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CORRESPONDENCE OF THE WARSAW NUNCIO ANTONIO SANTA CROCE WITH THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS IN 1629: FREQUENCY, INTENSITY, CONTENT

ABSTRACT

This article is based on source material from the unique collection of correspondence of the Warsaw nuncio Antonio Santa Croce, stored in the Roman *Archivio di Stato* in the *Archivio Santacroce* ensemble under number 774 and containing 846 letters from the year 1629, addressed to the nuncio from various senders. The authors analyze the correspondence of the nuncio from the Roman Catholic bishops of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, consisting of 109 letters. 104 from the ordinary bishops and 5 from suffragan bishops. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the most regular and intensive correspondence was maintained with the nuncio by Archbishop of Gniezno Jan Wężyk and Bishop of Cracow Marcin Szyszkowski (presumably twice a month). Most of the other bishops approached the frequency of one letter per month, and this concerned the bishops of Vilnius, Cuiavia, Poznań, Płock, Samogitia, Łuck (Lutsk), Przemyśl and Chełm. The bishops present at the court, such as Bishop of Chełmno, Chancellor Jakub Zadzik or Bishop of Kamieniec Paweł Piasecki, made less frequent contact with the nuncio by letter. The bishops only sporadically addressed political issues in their letters and this was connected with the preparation for the *sejm*. Some hierarchs were interested in the Brest Union and referred to it in their letters. Most often, however, the bishops raised in their correspondence the issues of nominations for benefices, problems related to the discipline of the diocesan clergy and the issues of dispensations and facultates. The bishops' contact with the nuncio therefore concerned in the vast majority of cases ecclesiastical matters and the secular functions of hierarchs, as senators of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, only occasionally marked their presence in correspondence with the papal ambassadors.

KEYWORDS: Papal diplomacy; Correspondence of nuncio; Roman Catholic bishops; Church Elites; Antonio Santa Croce.

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In research on the history of the Polish nunciature for several decades there has been a period of intensive editorial work initiated by the Polish Historical Institute in Rome, acting under the inspiration of Prof. Karolina Lanckorońska and according to the principles developed by Rev. Prof. Henryk Damian Wojtyśka. In the mid 1990s, the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences took over the task of editing the correspondence of apostolic nuncios in Poland and continues it at present. The editions of subsequent volumes of *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae* (ANP) are accompanied by numerous monographs and analytical studies based on the edited materials. The current recapitulation of these works was a scientific conference organized by the Polish Academy of Arts in 2019, the output of which appeared in print in 2020¹. This recapitulation led to the creation of a restrained balance sheet of the work done so far, showing above all the need for further research and development of spaces still little explored. This text is a modest attempt at a reconnaissance of an issue that has been little known so far due to a lack of adequate source material. The undersigned take up the subject of the nuncio's contacts with the local Roman Catholic hierarchy².

1 *Sztuka rozprawy. Dyplomacja Stolicy Apostolskiej wobec Rzeczypospolitej, Europy i świata w epoce nowożytnej i XX wieku. Zbiór studiów*, eds. Krzysztof Ożóg and Ryszard Skowron (Kraków: PAU, 2020).

2 It is worth noting that Polish nunciatures in their research attempted a prosopographical approach to the Polish episcopate based on the correspondence of papal diplomats: for example, see Jan Kopiec, "Nuncjusze papiescy o senacie

In the volumes of *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae* concerning the period 1572–1648 published so far, correspondence between nuncios and bishops has appeared sporadically. Only in the volume devoted to nuncio Germanico Malaspina, prepared by Leszek Jarmański, can we find 29 such letters – 7 written to the Nuncio and 22 sent by him³. Most of these valuable finds (20) come from a manuscript containing registers of Malaspina's outgoing correspondence from the time of his Polish nunciature, held in Rome's Biblioteca Vallicelliana⁴. 5 letters from Primate Stanisław Karnkowski, on the other hand, are known from registers recorded in a volume owned by the Library of PAN-PAU in Cracow⁵. Jarmański found 2 letters from the nuncio to Bishop of Cuiavia Hieronim Rozrażewski in the Diocesan Archives in Włocławek⁶. The other 2 letters from Rozrażewski and Wawrzyniec Gościński, Bishop of Przemyśl, "wandered" into the files of the nunciature kept in the *Fondo Borghese* of *Archivio Apostolico Vaticano*⁷. This fascinating material was discussed in the introduction to the above-mentioned volume, but necessarily in a rather perfunctory manner⁸ and never became the basis for separate analyses.

In other volumes of the ANP from the period 1572–1648, correspondence with bishops does not appear at all⁹, or we find isolated examples of it, such as 4 letters from Bishop Stanisław Łubieński in the volume on Antonio Santa Croce and 8 more from the same hierarch in the volume on the nunciature of Honorato Visconti¹⁰. For the sake of order, we should also mention four letters from Vincenzo Lauro to Polish bishops collected from scattered sources¹¹, as well as one letter from the Archbishop of Gniezno Jan Wężyk, which "wandered" into the files of the nunciature of Mario Filonardi¹².

