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PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE NEGOTIATION BETWEEN JAN
POTOCKI AND SIGISMUND III IN 1601–1602.
A STANDPOINT IN THE DEBATE REGARDING
JAN ZAMOYSKI'S AFFINITY AND MULTIPLE FIDELITIES

To the memory of Petre P. Panaitescu

The present paper¹ continues earlier and more recent preoccupations of both the Polish historiography and the present author² focusing on the (the more significant, the less visible) change of certain political and social solidarities of the patron-client-broker type between the entourage of a monarch and that of a minister.

Generally speaking, the Europe of «absolutist» monarchies saw at one point a decrease in the entourages of the important nobles, «compensated and conditioned» by an increase of those of the monarchs. In the French case, the phenomenon was studied (among others) by Sharon Kettering who noted a decline in the entourages of the important nobility during the second part of the 17th century³. The pendulum of the members of the entourages had also occurred before. If Louis XIII was wondering why his followers had left him for Richelieu, we will ask

¹ The present paper constitutes the sampler version of the lecture with the same title presented at the Annual Scientific Session of the «Nicolae Iorga» Institute of History in December 2016.

² *Raporturile dintre familiile Potocki și Movilă 1595–1606*, paper presented at the Annual Session of the Bukovina Museum on November 25–26, 2011.

³ Kettering, S. The Decline of Great Noble Clientele during the Reign of Louis XIV, in: *Canadian Journal of History*. 1989. Vol. 24. No 2. P. 157–177.

ourselves why and how the followers of Jan Zamoyski, the Lord Grand Chancellor and Grand Hetman of the Crown, distanced themselves from him only to get closer to King Sigismund III⁴.

The process of the decline of the clientele is reversed for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth when compared to the French case. In Poland during most of the 16th century, the monarch was the most important patron, while the magnates which had not yet created dynasties, could not compete with him.

Here are a few figures which, although somewhat incongruent, would clear the matter. An Italian observer at the Court of Sigismund August (1548–1572) mentioned that there were 1500 noble courtiers holding no functions at the Court, who were waiting for the opportunity to obtain a lay or religious office from the king⁵. Władysław Czapliński, studying the Court of Władysław IV (1632–1648), stated that the Court should have nominally consisted of 300 people. The number of those actually present at the Court was very small, thus requiring an increase at ceremonial moments, which would also have increased the prestige of the monarch. A second figure employed by Czapliński to illustrate this, was that of the secretaries of Władysław IV. Nominally, the title was held by a hundred individuals, but at the Court were never more than ten⁶. These two large numbers

⁴ The relationships between the Polish Kings and their Grand Hetmans were rather tensed. The following witty remark was attributed to Augustus the Strong: «... had I know the power the Grand Hetman of the Crown holds, I would have strived to become hetman and not king». The situation had not been different a hundred years before when, following the death of Zamoyski in 1605, Sigismund appointed a Grand Hetman only 1618 (Stanisław Żółkiewski), and after the latter's death in 1620, he appointed Stanisław Koniecpolski hetman in the year of his death only (1632), thus securing his support for the election of his son Władysław, as king.

⁵ *Relacje nuncjuszów apostolskich*. Vol. I. P. 140. N. Ruggeri, the year 1565: «Alongside the king there are many nobles, known as courtiers, each of them with four to five horses. Their number can reach 1500. They do not keep this job for the pay, but, according to their abilities, they can become high priests, voivodes or castellans», quoted after: *Kaczmarczyk, Ż., Leśnodorski, B.* Historia państwa i prawa Polski. Warszawa, 1966. Vol. II. S. 113.

⁶ *Czapliński, W.* Na dworze Władysława IV. Warszawa, 1959. S. 141, 158. The author of this work has been considered to the day the best specialist in the reign of this king; he is also the author of the monarch's biography, published in the 1970s. The latter work had been completed in 1944, as I was able to check with the manuscript I found in the possession of an antique bookshop in Krakow.

(1500 and 300, respectively) indicate a decline in the power of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchs' Court, which as we will show further on, was a sinuous one. Below we will present a short episode of this sinuosity.

The shift of the above-mentioned solidarity occurred during, and continued after the negotiation between King Sigismund III and the Field Chancellor⁷ of the Crown's Army, Jan Potocki, a personality that collaborated both with the King and the Grand Hetman. At the end of the negotiation, the two parties initially involved, and a third party also (the Grand Chancellor and Hetman Jan Zamoyski) would find themselves in different positions from their earlier ones.

Although at a first glance the interaction between the two might have given birth to a rather complicated situation, this can be decrypted using two concepts: those of *multiple fidelities/loyalties*⁸ and of a *virtual court/cour virtuelle*⁹.

The documentary base of our investigation¹⁰ is represented by the active (fourteen letters) and the passive (a letter of Sigismund III

⁷ *Notarius campestris* was leading the administration of the army when replacing the hetman; was also verifying the army and keeping its records which he presented to the Sejm at the beginning of each cadence, paid them, controlled and took care of the armament informing the king on the possible needs, checked on the castles in Podolia and Ukraine. See *Góralski, Ż.* Urzędy i godności w dawnej Polsce. Warszawa, 1983. S. 176–177.

⁸ *Neuschel, K. B.* Word of Honor. Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France. Ithaca; London, 1989. P. 69–72, 93; *Boltanski, A.* Les Ducs de Nevers et l'état royal. Genèse d'un compromis (ca 1550 – ca 1600). Genève, 2006. P. 275–300; *Holt, M. P.* Patterns of Clientèle and Economic Opportunity at Court during the Wars of Religion: The Household of Francois, Duke de Anjou, in: *French Historical Studies*. 1984. No 13. P. 305–322; *Pośpiech, A.* W służbie króla czy Rzeczypospolitej? Włoscy sekretarze Jana III Sobieskiego, in: *Władza i społeczeństwo w XVI i XVII wieku. Prace ofiarowane Antoniemu Mączakowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, Warszawa, 1989. S. 151–165.

