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The Habsburg Monarchy from a Roman Perspective: Potential Insights of the “Nuncial Reports from Germany” for International Historical Research

Abstract: *From the very beginning of the edition “Nuncial reports from Germany” in the late nineteenth century, the publication of sources was extended beyond the century of Reformation to the time of the Thirty Years’ War. The fourth series, dedicated to the first half of the seventeenth century, was finished in 2016. There are six substantial volumes which document the core phase (around 1630) of the Thirty Years’ War with its decisive change to the disadvantage of the emperor, the Habsburgs and the Catholic faction of the Holy Roman Empire up to the intensive efforts to make peace, the Peace of Prague in 1635 and the concurrent European extension of the Thirty Years’ War with Sweden’s and France’s entry into the war in 1630/1635. With these volumes, a cohesive documentation of sources of European rank was achieved. 2018 marked the 400th anniversary of the outbreak of the war, thus it is worth looking at this edition as a prime collection of sources of European history, particularly of the Papal–Habsburg relations at the height of the Thirty Years’ War.*

Keywords: *Thirty Years’ War – Peace of Westphalia – papal diplomacy – Imperial court – Habsburg–Roman relations*

In December 1891, Bonn University professor and director of the Preußisches Staatsarchiv, Heinrich von Sybel, wrote down his preface for the first volume of the editorial undertaking “Nuncial reports from Germany”, which had been promoted by the Preußische Historische Station (later to become the Deutsches Historisches Institut) since its foundation in 1888¹. Even if the first series of the new edition, of which this was the first volume, edited the dispatches of papal nuncios of the time of the Reformation, Sybel was already able to look ahead to the editorial inclusion of the pontificates of Paul V (1605–1621) and Urban VIII (1623–1644)². It seems logical to look at the fourth series in

1 Heinrich VON SYBEL, *Vorwort*, in: Walter Friedensburg (ed.), *Nuntiaturen des Vergerio 1533–1536*, [= NBD I, vol. 1], Gotha 1892 (Reprint Frankfurt a. M. 1968), pp. I–VI, dated Berlin, December 1891.

2 To be precise, the examinations of Paul V are called ‘studies’, whereas, regarding the pontificate of Urban VIII, there is ‘research’ by two members of the institute. *Ibidem*, p. VI.

this article for two reasons: Firstly, the year 2018 marks the 400th anniversary of the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), and its caesura around 1630 is featured with highly interesting sources in this collection. Furthermore we celebrate the 370th anniversary of the Peace Treaties of Münster and Osnabrück, twenty years after the great jubilee of peace in 1998 with its many exhibitions and publications.³ Secondly, the series in question has been finished recently (in 2016) and we can therefore take a concise look at the edited corpus of sources⁴.

The fourth series of the edition came to a virtual standstill until 2004 after two volumes on the Barbarini pontificate (1628–1629) had been published towards the end of the nineteenth century and one more – on the early seventeenth century (1603–1606) – on the eve of the First World War.⁵ The reasons for this need not concern us here. Seen against the edition's explicit intentions to cover the pontificates of Paul V and Urban VIII, the currently accomplished results seem modest on the one hand: in a single volume, the seventeenth century before the Thirty Years' War is only fragmentarily covered and the nunciature at the court of the emperor of the time was given over to the Czechoslovak (now Czech) Historical Institute in Rome. On the other hand, for the central period of the Thirty Years' War (around 1630), a cohesive and important documentation of European significance was produced in six extensive volumes. These volumes encompass the decisive turn of the war against the emperor, the Habsburg and Catholic factions in the Empire up to the intensified peace efforts, the signing of the Peace of Prague in 1635 and the concurrent European extension of the Thirty Years' War with the entry into the war of Sweden in 1630 and France in 1635. In this respect, the edition offers more than the instigators of the late nineteenth century had intended (with their views constricted by the nation-state).⁶

3 Cf. besides the following titles the extensive exhibition catalogue by Klaus BUSSMANN – Heinz SCHILLING (edd.), *1648–Krieg und Frieden in Europa. Münster/Osnabrück 24. 10. 1998–17. 1. 1999. Katalog der 26. Europarats-Ausstellung*, 3 Vols., München 1998.

4 The third series of “Nuncial reports from Germany” (until 1585) is currently under way, edited by Alexander Koller.

5 Hans KIEWNING (ed.), *Nuntiatur des Pallotto, 1628–1630*, Part 1–2: 1628–1629, [= NBD IV, vol. 1–2], Berlin 1895–1897 (Reprint Torino 1973); Arnold Oskar MEYER (ed.), *Die Prager Nuntiatur des Giovanni Stefano Ferreri und die Wiener Nuntiatur des Giacomo Serra (1603–1606)*, [= NBD IV, vol. 3], Berlin 1913 (Reprint Torino 1973).

