress and Frederick as substantial threats to future Saxon interests[94] and the stability of Protestantism[95].
Rome maintained a keen interest in the unfolding dynamics between Christina Eberardina and Augustus II[96], recognizing that the outcome would have far-reaching

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> Fabrizio Paolucci would undoubtedly have served God, the Holy See and the interests of that country very well, if the rush to return to Rome, hoping to become a cardinal, had not left some questions unresolved. Above all, the possibility of reintroducing the Catholic faith in Saxony, recognizing the Elector as king of Poland without any promises[97].

Despite Paolucci's inability to fulfil this final objective, it is noteworthy that Rome acknowledged his efforts to foster internal peace within the kingdom.
Following the order to depart[98], he journeyed to Krakow, subsequently traversed Olmuz[99], and ultimately arrived in Vienna on the evening of September 28, 1698[100]. In correspondence with Secretary of State Spada, he reported that Monsignor Paolucci was received amicably by Leopold I of Habsburg-Austria and the imperial court. This account contrasts the observations of Count Elci, who stated that Paolucci's reception in the imperial capital was tepid, as he was perceived to be overly aligned with French interests[101]. Regardless of the differing assessments, Paolucci seized the opportunity in Vienna to engage publicly with the emperor and the nuncio Santacroce while meeting privately with several ministers to circumvent the ceremonial delays[102].
Following his departure from Vienna, Paolucci took the longer yet more manageable

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

route through Tyrol[103]. On October 28, he communicated from Mantua[104], then proceeded to Forlì, where he paused to await the arrival of his luggage. By November 13, after learning that his belongings had arrived in Ferrara, he resumed his journey to Rome, arriving shortly thereafter to present himself before the Pontiff[105].

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

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

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

ABBREVIATION

AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano.
Segr. Stato: Segreteria di Stato.
APF: Archivio Storico della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide.
BAV: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.
Barb. Lat: Barberino Latino.
Ottob. Lat.: Ottoboniano Latino.
Vat. Lat.: Vaticano Latino.
BNVE: Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele" di Roma.
DBI: Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani.
PSB: Polski Słownik Biograficzny.

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POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE NOBILITY OF THE VOIVODSHIPS OF POZNAŃ AND KALISZ DURING THE INTERREGNUM FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF AUGUST III[1]

ABSTRACT
Research on the course of the last interregnum in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth has generally dealt with it from a top-down perspective. The political struggle between the Czartoryski "Familia" supported by the Russian army and the republican camp in individual provinces was usually presented rather superficially. This article will attempt to do so on the example of the political activity of the nobility of the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships. This was a rather interesting area, as it was dominated by middle-income nobility. None of the magnate families was able to gain the upper hand in this territory. The political struggle that took place in these provinces between 1763 and 1764 led to a major mobilisation of the local gentry and a split session of the sejmik in Środa, which was common to both regions. Both sides passed instructions in support of regime reform. Ultimately, despite a large majority, the supporters of the republican camp lost. The assembly of supporters of the Czartoryski "Familia" in the region was recognised as legitimate.

KEYWORDS: Parliamentarism; Stanislaw August; Political elites; Poznañ-Kalisz voivodeships; Interregnum.

INTRODUCTION

The death of August III, like that of the previous rulers of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was a turning point in the political history of the period. Old arrangements ceased to function, and all participants in public life had to redefine themselves in the face of rapidly succeeding events. This time, noble society was entering a period of interregnum after more than thirty years of the collapse of the political culture, system and institutions of the state[2]. The impotence that had prevailed during this time and the influence of the neighboring powers had built

1 The following article is a partially abridged and revised version of one of the chapters of my book (dissertation) Grzegorz Glabisz, *Sejmiki Wielkopolski w latach 1764–1793* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM, 2022).

2 Józef Gierowski, "Rozkład państwowości szlacheckiej w czasach saskich", in *Między Wschodem a Zachodem. Rzeczpospolita XVI–XVIII w. Studia ofiarowane Zbigniewowi Wójcikowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin,* ed. Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel (Warszawa: Historia pro Futuro, 1993), 191-93; Wojciech Kriegseisen, "Zmierzch staropolskiej polityki, czyli o niektórych celach szczególnych polskiej kultury politycznej przełomu XVII i XVIII wieku", in *Zmierzch kultury staropolskiej. Ciągłość i kryzysy* (*Wiek XVII–XIX*), eds. Urszula Augustyniak, and Andrzej Karpiński (Warszawa: Semper, 1997), 15-39.

up the conviction among a significant part of the political elite that only with foreign support could any political project be carried out. Admittedly, it may still have seemed to the masses of the nobility at the time that it was up to them to decide on the choice of king and any reforms. However, this was to some extent a misconception, although this does not mean that nobility could be completely ignored.

The aim of this article is to show the entire course of the 1764 interregnum from a grass-roots perspective, understood here as a description of the attitudes of the nobility and local elites of the Poznań and Kalisz provinces towards the political struggle taking place at that time. So far, this topic has not been presented more extensively[3]. A well-preserved source base allows this process to be captured quite precisely in the case of Greater Poland (Wielkopolska or the voivodeships of Poznań and Kalisz). This was a region which was not only highly populated and economically developed, but also characterized by a strong domination of the middle gentry within the noble estate. The representation of both provinces in the Senate numbered as many as 16. This group was quite hermetic; noblemen from outside the provinces rarely had any chance of holding office[4]. In both voivodeships, the starosta general of Greater Poland also played an important role, with a number of judicial and administrative powers not found in other regions of the country. These included the right to convene an assembly to defend the province, or the authority over 7 of the 10 town offices in both voivodeships, which gave the starost power over a large group of town officials, and thus the power to decide the careers of a large group of local nobility. It is also worth mentioning here that the Greater Poland voivodeships were represented in the Sejm (polish parliament) by 12 deputies. Thanks to such an extensive hierarchy of offices, administrative system, and socio-economic situation, the importance and political potential of the joint Sejm of the voivodeships of Poznań and Kalisz was extremely significant on a national scale[5]

On the political scene of the time, only the Czartoryski Familia, gathering around it a considerable number of more organized supporters, was prepared to attempt to seize the throne and introduce its own program of reforms[6]. However, it could not be made fully public, as the noble nation was not ready for such a radical reform of the system. Having remained in opposition to the royal court for years, the Familia was

3 So far, only an article has been devoted to this topic by Tomasz Szwaciński, "Sejmiki poselskie przed konwokacją 1764 r.", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 113/1 (2006): 19-56.

4 Teresa Zielińska, *Magnateria polska epoki saskiej. Funkcje urzędów i królewszczyzn w procesie przeobrażeń warstwy społecznej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 1977), 72.

5 Michał Zwierzykowski, "Odrębności ustrojowe Wielkopolski w dobie nowożytnej" in *Między barokiem a oświeceniem. Staropolski regionalizm"*, ed. Stanisław Achremczyk (Olsztyn: OBN, 2008), 54-62.

6 Jerzy Michalski, "Plan Czartoryskich naprawy Rzeczypospolitej", in *Studia historyczne z XVIII i XIX w.*, t. 1, eds. Wojciech. Kriegseisen, and Zofia Zielińska (Warszawa: Stentor, 2007), 11-27.

closely allied with the Russian[7]. It should be stressed that the objectives of Russian policy overlapped only minimally with the plan of the Czartoryskis, who in their naivety believed that they were similar. It was in the Russian interest to maintain the vassal character of the Polish-Lithuanian state. However, in order to achieve this objective, a political party was needed[8].

The other factions, referred to as the Saxon-Republican, Patriotic-Republican or Saxon-hetmanic, had no common program or political center. Rather, they were not very compact political camps, which in earlier periods often competed. They only formed into one common party in the face of the Czartoryskis' attempts to seize power and thus lose their previous influence. Its main leaders included Jan Klemens Branicki, Grand Hetman of the Crown, who grouped his clientele around the army, Jerzy August Mniszech, Court Marshal of the Crown, who had long been at the head of the so-called "kamaryla", or court party, and who was also joined by numerous representatives of the Potocki family[9]. Despite some polarization, not all families took a strong side, with some playing two sides for safety through various family ramifications[10]. Also, a significant part of the nobility had no concretized views in the face of this situation[11].

The chronology of the struggle for their support in the early stages of the interregnum was set at the Senate Council on 7 and 8 November 1763. During the deliberations, all the Families holding the most important positions in the country symbolically reconciled and advised on the good of the state, but it was a political spectacle - each side pursued a separate scenario[12]. During the council, much was said about the need for state reform. In the end, the conclusion of the senate council was not very clear on the issue of state reform. Influenced by earlier discussions with the Russian ambassador Herman Karl von Keyserling, the Primate Władysław Łubieński yielded and formulated it rather generally. Also in the universals, instructions and letters from the pre-Convcation Sejm expedition to the provinces, he made only a vague request that the nobility should devise and indicate to the deputies to the Sejm in their instructions ways of upholding all the laws of the Republic. Not a word was written about preventing the breaking of the Sejm, the reform of the army, or other

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7 Zofia Zielińska, "Rosja wobec planów reform ustrojowych", in *Studia z dziejów stosunków polsko-rosyjskich w XVIII wieku*, ed. Ead. (Warszawa: Semper, 2001), 60-90.

8 Emanuel Rostworowski, "Łubieński Władysław", in PSB, vol. 18 (1973), 508-11.

9 A broader characterization of the main leaders of the parties see: Henryk Schmitt, *Dzieje panowania Stanisława Augusta*, t. 1 (Lwów: Drukarnia Narodowa im. W. Manieckiego, 1868), 97-114.

10 Zofia Zielińska, *Polska w okowach "systemu północnego" 1763–1766* (Kraków: Arcana 2012), 21-80.

11 Often, descriptions of political events have so far been formulated that one could get the impression that there were only warring parties and factions. In fact, however, as in the case of democratic regimes, there have always been whole crowds of undecided or passive participants, who only under the influence of sometimes completely different events became involved in public life.

12 Schmitt, *Dzieje*, t. 1, 97-114.

fundamental issues, in accordance with the wishes of the Russian ambassador.
It was not until late November/early December that Familia realized that a full program of reform would not be able to be carried out[13]. Nevertheless, the decisions of the senate council in the absence of opposition were in its favour. The pre-convocation royal assemblies were convened for 6 February, while the Convocation Sejm was not convened until 7 May. This gave the necessary time for preparations, the introduction of Russian troops into the country and the gathering of a sufficient number of supporters for the various assemblies. The Saxon-Republican camp also counted on the support of neighboring kingdoms, but received nothing but vague assurances of support. The death of Augustus III's son, Frederick Christian, in December 1763 caused confusion, as the party lost a candidate for the throne. With time, the party began to favour the candidature of Jan Klemens Branicki, then already 75 years old, Grand Hetman of the Crown.

The Saxon-Republican camp was already spreading rumors that Prussia and Russia were planning the partition of the country. At the end of December, however, these were debunked by an official declaration from both powers. It also stated that both countries supported the candidacy of "Piast"[14]. Before the royal assemblies convened, the tone of the debate was initially set by political magazines circulating around the country, published by the two warring parties. The Czartoryskis' opponents accused them that the election of "Piast" would result in the withdrawal of all allies in Europe and dependence on Russia. They therefore advocated that no one should be excluded from the monarchy election. At the same time, they demanded that Sejm support the passing of a law according to which anyone who drew foreign troops into the country and colluded with neighboring powers was to be considered as a traitor to the homeland. All deputies were also to take an oath not to accept money from anyone. The election was to be held by right of participation for any nobleman who turned up, and not through the deputies, as the Czartoryskis wanted[15]. Interestingly, some of the republicans in private correspondence also considered this a better idea and even recommended that the money the nobility would use for an expedition to the region of the electoral field should be used to fund the replenishment of some of the troops of the crown army[16].
The other side pointed to the decline in previous years, stressing that only a person familiar with the laws and privileges of the Commonwealth could understand it and maintain proper governance. In turn, the election of deputies instead of *viritim* participation would bring about a quicker election of the king and preserve peace.
There were also reformist proposals in the journalism: the introduction of majority voting in all royal assemblies and secret ballots if there was no unanimity. Some wanted to retain the *liberum veto* but limit its scope. These types of demands were closer to the Saxon-Republican camp. Its leaders also proposed that the future king

13 Zielińska, *Polska*, 196-256.

14 Zofia Zielińska, "Pogłoski o rozbiorze Polski oraz ich reperkusje w Rzeczypospolitej w okresie bezkrólewia 1763-1764 r.", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 96/4 (2004): 557.

15 Schmitt, *Dzieje*, t. 1, 205-07.

16 BUW, ms. 116, J. Starzeński to W. Łubieńskiego, [propably 17 XI 1763], ff.114-15.

should be deprived of the power to distribute offices and provincial governorships (an administrative unit in the Polish-Lithuanian Com. managed by a starosta) Hetman and treasurers, whose abuses they wanted to curb, came under criticism from authors with a reformist streak. All agreed on the need to raise the subject of the reform of the Tribunal and courts at future royal assemblies and Sejm sessions[17]. The fight between the parties for the noble votes also took place in the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships[18]. The area had suffered severely in recent years as a result of the Russian occupation from the Seven Years' War, so it was difficult to find supporters of cooperation with Russia there. One of the dominant political camps in Greater Poland was the partisanship of George Augustus Mniszech, Court Marshal of the Crown, who was also general starost of Greater Poland from 1757. His main collaborator was Ignacy Twardowski Voivode of Kalisz, who owed virtually his entire career to him[19]. Supporting him in the upcoming political battle during the interregnum was Antoni Barnaba Jabłonowski, Voivode of Poznań, who was regarded as an independent politician with considerable influence[20]. At the time, the Familia camp was led in the area by Teodor Czartoryski Bishop of Poznań, the younger brother of the main leaders of Princes August and Michael, who until then had rather rarely made public statements[21]. Russian diplomacy sought supporters among those supporting each side, though far more strongly among Familia supporters, thus creating a base for further action[22].

In the case of the senatorial and clerical elite of Greater Poland (the voivodships of Poznań and Kalisz) the first attempts to probe the scale of support for particular parties began to become more apparent during the January meetings of senators and officials in Poznań. Teodor Czartoryski, Bishop of Poznań, was probably the first to convene such a meeting on January 23[23]. He wanted to prevent him from

17 H. Schmitt, *Dzieje*, t. 1, 205-07.

18 The problem of pre-convocation local councils was dealt with by T. Szwaciński. The very wide scope of this article caused him to devote one page to the royal assemblies of the Poznań and Kalisz provinces, relying only on correspondence and copies of instructions and lauds. In this regard, the author did not review the "księgi grodzkie" (specific to Poland-Lithuania, something similar to municipal record book) and many other collections. The following findings show this issue in a much more complete way, so I do not refer to the article Szwaciński, *"Sejmiki"*, 19-56.

19 Maria Czeppe, *Kamaryla pana z Dukli. Kształtowanie się obozu politycznego Jerzego Augusta Mniszcha 1750–1763* (Warszawa: Neriton, 1998), 52, 55, 72-3.

20 Halina Wereszycka, "Jabłonowski Antoni Barnaba", in PSB, vol. 10 (1962–1964), 216-18; Dariusz Rolnik, "Kasztelan krakowski Antoni Jabłonowski i inni 'możnowładcy'. O roli politycznej magnaterii w czasach panowania Stanisława Augusta", in *Wobec króla i Rzeczypospolitej. Magnateria w XV–XVIII wieku*., eds. Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, and Jerzy Urwanowicz (Kraków: Avalon 2012), 207-31.

21 Władysław Konopczyński, "Czartoryski Teodor", in PSB, vol 2 (1936), 297-99.

22 The scale of the bribes granted in the era of the interregnum showed Zielińska, *Polska*, 175-78.

23 Some of the materials indicate that the meeting took place on January 22, 1764,

doing so, Ignacy Twardowski Voivode of Kalisz, who also sent out letters inviting potential participants on January 20[24]. His initiative, however, turned out to be misguided, with few representatives of the Greater Poland elite coming to his invitation. Eventually, they all met at a meeting called by the Bishop of Poznań[25]. This was the solution preferred by most officials, as for practical reasons at the time, the point of two meetings in such a short interval was not seen.
Senators and almost all officials from both voivodeships came to Poznań in large numbers on January 23. Rarely has such a turnout among the local elite been recorded at the royal assemblies[26]. The discussion during the session centered around three issues, proposed by Theodor Czartoryski. They concerned: 1. the issue of the exclusion of the foreigner and the election of the "Piast", 2. the form of participation in the election - through deputies or *viritim*, and 3. the organization of the so-called confederate court local extraordinary courts)[27].

Among those gathered, only a few supported the bishop's proposal to exclude the foreigner from the throne. This group included Jozef Mielżyński, Castellan of Poznań, Piotr Drwęski, Land Writer of the Voivodeship of Poznań, Wojciech Rydzyński, Carpenter of the Voivodeship of Poznań, Antoni Krzycki, Podstoli of the Voivodeship of Poznań and Jan Korytowski, Podstoli the Voivodship of Kalisz. This type of unequivocal declaration allows us to believe that they belonged to the circle of strongly declared supporters of Familia, which was also confirmed by later events. Ignacy Twardowski, Voivode of Kalisz, who was also supported at the time by Piotr Pawel Sapieha, Voivode of Smolensk, who was associated with the Czartoryski camp, went in a slightly different direction. Well, according to the former, in fact the homeland was in decline during the reign of August III and the "Piast" should

BUW, ms. 116, A. Miaskowski to W. Łubieńskiego, Poznań, b.d. [propably 26 I 1764], ff. 326-27.

24 BUW, ms. 116, A. Miaskowski to W. Łubieńskiego, Poznań, [after 26 I 1764], f. 326-27. It is difficult to ascertain who was the first to come up with such an initiative and who copied it, as in accounts and correspondence both parties attributed priority to each other on this issue, see: BCzart., ms. 3858, I. Twardowski to J.A. Mniszcha, Poznań 24 I 1764, f. 1-3.

25 BUW, ms. 116, A. Miaskowski to W. Łubieńskiego, Poznań, [propably 26 I 1764], f. 326-27.

26 BUW, ms. 116, Senators present at the conference: Teodor Czartoryski Bishop of Poznań, Ignacy Twardowski Voivode of Kalisz, Piotr Paweł Sapieha Voivode of Smoleńsk, Józef Mielżyński Castellan of Poznań, Roch Zbijewski Castellan of Kalisz, Józef Starzeński Castellan of Gniezno, Stanisław Chłapowski Castellan of Międzyrzec, Rafał Gajewski Castellan Rogoziński, Michał Miaskowski Castellan of Lędź, Jan Tworzyński Castellan of Przemęt, Antoni Gajewski Castellan of Nakielsk, Antoni Wyssogota Zakrzewski Castellan of Biechów, Józef Potocki Castellan of Kamień. Was not present Antoni Barnaba Jabłonowski Voivode of Poznań, Rafał Bniński Castellan of Śrem, Antoni Krzycki Castellan of Krzywin. Among officials, only Ksawery Sokolnicki Chamberlain of Kalisz, and Antoni Gorzeński Ensign of Kalisz, (Manuscript newspaper from Poznań sent to W. Łubieńskiemu after 24 I 1764, f. 339-340.

27 AGAD, AR, II, 2874, "Punkta Teodora Czartoryskiego", Poznań 23 I 1764, f. 1-3.

be elected, but there is no point in enacting an exclusion, as all such attempts in the past failed. In turn, such a decision should be made by the Convocation Sejm. The majority of those gathered supported it[28]. Twardowski no longer had to specifically defend the issue at the time, as the candidate of his camp was Hetman Branicki.
The assembled nobility also decided that an election by parliamentarians could be held, but only if the convocation passed such a resolution unanimously. If this does not happen, it should be held *viritim*. During the discussion, some participants supported only the latter possibility. Generally, supporters of voting by deputies were Familia followers, although the idea also found supporters among its opponents, e.g. Józef Starzeński, Castellan of Gniezno, supported this initiative as early as November 1763. The issue of confederate court (local extraordinary courts) was not discussed much, as it was unanimously agreed that they should be elected according to the current formula. In the later part of the session, a proposal for the nomination of a marshal of the future pre-convocation royal assembly was discussed. Teodor Czartoryski's supporters preferred the young Kazimierz Raczynski, then twenty-five years old, the Starost of Czerwogrodzki. He reportedly had many supporters among the local nobility. The republican camp, on the other hand, proposed Kasper Rogalinski, Starost of Nakiel, who had been active in Sejm self-government and state affairs for years[29].

Toward the end of the meeting, when Teodor Czartoryski was already heading to the conclusion and bidding farewell to those gathered, August Sulkowski took the floor with a request, however, that it be determined whether at the upcoming royal assembly it would be recommended to the deputies that the "Piast" candidate and the foreigner be excluded, or some other solution. This request was supported by his brother-in-law Piotr Paweł Sapieha Voivode of Smoleńsk. Eventually, the meeting ended, and some of the supporters of both parties went to the seat of the Bishop of Poznań in Dolsk to further advise on the thread that had been raised, as well as the creation of instructions and the course of the royal assembly. Antoni Barnaba Jabłonowski, Voivode of Poznań, who was absent from the meeting in Poznań, also arrived there. Pleasantly received, however, he failed to convince the bishop and his supporters of his vision. He therefore returned to Poznań, where he, together with Ignacy Twardowski and Kasper Rogaliński Starost of Nakiel[30], decided to prevent the Bishop of Poznań from opening the royal assembly session as customary. They also began to jointly organize a party of their supporters with "money, hope and threats"[31].

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28 BUW, ms. 116, A. Miaskowski to W. Łubieńskiego, Poznań [26 I 1764], f. 326-27.

