

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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DIPLOMATS AND DIPLOMACY

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

Edited by

Dorota Gregorowicz and Alessandro Boccolini



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EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: LA RIVISTA

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

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

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

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

Il Comitato Redazionale e Scientifico

EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: THE JOURNAL

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

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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 YARD¹

ABSTRACT

The last years of the reign of John Casimir, including the *rokosz* of Jerzy Lubomirski, the abdication of Vasa and the *interregnum* of 1668–1669, still arouses great interest among Polish and foreign historians. The internal situation of the Polish-Lithuanian state interested foreign courts, also this one in London. English envoys staying in Gdańsk, Francis Sanderson and Robert Yard meticulously informed about current events in the Commonwealth. Sanderson and Yard correspondence is an interesting source of information about internal events in Poland in the last years of the reign of John Casimir. It should be stated that most of the messages contained in accounts were accurate, sometimes minor mistakes may be encountered. Some of Sanderson's comments and opinions, although appearing relatively rarely, confirm that English diplomats are well-versed in the intricacies of Polish politics, and on the other hand, prove that he has reliable sources of information and competent collaborators. In some reports, we can find detailed descriptions of some events and political moods in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which certainly proves their usefulness in historical research.

KEYWORDS: Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; John Casimir Vasa; Diplomacy; English reports; *Interregnum*.

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The last years of the reign of John Casimir Vasa, including the *rokosz*² of Jerzy Lubomirski, the abdication of the monarch and the *interregnum* of 1668–1669, still arouses great interest among Polish and foreign historians. The internal situation of the Polish-Lithuanian state interested foreign courts (the Habsburgs, Louis XIV, Frederick Wilhelm Hohenzollern and Moscow). The Commonwealth remained an important political player in the arena of Europe, and primarily in all central and eastern Europe. This kind of activity of foreign states certainly gained momentum during the *interregnum*, which was related to the desire to force a supported candidate to the throne. However, other European countries were not passive in the face of the events in the Polish-Lithuanian state. Their envoys were sent to keep track of the current internal situation of the country. In the last years of the reign of John Casimir and during the *interregnum*, the English envoy Francis Sanderson stayed in Gdańsk. His main task was to control trade affairs, but in his reports we can find information about the most important events in the Commonwealth. In 1669, he was joined by the extraordinary envoy Peter Wyche and his secretary, Robert Yard. The last-mentioned left several letters describing the course of the election in 1669. Most of their correspondence (probably all of them) was addressed to Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State for the Southern Department; the head of this department was then Henry Bennet³.

1 The article was made as a result of research conducted as part of PRELUDIUM 12 project titled "Attitudes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania elites towards the election of Władysław IV Vasa and Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki" (project n. UMO-2016/23/N/HS3/00679) financed by the National Science Centre in Kraków.

2 Armed appearance of the nobility against the royal authority.

3 Thomas Seccombe, *Williamson Joseph*, in *Dictionary of National Biography*, t. 62 (London: Smith, Elder & co., 1900), 3; Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives 1509–1688* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1990), 216; David Worthington, *British and Irish Experiences and Impressions of Central Europe 1560–1688* (Farnham: Routledge, 2012), 146.

The main purpose of the article will be to indicate how the English envoys described the most important events of the last years of the reign and *interregnum* after the abdication of John Casimir. Emphasis will be placed on the *rokosz* of Lubomirski, the abandonment of the throne by Vasa, the *interregnum* period and candidates for the throne. An important issue will be to indicate how Sanderson and Yard understood the idea of the *rokosz* as a rebellion of the nobility against royal power, the abdication of the monarch or the idea of free royal election.

The correspondence of the abovementioned English envoys, which was used to elaborate this text, is collected at The National Archives in London⁴. It should be noted here that Sanderson and Yard received news about the events in Warsaw from people unknown to us (perhaps Adrian Stoderts and Reinhold Widders⁵, or Abbot Cosimo Brunetti⁶). It is also known that the English envoys maintained contacts with representatives of the Polish elite, from whom they probably obtained information about current events in the country. This is confirmed, *inter alia*, by the analysis of letters collected in The National Archives.

