

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# DIPLMATS AND DIPLOMACY

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

Edited by

Dorota Gregorowicz and Alessandro Boccolini



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# **EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW**

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**n. 4/2021**  
**Special Issue**

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**Edited by**

**Dorota Gregorowicz and Alessandro Boccolini**



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

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

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

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

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## **EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: THE JOURNAL**

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

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

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

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

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

The Editorial and Scientific Board



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## INTRODUCTION

The crisis of political history, particularly profound since the 1960s and the subsequent cultural turn, has penalised the scientific investigation of “international” relations<sup>1</sup> in the early modern period for many years<sup>2</sup>. Over the last decades, though, there have been several calls for new methodological and conceptual approaches to diplomatic studies, some of them extraordinarily fruitful and inspiring<sup>3</sup>. Nowadays, as Tracey Sowerby observed, «the *New Diplomatic History*, no longer so new, has become a broad church. It has successfully integrated wider concerns into a field that was once dominated by the study of bureaucracy and foreign policy»<sup>4</sup>. Integrated, but not replaced, which is also essential to emphasise. That is mainly why scholars no longer consider diplomacy and foreign policy making as coterminous, but do assimilate plenty of different aspects diplomatic practice entailed.

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

On the threshold of the early modern period, *Rzeczpospolita* found itself among the political entities that adopted the praxis of permanent diplomatic missions exchange very late (only in the eighteenth century), relying on the old system of extraordinary embassies, of medieval provenance. However, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was no exception on a European scale. The general rules for foreign relations’ conduct appeared similar in Portugal, Scotland, Hungary, Scandinavia (Sweden and Denmark), Switzerland, and several German states<sup>5</sup>.

Federico Chabod considered the permanent diplomatic service, next to the professional army and elaborated bureaucratic apparatus, as the basis for the affirmation of the “early modern state”<sup>6</sup>. *Rzeczpospolita* did not possess any of these elements, but can it be denied the character of statehood from a historical point of view<sup>7</sup>? Subsequently, for Matthew Smith Anderson, the history of early

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

modern diplomacy constituted a slow but increasingly evident evolution towards the system of permanent representation. He considered contacts between polities that failed to conform to that model «less developed ones, [...] where diplomacy was less important and diplomatic organisation more primitive». Anderson believed that from the point of view of diplomatic practice, one could speak of two “separate Europes” and that «between these two Europes there were as yet only slender links»<sup>8</sup>. Nowadays, historiography views the issue of permanent diplomatic posts in a significantly different way. As Riccardo Fubini suggests, the general deficiency of institutionalisation of the then diplomacy makes the equality of residency and modernity dubious<sup>9</sup>. Also, Sowerby appropriately stated that «the exchange of resident ambassadors did not extend across all of Europe. Rather, asymmetrical relations were not uncommon within Europe and continued to be so into the eighteenth century»<sup>10</sup>.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The role of political nuances and, at first glance, of less important elements in conducting a diplomatic activity is treated by Ryszard Skowron (*Palatinate: the Key to Europe. On the Art of Diplomacy of Władysław IV Vasa*). The author points to the role of a seemingly secondary German state, as well as to the complicated system of ties between single European states at that time, in the perspective of the implementation of the great political and dynastic plans of the Polish-Lithuanian monarch, primarily related to his efforts to reclaim the Swedish throne. In fact, it is worth observing how the interests represented and defended through early modern diplomatic negotiation were primarily dynastic, typical of the sovereign families that divided the European spaces between themselves<sup>11</sup>. In his article, Skowron has distinguished two basic categories defining Władysław IV's foreign policy: peace tactics (diplomatic activity and matrimonial policy) and war (military involvement in connection with the events of the Thirty Years' War).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ewelina Sikora (*Feasting and Fasting in Moscow: Peace Negotiation Between Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy as Seen Through Eating and Drinking Customs*) takes up the theme of feasting as an essential element of Polish-Lithuanian diplomatic practice during the missions to Muscovy. The article constitutes an important contribution for developing further research on material culture in the field of the history of diplomacy<sup>14</sup>, also in the context of ceremonial treatments and traditional usages.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

their religious and confessional nature<sup>17</sup>, diplomatic ceremonial and non-verbal communication, tools and techniques used by ambassadors, *people* as direct implementers of the “art of diplomacy”, their *cursus honorum* and mechanisms of social advancement, cultural image expressed in diplomatic documents, social, economic, commercial and dynastic causes that determined political choices, as well as material culture in diplomacy<sup>18</sup>. This volume will undoubtedly contribute to the further development of contemporary analysis of these issues. We would like to continue to engage in new methods, ask additional questions, and rethink how early modern Polish-Lithuanian diplomacy is currently being studied.