29 BUW, ms. 116, J. Starzeński to W. Łubieńskiego, [19 XI 1763], 114-15; BCzart., ms. 3858, I. Twardowski to J.A. Mniszcha, Poznań 24 I 1764, f. 1-3; BCzart., ms. 3858, J. Starzeński to J.A. Mniszcha, Poznań 26 I 1764, ff. 5-7; AGAD, APP, 83, J. Starzeński to W. Łubieńskiego, Iłowiec 26 I 1764, ff. 264-265; BUW, ms. 116, Manuscript newspaper from Poznania to W. Łubieńskiego [after 26 I 1764], f. 339-340); BUW, ms. 116, A. Miaskowski to W. Łubieńskiego, Poznań, [ok. 26 I 1764], f. 326-327. Jerzy Dygdała, "Rogaliński Kasper", in PSB, vol. 31 (1988–1989), 404-08.

30 Ignacy Twardowski Voivode of Kalisz was brother-in-law of Kasper Rogaliński Starost of Nakiel

31 BCzart., ms. 3858, I. Twardowski to J.A. Mniszcha, Poznań 24 I 1764, f. 1-3.

On 6 February 1764, in accordance with the Primate's universal, a pre-convocation royal assembly took place in Środa. Both sides were preparing for a confrontation, having already arrived in the town the day before and intending to use all possible means to push through their vision of instructions and the composition of the parliamentary representation[32]. The bishop's supporters were said to wear green caps, while the other side wore orange caps[33]. Some attempt at mediation was still made between the parties by Piotr Paweł Sapieha, Voivode of Smoleńsk. The only agreement reached was that everyone would arrive at the cemetery at 6.00 in the morning, before the church was even opened[34]. This did not happen, however, as some of Jablonowski's supporters overslept. The Poznań Bishop's party entered the church to listen to the morning votive as was customary. At this time, the supporters of Voivode Jabłonowski, who sat in the chair provided for the Bishop of Poznań, were gathering in the cemetery. At about the same time, information came to those gathered in the church that he already wanted to start the royal assembly. Several dozen nobles ran out to stop him. A brawl ensued in which the Voivode was thrown off his chair. From the above description, it appears that it was the bishop's supporters who attacked the Poznań voivode's group, but it is hardly surprising, as Jabłonowski took the seat provided for the speaker, and, as he recalled, intended to do so himself[35]. Eventually, the two sides split up and the royal assembly split into two separate royal assemblies.

The Bishop of Poznań convened the royal assembly in the cemetery, the usual place. A marshal of this assembly was Kazimierz Raczyński, Starost of Czerwonogród. In the Jablonowski voivode's circle, tied up behind the church on the other side, the marshal of this assembly was Adam Poniński, the Crown Master of the Kitchen. Each party then dispersed, having declared a break in the proceedings until the following day.

When they resumed, the assembly, chaired by Raczyński, set to work electing deputies and drawing up instructions. The second assembly of Poniński debated the cause of the split and took steps towards unity. Delegates to the second assembly were elected. Their task was to convince those maintaining neutrality in the dispute: Józef Chłapowski, Castellan of Międzyrzec, Michał Skórzewski, *Podkomorzy* of Poznań, and Ksawery Sokolnicki, *Podkomorzy* of Kalisz, to mediate between the two sides.

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32 Antoni Barnaba Jabłonowski, *Pamiętniki ks. Antoniego Jabłonowskiego kasztelana krakowskiego*, ed. August Bielowski (Lwów: Zakład Narodowy Ossolińskich, 1875), 82.

33 Katarzyna Kuras made an interesting suggestion for the interpretation of wearing different colored caps. In her opinion, the members of the two camps were not only aware of the differences between them, but also felt the need to manifest them externally. Katarzyna Kuras, "'Człowiek manekin' w politycznym teatrze XVIII wieku", in *Miscellanea res Polonorum, Brittanorum ac Judaeorum illustrantia,* eds. Jakub Basista, Adam Kaźmierczyk, Mariusz Markiewicz, and Dominika Oliwa (Kraków: Era, 2015), 219-34¸ Szwaciński, "Sejmiki", 24-5.

34 Jabłonowski, *Pamiętnik,* 82

35 LMAVB, F17-181, A.B. Jabłonowski to W. Łubieńskiego, Poznań 12 II 1764, f. 67-8v; Jabłonowski, *Pamiętniki*, 83-4; BOssol., ms. 3829, "Diariusz rozdwojonego sejmiku", Środa 6-12 II 1764, f. 58-9.

Ultimately, despite the attempt, no compromise was reached. Chłapowski, together with his comrades, saw only hope in Primate Łubieński, who should have convened a reconvene the royal assembly without recognising the assemblies chaired by Raczyński and Poniński[36].

On the third day, deputies to the Convocation Sejm had already been elected in a circle chaired by Raczyński. These were noblemen, led by Raczyński, who had already cooperated with the Familia for some time or had associated themselves with it before the interregnum. It took two more days to pass the entire instructions and the composition of the confederate court. The assembly chaired by Poniński also elected twelve deputies, deciding that the Convocation Sejm would judge who had deliberated legally. Both royal assemblies finished their work on 12 February[37].

According to tradition, presumably in both circles before the instructions were written down, letters from key officials and dignitaries were also read. In his letter, Primate Łubieński appealed to the nobility to avoid splits, determine issues related to the security of the electoral field, recapitulate treaties with neighbors, maintain security throughout the country and on the borders, do not change the existing legal status of dissenters, and include in the instructions demands for: settlement of accounts by the heirs of previous treasurers and those currently holding the office, taking care of taxes, and strengthening Cracow. The Primate, although cooperating with the Familia, suggested in his letter that the exclusion of foreign candidates for the throne should be avoided. Similar demands had previously gone to senators[38].

Jan Klemens Branicki, Castellan of Cracow and Grand Hetman of the Crown, proposed far more specific demands in his letter and accompanying instruction. He considered the issue of breaking Sejms, the influx of bad coin over the years, poorly functioning Tribunals, the decline of cities and the powerlessness to protect borders to be the most important problems. In his opinion, the Convocation Sejm, under the knot of confederation, should remedy these problems, especially with regard to the smooth operation of the Sejm and the reform of the army, as well as the abolition of the poll tax on the estates of the nobility in exchange for the introduction of other equitable burdens. This was a constant demand of the nobility, made for many years. In general, despite the attention paid to more specific problems, it was also in vain to find in these correspondence proposals on how to make these changes.

Two anonymous political periodicals associated with the Sasko-Hetmanski camp also spoke in a similar vein. It was in them, although not explicitly, that the choice of a monarch was promoted without excluding anyone, and there was a strong emphasis on a critical attitude towards political actors who bring foreign troops into the country or enlist their own. This remark was probably directed toward the

36 BOssol., ms. 3829, "Diariusz", f. 58-9; BUW, ms. 116, J. Chłapowski, M. Skórzewski, K. Sokolnicki to W. Łubieńskiego, b. m., 10 II 1764, f. 414-15.

37 BOssol., ms. 3829, "Diariusz", f. 58-9; LMAVB, F17-181, A.B. Jabłonowski to W. Łubieńskiego, Poznań 12 II 1764, f. 67-8v; A.B. Jabłonowski, *Pamiętnik*, s. 83-84); BCzart., ms. 3858, I. Twardowski to J.A. Mniszcha, Poznań 10 and 15 II 1764, ff. 103-06, 123-24.

38 Szwaciński, "Sejmiki", 49-50; BUW, ms. 116, W. Łubieński do województw, ziem i powiatów, Warszawa 22 XII 1763, f. 98-9; LMAVB, F17-181, Kopia listu W. Łubieńskiego do senatorów, Warszawa 22 XII 1763, f. 29-30v.

Familia, which was trying, then still secretly, to introduce Russian troops[39].
The instructions passed at the bifurcated royal assemblies in Środa handed over to the elected deputies did not differ all that much, which leads one to conclude that this political battle was more about choosing the right deputies for a particular party. The content of the documents handed over to them coincided in many places, and sometimes were even identical. The issue of the exclusion of foreigners from candidacy also turned out to be irrelevant in this case, as both instructions supported the election of a "Piast" born in the Republic, familiar with its laws, customs and wearing Polish clothes[40].
Only the instruction written under the leadership of Poniński recommended preserving the rights of Royal Prussia in the matter of electing parliamentarians, since there the opposition planned to gain their most parliamentarians. On the other issues, there were already more rhetorical differences or particularization of a given issue. The consensus prevailed in both royal assemblies in Środa on the election between Warsaw and Wola, conducted only by the Primate. Parliamentarians were ordered to strive to ensure that no bishop had the right to usurp these powers, as had been the case in the past. Also, foreign diplomats were to be out of Warsaw at this time. And the election of the king itself, according also to both royal assemblies in Środa, was to take place *viritim* (with the right of participation of every nobleman), and as soon as possible. As for the election of the Speaker of the Electoral Sejm, the instruction from under Poniński's cane proposed election by the parliamentarians.
In diplomatic matters, supporters of the Familia raised the issue of recognizing Catherine II's imperial title. It was pointed out, however, that by virtue of this title she could not lay claim to any lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Courland and Ruthenia. Both instructions called for the renewal of treaties with neighbors, as well as talks with the Prussian resident and the Imperial deputy on the delimitation of estates in the borderlands with those countries. They also proposed appointing commissioners to deal with the damage done by the armies of both countries during the past war. Also, the problem of reforming the army, which had been burning for years, was raised by the nobility of Greater Poland, but these were not proposals on the scale of the situation at the time. Again, as in 1744 and at later assemblies, there were demands for the establishment of voivodeship land militaries, supplementing the ranks with privates in existing formations, hiring only Polish officers, taking away officers' ranks from senators and officials, establishing a school of knighthood, and replacing the poll tax with other taxes that would be fairer to the nobility. Quite interestingly, the instruction written under Ponińsky's leadership included a postulate to give tenant of royal lands to current possessors in hereditary possession in exchange for high taxation. This instruction also included a demand that hetmans should not be allowed to sit in the senate and that they should be elected at the Sejm by majority vote.
The issue of breaking the Sejm was raised rather perfunctorily, with the nobility only signaling that they should be held in accordance with the law, that the election of the Speaker of the Sejm (presiding over proceedings) should take place on the

39 Szwaciński, "Sejmiki", 48-9.

40 Of the 45 instructions known to historiography, only three ordered the actual exclusion of foreigners. These came out of sejmiks dominated by the Czartoryskis.

first day, and that if there was a rupture, then, according to instructions from the royal assembly where Raczyński presided, the envoy was to take an oath that he was guided by the public interest, and at the assembly he was to give an account of why he did so. The second sejmiks recommended that deputies not interfere with the work of the chamber. When it came to the functioning of the royal assemblies, the demands of Greater Poland were similar: the election of provincial governors, castellans, deputies, land judges, land undersheriffs, land writers and chamberlain were to be carried out by a majority. The royal assembly instruction, chaired by Poniński, further expanded this catalog to include the election of all senators and other land officials up to and including the treasurer by appointing 4 candidates to the king, as was the case with the election of land judges. According to Jabłonowski's supporters, all ministers, senators, crown officials and deputies should receive salaries.

The supporters of the Familia proposed a narrower catalog of individuals in their instructions, and rather suggested attaching the income from royal leasehold land to these offices on a permanent basis. Representatives of this camp also postulated that in the absence of judges, their replacements should be elected, while the universals for royal assembly should be entered in the town registers 2 weeks before the royal assembly and itself should begin at 9 a.m. after mass, while the other side proposed 3 weeks and 10 a.m., also after mass. The nobility probably wanted to avoid in this way the problems that occurred at the pre-convocation royal assemblies in Środa. All deliberations, according to both sides, were to be held only with the participation of nobles who owned any landed property in the region, and only they were to be elected to all functions and offices.

The issues of state finances were also limited to the proposals, which had been repeated for years, to restore the mint, to mine bullion in the Olkusz mountains, to strengthen the monarch's table estates with starships, to change the rate of coinage with the help of the Sejm. In the case of the treasurers (finance ministers), it was also sought that they finally account to the Sejm for their activities. This demand also applied to the families of already deceased officials who failed to do so due to the breaking of the Sejm. If there was not enough time, the deputies were to appoint a commission that would complete the matter by the time the monarch was elected.

Quite a lot of space in the instructions was devoted to judicial and legal issues. Here, too, the discrepancies were at the level of detail. Both instructions proposed reforming the Tribunals (the highest court of the nobility) and abolishing the Tribunal of Radom (the highest court of account for settling taxes transferred to the army). They also suggested setting fixed salaries for deputies working in the tribunals; the instruction from the Raczynski-led assembly proposed that the new reformed Tribunal sit in Poznań and Piotrków[41].

In the case of the dissidents (not Catholics), there was a lack of any proposal from Greater Poland to improve their political or any other rights. The instruction

41 The issue of justice reform was discussed more extensively by the Jerzy Michalski, "Reforma sądownictwa na sejmie konwokacyjnym 1764 roku", in *Między wielką polityką a szlacheckim partykularyzmem. Studia z dziejów nowożytnej Polski i Europy ku czci profesora Jacka Staszewskiego*, ed. Kazimierz Wajda (Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 1993), 295-313.

of the assemble chaired by Raczyński even proposed the demolition of illegal congregations. This postulate may come as a surprise, since already at that time the Russian ambassador had asked the Czartoryskis to improve the rights of dissidents. However, the Familia did not take up this thread, as they knew the real, very negative attitude of the nobility[42]. The instructions also touched on several issues related to the Church and land ownership, including the vetting of royal leases and estates, property matters, the promotion of distinguished nobility and disputes over tithes. The plan for repairing the state by the Czartoryskis did not feature prominently in them. The instructions of the supporters of the Sasso-Hellenic camp also proposed positive changes, sometimes even more profound than those formulated by the supporters of the Familia. A good example is that it was the assemble chaired by Poniński that proposed the introduction of a permanent institution to manage the state or the improvement of the post office.

To sum up, one should agree with Tomasz Szwaciński, who compared more than 45 instructions from across the Commonwealth, that the content provided by both parties did not differ significantly[43]. The plan for repairing the state by the Czartoryskis did not feature prominently in them. The instructions of the supporters of the opposition camp also proposed positive changes, sometimes even more profound than those formulated by the supporters of the Familia. A good example is that it was the assembly chaired by Poniński that proposed the introduction of a permanent institution to manage the state or the improvement of the post office[44]. It was in this instruction that there was also a demand to rectify all violations of the law, and even to convene an extraordinary parliament on the matter even before the election, if they could not be rectified at the convocation.

Despite the programmatic convergence of the instructions themselves, the two voivodeships found themselves in a situation of political disunity and legal and constitutional confusion. The two assemblies confederated according to tradition and elected two separate formations of confederate court. This threatened chaos, as it was unclear which was legitimate. An assemblies of Familia supporters decided to depose J.A. Mniszch the Crown Court Marshal, who at the time was also acting as General Starost of Greater Poland, of the powers related to the right to convene a local hasty march, and if there was any threat to both voivodeships, handed them over to Marshal Raczyński. In contrast, supporters of Jabłonowski, Voivode of Poznań, recognized only Mniszech's powers in this regard. There were more such discrepancies, but it is difficult to determine how the issue was handled[45].

42 Zielińska, *Polska*, 154.

43 More about the other instructions, including the Wielkopolska, zob. Szwaciński, "*Sejmiki*", 46-56.

44 APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Instrukcja sejmiku przedkonwokacyjnego pod laską marszałka Kazimierza Raczyńskiego starosty czerwonogrodzkiego", Środa 6 II 1764, ff. 137-47v; APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Instrukcja sejmiku przedkonwokacyjnego pod laską marszałka Adama Ponińskiego", Środa 6 II 1764, ff. 120-24.

45 APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Laudum sejmiku przedkonwokacyjnego […]", f. 99-119; APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Laudum sejmiku przedkonwokacyjnego […]",

It was not known at the time how the other assemblies had ended and whether Familia had gained an adequate advantage. The legality of any of the assembly was to be decided only by the Convocation Sejm, since Primate Władysław Łubieński did not agree to convene a second assembly, as supporters of reconciliation had converged on him for[46]. However, from the very beginning of this dispute (information about the split reached him as early as February 8), he supported the supporters of Theodore Czartoryski, Bishop of Poznań[47], despite the fact that the *laudum* (resolution document) of his assembly was signed by about 794 nobles, while that of the opposing side was signed by about 1,700. In both cases, however, there were forgeries, so it was not actually known how many citizens were present in Środa[48].

Both sides, in the days following the end of the deliberations, convinced public opinion throughout the country, and especially Primate Łubieński, that they were right on their side[49]. Locally, there was the publication of voluminous manifestos accusing each other of violating laws and traditions[50]. Political writings were also circulated[51]. However, Primate Łubieński remained to the very end in his position that Jabłonowski and his party were to blame for the whole situation[52]. Still hoping that it would change, Jabłonowski Voivode of Poznań continued to contest the actions of the other side. He opened, together with Twardowski, Voivode of Poznań, the confederate court in Poznań on March 5, 1764. On the orders of Branicki, Great

f. 77-98. Among other things, the army was ordered to support the opponents of the Familia: AGAD, APP, 313, t. 1, J.K. Branicki to K.J. Laurene de Bosquet, Białystok 17 II 1764, f. 182

46 AGAD, APP, 83, W. Łubieński to J. Chłapowskiego, and J. Skórzewskiego to K. Sokolnickiego, Warszawa, 16 II 1764, f. 285-286.

47 BUW, ms. 116, "Informacja sejmiku w Środzie", 8 II 1764, f. 371; BUW, ms. 116, W. Łubieński to A.B. Jabłonowskiego, Warszawa 9 II 1764, f. 372-373.

48 APPozn., Gr. Kalisz 404, ""Protestacja Piotra Korytowskiego oraz Zygmunta Kurczewskiego przeciw podpisom pod laudum sejmiku zagajonego przez A.B. Jabłonowskiego wojewodę poznańskiego", Kalisz 20 III 1764, f. 101-02, 108.

49 Glabisz, *Sejmiki*, 300-02.

50 APPozn., Gr. Wałcz 92, "Manifest spisany podczas sądów kapturowych wałeckich", Wałcz 19 III 1764, f. 294-95v; APPozn., Gr. Kalisz 404, "Manifest spisany podczas otwarcia sądów kapturowych kaliskich przez zwolenników sejmiku zagajonego przez A.B. Jabłonowskiego wojewodę poznańskiego", 19 III 1764, f. 146-51; APPozn., Gr. Kalisz 404, APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1106, "Manifest spisany w grodzie kaliskim", 19 III 1764, f. 100, 102-07; APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1106, "Manifest spisany w grodzie poznańskim", Poznań 12 III 1764, f. 646-51.

51 Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie, Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamoyskich, ms. 964, "Pismo dowodzące pierwszeństwa biskupa przed senatorem na sejmikach", f. 110-14; BOssol., ms. 1612, "Racje pro parte jm. wojewody poznańskiego względem precedencji przed biskupem poznańskim", f. 116-19

52 BUW, ms. 116, W. Łubieński to T. Czartoryskiego, Warszawa 13 II 1764, f. 416; BUW, ms. 116, W. Łubieński to A.B. Jabłonowskiego, Warszawa 16 II 1764, f. 417-18; AGAD, APP, 83, W. Łubieński to I. Twardowskiego, 16 II 1764, f. 284-85.

Hetman of the Crown, the troops of the Poznań garrison were to cover their course and support all the activities of the voivode[53]. The session lasted until Saturday after which it was sealed so as not to cause more confusion with its verdicts[54]. The Courts of Familia supporters were opened in Poznań on March 12, 1764. The day before, Teodor Czartoryski Bishop of Poznań arrived in the city, along with Raczyński Marshal of the Confederation and Mielżyński Castellan of Poznań. A total of 228 participants came to the came to the assemble in Środa[55]. After the meeting and the mass in the parish church, a "deliberately made" vision of the castle, which was in a deplorable state, was read[56].This was undoubtedly an attempt to publicly discredit the opposition-minded George Augustus Mniszch, Crown Court Marshal and General Starost of Greater Poland, whose duties included taking care of the castle. During the proceedings of the confederate court of the Familia supporters the following day, a rather interesting situation took place. Well, a nobleman unknown by name, Radecki, sued the Jews of Poznań, so that, according to the law, "they all wear yellow caps or berets, and this is to mortify another party whose caps are of a similar color"[57]. This was undoubtedly an interesting manifestation of the political struggle at the level of symbols, as well as an unsympathetic attitude towards Jews. The remaining confederate court conventions in both voivodeships were held in a similar atmosphere[58].

In the end, the power of the Convocation Sejm was taken over by the Familia, and all the bifurcated squads of supporters of the opposition camp were declared illegally elected. In Greater Poland, the power of the confederation under the leadership

53 Wojciech Stanek, "'Opisanie' urzędu hetmańskiego z 1717 roku i jego polityczne następstwa", *Studia i materiały do historii wojskowości*, 37 (1995): 36; AGAD, APP, 313, t. 1, J.K. Branicki to K.J. Laurene de Bosquet, Białystok 17 II 1764, f. 182; BCzart., rkp 3858, I. Twardowski to J.A. Mniszcha, Poznań 4 III 1764, f. 193-94.

54 BCzart., ms. 3858, J. Starzeński to J.A. Mniszcha, b.m. i d [11 III 1764], ff. 163-65.

55 APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1106, "Manifest senatorów, urzędników i szlachty, zwolenników Familii, zgromadzonych na sądy kapturowe w Poznaniu", Poznań 12 III 1764, ff. 646-51.

56 It is probably about the visions issued by Zbigniew Chodyła, "Wizje Zamku Królewskiego, jego wieży i sklepu z archiwum grodzkim", *Kronika Miasta Poznania*, 4 (2004): 321.

57 BUW, ms. 116, A. Miaskowski do W. Łubieńskiego, b.m, [przed 21 III 1764], f. 294r-v; APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1106, "Manifest spisany w grodzie poznańskim przez zwolenników sejmiku zagajonego przez T. Czartoryskiego biskupa poznańskiego", Poznań 12 III 1764, ff. 646-51.