Due to the policy of maintaining the balance of power in Europe, which developed after the end of the Thirty Years' War, English diplomacy followed, *inter alia*, the events in the Commonwealth, and it seems that it was particularly interested in issues related to unusual events, such as *rokoszes*, wars or the *interregnum* and election of a new monarch. Forcing a given candidate could have decided about the outcome of the fight for supremacy in Europe between the Habsburgs and Louis XIV⁷. Particular interest in the issue of the election of a new ruler is also confirmed by the fact that most probably from 1641 to 1698 there were no English residents in the Commonwealth, and in February 1669, the aforementioned Peter Wyche was delegated here from Russia for a few months⁸. English accounts may be interesting for another reason as well. England was a state that was not directly involved in the course of the *interregnum*, and its deputies were merely observers, and even not eyewitnesses, of the events. They probably drew their knowledge from direct or indirect messages, which should result in research caution. For this reason, their comments were perhaps more objective. However, it cannot be ruled out that Sanderson and Yard were less aware of Poland's internal politics than diplomats from other courts, such as the Brandenburg envoys Johann von Hoverbeck, the French Pierre de Bonzy or the imperial Christopher Leopold Schaffgotsch.

ROKOSZ OF JERZY SEBASTIAN LUBOMIRSKI

The *rokosz* of the Grand Marshal of the Crown, Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski, which took place in 1665–1666, was certainly one of the most important events in the history of the Commonwealth in the second half of the seventeenth century. The reasons for the outbreak of the nobility's rebellion include the desire to strengthen the royal power by John Casimir and plans to appoint a French candidate on the Polish throne while Vasa was still alive (*vivente rege* election), as well as Lubomirski's private grudge. Due to the possible consequences that the *rokosz* could bring, internal events in the Commonwealth were tracked by foreign diplomacy⁹.

During the rebellion, we encounter numerous interruptions in Sanderson's correspondence. The first letter mentioning this topic comes from 6 June 1665. The letters did not contain information about

4 The analysed correspondence is stored under signatures: TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/11 and SP 88/12.

5 More information about the reports of Gdańsk envoys from the *interregnum* in the years 1668–1669 can be find in: Ferdinand Hirsch, "Zur Geschichte der polnischen Königswahl von 1669. Danziger Gesandtschaftsberichte aus den Jahren 1668 und 1699", *Zeitschrift des Westprussischen Geschichtsvereins*, vol. 25 (1889): 20–63.

6 Edward Alfred Mierzwa, *Polska a Anglia w XVII w.* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2003), 222.

7 More information about theory "The Balance of Power": Michael Sheehan, *Balance of Power. History and Theory* (London-New York: Routledge, 1996); Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and model* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

8 Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives*, 213–16; Mierzwa, *Polska a Anglia w XVII w.*, 230.

9 Seccombe, *Williamson Joseph*, 3; Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives*, 216; Worthington, *British and Irish Experiences*, 146.

the session of the *sejm*, during which the royal oppositionist was convicted of treason and deprived of offices (December 1664). The first break in sending correspondence took place from mid-June to mid-August 1665, and the second from late August to December 1665. It should be noted, however, that only one letter was sent in August (12/22 August 1665). From December 1665 to February 1666, there was another break in the exchanged correspondence. Sanderson blamed the state of affairs on Secretary of State Williamson for not answering his letters.