The continuation of research into the mission of Antonio Santa Croce opens up new possibilities for the analysis of the Polish nuncio's contacts with the local Latin hierarchy.¹³ In connection with the preparation for publication of the second volume of the correspondence of this nunciature, a very

Rzeczypospolitej", in *Senat w Polsce*, eds. Krystyn Matwijowki and Jan Pietrzak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1993), 148-157; Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, "Elita polityczna Rzeczypospolitej w świetle "ankiety personalnej" nuncjusza Honorata Viscontiego", in *Władza i prestiż. Magnateria Rzeczypospolitej w XVI-XVIII wieku*, eds. Jerzy Urwanowicz and Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2003), 125-137; Tadeusz Fitych, "Obraz biskupów polskich w oczach nuncjuszów papieskich z połowie XVII wieku", in *Od Kijowa do Rzymu. Z dziejów stosunków Rzeczypospolitej ze Stolicą Apostolską i Ukrainą*, eds. Dariusz R. Drozdowski, Wojciech Walczak and Katarzyna Wiszowata-Walczak (Białystok: Instytut Badań nad Dziedzictwem Kulturowym Europy, 2012), 469-509.

3 ANP, t. XV: *Germanicus Malaspina (1591-1598)*, vol. 1: (*I XII 1591-31 XII 1592*), ed. Leszek Jarmański (Cracoviae: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2000), 136, 172, 254, 255, 266, 268, 269, 277, 292, 301, 303, 304, 305, 314, 334, 336, 341, 349, 353, 360, 363, 380, 382, 284, 285, 413, 416.

4 Biblioteca Vallicelliana, L. 18, f. II, c. 8-24v.

5 BPAN, 1884, n. 486, 496, 497, 498, 500.

6 Archive of the Bishops of Kuyavia and Pomerania, *Acta Episcoporum*, 11, ff. 320, 321.

7 AAV, *Fondo Borghese*, III 18, ff. 35v-36; III 96 D, f. 209.

8 ANP, t. XV/1, XXXI-XXXII.

9 ANP, t. XVIII: *Franciscus Simonetta (1606-1612)*, vol. 1: (*21 VI 1606-30 IX 1607*), ed. Wojciech Tygielski (Romae: Institutum Historicum Polonicum Romae, 1990); ANP, t. XXII: *Giovanni Battista Lancellotti (1622-1627)*, vol. 1: (*12 XI 1622-29 IV 1623*), ed. Tadeusz Fitych (Cracoviae: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2001); ANP, t. XXV: *Marius Filonardi (1635-1643)*, vol. 1: (*12 II 1635-29 X 1636*), ed. Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel (Cracoviae: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2003).

10 ANP, t. XXIII: *Antonio Santa Croce (1627-1630)*, vol. 1: (*1 III 1627-29 VII 1628*), ed. Henryk Litwin (Romae: Institutum Historicum Polonicum Romae, 1996) 16, 182, 194, 215, and ANP, t. XXIV: *Honoratus Visconti (1630-1636)*, vol. 1: (*20 IV 1630-26 VII 1631*), ed. Wojciech Biliński (Romae: Institutum Historicum Polonicum Romae, 1992) 60, 185, 187, 224, 254, 283, 316, 318; all these letters from both volumes have been taken from manuscript 157 II of the Library of the National Ossoliński Institute.

11 ANP, t. IX: *Vincentius Lauro (1572-1578)*, vol. 1: (*25 VII 1572-30 IX 1574*), eds. Mirosław Korolko and Henryk D. Wojtyska, (Romae: Institutum Historicum Polonicum Romae, 1994), 213, 270, 296, 340, published on the basis of AAV, *Segreteria Stato. Polonia*, vol. 396, f. 61.

12 ANP, t. XXV: *Marius Filonardi (1635-1643)*, vol. 2: (*1 XI 1636-31 X 1637*), ed. Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel (Cracoviae: Academia Scientiarum et Litterarum Polona, 2006), 66.

13 For more on A. Santa Croce, see Alberto Tanturri, "Santacroce Antonio", in DBI, vol. 90 (2017); Henryk Litwin, *De Antonio Santa Croce nuntio eiusque sociis*, in ANP t. XXIII/1; Henryk Litwin, *Chwała Północy. Rzeczpospolita w polityce Stolicy Apostolskiej 1598-1648* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2018), 224-27.

interesting collection of documents has been explored, which includes 837 original letters addressed to the nuncio in 1629. These materials can be found in folder n. 774 of the *Archivio Santacroce*, complex stored in the *Archivio di Stato* in Rome. Among other things, there are 103 letters from Polish Roman Catholic bishops. 22 of them from January through March 1629 will be included in the above-mentioned edition of the second volume of the nunciature of Antonio Santa Croce prepared by the undersigned, which appear in print in 2021¹⁴. However, it is already worthwhile to take a look at the whole of this collection and to subject it to at least a preliminary analysis. A complete list of the bishops' letters is given in the table below¹⁵.