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

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



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## THE CORONATION PARLIAMENT OF JOHN III SOBIESKI IN FRENCH-LANGUAGE REPORTS SENT TO LONDON

### ABSTRACT

The coronation parliament in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was always an exceptional event not only for the newly elected monarch but also for diplomats from foreign courts who reported about its proceedings. In their reports, they tried to provide as much information as possible, not only political but also moral, social, and related to the ceremony. Of course, such material needs careful analysis, as the diplomats, often unfamiliar with the reality of the Polish-Lithuanian state, misrepresented the facts or presented them in a wrong context. The analysed manuscript accounts from the coronation parliament of John III Sobieski probably played the role of an additional source of information in London. In addition to the official reports of diplomats, they broadened the recipients' knowledge about the described event, generally informing the reader about events during the parliamentary sessions, but not only that. The information about events in Russia and Turkey as well as about matters of minor importance was also included in these documents. Despite doubts about objectivity of some of the analysed papers, they should be considered an important source of information about the coronation parliament in 1676. They supplemented the official documents, and their congruence with diplomatic reports may have allowed for deepening of the reader's knowledge about the described events.

**KEYWORDS:** Sobieski; The coronation parliament; Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; English diplomacy.

The coronation parliament in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was always an exceptional event not only for the newly elected monarch but also for diplomats from foreign courts who reported about its proceedings. In their reports, they tried to provide as much information as possible, not only political but also moral, social, and related to the ceremony. Of course, such material needs careful analysis, as the diplomats, often unfamiliar with the reality of the Polish-Lithuanian state, misrepresented the facts or presented them in a wrong context. Frequently, their conclusions could be incomplete or even erroneous due to the lack of understanding of the country's specificity or of the prevailing political relations. Foreign envoys often attached to their reports handwritten accounts and leaflets that appeared on an occasion of an important event, in this case, the coronation. The subject of my deliberations will be several of these handwritten accounts, which described not only what happened in Cracow at the coronation session of John III Sobieski in 1676, but also provided political, military and social news from February and March 1676. The London headquarters was interested in any information related to the event, and the transmission of such documents was additional to official diplomatic reports. They are stored in The National Archives in London, in the collection *State Papers Foreign, Newsletters. Germany, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary and Poland*, against number 101/44. Unfortunately, we do not know the author of the discussed French manuscripts. The information contained therein must be subjected to scientific criticism, allowing to eliminate factual errors from the communication. They could have arisen for various reasons, of which the main one seems to be the insufficient knowledge of the reality of the Commonwealth and of the people participating in the described events. Therefore, the data provided in the manuscripts must be verified in terms of their information credibility. Of course, the image of the coronation parliament which emerges from the discussed documents would be incomplete if we did not briefly present the election of John III Sobieski as the king of the Commonwealth, which will be the first issue discussed in this article.



