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IMPIETAS GRAVISSIMA – THE WARSAW CONFEDERATION
IN THE PAPAL DIPLOMACY'S DISCOURSE
IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY *

In the age of the Counter-Reformation, concessions to religious dissenters from the dominant Roman Church, conceived as a normalisation of the coexistence of various confessions within the multi-ethnic Poland-Lithuania, remained one of the most significant issues both for the stabilisation of the internal situation of the Commonwealth and for the policy pursued by the Holy See on the territory of Central and Eastern Europe. As a result of the events of the first *interregnum*, which occurred in the face of the heirless death of Sigismund II Augustus and the extinction of the male line of the Jagiellonian dynasty, the most relevant normative act on this issue became the Warsaw Confederation, passed at the convocation¹ of 1573, and the fact that its articles (later called the Henrician Articles) were included in the royal oath of every newly elected monarch (starting with Henry of Valois, crowned on 21 February 1574).

The Warsaw Confederation was undoubtedly one of the crucial issues of a religious nature raised in the discourse of papal diplomats residing in Poland-Lithuania

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¹ The convocation, convened following the death of the monarch, constituted a form of *sejm*, although its legislative prerogatives remained questionable. Its powers included resolving matters concerning the death of the king and ensuring the internal and external security of the state during the *interregnum*. The main objective was to decide the date and place of the new election, but also to define the political programmes, discussed during the previous provincial assemblies throughout the Polish-Lithuanian territory, as well as to convene the *sejmiki* prior to the election *sejm*.

in the second half of the sixteenth century, as well as of their Roman superiors. This article will analyse the role of the Holy See's representatives in the events accompanying the approval of the famous act and its subsequent inclusion in the oaths of consecutive monarchs. In addition, the narrative of the papal envoys' diplomatic correspondence will be analysed in the context of its coverage of the issue of Confederation. The choice of words to describe the act in question and the emotional content of the discourse will be considered. As Anna Krześkowiak-Krwawicz noted, one can find a real "world vision" of the time behind the terms used in the political narrative of a given era.²

THE WARSAW CONFEDERATION DURING THE INTERREGNA
OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY
IN THE ACTIVITY OF PAPAL DIPLOMATS

From 6 to 29 January 1573, the first convocation convened in Warsaw. The nobility's priority was to ensure the state's safety during the *interregnum* and to guarantee that the election of a new king would be conducted smoothly.³ The order of the election, which was to begin on 6 April 1573, was then determined. During the convocation, the question of religious peace, made urgent by the recent events of St Bartholomew's Night, arose. The resolution on the peaceful coexistence of confessions eventually became part of the so-called Warsaw Confederation, a political agreement designed to preserve Poland-Lithuania's internal security during the *interregnum* and the upcoming election.

Neither the papal legate *a latere*, Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Commendone, who operated in the Commonwealth at the time, nor the apostolic nuncio Vincenzo Dal Portico and other foreign delegates took direct part in the convocation. Nevertheless, the legate sent his secretary Antonio Maria Graziani to Warsaw to control the proceedings of the convening. There, Graziani became heavily involved in activities against the Confederation. He also led efforts to have the Catholic Masovia designated as the place of the forthcoming election. Assisting the convocation proceedings, Graziani regularly sent the legate documentation concerning the negotiations on the article on the peaceful coexistence of

² Anna Krześkowiak-Krwawicz, *Dyskurs polityczny Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2018), 15.

³ Jan Dziągiewski, *Sejmy elekcyjne, elektorzy, elekcje 1573–1674* (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztor w Pułtusku, 2003), 34.

confessions.⁴ Commendone analysed these materials and then forwarded them to Rome.⁵ The legate explained to the Holy See that, from a juridical point of view, the Warsaw Confederation should not enter into force, as it had been protested against by all members of the episcopate headed by Primate Jakub Uchański (with the only exception of bishops of Kraków – Franciszek Krasieński and of Kamieniec – Dionizy Secygniowski). He stressed that the act had been conceived as a temporary solution, regulating social and political relations during the *interregnum*. However, he noted with concern that most of the Catholic nobility supported it more or less openly and that dissenters would never agree to appoint a Catholic monarch without a similar guarantee of religious tolerance at the forthcoming election (mindful of the very recent French massacre of Huguenots). Thus, with the enactment of the Warsaw Confederation, papal diplomacy found itself in a difficult position.⁶

Commendone's public audience at the election *sejm* took place on 8 April 1573. At that time, he delivered to Primate Uchański a papal brief on the election, containing condolences on the death of Sigismund Augustus and an appeal for an unanimous election of a Catholic monarch. In his oration, the legate drew particular attention to the necessity of electing a Catholic and the danger to the Catholic Church in Poland-Lithuania posed by the provisions of the Warsaw Confederation. He underscored the role of the Commonwealth in European Christianity. Commendone spoke out against political reforms and the enactment of new laws during the *interregnum*, thus striking directly at the article *pacem et tranquillitatem inter dissidentes in religione manutenebo*, contained in the Confederation. The legate argued that different confessions could not coexist peacefully within one kingdom. Citing the biblical example of Samson, who set fire to the crops of the Philistines, Commendone metaphorised that it was impossible to obtain good harvests from mingled seeds. He warned that the impression of religious peace could give rise to new conflicts. He also stood up for the jurisdictional rights of the Catholic clergy. However, the legate did not support

⁴ Antonio Maria Graziani, *La vie du Cardinal Commendon* (Lyon: Du Puis, 1702), 228; Stefan Gruszecki, *Walka o władzę w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej po wygaśnięciu dynastii Jagiellonów (1572–1573)* (Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1969), 194; Dorota Gregorowicz, *Tiara w grze o koronę. Stolica Apostolska wobec wolnych elekcji w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w drugiej połowie XVI wieku* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2019), 239.

⁵ See Archivio Apostolico Vaticano [hereafter: AAV], Segr. di Stato, Pol. 3, Confederatio Generali Varsaviae in Comitibus Regni facta, 48–50r; AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 3, Protestatio Catholicorum, 52–53r.