Surname and first name	Bishopric	Date	Location	Language	Nr.
Wołowicz Eustachy	EP. Vilmensis	1629.01.04	Di Besdesa	It.	1
Grochowski Achacy	EP. Luceoriensis	1629.01.05	Janoviae	Lat.	2
Woyna Abraham	EP. Samogitiae	1629.01.07	Miednices	Lat.	3
Nowodworski Adam	EP. Praemyliensis	1629.02.06	Brzozoviae	Lat.	4
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.02.12	Kielciis	Lat.	5
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.02.18	Kielciis	Lat.	6
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.02.19	Kielciis	Lat.	7
Nowodworski Adam	EP. Praemyliensis	1629.02.20	Brzozoviae	Lat.	8
Węzyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.03.11	Squiernieviciis	Lat.	9
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.03.07	Kielciis	Lat.	10
Węzyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.03.07	Squiernieviciis	Lat.	11
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.03.08	Kielciis	Lat.	12
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.03.09	Kielciis	Lat.	13
Lipski Andrzej	EP. Vladislaviensis	1629.03.14	Volboriae	Lat.	14
Woyna Abraham	EP. Samogitiae	1629.03.15	Vornis	Lat.	15
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.03.16	Viscoviae	Lat.	16
Węzyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.03.19	Squiernieviciis	Lat.	17
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.03.20	Viscoviae	Lat.	18
Węzyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.03.27	Squiernieviciis	Lat.	19
Tyszkiewicz Jerzy	EP. Suff. Vilmensis	1629.03.28	Vilnae	Lat.	20
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.03.29	Brocoviae	Lat.	21
Konieczpolski Remigian	EP. Chelmensis	1629.03.31	Cumoviae	Lat.	22
Konieczpolski Remigian	EP. Chelmensis	1629.04.01	Cumoviae	Lat.	23
Lipski Andrzej	EP. Vladislaviensis	1629.04.14	Vladislaviae	Lat.	24
Węzyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.04.14	Lovicii	Lat.	25
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.04.20	Lubluni	Lat.	26
Węzyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.04.21	Lovicii	Lat.	27
Próchnicki Jan Andrzej	AEPP. Leopoliensis	1629.04.28	Leopoli	Lat.	28
Próchnicki Jan Andrzej	AEPP. Leopoliensis	1629.04.28	Leopoli	Lat.	29
Węzyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.05.02	Lovicii	Lat.	30
Konieczpolski Remigian	EP. Chelmensis	1629.05.02	In curia Cumoviensi	Lat.	31
Tyszkiewicz Jerzy	EP. Suff. Vilmensis	1629.05.03	Vilnae	Lat.	32
Lipski Andrzej	EP. Vladislaviensis	1629.05.04	Vladislaviae	Lat.	33
Węzyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.05.04	Lovicii	Lat.	34

14 ANP, t. XXIII/2.

15 Name of bishopric given in Latin; place of dating given according to source text.

Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.05.08	Lublina	Lat.	35
Woyna Abraham	EP. Samogitiae	1629.05.09	Vilnae	Lat.	36
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.05.11	Lovicii	Lat.	37
Lipski Andrzej	EP. Vladislaviensis	1629.05.15	Vladislaviae	Lat.	38
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.05.15	In Wałowice	Lat.	39
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.05.16	Lovicii	Lat.	40
Schenking Otto	EP. Vendensis	1629.05.20	Suleoviae	Lat.	41
Nowodworski Adam	EP. Praemyliensis	1629.05.25	Brzozoviae	Lat.	42
Lipski Andrzej	EP. Vladislaviensis	1629.05.28	Vladislaviae	Lat.	43
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.05.30	Ilzae	Lat.	44
Łubieński Maciej	EP. Posnaniensis	1629.06.01	Posnaniae	Lat.	45
Śladkowski Abraham	EP. Suff. Chelmensis	1629.06.05	Lublina	Lat.	46
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.06.07	Ilzae	Lat.	47
Wołowicz Eustachy	EP. Vilmensis	1629.06.08	Di Vilna	It.	48
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.06.09	Ilzae	Lat.	49
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.06.15	Lovicii	Lat.	50
Wołowicz Eustachy	EP. Vilmensis	1629.06.27	Vilnae	Lat.	51
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.06.29	Lovicii	Lat.	52
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.07.02	Lovicii	Lat.	53
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.07.08	Lovicii	Lat.	54
Łubieński Maciej	EP. Posnaniensis	1629.07.12	Ciążimi	Lat.	55
Baykowski Jan	EP. Suff. Posnaniensis	1629.07.19	Posnaniae	Lat.	56
Woyna Abraham	EP. Samogitiae	1629.07.21	Olsadio	Lat.	57
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.07.23	Lovicii	Lat.	58
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.07.27	Lovicii	Lat.	59
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.07.29	Cracoviae	Lat.	60
Lipski Andrzej	EP. Vladislaviensis	1629.07.29	Chocii	Lat.	61
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.07.30	Lovicii	Lat.	62
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.08.02	Kielciis	Lat.	63
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.08.03	Brocovio	Lat.	64
Grochowski Achacy	EP. Luceoriensis	1629.08.06	Janoviae	Lat.	65
Wołowicz Eustachy	EP. Vilmensis	1629.08.10	Vilnae	Lat.	66
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.08.15	Brocovio	Lat.	67
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.08.20	Lovicii	Lat.	68
Konieczpolski Remigian	EP. Chelmensis	1629.08.20	Andreoviae	Lat.	69
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.08.22	Lovicii	Lat.	70
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.08.23	Pultovio	Lat.	71
Tyszkiewicz Jerzy	EP. Suff. Vilmensis	1629.08.23	Vilnae	Lat.	72
Zadzik Jakub	EP. Culmensis	1629.08.24	ex Castris ad Granfeltum	Lat.	73
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.08.28	Lovicii	Lat.	74
Wołowicz Eustachy	EP. Vilmensis	1629.09.04	Di Vilna	It.	75
Piasecki Paweł	EP. Camenecensis	1629.09.07	Di Varsavia	It.	76
Grochowski Achacy	EP. Luceoriensis	1629.09.08	Janoviae	Lat.	77
Wołowicz Eustachy	EP. Vilmensis	1629.09.12	Di Vilna	It.	78

Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.09.17	Słavcoviae	Lat.	79
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.09.18	Słavcoviae	Lat.	80
Nowodworski Adam	EP. Praemyliensis	1629.09.20	Brzozoviae	Lat.	81
Grochowski Achacy	EP. Luceoriensis	1629.09.20	Janoviae	Lat.	82
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.09.24	Pultoviae	Lat.	83
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.09.24	Kielciis	Lat.	84
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.09.25	Kielciis	Lat.	85
Woyna Abraham	EP. Samogitiae	1629.09.29	Vilnae	Lat.	86
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.10.05	Lovicii	Lat.	87
Łubieński Maciej	EP. Posnaniensis	1629.10.08	Łubnae	Lat.	88
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.10.21	A Bozentin	It.	89
Łubieński Maciej	EP. Posnaniensis	1629.10.21	Ciążimi	Lat.	90
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.11.11	Kielciis	Lat.	91
Lipski Andrzej	EP. Vladislaviensis	1629.11.21	Volboriae	Lat.	92
Nowodworski Adam	EP. Praemyliensis	1629.11.24	Brzozoviae	Lat.	93
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.11.28	Varsaviae	Lat.	94
Konieczpolski Remigian	EP. Chelmensis	1629.11.29	Cumoviae	Lat.	95
Zadzik Jakub	EP. Culmensis	1629.12.01	Varsaviae	Lat.	96
Grochowski Achacy	EP. Luceoriensis	1629.12.02	Janoviae	Lat.	97
Zadzik Jakub	EP. Culmensis	1629.12.13	In villa Jablonna	Lat.	98
Grochowski Achacy	EP. Luceoriensis	1629.12.19	Janoviae	Lat.	99
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.12.19	Squiernieviciis	Lat.	100
Łubieński Stanisław	EP. Plocensis	1629.12.21	Viscovio	Lat.	101
Szyszkowski Marcin	EP. Cracoviensis	1629.12.23	Cracoviae	Lat.	102
Wężyk Jan	AEPP. Gnesnensis	1629.12.26	Squiernieviciis	Lat.	103

These 103 letters from bishops of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth probably do not constitute the complete set of their correspondence addressed to the nuncio in 1629. This is because file 774 is an example of the rather careless work of the nuncio's chancellery. Secretarial annotations are extremely rare here. The letters were not arranged chronologically and were not paginated. It is known from other sources that the folder contained only some letters sent to the nuncio by the Secretariat of State and the Congregation for *Propaganda Fide*¹⁶, which are known from the registers. It must have been the same with the correspondence from other addressees. It is therefore difficult to assess the completeness of the collection in question. However, it must be assumed that it is high and that we have at our disposal material which illustrates in a panoramic way the problem of the nuncio's relations with bishops.

As the list presented in the table shows, almost all ordinary bishops operating in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth maintained with the nuncio correspondence contact. For obvious reasons, the sender does not include the nominal Bishop of Varmia, i.e. Prince John Albert Vasa, who was still a minor at that time. The second lack is more difficult to explain because it concerns Bishop Bogusław Radoszewski of Kyiv, who was a very active hierarch and devoted to missionary matters and support for the union¹⁷, which was, after all, an important object of interest for the nuncio. It is possible that most of the letters related to the Union and missionary issues were kept separately¹⁸. The remaining

¹⁶ Henryk Litwin, "Krań korespondentów nuncjusza Antonio Santa Croce w świetle zbioru listy otrzymanych w roku 1629", in *Nuncjatura Apostolska w Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel and Katarzyna Wiszowata-Walczak (Białystok: Benkowski Publishing & Balloons, 2012), 224.