58 APPozn., Gr. Kalisz 404, "Manifest senatorów, urzędników i szlachty, przeciwników Familii, zgromadzonych na sądy kapturowe w Kaliszu", Kalisz 20 III 1764, ff. 140-51; BK PAN, 2110, W. Wyganowski do J.K. Potockiego, Kalisz 17 III 1764, ff. 86-7v; APPozn., Gr. Kalisz 404, "Manifest senatorów, urzędników i szlachty, zwolenników Familii, zgromadzonych na sądy kapturowe w Kaliszu", Kalisz 20 III 1764, ff. 102v-04; APPozn., Gr. Wałcz 92, "Manifest spisany podczas sądów kapturowych wałeckich przez zwolenników sejmiku zagajonego przez T. Czartoryskiego biskupa poznańskiego", Wałcz 19 III 1764, ff. 294-95v.

of Kazimierz Raczyński was sanctioned. The opposition, after behind-the-scenes arrangements, resigned from the Convocation Sejm so that there would be no bloodshed. Before long, most of its leaders emigrated or surrendered[59]. In addition to fulfilling a number of Russian policy goals, the assembly determined that the delegates would decide for themselves whether the nobility should go to the election *viritim* or by parliamentarians. Foreigners were excluded from the candidacy, and the king, in accordance with the wishes expressed earlier by Russian and Prussian diplomats, was to become "Piast".

During the deliberations, the central government, taxation and economic affairs were partially reformed. The rationalization of the system also affected the assembly and the Tribunal. It was possible to agree to such changes because the neighboring powers considered that majority voting for deputies and candidates for land and chamber judges, or questions of procedural conduct, were a need of domestic order, and therefore did not constitute a politically important matter, like voting at parliamentary sejmiks, to which such agreement was no longer given[60]. However, it should be noted that the new law gave the local nobility very wide latitude in deciding the order of sejmik and granting active and passive voting rights[61]. After the end of the Convocation Sejm on June 23, 1764, the confederation binding it was dissolved, and a new crown general confederation was established in its place, under the leadership as marshal of August Czartoryski, Voivode of Russia, who then also became Commander-in-Chief (temporary commander of the entire army). Behind the highfalutin justifications for its existence, was the maintenance of Familia's control over the country, under the auspices of its Russian ally, which had already announced at the time (August 7 officially) that Stanisław Antoni Poniatowski Court Pantler of Lithuania was to be the new king[62]. According to the will of the Convocation, the start of the Electoral Sejm was set for August 27, 1764, while the assemblies after the Convocation Sejm was to meet on July 23[63]. Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships were still divided in the face of the upcoming election, although no longer as strongly as in February 1764. Some officials and nobles, such as Kasper Rogaliński starosta of Nakiel, realized that the situation had already been decided and it was necessary to adapt to the new conditions, so he reconciled with his

59 Grzegorz Szymborski, "Wykorzystanie i kontrola wojska jako przedmiot gry politycznej i obrad sejmu konwokacyjnego w dobie bezkrólewia 1764 roku", *AUL, Folia Historica*, 98 (2017): 5-68.

60 After the Convocation Sejm, the opposition sought this provision because it was aware that with the help of republican and freedom slogans it would be able to gain a majority in the regional assemblies. Zofia Zielińska, "Zabiegi Rosji o zachowanie liberum veto i o gwarancję w okresie bezkrólewia 1763–1764 r.", *Kwartalnik Historyczny Rocznik*, CXI/3 (2004): 78-80, 84-5.

61 Schmitt, *Dzieje*, t. 1, 270.

62 Publicly, this message was given by Russian diplomacy at a meeting at the Primate's 7 VIII 1764; Zielińska, *Polska*, 154, 179-180.

63 APPozn., Gr. Kalisz 404, "Uniwersał prymasa Władysława Łubieńskiego zwołujący sejmik relacyjno-elekcyjny", Warszawa 26 VI 1764, f. 305.

previous opponents[64]. At this time, too, on the ruins of the former opposition and among the supporters of the Czartoryskis, the Russian embassy was slowly building its hidden party, generously rewarding both its allies and recent enemies[65].
Some attempts to make a name for themselves in the new political situation among the Greater Poland were made by the Sułkowski brothers, of whom Prince August sympathized with the Familia camp from the beginning of the interregnum, according to a previously established Family plan[66]. At the beginning of June, he asked Stanislaw Poniatowski for patronage from Teodor Czartoryski, bishop of Poznań, himself somewhat exaggeratedly creating himself as having considerable influence in the region[67]. He asked for direct orders regarding the upcoming assembles, probably hoping to play an important role in the future royal party. From the information he provided on June 21, 1764, it appeared that Antoni Barnaba Jabłonowski Voivode of Poznań was absent from Greater Poland and hesitated to come to the assembly. He reportedly made this contingent on providing protection[68].

Among the nobility, the idea of going to the viritim election still prevailed. Some dissatisfaction among Greater Poland was caused by information from Primate Łubienski's universal that the nobility would not be able to advise on the constitutions passed at the Convocation, as they would not be able to be printed in time. Sułkowski rightly conceded at the time, asking: "What instruction can we give to the next Diet, if we don't know what was passed at the previous one?"[69].
The recent decisions related to the creation of a general confederation were also a major problem. It was headed, as I have already mentioned, by August Czartoryski, Voivode of Ruthenia, who, by virtue of the Convocation Sejm's constitutions, was also regent-general and headed the general confederate court. In this way, he actually wielded supreme military, judicial and partly legislative power, which, in the opinion of his opponents, resembled a dictatorship from the times of ancient Rome. At the end of June, Sułkowski asked Poniatowski what points he would be pushing for in his instructions to the Sejm for the election. It is difficult to say whether he finally received such instructions.
Proceedings of the relational-electoral assembly in Środa on 23-25 July. Information preceding the assembly shows that Jabłonowski, Voivode of Poznań, together with

64 Dygdała, *Rogaliński*, 404-08.

65 Zielińska, *Polska* , 175-78.

66 Dorota Dukwicz, and Michał Zwierzykowski, "Sułkowski August", in PSB, vol. 45 (2007–2008), 544.

67 August Sułkowski must have known by then that Stanislaus Antoni Poniatowski, the Lithuanian stolen monarch, would be a Russian candidate for the crown. They knew each other from their time in Vienna. Doubtless Sułkowski hoped to use this acquaintance in his career and political plans; Stanisław August, *Pamiętniki króla*, 85; BCzart., ms. 712, A. Sułkowski to Stanisława Augusta, Rydzyna 1 VI 1764, f. 41

68 BCzart., ms. 712, A. Sułkowski to Stanisława Augusta, Rydzyna 7 VI 1764, f. 45.

69 BCzart., ms. 712, A. Sułkowski to Stanisława Augusta, Rydzyna 22 VI 1764, f. 47.

his supporters, probably made some kind of compromise with the Familia camp[70]. Some 507 noblemen were present at the assembly itself. Among the senators, only the Czartoryski's supporters appeared: Michał Miaskowski, Castellan of Ląd, and Antoni Gajewski, Castellan of Nakło. Unfortunately, little is known about the proceedings themselves. What is important, however, is that the assembled nobility confirmed that, despite the dissolution and establishment of a new confederation, the functions of marshal were to continue to be performed by Kazimierz Raczyński, Starost of Czerwonogród, who, together with Władysław Gurowski, the Great Crown Writer, was responsible for conducting the assembly in accordance with the party's assumptions[71]. The gathered nobility agreed to merge with the general confederation. Accordingly, consuls were elected to assist the marshal, and an act of particularistic confederation was passed[72]. Instructions for deputies to the electoral assembly were also formed. However, it did not fully meet the objectives of the Familia and the Russian embassy, because apart from the issue of electing the "Piast" king and improving his financial situation, it demanded respect for the free vote in the election of the monarch and an equal number of senators and deputies in the composition of the Treasury Commission appointed at the Convocation Sejm[73]. The choice of how to go to the election was also compromised. In the debate so far, the supporters of the Familia proposed that the king should be elected by the deputies, while the opposition proposed *viritim*[74]. In the end, the assembly decided to elect 36 deputies, considering the *viritim* election to be too costly for the nobility. At the same time, however, it was resolved that any citizen from the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships who wished to do so could go to the election and vote. This was quite a breakneck solution, and it is apparent that there was probably no way to tip the scales in favour of either side. The parliamentary representation, which was obligatory to go to the Sejm, consisted in sixteen cases of deputies elected in both circles at a split pre-convocation[75].The majority of the others were also active participants in political life[76].

Under the cover of 25,000 Russian troops stationed away from the electoral field, the Electoral Sejm began on 27 August 1764. On 4-5 September, the Russian ambassador Keyserling and the Prussian deputy Gedeon de Benoît recommended to the states, during official audiences, the candidature of Stanisław Antoni Poniatowski Stolnik

70 BCzart., ms. 712, A. Sułkowski to Stanisława Augusta, Rydzyna 22 VI 1764, f. 47.

71 Zielińska, *Polska*, 174-75.

72 APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, Konfederacja spisana na sejmiku relacyjnym i przedelekcyjnym w *Środzie*, 23-5 VII 1764, f. 146-52v.

73 APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Instrukcja sejmiku relacyjno-elekcyjnego na sejm elekcyjny", Środa 25 VII 1764, ff. 153-54v.

74 BCzart., ms. 712; A. Sułkowski to Stanisława Augusta, Rydzyna 22 VI 1764, f. 47.

75 Glabisz, *Sejmiki*, 686-587.

76 Marcin Skakawski also applied for parliamentary function; he did not receive it at that time, so the sejmik promised to elect him to function at the next assembly; APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Laudum sejmiku relacyjno-elekcyjnego", Środa 23-25 VII 1764, f. 155-56.

of Lithuania for the crown. They also set the date of the coronation in Warsaw for 25 November, while the Coronation Sejm was to meet on 3 December. As the dates of the assembly to elect judges to the Crown Tribunal coincided with the coronation and the Sejm sessions, they were postponed to the day after the pre-Sejm assembly, recommending the election of judges already elected to the would-be tribunal in 1763[77]. The deputies of Greater Poland were also very active in these days, striving strenuously, in line with the aims of the Familia and the Russian embassy, to enact a constitution increasing the royal revenues. Among those striving for this provision was Adam Poniński, the Crown Cook (who was already collaborating with the Familia at the time)[78]. Józef Łącki, *Podkomorzy* of Brzeg and Kujawy, and August Sułkowski, Starost of Nowy Dwór. The proposal was not accepted, the king only received the right to income from the operation of the post office[79].

The election itself took place on 7 September 1764. Among its participants were some 256 representatives of the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships, including 36 parliamentarians elected at the assembly[80]. Among them was Ignacy Twardowski, Voivode of Kalisz, who also recognized at the time that reconciliation with the victors should be sought. Antoni Barnaba Jabłonowski, Voivode of Poznań, and other opposition-minded noblemen of Greater Poland soon did the same[81]. The dominance of the Familia camp, however, was unacceptable to most of them, and many hoped that the situation would soon change, however[82].

Meanwhile, another problem, unrelated to current political events, had been growing for a long time in Greater Poland. From the very beginning of the interregnum, the activities of so-called groups of deserters from the army, mainly Prussian, who were crossing the border, looting the surrounding villages in the process, intensified[83]. Kazimierz Raczyński, as marshal of the local confederation, ordered all types of

77 See, "Konstytucja", part "O Trybunale Lwowskim", and "Czas Sejmików Ante-Coronationis Króla przyszłego y Seymu Koronacyi", in *Volumina Legum: Przedruk zbioru praw staraniem XX. Pijarów w Warszawie, od roku 1732 do roku 1782*, t. 7, edited by Jozafat Ohryzko (Petersburg: Jozafat Ohryzko, 1860), 33, 95; APPozn., Gr. Wschowa 219, "Uniwersał prymasa Władysława Łubieńskiego zwołującego sejmiki przedkoronacyjne", Warszawa 10 IX 1764, ff. 77v-8.

78 Zielińska, *Polska*, 173-75

79 Rafał Zgorzelski, "Kształtowanie się struktury organizacyjnej dyrekcji oraz pocztamtu nadwornego poczty stanisławowskiej", in *W podróży przez wiek osiemnasty. Studia i szkice z epoki nowożytnej. Dedykowane Profesorowi Jerzemu Dygdale*, eds. Adam Perłakowski, Monika Wyszomirska, and Michał Zwierzykowski (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2015), 251-73.

80 The number is approximate, because the source material contains printing errors and repetitions. Ohryzko, *Volumina Legum*, t. 7, 107-08, 113-14.

81 Wereszycka, *Jabłonowski*, 216-18

82 Jerzy Głowacki, *Gastronomia polityczna kuchmistrza litewskiego. Michał Wielhorski (ok. 1731–1814) –* życie *i myśl ustrojowa* (Warszawa: DIG, 2014), 97-9.

83 BUW, ms. 116, P.P. Sapieha to W. Łubieńskiego, [XI 1763], f. 41-42; BUW, ms. 116, P.P. Sapieha to W. Łubieńskiego, b.m. i d. [I 1764], f. 282.

estates to field troops to guard security[84]. Primate Łubieński was also kept informed of the whole situation, assuring the people of Greater Poland that, following talks with the Prussian diplomatic representative, he had received an assurance from Frederick II that order would be maintained on the border[85]. Fundamentally, however, these as well as other talks did not achieve much[86]. Raczyński issued another universal on 1 October calling for expeditions[87]. By the end of October, the situation already seemed to be more normalized, the borders secured, so the nobility was increasingly resistant to keeping the expeditions going.

The day before the pre-Sejm assembly on 28 October, there was a meeting between Teodor Czartoryski, Bishop of Poznań, and the vast majority of senators from both voivodeships on matters to be discussed. Unfortunately, it is not known who exactly attended this meeting and what its conclusions were[88]. The parliamentary representation elected at that time consisted of those who had participated in the two previous assemblies, with an emphasis on supporters of the Familia camp in Greater Poland[89]. The interests of the Russian embassy were certainly unofficially represented at the Sejm sessions by Władyslaw Gurowski, the Great Crown Writer at the time. It was supposedly due to his efforts that the nobility did not introduce demands close to the king for the reform of the army and the introduction of majority voting at all assemblies[90]. However, the latter issue was smuggled out of the instruction under a clause demanding the reinstatement of the 1685 rules. As for the other issues, the instruction recommended that the deputies agree with others on the extension or dissolution of the General Confederation, on the functioning of the Treasury Commission (the Ministry of Finance) it was recommended to clarify the selection of its commissioners, and in Lithuania a Military Commission (the Ministry for the Lithuanian army) was to be established, analogous to the Crown section. It was also recommended that the matter of the mint be included in the pacts of convention (the king's personal obligations). In financial matters, the demand for an increase in the royal income appeared once again - income from stamp paper was cited as a proposal for improvement, as well as the enlargement of the table estate by four royal leases. The deputies were also to see to the permanent financing of the Knights' School. In connection with the subordination of the post office to the king, the nobility of Greater Poland wanted it to be organized in such a way that fees and private post offices were abolished.

84 APPozn., Gr. Gniezno 201, "Uniwersał Kazimierza Raczyńskiego marszałka konfederacji", Poznań 18 IX 1764, f. 304.

85 BUW, ms. 116, J. Mielżyński to W. Łubieńskiego, [2. poł. IX 1764], f. 1113; BUW, ms. 116, W. Łubieński to J. Mielżyńskiego, Warszawa 27 IX 1764, f. 1115.

86 Zielińska, *Polska*, 204-05.

87 APPozn., Gr. Gniezno 201, "Uniwersał Kazimierza Raczyńskiego marszałka konfederacji", Poznań 1 X 1764, f. 313.

88 BCzart., ms. 712, A. Sułkowski to Stanisława Augusta, Rydzyna 28 X 1764, f. 79-80.

89 Glabisz, *Sejmiki*, 586-87.

90 Zielińska, *Polska*, 215.

For the security of both voivodeships, the deputies were ordered to seek the return of four companies of General Goltz's regiment to Poznań from Kamieniec Podolski, where they were currently stationed. Other issues concerned church matters, the improvement of the flow of the Warta river and other local matters. Finally, it was traditional to recommend to the monarch's favour priest Andrzej Młodziejowski for the office of the Vice Chancellor of the Crown, and to the post of Grand Chancellor of the Crown Antoni Barnaba Jabłonowski, Voivode of Poznań, or Andrzej Zamoyski, Voivode of Inowrocław. Envoys were also not to forget Józef Mielżyński, Castellan of Poznań, and Kazimierz Raczyński, Starost of Czerwonogród and Marshal of the Confederation[91]. Thus, it can be seen that, on the ground of local politics, Jablonowski cooperated, but further analysis of his behavior will show that this was an ad hoc alliance, in the face of the weakness of all the other opposition[92].

Although the pre-Sejm assembles was over, the nobility remained to hold, in accordance with the new law on the Crown Tribunal, assemblies for the election of judges to the tribunal and separate assemblies for economic affairs. At the first of these, in accordance with the new law, the introduction was made by Antoni Barnaba Jabłonowski, who then put forward Kazimierz Raczyński as a candidate for the post of assembly marshal. Such a move was necessary in the light of the new law, which the nobility interpreted very literally. In principle, these provisions applied only to deputy and electoral assembly; in other cases, e.g. pre-Sejm ones, when there was a confederation, its marshal automatically held the post of director already without recitation or election. Raczyński was legally assisted by ten assessors, two from each county, who were then sworn in in accordance with the constitution[93]. In the end, four deputies were elected by means of a majority vote. All of them were associated with the Familia camp from the very beginning of the interregnum[94]. They were headed by Jozef Mielżyński, Castellan of Poznań, who, according to the party's plans, became Marshal (chairman) of the Tribunal for the Greater Poland Province[95]. All those elected, in accordance with the new law, took an oath before Jabłonowski, Voivode of Poznań, which was recorded in the *laudum*[96].

At the Coronation Sejm, despite the communication to the Familia and Stanislaus Augustus by the Russian ambassador, Repnin, of Catherine II's disapproval of profound changes to the state's political system; in the end, some real changes were introduced. Majority voting at all pre-Sejm assemble was not one of them.

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91 APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Instrukcja na sejm koronacyjny posłom", Środa 29 X 1764, ff. 163-67v.

92 Wereszycka, *"Jabłonowski"*, 216-18

93 APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Laudum sejmiku deputackiego", Środa 5 XI 1764, f. 161-62v.

94 Glabisz, Sejmiki, 611.

95 He was also part of a group receiving financial gifts from the Russian embassy from 1764; Włodzimierz Dworzaczek, "Mielżyński Józef", in PSB, vol. 20 (1975), 782-84; Zielińska, *Polska*, 173-75.

96 APPozn., Gr. Poznań 1221, "Laudum sejmiku deputackiego", Środa 5 XI 1764, ff. 161-62v.

However, by the back door, with the help of constitutions for individual lands and voivodeships referring to old customs, many sejmiks 'restored' this right to themselves, including the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships. In summing up the Sejm to Catherine II, Stanislaus Augustus pointed out that he had submitted to the will of the Emperor, and had not introduced the planned reforms, but had tried to carry out all the postulates, except for the equality of dissidents. Everyone was aware that the noble people would not agree to this. However, it did not matter. Catherine II absolutely demanded this change, for the sake of her prestige. However, it only became the axis of political debate in 1766.

In the case of the Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships, the rivalry for power after the death of August III was quite turbulent. Ultimately, the fight was won by representatives of the Familia camp; nevertheless, the opposition supporters had the actual advantage among the noble masses. Mainly associated with Jerzy August Mniszech, his supporters pretended to come to terms with the situation after the King's election, waiting for a convenient moment to raise their heads. In fact, and this was a mistake, the Familia camp made no attempt at reconciliation and compromise after the election of 1764 but continued to maintain power through general and particular confederations across the country until 1766. Despite the apparent division in both voivodeships in matters of state, the nobility of Greater Poland was united in its reforms. The essence of the feuds and disputes was the question of who took power and who was spurned. Already after the Convocation Sejm, it can be seen that the reforms introduced at the Sejms found recognition and rationalised the functioning of, among other things, the assemblies. The reforms to the functioning of local institutions were not reversed in the following years, when the opposition began to gain the upper hand in Greater Poland as well, thanks to Russian patronage.

ABBREVIATION

AGAD: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie.
APP: Archiwum Publiczne Potockich.
AR: Archiwum Radziwiłłów.
APPozn.: Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu.
Gr.: Księgi Grodzkie.
BCzart.: Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich w Krakowie.
BK PAN: Biblioteka Kórnicka Polskiej Akademii Nauk.
BOssol.: Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich PAN we Wrocławiu.
BUW: Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
PSB: Polski Słownik Biograficzny.

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VARIA SECTION

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BALD ISLAND: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT
The English translation of an Italian manuscript on the emprisonment of Italia migrants in socialist Yugoslavia suggests numerous reflections not only on what happened there and then, but on the entire history of Italian political migration into Sovietized Europe before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

KEYWORDS: Yugoslavia; Soviet Union; Warsaw Pact; Goli Otok; Concentrion camps; Refugees Camps.