⁶ AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 3, Letter of Giovanni Francesco Commendone to Tolomeo Gallio, Sulejów 27 II 1573, 83–85. See Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 260–261; Dorota Gregorowicz, “The Polish-Lithuanian Interregna and Papal Diplomacy”, in *Confessional Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Roberta Anderson and Charlotte Backerra (London–New York: Routledge, 2021), 16.

any candidates for the Polish-Lithuanian crown during his audience, sticking to the principle of political neutrality endorsed by the Holy See.⁷

The nobility's votation began on 4 May 1573. After excluding the candidatures of 'Piast' and Ivan IV the Terrible, the battlefield was left to Archduke Ernest, Henry of Valois and the underdog – John III Vasa. The scales of victory eventually tipped in favour of the French. Henry was nominated by Primate Uchański on 11 May. Then, on 16 May, his election was accepted by the Protestants gathered in Grochów under Jan Firlej, Grand Marshal of the Crown. The condition placed by the dissenters for the acceptance of the election of Henry of Valois was that the Warsaw Confederation's articles on religious liberties would be included in the new royal oath.⁸

The feast of Corpus Domini, 21 May, Commendone spent with Primate Uchański at his residence in Błonie. The hierarchs then discussed what action should be taken to prevent the king-elect from approving the Warsaw Confederation's provisions. Together they drafted an official protest against the articles on the coexistence of confessions.⁹ Graziani meanwhile sought from the Catholic nobility still gathered in Warsaw not to sign any documents containing the act's wording.¹⁰ Nuncio Dal Portico also showed his commitment – he tried to obtain the text of the oath to be sworn by the new monarch to communicate its exact content to the Holy See. In addition, he monitored the attitudes of the Catholic party. Eventually, Dal Portico sent the legate the definitive text of the Henrician Articles to be sworn on 25 May. As the nobility had already

⁷ AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 172, Letter of T. Gallio do G.F. Commendone, Rome 16 V 1573, 96. See Graziani, *La vie du Cardinal*, 246; Mikołaj Malinowski, "Wiadomość o życiu kardynała Commendoniego," in *Pamiętniki o dawnej Polsce z czasów Zygmunta Augusta obejmujące listy Jana Franciszka Commendona do Karola Boromeusza*, t. vol (Wilno: R. Rafałowicz, 1851), XLI–XLII; Almut Bues, "Polityka papieska wobec pierwszego bezkrólewia w Polsce," *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 41 (1997): 136; Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 250–251.

⁸ Maciej Serwański, *Henryk III Walezy w Polsce. Stosunki polsko-francuskie w latach 1566–1576* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976), 95–96; Stanisław Grzybowski, *Henryk Walezy* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1985), 94.

⁹ *Uchańsciana, czyli zbiór dokumentów wyjaśniających życie i działalność Jakóba Uchańskiego, arcybiskupa gnieźnieńskiego, legata urodzonego, Królestwa Polskiego prymasa i pierwszego księcia*, vol. 5: *Jakób Uchański, arcybiskup gnieźnieński, (1502–1581): monografia historyczna*, edited by Teodor Wierzbowski (Warszawa: J. Berger, 1892), 539–540; Stanisław Płaza, *Próby reform ustrojowych w czasie pierwszego bezkrólewia (1572–1574)* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1969), 121–122; Marcin Niemyjski, "Koronni senatorowie duchowni wobec kwestii pokoju religijnego w artykułach konfederacji generalnej warszawskiej w pierwszym bezkrólewiu po śmierci Zygmunta Augusta," *Białostockie Teki Historyczne* 6 (2008): 71.

¹⁰ AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 3, Letter of G.F. Commendone to T. Gallio, Skierniewice 13 V 1573, 189v–190r.

begun to leave Warsaw, further discussion on the oath issue was postponed until the coronation *sejm*.

On 1 June 1573, Vincenzo Lauro, bishop of Mondovì, assumed the office of apostolic nuncio in Poland-Lithuania, by the newly elected Henry of Valois. After spending several months at the French court, Lauro set off for Kraków (anticipating the monarch's departure). The new diplomat's first and most important task was to prevent the inclusion of the Henrician Articles containing the Warsaw Confederation in the royal oath during the forthcoming coronation ceremony. The nuncio arrived in Kraków on 30 January 1574. He then passed papal letters to the bishops of Kraków – Franciszek Krasieński, Kuyavia – Stanisław Karnkowski, Płock – Piotr Dunin-Wolski, Poznań – Adam Konarski and primate Jakub Uchański ascertaining their support for boycotting the form of the royal oath containing the articles. Krasieński was the only one to indicate that he would support the cause only if it did not lead to civil war.¹¹

The king-elect, meanwhile entering Poland-Lithuania, was greeted in Frankfurt am Oder by Antonio Maria Graziani, who arrived there on 17 January 1574. The new nuncio Vincenzo Lauro had travelled straight to Kraków by another route.¹² Henry of Valois granted Graziani an audience, during which the Commendone's secretary raised the question of the royal oath, saying "how much impiety and terrible heresies it contains and how some people [in Poland-Lithuania] openly convert to Islam [sic]".¹³ The king-elect inquired whether there was a way to get the coronation without taking an oath on the Warsaw Confederation's articles. Graziani had previously discussed such a possibility with Uchański, Karnkowski, Andrzej Zborowski, and French representatives. Above all, it was agreed that the coronation act should occur as soon as possible after Henry arrived in Kraków. The plan was to move the discussion on religious matters to the *sejm*. In the opinion of the papal diplomat, the best option was to shout down the dissidents, arguing that the consent of all was needed for any change to the laws of the Commonwealth. Graziani naively expressed the hope that

¹¹ Letter of Vincenzo Lauro to T. Gallio, Kraków 5 II 1574, in *Acta Nuntiaturae Poloniae*, t. IX: *Vincentius Lauro (1572–1578)*, vol. 1 (25 VII 1572 – 30 IX 1574), edited by Mirosław Korolko and Henryk Damian Wojtyńska (Romae: Institutum Historicum Polonicum, 1994) [hereafter: ANP IX/1], nr 68, 129–130; Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Kraków 16 II 1574, in ANP IX/1, nr 70, 135. See Tadeusz Gostyński, *Franciszek Krasieński – polityk złotego wieku* (Warsaw, 1938), 115; also Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 271.