In the correspondence, we find information about the movements of Lubomirski's army, his whereabouts and health, as well as propaganda activities. We can also find information about the activities of King John Casimir or the convening and course of the *sejm* in 1666¹⁰. In two letters, Sanderson also described the Battle of Mątwy (13 July 1666), during which Lubomirski defeated the royal troops¹¹. In most of his letters, we see anxiety about the complicated situation in the country, and the delegate was unable to foresee the next steps to be taken by the parties of the conflict. For example, he wrote: «Our Polish news are so various that I scarce know now what to write. The only is certain that his Majesty intended to have marched out against the confederated armie»¹². The letters also contain information about the peace talks between the king and Lubomirski and the end of the *rokosz*, about which Sanderson himself counted very much – «we have great hopes the treatie will have a good event». Sanderson in his relation pay attention to fact, that Lubomirski humble himself before John Casimir. He wrote also that Vasa resigned of plans for the *vivente rege* election¹³.

Interesting is also the approach of Sanderson to the issue of *rokosz* and his comments about the nobility's rebellion against the royal power. It turns out that he was quite well versed in the specificities of the political system of the Commonwealth. In several letters he mentions that Lubomirski urged the nobility to join him and defend common freedoms by his side. Interestingly, the English diplomat described this procedure as «the old incentive to rebellion», which confirms the thesis that he knew quite well the specificity of the relationship between the nobility and the king. Note, however, that Sanderson does not use the word *rokosz* in his correspondence. It is difficult to say whether he did not know this concept or did not want to use it not to complicate the provided information¹⁴.

JOHN CASIMIR VASA'S ABDICATION

The abdication of John Casimir Vasa from the Polish throne took place during the *sejm* on 16 September 16, 1668¹⁵. Sanderson informed about the monarch's resignation from the crown several times before that date. In one of the letters of the English agent, we even find information that Pope Clement IX urged John Casimir to remain on the throne of the Polish-Lithuanian state¹⁶. The frequency of this issue in correspondence shows a completely different approach to the problem of abdication by Sanderson than the rebellion question. London was probably more interested in these issues.

10 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/11, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 6 June 1665, f. 31r. Other letter sent by Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson in: *Ibid.*, Gdańsk 13 June 1665, f. 32r; Gdańsk 22 August 1665, f. 34r; Gdańsk 26 December 1665, f. 37r-v; Gdańsk 6 February 1666, f. 40r-v; Gdańsk 20 February 1666, f. 41r-v; Gdańsk 6 February 1666, f. 40r-v; Gdańsk 21 August 1666, f. 49r.

11 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/11, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 17 July 1666, f. 44r, and Gdańsk 14/24 July 1666, f. 45v.

12 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/11, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 3 July 1666, f. 43r.

13 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/11, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Warsaw 30 July 1666, f. 46r.

14 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/11, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 6 June 1665, f. 31r.

15 Tadeusz Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza na polskim tronie* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo «Śląsk», 1984), 268-69; Mieczysława Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2006), 13.

16 Among others: TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/11, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 23 June 1668, f. 136r; also *Ibid.* Gdańsk 7 July 1668, f. 144r, Gdańsk 28 July 1668, ff. 145r-v, Gdańsk 11 August 1668, f. 146r. More about attitudes of Holy See towards the election in 1668-1669 you can read in the article of Dorota Gregorowicz, «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: PAU, 2020) 141-61.

Sanderson informed London about the act of abdication and the related ceremonies in a letter from 22 September. According to his message, the ceremony began around 1 pm, and John Casimir delivered «a very pathetick oration». Apparently, he made the audience cry¹⁷. A speech full of compliments for John Casimir on behalf of senators and gathered deputies was given by Archbishop of Gniezno Mikołaj Prażmowski. After all the ceremonies and the destruction of the election diploma, the abdicated-king did not allow those present to escort him to the carriage, claiming that at that moment he was only a private person. He went alone to his residence – «to a garding» (probably the private palace of John Casimir at Krakowskie Przedmieście in Warsaw)¹⁸. The envoy, who was in Gdańsk, also informed that during the session of the abdication *sejm*, an *asekuracja* was established for John Casimir, which was exalted 150'000 złoty (100'000 złoty from the Crown and 50'000 złoty from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). Finally, Sanderson announced in his letter that the primate would set the date of the future convocation *sejm*¹⁹. Unfortunately, Sanderson did not leave any private opinion about the events that took place during the abdication *sejm*, and these letters have only reporting nature.