⁹ *Boutier, J.* Adresser ses vœux au grand-duc. Pratiques épistolaires entre recherche de la grâce et expression de la fidélité dans l'Italie du XVII^e siècle, in: *La politique par correspondance / Éd. J. Boutier, S. Landi, O. Rouchon, É.* PUR. Rennes, 2009. P. 262–263.

¹⁰ *Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I.* Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II (1601–1640). București, 1895. P. 63. No XXXVII: Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, September 8 1601; P. 77. No XLVI: Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, December 10 1601; P. 92–93. No LII: Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, January 1 1602; P. 102–104. No LVIII, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, February 21 1602; P. 145–147. No LXXXVIII, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, May 4 1602; P. 164. No LXXXV, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, June 1 1602; P. 165–166. No LXXXVI,

unknown to the Polish historians) correspondence between Jan Potocki and his brother Andzej (one letter)¹¹, and King Sigismund III, between September 1601 and September 1602. This correspondence is important to us as it attracted only briefly the attention of the Polish historiography which saw in them mere 'reports' on the military and diplomatic situation of Wallachia.

During this period, the Commonwealth of the Two Nations was fighting two wars, one at the Danube where it aimed to support Simion Movilă on the throne of Wallachia, and the second in Livonia against the Sweden of Carl of Sudermania - Sigismund's uncle - which had dethroned the latter in 1599.

The four Potocki brothers joined the two fronts: Jan (the eldest) and Andzej the southern one, and Stefan and Jakub the northern one, with the last two brothers finding themselves on a front with both the Polish-Lithuanian monarch and Jan Zamoyski, the Grand Chancellor and Hetman of the Crown, as the commander of the operations. Jan Potocki was the commander of an important part of the army supporting Simion Movilă.

Fighting two wars concomitantly put pressure both on the finances of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the human and financial resources of some of the nobles engaged in them, a fact which will become visible in the analysed sources as well.

This problematic we touch upon namely the survival of the clientele nebulosity¹² surrounding Jan Zamoyski during the final years of his life has been discussed by the present author elsewhere also¹³.

Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, June 2 1602; P. 168–169. No LXXXVIII, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, June 20 1602; P. 180–181, No XCV, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, July 12 1602; P. 183–184, No XCVII, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, July 22 1602; P. 189. No C, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, August 12 1602; 96. P. 195–196, No CIII, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, August 18 1602; P. 218–220. No CXI, Jan Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, September 19 1602.

¹¹ *Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I.* Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 193–194. No CII: Andzej Potocki către Sigismund al III-lea, August 14 1602.

¹² I had used this term in my presentation unaware at the time that it had been introduced in the literature by *Duma, J.* *Les Bourbon-Penthièvre (1678–1793): une nébuleuse aristocratique au XVIII^e siècle.* Paris, 1995.

¹³ *Bobicescu, C.* Notă pe marginea raporturilor lui Jan Zamoyski cu Țările Române, in *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie.* 2002. No XX. P. 201–206; *Bobicescu, C.* *Tyranny*

So far, Polish historiography has provided two answers to the problem regarding the evolution of the entourage of the Grand Chancellor and Hetman of the Crown during the final years of his life. One opinion, corresponding to a direction we like to consider 'optimist' suggests that the «system» survived, while the other which we call «pessimist», indicates that the «system presented dysfunctionalities», and was thus in crisis. To this latter period corresponds as well a crisis in the relations between Sigismund III and Jan Zamoyski.

The place of the Potocki brothers in this historiographic dispute is a central one: our research suggests they were mentioned in nine works of variable sizes which touch on the matter we are currently discussing. We shall mention below only the most important ones.

The optimists consider that the four Potocki brothers remained faithful to the Grand Chancellor and Hetman to the end of his life in 1605. They bring into discussion the report of the Papal Nuncio Rangoni who in 1604 saw Jan Potocki as one Zamoyski's most faithful men¹⁴. The pessimists consider that from the very 1601–1603 the brothers had left the side of the Chancellor to join that of the King, accusing publicly the former (among other things) during the 1603 Sejm, that during the campaign in Livonia he had tried turn the army of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against the king¹⁵. This last opinion is based on two controversial paragraphs from Paweł Piasecki's chronicle¹⁶.

and Colonization. Preliminary considerations about the Colonization Plans of Moldavia during the Time of Jan Zamoyski, in *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*. 2016. Vol. LIV. No 1–4. P. 99–118, and other works of the present author.

¹⁴ *Tygielski, W.* Listy-ludzie-władza: Patronat Jana Zamoyskiego w świetle korespondencji. Warszawa, 2007, Papal Nuncio Rangoni «certainly objective»: *Relazione del Regno di Polonia 1604*, where he considers him among «the most important partisans and allies of Chancellor Jan Potocki, Starosta of Kamienica, S. 86. Although the work was only published in 2007, it represented the author's PhD thesis under the supervision of Antoni Mączak in 1980. For publication, the author added a supplementary chapter (S. 413–437), where while reviewing the opinions of the «pessimist», he supported his viewpoint from 1980 on the survival of Zamoyski's clientele.