6 In addition to NBD IV, Vols. 1–3 see for this period Rotraud BECKER (ed.), *Nuntiaturen des Giovanni Battista Pallotto und des Ciriaco Rocci (1630–1631)*, [= NBD IV, vol. 4], Tübingen 2009; Eadem (ed.), *Nuntiatur des Ciriaco Rocci. Außerordentliche Nuntiatur des Girolamo Grimaldi (1631–1633)*, [= NBD IV, vol. 5], Berlin–Boston 2013; Eadem (ed.), *Nuntiatur des Ciriaco Rocci. Außerordentliche Nuntiatur des Girolamo Grimaldi. Sendung des P. Alessandro D'Ales (1633–1634)*, [= NBD IV, vol. 6], Berlin–Boston 2016; Eadem (ed.), *Nuntiaturen des Malatesta Baglioni, des Ciriaco Rocci und des Mario Filonardi. Sendung des P. Alessandro D'Ales (1634–1635)*, [= NBD IV, vol. 7], Tübingen 2004.

Following the Second World War, earlier research and editorial projects were reappraised. Consequently, various considerations from the 1960s and 1970s exist about the significance of the nuncial reports and the potential of the research of nunciatures, which have been refined and adapted to new perspectives in research in the 1990s and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Some of the contributors in German research I would like to mention (in alphabetical order) are Helmut Goetz,⁷ Georg Lutz,⁸ Heinrich Lutz,⁹ Gerhard Müller¹⁰ and Wolfgang Reinhard.¹¹ They studied a variety of facets of the nuncial reports and their research; from church history, regional history and European politics to the considerable relevance of nuncial documents as complimentary sources for different fields of research, from infrastructures to linguistics.¹² The fundamental question of the expedience of publishing further editions or the preference of evaluative research were discussed, as well as problems of the extent and methods of these editions. Since the beginning of the editorial work on the main instructions, i.e. the main directives given to the papal ambassadors at the beginning of their missions,¹³ this has been accompanied by the question to which extend this species of text was to be preferred to nuncial reports in the narrower sense. At the same time Peter Schmidt offered a very instructive survey of the status of nuncial research in 1998.¹⁴

This article is not able to achieve such an extensive overview. Rather, it attempts to consider the key aspects, analytical possibilities and prospective findings of the volumes

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- 7 Helmut GOETZ, *Die Nuntiaturberichte des 16. Jahrhunderts als Komplementärquelle zur Geschichtsschreibung*, QFIAB 53, 1973, pp. 214–226.
 - 8 Georg LUTZ, *Glaubwürdigkeit und Gehalt von Nuntiaturberichten*, QFIAB 53, 1973, pp. 227–275; Idem, *Die Nuntiaturberichte und ihre Edition*, in: Reinhard Elze – Arnold Esch (edd.), *Das deutsche Historische Institut in Rom 1888–1988*, Tübingen 1990 (= Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 70), pp. 87–121.
 - 9 H. LUTZ, *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland. Vergangenheit und Zukunft einer „klassischen“ Editionsreihe*, QFIAB 45, 1965, pp. 274–324; Idem, *Die Bedeutung der Nuntiaturberichte für die europäische Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsschreibung*, QFIAB 53, 1973, pp. 152–167; Idem, *Zum Abschluß der Editionsreihe “Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland. Erste Abteilung”*, in: Dieter Albrecht (ed.), *Politik und Konfession. Festschrift für Konrad Repgen zum 60. Geburtstag*, Berlin 1983, pp. 49–60.
 - 10 Gerhard MÜLLER, *Die Bedeutung der Nuntiaturberichte für die Kirchengeschichte*, QFIAB 53, 1973, pp. 168–179.
 - 11 Wolfgang REINHARD, *Nuntiaturberichte für die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft? Wert und Verwertung eines Editionsunternehmens*, in: Alexander Koller (ed.), *Kurie und Politik. Stand und Perspektiven der Nuntiaturberichtsforschung*, Tübingen 1998 (= Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 87), pp. 208–225.
 - 12 H. GOETZ, *Die Nuntiaturberichte des 16. Jahrhunderts*.
 - 13 To date, the main instructions for the period 1592–1623 have been edited. The pontificate of Urban VIII until 1644 is currently being edited by Silvano Giordano, OCD.
 - 14 Peter SCHMIDT, *Bibliographie zur päpstlichen Politik und Diplomatie (1500–1800)*, II: *Sekundärliteratur*, in: A. Koller, *Kurie und Politik*, pp. 436–493. Alexander KOLLER, *Bibliographie zur päpstlichen Politik und Diplomatie (1500–1800)*, I. *Aktenpublikationen*, in: Idem, *Kurie und Politik*, pp. 285–300.

of the nuncial reports for the years 1630–1635. This comes after a short general survey of nuncial reports and their editions in German historical science was done, in connection with a cursory survey of the central themes of the volumes dedicated to the early 1630s. Special consideration will be given to the Roman-Habsburg relations and the last volume, published in 2016, for historical research on several selected subjects. Against this background, my article will finally make clear the question of the expedience of such editorial efforts, which has already been heavily debated since the 1990s.¹⁵

