

Paweł Duda, KRZYŻ I KARABELA. POLITYKA ZAGRANICZNA RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ OBOJGA NARODÓW W OCENIE DYPLOMACJI PAPIESKIEJ W LATACH 1623–1635 (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2019), pp. 316; ISBN 978-83-226-3474-5

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When a book deals with a topic such as bilateral relations between two states other than ‘the great powers’, it is usually aimed at a relatively limited audience, so the fact that it is not published in English or other more popular language is usually not a big problem. In this case, it is different – reading *Krzyż i karabela* one can regret that it has not been translated into English or at least Italian, as Paweł Duda’s findings may be of interest not only to Polish historians, or the relatively narrow, albeit increasingly internationalized circle of researchers interested in the Polish nunciature but also to a broader group of scholars studying modern diplomacy. This results from the fact that although the book deals primarily with the relationship between the papacy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it takes a much broader context into account. Therefore, everyone interested in papal diplomacy in the 1620s and 1630s would appreciate the analysis of the political situation in Europe, and the diplomatic practices of papal representatives, that it provides.

The book is very well-thought-out, and it is clearly the result of the author’s great self-discipline. There is, for example, no attempt to show how the book takes into account various more or less modern methodological approaches, although one cannot find the slightest trace of them in its content – a thing that tends to happen quite often in the introductions to Polish books dealing with diplomacy. Both the primary-source material and the author’s conclusions have been presented concisely and clearly while considering all the necessary details.

As far as the chronology of the work is concerned, the choice to cover the period between the conclave at which Urban VIII was elected in 1623 and the year 1635, which saw a reorientation of the Apostolic See’s policy towards Poland-Lithuania and a significant reduction of its importance for papal diplomacy, can undoubtedly be regarded as fully justified.

With regard to the primary-source base, it understandably comprises primarily materials from Vatican collections: the files of the Polish, German, French and Spanish nunciatures from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, as well as individual units from the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (section Barberiniana Latini). As some of the materials of papal diplomacy have already been published, they have been used in this form (e.g. the printed documents of the German and Brussels

Nunciatures) or the Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae. The Central Archives of Historical Records (AGAD) takes precedence in Polish collections, especially Libri Legationi (i.e. the diplomatic archive).

In discussing the primary sources he used, the author emphasises that he intended to follow 'the increasingly popular trend in Polish historiography of perceiving the history of Poland-Lithuania on the basis of *Polonica* – in this case, the correspondence of Papal nuncios' (p. 8). This is entirely credible. However, what is missing here is an explicit declaration that this is not only because foreign sources are very valuable as they contribute a lot to our knowledge of Polish-Lithuanian history, due to their volume and often their quality, as they were produced by a well-functioning diplomatic system (to which the author refers when describing papal diplomacy in the first half of the seventeenth century as one of the most modern diplomatic formations), but also because we often face the lack of primary sources on the Polish side. In other words, we do not have the opportunity to study specific issues and topics using Polish materials as they have not been preserved, and focusing on the 'outside view' is often the only option for a historian.

What is also striking about this book when compared with other similar publications is that Paweł Duda limits himself to just one question, albeit a highly significant one, i.e. 'How did the papacy in the first phase of the pontificate of Urban VIII [...] assess the foreign policy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and to what extent did it try to influence it?' (p. 7). Some may see its generality as a flaw, but, in fact, it does work for the book, as overall, it provides the reader with a clear and satisfying answer. This is thanks to the author's reliable analysis of the papacy's attitude to the most critical aspects of Polish-Lithuanian foreign policy, presented in the chapters that follow, such as relations with neighbours, the problem of possible Polish involvement in the Thirty Years' War, relations between the Vasas and the Habsburgs in the context of possible joint military plans and the significance for the international situation of the election of 1632, and the dynastic plans of Władysław IV.

The author has decided to present the results of his research in chronological order but with underlying specific issues. Therefore, each subsequent chapter deals with a separate sub-period, but the particular issues determine its internal divisions. This proves to be the most appropriate solution due to the thematic scope of the work.

Thus in the first chapter, entitled 'On the threshold of the pontificate, 1623–1625', we get a brief overview of the situation in European international politics at the beginning of Urban VIII's pontificate. It presents a broad perspective and discusses the most important events on the continent and their interconnections and consequences. There is, for example, mention of issues related to Scandinavia and England. As a result, we benefit from a tableau that extends far beyond Central Europe's area, which is usually the natural point of reference in

studies showing the relations between the Papacy and Poland-Lithuania (the only exception is usually Spain, but rather more generally). The author emphasises here that the main aim of the papacy's diplomatic efforts towards Sigismund III in this period was to induce him to resume the conflict with Turkey, which had just ended with the agreement at 1621 Khotyn (Chocim), to engage militarily on the Emperor's side against Bethlen Gabor, and to return to intensive anti-Swedish activities. It is to these three issues that the remaining subsections of the first chapter are devoted. The author dedicates most space to present the Holy See's negative attitude towards a possible peace agreement with Sweden because after 1624 Urban VIII was determined – due to the international situation – to limit Gustav II Adolf's scope for action in Germany, which would have significantly strengthened the Protestant camp.