## JAN SOBIESKI'S ELECTION

The death of Michał I opened a period of a new *interregnum* in the Commonwealth. Various candidates started their efforts to obtain the crown. There were three significant candidates for the Polish-Lithuanian throne: Philip William of Neuburg, supported by France; Charles V Leopold of Lorraine, with Austrian support; and Tsarevich Fyodor. During this time, several other candidacies were put forward, for example of Danish Prince George, Prince Louis Thomas of Savoy, who was initially considered by the French diplomacy, Duke of Modena Rinaldo d'Este, and Charles Emil Hohenzollern (son of Elector of Brandenburg Frederick William). Still, none of these received clear support. The Tsarevich's candidacy also seemed to have no chance because according to the expectations of the influential Pac family, who promoted it, he was to adopt Catholicism and marry the widow of the deceased king, which was unacceptable for the Romanov. Besides, the Muscovite candidate himself was not eager to take the throne of the Commonwealth. Therefore, the most important candidates were the Duke of Neuburg and Charles of Lorraine, who received the support of Rome. On the other hand, the nobility gathered around the Viennese court waited for the declarations of Christoph Leopold Schaffgotsch on this matter. French diplomacy believed that the election in the Polish-Lithuanian state should be carefully observed because it was of great importance for the whole of Europe. The election of a new king in the Commonwealth was indeed a problem of great importance at the court of Louis XIV in connection with his struggle on the Rhine with Emperor Leopold I of Habsburg<sup>1</sup>. Apart from the undisguised aversion to the candidacy of the Lorraine, French diplomats also emphasised that his chances of taking the throne were relatively small, precisely because of his connection with the Viennese court and the divergent interests of the Emperor and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth<sup>2</sup>. The campaign of gaining allies for its candidate was also started by the Viennese court, which had strong supporters in the Commonwealth. It is recorded in the visit diary of the imperial diplomat Christoph Leopold Schaffgotsch, who came to Warsaw on 17 April 1674<sup>3</sup>. During the convocation parliament, which was to set the time and prepare the course of the election, the candidacy of *Piast* (a Pole) was also announced, but John Sobieski was not yet considered<sup>4</sup>. The period between the convocation and the election of 1674 was spent by political parties on strengthening their positions before the decisive clash, which was the election of a new monarch. In Lithuania, the Pac family closely watched their rivals' actions – the Radziwiłł and Sapieha families, who were helped by the French money provided by the bishop of Marseille, Toussainte de Forbin-Janson. Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł was to receive 20'000 écus, and the Lithuanian Court Treasurer Benedykt Paweł Sapieha – 10'000 écus<sup>5</sup>. The wife of John Sobieski, Marie Casimire d'Arquien, who mentioned the crown to her husband in 1670, also became involved<sup>6</sup>. To the envoy of Duke de Longueville to Warsaw, François de Callières, it seemed unlikely that Sobieski, a supporter of France, would support the Great Condé, and King Louis XIV – the candidacy of the Duke of Neuburg. He realised that the

1 "Mémoire pour servir d'instruction au sieur évêque de Marseille allant de la part de Sa Majesté ambassadeur extraordinaire en Pologne, Versailles 30 mars 1674", in *Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France: depuis les traités de Westphalie jusqu'à la Révolution française IV-V: Pologne*, vol. 1: 1648–1729, ed Louis Farges (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Germer Baillière et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1888), 131–32; Mariusz Sawicki, *Dom sapieżyński 1666–1685. Droga do hegemonii w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim* (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2016), 95–7.

2 AMAE Fr, CP, Pologne, vol. 44, *Bishop Toussainte de Forbin-Janson's report on the conversation with the French ambassador to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, [30] March 1674, f. 27r.

3 Aleksandra Ziober, "Dziennik wizyt posła cesarskiego K. L. Schaffgotscha, jako przyczynek do wyjaśnienia przebiegu elekcji 1674 r.", 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), 342–53.

4 AMAE Fr, CP, Pologne supp., vol. 2, *Copie de l'écriture de Warsovie du 2 Février 1674, du 3 Février 1674, du 5 Février 1674, du 13 Février 1674*, ff. 364–68r.

5 Sawicki, *Dom Sapieżyński*, 107.

6 Michał Komarzyński, *Piękna królowa Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien-Sobieska 1641–1671* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1995), 116.

game was about someone completely different, and the conversation with Marie Casimire reassured him that it was about her husband – John Sobieski<sup>7</sup>.

On 20 April 1674, the election parliament began, for which Benedykt Paweł Sapieha was elected the Marshal. At the outset, Lithuanian deputies asked for the exclusion of *Piast* from the possibility of competing for the throne. This issue should have been discussed in the parliament. Eventually, on 30 April, Lithuanians resigned from blocking the proceedings. On 19 May 1674, there were further protests by Lithuanian deputies gathered around the Pac family, who asked for an extension of the proceedings and protested against the election of a king from the Commonwealth. At the same time, choosing a new monarch was already a foregone conclusion, as the Polish crown provinces declared their support for John Sobieski. The elect, initially accepted only by the Crown, then obtained the support of his brother-in-law, Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, as well as of the Sapieha family. At that time, most Lithuanian voivodeships declared their solidarity with the Poles and supported the election of John Sobieski. Finally, on 21 May 1674, there were no more obstacles to recognise Sobieski as the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania<sup>8</sup>.