¹⁷ Krzysztof R. Prokop, *Biskupi kijowscy obrządku łacińskiego XIV–XVIII w. Szkice biograficzne* (Biały Dunajec-Ostróg: Ośrodek "Wołanie z Wołynia", 2003), 62-5.

¹⁸ Litwin, "Krań korespondentów", 224.

14 ordinary bishops were the authors of 98 letters. Five more units of correspondence are due to 3 auxiliary bishops.

For the most part, the ordinary bishops maintained regular correspondence with the nuncio. The most active were two hierarchs whose position within the episcopate of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was particularly strong: the Primate, Archbishop of Gniezno Jan Wężyk, and Bishop of Cracow Marcin Szyszkowski. We note that their number of letters amounted to 23 and 21 respectively. So both bishops wrote to the nuncio on average once every two weeks. The intensity of contacts between the remaining bishops and the papal envoy was somewhat lower and basically comparable: Stanisław Łubieński, Bishop of Płock, sent 9 letters, Andrzej Lipski, Bishop of Cuiavia – 7, Eustachy Wołłowicz, Bishop of Wilno and Achacy Grochowski, Bishop of Łuck sent 6 letters each to the nuncio, Abraham Woyna, Bishop of Samogitia, Adam Nowodworski, Bishop of Przemyśl and Remigian Koniecpolski, Bishop of Chełm sent 5 letters each, while Maciej Łubieński, Bishop of Poznań sent 4 letters. The frequency of letter contacts with the nuncio of the Bishops of Chełmno Jakub Zadzik and Kamieniec Paweł Piasecki was low (3 and 1 letters respectively). At that time Zadzik held the office of the Deputy Chancellor of the Crown, while Piasecki was appointed a resident senator by the *sejm* of 1629. Both of them therefore spent most of the year in Warsaw and had the opportunity to have direct contacts with the papal representation. Their letters come mainly from the period when Antonio Santa Croce left Warsaw in fear of the plague (20 October–20 December 1629)¹⁹. Only one letter from Otto Schenking, Bishop of Wenden (Cēsis), has survived. It is clear from its contents that this was the first attempt by the hierarch to contact the nuncio, even though he had held the office of bishop for a long time (1593) and resided permanently in the Sulejów abbey, not too far from Warsaw. The matters of the small diocese, almost entirely occupied by the Swedes in 1629, apparently did not require frequent contact. Also, noticeable is the small number of letters (only 2) from the Archbishop of Lviv Jan Andrzej Próchnicki, a person who was strongly involved in the 1629 matter of the so-called “unification council” between the Union and Orthodoxy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was of vital importance to the nuncio. This may be another argument in favor of the hypothesis that the letters concerning the union issues were collected separately and therefore the vast majority of them are missing from the already mentioned file 774 of the *Archivio Santacroce*.

Letters from auxiliary bishops are found sporadically in the collection – one from each of the sufragans of Poznań (Jan Baykowski) and Chełm (Abraham Śladkowski), and 3 from Jerzy Tyszkiewicz of Vilnius, who was one of the nuncio’s most important “experts” in matters of the union and relations with the Orthodox Church, and probably corresponded with Antonio Santa Croce more often than the letters in file 774 suggest.

Let us now turn to the subject of the bishops’ letters to the nuncio. When starting this analysis, it should be noted that in the majority of letters (96 out of 103 in total), the senders (apart from numerous courteous works) deal only with one issue. Only 2 letters dealt with three separate issues, and another 5 with two issues each. In total, 112 issues are raised in 103 letters. Three thematic circles of letters to the nuncio can be distinguished.

Most often, the bishops wrote about matters related to the papal ambassador’s decision-making abilities, resulting from the *facultates* granted to him and the powers defined in the instructions of the Secretariat of State and the Congregation for *Propaganda Fide*. A total of 52 such matters were raised, most often – in 19 cases – related to the nuncio’s prosecutorial and judicial functions. It should be recalled here that in accordance with the powers vested in him, the papal representative was authorized to conduct investigations and trials against disobedient and wicked clergy, to settle disputes in appellate instances in matters in any way falling under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and to impose, but also to release from ecclesiastical penalties²⁰. In the bishops’ letters of 1629, cases of disobedient priests in dispute with the

19 In a letter dated 20 October, Santa Croce informed the Secretariat of State about the plague and his departure from the capital. For the next two months, the nuncio stayed in the provinces on the estates of the Mazovian nobility, and then at the royal residence in Nieporęt, before finally returning to Warsaw and staying at the residence of Jan Wężyk. Barberini, Warsaw 20 December 1629, AAV, *Segreteria di Stato. Polonia*, vol 42, ff. 121r-22r.