¹² Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 271–273.

¹³ Archivio Graziani [hereafter: AG], ms. 54, fasc. Gennaio 1574, Letter of Antonio Maria Graziani to T. Gallio, Frankfurt am Oder 21 I 1574, s.p.: "Quanta impieta contiene, et quanto abominandi heresie confirma, et come già apertamente alcuni diventano Mahomettani". All the translations from Italian, present in the text, are made by the author.

the Protestants would give up and allow the coronation without the king taking an oath containing amendments to the religious peace.¹⁴

In Kraków, Lauro also worked in parallel for the coronation to be conducted using the old formula of the royal oath, which did not include the article of the Warsaw Confederation on the peaceful coexistence of confessions. If this was impossible, he demanded this point to be tightened or the Confederation be treated as a separate document protecting dissenters rather than an integral part of the *iuramentum*.¹⁵

Initially, the coronation ceremony went according to the papal diplomats' expectations. However, the voivode of Kraków Jan Firlej realised in time that the oath formula submitted to the king did not contain changes compliant with the provisions of the Warsaw Confederation, sworn earlier in Paris. It caused a conflict at Wawel Cathedral, which led to Firlej threatening that the nobility would not recognise the royal oath thus taken and, thereby, the entire act of coronation. In the end, Henry of Valois was forced to add the subsequent words to the text of the initially proposed oath: *Pacem inter dissidentes religione tuebor*, after which the bishop of Kuyavia Stanisław Karnkowski submitted to him for inclusion in the *iuramentum* an additional phrase: *Salvis tamen juribus ecclesiasticus*. By these means, the inauguration of the French reign opened the way to a reinterpretation of the legal basis for religious peace in Poland-Lithuania.¹⁶

In the situation of a split election in 1575, Vincenzo Lauro, the nuncio still in office, did not take part in the coronation ceremony of Stephen Báthory and Anna Jagiellon because the choice accepted by the Holy See as legitimate was that of Maximilian II Habsburg. Also, almost the entire Polish-Lithuanian episcopate recognised the Emperor's right to the throne, and most bishops boycotted the coronation act of 1576.¹⁷ Anna Jagiellon unsuccessfully appealed to both the nuncio and Primate Uchański to come to Kraków.¹⁸ To the very last moment, Lauro tried to convince bishop of Kuyavia Stanisław Karnkowski that the coronation of the voivode of Transylvania would inevitably result in civil war and division of the Commonwealth. He suggested the immediate

¹⁴ AG, ms. 54, fasc. Gennaio 1574, Letter of A.M. Graziani to T. Gallio, Łowicz 1 I 1574, s.p.; AG, ms. 54, fasc. Gennaio 1574, Letter of A.M. Graziani to T. Gallio, Włocławek 7 I 1574, s.p.; AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 7, Letter of A.M. Graziani to T. Gallio, s.l. 25 I 1574, 9–11. See Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 272.

¹⁵ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Kraków 16 II 1574, in ANP IX/I, nr 70, 135.

¹⁶ See Waclaw Sobieski, "Si non iurabis – non regnabis," *Reformacja w Polsce* 2 (1922), 54–70; Grzybowski, *Henryk Walezy*, 110; Niemyjski, "Koronni senatorowie," 73; Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 274.

¹⁷ Jerzy Besala, *Stefan Batory* (Poznań: Zysk, 2010), 129; Karol Olejnik, *Stefan Batory* (Warsaw: Rytm, 2013), 96.

¹⁸ *Uchańsciana*, vol. 5, 585.

convening of a new assembly *ad concordiam*.¹⁹ At the same time, however, the nuncio called on Karnkowski to supervise the religious and ceremonial setting of the coronation, the content of the royal oath and matters of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. He postulated that, if possible, the text of the Warsaw Confederation should be removed from the *iuramentum*, leaving only the sentence: *Quod rex pacem inter dissidentes de religione tuebitur et manutenebit*. Lauro explained: “The king could always interpret this that motto *pacem* did not mean to spread heresy in the kingdom, but not to cause a civil war from religious diversity”.²⁰

During the convocation of 1587, a special commission was appointed to discuss religious matters, primarily the Warsaw Confederation. The debate lasted from 3 to 9 March 1587, with the effect of including the Confederation’s provisions in the official conclusions of the assembly. Interestingly, the then apostolic nuncio Girolamo Bovio showed himself ready to temporarily accept such resolutions to protect the internal security of the Commonwealth during the *interregnum*. However, he feared the Confederation would further extend confessional freedom and undermine ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Poland-Lithuania. The *kaptur*²¹ was finally sealed on 9 March 1587. Of the bishops, only Wawrzyniec Goślicki, hierarch of Kamieniec, signed it, *sub conditione propter bonum pacis publicae*.²²

After the inauguration of the election *sejm* of 1587, the new apostolic nuncio Annibale Di Capua organised a meeting of the Polish-Lithuanian episcopate, during which he appealed for the election of a Catholic sovereign and universal involvement against the Warsaw Confederation. Accordingly, Pope Sixtus V issued a brief dated 18 April 1587.²³

¹⁹ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Warsaw 18 II 1576, in Teodor Wierzbowski, *Vincent Lauro, évêque de Mondovì, nonce apostolique en Pologne, 1574–1578* (Varsovie: J. Berger, 1887), nr 97, 362; Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Warsaw 10 IV 1576, in Wierzbowski, *Vincent Lauro*, nr 103, 382; Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Warsaw 19 IV 1576, in Wierzbowski, *Vincent Lauro*, nr 105, 393–394. See Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 275–276.

²⁰ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Warsaw 18 II 1576, in Wierzbowski, *Vincent Lauro*, nr 97, 352: “Questo si potrebbe poi sempre interpretare dal re che per il motto *pacem* non intendeva metter l’eresie nel regno, ma solo far opera che per conto della diversità della religione non nasca qualche guerra civile”. See Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 276; Gregorowicz, “The Polish-Lithuanian Interregna,” 16.

²¹ *Kaptur* – extraordinary tribunal in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. These courts were set up around the lands by *sejmiki* during the *interregnum* when all ordinary tribunals adjudicating on behalf of the monarch suspended their activities.