¹⁵ *Janiszewska-Mincer, B.* Rzeczpospolita Polska w latach 1600–1603: Narastanie konfliktu między Zygmuntem III Wazą a stanami [The Polish Commonwealth between 1600 and 1603: Escalation of the conflict between Sigismund III Vasa and the states]. Bydgoszcz, 1984. S. 111–112.

¹⁶ *Paweł Piasecki*, *Kronika Pawła Piaseckiego biskupa przemyskiego* [Chronicle of Paweł Piasecki, Bishop of Przemyśl], translated by Antoni Chrzęszczewski. Kraków,

The polemic between Barbara Janiszewska-Mincer/Wojciech Sokołowski and Wojciech Tygielski was continued during the last years by Marta Kupczewska and Marian Wolski. The latter questioned the «incriminating» paragraph in Piasecki's chronicle (which, having on-going court processes with Stefan Potocki was denigrating him and transforming him into an enemy of Zamoyski)¹⁷, while Marta Kupczewska brought new arguments supporting the «flip» of the brothers to the King's side in 1601–1603¹⁸. She stressed the role played by Jakub and Stefan, who had fought in Livonia, losing «consideration» for Zamoyski's northern plans.

In order to better understand where we start from and what we aim to with our interpretation, we find it necessary to present both the main actors and the «secondary» one — Chancellor Jan Zamoyski — as well as the relationships among them in the fore-days of the debut of the above-mentioned correspondence.

The five, later four Potocki brothers (following the death of Mikołaj at the beginning of 1596 or during the campaign in Moldova), were part of Jan Zamoyski's political entourage, thus of his affinity¹⁹.

They supported his political actions even during the times when they had been aimed at Sigismund III, accompanying the Chancellor during his military actions also. During the campaigns of 1595 (Moldova) and 1600 (Moldova-Wallachia), the Potocki brothers led military units

1870. P. 133: «... especially the Potocki brothers, who, also lifted to higher ranks by his wealth first they became his competitors and covered him in suspicions implying he would have wanted to make the king return quickly from Livonia, that he had instigated the knights to rebellion and was creating new intrigues in the Commonwealth», a paragraph ignored by M. Wolski, who considered that B. Janiszewska-Mincer invented the story of the troubling of the army. M. Wolski's critique, *Potoccy herbu Piława*. Kraków, 2013. P. 267–268, note 35, starts from the acknowledgement of the second paragraph of the same chronicle on P. 172: «But Zamoyski's military successes were followed by those envious on him who stood against him cunningly. Especially Stefan Potocki, the Starosta of Felin, while he was still in Livonia, was trying to take him out of the favours of the king, and mostly in the proximity of the Sejm, they were trying that his mediating for those who wanted vacant office not to succeed».

¹⁷ Wolski, M. *Potoccy*, S. 267–268.

¹⁸ Kupczewska, M. *Potoccy herbu Piława – mechanizmy kariery rodu w XVI–XVII wieku*, in: *Przegląd Historyczny*. 2012. Vol. 13. No 2. S. 290.

¹⁹ We prefer to use the term *affinity*, with a wider meaning than that of *clientele*, while incorporating it.

consisting of 500 people, a number representing 7% of the army effective led by Zamoyski. Significant for their status was the fact that the cavalry troops they were leading consisted of hussars²⁰.

They also played a political role in the mechanism of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as elected deputies in several Sejms during the respective period (1593–1605). Their wealth could be estimated between that of a magnate and a wealthy noble²¹. The offices held by the brothers, and their marriages (prior to that of Stefan with Maria Movilă in 1606) did not surpass the provincial threshold²². The relationship between Zamoyski and the Potocki brothers had not been initiated when Jan Potocki was appointed Field Chancellor of the Crown's Army in January 12 1588, but was a family heirloom. Jan Zamoyski's father had been connected politically with their own father, Mikołaj Potocki, General of Podolia and Starosta of Kamiënica, as stated in a letter of recommendation for Jan Potocki addressed by the Chancellor to Marcin Kromer in 1584²³. As already mentioned, Jan Potocki's letters have a substrate which is not only, or better said, it is not at all informative. It develops around six main themes: the difficulties encountered during the mission in Wallachia, stating the role played there by Andzej Potocki, making note of the poor health and the efforts of Jan Potocki himself, inquiring upon the person to whom the king would entrust the «province» when himself would retire, the appeal to the King's gratitude regarding the situation of the soldiers and the fact that himself, Jan Potocki, fought for the glory of the King, for his dignity and for the safety and welfare of the Commonwealth.

It is worth mentioning that we are facing a discourse on merits («*zasługi*») gained on the battlefield, which the Polish monarch is «com-

²⁰ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, vol. I (1510–1600). București, 1893. P. 639–643. No CCCXLIII: Lupta lui Mihai Viteazul cu Ioan Zamoyski lângă Bucov și condițiunile impuse de Zamoyski lui Ieremie și Simeon Movilă ca vasali ai Poloniei: descrise de însuși Ioan Zamoyski, 12–14 octomvrie 1600, among which we find: Spisek wojska co do Multan szło (P. 643); Wolski, M. Potoccy, P. 164–165.

²¹ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. I. P. 639–643. No CCCXLIII; Wolski, M. Potoccy, P. 164–165.

²² Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. I. P. 639–643. No CCCXLIII; Wolski, M. Potoccy, P. 164–165.

²³ Tygielski, W. W poszukiwaniu patrona, in: *Przegląd Historyczny*. 1987. Vol. 78. No 2. S. 207.

pelled» to reward, having at his disposal the various offices and dignities, as well as the «public» lands, known in the pre-modern Polish-Lithuanian age as «*pane bene merentium*» («*chleb dobrze zasłużonych*»).