About ten years ago, Claudia Sonia Colussi Corte's diary on her father's imprisonment in a Yugoslav concentration camp was published in the "Autobiographies" series of the Archivio Diaristico Nazionale of Pieve Santo Stefano, the largest Italian documentary center of and on "personal" writings[1]. The author was born in Isola Vicentina, but in 1946 Cherubino Colussi, who in the meantime had started working in the Monfalcone shipyards, decided to go to Yugoslavia and contribute to the construction of communism. The family therefore moved to Lussinpiccolo (Mali Lošinj) on the island of Lussino (Lošinj), now Croatia, which is also the native place of Cherubino, who had lived there until he was eighteen.
His decision was not isolated and over 2,000 workers, some with families, left Monfalcone to contribute to the revolutionary cause. However, in the newly formed Yugoslav republic those arrivals were viewed with suspicion. They strengthened an Italian-speaking minority, frowned upon due to what had happened during the fascist "Ventennio". Furthermore, the Monfalconeses' loyalty to the Soviet Union was feared, because the conflict between Joseph Stalin and Josip Tito had become insurmountable and Yugoslavia had been expelled from the Cominform (1948).
Cherubino Colussi had in the meantime found work in the Lussinpiccolo shipyard and wanted to stay there even when, in 1949, his wife Antonietta asked him to leave. Unfortunately, her husband didn't listen to her, just as he hadn't listened to her when he decided to move to Yugoslavia. The woman thus found herself projected into a nightmare and in February 1951 she was woken up by the police. The authorities allowed her and her daughter to return to Italy, but without giving any explanations about Cherubino's fate. After almost a year at Isola Vicentina, Antonietta finally learned that her husband, like many people from Monfalcone, had been accused of being an enemy of the Yugoslav people and sentenced to imprisonment on Goli Otok (Bald Island). This was a large bare rock in the northern Adriatic, transformed into a concentration camp. Having learned of Cherubino's conviction, Antonietta

1 Claudia Sonia Colussi Corte, *Il segreto dell'isola nuda* (Udine: Forum Edizioni, 2015).

returned with her daughter to the island of Lussino, where she found work in the fish processing plant. She hoped to be close to her husband, but she only managed to see him in 1954 and for just 15 minutes.
In her daughter's journal, the frustrating wait in Lussinpiccolo and the very short visit to Goli Otok are well described. However, in 1955, when Stalin died, some prisoners were amnestied and Cherubino was able to return to his family. After months of patient treatment, he was able to talk about the torture, the hunger, the illness (an untreated duodenal ulcer, because the small infirmary on the island had no instruments and medicines) in the concentration camp. He died in 1961 without having renounced his ideals, as attested by a poem published in the appendix of his daughter's journal.
The manuscript deposited in the Archivio Diaristico has a strong impact and appeared in a crucial year for migrations in Croatia: in July 2015 was planted the large metal fence that separates this nation from Hungary and Serbia and keeps out the refugees of the so-called "Balkan route"[2]. A few years later Claudia's daughter, who moved to Calgary, suggested translating the journal into English and this version was created for the Giuliano Dalmato Club of Toronto by Konrad Eisenblicher, another native son of Lussinpiccolo[3]. The comment of Eisenblicher, very well known for his works on the Italian Renaissance, but also on the Julian diasporas[4], and the pages of Giuricin, president of the "Istria" culture club of Trieste, explain to the reader the coordinates in which to frame the memorial, first the reasons and results of the Monfalcone's exodus.
The story and the imprisonment of those workers have been carefully studied in our century[5]; they also inspired a more general reflection on the migratory exchange

2 Various studies are available on the subject but see *Rapporto di ricerca. La Rotta balcanica 5 anni dopo*, edited by Luisa Chiodi e Raffaella Coletti (Roma: CESPI, 2021). For a recent picture: Tommi Siviero, "Balkan Migrant Route Still Active Despite Falling Numbers", available at https://balkaninsight.com/2024/01/17/balkan-migrant-route-still-active-despite-falling-numbers-frontex/.

3 Claudia Sonia Colussi Corte, *The Secret of Bald Island*, with an introduction by Aleksandra Sojanovic and a postscript by Ezio Giuricin (Toronto: Club Giuliano Dalmato di Toronto, 2023).

4 Konrad Eisenblicher, ed., *An Italian Region in Canada: The Case of Friuli-Venezia Giulia* (Toronto: MHSO, 1998), and *Forgotten Italians: Julian Dalmatian Writers and Artists in Canada* (Toronto: UTP, 2019). See also his translation of Arrigo Petacco, *A Tragedy Revealed. The Story of the Italian Population from Istria, Dalmatia, and Venezia Giulia, 1943–1956* (Toronto: UTP, 2005), and "Il ricordo del paese natale nelle opere degli scrittori giuliano-dalmati emigrati in Canada", *Ateneo Veneto*, 195 (2007), 97-113

5 Marco Puppini, "Il "controesodo" monfalconese in Jugoslavia tra Trattato di Pace e Risoluzione del Cominform", in *Il mosaico giuliano. Società e politica nella Venezia Giulia del secondo dopoguerra (1945–1954)*, ed. Id. (Gradisca d'Isonzo: Centro isontino di documentazione storica e sociale Leopoldo Gasparini, 2003), 65-94; Andrea Berrini, *Noi siamo la classe operaia. I duemila di Monfalcone* (Milano: Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2004); Anna Di Gianantonio, Tommaso Montanari, Alessandro Morena, and Sandra Perini, *L'immaginario*

between Italy and Yugoslavia (forced and otherwise)[6] and on the fact that that of the Monfalconesi was not the only Italian experience of support of the Republic of Yugoslavia[7]. An impressive literature is also dedicated to Goli Otok. The Italian entry on Wikipedia lists many novels, short stories and plays in various languages about the island prison, while the English one lists documentaries and films dedicated to it. On Bald Island, it is possible to read some historical-political essays in Italian, starting with two by Giacomo Scotti, a Neapolitan communist who migrated to Istria in 1947 and still resides there[8]. Some authors, in addition to quantify the number of political prisoners on the island (at least 30,000 according to Scotti), have also explored the memory of that concentration camp[9]. Finally, Scotti again tried to understand the reason for the arrests of the Monfalcone's people and found traces of an attack against Tito organized by the Soviets with the support of the Communist Federation of Trieste; this attempt would have definitively compromised the fate of the Italian communists in Yugoslavia[10].

Alongside these two research ideas, we can glimpse others. For example, one could reflect on the migrations of many left-wing militants of that time towards communist Europe. Not everyone pays for their choices as dearly as the people of Monfalcone and some are even treated well. Prague welcomes the partisans wanted by the Italian police after the revenges of the immediate post-war period and the Red Brigades on the run after the Moro crime[11]. A group of Italian communists also moved to the

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imprigionato. Dinamiche sociali, nuovi scenari politici e costruzione della memoria nel secondo dopoguerra monfalconese (Monfalcone: Consorzio Culturale del Monfalconese –Istituto Regionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 2005); Alfredo Bonelli, *Fra Stalin e Tito. Cominformisti a Fiume, 1948–1956*, ed. Franco Cecotti (Trieste: Istituto Regionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1994); Luigi Lusenti, *Una storia silenziosa. Gli italiani che scelsero Tito* (Milano: Edizioni Comedit, 2014).

6 From Raoul Pupo, "L'esodo forzoso dall'Istria", in *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana*, eds. Piero Bevilacqua, Andreina De Clementi, and Emilio Franzina, I: *Partenze* (Roma: Donzelli, 2001), 385-96, to Enrico Miletto, *Gli italiani di Tito. La Zona B del territorio libero di Trieste e l'emigrazione comunista in Jugoslavia (1947–1954)* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2019).

7 Gloria Nemec, "Braccia per il socialismo. Italiani al lavoro volontario nella Jugoslavia post-bellica", in *Corpi al lavoro*, eds. Alessandro Casellato, and Gilda Zazzara (Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2015), 31-49.

8 Giacomo Scotti, *Goli Otok: Ritorno all'isola Calva* (Trieste: Lint, 1991), and *Goli Otok. Italiani nel gulag di Tito* (Trieste: Lint, 1997).

9 Orietta Moscarda Oblak, "Le memorie contrapposte di Goli Otok – Isola Calva", *Quaderni del CRSR*, 18 (2007): 69-101; Luigi Giuricin, *La memoria di Goli Otok –Isola Calva* (Rovigno: Centro Ricerche storiche di Rovigno, 2007); Gian Mario Villalta, *L'isola senza memoria* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2018).

10 Giacomo Scotti, *Il gulag in mezzo al mare. Nuove rivelazioni su Goli Otok* (Trieste: Lint, 2012).

11 Giuseppe Fiori, *Uomini ex. Lo strano destino di un gruppo di comunisti italiani in*

Golden City during the 1950s to take care of a clandestine radio station aimed at the Peninsula[12]. However, in communist Europe, beyond superficial internationalism, migrants, especially if political, are looked at with suspicion and often persecuted[13]. It is believed that they are spies or can exacerbate divisions by propagating views that conflict with those of the dominant communist group[14].

A fourth working theme could serve to frame the persecution of the Monfalconesi in the context of the expulsion from Yugoslavia of the Italian-speaking nuclei on the islands and along the Dalmatic coasts. Here, however, we enter the mined territory of the Julian-Dalmatian diaspora and of the anti-Italian "vengeance", which led to the tragedy of the foibe (natural sinkholes of the Karst Region, where the Yugoslav communists buried their adversaries)[15]. Beyond today's political exploitation of these events, i.e. the foibe and the Julian exodus used in contrast to the memories of the Holocaust or of the European resistance[16], a very bad page in Italian history opens. The Julian-Dalmatians who fled to the Peninsula were relegated to poorly served refugee camps and forced to expatriate again (so they arrived in Canada and Australia, bringing with them the Julians and Triestines who were already Italian citizens at the time)[17]. In fact, Italy did not want to help those who, although

Cecoslovacchia (Torino: Einaudi, 1993); Philip Cooke, "Da partigiano a quadro di partito: l'educazione degli emigrati politici italiani in Cecoslovacchia", *Ricerche storiche*, 101 (2006): 9-38, and "Italian Political Emigration to Czechoslovakia", in *The Italian Diaspora after the Second World War*, eds. Gaetano Rando, and James Hagan (Bivongi: International AM Edizioni, 2007), 273-84; Fernando Orlandi, "A Praga, A Praga!", in Roberto Bartali, et al., *Le vene aperte del delitto Moro* (Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2009), 119-159.

12 Paola Oliva Bertelli, *Praga, radio clandestina* (Milano: Terre di mezzo, 2008).

13 For the striking case of the Soviet Union, see Elena Dundovich, Francesca Gori and Emanuela Guercetti, *Gulag. Storia e memoria* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2004), and *Italiani nei lager di Stalin* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006).

14 This does not mean that migrations were not resorted to, especially from other communist countries, but that they were strictly controlled (and exploited): Alena K. Alamgir, "'Inappropriate behaviour': Labor control and the Polish, Cuban, and Vietnamese workers in Czechoslovakia", in *Labor in state socialist Europe, 1945–1989: Contribution to a history of work*, ed. Marsha Siefert (New York: Central University Press, 2020), 99-119, and Sara Bernard, "The regulation of international migration in the Cold War: a synthesis and review of the literature", *Labor History*, 64/4 (2023): 330-57.

15 The bibliography is enormous, for an introduction: Raoul Pupo, *Il lungo esodo. Istria: le persecuzioni, le foibe, l'esilio* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2005), and Enrico Miletto, *Novecento di confine. L'Istria, le foibe, l'esodo* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2020).

16 Giacomo Scotti, *Dossier foibe* (San Cesario di Lecce: Manni, 2022); Emilio Franzina, *La guerra delle foibe. Un inghiottitoio delle memorie con (due) divise* (Asiago: Odeonlibri, 2024).

17 For the refugee camps: *C.R.P. Centro Raccolta Profughi. Per una storia dei campi profughi istriani, fiumani e dalmati in Italia (1945/1970)* (Trieste: IRCI, 2004). For migration to Australia: Francesco Fait, *L'emigrazione giuliana in Australia (1954–1961)* (Udine: Ente regionale per i problemi dei migranti, 1999); *Giuliano-*

Italian-speaking, came from across the border. Italian officials underlined in various intergovernmental meetings the poverty of their nation, irreparably wounded by the war, and the impossibility of helping "foreign" refugees[18]. Furthermore, the police believed that those immigrants were possible communist spies or members of the Ustasha movement (we have very rich documentation on the matter[19]). The forces of the Italian left condemned them collectively as fascists (if Italian-speaking) or Ustasha (if Croatian)[20]. If we then investigate the right-wing or centrist press of the time, we see how the former feared, in the same way as the police, Tito's infiltration

Dalmati in Australia: contributi e testimonianze per una storia, ed. Gianfranco Cresciani (Trieste: Associazione Giuliani nel mondo, 1999); Viviana Facchinetti, *Storie fuori dalla storia. Ricordi ed emozioni di emigrati giuliano-dalmati in Australia* (Trieste: Lint, 2008); Gianfranco Cresciani, *Trieste goes to Australia* (Lindfield: Padana Press, 2011). For migration to Canada: Konrad Eisenblicher, "I Giuliano-Dalmati in Canada", *Italian Canadiana*, 9 (1993), 31-45; Viviana Facchinetti, *C'era una sVolta. Storie e memorie di emigrati giuliano-dalmati in Canada* (Trieste: Dalmati nel mondo, 2006); Claudio Antonelli, *Espatrio, fedeltà, identità. Omaggio all'Istria e al Canada* (Bagno a Ripoli: Edarc, 2007).

18 Archivio centrale dello Stato (Roma), Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale di Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Affari Generali Riservati, Cat. A16, Stranieri ed ebrei stranieri, AA.GG. (1930–1956), busta 23: IRO. Comitato misto PCIRO, Sedute plenarie (riunioni) 1947–1948, e busta 24, fasc. 26: Comitato Misto PCIRO. Sedute plenarie 1948-1950.

19 In Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito (Roma) see the case of a Croatian prostitute active in Rome, mistakenly considered the key element of an organization that would have seen Tito spies and Ustasha fugitives collaborate, while in reality she limited herself to having exponents of both groups as clients: serie RGPT, 327, Fuoriusciti croati in Italia – 1945, Titolo 1, sottotitolo 10, Pratica 24, anno 1945, Jugoslavia. Costituzione di un comitato anti Tito a Roma.

20 For a very well-known example: Piero Montagnani, "Profughi", *L'Unità*, 30 XI 1946. In the last years, a controversy arose over this article (see https://www.wumingfoundation.com/giap/2019/02/bufala-unita-1946/), in which several leftist intellectuals tried to show how the author didn't have any prejudice against the "Istrians". In fact, Montagnani didn't just condemned them, but all the refugees who fled Europe under Soviet control. We could ascribe his position to the grip of Stalinism on the Italian Communist Party and to the context of the Cold War, after all even a fine thinker like Gianni Rodari expressed himself against the "Istrians" in his years at *L'Unità*, the newspaper of PCI. However, we should reflect on the lack of communist empathy, even in Western Europe, towards refugees and migrants. These were considered possible cover for the anti-communists and in any case part of that "reserve" army used by the capitalists to depress workers' wages. In addition to the articles in the communist newspaper we can consider those in *Avanti!* and *Paese Sera*, extending this framework to the entire Italian left. This position was so encysted that it lasted well beyond the disappearance of the PCI: Maria Letizia Zanier, "Destra e sinistra di fronte agli immigrati: identità politica o conflitto di interessi?", in *Stranieri in Italia. Assimilati ed esclusi*, eds. Asher Colombo, and Giuseppe Sciortino (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 283-315.

and did not love refugees as a category, despite declaring that they wanted to help those who had been expelled from the territory now Yugoslavian. The second in turn thought that it was necessary to look after Italian citizens first and only in a second time after those coming from across the border.

In short, Claudia Sonia Colussi Corte's autobiography invites various possible research. Among other things, another one emerged from an email exchange with Eisenblicher. Many of Colussi's fellow believers and prisoners remained faithful to communist ideas like him. Why didn't they renounce ideals so tarnished in Yugoslavia and throughout Warsaw's Europe? How did they manage to still believe in revolutionary palingenesis in the face of the oppression of workers by the communist bureaucracy? And here we can also think of all those who had to flee Yugoslavia, even though they were not Italian. Recent studies have highlighted the many departures of Croats and Slovenians and how they led to the social and regional redesign of what are now the Croatian and Slovenian republics[21]. The various exoduses due to communist dictatorship deserve to be discussed, also because they led to the conflict between those who left and those who remained. Even today, the latter accuse the former of having abandoned them[22].

Reading this short autobiography can inspire a series of reflections on the Croatian and Slovenian history after the II World Wara, as well as the history of other Warsaw Pact countries. The translation of it, by Eisenblicher, also makes this text available to a wider audience than the Italian-speaking one and enriches the knowledge of the desperate lives in Tito's concentration camp (and in the country)[23]. Furthermore, it provides us with some glimpses into the personal and family lives of those "knights of the ideal": images that are not always appreciable today, when one naturally wonders why those militants were so ready to make their families pay the price for their political shortsightedness. After 1948, how could anyone believe they could remain in Yugoslavia while continuing to assert their trust in the Soviet Union?

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21 Katja Hrobat Virloget, "The 'Istrian Exodus' and the Istrian Society that Followed it", *Dve Domovini–Two Homelands*, 4/9 (2019): 163-79. On other escapes from that area and on its repopulation: Aleksej Kalc, "The other side of the 'Istrian exodus': immigration and social restoration of Slovenian coastal towns in the 1950s", Ibid., 145-61, and Igor Jovanović, "Illegal migration from the Croatian part of Istria from 1945 to 1968", Ibid., 181-96; see also Sandi Volk, *Esuli a Trieste* (Udine: Edizioni KappaVu, 2004).

22 See works by Pamela Ballinger, from *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), to *The World Refugees Made: Decolonization and the Foundation of Postwar Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020), passing through "Remapping the Istrian Exodus: New Interpretive Frameworks", in *At Home but Foreigners: Populations' transfers in 20th century Istria*, eds. Katja Hrobat, Catherine Gousseff, and Gustavo Corni (Koper, Univerzitetna založba Annales, 2015), 71-93, and Gloria Nemec, "The Hardest Years: Private Stories and Public Acknowledgement in the Recollections of Istrian Italians, Either Exiled or Stayed Behind", ibid., 141-59.

23 The autobiographical novel *Martin Muma* (edited by Mario Sambi. Vicenza: Ronzani, 2023) by the Istrian poet Ligio Zannini, who was in the same prison, was also published recently. The novel was written clandestinely during and after imprisonment.

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AMOR LIBERTATIS E TOLLERANZA NELL'EUROPA CENTRALE DELL'ETÀ MODERNA: QUESTIONI POLITICHE E RELIGIOSE

ABSTRACT
The essay aims to highlight some new interpretations that are emerging in the history of Central and Eastern Europe, especially regarding the tolerance and peaceful coexistence of groups of different religions and faiths (Jews, Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims, Lutherans, Calvinists, Socinians), while in the rest of Europe expulsions and religious wars were raging. In particular, the different readings of the Warsaw Confederation of 1573 examine the outcome of a political decision-making process. Retracing the history of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, without neglecting the numerous violent episodes, in that political-geographical area is important due to the centuries-old presence of different religions to explore political decisions. It is relevant to analyse the role of Poland, in particular, as a Christian bulwark to the Ottoman Empire. Recent studies enrich our knowledge of that area by analysing previously neglected documentation to reconstruct Poland's transition from a refuge for heretics to Catholic Poland and then to its disappearance from the European geopolitical map.

KEYWORDS: Tolerance; Multiconfessionalism; Politics; Poland; Central Europe.

Nell'Europa del Cinquecento, le onde dell'umanesimo e della filologia ingrossarono la già feroce critica alla decadenza morale della Chiesa e furono tra le molteplici cause che generarono la frattura dell'unità del cristianesimo: immediate ripercussioni si ebbero con l'esplodere delle guerre di religione e con tutta una serie di problemi che riguardavano la vita quotidiana. Il primo fu quello della coesistenza tra nuove minoranze e maggioranze cristiane, insieme ai preesistenti gruppi di non cristiani[1]. Già nei decenni precedenti, il problema si era posto: sulla base del principio della *limpieza de sangre*, tra fine XV e inizio XVI secolo, dopo i tentativi di conversione, nella penisola iberica si era avviata la politica di espulsione o di controllo delle minoranze, soprattutto quella ebraica e quella islamica[2] e,

1 Mark Greengrass, *La cristianità in frantumi. Europa 1517-1648* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2017) (ed. orig. 2015). Si veda pure Brad Gregory, *Gli imprevisti della Riforma. Come una rivoluzione religiosa ha secolarizzato la società* (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 2014) (ed. orig. 2012). Inoltre, rimando al classico Leszek Kołakowski, *Chrétiens sans Église: la conscience religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVII. siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987).

2 Nicholas Terpstra, *Purezza e fede. Esuli religiosi nell'Europa moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2020) (ed.or. 2015).

successivamente, la Riforma impose questioni di governo della popolazione in dimensioni inattese, provocando grandi flussi migratori. La pace di Augusta prevede infatti il riconoscimento di uno *ius migrandi* per coloro che non si riconoscessero nella scelta della fede del principe[3]. Di fronte all'impossibilità di avere un'unica fede nei propri confini, convinti che l'eterodossia religiosa aprisse le porte alla dissidenza politica, gli Stati si mossero diversamente: in molte realtà divamparono guerre di religione, come in Francia e nei Paesi Bassi, mentre, al contempo, l'idea e la pratica della tolleranza, intesa come sopportazione del male minore, furono sempre più discusse[4]. Per ricostruire con cura lo scenario di violenti sconvolgimenti che caratterizzò l'Europa, nel corso dell'Ottocento e del Novecento gli studiosi di storia della tolleranza hanno privilegiato l'analisi delle idee e quindi delle opere che portarono avanti l'istanza di tolleranza, dal classico *De haereticis an sint persequendi* di Sebastiano Castellione a Locke e Voltaire, mentre hanno trascurato, anche perché più difficili da far emergere, i casi in cui si provò a praticare la coesistenza pacifica[5]. Questa prospettiva teorica di storia delle idee è stata progressivamente accompagnata dall'emergere di un indirizzo di ricerca che, sulla scia della *history from below*, ha messo in risalto la pratica della coesistenza religiosa, ossia come le popolazioni abbiano trovato rimedio nella vita quotidiana alla presenza di persone di fede diversa dalla maggioranza. Pioniere di questa tendenza è stato Ben Kaplan con il suo *Divided by faith*[6], anticipato in parte da Hans Rudolf Guggisberg e poi da Alexandra Walsham con il suo *charitable hatred*[7]. Recentemente Kaplan e Geraerts

3 *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism in the Early Modern World*, ed. Thomas Max Safley (Leiden: Brill, 2011). Si veda pure *La formazione storica della alterità. Studi di storia della tolleranza nell'età moderna offerti a Antonio Rotondo*, eds. Henry Méchoulan, Richard H. Popkin, Giuseppe Ricuperati, and Luisa Simonutti, 3 voll. (Firenze: Olschki, 2001).