At the time of the announcement of John Sobieski's candidacy, French diplomacy also supported his efforts to obtain the Commonwealth's crown. On 11 May 1674, bishop Forbin-Janson had a general audience in the *sejm*, during which he supported the candidacy of the Duke of Neuburg. He did not have much chance of winning at that time, but the bishop did not know about it yet. On the same day, he was welcomed by the Sobieski family, and then the concept of electing John Sobieski was put forward. The French diplomat assessed the idea as feasible and handed over 9'000 livres to Sobieski for distribution in the army, and among the nobility, aiming to win supporters of the new candidacy<sup>9</sup>. On 14 May 1674, John Sobieski and his wife received 30'000 livres from the diplomats of Louis XIV. Most likely, most of these funds were distributed during the election parliament. In addition, Sobieski was handed over 5'000 ducats brought by Antoine de Baluze, and Formont banker<sup>10</sup>.

Benedykt Paweł Sapieha, as the Marshal of the election parliament, contributed significantly to the election of John III Sobieski. That influenced the further fate of the *Sapieha* faction, which soon became the royal party. Italian diplomacy estimated that the court of Louis XIV spent around 800'000 écus on the election. Forbin-Janson handed them over or promised to pay them to Polish and Lithuanian magnates favourable to the French candidate. According to the diplomat of the Duke of Modena, Galeazzo Gualdo Priorato, all these actions were dictated by the desire to exclude a Viennese candidate from the election, as well as to win the new monarch's favour. On the other hand, French diplomats informed Louis XIV that, according to the information obtained from Sobieski, 400'000 livres were spent, initially in the form of promises; however, they were confirmed by relevant documents from the Formont banking house in Gdańsk<sup>11</sup>.

## CORONATION PARLIAMENT

In the Commonwealth, the newly elected monarch used to become an effective ruler only after the solemn coronation. Then he could distribute offices, hold courts and have the state goods at his disposal. On the occasion of the coronation act, the so-called coronation parliament would gather. After the solemn ceremony, the most important matters of the state were debated. It was no different with John Sobieski, whose coronation parliament began on 4 February 1676, despite being convened on 3 January of the same year<sup>12</sup>. On 29 January, the new monarch officially entered Cracow. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of the same

7 Zbigniew Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski (1629–1696)* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1983), 217–18.

8 Sawicki, *Dom sapieżyński*, 103–05.

9 Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski*, 218.

10 Sawicki, *Dom sapieżyński*, 106.

11 Sawicki, *Dom sapieżyński*, 109.

12 Władysław Konopczyński, *Chronologia sejmów polskich 1493–1793* (Kraków: PAU, 1948), 157. Konopczyński states that parliament began on February 2 although in reality it was February 4 (*Diariusz*–Stolicki, 3).

month, the funeral of two previous kings, John II Casimir and Michał I was held. They were buried in the Wawel Cathedral<sup>13</sup>. According to tradition, after the funeral of the deceased monarchs, on 2 February, John Sobieski and his wife Marie Casimire d'Arquien were officially crowned. The noble society did not accept the new queen. There were even attempts to prevent her coronation by setting its date purposely, so that the queen, being heavily pregnant, would not participate in the ceremony. Meanwhile, Marie Casimire not only was crowned with her husband, but a month later, she gave birth to her daughter Theresa Kunegunda in the Wawel Castle. When Primate Andrzej Olszowski put the crown on the head of Marie Casimire, murmurs and objections of her opponents could be heard. Still, they were quickly silenced by joyful shouts concluding the coronation<sup>14</sup>. Anyway, only a few people were admitted to the ceremony, perhaps for fear of unusual reactions<sup>15</sup>.

After the coronation ceremonies, which culminated in an all-night feast, the parliament began. The first account of this event sent to London, which comes from the analysed collection, dates from 16 February 1676. It was a Sunday, i.e. a day without deliberations; therefore, it provides the information of events that took place earlier. The narrative begins by mentioning the events of 11 and 12 February. On the first of these days, the Marshal of the *sejm* (who is not mentioned by name and surname, but we know that it is the crown Standard-Bearer Mikołaj Hieronim Sieniawski) called on the nobility for a general agreement, and to postpone all controversial issues, finally, to go to the Senate's deliberation place to greet the king. Ultimately, the deputies agreed and went to welcome the monarch and kiss the royal hand<sup>16</sup>. Here the report is consistent with reality: the deputies went to the Senate around 3 p.m., and the king's greeting took place by candlelight<sup>17</sup>. On 12 February, the monarch waited for deputies in the Senate, where they arrived with Marshal Sieniawski. It was when the Grand Chancellor of the Crown, Jan Leszczyński, presented the royal postulates in his speech (called by the author of the newspaper *une belle propositions*). First, the monarch asked whether he should seek peace with the Turks or continue the war. In any case, it was necessary to contact Venice and check whether the army in Hungary was being gathered and if it could move to Poland in the spring<sup>18</sup>. Subsequently, it is recounted that the Chancellor explained that if the nobility decided for peace, it was necessary to consider which measures should be used so that the treaties with Turkey were not humiliating for the Commonwealth. However, it was assumed that the enemy, relying on their forces, would not accept any conditions from the Commonwealth.