INTERREGNUM IN THE LIGHT OF ENGLISH REPORTS

During the *interregnum* after John Casimir's abdication, Sanderson's correspondence gained momentum. Letters were sent more and more often, and we find in them more detailed information on internal events in the country. It is obvious that Sanderson described the course of the *sejms* in his correspondence, but I would like to omit these issues because it would be reproductive, and the information that the agent brings in there is largely consistent with the current state of knowledge. Therefore, below I would like to discuss the subject that seems to be of most interest to an English envoy, which, in a way, also shows his attitudes and opinions and his ability to obtain information or issue certain political judgments as a diplomat.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE INTERREGNUM²⁰

It is natural that Sanderson and Yard reported on major political events during the *interregnum*. Since most of the information that the English envoys sent to London are generally known, I will limit myself in this part to only a brief description and an indication of what was particularly noted. Significantly, Sanderson, for example, makes no mention about the *sejmiki* (local, political, official meeting of nobility) or their conduct, apparently considering their decisions and composition as insignificant. Sanderson described the course of the convocation parliament in some detail in his letters. Information about it can be found in the correspondence from 29 September (about the date of calling the *sejm*)²¹,

17 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 22 September 1668, f. 164r. The farewell oration of John Casimir Vasa was sent by Sanderson to London, most probably on September 29, 1668, and its Latin copy is kept at The National Archives in London: TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, *Oratio Serenissimo Poloniae Regis Joannis Casimiro Die 16 Sept. Regno esse solenniter abdicantis ad Senatum Gabita atq ex Poloniae in Latinum translate* Ao. 1668, ff. 179r-180r. The letter in which the envoy staying in Gdańsk informs about the sending of speech of John Casimir: TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 29 September 1668, f. 166r.

18 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 22 September 1668, f. 164r; Witold Kłaczewski, *Abdykacja Jana Kazimierza. Społeczeństwo szlacheckie wobec kryzysu politycznego lat 1667–1668* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1993), 232; Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza*, 269.

19 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 22 September 1668, f. 164r; Wasilewski, *Ostatni Waza*, 268.

20 The reports from the *interregnum* have been discussed by myself in a separate article: Aleksandra Ziober, "Francis Sanderson and Robert Yard reports about an interregnum in the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth after the abdication of Jan Kazimierz Waza", *Res Historica*, n. 47 (2019): 139–56.

21 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 29 September 1668, f. 166r.

24 November²², 1 December²³, 8 December²⁴ and 15 December (information about the end of the *sejm*)²⁵. It is worth mentioning that Sanderson devoted a lot of space in his letters to the general confederation (legal solutions aimed at preventing illegal practices during *interregnum*, including collecting bribes), as well as creating factions and the problem of excluding the French candidate from seeking the Polish throne. In the opinion of the English agent, the question of the general confederation elicited «great dissensions» among the debates. Sanderson believed, in a sense rightly, that it was directed against a candidacy supported by France, but it was also detrimental to Philip William Neuburg²⁶.

Unfortunately, we have much more modest information about the course of the election *sejm*, which resulted from the fact that information on this subject was passed to London by Brunetti, who was not mentioned by name, which in a way relieved Sanderson and Yard from this obligation²⁷. At this point, however, it is worth mentioning at least the election of the Marshal of the election *sejm*, who became the Crown Steward Szczęsny (Feliks) Kazimierz Potocki, a Radziwiłł's supporter, as Sanderson writes in his correspondence. He also noted: «I shall only tell you, it's here beleaved that the nobleman whom they have chosen for their marschall is wholly for the Duke of Neuburgh [and next] so that he's like to carry it from the Loteringer». These polls should be considered the most appropriate at this moment in the game for the throne of the Republic of Poland²⁸. Of course, the English deputies also sent information about the election of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, about which I have provided detailed information in the section «Candidates for the throne».