4 Yves Krumenacker, "La coexistence confessionelle aux XVII^{e} et XVIII^{e} siècles. Quelque problèmes de méthode", in *La coexistence confessionelle* à l'épreuve. Études sur les relations entre protestants et catholiques dans la France moderne, eds. Yves Krumenacker, and Didier Boisson (Lyon : Chrétiens et Sociétés, 2009), 107-25; Mark Greengrass, "Afterword: Living Religious Diversity", in *Living with Religious Diversity in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Scott Dixon, Dagmar Freist, and Mark Greengrass (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 281-95.

5 Si veda Lucia Felici, Girolamo Imbruglia, *La tolleranza in età moderna. Idee, conflitti, protagonisti (secoli XVI–XVIII)* (Roma: Carocci, 2024). Rimando ai miei "*La via dritta della salute.* Tolleranza e convivenza nell'Europa dell'età moderna", in *Ripensare la Riforma protestante. Nuove prospettive degli studi italiani*, ed. Lucia Felici (Torino: Claudiana, 2016), 353-72 e "Idee e pratiche della tolleranza nell'Europa dell'età moderna: a proposito di alcuni recenti studi", *Studi e materiali di Storia delle Religioni*, 87 (2021): 746-55.

6 Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007). Si veda ora Id., *Reformation and the Practice of Toleration. Dutch Religious History in the Early Modern Era* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

7 Hans R. Guggisberg, *Religiöse Toleranz: Dokumente zur Geschichte einer*

sono tornati sulla questione per sottolineare il significato storiografico e politico di questo genere di ricerche[8].

Di fronte a queste sfide storiografiche, Elena Bonora ha raccolto il guanto di sfida ponendosi alcuni interrogativi riguardo all'Europa multiconfessionale e al ruolo della Chiesa di Roma[9]. Si sono individuate nuove prospettive di ricerca da percorrere, le topografie di intolleranza e intolleranza, e si sono accantonate categorie (quella di confessionalizzazione), senza trascurare gli esiti più recenti, che vedono molti giovani studiosi non considerare affatto la storia delle idee[10]. Questi nuovi studi hanno posto in luce la giudizializzazione del conflitto confessionale come metodo di soluzione delle controversie e l'adattamento, *obtorto collo*, della Chiesa di Roma soprattutto con i nunzi che provarono a correggere quello che Bonora efficacemente definisce lo strabismo di Roma[11]. Laddove il cattolicesimo continuava a essere maggioranza, l'intransigenza era la regola: ne è testimonianza l'esemplare risposta del Sant'Uffizio alla richiesta che nel maggio 1602 il re cattolico Sigismondo Vasa pone circa l'atteggiamento da assumere nei confronti dei sudditi non cattolici. Lapidaria ma inequivocabile la risposta: il re deve costringerli a tornare al cattolicesimo[12].

A questo punto, mentre si vanno precisando sempre più i compromessi e gli accordi che garantirono la convivenza, è necessario che, ad esempio, rispetto ai nunzi, gli storici cerchino «di capire anzitutto di quali *visioni e progetti* furono interpreti quelle voci talvolta dissonanti tra loro, e di ricostruire i mutevoli rapporti di potere ai vertici della Chiesa che portarono a determinate scelte»[13]. In altre parole, è giunto il momento di esaminare i tanti attori su un palcoscenico sempre più affollato con copioni e partiture che lasciano spazio a interpretazioni persino sorprendenti a seconda della realtà sociale e politica nella quale si radicano. Soprattutto, si deve considerare la continua influenza e osmosi contaminante di idee e pratiche.

Date queste premesse, con l'Europa in cui infuriano le guerre di religione e ci sono timidi laboratori di convivenza religiosa, si nota come per un lungo periodo, la storia della tolleranza è stata scritta con una prospettiva che si è concentrata sull'Europa occidentale, trascurando l'Europa orientale. Negligenza grave visto che lì, per via della presenza antica di molte religioni e confessioni (luterani, cattolici, calvinisti,

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Forderung (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-holzboog, 1984), 9-11 e Alexandra M. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

8 Benjamin J. Kaplan, and Jaap Geraerts, *Introduction*, in *Early Modern Toleration: New Approaches*, eds. Id. (London: Routledge, 2023), 1-19.

9 Elena Bonora, "Quale Controriforma? Roma e l'Europa multiconfessionale", *Studi storici* 1 (2023): 21-52.

10 *Topographies of Tolerance and Intolerance. Responses to Religious Pluralism in Reformation Europe*, eds. Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, and Victoria Christman (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

11 Bonora, "Quale Controriforma?", 43.

12 Città del Vaticano, Archivio del Dicastero per la Dottrina della Fede, Stanza Storica NN3d, f. 47v.

13 Bonora, "Quale Controriforma?", 46.

ortodossi orientali, uniati, musulmani, ebrei, moravi e anabattisti), si trovano leggi che proteggono la libertà di coscienza[14]. Oltre che da motivi storico-politici, queste lacune sono influenzate dalle difficili condizioni delle fonti superstiti e dall'esigenza di conoscere molte lingue spesso poco frequentate. Inoltre, non è da sottovalutare come i confini dei diversi Stati dell'Europa centro-orientale siano ancor più porosi di quelli già mobili degli Stati dell'Europa occidentale. Porosità che determina rilevanti e frequenti variazioni politiche e quindi religiose[15]. La diffusione delle pratiche di coesistenza fu favorita e facilitata dalla estrema mobilità dell'aristocrazia da sempre caratterizzata da una forte connotazione cosmopolitica in un'area di antico pluralismo religioso e confessionale. Dal punto di vista storiografico, si osserva che molti studiosi che si sono occupati del tema hanno privilegiato lo sguardo romano e molti altri hanno contrapposto la storia delle idee, enfatizzando il fiorire del pensiero razionalistico all'interno del socinianesimo[16]. Inoltre, è d'obbligo ricordare l'influenza della matrice politica su questa storiografia almeno fino agli anni Novanta del secolo scorso. Entrambe queste prospettive fanno correre il rischio di offuscare o semplificare la complessa realtà religiosa e politica di quelle aree. Tuttavia, lo spostamento del baricentro storiografico dalla teoria alla pratica ha fatto sì che negli ultimi anni siano stati pubblicati (in inglese e in francese) un maggior numero di studi sull'Europa centro-orientale[17].

14 Paul Knoll, "Religious toleration in sixteenth- century Poland: political realities and social constraints", in *Diversity and Dissent: Negotiating Religious Difference in Central Europe*, eds. Howard Louthan, Gary B. Cohen, and Franz Szabo (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), 30-52. Si rimanda a Domenico Caccamo, *Eretici italiani in Moravia, Polonia, Transilvania (1558–1611). Studi e documenti* (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1999) e a Rita Mazzei, "Alle origini dell'immagine di Cracovia come città di esilio. Il ferrarese Antonio Maria Nigrisoli alla corte di Bona Sforza (1550-1555)", *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 123 (2011): 461-509.

15 Howard Louthan, "Multiconfessionalism in Central Europe", in *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism*, 369-92.

16 Rimando al classico studio del 1932 di Stanisław Kot, *Socinianism in Poland: The Social and Political Ideas of the Polish Antitrinitarians in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. E.M. Wilbur (Boston: Star King Press, 1957) e a *Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, eds. Martin Mulsow, and Jan Rohls (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

17 Fondamentali studi sulle teorie, oltre ai classici studi, da Bainton a Lecler, sono Lech Szczucki, "L'Antitrinitarismo in Polonia (Tendenze e prospettive)", in *Movimenti ereticali in Italia e in Polonia nei secoli XVI e XVII* (Firenze: Olschki, 1974), 5-41; Massimo Firpo, "Sui movimenti ereticali in Italia e in Polonia nei secoli XVI–XVII", *Rivista Storica Italiana*, LXXXVI (1974): 344-71; "Introduzione" a Lelio Sozzini, *Opere. Edizione critica*, ed. Antonio Rotondò (Firenze: Olschki, 1986), 9-72; Luca Addante, *Valentino Gentile e il dissenso religioso nel Cinquecento. Dalla Riforma italiana al radicalismo europeo* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2014); Mario Biagioni, *The Radical Reformation and the Making of Modern Europe: A Lasting Heritage* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016), e *The Oxford History of Dissenting Traditions*: vol. 1: *The Post-Reformation era, c.1559–c.1689*. ed. John Coffey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); i contributi di

Per quello che riguarda l'unione lituano-polacca, dominata dall'*amor libertatis*, l'immagine proposta dalla storiografia sin dall'Ottocento, in seguito alla terza spartizione del 1795, che cancellò la Polonia dall'Europa, è scandita dall'esaltazione della confederazione di Varsavia del 1573 e dall'agonia che annuncia la cattolicizzazione del XVII secolo (culminata con l'espulsione dei sociniani del 1658), che avrebbe reso la Polonia antemurale della cristianità, dopo essere stata definita asilo degli eretici per la politica di tolleranza dell'aristocrazia[18]. Si tratta di un'immagine che, sebbene non sia mai stata accolta da autorevoli studiosi, è stata ampiamente rivista da studi recenti, di cui intendo occuparmi qui, grazie ai quali si sono mostrate le varie sfaccettature di quel mondo religioso, ben oltre il cristianesimo. La lucida constatazione di Howard Hotson sulla necessità di definire l'Europa centrale e il lascito nella storiografia della novecentesca guerra fredda non pare ancora essere condivisa unanimemente[19].

Nel suo pionieristico studio, *A state without stakes*, pubblicato in polacco nel 1967 e tradotto in inglese nel 1973[20], Janusz Tazbir dà conto della resistenza politica alle continue interferenze religiose. Nel rintracciare le origini della Confederazione di Varsavia del 1573, dove si tratta dei *dissidentes de religione,* lo studioso legge il documento come l'adattamento del principio del *cuius regio eius religio* alla realtà polacca e soprattutto come indignata e atterrita risposta alla violenza della strage di San Bartolomeo, per ribadire che il re doveva temere gli aristocratici più di quanto loro non temessero lui, secondo l'interpretazione del calvinista Buzenski all'ambasciatore francese Jean de Monluc[21]. La Confederazione di Varsavia sarebbe poi stata ampiamente richiamata dai fautori della tolleranza religiosa in Francia.

Una prima messa a fuoco è quella di Michael G. Müller, che delinea il variegato mondo lituano-polacco dove gli ebrei poterono appellarsi a provvedimenti locali concessi di volta in volta da regioni e città, musulmani e tartari karaimi furono

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Riccarda Suitner, "Antitrinitarismo della prima età moderna e cultura italiana: Prospettive interdisciplinari", e Girolamo Imbruglia, "La religione sociniana: Culto e comunità", *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, vol. 102/1 (2022): 3-8, e 69-85.

18 Rispetto alla concezione della libertà di coscienza come derivante dalle libertà politiche della szlachta, Gromelski sottolinea: «Unrestrained freedom in "choosing the King of Kings, the lord of Heaven and earth" and holding particular beliefs without fear of oppression at the hands of authorities or fellow citizens were seen as no different from other rights or wolności», Tomasz Gromelski, *Liberty and liberties in early modern Poland-Lithuania* in *Freedom and the Construction of Europe*, eds. Quentin Skinner, and Martin van Gelderen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 215-34: 231.

19 Howard Hotson, *Central Europe, 1550–1700*, in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: a guide to research*, ed. David M. Whitford (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 161-206.

20 Janusz Tazbir, *A State Without Stakes: Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: The Kosciuszko Foundation, 1973).

21 Tazbir, *State Without Stakes*, 92.

tollerati *de facto* e la chiesa ortodossa non subì limitazioni[22]. Il caso lituano-polacco si distingue per aver introdotto un modello di tolleranza ampio per gli aristocratici e un altro non precisato che si applica ai non aristocratici «that collectively applied to certain groups of non-noble status and provided for pragmatic arrangements and where the degree of the religious freedoms granted, including the question of non-Catholic church organisations, ultimately depended on the very size as well as the social weight of the given group within the very much "multi-cultural" society of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth»[23]. Dunque una pratica di tolleranza che non discende da motivazioni teologiche, bensì quasi esclusivamente dalla politica. Il fatto che l'unione lituano-polacca fosse di per sé segnata dalla fragilità di tentare di unire due peculiari tradizioni giuridiche condiziona pure l'impossibile conciliazione di politica e religione: di fronte a un frastagliato mondo che sembrava non componibile, la soluzione della tolleranza pragmatica risolve questo nodo. Inoltre, la tanto decantata *pax dissidentium* del 1573 nasconde nodi non sciolti, poiché molti aspetti non erano trattati o chiariti. L'impatto fu ridotto, secondo Müller, e questo spiega come fu facile rimuoverla nel volgere di qualche anno

Attento anche all'influenza della politica sulla storiografia, Palmitessa ha esaminato la storia religiosa di Boemia e Polonia dal XIV e XV secolo come essenziale premessa agli sviluppi dottrinali e liturgici, sociali e politici fino alla metà del Seicento, presentando vicende e protagonisti. Quelle regioni sono spesso incubatrice di tensioni in cui poi divampa la rivolta e questo è favorito dalla combinazione di fattori linguistici, sociali, politici ed economici[24].

Significativamente il *Companion* sulla riforma nell'Europa centrale si chiude con un saggio *Tolerance and Intolerance* di Laura Lisy-Wagner e Graeme Murdock volto a esaminare «the strategies and policies adopted by state authorities and local communities to deal with the problem of religious diversity in a fluid and changing social and political environment» [25] . In molte zone dell'Europa centrale si garantiscono diritti di coscienza, non la libertà di culto, favorendo indirettamente episodi gravi di violenza religiosa. Nel corso del Seicento in diverse aree furono presi provvedimenti di espulsione contro gli ebrei e contro i non cattolici e solo nella seconda metà del Settecento, la persecuzione ereticale fu accantonata con atti di tolleranza, come quello del 1781 di Giuseppe II.

Il mosaico del pluralismo religioso dell'Europa orientale ha suscitato un rinnovato interesse: gli studiosi raccolti in *Reformations compared* hanno inteso chiarire nessi

22 Michael Müller, "Protestant confessionalisation in the towns of Royal Prussia and the practice of religious toleration in Poland-Lithuania" in *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, eds. Ole Peter Grell, and Robert W. Scribner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 262-81.

23 Müller, "Protestant confessionalisation", 265.

24 James R. Palmitessa, "The Reformation in Bohemia and Poland", in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 185-204.

25 Laura Lisy-Wagner and Murdock Graeme. "Tolerance and Intolerance", in *A Companion to the Reformation in Central Europe*, eds. Howard Louthan, and Graeme Murdock (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 451-74.

e rapporti fra situazioni e svolgimenti nel quadro istituzionale e di dinamiche sociali adottando un'ottica comparativa che ha incluso aree meno frequentate e conosciute[26]. Liudmyla Sharipova fa esplorare il mondo dei greco-ortodossi nell'Europa orientale, richiamato dalla storiografia anglofona (quasi esclusivamente) per la tolleranza e la convivenza pacifica, trascurando come lo scontro confessionale investì i greco-ortodossi, improvvisamente contesi (a fini conversionistici) dai cattolici e dai riformati[27]. Allo stesso modo, un'altra area importante dell'Europa centrale che spesso è trascurata: Ungheria e Transilvania sono, come significativamente titola Béla Vilmos Mihalik, all'ombra della luna crescente, quindi sotto il dominio dell'Impero ottomano. Territori e popolazioni con tradizioni e pratiche varie, non sempre assimilabili e con barriere linguistiche che ostacolano, o almeno complicano, la diffusione delle idee[28].

L'analisi delle soluzioni e dei compromessi nella pratica necessita di tener conto del coevo dibattito teologico-dottrinale, in quelle aree anche liturgico per la questione utraquista. In occasione della ricorrenza dei cinquecento anni, in un saggio del 2017, Daugirdas ha avanzato l'ipotesi che il ritardo nell'adesione alla Riforma sia dovuto alla politica intransigente del re Sigismondo I e che poi, anche in Polonia e Lituania, la Riforma si sia affermata, sotto Sigismondo II, come esito di un processo di reti europee che avrebbe portato il contemporaneo sviluppo di vari rami, incluso l'antitrinitarismo[29].

La diffusione delle dottrine riformate in Polonia è immediata e subito contrastata dal sovrano con la conseguenza che si affermò più tardi rispetto al resto dell'Europa. Lo stretto e indissolubile intreccio di religione e politica è sottolineato da tutti gli studiosi. Secondo Wyrva, l'indifferenza di Sigismondo II alle questioni religiose favorì la proliferazione di diversi gruppi in un clima di tolleranza che in realtà celava ben altre motivazioni: l'aristocrazia non sposò il luteranesimo, considerato sempre fede straniera, perché non ne condivideva la teoria politica, mentre ebbe più fortuna il calvinismo[30]. Nell'ammettere e accettare la tolleranza dei dissidenti cristiani, certi

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26 *Reformations Compared. Religious Transformations across Early Modern Europe*, eds. Henry A. Jefferies, and Richard Rex (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024).

27 Liudmyla Sharipova, "Beyond Toleration: The Eastern Orthodox Church in Reformation Europe", in *Reformations Compared*, 104-23.

28 Mihalik Béla Vilmos, "In the Shadow of the Crescent Moon: Hungary and Transylvania", in *Reformations Compared*, 80-103. Si veda pure István G. Tóth, "Between Islam and Orthodoxy: Protestants and Catholics in south-eastern Europe", in *The Cambridge History of Christianity,* ed. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, vol. 6: *Reform and Expansion, 1500–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 536-57.

29 Kęstutis Daugirdas, "The Reformation in Poland-Lithuania as a European Networking Process", *Church History and Religious Culture*, 97 (2017): 356-68.

30 Tadeusz Wyrwa, "Politique et Religion en Pologne au Temps de La Réforme", *Revue Historique*, 263 (1980): 59-79 e Jean-Marie Le Gall, "La Tolérance Polonaise à travers le prisme de l'intolérance française au XVI[e] Siècle", *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, 27 (2003): 53-84.

acuti osservatori cattolici avevano immaginato che concessa la tolleranza sarebbero nate molte chiese, di fatto frammentando l'opposizione alla chiesa di Roma e quindi indebolendo questo fronte antiromano:

> La tolérance et la liberté dans lesquelles agissaient en Pologne tous les courants résultant de la Réforme, au lieu de créer, ce qu'on pouvait croire, des mouvements bien organisés ou une Eglise nationale capable de rivaliser avec l'Eglise catholique, facilitèrent la division de ces courants, et par suite leurs querelles qui forcément devaient aboutir à leur affaiblissement".

Nel frattempo, la missione di unire e conciliare insieme tutte le famiglie riformate fu tentata dall'umanista erasmiano Jan Laski. I fratelli polacchi (Fratres polonisociniani) sono gli eredi dell'umanesimo e la loro caratteristica principale è di carattere etico oltre al radicalismo sociopolitico. Rispetto a editti e paci religiose, la confederazione di Varsavia rappresenta un unicum: non è *octroyee* dal sovrano, ma è il sovrano che deve firmarla: «était l'œuvre de la noblesse et pour la noblesse, personnifiant alors l'Etat polonais»[31].

Resta da considerare con molta attenzione il tema dell'intolleranza e dei vari fenomeni di persecuzione che si ebbero, esaminati da Magda Teter, che, dopo un indispensabile excursus sui rapporti tra corona, aristocrazia e chiesa cattolica, pone in discussione altresì l'immagine del trionfo del cattolicesimo in Polonia con tutte le sue ombre[32].

Come ha ben messo in evidenza Howard Louthan, volgere lo sguardo a Est per tracciare la storia della Riforma aiuta a superare alcuni punti di vista e interpretazioni che non reggono così come vacilla fortemente anche la cronologia finora accettata. Si pensi alla Boemia, dove con Jan Hus la crisi della chiesa è denunciata con forza, quasi un secolo prima della tempesta luterana. Allo stesso modo, si deve discutere della forma dell'adesione, poiché la riforma urbana non si applica all'Europa orientale. La matrice è il pluralismo religioso non solo cristiano, in cui confluisce il pluralismo etnico e quello istituzionale. Nei suoi precedenti studi, Louthan ha analizzato la strategia cattolica di riconquista di quelle aree, in particolare della Boemia, dopo la battaglia della Montagna bianca del 1620[33]. La Chiesa di Roma mise in atto una trasformazione che si basava su metodi conciliatori, rifiutandosi di attuare la repressione su larga scala anche perché si andava a riprendere un territorio che era stato perso più di due secoli prima, quando Hus era stato condannato al Concilio di Costanza, momento in cui si radicalizzò il motivo nazionalistico. A seguito dell'esecuzione, vi fu una vera e propria rivolta popolare che, in vari momenti, nel corso dei due secoli successivi, acquisì forza. Nel XVII secolo la Boemia torna sotto Roma, ma si tratta di un successo dell'ortoprassi e non dell'ortodossia, si riuscì in

31 Wyrwa, "Politique et Religion", 77

32 Magda Teter, *Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland: A Beleaguered Church in the Post-Reformation Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

33 Estremamente persuasive sono le analisi sulle ragioni della cattolicizzazione della Boemia, prima roccaforte di Jan Hus, di Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

qualche modo a ottenere una conformità dei comportamenti, dal momento che risulta molto arduo poter verificare quanto questi comportamenti rispondessero all'aver compreso e fatto proprie dottrine teologiche: ed è ciò che si può verificare dalle fonti.