A look at the body of sources: “Nuncial reports” and their editions as a source of the history of the Roman-Habsburg relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Nuncial reports belong to the “type of sources of periodic ambassadorial reports, which from constant observation [promise to] give insight into the thoughts and action of a host court”, as Rudolf Schieffer said from a medieval perspective in 2008.¹⁶ The term “nuncial reports” represents, according to Wolfgang Reinhard (1998), an artificial term which is not substantiated by sources. In the nineteenth century, it was initially described as “reports of papal diplomats about the Reformation”; by extension, however, it came to be referred to as “the complete written exchange between ordinary nuncios as well as special envoys (among others, legates) and the Secretariat of State and other Roman authorities (especially congregations), including the initial main directives and jurisdictional powers as well as the final report in some cases”.¹⁷ Therefore, the term “nuncial report” has essentially undergone two extensions: a chronological (beyond the sixteenth century) and a factual extension. Concerning the latter, apart from the nuncios as “senders” in their reports, the documents produced by the Curia and directed at the nuncio as “recipient” are subsumed under the term “nuncial reports”.

15 W. REINHARD, *Nuntiaturreich für die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft?* As to the principle debate about the expedience of editions at the end of the 1990s, cf. Lothar GALL – Rudolf SCHIEFFER (edd.), *Quelleneditionen und kein Ende? Symposium der Monumenta Germaniae Historica und der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. München, 22./23. Mai 1998*, München 1999 (= Historische Zeitschrift, Beiheft, N. F. 28).

16 Rudolf SCHIEFFER, *Die päpstliche Kurie als internationaler Treffpunkt des Mittelalters*, in: Claudia Zey – Claudia Märkl (edd.), *Aus der Frühzeit europäischer Diplomatie. Zum geistlichen und weltlichen Gesandtschaftswesen vom 12. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*, Zürich 2008, pp. 23–39, here 38.

17 Wolfgang REINHARD, *Nuntiaturreich*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 7, Freiburg 1998³, col. 948 f., quote 948.

The century of the Reformation was the period which the edition of “Nuncial reports from Germany” first addressed.¹⁸ The initial meaning of the term is significant: The emphasis lay clearly on the reports by the nuncios, not the Roman directives and the central view on German affairs. The editors (and their sponsors, i.e. initially the Prussian state) were first interested to learn from the nuncial reports about Germany or the Empire and particularly about the history of the Reformation. They were not yet seen for what they are to a much greater extent – a significant source about Rome itself.

A change of perspective, that began in the 1990s, has opened this dimension and highlighted the historical-anthropological significance of the nuncial reports.¹⁹ Due to the status of source editions in early modern research, it is necessary to emphasize that essentially only the nuncial reports offer a first point of contact for the structural historical research of early modern diplomacy and especially the spheres of life and experience of ‘diplomats’ *avant la lettre*.

A particularly full history of written records distinguishes the “German” nunciature, as the papal representation at the emperor’s court called itself in Roman sources of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (even when the emperor resided in Prague and thus “Germany” meant the Holy Roman Empire including Bohemia).²⁰ The same holds true for further nunciatures, which had existed since the sixteenth century in greater number

18 An assessment of the ‘German’ nuncial reports from the sixteenth (and early seventeenth) century regarding Roman relations to the Empire is offered by Guido BRAUN, *Imagines imperii. Die Wahrnehmung des Reiches und der Deutschen durch die römische Kurie im Reformationsjahrhundert (1523–1585)*, Münster 2014 (= Schriftenreihe der Vereinigung zur Erforschung der Neueren Geschichte e. V. 37); also for the period from mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries: Alexander KOLLER, *Imperator und Pontifex. Forschungen zum Verhältnis von Kaiserhof und römischer Kurie im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung (1555–1648)*, Münster 2012 (= Geschichte in der Epoche Karls V. 13). For issues centring on Rome and the Reformation cf. Volker REINHARDT, *Luther der Ketzer. Rom und die Reformation*, München 2017³.

19 For their significance to historical anthropology cf. Peter BURSCHEL, *Das Eigene und das Fremde. Zur anthropologischen Entzifferung diplomatischer Texte*, in: A. Koller (ed.), *Kurie und Politik*, pp. 260–271; Volker REINHARDT, *Nuntien und Nationalcharakter. Prolegomena zu einer Geschichte nationaler Wahrnehmungstereotype am Beispiel der Schweiz*, in: A. Koller (ed.), *Kurie und Politik*, pp. 285–300; Wolfgang REINHARDT, *Historische Anthropologie frühneuzeitlicher Diplomatie. Ein Versuch über Nuntiaturberichte 1592–1622*, in: Michael Rohrschneider – Arno Strohmeier (edd.), *Wahrnehmungen des Fremden. Differenzenerfahrungen von Diplomaten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Münster 2007 (= Schriftenreihe der Vereinigung zur Erforschung der Neueren Geschichte e. V. 31), pp. 53–72.