CANDIDATES FOR THE THRONE

For obvious reasons, a large part of Sanderson's correspondence from the *interregnum* deals with the question of candidates for the Polish throne. During the *interregnum* after the abdication of John Casimir, several important contenders²⁹ fought for the throne of the Commonwealth, but, as Francis Sanderson rightly pointed out, at the time of start of the *interregnum*, no candidate gained a definite advantage. At the same time, he argued that there were at least a few pretenders, «but they are all nothing» and that the whole situation should clarify in the next two months³⁰. According to the information obtained by him in September 1668, some announced the election of the famous de Condé, i.e. Henry or his father Louis. According to Sanderson, many of the highest officials represented this political option, and he described them as «frenchified»³¹.

22 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 24 November 1668, f. 171r.

23 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 1 December 1668, f. 173r.

24 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 8 December 1668, f. 176r.

25 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 15 December 1668, f. 177r.

26 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 1 December 1668, f. 173r.

27 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 25 May 1669, f. 29r.

28 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 18 May 1669, f. 28r.

29 Above all, the following were mentioned: the princes d'Enghien Louis or his son Henry, the prince of Neuburg Philip William Wittelsbach, the Brandenburg elector Frederick Wilhelm Hohenzollern, the Lorraine prince Charles V, the Moscow tsar Alexei Mikhailovich Romanov and his sons, Alexei and Fyodor. At that time, the idea related to the election of the king of «Piast» also revived; Jan Sobieski, Dymitr and Michał from Wiśniowiecki family, Aleksander Zasławski-Ostrogski and the famous soldier Aleksander Polanowski were most often mentioned in AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Polonia*, vol. 81, *Speculum in electionem Regni Polonie expositum pro casu abdicatione in quo Polonia expedit prendere has necessitates candidatos comitantes*, ff. 370r-71r. Cf. Zbigniew Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski (1629–1696)* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1983), 152; Adam Przyboś, *Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki 1640–1673* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1984), 38; Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała*, 63–83; Andrzej Kamiński, «Kandydatura Hohenzollernów brandenburskich do tronu polskiego od XVI do końca XVIII wieku. Realny cel czy też gra polityczna?», in *Miedzy Zachodem a Wschodem. Etniczne, kulturowe i religijne pograniczna Rzeczypospolitej w XVI-XVIII wieku*, eds. Krzysztof Mikulski and Agnieszka Zielińska-Nowicka (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2006), 31–3.

30 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 29 September 1668, f. 166r.

31 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 22 September 1668, f. 164r; Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała*, 60–1; Kamiński, *Kandydatura Hohenzollernów brandenburskich*, 31–3; Joanna Matyasik, *Obóz politycznych Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2011), 23.

In a letter from 23 March 1669, Francis Sanderson mentions the appearance in Warsaw of a Muscovite envoy who was to present Romanov's proposals and seek the crown for his eldest son. He promised that Alexei would «there upon turn catologue» and would additionally fill «great matters» for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth - but we do not know exactly what Sanderson meant³². Rumors that one of the Tsar's sons might change religion practically continued throughout the *interregnum*. Information about this can be found in numerous reports both by foreign deputies and residents of the Commonwealth³³. Most, including the Holy See, did not believe these promises. The Tsar had even to promise that his son would convert to Catholicism; otherwise, he would not be able to fight for the election throne at all, as the applicable law forbade it. However, there were references to the benefits that the appointment of Moskal to the king could bring. Some believed that this would guarantee peace with the eastern neighbour and that the Tsar would return the lands seized during the last war³⁴. A separate issue raised in the correspondence connected with the Tsar was his alleged maintenance of the army «besides whole Lithuania»³⁵. Mentions about this subject appeared in the accounts of other people. However, no confirmation of this information could be found, and it seems that it had rather a propaganda dimension.