The nobility was also to consider who could be asked to act as a mediator in the peace negotiations. Subsequently, the Chancellor discussed the possibility of waging war. Still, he immediately noted that the soldiers did not have their payments settled yet, and the state's situation was terrible – «la Republique estant dans un misérable estat». He asked to think about where to get military reinforcements. In the case of the decision to wage war, the first thing to consider was where to obtain the money to pay the old troops and recruit new soldiers. In his speech, Chancellor Leszczyński lamented about the tax burdens affecting the king's subjects, not only for the other war but also for paying the army, and the state's debts, which he, however, did not mention. Next, the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, Krzysztof Zygmunt Pac, spoke. In his lengthy speech, he touched upon the need for an alliance with Moscow but pointed out that they did not keep their promises and obligations regarding the subsidies they had been already supposed to provide. He argued that these issues should be resolved during the talks on perpetual peace. At the end of his speech, the Lithuanian wished for a quick and happy conclusion of the parliament<sup>19</sup>. Then, after the speech of the Lithuanian Chancellor, the Marshal of the Parliament

13 BOssol., n. 247/II, *Diariusz sejmu koronacyjnego Jana Sobieskiego w 1676 roku*, f. 400r.

14 Aleksandra Skrzypietz, *Królewscy synowie – Jakub, Aleksander i Konstanty Sobiescy* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2011), 39; Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski*, 249.

15 BOssol., n. 247/II, *Diariusz sejmu koronacyjnego [...]*, f. 400r.

16 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 16 Février 1676*, f. 154r.

17 BOssol., n. 247/II, *Diariusz sejmu koronacyjnego [...]*, f. 407r; *Diariusz–Stolicki*, 13.

18 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 16 Février 1676*, f. 154r.

19 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 16 Février 1676*, f. 155r.

went to the Chamber of Deputies. The deputies started talks about the vacancies and demanded their fair distribution, making the point that further discussion of royal proposals depended on it<sup>20</sup>.

The relations also report the congratulations from the apostolic nuncio Francesco Martelli, and the French ambassador François Gaston de Béthune-Sully. The latter also stated that Louis XIV considered the Polish queen as his daughter and offered the royal couple his paternal feelings: «son principal [Louis XIV] prend la reine pour sa propre fille et offre leurs majestés son affection paternel [...]». This meant an explicit proposal for close political cooperation between France and the Commonwealth. The Polish king replied in French to the expressed courtesy and stated that «il prend bien a Coeur la bonne volonté du roi». In the end of the report, the author also noted that the monarch had dispatched to the Chamber of Deputies the bishop of Chełmno, Jan Małachowski, who was supposed to bring a list of vacancies prepared there<sup>21</sup>. In fact, the king dispatched the aforementioned bishop together with the voivode of Kyiv, Andrzej Potocki, to urge the deputies<sup>22</sup>.

The above-mentioned account is basically in line with what is known to have happened in the parliament. The novelty is a more detailed description of what the Crown and Lithuanian Chancellors said and placing it in points of the discussed report. In the well-known parliamentary diary, it is only mentioned that Leszczyński spoke briefly and Pac for more than two hours, so it is difficult to verify whether their speeches covered the presented points<sup>23</sup>. We know for sure that in his speech, the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania mentioned the necessity of an alliance with Moscow and the preparation of instructions for the Polish legation to the eastern neighbour's capital<sup>24</sup>.

From one point of view, we can assume that the analysed document brings some new, interesting information. On the other hand, the statement of the French ambassador cannot be verified in any way. However, his courtesy and diplomatic tone make the report seem justified and very probable, and we have no grounds to deny his statements.