20 Very important sources, particularly for the history of Habsburg diplomacy at the end of the sixteenth century and the period of the crisis in the Habsburg dynasty (Rudolf II vs. Matthias): the numerous volumes of the edition of Tomáš Černušák, Milena Linhartová and Alena Pazderová. Milena LINHARTOVÁ (ed.), *Epistulae et acta Antonii Caetani 1607–1611*, pars I, Pragae 1932; Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK (ed.), *Epistulae et acta Antonii Caetani 1607–1611*, partes IV–V, Pragae 2013–2017; Alena PAZDEROVÁ (ed.), *Epistulae et acta nuntiorum apostolicorum apud imperatorem 1592–1628. Epistulae et acta Caesaris Speciani 1592–1598*, I–III., Praha 2016.

only in the Empire. No edition of the nuncial reports of a European country has advanced further than the edition concerning the nunciature at the emperor's court published by German speaking historical scientists in cooperation with Austrian and Czech researchers.

The extent of edited "Nuncial reports from Germany" from the foundation of the "German nunciature" by Clement VII (1523–1534) to Gregory XIII (1572–1585) encompasses with its 37 volumes in series I to III until 2012 a total of 22,109 pages, 18,067 of these pages are edited sources and reflect more than a half-century of activities and experience of papal representations in Germany.²¹ These include the nunciature of South Germany²² and the "Fight for Cologne".²³ Additionally, the nunciatures of Cologne proper²⁴ and of Graz²⁵ have been edited separately.

Consequently, conditions are particularly favourable in the case of Germany and the court of the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, with the best editorial status for the sixteenth century, fewer printed volumes for the seventeenth century and hardly any existing editions for the eighteenth century.²⁶

The fourth series of nuncial reports from Germany is, besides one volume about the Prague nunciature of Giovanni Stefano Ferreri and the Vienna nunciature of Giacomo Sera from the first decade of the seventeenth century, 1603–1606 (edited on the eve of the First World War, in 1913), comprised of six volumes about the time of the decisive

21 Walter FRIEDENSBURG (ed.), *Nuntiaturen des Vergerio 1533–1536*, [= NBD I, vol. 1]; Helmut GOETZ (ed.), *Nuntiatur Delfinos. Legation Morones. Sendung Lippomanos (1554–1556)*, [= NBD I, vol. 17], Tübingen 1970; Gerhard MÜLLER (ed.), *Ergänzungsband 1: 1530–1531. Legation Lorenzo Campeggios 1530–1531 und Nuntiatur Girolamo Aleandros 1531*, Tübingen 1963; Idem (ed.), *Ergänzungsband 2: 1532. Legation Lorenzo Campeggios 1532 und Nuntiatur Girolamo Aleandros 1532*, Tübingen 1969; Samuel STEINHERZ (ed.), *Die Nuntien Hosius und Delfino 1560–1561*, [= NBD II, vol. 1], Wien 1897; Johann RAINER (ed.), *Nuntius G. Delfino und Kardinallegat G. F. Commendone 1571–1572*, [= NBD II, vol. 8], Graz – Köln 1967; Joseph HANSEN (ed.), *Der Kampf um Köln 1576–1584*, [= NBD III, vol. 1], Berlin 1892; Alexander KOLLER (ed.), *Nuntiaturen des Orazio Malaspina und des Ottavio Santacroce. Interim des Cesare dell'Arena (1578–1581)*, [= NBD III, vol. 10], Berlin – Boston 2012.

22 Karl SCHELLHASS (ed.), *Die süddeutsche Nuntiatur des Grafen Bartholomäus von Portia (Erstes Jahr 1573/74)*, [= NBD III, vol. 3], Berlin 1896 (Reprint Torino 1972); Idem (ed.), *Die süddeutsche Nuntiatur des Grafen Bartholomäus von Portia (Zweites Jahr 1574/75)*, [= NBD III, vol. 4], Berlin 1903 (Reprint Torino 1972); Idem (ed.), *Die süddeutsche Nuntiatur des Grafen Bartholomäus von Portia (Schlussjahre 1575–1576)*, [= NBD III, vol. 5], Berlin 1909 (Reprint Torino 1972).

23 NBD III, Vol. 1.

24 Stephan EHSES – Aloys MEISTER (edd.), *Bonomi in Köln. Santonio in der Schweiz. Die Straßburger Wirren*, [= NBD, NBK, vol. 1], München – Paderborn – Wien 1969 (Reprint Vol. IV, Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte, Paderborn 1895); Maria Teresa BÖRNER (ed., unter Benutzung der Vorarbeiten von Joseph Wijnhoven), *Nuntius Fabio Chigi (1639 Juni–1644 März)*, [= NBD, NBK, vol. 9], Paderborn et al. 2009.