20 For a summary of the *facultates* of Antonio Santa Croce see ANP, t. XXIII/1, 9; they were identical in content to the earlier *facultates* of Vincenzo Lauro, see ANP, t. IX/1, 89-98; the same *faculties* were granted to Antonio Santa Croce’s

bishops appear frequently. Some of them were chronic and returned to the nuncio several times, such as the dispute of Bishop of Chełm Remigian Koniecpolski with his suffragan Abraham Ślaskowski²¹, the persistent efforts of the Bishop of Samogitia Abraham Woyna to punish the recalcitrant canon of the Samogitian chapter Mikolaj Powetrius²², or the efforts of the Bishop of Łuck Achacy Grochowski to punish the disobedient parish priest Stanisław Urbanowicz²³. Several cases involved conflicts between laymen and clergymen, for example, over patronage (collation) or disputed rights to own a private chapel²⁴. The expectations of the nuncio to settle disputes over benefices and endowments, including those between diocesan and monastic clergy, were also frequent²⁵.

In addition to jurisdictional matters, the nuncio had the power to grant certain benefices connected with lower church offices and endowed with limited income.²⁶ In practice, this concerned some rectories in specific dioceses. Five times during the year 1629 the bishops turned to Antonio Santa Croce asking for the nomination of certain persons or requesting that the nuncio give them the right to appoint a parish priest in certain parishes²⁷.

A relatively common topic addressed by the hierarchy was the solicitation of dispensations. The nuncio had the authority to dispense from obstacles to priestly ordination and church benefices. In relation to the laity – to dispense from some obstacles to the sacrament of marriage²⁸. The bishops' correspondence more often concerned marriage dispensations for the laity (6 cases)²⁹ than exemptions from obstacles for the clergy (3 cases)³⁰. Hierarchs applied for both kind treatment of the affluent persons of that time (efforts of several bishops for a marriage dispensation for Stanisław Przyjemski, general *starosta* of Wielkopolska), and the little ones (a request of Archbishop Jan Wężyk in the case of Adam Wąsz, a shoemaker from Krzepice)³¹. The requests for dispensations for the clergy concerned the exemption from the obstacle of physical defects and combining benefices.

Facultates of the nuncio also provided for the possibility of granting certain special powers to the clergy - to grant indulgences and privileges³². 6 letters from bishops dealt with such matters. They were related to the granting of two types of authority – *absolvendi ab haeresis* and the consecration of church rooms, paintings and other church equipment. They were to be granted to diocesan priests selected by the bishops³³. We find only letters with requests for granting the powers. No thanks for arranging such requests were present. However, it is hard to doubt that this is a matter of chance. According to the papal nominative brief, matters of this kind should have been handled routinely. This is apparently how the bishops treated them, justifying their requests rather perfunctorily and generally with the needs of the diocese.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, a great deal of attention from the Holy See was focused

predecessor, Giovanni Battista Lancellotti. They have been discussed at length by Fr. Tadeusz Fitych in his work: *Struktura i funkcjonowanie nuncjatury Giovanniego Battisty Lancellottiego (1622–1627)* (Opole: Wyd. Świętego Krzyża w Opolu, 2005); for matters of orchard powers see pages 130–32.

- 21 The letters we refer to here are contained in a folder whose pages are unpaginated. For these reasons, we give the numbers of the letters in the footnotes from the index we publish here. N. 46, 69, 95.
- 22 N. 3, 15, 36, 86.
- 23 N. 2.
- 24 N. 13, 19, 48, 65, 77, 81.
- 25 N. 18, 21, 83, 88.
- 26 ANP, t. XXIII/1, 9; Fitych, *Struktura i funkcjonowanie*, 138–40.
- 27 N. 30, 34, 45, 66, 92.
- 28 ANP, t. XXIII/1, 9; Fitych, *Struktura i funkcjonowanie*, 133–38.
- 29 N. 11, 23, 55, 56, 58, 68.
- 30 N. 4, 23, 39,
- 31 N. 11, 55, 56, 58, 68.
- 32 ANP, t. XXIII/1, 9, Fitych, *Struktura i funkcjonowanie*, 141–44.
- 33 N. 22, 23, 35, 37, 42, 47.