This makes for a smooth transition into the second chapter, which focuses exclusively on issues related to the attitude of papal diplomacy to the Polish-Swedish conflict and its international context, as seen from Rome's perspective in the second half of the 1620s. The chapter's title, 'Between the Polish-Swedish War and the conflict in Germany, 1625–1629', summarises its content, including a thorough analysis of papal involvement in the plans for a military alliance between the Polish Vasas and the Spanish Habsburgs perfectly. Polish-Spanish contacts have been reconstructed in great detail by Ryszard Skowron, but only Paweł Duda has demonstrated how the Apostolic See reacted to them. The nuncio Santa Croce's activities in the second half of 1628, aimed at inducing Prince Władysław Zygmunt (later King Władysław IV) (pp. 125 ff.) to press his father to accelerate his plans for military cooperation with the Habsburgs, are extremely interesting. Generally, in the period under discussion here, papal diplomacy hoped that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth could play an important role in the Thirty Years' War by, on the one hand, 'tying down' the forces of Gustav II Adolf and, on the other, providing military assistance to Ferdinand II.

The conclusion of the Altmark Truce – the starting point for Chapter Three – was, therefore, a failure for papal diplomacy. Urban VIII was well aware that it would mean an intensification of Swedish involvement in the military hostilities on the continent, significant not only in the context of events in Germany but also, among other things, for the War of the Mantuan Succession, involving France and the Emperor. Nonetheless, as Duda shows, this defeat only mobilised papal diplomats to take further action, including attempts to convince Sigismund to break the truce with Sweden. The new nuncio in Warsaw, Onorato Visconti, worked intensively for this from the Spring of 1631 until Sigismund III's death a year later. The Swedish-Moscow talks (Anton Monier's mission, 1629–30) were another point of focus (albeit of lesser importance): these were linked to Russo-Polish relations, which also obviously had a broader international dimension.

In the last, fourth chapter, we again benefit from a brief discussion of the international situation, which is of course justified by the fact that it changed significantly as a result of two events in November 1632, i.e. the Battle of Lützen and the election of Władysław IV. The title of the chapter reveals its content, as it speaks of a 'new opening' that indeed transpired not only in Polish-Swedish relations but also in relations between Poland-Lithuania and Moscow and the Ottoman Empire. In the case of the latter two states, the beginning of Władysław IV's reign marked a return to the armed conflicts suspended earlier in the century. According to the author, the Polish-Turkish conflict was also the only one in which Rome was ready to support Poland-Lithuania financially. However, despite this, pacifist sentiments prevailed in the Commonwealth, which resulted in the confirmation of the peace agreement of 1621 in summer 1635. Another cause for concern were Władysław's plans to regain the Swedish throne by negotiation and through dynastic policy, which included his proposals for mediation in Germany and a project for a so-called 'Calvinist marriage', i.e. the king's marriage to Frederick V Wittelsbach's daughter, Elisabeth, the Princess Palatine. The author rightly interprets this plan as a tool used by Władysław to pressurise the Emperor for military assistance to the Polish king in his possible war with Sweden.

The author has clearly shown that a series of failed attempts to persuade Sigismund III and Władysław IV to intensify their anti-Turkish policy and the limited success of actions to support the Vasa-Habsburg alliance to Rome's decreased interest in Poland-Lithuania as a political partner. As a result, the reader is presented with a coherent picture of the evolution of the Holy See's attitude towards the Commonwealth. From a situation where events in the Polish-Lithuanian state were considered to have highly significant importance in a European context, the papacy's interest in the Commonwealth declined to the point where, in the mid-1630s, subsequent Polish actions were either not fully understood in Rome or were even interpreted as contradictory or irrelevant to the interests of the Holy See.

As already mentioned, the book presents a broad context, which is an obvious consequence of the broad concept of the work and the primary sources used, as the author analyses to the same extent materials not only related to the functioning of the Polish nunciature but also those in other European capitals. Another important finding is the significant involvement of Urban VIII's diplomacy in attempts to enlist the help of the Commonwealth for the Emperor. This indicates that this pope's alleged anti-Habsburg attitude, a supposition that endures in the historiography, should be looked at afresh.

The book has been prepared with great editorial care. It also has an attractive graphic layout. The text has been enriched with an annexe – a tabular listing of nuncios residing at European courts between 1621 and 1635, which is very helpful for non-experts, as one can always check who resided where at a given moment.

The book also has an index of names, which is unfortunately not standard nowadays, but essential in this type of publication, and has summaries in English and Italian. This is good news – the worse news is that the English summary has some flaws, e.g. the use of the word *telegrams* instead of dispatches/reports.

In conclusion, *Krzyż i karabela* is a solid, interesting and well-written work. It is an excellent example of a monograph on the history of diplomacy, which, although extremely rich in facts, is constructed in a way that allows the reader both to avoid drowning in a sea of detailed information and to follow individual themes that together provide a fully coherent picture of the main arguments. The author has made excellent use of source material, which enables him to answer fully the question he posed and, as a result, to contribute many new and interesting elements to the narrative on the relationship between the Papacy and Poland-Lithuania. It also enriches our knowledge of the workings of Polish-Lithuanian diplomacy, as the work includes many interesting comments and observations by nuncios active in various European capitals on Polish diplomats active there. As a result, Paweł Duda's book certainly deserves the attention of a wider group of readers. It can be singled out as one of the more valuable works on Poland-Lithuania's place in European politics of the first half of the seventeenth century to have appeared in recent years.

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