²² Kazimierz Lepszy, “Walka sejmowa o konfederację warszawską w roku 1587,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 4 (1959): 116–118; Anna Pieńkowska, *Zjazdy i sejmy z okresu bezkrólewia po śmierci Stefana Batorego* (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztor, 2010), 115, 189; Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 244–245; Gregorowicz, “The Polish-Lithuanian Interregna,” 17.

²³ AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 23, Letter of Alessandro Peretti de Montalto to Annibale Di Capua, Rome 11 VII 1587, 150.

Di Capua reported with concern that the dissenters, led by voivodes of Sandomierz Stanisław Szafraniec and Poznań Stanisław Górka, made efforts not only to confirm the presence of the Warsaw Confederation in the wording of the royal oath, but also to include in it four new demands: recognition of the authority and jurisdiction of Protestant clergy, permission to freely build Protestant churches, collection of a separate tax corresponding to tithes among dissenters, and approval for building Protestant schools and seminaries. The bishops, including Goślicki (who had earlier confirmed the provisions of the Warsaw Confederation during the convocation), spoke universally against the demands of the dissenters. The nuncio also contrasted the act through chancellor Jan Zamoyski, Grand Marshal of the Crown Andrzej Opaliński and voivode of Kraków Andrzej Tęczyński, asking them to support the episcopate's demands. In Lithuania, the bishop of Vilnius, Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł, became involved. They all declared their commitment to support the papal postulates but saw them as utopian. Once again, the Protestant party would never allow the election of a Catholic ruler if he did not swear to the articles on the peaceful coexistence of confessions.²⁴

The problematic situation of a split election returned in 1587 when the race for the crown began between the Swedish Prince Sigismund Vasa and Archduke Maximilian Habsburg. Sixtus V instructed his diplomat in Poland-Lithuania to maintain neutrality towards the two competitors. Instead of siding with one of them, Di Capua was to commit himself to a peaceful settlement of the conflict and to try to prevent the provisions of the Warsaw Confederation from being reincorporated into the royal oath of the new monarch.²⁵

²⁴ AG, ms. 59, fasc. L61–89, nr 80, Letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, Kraków 4 VII 1587, s.p.; Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana [hereafter: BAV], Chigi M II 43, Letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, Warsaw 9 VII 1587, 255–257. See Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 260–261.

²⁵ AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 23, Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 7 X 1587, 109; Letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, Borzęcin 17 XI 1587, in *Fonti per la storia della nunziatura polacca di Annibale di Capua (1586–1591)*, a cura di Jan Władysław Woś (Trento: Università degli Studi di Trento, 1992), nr 20, 84; AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 23, Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 21 XI 1587, 100; AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 30, Letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, Sulejów 12 II 1588, 56–58r. See Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, “Działalność polityczna Hannibala z Kapui w bezkrólewiu po śmierci Stefana Batorego,” in *Nunziatura Apostolska w Rzeczypospolitej*, edited by Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel and Katarzyna Wiszowata-Walczak (Białystok: IHiNP UWB, 2012), 156; Dorota Gregorowicz, “Dylematy papieskiej dyplomacji. Stanowisko polityczne Stolicy Apostolskiej a działalność nuncjusza Annibale Di Capua wobec elekcji 1587 roku,” in *Wokół wolnych elekcji. O znaczeniu idei wyboru – między prawami a obowiązkami w państwie polsko-litewskim XVI–XVIII wieku*, edited by Mariusz Markiewicz, Dariusz Rolnik and Filip Wolański (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2016), 157; Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 150–151.

As for the nuncio's participation in the coronation ceremony, Cardinal Secretary of State Alessandro Peretti de Montalto recommended Di Capua to come to Kraków only in case of an unanimous support of the nobility for one of the candidates. If the internal conflict in Poland-Lithuania was to persist, the papal diplomat was advised not to attend the celebrations in person.²⁶ Also, Di Capua asked for instructions on whether a representative of the Holy See should be present if the king-elect accepted by the nobility would be newly forced to swear on the Warsaw Confederation. The nuncio noted that his predecessor Vincenzo Lauro had indirectly contributed to the king's approval of religious freedoms by not being present at the coronation of Stephen Báthory.²⁷ "During the future royal coronation, I will earnestly endeavour to have at least all the prelates make a public protest against this Confederation",²⁸ Di Capua thus declared. After all, despite the nuncio's final absence at Sigismund Vasa's coronation, he had an excellent knowledge of its course thanks to his network of informers and great influence on the episcopate members. As a result, Di Capua was able to give a detailed account on the matter of the royal oath to the Roman Curia: Sigismund swore the same *iuramentum* as Stephen Báthory, but, at the request of the Catholic senators, he added to it the following sentence: *Salvo semper iure eorum, qui contrarium sentiunt*.²⁹ The result of the bishops' opposition to the Confederation, animated by Di Capua, pleased both the nuncio and the Holy See. In particular, Di Capua praised the attitude of the bishops of Kuyavia – Hieronim Rozdrażewski and Kraków – Piotr Myszkowski.³⁰

During the seventeenth century, the problem of concessions for the Polish-Lithuanian confessional minorities remained significant, even if the inclusion of the Warsaw Confederation into the royal oath became common practice. In fact, in 1632, Władysław Vasa included the resolutions regarding religious peace

²⁶ AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 23, Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 7 XI 1587, 97. See Czesław Nanke, *Z dziejów polityki Kuryi rzymskiej wobec Polski (1587–1589)* (Lviv: Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1921), 38–39; Dorota Gregorowicz, "The Role of Papal Diplomats in the Interregnum's Parliamentary Practice of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16th–17th centuries)," *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 29/1 (2016): 135; Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 151.

²⁷ BAV, Chig. M II 43, Letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, Kraków 18 II 1587, 179.

²⁸ Letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, Warsaw 26 VIII 1587, in Aleksander Przedziecki, *Listy Annibala z Kapui Arcybiskupa Neapolitańskiego nuncjusza w Polsce, o bezkrólewiu po Stefanie Batorym i pierwszych latach panowania Zygmunta IIIgo do wyjścia Arcyksięcia Maxymiliana z niewoli* (Warsaw: Klukowski, 1852), nr 17, 83: "Podczas przyszłej Koronacji Królewskiej, usilnie będę się starał, aby przynajmniej wszyscy Pralaci uczynili publiczne protestacye, przeciwko owej Konfederacyi".