The various difficulties encountered during his mission that were mentioned by Jan Potocki, concern the delays in the payments of soldiers, their insufficient number, the lack of fortifications in Muntenia and the various military and diplomatic threats he had to face in order to keep Simion Movilă on the throne. Their enumeration did not aim at the mere necessity of sending money and troops but also to the creation of a commander's image who acted «*in adversibus*».

Several times, Jan Potocki mentioned his brother Andzej (six times²⁴ prior to the letter on June 20 1602) and his role in solving matters of military order. Wherever there was a problem, Jan sent his brother — suggests this correspondence. No letter mentioned a military failure of the latter. In other words, Jan Potocki did not only «inform» the King of his own merits, but of those of his brother also, who, in the light of acquiring these merits, should have been rewarded by the King. This is a manifestation of family solidarity.

Jan does not forget to mention his own «poor» health²⁵, as well as the fact that it was getting worse. He appealed to the king's gratitude for the «services» of the soldiers. He mentioned he had supported the campaign from his own fortune which was diminishing in time. Also, he had fought for the acknowledgement and rise of the King's glory («to retreat and preserve your Royal Majesty's Glory is not possible») and dignity²⁶ («has happened *cum dignitate* of your Royal Majesty's) as well as for the «welfare» and safety of the «Commonwealth» and the «country»²⁷.

²⁴ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 92–93. No LII: once; P. 102–104. No LVIII: twice; P. 145–147. No LXXXVIII: twice; P. 168–169. No LXXXVIII: once.

²⁵ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II., until June 20 1602 it is mentioned five times: P. 92–93. No LII; P. 102–104. No LVIII; P. 145–147. No LXXXVIII; P. 164. No LXXXV; P. 168–169. No LXXXVIII.

²⁶ It is not our intention to make here an analysis of the political theology in the spirit of Kantorowicz, which is intended for elsewhere, only an analysis of the political terminology use.

²⁷ We are preparing a comparative analysis between the monarchic discourse and that of the Commonwealth in the letters of Jan Potocki and those of Jeremia and Simion Movilă.

The glory of the King does not only represent, as claimed, «the prestige of the realm» as at that time the «realm» consisted of «the King and the Commonwealth», the latter term signifying either the community of all Polish-Lithuanian nobles or the nobility in a Sejm. The «glory» of the king represented the personal reputation of the monarch – his greatness²⁸ throughout his life, but also the posthumous one, which gives an even more personal touch to the respective correspondence and the transmitted message.

A short statistic will bring some light into the matter. The «glory» of the king appears alone in the letters five times. The King's «dignity» appears only once. King's «dignity» appears four more times but associated in two cases with «the welfare of the Commonwealth», the third time with «the safety of the Commonwealth» and the fourth time with «the glory of the Crown». The «glory» of the King appears accompanied twice, once by the «the welfare of the country» and the second time by «the safety of the Commonwealth». Summing things up, the «strict monarchic terminology occurs six times by itself and other six times in association, while the «Commonwealth» terminology occurs six times only and when in association, it comes second after the royal one. We see thus the presence of a considerable pre-eminence of the «monarchic» terminology²⁹.

How should we interpret this? It is certain that «the King and the Commonwealth» were «values somewhat connected, as if they were the two sides of the same reality»³⁰. In the same time, they could be disjoined: «I do not separate your Royal Highness from the Commonwealth, as they need to be One and they always go together, and whoever

²⁸ *Morka, M.* Polski nowożytny portret konny i jego europejska geneza. Wrocław, 1986. especially S. 8, 33. This book contains a reproduction of a portrait of Alexandrel Movilă, whose publication in Romania I now announce.

²⁹ The complete significance of this last fact results from the correspondence carried by the Great Emissary of the King and of the Commonwealth to the Porte, and Ieremia Movilă, when the emissary put the Commonwealth on the first place: «I believe it is in the interest of the Commonwealth and of his Highness the King, my Master» (*Panaitescu, P. P.* Documente privitoare la istoria lui Mihai Viteazul. București, 1936. P. 50–51. No 20: Jan Szcześny Herburt către Ieremia Movilă, august 1598). Ieremia Movilă did not dare to correct him, writing back in the same way (*Panaitescu, P. P.* Documente privitoare. P. 52–54. No 21).

³⁰ *Czapliński, W., Długosz, J.* Życie codzienne magnaterii polskiej w XVII wieku. Warszawa, 1976. S. 178.

wants to separate them, does wrong» said Zamoyski to the King during the 1605 Sejm, himself on the brink of starting up a rebellion³¹.

In order to get closer to the possible significance of using mainly the term of «royal glory» we appeal to the narration of Krzysztof Opaliński addressed to his brother Łukasz, where the former presented the manner, he had made King Władysław the IVth understand he was displeased with him. He told the King he would come to the next Sejm «in the service to the Commonwealth only. I do not say in your's also»³². It is obvious that Jan Potocki «reversed» the attempt of Krzysztof Opaliński, meaning to tell the King he wanted first to become, and then to remain «his man/follower».

When trying to understand the sense of sending to the King such a message, we should remember that the ethic of a nobleman, according to Mathieu Lemoine «resides in a tension between the fidelity towards the sovereign and the search for the *fortune personnelle*, in both the real and the figurative manner»³³. Jan Potocki describes both himself and his brother, as the well-deserving noble man («*dobrze zastużony*»), who sacrificed himself for the King and Commonwealth, thus deserving to receive a significant reward from the monarch.