The news about the Muscovite candidacy was also provided on 31 March 1669 by Robert Yard, claiming that it was supported by the entire Grand Duchy, in contrast to the Poles who feared the introduction of tyranny³⁶. Some Lithuanians indeed supported the Tsar's efforts in the election struggle. The greatest allies of Romanov, at least in 1667 and in the first half of 1668, were to be Michał Kazimierz and Krzysztof Zygmunt Pac. Most researchers believe that their support for Muscovite's candidacy was, however, only a political game³⁷.

Of course, the English envoys informed London of other pretenders to the throne as well. In December 1668, according to Sanderson, the Emperor officially supported the candidacy of the Wittelsbach. The English diplomat inquired about this matter «of those who pretend to know much» and finally stated that Habsburg supported the actions of the young Duke of Lorraine «who begins to be famous amongst the Poles». There were also many private scriptures spreading the reasons for supporting the mentioned candidate³⁸. It must be acknowledged that Sanderson did have access to good informants because the Emperor really wanted to enthrone to the Polish-Lithuanian state, Charles, the prince of

32 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, *Francis Sanderson to N.N. [probably Joseph Williamson]*, Gdańsk 23 March 1669, f. 9r.

33 "Respons jm. p. kasztelana liwskiego p. Łuszczewskiemu", in *Pisma polityczne z czasów panowania Jana Kazimierza Wazy 1648-1668. Publicystyka, eksorbitanskie, projekty, memoriały*, vol. III: 1665-1668, ed. Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska (Wrocław-Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991), 273; "Copia listu p. Dąbskiego chorążego zatorskiego do p. Brzychwy chorążego krakowskiego de data 10 Julii 1668 z Rapki", in ead. *Pisma polityczne*, 280-81; "Zwierciadło na elekcję króla polskiego wystawione in casu abdicationis anno 1668, w którym w Polsce trzeba has necessitates candidatos comitantes upatrować", in Ead., *Pisma polityczne*, 315; Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała*, 65.

34 Zbigniew Wójcik, *Między traktatem andruszowskim a wojną turecką. Stosunki polsko-rosyjskie 1667-1672* (Warszawa: PWN, 1968), 126-27; Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała*, 63, 65; Konrad Bobiatyński, *Michał Kazimierz Pac. Wojewoda wileński, hetman wielki litewski* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2008), 199.

35 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, *Robert Yard to N.N.*, Gdańsk 1 [?] April 1669, f. 21r-v.

36 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, *Robert Yard to N.N.*, Gdańsk 31 March 1668, f. 17r-v.

37 AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Polonia*, vol. 81, *Stato delle fattioni nel fine del mese d'Agosto 1668 secondo le relationi e notitie che possono haversene*, f. 385r; Zbigniew Wójcik, "Pacowie wobec kandydatury rosyjskiej na tron polski w latach 1668-1669 (misja Połkowa na Litwie, 1668)", *Przegląd Historyczny*, n. 60/1 (1969): 144-45; Konrad Bobiatyński, "Kandydatura Romanowów na tron Rzeczypospolitej podczas elekcji 1669 i 1674 roku. Realna koncepcja, czy też gra polityczna?", in *Проблеми інтеграції і інкарнації у розвитку Центральної і Усхідньої Європи у першій половині Нового часу*, eds. S.F. Sokal and Andrey Yanushkevich (Minsk: BIP-S Plus, 2010), 349-51; Waclaw Uruszczak, "Fakcje senatorskie w sierpniu 1668 roku", in *Parlament, prawo, ludzie. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Juliuszowi Bardachowi w sześćdziesięciolecie pracy twórczej*, eds. Katarzyna Iwanicka, Maria Skowronek and Kazimierz Stembrowicz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996). Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski*, 152.

38 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 24 November 1668, f. 171r. There were many propaganda writing distributed during the *interregnum*. Their numerous copies are kept in the collections of the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw: AGAD, *Nabytki oddział I*, rkps 1244.

Lorraine³⁹.