Tuttavia, altrettanto interessante è porre sotto esame le premesse, il milieu culturale nel quale matura la crisi del cattolicesimo. Se in Boemia il culto di Hus catalizza adesioni e fa crescere la distanza da Roma, in Polonia, come in molte altre regioni europee, il pensiero erasmiano attecchisce proficuamente: nonostante questa premessa, il tema della fortuna polacca di Erasmo è stato a lungo trascurato[34]. Proprio mentre cominciava la diatriba sul libero arbitrio, orgogliosamente Erasmo poteva annunciare nel 1524, *Polonia mea est*[35]. Inoltre, esaltava la politica del re Sigismondo I e coltivava relazioni epistolari con numerosi umanisti polacchi sia attraverso lo studio di Cracovia che con il mondo degli stampatori per la corte e la chiesa. Sempre animato dalla speranza di poter ricucire la frattura del cristianesimo, Erasmo si faceva promotore di un messaggio di pace e di pietà rivolgendosi anche a quei suoi interlocutori e corrispondenti che ormai avevano scelto apertamente il luteranesimo. Le sue opere e il suo pensiero suscitavano aspre reazioni e confutazioni sia da parte cattolica che da quella luterana, ma in Polonia continuava a godere di gran credito. Diversamente da quello che avveniva nel resto d'Europa, il primo trattato antierasmiano sarebbe stato pubblicato qualche anno dopo la morte di Erasmo nel 1536. Se il mondo culturale religioso e politico polacco vide Erasmo con grande benevolenza, l'umanista non ricambiò con altrettanta conoscenza precisa e puntuale, poiché dalle lettere emerge una visione quasi utopica, cui guardare con speranza visto ciò che stava succedendo in Europa.

Dopo Tazbir, nel 2000 fu Jean Bérenger[36] a sottolineare come nell'Europa centro-orientale vi furono numerosi tentativi riusciti di convivenza tra fedi e confessioni diverse, smontando il pregiudizio della Polonia bastione del cattolicesimo contro gli assalti degli Ottomani. Dopo aver chiarito che quella messa in atto non può essere definita tolleranza, lo studioso ritiene, con giuste argomentazioni, che siano da considerare paci di religione. Con l'intento di esaminare la storia della tolleranza nel lungo periodo, Jean Bérenger va a fondo alla questione distinguendo tre livelli di tolleranza, partendo dal più basso quello della libertà di coscienza, che permette al singolo di praticare in privato la propria fede, come fu permesso all'aristocrazia dell'Austria meridionale dal 1652 al 1781, poi, la possibilità di praticare in pubblico come fu concesso ai protestanti dagli Asburgo dal 1781 e, infine, la possibilità di praticare le varie forme di cristianesimo come concesse in Ungheria Leopoldo II dal 1791. Bérenger parte quindi dall'esecuzione di Jan Hus al concilio di Costanza per arrivare all'affermazione della tolleranza civile da parte asburgica nel 1792, quando da una parte la costituzione americana e poi quella francese avevano recepito le

34 Howard Louthan, "A Model for Christendom? Erasmus, Poland, and the Reformation", *Church History*, 83/1 (2014): 18-37.

35 Percy S. Allen, ed., *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), vol. 5: *Letter 1488*, 534-36; citato da Louthan, "A Model for Christendom?", 20.

36 Jean Bérenger, *Tolérance ou paix de religion en Europe centrale (1415–1792)* (Paris, Honoré Champion, 2000).

istanze avanzate nel corso dei secoli. Il caso di Hus rappresenta uno spartiacque fondamentale per la storia religiosa e per quella politica, poiché, in seguito alla decisione repressiva dei padri conciliari, in Boemia comincia un ancor più aperto conflitto degli hussiti con lo Stato e con la Chiesa. I dissidenti, forti dell'appoggio politico importante che vantano, possono resistere e opporsi alla repressione, favorendo l'affermarsi della tolleranza religiosa. Per il Sacro Romano Impero, la discussione sulla tolleranza si radica con la fase critica, tra il 1530 e il 1546, quando si forma la lega di Smalcalda e i principi protestano contro Carlo V, rigettando l'imposizione del ritorno al cattolicesimo. L'arrivo e la diffusione del calvinismo complica ulteriormente il quadro dal momento che la pace di Augusta non lo riconosce. Negli stati prevale la confessionalizzazione e le misure di compromesso fino ad allora adottate sono abbandonate. Bérenger si occupa di misure meno note, tra cui la pace di Vienna del 1606 in cui l'arciduca d'Austria, Mattia, riconosce la pacificazione, in particolar modo "il libero uso ed esercizio della propria fede" e poi, per quello che riguarda il Principato di Transilvania, la dieta di Torda del 1569 che ammette una tolleranza *de jure* per le quattro confessioni cristiane, cattolica, luterana, calvinista e unitariana. La Transilvania rappresenta un'eccezione dal momento che, con la pace del 1568 tra gli Asburgo e gli Ottomani, la regione è «un condominium austro-turc et en fait, une principauté indépendante»[37]. Lì la diffusione della Riforma ha radici specifiche che risalgono alle conflittualità sociali e politiche e nel volgere di pochi anni, dagli anni Cinquanta, da Debrecen, considerata la seconda Ginevra, si irradia la Riforma verso l'Ungheria e la Transilvania con una notevole riduzione del cattolicesimo. Si diffonde molto rapidamente anche il socinianesimo.

Coacervo di popolazioni di culture e religioni diverse la Polonia, con la prima unione con la Lituania del 1386, ha raccolto in uno stato, polacchi, lituani, ruteni e tedeschi e fedi e confessioni diverse, etnie e religioni diverse. I privilegi accordati all'aristocrazia lituana sono stati, secondo Bérenger, alla base della tolleranza poi riconosciuta[38].

Muovendosi principalmente su fonti di storia delle istituzioni, Bérenger fa discendere la tolleranza dalla cornice politica, ribadendo che in età moderna ogni fede rivendica per sé la verità. A suo avviso, si tratta quindi di sottolineare l'importanza della politica nel definire i limiti del potere dei ceti e all'interno di questa sfera, rientra pure la questione religiosa. Per questo parla di regime di "democrazia nobiliare"[39].

Il prevalere del politico sul religioso può essere confermato anche dal conflitto tra Paolo IV e il re di Polonia e Lituania, Sigismondo Augusto, per la nomina di Uchanski, conflitto, ricomposto solo dalla morte del pontefice, spia della volontà

37 Bérenger, *Tolérance ou paix de religion*, 133. Per un altro caso interessante, si veda Massimo C. Giannini, "Una crociata francescana? Giochi diplomatici e controllo dei Luoghi Santi a metà Seicento", in *La crisi della modernità: studi in onore di Gianvittorio Signorotto*, eds. Matteo Al Kalak, Lorenzo Ferrari, and Elena Fumagalli (Roma: Viella, 2023), 345-74.

38 Sui Ruteni, si veda ora Laurent Tatarenko, *Une réforme orientale à l'âge baroque. Les Ruthènes de la grande-principauté de Lituanie et Rome au temps de l'Union de Brest (milieu du XVI^e siècle–milieu du XVII^e siècle)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2021).

39 Bérenger, *Tolérance ou paix de religion*, 152 e sgg.

del sovrano polacco di non ammettere ingerenze da parte di nessuno al suo potere. La risposta romana non si farà però attendere con la nomina a cardinale dell'intransigente Stanislaus Hosius nel 1561 quando Jan Laski tenta di addivenire a un'unificazione delle diverse tendenze della Riforma. Dopo l'unione di Lublino del 1569, con l'estinzione della dinastia degli Jagellone, nel 1573 con la confederazione di Varsavia si riconosce agli aristocratici (*szlachta*) libertà religiosa che, secondo Bérenger, discende direttamente dalla prassi tardomedievale in uso nel granducato di Lituania e da precise decisioni politiche dirette a rivendicare la difesa dell'autonomia dell'aristocrazia da interventi monarchici o romani.

In questo quadro politico articolato, Bérenger segue poi la diffusione del socinianesimo e il coevo successo della controriforma in Austria durante il Seicento e poi in Polonia, la riconquista cattolica dell'Ungheria, la lettura della Guerra dei trent'anni ultima guerra di religione per giungere all'epilogo con l'editto di tolleranza di Giuseppe II nel 1781, di cui rintraccia le diverse motivazioni.

Bérenger delinea, con una decisa impronta interpretativa, una buona sintesi storica fondata su bibliografia edita: insiste sulla dimensione politica e privilegia l'aspetto istituzionale senza soffermarsi molto sulle cause e sulle conseguenze di quelle decisioni, basandosi quasi esclusivamente su fonti secondarie. La bibliografia è ridotta, ma comunque sufficiente a farsi una prima idea.

Tra il 2000 e il 2024 sono stati pubblicati più saggi sull'Europa centro-orientale e sulla tolleranza[40]. Intorno ai due estremi, quello della tolleranza e quello dell'esclusione, Daniel Tollet, con il suo ultimo studio, sviluppa gli spunti e le sollecitazioni raccolti nel corso degli anni. Partendo dai suoi studi sugli ebrei di Polonia, Tollet è arrivato a formulare l'ipotesi che «ce qui conditionnait la vie des groupes religieux a-catholiques était leur rapport à la religion dominante, le catholicisme»[41]. Ha deciso quindi di esaminare la politica religiosa rispetto a tutti i gruppi in modo da porre in rilievo analogie e differenze. Per verificare questa ipotesi, ha esplorato numerosi archivi prendendo in esame fonti primarie e ha fissato dei punti di rottura nella storia. Tollet restituisce così spazio e voce ai gruppi minoritari come armeni, ebrei, caraiti e tatari musulmani, attivi nel complesso mondo religioso esistente. Allargando lo sguardo oltre i confini del cristianesimo, si mette alla prova la categoria di tolleranza: l'esame del trattamento riservato alle altre minoranze, in primis quella ebraica, è fondamentale per questo fine. Si pongono in evidenza gli effetti della politica sulla vita delle varie comunità, tra i quali l'influenza degli esiti delle guerre, che provocano immediate migrazioni di fuga o di ritorno. Nei tre capitoli, che sono in realtà parti, la cronologia (dal XVI a metà XVII secolo, dalla fine del XVII all'inizio del XVIII secolo, dal 1733 al 1795) scandisce il contesto generale, le relazioni tra fedi cristiane, e poi quelle con i non cristiani. L'analisi parte dal secolo d'oro della tolleranza: dopo che negli anni Quaranta, si era ampiamente diffuso il calvinismo, il regno di Sigismondo II (1548–1572) si caratterizza per le continue negoziazioni (soprattutto

40 Laurent Tatarenko, "Pluriconfessionnalité et politique de tolérance: le cas de la Pologne", in *L'Europe en conflits*, ed. Wolfgang Kaiser (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 239-65.

41 Daniel Tollet, *Entre tolérance et exclusion. Essai sur les relations entre les religions dans la Confédération polono-lituanienne (XVI^e^–XVIII^e^ siècles)* (Paris, Honoré Champion, 2024), 13.

per i matrimoni e per le guerre) con l'aristocrazia, abile a rinverdire tradizioni e privilegi ormai desueti. In questo costante confronto, durante la Dieta di Piotrkòw del 1552 si giunge a uno dei primi momenti di scontro tra la chiesa di Roma e l'aristocrazia per le rivendicazioni contrapposte[42]. Tra queste c'è anche la richiesta di riconoscimento della libertà religiosa per gli aristocratici, richiesta che va letta in funzione dell'equilibrio tra le forze politiche. Intanto, la chiesa cattolica polacca elabora delle proposte di riforma per presentare le quali il re manda due delegazioni a Roma, invano. Paolo IV rifiuta di accogliere le richieste che prevedevano la liturgia in polacco, la comunione sotto le due specie e il matrimonio per il clero, suscitando una dura reazione polacca, proprio mentre naufragano le speranze di Jan Laski di unire il multiforme mondo della Riforma. Nel caso polacco la chiesa di Roma mostra miopia e incapacità di lettura, non riuscendo a rispondere adeguatamente alle istanze e involontariamente facilitando il costituirsi di un blocco in cui si coalizzano gli avversari (si noti la convergenza tra Bonora e Tollet). C'è addirittura un tentativo da parte luterana di convincere i greco-ortodossi.

Negli anni successivi le tensioni religiose aumentano con la cristallizzazione delle differenze, come dimostra la decisione di Sigismondo II di riconoscere i decreti tridentini, decisione che non è ratificata dalla dieta. Nel 1570 si giunge poi alla confessione di Sandomierz, una forma di concordia religiosa tra i vari gruppi di riformati (esclusi i fratelli polacchi) che avrebbe dovuto rafforzarne le istanze. Con la morte del sovrano, gli equilibri cambiano ancora e, al suo arrivo, Enrico Valois deve riconoscere la confederazione di Varsavia, che, all'articolo 3, impedisce arresto e confisca per motivi religiosi[43]. Celebrata come uno spartiacque nella storia della tolleranza, il documento nasce dalla volontà di proteggere la Polonia da quella violenza che altrove imperversa. Il racconto della strage della notte di San Bartolomeo si diffonde ovunque e diventa monito e minaccia alla stabilità politica. Secondo Tollet, l'enfasi rivolta alla confederazione di Varsavia risente della lettura parziale che ha deliberatamente messo in ombra come l'apice del 1573 fu seguito da un quasi precipitoso declino con la ricattolicizzazione forzata.

Rispetto ad altre ricostruzioni, pregio di Tollet è quello di intrecciare le vicende istituzionali con percorsi individuali, come quello di Mikolaj-Krzystof Radziwill, il primo magnate lituano a convertirsi al cattolicesimo, destinato quindi a svolgere un ruolo notevole per il progetto di ricondurre quelle popolazioni al cattolicesimo. Radziwill è tra l'altro autore di un'interessante relazione di viaggio in Terra Santa, composta tra il 1594 e il 1595 e pubblicata in polacco soltanto nel 1962. Inoltre, Tollet allarga l'esame alle opere per porre in evidenza l'influenza reciproca di teoria e pratica e la discussione europea su questioni spinose, *in primis* quella dell'imposizione di un'unica fede.

L'ascesa al trono di Sigismondo III nel 1588 favorisce ulteriormente l'azione dei gesuiti e allarma di conseguenza l'aristocrazia ucraina che teme ingerenze nella politica di tolleranza. Il re, che per un breve periodo cinge anche la corona di Svezia, riesce, adottando misure di persuasione e senza coercizione, a dare una spinta al processo di

42 Tollet, *Entre tolérance et exclusion*, 33.

43 Si possono leggere notevoli resoconti sulle convulse reazioni romane alle trattative per la confederazione di Varsavia nel portale open-access *Graziani Archives* [https://grazianiarchives.eu].

conversione-ritorno al cattolicesimo. In questo processo, è determinante la politica di esclusione dai benefici concessi dalla corona: ancora una volta, le trasformazioni religiose passano per la politica. La confessionalizzazione è presentata come indispensabile arma per rendere la Polonia antemurale della cristianità contro gli Ottomani: per questo è necessario far cadere il riconoscimento della Confederazione di Varsavia. Si può verificare la rapidità della confessionalizzazione con la repentina riduzione della rappresentanza dei riformati nel Senato: nel 1572 sono circa il 40 per cento, mentre nel 1632 solo il 5 per cento. Gli effetti sulla tolleranza sono immediati con il passaggio all'ubbidienza cieca alla chiesa con numerosi episodi di assalto ai luoghi di culto dei non cattolici.
Pertanto, a questo punto dilaga la violenza che si era cercato di tenere fuori dai confini dell'unione polacco-lituana grazie alla confederazione di Varsavia. Una violenza che si dirige verso gli edifici e soprattutto contro le persone.

Altrettanto difficile è la situazione dei greco-ortodossi, perché questi riconoscono come proprio capo il patriarca di Costantinopoli, a sua volta suddito del sultano, e dei ruteni, dal momento che i piani di coinvolgere Mosca in una campagna contro gli Ottomani falliscono e quelli di latinizzazione messi in campo dai gesuiti trionfano. Nel 1596 si costituisce una comunità greco-cattolica. Ci sono poi gli armeni che entrano nei piani del nunzio Giovanni Francesco Commendone.
Seguendo e analizzando le relazioni tra cattolici e le molte altre realtà cristiane, si pongono in evidenza alcune caratteristiche ricorrenti. Contro la cattolicizzazione e polonizzazione, molti gruppi preservano la loro fede, rivendicando la propria giurisdizione e il mantenimento dei loro privilegi[44].
Per quanto riguarda poi i rapporti con i non cristiani, Tollet approfondisce l'esame della condizione degli ebrei che risiedevano in Polonia da secoli. Il luogo comune che la Polonia fosse il paradiso per gli ebrei nasce in virtù di alcuni provvedimenti che furono presi in favore dell'autonomia della comunità e che però, nel lungo periodo, nascondono forti pregiudizi. Dalla fine del XVI secolo in Polonia, come nell'Europa occidentale, si istituiscono ghetti densamente popolati e la giudeofobia esplode nel Seicento riproponendo stereotipi e accuse, ma soprattutto scatenando rappresaglie violente. Per ricordare solo un episodio, si pensi che nel 1656 gli ebrei polacchi furono accusati di aver cospirato con i luterani svedesi e quest'accusa fu il pretesto per azioni di violenza tanto gravi da far intervenire il re perché questi atti cessassero[45].
Altra comunità ebraica è quella dei caraiti che godono di uno statuto privilegiato e nel XVI secolo i dotti caraiti svolgono una fondamentale mediazione linguistica tra religioni diverse, attirando la diffidenza da parte cattolica e da parte ebraica. Anche i tatari hanno potuto godere di privilegi in Lituania fin dal 1397.
Volgendo lo sguardo indietro fino all'insediamento dei diversi gruppi, Tollet sottolinea la precedente prassi di convivenza e tolleranza e le campagne di conversione che, dalla seconda metà del Cinquecento, furono portate avanti dai gesuiti, pionieri sul campo e dallo scrittoio, come opportunamente ricordato. L'azione pastorale è accompagnata da quella politica, prima con misure sempre più

44 Rimando a Gaetano Platania, *Rzeczpospolita. Europa e Santa sede tra intese ed ostilità (Saggi sulla Polonia del Seicento)* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2017, 2° ed.).

45 Tollet, *Entre tolérance et exclusion*, 188.

restrittive e poi con provvedimenti di esclusione: «le courant de la Contre-Réforme, qui ne voulait admettre que des chrétiens romains dans un état chrétien latin, tenta de mettre fin à la tolérance dont les minorités religieuses avaient joui»[46].
La riconquista cattolica dell'Europa orientale è favorita dalla crisi che percorre l'Impero ottomano: soffermandosi sulla trattatistica apologetica e propagandistica di matrice cattolica, Tollet rischia di dare l'impressione che il papato riesca a recuperare un ruolo internazionale, quando ormai Roma è attore di secondo piano. Aspetto ben chiarito dal porre in evidenza il rifiuto di Luigi XIV a intervenire in soccorso degli Asburgo nel 1683 perché "l'ère des croisades était terminée"[47] e dal bilancio magro di questa campagna di riconquista. A pagare la crisi politica ed economica dell'Unione lituano-polacca sono i fratelli polacchi, da sempre invisi sia ai cattolici che ai riformati, espulsi con un provvedimento della Dieta del 1658, e pertanto si inaugura una stagione di intolleranza nei confronti dei non cattolici, ritenuti colpevoli della disfatta militare con la Svezia. Le decisioni di politica religiosa sono quasi sempre il riflesso del cambiamento di equilibri sul fronte internazionale.