The predominant use of the monarchic terminology makes us at times witness an almost complete personalization of the «state»: Jan told the King he had fought for him and conveyed that it was from him also that he expected an matching reward («I suffer in my broken health for the glory of your Royal Highness», not mentioning that of the Commonwealth!³⁴. The discourse of the gift and the counter-gift in these letters subscribes both to the generosity of the monarch and to that of obligation: «Feeling certain that your Royal Highness, our merciful Lord, would receive with gratitude... from these knights («*od tego rycerstwa*») their great work and toil, and the services done under the threat of deteriorating health»³⁵.

³¹ Czaplinski, W., Długosz, J. *Życie codzienne magnaterii*. S. 178.

³² Czaplinski, W., Długosz, J. *Życie codzienne magnaterii*. S. 186.

³³ Lemoine, M. *La faveur et la gloire. Le maréchal de Bassompierre mémorialiste (1579–1646)*. Paris, 2012. P. 351.

³⁴ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 102. No LVIII.

³⁵ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 103. No LVIII.

These messages occurred repeatedly between the end of 1601 and May 1602. They were followed by a few episodes that we would like to insist upon. On May 4 1602, Jan Potocki «informed» the King he was returning home and asked him to appoint somebody «wealthier» and «healthier» in his place «everything I did together with my sibling [Andzej Potocki] I did on my own cost»³⁶. On June 20, from Kamienica, he wrote the King he had gone home because of health issues and added that Moldova and Wallachia, where he had left his brother, «would be lost»³⁷.

The following two letters were dated July 12 1602 and July 22 1602. The message they convey is different from the one in the previous letters. The first of the two letters informs the King that «I can no longer excuse myself from your Majesty with my health problems» adding that «I am getting ready... I have already gathered people, a thousand already, with my own money (*za swój grosz*)», and ends with «... for the glory of your Royal Highness and the welfare of the country I will spare nothing»³⁸. And on July 22 1602 he stated he was getting ready to leave for Wallachia «with my men, paid from my own money». He also mentioned his infantry and that of a few «friends», adding that «There are also a few friends who said they would join in [the expedition] but I cannot name them [now] as they are not here yet [...]. I have understood very well your Majesty's command»³⁹.

The last two letters indicate a different attitude regarding his commitment in Wallachia. If until then he was «reticent», from there on he had become more «malleable». What had happened?

The answer to this question may be unveiled by Sigismund III's only letter to Jan Potocki during all this period, which reached us grace to the efforts of Ilie Corfus. It is a long letter, dated to June 13 1602, thus after the reception of the letter where the Field Chancellor of the Crown's Army had announced the King he would leave Wallachia and return home. Towards

³⁶ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 145–147. No LXXVIII.

³⁷ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 168–169. No LXXXVIII.

³⁸ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 180–181. No XCV.

³⁹ Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I. Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 183–184. No XCVII.

the end of the letter there is a paragraph giving Jan Potocki an answer on the future of himself and that of his family: «We shall try to remember the toils and, if accomplished suitably and in good faith, and those of your brother, also»⁴⁰. Sigismund III promised not only to reward him if he pursued his attempt to support Simion Movilă, but also his brother Andzej, in whose favour, as we have seen, Jan Potocki had insistently intervened.

It is our opinion that upon the reception of those two lines, Jan Potocki had become **the «possessor» of a royal promise**, which dissolved his reluctance regarding his engagement at the Danube. No matter the «amount of money» he was going to «invest» in the future campaign, he had the royal promise that it would «have been covered» by the reward granted to him and his brother Andzej by the monarch.

It was also that promise that determined the ulterior mention of his «friends» who were to join him in Wallachia. We believe that if prior to the arrival of the King's letter, Jan Potocki was negotiating to obtain a reward from the monarch, after its reception he was negotiating its importance/dimension. By mentioning the «friends», he had in mind their future reward by the king, if they took part in the planned expedition. Also in the letter from July 22 1602, he had recommended Podstarosta Boryslawski⁴¹. Presumably, while trying to convince his «friends» to join him, Jan Potocki had mentioned he had a communication channel with the monarch. This situation continued on, as in a letter from September 13 1603, Jan Potocki intervened by the King for the Hotin Rotmistrz and for a certain Kobilniczki⁴².

Such interventions for soldiers who were actually the attribute of the Grand Hetman did not exist prior to the letter/promise from the King; as a consequence, I believe they were based on it. I consider that upon its reception, the correspondence with the king acquired the valences of a sign of belonging to a network⁴³. As Arlette Jouanna would have said, Jan

⁴⁰ *Corfus, I.* Documente privitoare la domnia lui Simion Movilă în Țara Românească, in *Codrul Cosminului*. 1939. Vol. X–XII. P. 194–196: Doc. No VIII: Sigismund al III-lea către Jan Potocki, starostele Cameniței, written at Cracow, June 13 1602.

⁴¹ *Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I.* Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 183–184. No XCVII.

⁴² *Hurmuzaki, E., Bogdan, I., Skupiewski, I.* Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. Suppl. II, Vol. II. P. 297–298. No CXLIX.

⁴³ *Schick, S.* La correspondance comme signe d'appartenance à un réseau: sur la fonction symbolique de l'échange épistolaire (Saint-Empire romain germanique – XVIII^e

Potocki's *local credit* started to rely also on his *central credit*, meaning by this his frail still, but direct relation with the King⁴⁴ and which was non-mediated by Zamoyski. We see thus the Field Chancellor of the Crown's Army, the formal subordinate and client of the Grand Hetman of the Crown, starting to play towards the king, and the «friends» and the members of his own family, at the beginning with less, later with more success, the same role that Jan Zamoyski had previously played to Sigismund III for himself. Jan Potocki had started, with the help of the King, to play the part of the patron of an affinity.