In Sanderson's letters we can also find many election polls and opinions on the changing chances of success of candidates. For example, in April 1669 he claimed that Philip William, the Prince of Neuburg, had a very good chance of winning the Polish crown – «I shall only tell you it's not doubted here: the Duke of Neuburg will carry the crown of Poland, if the French really intend what they seems to pretend»⁴⁰–, and Robert Yard added that he enjoyed the support of the Elector of Brandenburg Frederick William⁴¹. However, the situation changed in mid-June 1669. Sanderson, referring to the words of a man sitting in the parliament of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, stated that it was most likely the Lorraine who would manage to win the crown. His greatest opponent, however, was still the Prince of Neuburg⁴². Meanwhile (20 April 20 1669) Sanderson reported to Joseph Williamson «that the Poles have some thoughts of choosing the younger Prince Wiesnewitzsky for their King»⁴³. However, the deputy staying in the Republic of Poland did not treat this option as real and feasible. However, the information provided proves that the possibility of electing Michał Korybut as king was taken into account even before the start of the election *sejm*.

Francis Sanderson informed London about the election of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki on 26 June 1669 (it happened on 19 June). In the letter, he also provided a brief description of him. The deputy also informed about Wiśniowiecki's father, Jeremi, who died during the wars with the Cossacks. In his opinion, he owned huge estates in Ukraine, although destroyed by the Cossacks. Some of them were then held by the Tsar of Moscow. The respondent also briefly mentioned the mother of the new king, Gryzelda née Zamoyska. Sanderson received similar information about the result of the election from Königsberg. However, the local informant added that Prince Charles of Lorraine received the most votes, and Philip William was to collect 50 votes less. At the decisive moment, the candidacy of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki «who was then amongst them» was proposed, and this suggestion received general applause. Reportedly, several people who opposed his candidacy were killed⁴⁴. A similar course of events related to the election of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki was described in various relations from the election parliament⁴⁵.

BOGUSŁAW RADZIWIŁŁ IN ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE INTERREGNUM

Quite often in the correspondence of Sanderson and Yard we come across the person of the Lithuanian Equerry, Bogusław Radziwiłł. We can associate this interest with his religion, i.e. Calvinism. In this context Bogusław was most often mentioned as one of the most influential representatives of Protestantism in Lithuania, if not in the entire Commonwealth. However, the interest in Radziwiłł's person may also result from the fact that his ancestors established numerous contacts with the aristocracy and the royal court in London.

Mentions about Radziwiłł also appeared during the transmission of information on religious conflicts, mainly during the convocation parliament. An example can be Sanderson's letter of December 1668, in which he informed that the papal party intended to eliminate Protestants from election games and participation in the *sejms* of the *interregnum* period. The actions were directed mainly against

39 Przyboś, *Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki*, 38-9; Andrzej Kamieński, *Polska a Brandenburgia-Prusy w drugiej połowie XVII wieku. Dzieje polityczne* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2002), 76; Andrzej Kamieński, "Działania dyplomacji brandenburskiej w Polsce podczas elekcji 1674 roku", *Wiek Stary i Nowy*, n. 8 (2015): 30-1.

40 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/12, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 6 April 1669, f. 16r.

41 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/12, *Robert Yard to N.N.*, Gdańsk 9 April 1669, f. 23r.

42 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/12, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 15 June 1669, f. 34r.

43 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/12, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 20 April 1669, f. 25r.

44 TNA, *SP Poland and Saxony*, SP 88/12, *Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson*, Gdańsk 26 June 1669, f. 37r.

45 Bogusław Radziwiłł, *Autobiografia*, ed. Tadeusz Wasilewski (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1979), 97; Jan Antoni Chrapowicki, *Diariusz, część druga: lata 1665–1669*, eds. Andrzej Rachuba, Tadeusz Wasilewski (Warszawa: "Pax", 1998), 508-09; Matyasik, *Obóz polityczny króla*, 29; Mariusz Sawicki, *Dom sapieżyński 1666–1685. Droga do hegemonii w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim* (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2016), 52; Konrad Bobiatyński, *W walce o hegemonie. Rywalizacja polityczna w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w latach 1667–1674* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2017), 54.