25 Johann RAINER (ed.), *Nuntiatur des Germanico Malaspina. Sendung des Antonio Possevino 1580–1582*, [= NBD, NBG, vol. 1], Wien 1973; Elisabeth ZINGERLE (ed.), *Nuntiatur des Girolamo Portia 1599–1602*, [= NBD, NBG, vol. 5], Wien 2012.

26 In this respect the findings resulting from A. KOLLER, *Bibliographie*, until 1998 are still valid.

turn of the Thirty Years’ War, which was the result of the active involvement of Sweden 1630 and France 1635. The volumes in question provide the correspondence of Giovanni Battista Pallotto, the nuncio at the emperor’s court in 1628/1629 following Carlo Caraffa. Two volumes with reports of those first years 1628 and 1629 had already been published towards the end of the nineteenth century (1895–1897) by Hans Kiewning, while Rotraud Becker commendably undertook publishing a further four volumes between 2004 and 2016, which completed the Pallotto nunciature and furthermore edited the documents of the ordinary and special nunciatures, as well as the missives of Ciriaco Rocci, Girolamo Grimaldi, Alessandro d’Ales, Malatesta Baglioni and Mario Filonardi (from 1630 to 1635) in an exemplary manner.²⁷

The six volumes representing the years 1628 to 1635 of this now completed series are comprised of almost 4,500 pages (3,997 and CDLVII pages). The edited sources constitute fundamental documents of European politics at the height of the Thirty Years’ War. In this respect, they not only offer insights into the relations between the Curia and the Empire but open a panorama of Central European political problems. The attempts at solving those problems are highly relevant to our present, when experts and politicians look to the conflicts and solutions of the seventeenth century in their considerations of ways for the peaceful resolution of ongoing conflicts, namely in the Middle East.²⁸

Currently, there is a very serious discussion of the question whether the Middle East is living through its Thirty Years’ War with its mix of secular and religious, national and international conflicts, the confrontation of official and non-official or non-sovereign agents or groups; there is a debate whether twenty-first century Aleppo represents seventeenth century Magdeburg, as stated in the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” (August 18th, 2016).²⁹ Furthermore, it is asked which seventeenth century methods of conflict resolution may be relevant today. These questions are being sincerely discussed from a scientific point of view.³⁰

²⁷ NBD IV, Vols. 4–7.

²⁸ Cf. speech of German Federal President and former Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter STEINMEIER, *Der Westfälische Frieden als Denkmodell für den Mittleren Osten*, 12.07.2016, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2016/160712-Westfaelischer_Frieden.html. Cf. Idem, *Rede zur Eröffnung des 51. Deutschen Historikertages*, 20.09.2016: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2016/160920-BM-Historikertag.html>; in addition, press reports <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/steinmeiers-rede-im-mittelpunkt-frieden-1.3170936> and <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/buergerkrieg-in-syrien-braucht-der-nahe-osten-einen-westfaelischen-frieden-1.3170977> (all checked 15th November, 2017).

²⁹ Rainer HERMANN, *Die Suche nach einem Frieden. Was wir vom Westfälischen Frieden für die arabische Welt heute lernen können*, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, No. 192 (18. 8. 2016), p. 8.

³⁰ Cf. Research Project of the University of Cambridge “A Westphalia for the Middle East?”, <https://www.coggs.polis.cam.ac.uk/laboratories-for-world-construction/westphalia-middle-east> (checked 12th January, 2018).

Besides problems of state and church history, which the papal legates reported to Rome according to their function and mandate, there is a lot to be learned from these edited sources on several aspects: the function of the Papal legation system, the protagonists in foreign relations, their profiles, networking, perception, European interrelations as well as early modern spheres of life and experience.³¹

The Fourth Series of the “Nuncial Reports from Germany”: What do the sources say to the Habsburg monarchy and to Europe from a Roman perspective? Themes of the latest volumes of the edition

Which themes do the recently published volumes 4 to 7 of the fourth series of “Nuncial Reports from Germany” address? The fourth volume, published in 2009 and edited by Rotraud Becker, offers the correspondence between the nunciature at the emperor’s court and the Roman Curia during the period of change in the Thirty Years’ War, which started in 1630. These were the nunciatures of Giovanni Battista Pallotto and Ciriaco Rocci, in the period between the beginning of January 1630 and the end of August 1631. The time of these reports coincides with Mantuan War of Succession (1628–1631) about the Duchies of Mantua and Monferrat along with the subsequent peace negotiations, as well as the end of the first phase of Thirty Years’ War, which was successful for the Imperial-Catholic side. The turn of the war was chimed in with the Swedish landing in Pomerania and the dismissal of the imperial *generalissimo* Wallenstein at the Regensburg Diet of Electors in 1630. This was a highly dramatic period in European international and confessional politics. It coincided with the European expansion of the Thirty Years’ War as well as grave existential, social, economic and cultural consequences for large parts of the population in the Empire and beyond.³²