What were the immediate consequences of this correspondence? The first one was the rewarding by the king of two of the four brothers. Not of Jan and Andzej who had fought in Wallachia and had been promised a reward, but of Stefan and Jakub who had taken part in the campaign in Livonia alongside the monarch and Zamoyski.

Stefan who had proved himself during that campaign but also during the occupation of Felin, became Starosta of Felin, while Jakub became Starosta of Biała Kamień. The two were rewarded in September-October 1602, although the conquest of Felin took place in May 1602⁴⁵. The fact this happened after the beginning of the King's «dialogue» with Jan Potocki makes us presume it may also have been a consequence of it. All the same, the King did, and did not keep his word. On one hand, Jan and Andzej who had been promised a reward did not get it. On the other hand, two other brothers who had participated in a victorious campaign were rewarded and the granting of the reward had a pedagogic aspect: it was the brothers close to the monarch who got it, not those who were far away.

We may ask ourselves if the Grand Hetman, who had played the part of pointing out the deserving soldiers to the King, had had in his turn any part in this rewarding. Perhaps Zamoyski did not lose the occasion to do it, in the case of Stefan and Jakub, whom he considered «his

siècle), in: *Appartenances et pratiques des réseaux* / Éd. Claude Gauvard, É. Edition électronique du CTHS. Paris, 2017. P. 98–107, URL: <http://books.openedition.org/cths/2457> (25.04.2018).

⁴⁴ Jouanna, A. Des réseaux d'amitié aux clientèles centralisées: les provinces et la Cour (France, XVI^e–XVII^e siècle), in: *Patronages et clientélismes 1550–1750 (France, Angleterre, Espagne, Italie)* / Éd. Ch. Giry-Deloison, R. Mettam, É. Université Charles de Gaulle (Lille III), Institut français du Royaume-Uni (Londres). Lille, 1995. P. 21–38.

⁴⁵ Wolski, M. Potoccy. S. 265.

men». Still, even so, in our opinion, it was the *in statu nascendi* relations between the king and Jan Potocki that led to the rewarding of two of his brothers, and the manner the Chancellor had acted and thought did not play a part in the new relations between the King and the Potocki brothers.

Why did Jan Potocki send those messages to the king? On one hand, any nobleman who had proved himself in battle wanted to be rewarded by the monarch. Still, Jan's insistence went beyond that. His bidding was the expression of his discontent on the palpable results of the «collaboration» with the Grand Hetman. Marta Kupczewska considered that it was the Chancellor's failures to obtain their reward by granting them offices and royal lands, that made them pull away from him⁴⁶, a fact that has been noted by other researchers also⁴⁷.

A consequence of the discontent of the four brothers was, at an early stage, the mere expression of it, as illustrated by Jan Potocki's letter addressed to a Royal Stolnik — a certain Porudynski — in August 1600. The Field Chancellor of the Crown mentioned the «poor reward» he had received despite the «efforts» made until then⁴⁸. We were unable so far to identify the connections of this person. From the title he bore, he must have been a court member, but whose man was he? If he was the King's man, than it means that Jan Potocki had tried from 1600 to establish a contact with the king, thus implicitly expressing his discontent regarding the relations with the Grand Hetman. If he was Zamoyski's man, than Jan had started to show his discontent right «within» the latter's faction. A clue in this direction was provided by Jan Potocki's association with the successes of the Grand Hetman in Stanisław Bartholan's brochure — a client of the latter- published in Krakow in 1601, and which told of the 1600 fight in Wallachia⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ Kupczewska, M. Potoccy herbu Piława. S. 74–75.

⁴⁷ Sokołowski, W. Schyłek działalności politycznej Jana Zamoyskiego, in: *Kultura — polityka — dyplomacja. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Jaremic Maciszewskiemu w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę jego urodzin*. Warszawa, 1990. S. 393; Sokołowski, W. Politycy schyłku złotego wieku: Małopolscy przywódcy szlachty i parlamentarzyści w latach 1574–1605, Warszawa, 1997. S. 140–141.

⁴⁸ Corfus, I. Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone. Secolul al XVI-lea. București, 1979. P. 411–412. No 220: *Ioan Potocki către Ioan Porudynski*, August 4 1600.

⁴⁹ Source published by *Rezachevici, C.* Luptele lui Jan Potocki cu Mihai Viteazul după

Hieronim Otwinowski, one of the secretaries of the great hetman, dedicated him a poem, also published in 1601⁵⁰. Such a publishing activity may have been inspired by the Grand Hetman himself, in order to inspire the King to reward Jan and not lose a follower.

Although Jan Potocki (and his brothers) had established a relation with the king, they had never totally abandoned Jan Zamoyski. The 1604 statement of Papal Nuncio Rangoni indicates it. Still, from the documentation used by Sokołowski and from the above-mentioned observations, we may suggest the hypothesis that this relation weakened. Thus, in 1604, the Grand Hetman made two «agreements-understandings» with Jan and Jakub. At the end of the same year he mediated an understanding between them and their old adversary Hieronim Jazłowiecki⁵¹. The brothers were obviously still connected to the Chancellor, as observed by Papal Nuncio Rangoni. But, all the same, they were tied to the King's word and to the perspective of collaboration with him. Their fidelity was multiple, not unique. But then why did Rangoni not notice their links with Sigismund? Because their relations to the monarch subscribed to what Jean Boutier coined as the «virtual court» of the prince's servants: a court that consisted of those writing to the prince, was 'organized» function of the answers they received from him and did not have a visible existence. It did not overlap the Court proper but the proofs of fidelity given by the corresponding members strengthened the position of the prince⁵².