²⁹ Lepszy, "Walka sejmowa," 123; Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 278.

³⁰ AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 30, Letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, s. l. 9 I 1588, 41–42. See Gregorowicz, *Tiara*, 278–279.

into his electoral promises and did not cause many protestations. Nevertheless, primate Jan Wężyk habitually and symbolically opposed it during the coronation act. As the then apostolic nuncio Onorato Visconti reported to the Roman Curia, Władysław could not refuse to swear the formula of his three predecessors regarding maintaining peace between religious dissidents. However, further protests against the Warsaw Confederation still occurred during the seventeenth century, for example, in 1674, when papal diplomat Francesco Buonvisi was anew obliged to oppose it by his Roman instructions.³¹

THE WARSAW CONFEDERATION IN THE DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE OF THE HOLY SEE

The Warsaw Confederation was repeatedly described by papal diplomats and their superiors as a “confederation of heretics”³² or “confederation solicited by heretics”.³³ This was intended to emphasise the act’s lack of universality and its boycott by representatives of the Catholic Church. In reality, as is well known, the Confederation had strong support also from the Catholic nobility and even some members of the episcopate, convinced of its positive impact for stabilising internal relations in Poland-Lithuania and preserving public security. From Rome, however, it was written:

It appears that the said Confederation is a private act and it is void, without any public authority or force, since no law or public decree can be made in that Kingdom, if not by common consent of the Orders. And not only have the Ecclesiastics not consented to this, but they have opposed it and made a protest against it, and the Catholic seculars have done the same, besides the fact that it is contrary to the Confederation found in the statutes and laws of the Kingdom, made against the heresies, and sworn in agreement

³¹ See more Gregorowicz, “The Polish-Lithuanian interregna,” 17.

³² „La confederazione de gli heretici”. See letter of T. Gallio to V. Lauro, Rome 4 VIII 1573, in ANP IX/1, nr 38, 61; letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Paris 26 II 1574, in ANP IX/1, nr 72, 139; letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae*, t. XIII: *Hannibale de Capua (1586–1591)*, vol. 1 (6 IX 1586 – 30 IV 1587), edited by Dorota Gregorowicz (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2023) [hereafter: ANP XIII], nr 166, 229–232; AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 23, letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 11 VII 1587, 150r; letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, [Witów] 28 II 1588, in Jan W. Woś, *Annibale di Capua nunzio apostolico e arcivescovo di Napoli (1544–1595). Materiali per una biografia* (Roma: Fondazione Giovanni Paolo II, 1984), nr 81, 147.

³³ “La confederazione domandata dagli heretici del Regno”. See letter of Antonio Maria Salviati to T. Gallio, Paris 10 VIII 1573, in ANP IX/1, add. 3, 350.

by all the Orders, with an oath that binds them and their successors, and confirmed and sworn also by all the Kings.³⁴

The aspect of the illegality of the act was also emphasised by nuncio Vincenzo Lauro, who wrote that the Warsaw Confederation presents itself “against the honour of God, the Catholic Religion and the ancient laws of the Kingdom”.³⁵ Cardinal Secretary of State Alessandro Peretti de Montalto further considered that it could not be described as a true “Confederation of the Orders, but a conventicle, and a conspiracy of a few against public service, and against common peace, and found, and moved only by heretics, always authors of novelty, discord, and sedition”.³⁶ Papal diplomacy put forward the argument of its non-acceptance by the Lithuanian side to emphasise the act’s legal weakness, as the Grand Duchy’s delegation did not participate in the convocation of 1573.³⁷

Representatives of the Holy See repeatedly stressed the harmfulness of the Warsaw Confederation to Catholicism and the condition of the Catholic Church in the Commonwealth. Nuncio Lauro wrote that “the Confederation does great harm to the Catholic religion”,³⁸ that it is “entirely contrary to the honour of God and ecclesiastical jurisdiction”,³⁹ and provokes “the disgrace and grave harm resulting to the whole ecclesiastical order from the approval

³⁴ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230–231: “Tanto che consta essere la detta Confederatione un atto privato, et nullo, et senza vigore et autorità alcuna publica, non potendosi in quel Regno far legge, né decreto alcuno publico, se non è di commun consenso de gli Ordini. Et a questo, non pur non han consentito gli Ecclesiastici, ma vi si sono opposti, et vi han fatto protesta contra, et lo stesso hanno fatto anco i secolari Catholici, oltre ch’è contraria a la Confederatione che si trova ne gli statuti, et leggi del Regno, fatta contra l’heresie, et giurata concordemente da tutti gli Ordini, con giuramento che obliga loro, et i loro successori, et confermata et giurata anco da tutti i Re”.

³⁵ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Lutetiae Parisiorum 27 VIII 1573, in ANP IX/1, nr 42, 72: “Contra l’honor di Dio, contra la Religion Cattolica et contra le leggi antiche del Regno”.

³⁶ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 231: “Confederatione de gli Ordini, ma conventicola, et congiura di pochi contra il servitio publico, et contra la pace commune, et trovata, et mossa solamente da gli heretici, autori sempre di novità, di discordie, et di seditioni”.

³⁷ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, [Warsaw 28 V 1575], in *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae*, t. IX: *Vincentius Lauro (1572–1578)*, vol. 2 (1 X 1574 – 30 VI 1575), edited by Mirosław Korolko and Lucjan Olech (Romae: Institutum Historicum Polonicum, 1999) [hereafter: ANP IX/2], nr 309, 296.

³⁸ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Paris 11 IX 1573, in ANP IX/1, nr 43, 76: “Confederatione che apporta danno gravissimo ala Religion Cattolica”. See also letter of V. Lauro do T. Gallio, Skierniewice 12 IX 1574, in ANP IX/1, nr 152, 319.