Another relation about the coronation parliament of John Sobieski comes, like the earlier one, from Sunday, 16 February. Still, it is written by a different person, as evidenced by the handwriting. In this case, similarly to the first document, the author reported earlier events, this time from another day – 15 February.

At the very beginning, it informs about vacancies which were finally collected and agreed upon and then read to the king in the Senate. The author of the report also noted that the Marshal of the parliament, Leszczyński, in a speech addressed to the king, thanked him, perhaps for taking care of the issue of vacancies<sup>25</sup>.

The handwritten account from the coronation parliament also mentions that the king of Poland accepted the papal nuncio for a long, secret audience on 14 February. After that, he gave a public audience to the French ambassador, and this information is an extension of that contained in the earlier account. This time François Gaston de Béthune-Sully, in a speech on behalf of his king, handed Louis XIV's letters to Queen Marie Casimire d'Arquien, in which the French monarch referred to the royal alliance with John III Sobieski's wife. In the end, the ambassador in «des termes si fort et si propres» emphasised Louis XIV's respect for the Polish monarch, which could, of course, be considered a diplomatic manoeuvre and considerable artistry of the French court. Then he had an audience with the Queen, where he also gave a speech: «d'une semblable ce remonte avec la même force et élégance». The Polish royal couple expressed their gratitude for the ambassador's words and were also grateful

20 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 16 Février 1676*, f. 155v.

21 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 16 Février 1676*, f. 155v.

22 *Diariusz–Stolicki*, 20; *Urzędnicy województw kijowskiego i czernihowskiego XV–XVIII wieku. Spisy*, eds. Edward Janas and Witold Kłaczewski (Kórnik: Biblioteka Kórnicka, 2002), n. 411.

23 BOssol., n. 247/II, *Diariusz sejmu koronacyjnego [...]*, f. 408r; *Diariusz–Stolicki*, 15.

24 Marek Szwaba, *Działalność polityczna Krzysztofa Paca w drugiej połowie XVII wieku* (PhD diss., University of Wrocław, 1987), 224.

25 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 16 Février 1676*, f. 79r.

to the French king for the paid devoirs – «grandes d’amimie, d’estime et de tendresse»<sup>26</sup>. John III Sobieski also gave an audience to the ambassador of the Emperor Leopold I, Christoph Leopold von Schaffgotsch, who represented the widow of Michał I, Eleonore of Austria. The aforementioned envoy was in the same room where the audience of Louis XIV’s representative was held, and, as the author of the relation noted, he heard everything that was discussed. At the end of the report, it was stated that everyone expected that the queen would go into labour soon after, as she was nine months pregnant. Besides, its author noted that Warsaw often hosted great feasts, both in the royal palace and in senatorial residences. Organised with great splendour, these celebrations of weddings and nuptials occurring at that time astonished foreigners who stayed in the capital<sup>27</sup>. Perhaps, the person reporting these events in Cracow meant the wedding of Wacław Leszczyński, the voivode of Podlasie, with Princess Zofia Wiśniowiecka. The wedding was attended by the king, albeit without his wife, who was supposedly exhausted, due to the difficulties of the travel and of the parliament’s deliberations<sup>28</sup>.

The author of the report from 29 February begins with the statement that there was nothing important to write about, as no specific decisions had yet been made by the parliament. Time was spent on discussing vacancies, dignities and offices, and each speaker put forward his ideas about these topics<sup>29</sup>. It seems that the author of the analysed account was not entirely accurate because, during the deliberations, other issues were also discussed, such as those concerning the army, artillery, and the Ostrogski Ordination. The report also does not mention the senatorial *vota* (opinions), which began on 21 February. Perhaps the author of the account either inaccurately followed the deliberations of the parliament, which is likely, or his attention was exclusively drawn to quarrels over royal offices and estates<sup>30</sup>.

The analysed manuscript also mentions that the queen had not yet given birth, and everyone was waiting for it. Later, its author provided information about international affairs related to Turkey and Moscow, which he probably heard in the king’s entourage, or in Cracow. According to the news, the king was forced to send troops to the threatened border areas. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the type and strength of these military units<sup>31</sup>.