Bogusław Radziwiłł, who was accused of being dependent on the Elector of Brandenburg Frederick William. The personality of Radziwiłł also attracted the attention of the English respondent, and his political talents were described as follows: «he was so well seconded by some of his persuasion, that they could not accomplish their designs»⁴⁶.

Similar information appeared in the letter of 8 December 1668, when the gathered nobility moved to the topic of depriving Protestants of their existing rights. Even bishops were to oppose such strict behaviour. The quarrels were to last until 9 p.m., and Bogusław Radziwiłł had dissenters. Due to numerous misunderstandings, the session was almost break off⁴⁷. It seems that Sanderson wrote in his letter about 28 November events. The political moods against dissenters were also fueled by political opponents of Radziwiłł–Pac family, who wanted to oust him from the Chamber of Deputies⁴⁸.

Another interesting information about Radziwiłł comes from April 1669. Sanderson informed Williamson that he received a German-language book: «I have procured a book here of the war et state affaires in Poland for the last 100 years, where Prince Radzivills geneologie is discribed et other great families in Poland»⁴⁹). The English envoy wanted to send the entire work by sea: «shall send you per first ship from hence, being too great to be sent per post». At the same time, Sanderson found that it was very valuable reading, «it's in the dutch language et well worth the reading for those that understand it»⁵⁰. Robert Yard also mentioned the abovementioned book and the genealogy of Bogusław Radziwiłł in his letter of 31 March 1669⁵¹.

In the same letter, Sanderson informed that Prince Bogusław Radziwiłł was put forward as a candidate for the throne – «Prince Radzivill was also in nomination et had the votos of 18 counties to be king. Upon condition he would turn Romana Catholika» –⁵². The same number of voivodeships that supported the candidacy of the Lithuanian Equerry is given by *Theatrum Europeanum*⁵³. For various reasons, Radziwiłł's candidacy could not, however, be applauded in general; there was not even general agreement among Lithuanians for it⁵⁴.

SUMMARY

Sanderson and Yard's correspondence is an interesting source of information about internal events in Poland in the last years of the reign of John Casimir. However, it should be emphasised they transmitted to London the most important information, though sometimes unheard of in other reports, concerning this period. It should be stated that most of the messages contained in the accounts were accurate, occasionally minor mistakes may be encountered. Some of Sanderson's comments and opinions, although appearing relatively rarely, confirm that English diplomats are well-versed in the intricacies of Polish politics, and on the other hand, prove that he has reliable sources of information and competent collaborators. The relations of Sanderson and Yard, as well as their predecessors and successors, certainly provide interesting material for analysis. In some reports, we can find detailed descriptions of some events and political moods in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which prove their usefulness in historical research.

46 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 1 December 1668, f. 173r.

47 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/11, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk, 8 December 1668, f. 176r.

48 Chmielewska, *Sejm elekcyjny Michała*, 48.

49 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 6 April 1669, f. 16r.

50 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 6 April 1669, f. 16r.

51 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, Robert Yard do N.N., Gdańsk 31 March 1668, ff. 17r-v.

52 TNA, SP Poland and Saxony, SP 88/12, Francis Sanderson to Joseph Williamson, Gdańsk 26 June 1669, f. 37r.

53 *Theatrum Europaeum*, vol. 10 (Frankfurt am Mein: Verlag Matthäi Merian [...], 1677) 47.

54 Aleksandra Ziober, *Postawy elit Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego wobec elekcji Władysława IV Wazy i Michała Korybuta Wiśniowieckiego* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Księgarnia Akademicka, 2020), 144.

ABBREVIATIONS

AGAD: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie.

AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano.

TNA: The National Archives in London.

SP-Poland and Saxony: *State Papers Foreign, Poland and Saxony*.

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