³⁹ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Kraków 3 III 1574, in ANP IX/1, nr 75, 149: “Al tutto contraria al’honor di Dio et a la giurisdittione ecclesiastica”.

of it”.⁴⁰ Cardinal Montalto noted that the Confederation “gives place to so many, and so diverse, and so pernicious heresies”,⁴¹ highlighting the risk of further confessional disintegration in the Polish-Lithuanian territory. Rome also pointed out the negative impact of the act on state affairs: “How dishonourable it is to that noblest Nation, and how dangerous to the conservation of liberty, and the condition of that Kingdom”.⁴²

The papal diplomatic service also attempted to explain what the term ‘confederation’ meant, referring precisely to the signing of the famous act. According to the Papal Secretariat of State:

To deceive even the Catholics with a false title, they gave the name of Confederation to this impiety to preserve public peace so that they would not come to violence and arms among themselves because of their different religion, wanting (according to the usual blindness of heretics) to draw a bond of charity and union from heresy and from what is the true source of discord and dissension.⁴³

We can also find an interesting example of a description of the Warsaw Confederation’s origins in the instructions given by Cardinal Secretary of State Tolomeo Gallio to Serafino Olivier-Razali, auditor of the Rota and papal envoy to Paris, on the occasion of the election of Henry of Valois:

The Kingdom of Poland, for having been in part corrupted these past times and infected by heresy, has suffered much and has run the risk of receiving significant damage in this *interregnum* and therefore needs remedy. And because the heretics of that Kingdom have made great insistence and diligence in these electoral assemblies and in the initial ones [the convocation], which were also held in Warsaw, to sign and establish some conventions that they call the Confederation of Religion for their defence and impunity, contrary to the ancient laws and orders of the Kingdom, God has not allowed them

⁴⁰ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Kraków 2 V 1574, in ANP IX/I, nr 68, 129: “La vergogna et il danno gravissimo che ne risultava a tutto l’ordine ecclesiastico de la approvazione di esso”.

⁴¹ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 231: “Dia loco a tante, et tanto diverse, et tanto perniciose heresie”.

⁴² Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 231: “Quanto dishonor sia a quella nobilissima Nazione, et di quanto pericolo a la conservazione de la libertà, et stato di quel Regno”.

⁴³ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230: “A questa impietà, per ingannare con falso titolo anco i medesimi Catholici, posero nome di Confederatione a conservazione de la pace publica, siché, per causa di diversa religione, non si venisse a la violenza, et a l’arme fra di loro. Volendo (secondo la solita cecità de gli heretici) cavar vincolo di carità, et di congiuntione de l’heresia, et da quello ch’è vero fonte di discordia, et di dissensione”.

to obtain it, since the Apostolic Legate, together with the ecclesiastics and other Catholic nobles of the Kingdom, has vigorously opposed it.⁴⁴

It was repeatedly stressed that the intention to secure internal peace in the Commonwealth through concessions to confessions other than Catholicism constituted “a false name for peace”.⁴⁵ Papal diplomacy thus accused the Protestants of exploiting the goodwill, faith and love of neighbours on the part of Catholics in order to pursue their own interests. Nuncios Lauro and Di Capua wrote about this aspect (“Knowing that Catholics wish to live in peace, the heretics have availed themselves of this gracious name of concord and confederation, using every art to pull them [Catholics] to their side”⁴⁶ and “Liberty of Religion was machinated by heretics in the *interregnum* after the death of Sigismund Augustus, under the false name of confederation, to preserve public peace”⁴⁷). It was this factor that, according to the Roman dicasteries, accounted for the support of the act by some, reportedly few, Catholics.⁴⁸ In general, an attempt was made by papal diplomacy to show the cohesion of the Catholic party against the Warsaw Confederation: “The ecclesiastical order vigorously opposed it, together with the other Catholics, and protested the nullity of this decree, both verbally in the Senate, as well as in writing. And the protests mentioned above were also placed in the Books of Public Acts”.⁴⁹ Attention was also drawn to the

⁴⁴ Instruction from T. Gallio to Serafino Olivier-Razali, Rome 1 VI 1573, in ANP IX/1, nr 16, 23–24: “Che il Regno di Polonia, per esser stato in parte corrotto questi tempi passati et infettato d’heresie, ha patito assai et ha corso pericolo in questo interregno di ricever grandissimi danni, et perciò ha bisogno di rimedii. Et perché li heretici di quel Regno hanno fatta grandissima istanza et diligenza in questi Comittii de l’elettione et negli altri primi, fatti pur a Varsavia, di far sottoscrizioni et stabilire alcuni capitoli che essi chiamano la Confederatione della Religione per difesa et impunità loro, contra le leggi et ordini antichi del Regno, né perciò ha Dio permesso che l’habbino ottenuto, havendoli ostanto gagliardissimamente il Legato apostolico con li ecclesiastici et altri nobili catholici del Regno”.

⁴⁵ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230: “Finto nome di pace”.

⁴⁶ Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Cracow 26 II 1574, in ANP IX/1, nr 72, 139: “Conoscendo gli heretici che i Cattolici desiderano viver in pace, si sono valsuti di questo gratioso nome di concordia et confederatione, usando ogni arte per tirarli dala banda loro”.

⁴⁷ AG, ms. 59, fasc. 45–60, Letter of A. Di Capua to A. Peretti de Montalto, Warsaw 9 VI 1587, nr 57: “Libertà di Religione, che fu machinata da gli heretici nell’interregno dopo la morte di Sigismundo Augusto, sotto falso nome di confederatione, per conservare la pace publica”.

⁴⁸ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230.