The fifth volume of the “Nuncial Reports from Germany”, which was published in 2013 and also edited by Rotraud Becker, incorporates the correspondence between the papal diplomats in Vienna and the Roman Curia between September 1631 and May 1633. This

31 Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the Cardinal Nepots’ correspondence (an important complex of sources for the research of micro-political connections) is not part of the edited nuncial reports; for the potentials of micro-political research cf. Wolfgang REINHARD, *Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621). Mikropolitische Papstgeschichte*, Stuttgart 2009 (= Pápste und Papsttum 37); Idem, *Die Nase der Kleopatra. Geschichte im Lichte mikropolitischer Forschung. Ein Versuch*, *Historische Zeitschrift* 293, 2011, pp. 631–666.

32 Christoph KAMPMANN, *Europa und das Reich im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Geschichte eines europäischen Konflikts*, Stuttgart 2013²; Guido BRAUN, *The Papacy*, in: Olaf Asbach – Peter Schröder (edd.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Thirty Years’ War*, Farnham – Burlington 2014, pp. 101–113; Claire GANTET, *Guerre de Trente ans et paix de Westphalie: un bilan historiographique*, XVII^e siècle 277, 2017, No. 4, pp. 645–666.

turbulent period of the Thirty Years’ War was distinguished by the seemingly inexorable, triumphant progress of the Swedes, which reached into South Germany and undermined the successes of the previous imperial politics of re-catholicisation. Furthermore, it led to the subsequent re-appointment of Wallenstein and finally the death of the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus II in the Battle of Lützen (1632).

The relations between the emperor and the pope were severely strained during this time. Although the Swedish army, heavily supported by French subsidies, advanced into Franconian bishoprics, into Bavaria, occupied large parts of Catholic Germany, eventually crossed the Rhine into Alsace, the Francophile Pope Urban VIII did not support the Catholic faction financially to any appreciable extent due to his own political interests. The financial support would have strengthened the Habsburg’s rule in Vienna and Madrid, increased their dominance over Europe (especially Italy) and would have limited the influence of the Holy See from the viewpoint of Urban VIII.

What was seen to the papal side as neutrality between the Catholic states and his own position as “Common Father” (*padre comune*) among the princes of Catholic Europe,³³ was interpreted as partisanship by the emperor and the Spanish. The Spanish *remonstrance* against Roman politics increased the tensions between the papal court and the emperor’s court in Vienna.³⁴

On the other hand, Papal diplomacy aimed at creating a union of Catholic states, which should follow French interests and enable the Most Christian King to sever ties to his Protestant allies. However, this was seen by the Habsburgs as hardly promising. The Curia responded to continuing criticism by sending special nuncios to Vienna, Madrid and Paris, but could not achieve a diplomatic solution.

These considerations turned out to be progressive in as far as a new European order of peace could not be established through direct bilateral negotiations between single powers, but would have to be negotiated at a general, multilateral congress of peace envoys. This

33 For concepts of neutrality of the period cf. Axel GOTTHARD, *Der liebe vnd werthe Fried. Kriegskonzepte und Neutralitätsvorstellungen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2014 (= Forschungen zur kirchlichen Rechtsgeschichte und zum Kirchenrecht 32). For the term “padre commune” at the time of the Thirty Years’ War, in particular for the Peace Treaty of Westphalia, cf. Guido BRAUN, *Päpstliche Friedensvermittlung am Beispiel von Piombino und Porto Longone*, QFIAB 83, 2003, pp. 141–206; see also the classical, but problematic study of Auguste LEMAN, *Urbain VIII et la rivalité de la France et de la maison d’Autriche de 1631 à 1635*, Lille – Paris 1920 (= Mémoires et travaux publiés par les professeurs des facultés catholiques de Lille 16); for the eighteenth century Johannes BURKHARDT, *Abschied vom Religionskrieg, Der Siebenjährige Krieg und die päpstliche Diplomatie*, Tübingen 1985 (= Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 61), in particular pp. 369–372.

34 For the relations between the papal and Imperial courts during the pontificate of Urban VIII cf. Irene FOSI – Alexander KOLLER (edd.), *Papato e impero nel pontificato di Urbano VIII (1623–1644)*, Città del Vaticano 2013 (= Collectanea Archivi Vaticani 89).

conviction, which is verifiable before France entered the Thirty Years' War in 1635, would lead to the cessation of general hostilities thirteen years later,³⁵ although not to universal peace, since the Spanish-French war lasted until the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659.³⁶

The sixth volume of the series, recently published by Rotraud Becker (2016), records the correspondence between the Roman Secretariat of State and papal nuncios based in Vienna. The ordinary nuncio at the court of the emperor Ciriaco Rocci and the special nuncio Girolamo Grimaldi communicated during an unsettled and in its tendencies partly contradictory period of the Thirty Years' War. The added reports of the Capuchin Alessandro d'Ales are valuable. He was equally trusted with diplomatic mandates within the framework of his secret mission. These documents prove intense efforts to negotiate a peaceful resolution between the Catholic powers.