Preziosi sono i dati raccolti da Tollet presso l'archivio romano dei gesuiti sulle conversioni degli ebrei: tra il 1670 e il 1730, risultano 84 casi, dato che dimostra un esito modesto. Tentativi di convertire gli ebrei sono anche da parte di Propaganda fide e dai pietisti di Halle. Allo stesso modo, sono molto utili le opere analizzate perché restituiscono voci a dibattiti trascurati su questioni come quella dell'unione delle varie chiese, del passaggio al rito latino e del riconoscimento del patriarca in un contesto geopolitico in vivace cambiamento con l'egemonia svedese subito minacciata dalla crescente ambizione russa di Pietro il grande.
Significativa è la svolta della Dieta del 1717 che revoca ogni libertà religiosa prima riconosciuta e dichiara illegali gli edifici religiosi non cattolici costruiti dopo il 1674. Finisce un'era, sebbene si animi una resistenza politica e intellettuale, presto sostenuta dagli interventi della Prussia e dell'Inghilterra, «le dogme de la tolérance religieuse fût entièrement abandonné»[48]. Il vescovo di Vilnius, Jerzy-Kazimierz Ancuta si fa portavoce del nuovo spirito di intolleranza, pubblicando un'opera, *Jus plenum religionis in Regno Polonia et Magno Ducatu Lituaniae* (1719), in cui rivendica il diritto di escludere i non cattolici. Secondo Ancuta, sono stati i provvedimenti di tolleranza, dalla Confederazione di Varsavia in poi, a provocare la decadenza polacca, per questo equipara gli eretici a traditori. Ritorna così il motivo nazionalistico con forti spinte xenofobe.
Nella terza parte, *Lumières et fanatisme*, la definizione stessa di Illuminismo, la massoneria e il dibattito culturale sui diritti fanno da sfondo ai preparativi delle grandi potenze che, con le tre spartizioni, cancellano la Polonia dallo scacchiere europeo. Negli ultimi anni di vita del regno le ingerenze internazionali sugli affari polacchi aumentano esponenzialmente, facendo leva sul versante religioso. In questa parte, Tollet meritoriamente rivela le letture parziali della storiografia polacca, spiegandone le ragioni.
Sebbene il ritorno alla tolleranza religiosa voluto da Poniatowski sia accolto con

46 Tollet, *Entre tolérance et exclusion*, 229.

47 Tollet, *Entre tolérance et exclusion*, 235.

48 Tollet, *Entre tolérance et exclusion*, 323.

ostilità da molti, indiscutibilmente prepara i lavori della Dieta del 1788, che dura 4 anni. Fautori e critici della tolleranza in uno Stato che decide di essere non confessionale si confrontano apertamente. Dopo non poche tensioni con gli Stati confinanti, si approda alla Costituzione, varata nel maggio 1791, che però non impedisce né arresta gli esiti tragici delle successive due spartizioni. Rispetto a Bérenger, Tollet sottolinea l'importanza della reciproca influenza dei vari attori religiosi anche nel dialogo e nello scontro con la politica.
Attraverso l'analisi delle relazioni interconfessionali e delle relazioni interreligiose nel lungo periodo, Tollet traccia un bilancio delle politiche intraprese ben sintetizzate dal titolo scelto, *Entre tolérance et exclusion*, che lascia affiorare tutte le contraddizioni e i compromessi che vissero i cristiani e le molte minoranze presenti, con rivolte e con tentativi di integrazione e assimilazione.
Per concludere questa rassegna, alcuni studiosi si sono confrontati intorno a dei casi di studio, esaminati su fonti primarie, che prendono in considerazione, tra XVI e XVIII secolo, per sottoporre a verifica come nell'Europa orientale la questione della tolleranza, dell'irenismo e della coesistenza pacifica siano state affrontate e quale soluzione sia stata sperimentata e con quale successo[49]. Sono casi che sollevano molti interrogativi anche in funzione comparativa rispetto alle esigenze urgenti di uniformità religiosa che escludono ogni ipotesi di riconoscimento dei diritti delle minoranze[50]. Molti dei casi presi in esame rivelano come un certo pragmatismo della vita quotidiana si sia affermato. Fortunatamente questo interesse per i vari laboratori di coesistenza non impedisce di porre in luce i limiti di questa politica con tutto il seguito di orribili episodi di violenza. Si fa dunque forte un'ipotesi generale «that the origins, shapes, and impact of multiconfessional coexistence in Eastern and Central Europe were instrumental in building confessional identities and confessional cultures»[51]. Sono tredici saggi divisi in tre parti (la prima *Terms of Coexistence between Law and Tradition, la seconda Theology, Communication, Politics e la terza Radical Century or Age of Toleration?*).
Prima di entrare *in medias res*, indispensabile l'orientamento dato da Voigt-Goy tra esercizio religioso pubblico, privato e domestico: nei territori del Sacro Romano Impero, dopo la dieta di Augusta, si aprono casi di conflitto giurisdizionale sui quali è chiamata a esprimersi la Corte imperiale per definire l'estensione dello *ius reformandi*. Di fatto queste decisioni fanno avanzare il dibattito che porta al riconoscimento della libertà di coscienza. Questa differenziazione sarebbe poi entrata nelle discussioni per la pace di Westphalia[52]. Gli studiosi presentano casi

49 *Searching for Compromise? Interreligious Dialogue, Agreements, and Toleration in 16th–18th Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Maciej Ptaszynski, and Kazimierz Bem (Leiden: Brill, 2024).

50 Un'interessante analisi sui risvolti economici della pratica della tolleranza si trova in *Persecution and Toleration. The Long Road to Religious Freedom*, eds. Mark Koyama, and Noel Johnson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019).

51 Maciej Ptaszyński, "Introduction: Searching for Compromise" in *Searching for Compromise?*, 22.

52 Christopher Voigt-Goy. "*Private*, *Public*, and *Domestic* Exercise of Religion.

di studio in qualche modo evocativi della particolarità sociale, politica e giuridica dell'Europa orientale: ne è un esempio Padalinski che prende in esame tre eventi lituani per illustrare la reazione della monarchia alle crescenti pretese dei gesuiti, pretese che sfociano in dibattimenti giudiziari[53].

Sono presentati casi molto interessanti, benché non sempre significativi di strategie che avrebbero potuto essere intraprese altrove. Queste analisi pur circoscritte rivelano dialoghi, accordi e scontri con attenzione alla genesi e alla crescita di queste realtà. Pregio di questa raccolta è il tenere insieme la pratica e la teoria nel tentativo di mostrarne le reciproche influenze. Così per ricostruire il caso dell'espulsione dei sociniani del 1658, Maciej Ptaszyński esorta a rivedere le conclusioni alla luce dell'analisi delle opere del sociniano Jonas Schlichting, erede di Erasmo e precursore dell'Illuminismo: «the clash between the Polish Brethren and other confessions was a typical confrontation of the confessionalization era, and the Socinians experienced the same evolution as other churches»[54].

Accanto alla sempre più controversa categoria di tolleranza, di multiconfessionalismo e di coesistenza, ha preso nuovo spessore quella di irenismo, come dimostra Alexander Schunka, che propone di utilizzare questa categoria «to investigate the relationship between early modern theology and politics from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century»[55] . Nel corso dei secoli, tra irenismo e pan-protestantesimo, si alternano le proposte di riunire le diverse confessioni ed è possibile ricostruire una genealogia che dalla patristica giunge fino al movimento dell'ecumenismo.

Nelle conclusioni Luise Schorn-Schütte tira le file: questi studi hanno esaminato e quindi spiegato, da una parte «miscrostructures forming the basis of confessional or religious coexistance in various regions», e, dall'altra si sono interrogati «regarding the character of this coexistence [...]: did it provide a pragmatic coexistence in connection with traditions of the Middle Ages, basic toleration of the right to exist, or a protected space for confessional or religious development?»[56]. Si devono così ridimensionare le tesi finora accolte e insistere nell'analisi circoscritta, sollecitando maggiore attenzione al contesto istituzionale e alle riflessioni teoriche come frutto di scambi anche sotterranei di idee.

Questi recenti studi costringono a rivedere categorie che non si adattano alla realtà lituano-polacco e soprattutto fanno affiorare, con grande evidenza, i limiti e i pregi della storiografia precedente che deve essere conosciuta per poter essere superata. In questo modo, i debiti contratti rispetto ai prestigiosi lavori sulle nunziature e

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Origins of an Instrument of Early Modern Religious Peacemaking", in *Searching for Compromise?*, 35-55.

53 Uladzimir Padalinski. "Social Conditions of Religious Coexistence in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Three Cases of the Late Sixteenth Century", in *Searching for Compromise?*, 89-109.

54 Maciej Ptaszynski "Toleration and Religious Polemics: The Case of Jonas Schlichting (1592–1661) and the Radical Reformation in Poland", in *Searching for Compromise?*, 248-95: 287.

55 Alexander Schunka. "Reformed Irenicism and Pan-Protestantism in Early Modern Europe", in *Searching for Compromise?*, 299-329.

56 Luise Schorn-Schütte, *Afterword*, 402-04.

sul mondo delle gerarchie romane, come quelli sulla storia delle idee di tolleranza, possono essere ripagati allargando lo sguardo, consapevoli ormai della reciproca e mutevole influenza esercitata dagli attori coinvolti, sia quelli istituzionali che i singoli individui[57].

57 Si vedano i saggi in "Diplomats and Diplomacy in the early modern Polish-lithuanian Commonwealth (XVII century)", *Eastern European History Review*, 4 (2021), eds. Alessandro Boccolini, and Dorota Gregorowicz.

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I NUNZI DI PAPA URBANO VIII NELLA RZECZPOSPOLITA DEI WAZA. Series: *Acta Barberiniana*, vol. 7, edited by Alessandro Boccolini, and Gaetano Platania. Viterbo, Sette Città, 2024, pp. 188.

This volume, published in 2024, is the result of the international conference *I nunzi di papa Urbano VIII nella Rzeczpospolita dei Waza*, organised by Istituto Nazionale di Studi Romani, under the scientific direction of Professor Gaetano Platania director of the same institute, and Professor Massimo Carlo Giannini, president of the *Comitato Nazionale per le celebrazioni del IV centenario dell'elezione papale di Urbano VIII (1623–2023*), established by the Italian Minister of Culture. The conference and the subsequent volume are part of the initiatives promoted by the Committee with the support of public and private cultural institutions, with the aim of "restoring to Italian citizens a knowledge and a re-reading of the papacy as the keystone of a century – the 17th century – that has only been re-evaluated in recent decades and that deserves to be brought to light". Pope Urbano VIII, who lived in an era of religious conflicts, wars and censorship – but also of great artistic and linguistic flourishing – played a key role in the Seventeenth century in Europe. The celebration of the 400th anniversary of his election to the papacy (1623) allows us to rediscover the complexity of this character, his court and the Modern Age, overcoming stereotypes and hagiographic readings. In this perspective, *I nunzi di papa Urbano VIII nella Rzeczpospolita dei Waza* is helpful to take a closer look at the complex relations between the Pontiff and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, led by the Waza family, in the years of Barberini's pontificate. It was a critical moment characterized by intense relations that showed a specific interest of Pope Urban VIII and the court of Rome in Central and Eastern Europe against the backdrop of important events affecting Continental Europe, above all, the Thirty Years' War. The hope is to open a new season of research on the figure and politics of Urban VIII, integrating the traditional historiography of Pope Barberini with modern studies on papal diplomacy and Central and Eastern Europe, being able to count on the number of documents relating to the Barberini family preserved in the Vatican Library and the Vatican Apostolic Archive.

Alessandro Boccolini and Gaetano Platania edit this volume. It is divided into a preface, written by Massimo Carlo Giannini which introduces the seven interventions presented at the conference. The contributions—indexed according to a chronological and thematical perspective—offer analyses on various aspects, ranging from the apostolic nunciature as an institution to a prosopographic reading of the papal representatives sent to Warsaw by Urban VIII to the work of individual nuncios and their activities in Poland.

The first contribution, authored by Matteo Sanfilippo, is titled *Un prodromo cinquecentesco: il mancato ottenimento del cardinalato da parte di Annibale Di Capua*. Sanfilippo uses the case of Annibale Di Capua's diplomatic endeavours in Poland to

reflect critically on the challenges faced by papal nuncios when their missions do not achieve their intended objectives. He argues that Di Capua's inability to secure the cardinalate and the broader failures of his nunciature exemplify the recurrent tension between personal ambitions and the intricate geopolitical realities of the era. Sanfilippo meticulously retraces Di Capua's biography. Born in 1544 into a noble Neapolitan family loyal to the Spanish monarchy, Annibale was groomed for an ecclesiastical career as the second-born son. A profound interest in intellectual life overshadowed his academic pursuits in canon and civil law at Padua and Pavia. During this formative period, he established a relationship with Torquato Tasso, who later referenced Di Capua in the eighth canto of *Rinaldo* and expressed hopes for his elevation to the cardinalate.

Following a tenure at a Jesuit college in Rome, Di Capua connected with Ugo Boncompagni, who would become Pope Gregory XIII and facilitated his ecclesiastical advancement. Di Capua attained the titles of *referendario di ambedue le signature* and secret chamberlain to the Pope while aspiring to the archdiocese of Otranto, a position held by his paternal uncle, Pietro Antonio, who was reluctant to vacate the seat and suspected of heretical leanings, complicating Di Capua's ambitions. With papal backing, Di Capua entered Roman diplomacy, first serving as extraordinary nuncio to Prague to Rudolf II in 1576 and subsequently as nuncio to Venice the following year. However, his effectiveness in these postings was limited; in Prague, he merely conveyed the Pope's greetings, while in Venice, he failed to mitigate the pro-Protestant sentiments of patriarch Giovanni Grimani. Concurrently, his uncle retained control of the Otranto archdiocese and recommended to Rome that Annibale be reassigned. The sudden death of the Archbishop of Naples, Paolo Burali d'Arezzo, in 1578 presented a new opportunity for Di Capua. Despite opposition from several aristocratic families, he was appointed archbishop, bolstered by Spanish support. Di Capua's tenure in Naples was marked by a vigorous Counter-Reformation zeal, which focused on clergy reorganization, enhanced censorship, and improved ecclesiastical structures. He conducted a pastoral visit to identify systemic issues, including clerical inefficiencies and insufficient parishes. He proposed the establishment of twenty-five new parishes funded by ecclesiastical taxes—an initiative that ultimately faltered. Simultaneously, he intensified oversight of the press, mandating episcopal approval for new publications and instituting a censorship regime to restrict the dissemination of prohibited literature. He was recalled to diplomatic service after seven years in the pastoral role. In 1586, he was dispatched to Poland as nuncio with legate "a latere" powers at the court of Stephen I Báthory. Given Báthory's ambitions in Russia, a high-calibre papal representative was necessary. Di Capua was selected for this mission due to his aristocratic ties, wealth, and connections with Spain and the Austrian Habsburgs. Moreover, Di Capua viewed this assignment as a critical opportunity to achieve the cardinalate, a goal that had eluded both his predecessor and uncle. However, his departure was marred by an unforeseen development: the death of Báthory in 1587. Although conscious of the prevailing political instability in Poland, Rome mandated that he continue his mission without providing adequate support or an advisor familiar with the local political landscape.

Upon arriving in Poland, Annibale Di Capua became embroiled in the intricate dispute over the succession to the Polish throne. The Polish nobility was notably divided between the supporters of the House of Habsburg and those backing

Sigismund Vasa, the son of the Swedish King John III. Acting upon directives from the papacy and Spanish authorities, Di Capua, as papal nuncio, endorsed the Habsburg candidacy, anticipating that Sigismund would adhere to the Pacta Conventa, compromising Catholic supremacy in Poland. Nevertheless, this strategy proved ineffective, as the Polish nobility, mainly resistant to imperial influence, elected Sigismund king on August 19 1587. In a counter-move just three days later, the pro-Habsburg faction elected Maximilian of Habsburg, which ignited a civil war. Di Capua publicly aligned himself with Maximilian, visiting his military camp and declining to meet with Sigismund. Despite his efforts, the conflict culminated in Maximilian's defeat and subsequent capture by the newly elected sovereign.
Confronted with this reality, the Pope compelled Di Capua to recognize Sigismund; however, his position had become precarious. The newly crowned king and the Polish nobility viewed Di Capua as an adversary, significantly diminishing his influence. Efforts to secure the cardinalate, advocated by Anna Jagellon and other notable figures, proved fruitless. Remaining in Poland until 1591, Di Capua utilized his final years as nuncio to gather intelligence on the Ottoman Empire, endeavouring to prevent a diplomatic rapprochement between Poland and England and promoting, albeit with limited success, the Catholic presence in Moldavia and Sweden. Afflicted by gout and increasingly aware of his marginalization, he was ultimately recalled to Rome. During his return, he stopped at the imperial court to report on his activities and reaffirm his allegiance to the Habsburgs. Upon his arrival in Naples, he recommitted to pastoral duties, restructured the parishes, and intensified book censorship, firmly believing that doctrinal discord had contributed to the challenges faced in Poland. Di Capua amplified his initiatives to control the dissemination of prohibited literature and regulate liturgical practices in the final years of his life. At the synod of 1595, he instituted new restrictions on sermons, prohibited fireworks during religious holidays, and imposed regulations on funeral inscriptions. His stringent ecclesiastical discipline, however, led to conflicts with segments of the clergy and the laity. Di Capua died on September 2 1595, leaving behind a substantial debt, with his private archive subsequently seized by the Apostolic Chamber. The career trajectory of Annibale Di Capua exemplifies the complexities and challenges of papal diplomacy within the multifaceted political landscape of the Rzeczpospolita. His failure in Poland transcended personal misfortune, illustrating the strategic deficiencies of the Holy See in managing relations with the Polish kingdom. Nonetheless, his experience indirectly enhanced Vatican diplomacy, prompting refinements in approach during the subsequent decades, particularly under the Barberini nunciatures. Ultimately, Di Capua's quest for the cardinalate made him a scapegoat for an overly simplistic papal strategy inadequately attuned to the prevailing local realities.

The article *La nunziatura in Polonia in Età Moderna. Un quadro generale alle soglie del pontificato di Urbano VIII*, authored by Dorota Gregorowicz, provides an in-depth analysis of the apostolic nunciature in Poland during the Modern Age, mainly focusing on the period preceding the pontificate of Urban VIII (1623–1644). The author effectively underscores the significance of the nunciature as the primary diplomatic mission of the Holy See at the Polish-Lithuanian court, emphasizing its crucial role in shaping relations between the papacy and the Rzeczpospolita. Gregorowicz introduces the historical and institutional contexts essential for

understanding the development of papal diplomacy, showcasing the emergence of apostolic nunciatures in Sixteenth-century Europe as a response to the evolving political landscape of the Early Modern Age. Establishing these nunciatures was imperative for maintaining international equilibrium, with permanent diplomatic missions proliferating in Italy, particularly in cities such as Milan, Florence, and Venice. Conversely, the Holy See adopted a distinct model imbued with a strong religious dimension, recognizing its dual role as both a temporal power and the spiritual authority of the Catholic world. Nunciatures were employed strategically to bolster papal primacy and advance the Counter-Reformation. The foundational regulations governing nunciatures originated from the 22nd session of the Council of Trent (1562), with their institutionalization significantly advancing under the reforms of Gregory XIII (1572–1585). These reforms established a stable papal presence in various regions, including Spain, Portugal, Naples, Venice, Savoy, Florence, Poland, and the imperial court. The functions of the nunciatures were delineated across three primary domains: religious and administrative oversight of local episcopates, political engagement with sovereign courts, and financial responsibilities, encompassing the collection of ecclesiastical taxes. The apostolic nunciature in Poland formally commenced with the appointment of Zaccaria Ferreri in 1519 during Leo X's pontificate. However, it was not until the mid-16th century that the papal missions gained a stable and enduring character. A pivotal moment in this progression was the dispatch of Bishop Luigi Lippomano of Verona in 1555, during the reign of Sigismund II Augustus. Despite delays attributed to the death of Julius III, this mission signified the beginning of a sustained papal diplomatic presence in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Holy See's decision was driven by the escalation of Protestantism within the kingdom and the potential threat of a national council undermining the Church's unity. Following the Union of Lublin (1569), which solidified the merger between Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the *Rzeczpospolita* emerged as a formidable power in Europe, compelling the Holy See to intensify its diplomatic endeavours, particularly given its inability to establish nuncios at the Muscovite or Swedish courts.

The article rigorously examines the role of the nunciature during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa (1587–1632) on the eve of Urban VIII's pontificate. The double election of 1587, which pitted Sigismund against Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg, created a significant political dilemma for the papacy. Despite his strong ties to the Habsburgs, Sixtus V acknowledged the legitimacy of Sigismund's coronation and engaged in diplomatic mediation, culminating in the Peace of Będzin-Bytom in 1589. Initially, under the leadership of Annibale Di Capua, the nunciature, although favourably inclined towards the Habsburgs, effectively positioned itself within the power dynamics of the Polish court and influenced the ecclesiastical politics of the kingdom. However, a notable interruption of the nunciature occurred between 1591 and 1592, likely a consequence of political instability in Rome, marked by four conclaves within a year. The accession of Clement VIII (1592–1605) heralded a strengthened papal presence in Poland. Having personally mediated conflicts between the *Rzeczpospolita* and the Habsburgs, the pope supported Sigismund III's alliances with Vienna and his campaign against Protestantism. Nunciatures such as Germanico Malaspina and Claudio Rangoni were mainly instrumental in promoting Counter-Reformation initiatives and mediating relations with the Ottoman Empire.

During Paul V's pontificate (1605–1621), the papacy concentrated on the strife between Poland and Moscow, alongside Swedish incursions under Sigismund III. Rome viewed the king's marriages to Habsburg princesses Anna and Constance as strategic moves to fortify the Catholic alliance.
Nevertheless, the Holy See's refusal to confer cardinalships on candidates proposed by the king strained relations, as Sigismund interpreted these actions as a direct affront to his status as a Catholic monarch.
The lead-up to Urban VIII's pontificate was marked by Gregory XV's brief reign (1621–1623), characterized by Poland's confrontations with the Ottomans and ongoing conflicts with Sweden. The Treaty of Khotyn in 1621, which concluded the war with the Ottomans without substantial gains for the Catholic side, left the Holy See dissatisfied, prompting threats to withdraw support from the *Rzeczpospolita*. Giovanni Battista Lancellotti's nunciature (1622–1627) coincided with the onset of the Thirty Years' War, during which the Holy See endeavoured to ensure Polish support for the Catholic cause. By the onset of Urban VIII's pontificate, the nunciature in Poland had become an established institution. His administration saw the succession of four nuncios: Lancellotti (until 1627), Antonio Santacroce (1627–1630), Onorato Visconti (1630–1635), and Mario Filonardi (1635–1643). These nuncio missions were marked by rigorous political and religious engagement to reinforce Catholicism's position within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth while countering Protestant and Orthodox influences. The era of Urban VIII thus represented a period of significant diplomatic activity for the Holy See, utilizing the Polish nunciature to assert influence over the kingdom's politics and to solidify the alliance between Poland, the Habsburgs, and Rome.