⁴⁹ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230: “L’ordine ecclesiastico vi si oppose gagliardamente, insieme con gli altri Catholici, et si protestorno de la nullità di tal decreto, tanto in voce ne lo stesso Senato, quanto fuora in scrittura. Et le dette proteste furono anco poste ne’ Libri de gli atti publici”.

role of the Piotrków provincial synod of 1577, held with the participation of nuncio Lauro, in condemning the Confederation's provisions on religious policy.⁵⁰

In one of Sixtus V's briefs on the Confederation, we find the following information: "That impious decree of the heretics, once contrived in the name of a pact, i.e. to grant each individual the liberty he desires to worship his faith, [was] then to require the king to swear an oath to that effect".⁵¹ In another of the briefs, we read a similar Roman reflection about the act:

How unjust and contrary to the laws of God, to the extension of the Catholic Church, and also to the security of the Kingdom, was the decree by which, in the past not having entered into pacts with heretics, they allowed everyone the freedom to profess whatever faith they wished and thus required the taking of an oath on this matter by the Kings.⁵²

It clearly shows how far removed the Counter-Reformation papacy was from any question of religious tolerance, let alone the peaceful coexistence of confessions, and the fact that the Catholic monarch was obliged to swear by religious 'liberties' was generally regarded in Rome as an affront to royal dignity and prerogatives. Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Commendone was so appalled by the content of the Warsaw Confederation's articles the future monarch was to be forced to swear that he believed they would reduce the King's position in the Commonwealth to that of a Venetian doge and should not be allowed to be signed.⁵³

In papal diplomatic discourse, when writing about the Warsaw Confederation, they tended to be exceptionally indiscriminate in their words. There were times when the act was defined as "accursed" and should be "overthrown".⁵⁴ The papal

⁵⁰ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230.

⁵¹ Brief of Sixtus V to Wojciech Baranowski, Rome 18 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, add. 27, 338: "Impium illud haereticorum decretum superiori tempore foederis nomine excogitatum, de permittenda scilicet cuique libertate, quam velit quisque fidem colere, deque iureiurando in eam rem a Rege exigendo".

⁵² Brief of Sixtus V to a secular Senator, Rome 18 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, add. 30, 341: "Quam iniquum, quamque non divinis modo legibus, et Catholicae Ecclesiae amplitudini, sed istius etiam Regni salutis adversarium fuerit decretum id, quod superiori tempore foederis nemine haeretici composuerunt, de permittenda cuique libertate, quam quisque fidem vellet colere, deque iureiurando in eam rem a Regibus exigendo".

⁵³ Letter of G.F. Commendone to T. Gallio, Warsaw 29 IV 1573, in *Uchańsciana, czyli zbiór dokumentów wyjaśniających życie i działalność Jakóba Uchańskiego, arcybiskupa gnieźnieńskiego, legata urodzonego, Królestwa Polskiego prymasa i pierwszego księcia*, vol. 4: *Poselstwa papieskie w Polsce, 1560–1581. Różne dokumenty z lat 1534–1592*, edited by Teodor Wierzbowski (Warszawa: J. Berger, 1892), 78–80.

⁵⁴ AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 23, Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 8 IV 1589, 332r: "Che si batti per terra la confederazione maledetta". Cf. Letter of Germanico Malaspina to Clement VIII, Warsaw 22 X 1592, in *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae*, t. XV: *Germanicus Malaspina (1591–1598)*, vol. 1 (1 XII 1591 – 31 XII 1592), in *quo publicantur etiam documenta legationem a latere cardinalis Georgii Radziwiłł necnon munera ab Attilio Amalteo et Maximiliano de Pernštejn*

Secretariat of State stressed that the Confederation had been “concocted”⁵⁵ rather than legally adopted. The act was also described as “the pernicious designs of the Heretics”.⁵⁶ Likewise, the Confederation was referred to as “impious and abominable law, which *ex adverso* fights against the Christian Faith, and with the unity of the Church”,⁵⁷ an “impiety”,⁵⁸ as well as “a decree opprobrious to that Kingdom, and contrary to the Christian Religion”.⁵⁹ In the papal briefs, the act of the Warsaw Confederation was also referred to as a “conspiracy”.⁶⁰

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Papal diplomats found it challenging to integrate the Catholic nobility and even the Polish-Lithuanian episcopate to form a solid political party against the religious dissenters towards the first free royal elections in the second half of the sixteenth century. It was especially complicated given the fight against the Warsaw Confederation and the inclusion of its articles in the royal oath. Indeed, the bishops themselves usually showed a great deal of tolerance and understanding for the articles concerning religious peace, acknowledging the necessity of their implementation for the ordering of relations in the multi-confessional country that was the early modern Poland-Lithuania. The political divisions of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility were usually shaped against a non-confessional background. It meant great difficulties for the Holy See in any efforts to invalidate the provisions of the Warsaw Confederation by declaring

expleta illustrantia, edited by Leszek Jarmański (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2000), nr 160, 258: “Condennata confederatione”.

⁵⁵ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230: “Machinata da gli heretici”.

⁵⁶ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 232: “Perniciosi disegni de gli heretici”. Cf. Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, Skierniewice 20 XII 1574, in ANP IX/2, nr 213, 97.

⁵⁷ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230: “Impia, et abominanda legge, la quale ex adverso pugna con[tro] la Fede Christiana, et con l’unità de la Chiesa”.

⁵⁸ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 10 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 166, 230: “Impietà”.

⁵⁹ Letter of A. Peretti de Montalto to A. Di Capua, Rome 25 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, nr 198, 275: “Un decreto così opprobrioso a quel Regno, et così contrario a la Religion Christiana”.

⁶⁰ Brief of Sixtus V to Jan Dymitr Solikowski, Rome 18 IV 1587, in ANP XIII, add. 25, 336: “Impietatem haereticorum postulationis, et iurisiurandi formulae bis iam foederis nomine Regibus oblatae, de permittenda scilicet cuique libertate, quam quisque vellet fidem colere, perspectam tibi esse non dubitamus; meminisse etiam te quam gravibus verbis, sentiisique Synodus Gnesnensis con-spirationem illam damnarit, quamque horribili anathemate execrata sit”.

it illegitimate and then removing articles controversial for the Catholic Church from the text of the royal oaths of successive elective kings.

The image of the Warsaw Confederation in the diplomatic discourse of the Holy See presents itself as unambiguously negative. Almost every time, the unilateral character of the act was accentuated, as it was allegedly forced under pressure from the Protestant party. The papal correspondence completely ignored and passed over in silence the widespread support of Catholics for the articles on religious peace, stemming above all from the general desire to preserve the internal security of the Polish-Lithuanian state and the nobility's social solidarity. The legality of the act according to the *Nihil novi* constitution of 1505 was repeatedly questioned, although without directly referring to this legal basis (alluding, however, to protests made more than once by the episcopate or the Lithuanian non-attendance at the convocation of 1573). Interestingly, the argument that the Confederation was not a valid act, not coming from the King and being passed during an *interregnum*, was not put forward.⁶¹ Finally, the document was regarded in Rome as detrimental to the Catholic religion, the local structures of the Church, and the Polish-Lithuanian state as well. Its presence in the wording of the royal oath was also said to undermine, in the opinion of the Holy See, the authority of the elective monarchs.