One more clue of the existence of a personal connection with the king was the attitude the four brothers had at the beginning of the Sandomir *rokosz*, by choosing the side of the king from the very beginning: they went to the place where they knew they would have been accepted.

Trying to explain the political evolution of the four brothers, we frequently forget that Sigismund III was, for a relatively short time period,

broșura necunoscută a căpitanului Stanislav Bartholan din 1601, in: *Polska i Rumunia — od historycznego sąsiedztwa do europejskiego partnerstwa. Polonia și România — de la vecinătatea istorică la parteneriatul European* /Ed. St. Iachimovschi, E. Wieruszewska-Calistru, Z. Polaków W Rumunii. Suceava, 2009. S. 61–69: «*Valachicae Victoriae Ioannis Potocii Coronis. Per Stanislaum Bartholanum scripta*».

⁵⁰ Wagner, M. Hieronim Otwinowski i jego poemat patriotyczny z 1600 roku, in: *Ż dziejów wojskowości polskiej. Księga jubileuszowa Profesora Kazimierza Pindla w 70. rocznicę urodzin*. Warszawa, 2008. S. 53–62.

⁵¹ Sokołowski, W. Schyłek działalności, S. 397–398.

⁵² Boutier, J. Adresser ses vœux au grand-duc, P. 262–263.

leading a composite monarchy. We are not talking only about the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth but also of the Swedish Kingdom, and Moscow, which he had wanted to reign on also. Consequently, the way he did or did not rule over them, and the way some and the others perceived the multiple reigns of the king, reflected upon the way the subjects of one, and the citizens of the other, placed themselves in regard to the king. This matter falls well within the problematic of the functioning and the crises of composite monarchies.

Antoni Mączak considered that the development of the patronage networks of the magnates, at the expense of the Royal patronage during the period we are interested in, was triggered by the change in the strategy of the nobility involved in politics, either as actors or followers, we would say. Following the Henrician Articles⁵³ and the Pacta Conventa⁵⁴, they had stopped to see the king as the bastion of stability and would have looked for it in the magnates⁵⁵. From there arose an increase in the «affinities» of the magnates and a decrease of those of the kings, somewhat visible also in the figures mentioned at the beginning (1,500 and 300 respectively).

We try to bring some more data on the evolution of this process during the last part of Jan Zamoyski's life, Grand Hetman and Chancellor of the Crown. Thus, when considering the load the Polish elected monarch had «accumulated» following the «escape» to France of Henry of Valois, an escape that turned some of the future monarchs (for some, if not for very many Polish nobles) into potential fugitives — we understand why the career built on the bases of pro-royal strategy — be it individual or that of a family/clan — was no longer an *à la longue* option for the Polish noblemen. Sigismund III, who was to inherit and eventually did inherit the Swedish throne (1592), had then become for them a potential fugitive over the border, and the local magnates seemed and became in this contexts the pillars on which the provincial noble could have relied for his progress on the social, wealth and offices scale, which most of the times were intertwined.

⁵³ *Augustyniak, U.* Historia Polski 1572–1795. Warszawa, 2008. S. 70–71. The act contained the institutional principles of the Commonwealth and according to some researchers had a semi-constitutional character.

⁵⁴ *Augustyniak, U.* Historia Polski. S. 71–72. They constituted a «private law» agreement between the nobility and the newly elected king.

⁵⁵ *Mączak, A.* Klientela. Nieformalne systemy władzy w Polsce i Europie XVI–XVII w. Warszawa, 1996. S. 143.

Zamoyski had played this card from the very first moment he had met Sigismund III, whom he called after a first meeting, in front of his entourage, «a quiet monster»⁵⁶. The Papal Nuncio mentioned that the Grand Chancellor and Hetman behaved towards the King as if the latter had tried to make him leave⁵⁷, which Sigismund had indeed tried to do. It is understandable thus that the message emerging from Zamoyski found an audience inclined to believe him; moreover so, the actions of the king were themselves leaving this impression. How then to build an individual career, and, more difficult, the career of a family/clan, relying on a monarch who at one point might leave as Henry of Valois did?

In 1599 Sigismund was dethroned in Sweden by his uncle, Carl of Sudermania. Paradoxically, and in our opinion also arguably, the loss of the throne of Sweden — a place he could have left without «saying goodbye» — strengthened the position of this remarkable monarch within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

He had become, to anyone who wished it, a more viable and stable partner: either he had no other place to go to, or in order to recover his throne, he would have had to negotiate with the Polish and Lithuanian noblemen willing to negotiate, by granting them his support to their careers and wealth. This was doubled by another factor. On one hand, the king was relatively young, on the other hand the Chancellor was old and the state of his health could have risen a few doubts⁵⁸. Thus, the partnership

⁵⁶ Wisner, H. Zygmunt III Waza. Wrocław, 1991. S. 30: «*Et quid tandem daemonium nobis mutum ex Suaeciae addiixititis?*» — words that according to the author got repeated and had a deep echo.

⁵⁷ *Dzięgielewski, J.* Stan szlachecki w życiu publicznym Rzeczypospolitej w pierwszym stuleciu po unii lubelskiej, in: *Tradycje polityczne dawnej Polski* / Pod. red. Anny Sucheni-Grabowskiej i Alicji Dybkowskiej, Editions Spotkania. Warszawa, 1993. S. 86: Jan Zamoyski had started to discredit Sigismund III when he observed that «he did not want to be the Prince of a single party and intended with any price to free himself from the protection of the chancellor»; Wisner, H. Rzeczpospolita Wazów. Czasy Zygmunta III i Władysława IV. Warszawa, 2002. S. 218–219. It is worth noting that Zamoyski had conflicts with two people he had put on the throne himself: Sigismund III — and Ieremia Movilă, which make us look at him for the «fault», whereas he had created no trouble to Stefan Bathory, who had appointed him Grand Chancellor and Hetman.