The aim of Roman-Curial politics was the settlement of conflicts between France and the Habsburgs, which was meant to pave the way to a union of the Catholic princes, thereby rendering obsolete the Protestant ties of the Most Christian King. In its efforts, the Holy See kept close to the French ideas and conditions for negotiating a new order of peace with the Habsburgs. Pope Urban VIII's attitude towards the latter shows itself to be affected by deep mistrust throughout all the volumes discussed here.

Simultaneously to papal peace efforts, the conflicted relations of France and the Habsburgs led to a renewed expansion of military conflict into an all-European war. Imperial politics focussed on a reconciliation with the Protestant orders in the Empire, which would have given Ferdinand II considerably more scope for influence on the European stage.

The military progress within the Empire was characterized by ever-changing developments and temporarily kept open the question of territorial possession for the various denominations.³⁷ Ferdinand II observed the tentative warfare of the recalled

35 Fritz DICKMANN, *Der Westfälische Frieden*, Münster 1998⁷. For Papal diplomacy at the Peace treaty of Westphalia cf. Konrad REPGEN, *Dreißigjähriger Krieg und Westfälischer Friede. Studien und Quellen*, Paderborn et al. 1998 (= Rechts- und staatswissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Görres-Gesellschaft, Neue Folge, 81, also, significantly extended, Paderborn 2015³); idem, *Die römische Kurie und der Westfälische Friede. Idee und Wirklichkeit des Papsttums im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Vol. I: *Papst, Kaiser und Reich 1521–1644*, 2 parts, Tübingen 1962–1965 (= Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 24–25).

36 Lucien BÉLY – Bertrand HAAN – Stéphane JETTOT (edd.), *La paix des Pyrénées (1659) ou le triomphe de la raison politique*, Paris 2015 (= Histoire des Temps modernes 3).

37 Ralf-Peter FUCHS, *Ein „Medium zum Frieden“. Die Normaljahrsregel und die Beendigung des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, München 2010 (= Bibliothek Altes Reich 4).

Wallenstein with growing mistrust, which resulted in his dismissal and execution.³⁸ But in the aftermath of this leadership crisis, the Imperial troops were successful.

The seventh volume (submitted by Becker in 2004) offers the correspondence between the papal nuncios in Vienna and the Roman Secretariat of State from November 1634 to the end of 1635. This period in the history of the Thirty Years' War saw the initially successful efforts of Imperial politics achieving peace with the Protestant orders, which led to the signing of the Peace of Prague with Electoral Saxony in May 1635.³⁹ Conversely, the French declaration of war with Spain in the same month led to a serious expansion of conflicts, to open war against the emperor within the Empire. Apart from neglecting Sweden in the treaty, this contributed to the failure of the Peace of Prague, although the Protestant orders had initially dissociated themselves from Sweden and accepted the treaty. The Thirty Years' War had become a fully European conflagration with France's entry into the war.

For those reasons, the Imperial court could not improve its military position permanently, despite a temporary expulsion of the Swedish forces from South Germany. As far as confessional politics were concerned, Ferdinand II had, however, laid an important foundation stone for a future accord with the Protestant orders at the Peace of Westphalia by renouncing the demands of the Edict of Restitution from 1629. In this edict, the emperor had claimed the right to settle the differences created by the various interpretations of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 in a Catholic manner, by way of authentic interpretation from the head of the Empire.⁴⁰

Thus, this volume of the nuncial reports shows, as the volumes documenting the first half of the 1630s do, the concurrence of temporary expansion of conflicts and forward-looking considerations which contribute to a later permanent resolution of conflicts. Through the course of the aggravated conflict, the outlines of innovative strategies for solutions and ideas for a new order in the aftermath of the war became clearer.

During this time, the papal nuncios were unsuccessful in their constant efforts to realise a general peace conference. Despite years of failure in this respect, the idea that a pan-European conflict could only be resolved by multilateral negotiations and the intervention

38 Christoph KAMPMANN, *Reichsrebellion und kaiserliche Acht. Politische Strafjustiz im Dreißigjährigen Krieg und das Verfahren gegen Wallenstein 1634*, Münster 1992 (= Schriftenreihe der Vereinigung zur Erforschung der Neueren Geschichte e. V. 21).

39 Kathrin BIERTHER (ed.), *Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges, Neue Folge, Die Politik Maximilians I. von Bayern und seiner Verbündeten 1618–1651*, Zweiter Teil, Zehnter Bd.: *Der Prager Frieden von 1635*, 1. Teilbd. (Erschließungsbd.); 2. Teilbd. (Korrespondenzen); 3. Teilbd. (Verhandlungsakten); 4. Teilbd. (Vertragstexte), München – Wien 1997.