on the reform of religious orders, especially mendicant ones. Nuncios at this time were usually given the authority to visit and reform monasteries³⁴, and their instructions included specific indications of actions that should be taken with regard to particular orders³⁵. Antonio Santa Croce's predecessor Giovanni Battista Lancellotti even received detailed instructions from Gregory XV on the difficult question of reform in the family of Franciscan orders³⁶. The Archbishop of Seleucia was also furnished with special recommendations in the form of instructions from the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*³⁷. His correspondence on religious matters with representatives of individual congregations, visitators, general superiors in Rome, etc., is very abundant and probably worthy of a separate study. Here we will only note that the nuncio's interest in religious matters must have been known to the bishops, because they not infrequently raised this type of issue (7 letters). The Ordinary of Cracow, Marcin Szyszkowski, devoted as many as three of his letters to the scandalous incidents in the Cracow convent of the Conventual Franciscans, where the friars did not accept the prior assigned to them by the Provincial, and where the unfortunate candidate was thrown into a riot and beaten³⁸. Earlier the same hierarch had dedicated a letter to the reform of the same order³⁹. Bishop Eustachy Wołłowicz of Vilnius and his suffragan Bishop Jerzy Tyszkiewicz wrote to the nuncio about the need to send an inspector to the Lithuanian Bernardines.⁴⁰ In turn, Archbishop Jan Wężyk shared with the nuncio his thoughts about the excessive concentration of monasteries of mendicant orders in his main residence town of Łowicz⁴¹. Another important task of the nuncio, described in the documents initiating his mission, was to support the development of the Union of Brest. In this regard, the Congregation for *Propaganda Fide* prepared for Antonio Santa Croce specific, though perhaps not very detailed, recommendations in two special instructions (*instructio particularis*)⁴². The Archbishop of Seleucia delved into matters of care for the Uniate Church with commitment. Especially in 1629, when a "unification synod" of Greek Catholics and Orthodox was being planned, he devoted much attention to them, and his correspondence on these matters was very extensive. The undersigned will devote a separate analysis to this issue, and in this text we only draw attention to the bishops' consideration of the union theme (6 letters). At the end of the 1620s, the main "specialist" in matters of the union in the Roman Catholic episcopate of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a Suffragan Bishop of Vilnius Jerzy Tyszkiewicz. His 3 letters of 1629 addressed to Antonio Santa Croce concerned the preparations for the aforementioned joint synod of Uniates and Orthodox⁴³, which ultimately did not take place due to the nuncio's objections. This issue was also addressed in a letter by Jakub Zadzik⁴⁴, who was at the same time Bishop of Chełmno and Great Crown Chancellor, and in this case appeared rather in the latter capacity. The other two letters concerning the union issue came from Primate Jan Wężyk⁴⁵ and were his reaction to the papal brief received in May 1629 with an appeal for support for the Greek Catholic Church. A separate and important package of correspondence concerned matters related to the nuncio's role as an intermediary between the country of office and the Holy See. Such matters were mentioned in

34 For the Antonio Santa Croce, see ANP, t. XXIII/1, 9; for commentary on typical powers in this regard, see, Fitych, *Struktura i funkcjonowanie*, 129-30.

35 See, for example, General Instruction to nuncio Cosimo de Torres, *Die Hauptinstruktionen Gregor XV für die Nuntien und Gesandten an den europäischen Fürstenthöfen, 1621-1623*, t. 2, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1997), 700-01.

36 Fitych, *Struktura i funkcjonowanie*, 185-87, 702-04.

37 ANP, t. XXIII/1, 3-7.

38 N. 80, 84, 85.

39 N. 49.

40 N. 72, 75.

41 N. 54.

42 ANP, t. XXIII/1, 3, 6.

43 N. 20, 32, 72.

44 N. 73.

45 N. 37, 40.

39 letters from bishops. Definitely, the most frequent – 21 – were various appeals for support in the matters related to staffing of benefices reserved for the Pope. Most of them (14) concerned canons in diocesan chapters. In addition, bishops asked for support for requests to appoint an auxiliary bishop in their diocese (2), to grant a rectory (2), an abbey (2) or a collegiate canonry (1)⁴⁶. The nuncio was also asked to recommend the granting of powers to clergy in cases belonging to papal competence (3 letters)⁴⁷. In 1629 Primate Wężyk sought the privilege of the provost of Strzelno to wear a mitre and asked the nuncio for support⁴⁸. There were also requests for assistance in contacting the curial circles in Rome in connection with the correspondence or planned travel (3 letters)⁴⁹.

The letters sent by the nuncio to the bishops in August 1629, reminding them of their obligation to visit *ad limina apostolorum*, fall into the same category. Antonio Santa Croce probably sent such a disciplinary summons to all the Ordinaries. The responses of five of them have survived, including that of Primate Wężyk, whose letter generally explained the situation of the hierarchs in the archdiocese by pointing out that the pontificates of most of them lasted less than four years, after which a visit was required, and that, in addition, the war with Sweden and the war in Italy were ongoing, so that the time for the performance of the duty was inconvenient⁵⁰. Bishops from Poznań, Płock, Łuck, and Przemyśl also invoked similar arguments in their letters, but they declared their readiness to travel if their arguments were not understood by the nuncio and Rome⁵¹.

Another group of letters in this category is related to the efforts of Sigismund III Vasa to grant the cardinal dignity to a candidate proposed by him – the previous nuncio Giovanni Battista Lancellotti – which was received with dissatisfaction in Rome. The correspondence on this subject between Antonio Santa Croce and the Secretariat of State was very abundant and lasted for almost the entire mission in Poland⁵². The bishops' letters of 1629 (6) were related to the final stage of the affair, when the cardinal's hat was finally placed on the head of the nuncio in Warsaw, not Lancellotti's but Santa Croce's. Bishops Wężyk, Szyszkowski, Zadzik and Grochowski took note of this finale with goodwill. Paweł Piasecki's letter was written even before the news about the cardinal's post reached Warsaw; moreover, its sender had supported the King earlier in his endeavours for Lancellotti.

Santa Croce also acted as an intermediary, at the request of the Pope, to help a Georgian mission led by Father Nicefor Irubakidze, which was passing through the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth on its way back from Rome. It went to Lviv, where it was helped by the local Archbishop Jan Andrzej Próchnicki, who informed the nuncio about it in his letter⁵³.