⁵⁸ *Corfus, I.* Mihai Viteazul și Polonii, București, 1937–1938. P. 344. No CIII: *Stanisław Żółkiewski către Mikołaj Żebrzydowski*, October 21 1600. I have mentioned this last aspect to my colleague Ovidiu Cristea, as well as to Professor Andrei Pippidi,

with the king became more desirable in the context of the uncertainty that could rise regarding the future of the Grand Chancellor and Hetman of the Crown. For one moment, in the view of some nobles, the *ratio* certainty-uncertainty between the monarch and the chancellor would have thus been overturned.

It is possible that Jan Potocki and his brothers were aware of this thing. Jan — although with personal ambitions — wanted, as suggested by his mentioning of Andzej Potocki in his letters - the «rise» of his brothers also. He was not only after one gesture of grace, but of a series of such gestures, which could not have happened at one single moment, but in time, with the vacation of certain offices and dignities, etc. A young king, who had no place to escape to after 1599, was a more viable partner than the Grand Chancellor and Hetman of the Crown, especially as the two of them were in conflict.

The path taken by Stefan Potocki is also significant for this evolution of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy. At the beginning of Sigismund's reign, he became a courtier. Shortly after, he offered his services to Zamoyski and left the court to be close to Jan Potocki, who was bound to the Chancellor⁵⁹. If we are to believe Piasecki who wrote decades later, he rebelled against the latter in Livonia. The possibility of seeing both the King and the Chancellor/Hetman, one next to the other, on the rough Livonia front, as well as the possible gestures of the King towards Stefan and Jakub on the context of Jan's letters — could have played also a part in the political re-orientation of the four brothers.

The appearance of the relationships with the King among many members of the inherited entourage — thus the most stable — of the Grand Hetman and Chancellor of the Crown seems to be a symptom of the «crisis» of at least some parts of the entourage. Not in the least, the appearance of these multiple fidelities allows for a comparison with the situation in Western Europe, where the «flip» of the affinities' members from the important aristocrats to the monarchs was, in some cases, visible and open, with the relationship with the prince prevailing⁶⁰.

during the conference dedicated to Ieremia Movilă at Sucevița in 2006.

⁵⁹ *Wolski, M.* Potoccy, S. 261–262.

⁶⁰ *Boltanski, A.* Les Ducs de Nevers, P. 275–325.

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The article tries to shed a new light on the problem of surviving of the affinity of the Great Chancellor and Hatman of the Crown Jan Zamoyski during the last part of his life, which also corresponds to the conflict between him and the Polish-Lithuanian monarch Sigismund III. We have chosen as a case study the Potocki family, which in Polish historiography occupies a central place in this debate. The analysis of the correspondence between Jan Potocki - the eldest of the four brothers — and King Sigismund III during 1601–1602 highlights a communicative substrate that underline Jan Potocki's desire to establish a personal connection/bond with the Polish monarch. The result of this semi-clandestine correspondence is the reward of two of the four brothers by the king, and the appearance of a double fidelity, the one owed to the Polish-Lithuanian monarch doubling the one due to Zamoyski. The factors that facilitated the orientation of the four brothers to the monarch were, their dissatisfaction with the prizes they had obtained so far due to Zamoyski, his advanced age and the king's youth, as well as the loss of the Swedish throne by Sigismund in 1599, which thus, in the eyes of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility, made him a more secure partner with whom they could negotiate their careers, wealth and prestige. Taking this into consideration, their intention to initiate a liaison with Sigismund IIIrd, is significant for the debate of Polish historiography on the survival or the crisis of Zamoyski's entourage.

Key words: Affinity, Sigismund III, Jan Potocki, Jan Zamoyski, *cour virtuelle*, multiple fidelities

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В статье делается попытка пролить свет на проблему сохранения родственной связи канцлера и коронно гетмана Яна Замойского в последний период его жизни, что также связано с конфликтом между ним и Сигизмундом III, польско-литовским королем. Мы останавливаемся на истории семьи Потоцких, которая в польской историографии занимает центральное место в изучении этого вопроса. Анализ переписки между Яном Потоцким, старшим из четырех братьев, и королем Сигизмундом в 1601–1602 гг. говорит о существовании некоей договоренности, из которой ясно желание Яна Потоцкого установить личные отношения или заключить союз с польским королем. Результатом этой не совсем открытой переписки: это награждение королем двух из четырех братьев и сложение отношений двойного подданства: преданность польско-литовскому королю накладывалась на лояльность Замойскому. Среди фактор, обусловивших обращение братьев к королю, можно назвать их неудовлетворенность оплатой, полученной от Замойского, его преклонный возраст и юность короля, также как и потерю Сигизмундом в 1599 г. шведского трона, что в глазах польско-литовской знати превращало его в более надежного партнера, с которым знать могла вести переговоры относительно карьеры, достояния и престижа. При решении вопроса о выживании или кризисе окружения Замойского, решаемого в польской историографии, необходимо учитывать намерение братьев заключить с Сигизмундом III союз.

Ключевые слова: родство, Сигизмунд III, Ян Потоцкий, Ян Замойский, *cour virtuelle*, двойное подданство

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