The third article by Paweł Duda, titled *Riparare i rapporti interrotti. Giovanni De Torres e il suo viaggio a Varsavia nel 1645*, meticulously outlines the mission of Giovanni De Torres, who was dispatched by Pope Innocent X to Warsaw in 1645 with the objective of re-establishing diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Polish-Lithuanian Republic. This initiative followed a diplomatic crisis that had strained relations between Warsaw and Rome under the reign of Ladislaus IV and the pontificate of Urban VIII. In May 1645, De Torres embarked on a critical mission to renew ties severed two years prior. His undertaking acquired significant strategic importance within a geopolitical framework characterized by heightened tensions involving the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy, the Ottoman Empire, and the broader European conflicts of the early Seventeenth century. Under Władysław IV Vasa, Poland emerged as a focal point in the Roman Curia's aspirations to cultivate an Anti-Ottoman League to counter Turkish incursions. The appointment of a nuncio to Warsaw represented a pivotal step for Innocent X in fortifying collaboration with the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom. De Torres's journey was deeply entrenched in a historical context of diplomatic mobility, an essential characteristic of papal policy towards the *Rzeczpospolita*. Esteemed historians such as Henryk Damian Wojtyska, Tadeusz Fitych, and Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel have examined the travels of nuncios in Seventeenth-century Poland; however, the case of De Torres stands out due to the extraordinary circumstances surrounding his mission. His predecessor, Mario Filonardi, had exited Poland in 1643 following a conflict with the king, thereby severing official contacts between Rome and Warsaw. This disruption was symptomatic of a more significant diplomatic crisis during Urban

VIII's pontificate, during which papal representatives were expelled from Lisbon and Brussels. Only following Innocent X's election, were diplomatic avenues with the Polish court revitalized, aiming to bolster the Catholic Church's influence in the region. Giovanni De Torres, born into a noble family of Spanish descent in Rome in 1605, advanced his ecclesiastical career mainly through the auspices of his uncle, Cardinal Cosimo De Torres, a previous nuncio to Poland and a supporter of the Polish monarchy in Rome. After his scholarly pursuits in Perugia and Bologna, De Torres ascended to curial roles and gained valuable administrative experience as vicar of the Archdiocese of Monreale. In January 1645, he was appointed titular archbishop of Adrianople and apostolic nuncio to Warsaw, facilitated by familial connections with influential cardinals within the Roman Curia. The journey to Poland was fraught with difficulties and marked by numerous logistical challenges. De Torres navigated a route that included traversing the Adriatic to reach Trieste, continuing through Carniola and Styria to Vienna, and ultimately proceeding to Poland. While this route had been utilized by other papal diplomats, such as Onorato Visconti, it presented considerable logistical impediments. Departing Rome around May 20 1645, De Torres arrived in Ancona by May 28 but encountered delays due to adverse weather conditions. Following his crossing of the Adriatic, he reached Graz on June 15, where he met Empress Maria Anna of Habsburg, who was evading Swedish military threats in Vienna.

The prolonged stay in Vienna was marked by intricate diplomatic manoeuvres necessitated by the Swedish siege of Brno, rendering the most direct route to Poland inaccessible. The nuncio, Giovanni De Torres, experienced a delay of over a month while awaiting a pass from Swedish commander Lennart Torstenson. His tenure in the imperial capital was characterized by significant diplomatic engagement, wherein he held meetings with Emperor Ferdinand III, the widowed Empress Eleonora Gonzaga, and Venetian diplomat Giovanni Tiepolo, who was on a covert mission to recruit Cossack troops for the ongoing conflict against the Turks. On July 27, following extensive negotiations, the requested passport was finally issued, enabling De Torres to resume his journey. Upon crossing the Polish border on August 15, he arrived in Krakow on August 19, where he was received with great honour. In Krakow, he delivered a speech introducing himself as the messenger of peace between Rome and Warsaw, emphasizing the symbolic importance of his mission.

Nevertheless, he had to await the return of King Ladislaus IV, who was engaged in affairs in Lithuania, before proceeding to Warsaw. On September 6, De Torres departed again and reached the Polish capital by September 15, where he was formally received by the nobility and local authorities. The official meeting with King Ladislaus IV transpired on September 23. The following day, the king warmly welcomed De Torres during a private audience, wherein he articulated the political and military concerns of the Republic of the Two Nations. The king sought tangible support from the Holy See for his military campaign against the Ottoman Empire, hoping to secure financial assistance from Rome. The appointment of De Torres marked a pivotal reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the papacy and Poland, heralding a new era in the two states' bilateral relations. Giovanni De Torres' diplomatic journey was a significant mission and represented a crucial juncture in the reorganization of papal policy in Central and Eastern Europe. His undertaking

was fraught with logistical challenges, political hurdles, and the inherent risks of the ongoing conflict; however, his resolute determination ultimately led to the successful fulfilment of his objectives. Over the subsequent seven years, the nuncio played an instrumental role in shaping papal diplomacy in Poland, undertaking additional missions within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to reinforce the influence of the Holy See. His experiences contributed significantly to the evolution of diplomatic strategies employed by the Roman Curia, which, in the following decades, would adopt a more structured and systematic approach to relations with the Poland-Lithuania.

Henryk Litwin is the author of the fourth contribution in the volume, entitled *Cambiamenti e continuità. Urbano VIII e le missioni dei nunzi apostolici. Il caso di Giovanni Battista Lancellotti, nunzio in Polonia*. His article rigorously analyzes the diplomatic policies enacted by Urban VIII and their profound effects on the missions of apostolic nuncios, with a specific focus on Giovanni Battista Lancellotti, nuncio to Poland. Contrary to the prevailing historiographical narrative, which posits that Urban VIII's election in 1623 resulted in a wholesale replacement of nuncios appointed by his predecessors, a closer examination reveals a more nuanced and pragmatic selection process. In the initial months of his pontificate, Urban VIII replaced five out of eleven nuncios while retaining six, including Lancellotti. This selective approach underscores that the Pope's decisions were not dictated solely by political allegiance or loyalty to the Barberini family; instead, they were informed by considerations of competence and the effectiveness of the nuncios in fulfilling their diplomatic missions. The author meticulously traces the career trajectories of both the replacement and confirmed nuncios, noting that most emerged from curial and administrative backgrounds and possessed substantial legal education and diplomatic experience. Conversely, those removed from their posts often faced challenges in their relationships with local elites or were deemed ineffective by the Roman Curia. Notably, despite his proximity to the Barberini, Ottavio Corsini was dismissed for his disagreements with French authorities, while Pietro Francesco Costa was removed due to advanced age and perceived ineffectiveness.

In contrast, individuals such as Laudivio Zacchia were later elevated to the cardinalate, indicating that their removal was not necessarily punitive but rather part of a broader strategy to reorganize papal diplomacy. A critical analysis component centres on extending Lancellotti's mandate following Urban VIII's election. Available documentation, mainly the correspondence notably published by Tadeusz Fitych, elucidates how the new Pope confirmed the nuncio's mission in Warsaw. Receiving news of Gregory XV's death in early August 1623, Lancellotti promptly conveyed his condolences to Cardinal Ludovisi. Upon learning of Urban VIII's election in early September, he sent a letter expressing his loyalty to the new Pope. However, it is significant that his reappointment had already been determined by the end of August, prior to the arrival of Lancellotti's letter in Rome. This indicates that the Pope and the "Secretariat of the State" operated with current and strategic insights concerning the nunciatures, leading to decisions rooted in informed assessments rather than mere expressions of loyalty.

In the subsequent months, correspondence between Lancellotti and the Curia unequivocally confirmed his pivotal role and the significance of his mission. Cardinal Francesco Barberini transmitted explicit papal directives to Lancellotti, instructing

him to deliver an official brief to Sigismund III Vasa. This action formally sanctioned the continuation of his diplomatic mandate. Subsequent letters from Urban VIII reinforced the nuncio's authority in diplomatic negotiations, underscoring the Holy See's intention to maintain an active presence in Poland. Lancellotti, fully aware of the scrutiny from the Curia, intensified his commitment to the papacy, consistently reaffirming his loyalty to the Pope and the Barberinis. This analysis contends that Lancellotti's actions and the administration of the nunciatures under Urban VIII delineate a departure from the thesis positing that the Pope adhered to a rigidly pro-French and anti-Habsburg policy. Instead, the case of Poland illustrates that papal policy exhibited a degree of flexibility and pragmatism, adapting to localized dynamics to ensure the continuity of diplomatic action. The appointment and management of nuncios were not mere manifestations of clientelism; they were predicated on a rigorous assessment of each nuncio's capacity to represent the Holy See effectively. Notably, while some nuncios had ties to the Barberini, others, such as Agucchia, were appointed despite their affiliations with the preceding curial regime. Furthermore, the political role of papal diplomacy within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the importance of the nunciature in Warsaw are salient. The presence of a papal representative in Poland was indispensable for monitoring relations between the Polish monarchy and Catholic powers and supporting the interests of the local Catholic Church. Lancellotti navigated a complex political landscape marked by tensions among the Polish nobility, the monarchy, and foreign influences, with his adept management of relations with Sigismund III and various political factions likely being crucial in his reappointment. Ultimately, this article challenges prevailing stereotypes regarding Urban VIII's policies and the management of papal diplomacy in the Seventeenth century. The examination of Lancellotti's nunciature reveals that the Pope did not adhere strictly to personal loyalty in selecting his representatives. Instead, he employed a more nuanced and strategic approach, prioritizing the effectiveness and stability of diplomatic relations. This analysis demonstrates that Urban VIII's administration of the nunciatures maintained a delicate balance between continuity and change, thereby reinforcing the authority of the Holy See in European affairs without undermining the stability of international relations.

Alessandro Boccolini's article*, Onorato Visconti nunzio nella Polonia dei Waza (1630–1635)*, offers an incisive examination of Onorato Visconti's significant role as nuncio in Poland during a politically volatile era for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. His tenure coincided with the pivotal events surrounding the death of Sigismund III Vasa, the subsequent interregnum, and the election of Ladislaus IV. This period was not only marked by internal strife. However, it was also set against the broader backdrop of the Thirty Years' War, characterized by intense tensions among Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox factions. Visconti's diplomatic manoeuvres were crucial in ensuring that the succession to the Polish throne adhered to the interests of the Holy See, thereby preventing the potential ascent of a Protestant sovereign and countering the influence of competing European powers. Born in Milan before 1585 and educated under Cardinal Alfonso Visconti, Onorato Visconti was well-equipped for his mission. After attending the Roman College and serving as an inquisitor in Malta, he was appointed nuncio to Poland by Pope Urban VIII in 1630. His primary objective was to fortify the alliance between

the Holy See, the Polish monarchy, and the Habsburgs. Upon his arrival in Krakow on October 4, 1630, he faced immediate challenges concerning the frail health of Sigismund III, whose death threatened to plunge the realm into chaos. Following the king's death on April 30, 1632, Visconti actively orchestrated the succession. The Holy See endorsed the candidacy of Sigismund's firstborn, Ladislaus IV, motivated by concerns that the election of a Protestant, such as Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, would jeopardize the Catholic Church's position in Poland. Throughout the interregnum, the nuncio worked diligently to rally support for Władysław, applying pressure on the Catholic nobility while striving to insulate the electoral diet from external influences. His strategic diplomatic efforts, bolstered by support from Vienna, culminated in Władysław IV's election as king on November 8, 1632, achieving consensus among the nobility. Once on the throne, Władysław IV prioritized the search for a suitable consort to enhance his international standing. The king's marital prospects carried substantial political implications, potentially reshaping Poland's geopolitical alignments. Initially, Władysław considered uniting with Elizabeth of the Palatinate, a Protestant princess, to secure allegiance from Reformed powers and bolster his claims to the Swedish throne. However, the Holy See vehemently opposed this union, withholding dispensations for a mixed marriage and emphasizing the inherent dangers that such an alliance with a Protestant would pose to Catholicism in Poland.

Faced with opposition from Rome and the Polish Catholic nobility, Ladislaus IV attempted to exert pressure by threatening to proceed with his marriage without the Holy See's approval. In 1634, he dispatched an emissary to Rome seeking an extraordinary dispensation, which was ultimately rejected. While maintaining dialogue with the king, Onorato Visconti endeavoured to prevent any attempts to bypass papal regulations. Ultimately, in 1637, Ladislaus IV married Cecylia Renée of Habsburg, the daughter of Emperor Ferdinand II, thereby reinforcing the alliance between Poland and the House of Austria. In addition to the issues surrounding succession and the king's marriage, Visconti was compelled to confront the pronounced religious tensions within Poland. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a multi-confessional state with a Catholic majority, also housed significant Orthodox and Protestant populations. During Sigismund III's reign, Catholicism had secured a privileged position due to the king's support and the efforts of the Jesuits. However, following his death, religious dissidents seized the opportunity to push for greater freedoms. The Orthodox community, bolstered by Muscovy and the Cossacks, demanded the removal of restrictions imposed by the Catholic Church and the recognition of their ecclesiastical hierarchy. Their opposition primarily targeted the Uniate Church, established by the Union of Brest in 1596, which had led specific Orthodox individuals to acknowledge papal authority while retaining their rites. Visconti actively countered the claims of these schismatics, emphasizing the potential threats their demands posed to the kingdom's stability and the Holy See's position. However, Ladislaus IV, aiming to prevent internal discord, pursued a conciliatory approach, granting several concessions to the dissenters. This stance summoned concern from Rome, which feared a dilution of Catholic hegemony within the kingdom. The Protestant factions also capitalized on the prevailing situation to reassert their demands for religious freedom. During the convocation diet of 1632, Visconti informed the Holy See that heretical groups

sought guarantees for their faith, threatening to boycott the election of the new king if their demands went unaddressed.
The nuncio made concerted efforts to prevent the Sejm from conceding to these requests, finding a reliable ally in the primate Jan Wężyk and the Catholic nobility. Ultimately, through the influence of the clergy, a safeguard clause for the Catholic Church was successfully included in the final legislative documents, thwarting the approval of the dissenters' more radical proposals. Visconti's mission in Poland concluded in 1636, leaving behind a complex legacy. The nuncio played a pivotal role in managing the succession to the throne, contributing to the election of Ladislaus IV and averting the ascension of a Protestant candidate. Concurrently, his diplomatic endeavours effectively obstructed the king's marriage to a heretical princess, thus protecting the influence of the Holy See within the kingdom.

Nevertheless, his tenure in Poland was marked by numerous difficulties and tensions, particularly concerning the religious policies of Ladislaus IV, who demonstrated a level of tolerance that Rome found concerning. In his final report, Visconti articulated the challenges encountered throughout his mandate and the persistent threats to the Catholic Church's standing in Poland. While recognizing Ladislaus IV's political acumen, he cautioned the Holy See regarding the risks associated with the king's religious policies and dynastic ambitions. The nuncio underscored the king's attempts to cultivate autonomy from Rome, engaging in various diplomatic negotiations to pursue his dynastic interests. Thus, Visconti's experience in Poland exemplified papal diplomacy in 17th-century Europe, a period defined by religious conflicts and the intricate balance of power among the great monarchies.
The sixth part of the volume, authored by Gaetano Platania, is entitled *Tra conflitti e compromessi Mario Filonardi, ultimo nunzio di papa Urbano VIII nella Rzeczpospolita di* W*ładysław IV*. Platania analyzes the complex mission of Mario Filonardi as apostolic nuncio to the court of Warsaw during the pontificate of Urban VIII Barberini in the context of a Europe marked by religious conflicts and diplomatic struggles. Filonardi's mission took place in a historical phase in which the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom boasted a relative religious tolerance, deriving from the political pragmatism of sovereigns such as Bona Sforza and his son Zygmunt II August, who had shown a certain openness towards non-Catholic religious groups. To the decisive policy in the Catholic sense of the zealous Sigismund III, Ladislaus IV seemed to have returned to a more tolerant policy in the wake of his predecessors. Filonardi, born in 1594 near Veroli into a noble family, embarked on a successful ecclesiastical career, holding positions as assessor of the Congregation of the Holy Office and vice-legate in Avignon. After being appreciated for his diplomatic skills in France, he was appointed nuncio in Warsaw in 1635, succeeding Onorato Visconti, whose too-conciliatory approach towards the sovereign Władysław IV had raised concerns in Rome. Arriving in Poland, Filonardi found himself managing complex issues such as the controversy over the Union of Brest of 1596, which had sanctioned the adhesion of part of the Ruthenian Orthodox Church to Rome but which had provoked rebellions by the Cossacks and their supporters. One of the main obstacles that Filonardi faced was the proposal advanced by the Orthodox schismatics for a synod that could have included new accessions to the union with Rome. The Holy See feared that such a synod could undermine Catholic authority and create further divisions, and Propaganda Fide intervened by prohibiting any

synod. However, King Władysław IV, in favour of a tolerance policy, attempted to negotiate concessions for the Orthodox, such as the restitution of churches taken from schismatics and the creation of new Orthodox dioceses. Filonardi tried to oppose this firmly, but the situation became increasingly tense.
Another problem addressed by the nuncio was the controversy regarding the Armenian Archbishop Mikołaj Torosowicz, who, despite having joined the union with Rome, had ambiguous relations with the schismatic Armenian Patriarch. Torosowicz tried to maintain his autonomy and advanced claims regarding using ecclesiastical titles and privileges, causing tensions with the Latin Catholic hierarchy in Poland. Propaganda Fide, aware of the fragility of the Armenian-Catholic union, instructed Filonardi to monitor Torosowicz and manage the requests made by the Armenian community. Filonardi also found himself involved in the complex political dynamics of the Warsaw court, which, under French influence, was gradually moving away from the Austro-Spanish axis. King Władysław IV, after his marriage with Maria Luisa Gonzaga, opened the way to an alliance with France, raising concerns in Rome. During the Sejm of 1641, the sovereign promulgated new laws that guaranteed religious freedom to schismatics, allowing them to build churches, schools and printing presses. This decision aroused the indignation of the Holy See and Filonardi, who denounced the concessions as threatening Catholic supremacy. Despite numerous obstacles, Filonardi tried to keep diplomatic channels open with Władysław IV while constantly denouncing the pressure exerted by the king to obtain the cardinal's hat for Onorato Visconti. Filonardi frequently reported to Rome the difficulties encountered in negotiating with a sovereign weakened by illness and influenced by the local nobility and his advisors. The Holy See, aware of the delicacy of the situation, sought to strengthen the Uniate hierarchy and to limit further concessions to the schismatics.
In conclusion, according to Platania, Filonardi's mission proved particularly complex, highlighting the difficulties of papal diplomacy in maintaining Catholic unity in such a fragmented political and religious context. Tensions between Catholics, Orthodox and schismatics continued to grow, laying the foundations for future crises in the region. Despite Filonardi's efforts, the religious situation in the *Rzeczpospolita* remained unstable, with confessional divisions that would have a lasting impact on Polish history and Eastern Europe.
The last article is authored by Hubert Chlebik, titled *From a 'Terrible Power' to a Colossus on Legs of Clay: The Image of the Ottoman Empire in the Instructions to the Apostolic Nuncios in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Time of Urban VIII*. Chlebik rigorously examines the portrayal of the Ottoman Empire within diplomatic instructions issued during Pope Urban VIII's pontificate (1623–1644). This analysis elucidates the evolving perception of the Holy See regarding the Ottoman Empire during this pivotal period, concentrating on its societal structure, military capabilities, and internal and external policies. The primary sources for this exploration encompass the instructions directed towards nuncios Giovanni Battista Lancellotti (1623–1628), Antonio Santa Croce (1627–1630), Honorato Visconti (1630–1635), and Mario Filonardi (1635–1643). Additionally, the study incorporates instructions composed for Cosimo De Torres during the pontificate of Gregory XV, legitimized by Urban VIII as integral to the mission within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Notably, Polish historians have primarily

approached these instructions through a political lens, frequently neglecting their rich portrayal of the Ottoman Empire. The instructions categorize Ottoman society into three principal groups: the sultan, military commanders (bashas), and the populace. Sultan Osman II is depicted as a despotic ruler, driven by emotional impulses rather than rational governance. This sharply contrasts with the idealized image of a rational sovereign prevalent in European political thought. His inexperience and youth further reinforce the representation of an ineffective leader. Likewise, Ottoman commanders are characterized as inexperienced and hesitant to engage in military campaigns. Although the sultan's rule is framed as tyrannical, the commanders possess a degree of political influence. The portrayal of the Ottoman populace is simplistic, depicting them as uniformly loyal to the sultan and equating all subjects of the empire with Muslims and Turks. Santa Croce's instructions perpetuate the characterization of a tyrannical Ottoman state. At the same time, Filonardi's contributions offer more nuanced observations, noting the perceived moral decline within Ottoman society, a deterioration of discipline, and the emergence of prophecies forecasting the empire's collapse from the north. This latter prophecy is potentially linked to King Ladislaus IV of Poland, who was perceived as formidable and invincible. Notably, the instructions posited that, in the event of military failure, the Ottoman population might abandon Islam and convert to Christianity if assured property retention. Despite prior losses at Lepanto and in Hungary, the Ottoman military is initially presented as the preeminent force globally. De Torres' instructions underscore the superiority of the Janissaries over Polish infantry while acknowledging the prowess of Polish cavalry. However, the absence of robust fortifications in the Commonwealth suggests a strategy grounded in prolonged defensive warfare. Lancellotti's instructions characterously depict the Ottoman Empire as vulnerable, raising the potential threat of Cossacks to the food supply of Constantinople. Santa Croce's assessment recognizes the military strength of the Ottomans but advocates for caution in the Danube principalities to avert provoking open conflict. Conversely, Filonardi attributes the decline of the Ottoman military to generational shifts, a loss of discipline following Osman II's assassination, and a growing indulgence in luxury, suggesting that the Ottoman army would falter following an initial defeat in a multi-front conflict. However, such evaluations obscure Sultan Murad IV's military reforms and subsequent victories, including the recapture of Baghdad in 1638. The Holy See's strategic objective encompassed forming a universal anti-Ottoman alliance concerning internal and foreign affairs. While this aspiration was central to their strategy, it was moderated by a pragmatic acknowledgement of the limited support likely forthcoming from European states. The Vatican adeptly anticipated the Persian court's political climate and identified potential peace treaty breaches as justifications for future military engagements. However, there existed an overestimation of the influence wielded by European diplomats over Ottoman decision-making. Lancellotti's instructions predict the empire's collapse due to provincial rebellions, contrasted by Santa Croce's recognition of mutual respect between the Commonwealth and the Ottomans despite conflicting interests in the Danube region. Filonardi's recommendations suggest the division of Ottoman territory among Austria, France, Spain, and Persia; however, he concludes that only the Commonwealth, Persia, and Italian naval forces would suffice for success. Such proposals remain unrealistic, undermined

by the divergent interests of potential allies and the sluggish pace of coordination. According to Chlebik, in conclusion, the image of the Ottoman Empire, as delineated in Urban VIII's instructions, reveals a dynamic interplay between realism and stereotype. While the prior stereotype of an invincible Ottoman army diminished after the Battle of Khotyn, it transitioned into a new stereotype of chronic weakness attributed to moral and cultural decay. The portrayal of the sultan and the empire encapsulates a complex and multifaceted view that merits further scholarly inquiry.

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