Another account from Sobieski’s coronation parliament, which is included in the analysed English collection of manuscripts, dates from 23 March. From the very beginning, its author writes about the dispute between the Great Hetman of Lithuania, Michał Kazimierz Pac, and the Field Hetman, Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, which brought deliberations of the parliament to a standstill, extending them to the following week<sup>32</sup>. Indeed, the author of the report did not deviate from the truth. Although the agreement between the above-mentioned military commanders was already agreed on 16, it was signed only on March 30<sup>33</sup>.

London was also informed that the Polish parliament was still discussing the rates of taxes that had to be implemented to finance the war against the Ottoman Empire. Rumours spread in Cracow that the Ottoman Turks were preparing for another expedition against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the following paragraphs, the author of the report praised the virtues of John III, claiming that everything the king did was in the interest of the Commonwealth and the Catholic religion. He was supposed to personally edit the letters sent to unnamed “princes” about important issues that

26 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 16 Février 1676*, f. 79r.

27 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 16 Février 1676*, f. 79r.

28 BOssol., n. 247/II, *Diariusz sejmu koronacyjnego [...]*, f. 412r; *Diariusz–Stolicki*, 21; Jarosław Stolicki mistakenly gave the date of 17 February twice. Of course, in the first case, it is Sunday, 16 February.

29 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 29 Février 1676*, f. 207r. In fact, the account resembles a letter, as evidenced by its ending and illegible signature, despite being entitled like an ordinary manuscript account.

30 BOssol., n. 247/II, *Diariusz sejmu koronacyjnego [...]*, ff. 414-18r; Krystyn Matwijowski, *Pierwsze sejmy z czasów Jana III Sobieskiego* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1976), 100-06.

31 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 23 Mars 1676*, f. 351r.

32 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 23 Mars 1676*, f. 351r.

33 Sawicki, *Dom sapieżyński*, 127-28.

probably concerned a foreign policy problem. The account ends with the information about the death of Francesco Gratta, an Italian living in Gdańsk, where «il écrit General des portes de Prusse». He was famous because of his extraordinary devotion and desire to help all those who asked for it. He was to be particularly helpful to the Polish Monarchs. The author of the report also claimed that Gratta's death would be mourned throughout the country and that there was no one in Poland to replace him<sup>34</sup>. In fact, the Gdańsk postmaster, merchant and banker was certainly associated with the Sobieski family from as early as the 1660s. It was when he was to purchase property in France on behalf of Marie Casimire d'Arquen, who intended to buy it for her husband<sup>35</sup>.

The last account of the coronation *sejm* of John III Sobieski, included in the analysed collection, comes from 29 March. At the very beginning, its anonymous author indicated that it provided information from the previous week. He referred to the divine providence, which patronized the actions of the king – «Les nouvelle de cette semaine sont une continuation des bénédictions de Dieu sur les actions du Roi»<sup>36</sup>. As the unknown author of the report noted, John III also personally developed a financial project plan to assemble a large army of 50'000 people, called the *militia*. For so many soldiers, the king assumed the expenses, which were lower than usual, and it is not described in the report how the monarch wanted to cover them. Nevertheless, the royal speech was received with great attention and satisfaction among the nobility debating at the parliament<sup>37</sup>. In his beautiful speech, the Primate thanked Sobieski on behalf of the Senate, and emphasised the king's merits to the country. Leszczyński also appointed a meeting place for the day after, expressing his hope for a happy ending of the parliament. This passage mentions the reconciliation of the Lithuanian Hetmans (the Great Hetman Pac and the Field Hetman Radziwiłł), which took place in the royal chambers, in the presence of senators. According to the reporter, the whole event took place the day before, i.e. on 28 March, and was also supposed to contribute to the satisfying conclusion of the parliament. As for the last issue, the Hetmans' reconciliation certainly contributed to the successful conclusion of the parliamentary deliberations. Unfortunately, the settlement is misdated. Besides, the author probably did not know precisely when it happened because he added the word *hier* – “yesterday” above the line and between two dates<sup>38</sup>. The final document regarding the settlement was signed the day after the report was created, on 30 March. Still, earlier, on 23 March, the agreement was reached in the royal chambers, and the anonymous author of the report probably mentioned this event<sup>39</sup>.