It is worth noting that the harshest judgements on the Warsaw Confederation and its articles on religious peace can be found in the dispatches coming out of the Roman Secretariat of State as instructions to the papal diplomats in office. It seems the nuncios themselves were generally less emotional about the question of the religious plurality of the Polish-Lithuanian state, as well as about the act of the Warsaw Confederation, which indicates their relatively prompt and efficient adaptation to local conditions and good orientation to the peculiarities of the political-religious situation in the Commonwealth and, more broadly, the territory of Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, the concerns of papal diplomats about exposing the noble community by interfering too much in matters of the local religious order were evident. Nuncio Lauro described that

it would be better for me to negotiate with intermediaries because the Catholics, even if they genuinely cherish and show great respect for the remembrances that they make in the name of Our Lord, are nevertheless afraid of being suspicious by the opposite faction, that they oppose the Confederation for some hope of honours and favours from the Roman side. And for this reason, the Archbishop [Jakub Uchański] never wants to receive me at home, but rather in a church when I have to speak to him about something important.⁶²

⁶¹ Cf. Janusz Tazbir, *Polska bez stosów* (Warsaw: Iskry, 2009), 95.

⁶² Letter of V. Lauro to T. Gallio, 3 III 1574, in ANP IX/1, nr 75, 150: "A me conviene negotiar per persone intermedie, perché i Cattolici, se bene hanno veramente a caro et mostrano haver in

Finally, it should be stressed that the enactment of the Warsaw Confederation at the convocation of 1573 was *de facto* only a legitimisation of a situation which had already developed on the Polish-Lithuanian juridical and social ground, as evidenced by the provisions of the Sandomierz Agreement of 1570 and the relatively peaceful course of the earlier events of the Reformation and then of the Catholic Reformation in Poland-Lithuania⁶³. From the point of view of the general Polish law, which was predominantly based on custom, the creation of this document may have been less momentous for the nobility than for external and less accustomed observers, including diplomats of the Holy See.

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osservanza grande li ricordi che se li fanno in nome di N.ro Signore, nondimeno temono di entrar in sospetto appresso la fattione contraria, che essi si opponghino ala confederazione per qualche speranza di honori et di favori dala banda di Roma. Et per questo rispetto l'Arcivescovo, quando ho a parlargli di qualche cosa che importi, non vuoi mai aspettarmi in casa, ma in qualche Chiesa".

⁶³ See Maciej Serwański, "La Confédération de Varsovie (1573)," in *Conflitti e compromessi nell'Europa "di centro" fra XVI e XX secolo. Atti del 2 Colloquio Internazionale (Viterbo, 26–27 Maggio 2000)*, a cura di Gaetano Platania (Viterbo: Sette città, 2001), 23.

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IMPIETAS GRAVISSIMA – THE WARSAW CONFEDERATION
IN THE PAPAL DIPLOMACY’S DISCOURSE
IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Summary

The Warsaw Confederation represented one of the most significant issues raised in the correspondence of papal diplomats residing in Poland-Lithuania in the second half of the sixteenth century and of their Roman superiors. This article presents the role of the Holy See’s representatives in the *interregna* events accompanying the approval of the famous act and its subsequent inclusion in the oaths of consecutive elective monarchs. Moreover, the narrative of the papal envoys’ dispatches is analysed in the context of its coverage of the Confederation’s matter. The choice of words to describe the act in question, their contextual occurrence, and the emotional content of the discourse are considered. The study reveals papal diplomats’ difficulties in fighting the document – the lack of full support from the Polish-Lithuanian episcopate and the Catholic party or the nobility’s reluctance to be interfered with from abroad. The image of the Warsaw Confederation in the diplomatic discourse of the Holy See is shown as detrimental to the Catholic religion, the local ecclesiastical structures, and the Polish-Lithuanian state and monarch.

Keywords: Warsaw Confederation; religious tolerance; papacy; Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; Counter-Reformation; apostolic nunciature; diplomacy; political discourse.

IMPIETAS GRAVISSIMA – KONFEDERACJA WARSZAWSKA
W DYSKURSIE DOTYCZĄCYM DYPLOMACJI PAPIESKIEJ
W DRUGIEJ POŁOWIE XVI WIEKU

Streszczenie

Konfederacja warszawska stanowiła jedno z najistotniejszych zagadnień poruszanych w korespondencji dyplomatów papieskich rezydujących na terytorium polsko-litewskim w drugiej połowie XVI wieku oraz ich rzymskich zwierzchników. Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia rolę reprezentantów Stolicy Apostolskiej dla przebiegu wydarzeń bezkrólewia towarzyszących zatwierdzeniu słynnego aktu i wobec kwestii późniejszego włączenia go do przysięg kolejnych monarchów elekcyjnych. Analizie poddana została również narracja papieskich depesz dyplomatycznych w kontekście obecności w ich treści zagadnienia konfederacji. Omówiono dobór słów opisujących przedmiotowy akt, kontekst ich występowania, a także emocjonalny charakter dyskursu. Przeprowadzone badanie ukazało trudności, jakie papiescy dyplomaci napotykali w walce z dokumentem – brak pełnego wsparcia episkopatu i stronnictwa katolickiego, czy niechęć szlachty do ingerencji z zewnątrz. Obraz konfederacji warszawskiej w dyskursie dyplomatycznym Stolicy Apostolskiej ukazany został jako szkodliwy dla religii katolickiej, lokalnych struktur Kościoła, a także polsko-litewskiego państwa i monarchy.

Słowa kluczowe: konfederacja warszawska; tolerancja religijna; papieżstwo; Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów; kontrreformacja; nuncjatura apostolska; dyplomacja; dyskurs polityczny.