Finally, let us look at the third category of letters, related not so much to the nuncio's competencies as to his obvious interest in the internal politics of his country of office and current events that might have affected the situation of the Church in the Commonwealth. 21 letters of this kind can be identified. Only 2 of them (from Wężyk and Wołłowicz) concern matters related to the *sejm*⁵⁴, and there were 2 in 1629. Surprisingly few, considering the rather numerous presence of bishops at both *sejms*. As many as seven hierarchs took part in the January-February one, and four⁵⁵ in the November one. Apparently

46 N. 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 21, 24, 25, 31, 33, 38, 41, 43, 57, 59, 60, 66, 70, 74, 92.

47 N. 31, 62, 68.

48 N. 62.

49 N. 9, 50, 51.

50 N. 50.

51 N. 71, 82, 90, 93.

52 For more on this see Litwin, *Chwała Północy*, 226-27; Tadeusz Fitych, "Rekomendacje Zygmunta III Waza w sprawie kardynalatu Giovanni Battista Lancellotti nuncjusza apostolskiego w Polsce w latach 1622–1627", *Nasza Przyszłość*, vol. 91 (1999): 171-206.

53 N. 28.

54 N. 1, 100.

55 Anna Filipczak-Kocur, *Sejm zwyczajny z roku 1629* (Warszawa: PWN, 1979), 102-04; Jan Seredyka, "Senatorowie Rzeczypospolitej na sejmach 1629–1632", *Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej im. Powstańców Śląskich w Opolu*, History XVI (1979): 44-5.

the custom of pre-*sejm* “retreats” of bishops with the nuncio by letter did not catch on. Perhaps it was replaced by personal meetings during the *Sejm*. The bishops more often discussed matters related to sessions of the Crown Tribunal than *sejm* sessions. 4 letters informing about tribunals concerning disputes between the clergy and the laity can be identified, and their authors were twice the Primate and Szyszkowski and Woyna⁵⁶. 4 letters from the Bishop of Cracow were also related to the issue of interference between the clergy and the laity, informing the nuncio about actions taken by the secular authorities to free a nun who had been kidnapped from a monastery in Milan and held in Silesia⁵⁷.

The subject of the bishops’ correspondence was relatively often the war with the Swedes and the damage it caused to the state and the church (5 letters). This issue received most attention from Stanisław Łubieński, Bishop of Płock, who referred to the Swedish War three times in his letters⁵⁸. This was natural, since the Diocese of Płock was adjacent to the war theater and even a part of it. The Bishop of Wenden, Otto Schenking, who was the most severely affected by the actions of the Swedes, also devoted an extensive elaboration to these matters⁵⁹. The Primate also wrote to the papal envoy about the damage caused to the church by the war with the Protestant enemy. Among current events, the plague attracted the most attention of the bishops. This tragedy took place all over the country and claimed more victims than the war. We learn about its effects from 6 letters sent by the bishops of Cracow (2 letters), Płock (2 letters), Chełmno and Łuck⁶⁰.

In conclusion, the problem of cooperation between apostolic nuncio residing on the Vistula River and the hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the modern era has not yet been studied by historians, mainly due to a lack of extant source material. The compilation of a collection of letters received by nuncio Antonio Santa Croce in 1629, stored in the *Archivio di Stato di Roma* in the section *Archivio Santacroce* in volume 774, opens new avenues of research in this regard. The volume in question contains 103 letters sent by Polish Roman Catholic bishops to the titular Archbishop of Seleucia. Although the collection itself does not contain any letters from the nuncio to the bishops, the content analysis of the preserved material allows us to find traces of such letters. A review of the correspondence leads to the conclusion that the subject of the contacts between the hierarchs of the Polish Church and the papal envoy was primarily ecclesiastical matters closely related to his judicial, procedural and dispensational powers, or the mediation between Warsaw and Rome in such matters. Most frequently, the issues discussed the distribution of benefices and trials before the nunciature’s court. Intrapolitical issues appeared in the correspondence much less frequently – in practice only in cases where there was a clash between the interests of laymen and ecclesiastical subjects. It is symptomatic of the fact that most of the letters concern current affairs and that the mentioned volume lacks any trace of more or less regular reports to the papal envoy on the state of particular dioceses. The problem of contacts and cooperation of papal representatives with the hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in early modern times still awaits a reliable study. This publication, according to the authors’ assumption, aims at showing the cognitive possibilities of the analysis of source materials connected with the papal diplomatic service.

56 N. 7, 27, 36, 53.

57 N. 5, 26, 44, 63.

58 N. 16, 41, 61, 64, 67.

59 N. 41.

60 N. 89, 91, 94, 96, 97, 101.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANP: *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae*, t. I-LVII (Romae/Cracoviae: 1990–2021).

AAV: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano.

BPAN: Biblioteka Naukowa PAN i PAU–Kraków.

DBI: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 100 vols (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Treccani, 1960–2020, 100).

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