While still discussing the reconciliation of the Lithuanian Hetmans, the anonymous author of the report noted that the Great Hetman, Pac, gave a humiliating speech about the Field Hetman, Radziwiłł. Later, Michał Kazimierz responded, probably in the same vein. Finally, the king spoke, although what he said was not described in relation. It was, however, emphasised that he spoke in a way befitting a great monarch, and this part was concluded with the statement that John III Sobieski was sent to Poles by God – «ce grand Roi leur a esté donné de Dieu»<sup>40</sup>.

Unfortunately, the information regarding the number and type of troops mentioned in the report is not credible, although it was the king who designed the project plan. Sobieski finally proposed an army of 60'000 soldiers. In his proposal, he was not limiting himself only to the number of soldiers, but he also mentioned a specific type of units<sup>41</sup>.

The anonymous author of the report also provided information that the Ottoman Turks were making great preparations to enter the Commonwealth (in Podolia from Wallachia and Hungary). Therefore, the king issued appropriate orders; however, we do not learn about their content from the

34 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 23 Mars 1676*, f. 351r.

35 Komarzyński, *Piękna królowa*, 61.

36 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 29 Mars 1676*, f. 379r.

37 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 29 Mars 1676*, f. 379v.

38 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 29 Mars 1676*, f. 379v.

39 *Diariusz*–Stolicki, 103; Sawicki, *Dom sapieżyński*, 128.

40 TNA, *SP Newsletters*, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 29 Mars 1676*, f. 379v.

41 Matwijowski, *Pierwsze sejmy*, 133–4.



accounts. Sobieski also sent an unnamed colonel and military engineer from Piedmont to review the fortifications in the royal fortresses in Żółkiew, Jaworów and Złoczów, in Ruthenia<sup>42</sup>. Of course, the information about the Turkish threat is correct<sup>43</sup>. The account is right also when it comes to the aforementioned officer of Italian descent, Francesco Corazzini, who, from 20 June 1661, held the office of the general military architect in the Crown army. He was the head of a group of military engineers, and was directly subordinate to the king<sup>44</sup>.

At the end of the report, the author provided information about the deaths of Tsar Alexei I Nikolaevich, who died on 8 February, and the wife of the Elector of Bavaria, Henriette Adelaide of Savoy (this information was passed to him from Vienna)<sup>45</sup>. In the second case, the information is not valid, as Henriette Adelaide died on 13 June 1676. Perhaps she was ill at the beginning of the year, or her health deteriorated significantly, which led to the spread of misinformation about her death. So it was rather an ordinary rumour, which the author of the report delivered without checking.

## FINAL REMARKS

The analysed manuscript accounts from the coronation parliament of John III Sobieski were probably an additional source of information in London. In addition to official diplomatic reports, they broadened the recipients' knowledge, describing the events during the parliamentary sessions. They also informed about what was happening in Russia and Turkey, as well as about matters of minor importance.

The last two analysed accounts were most likely written by people either related to the king or favourably inclined toward him. They comprise the propaganda of the royal successes in the parliament and emphasise the monarch's care of the state and society. Such reports could shape the image of a particular event or people taking part in it, in that case – the Polish king, who was presented in a good light. Of course, the image of the monarch was intentionally fabricated and not entirely accurate. The monarch seemed to believe such depiction to be extremely important as it shaped the image of the Polish king in the eyes of European readers. It cannot be excluded that it was the king *in persona* that inspired these accounts.

Despite doubts about the objectivity of some of the analysed documents, they should be considered an important source of information about the coronation *sejm* in 1676. They complemented the official sources, and their congruence with diplomatic reports may have allowed for deepening the reader's knowledge about the described events.

42 TNA, SP Newsletters, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 29 Mars 1676*, f. 38or.

43 Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski*, 250-52.

44 Jan Wimmer, *Wojsko polskie w drugiej połowie XVII w.* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1965), 350; Marek Wagner, *Słownik biograficzny oficerów polskich drugiej połowy XVII wieku*, vol. 1 (Oświęcim: Napoleon V, 2013), 53.

45 TNA, SP Newsletters, n. 101/44, *De Cracovie de 29 Mars 1676*, f. 38or.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AMAE Fr: Archives Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International République Française à Paris.

CP: *Correspondance politique*.

BOssol.: Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich we Wrocławiu.

Diariusz–Stolicki: *Diariusz sejmiku koronacyjnego [...]*, (ed. Stolicki, 2019).

TNA: The National Archives in London.

*SP Newsletters: State Papers Foreign, Newsletters. Germany, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary and Poland.*

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