40 Michael FRISCH, *Das Restitutionsedikt Kaiser Ferdinands II. vom 6. März 1629. Eine rechtsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Tübingen 1993 (= Jus ecclesiasticum. Beiträge zum evangelischen Kirchenrecht und zum Staatskirchenrecht 44).

of peace mediators became a conviction and ultimately advanced to an important fund of experience for European diplomacy.⁴¹

Although a settlement of conflicts could not be achieved at this stage in the war, this was not least due to continued indeterminacy of the military outcome, which gave hope of a favourable development of the military situation to all sides. The simultaneous protestations of peace should not be dismissed as dishonest. Instead, they show an already existing awareness that a political resolution of conflicts was inevitable, with the best possible military position in peace negotiations for one's own side. This awareness was the result of the ideal of peace as the perfect normal status of the European society of princes, which excluded the waging of "total war" in early modern times on principle.⁴²

This tentative position of the princes and their advisers in hope of better military conditions was nevertheless a frequently frustrating experience for the papal nuncios, who were charged with the opening of peace talks, and this is clearly reflected in the edited reports.

Informational content and scientific perspectives in the nuncial sources from the court of the emperor

Which information can now be extracted from the edited correspondences? On the one hand, the texts offer an insight into the workings of the Imperial court as a courtly and administrative nucleus as well as the governance and personality of Emperor Ferdinand II (1578–1637, Emperor since 1619) at its centre from the perspective of foreign ambassadors. They further emphasize the role of the Imperial advisers and leading functionaries, e.g. Anton Wolfradt OSB (1582–1639), hailing from Cologne, Bishop of Vienna and president of the Imperial court chamber. They also provide information about the events at the Imperial court, the daily routine, the atmosphere of court life, and illuminate apart from the political the cultural life at court. Thus, Volume 7 offers observations on court etiquette, festivities, hunts, theatrical performances and liturgical ceremonies.

41 For the type of assembly emerging from this, the international congress of envoys cf. Christoph KAMPMANN – Maximilian LANZINNER – Guido BRAUN – Michael ROHRSCHEIDER (edd.), *L'art de la paix. Kongresswesen und Friedensstiftung im Zeitalter des Westfälischen Friedens*, Münster 2011 (= Schriftenreihe der Vereinigung zur Erforschung der Neueren Geschichte e. V. 34).

42 Admittedly, it was likely not possible in Early Modern times to speak about 'total peace' because of blurred mutual classification, cf. Guido BRAUN – Arno STROHMEYER, *Einleitung*, in: idem (edd.), *Frieden und Friedenssicherung in der Frühen Neuzeit. Das Heilige Römische Reich und Europa. Festschrift für Maximilian Lanzinner zum 65. Geburtstag*, Münster 2013 (= Schriftenreihe der Vereinigung zur Erforschung der Neueren Geschichte e. V. 36), pp. IX–XXVII, in particular IX f. with reference to André Corvisier.

Moreover, the reports of the nuncios demonstrate the importance and the politically charged nature of ceremonial and protocolary questions as an integral part of European political culture in early modern times, particularly in a period of change of the state system and its fundamental ideas of order as it appears to us in the age of the ‘Thirty Years’ War.’⁴³ These ceremonial and protocolary problems were part of the order, whose definition was heavily debated;⁴⁴ however, they appeared dysfunctional in the handling of other potential political conflicts. In particular, the already tense relations between the emperor and the pope were further poisoned by the prefect dispute regarding the precedence of the *Praefectus Urbi* to the Imperial ambassador in Rome.⁴⁵

On the other hand, the edited texts allow deeper insights into the world of the reporters themselves and the recipients of their missives. Into the ideas, world views and cognitive horizons of Roman-Curial officials and diplomats; into the difficulties, tensions and contradictions, which were connected to balancing secular-stately and sacred interests and demands of the Papacy – especially against the Habsburgs and the emperor. They witness the methods and administrative practices of control within a highly sophisticated Papal administrative apparatus, which in itself is one of the most remarkable manifestations of European political culture with a considerable potential for the future.

The tendency to edit full texts in the latest volumes of the fourth series is to be commended. In posing many questions, modern historical science cannot be satisfied with using nuncial reports as a quarry of information or so-called facts as positivistic history of events, which leaves a barren field of potentially crucial insights from these texts. In contrast to the research around 1900, misinformation, unfounded rumours and misunderstandings (which are found in the nuncial reports) are no longer considered less telling or even annoying. This view had led to omissions in or paraphrases of said passages in some of the older nunciature editions.

43 Niels F. MAY, *Zwischen fürstlicher Repräsentation und adliger Statuspolitik. Das Kongresszeremoniell bei den westfälischen Friedensverhandlungen*, Ostfildern 2016 (= Beihefte der Francia 82); earlier, regarding the concepts of order behind the ceremonial demands Barbara STOLLBERG-RILINGER, *Völkerrechtlicher Status und zeremonielle Praxis auf dem Westfälischen Friedenskongreß*, in: Michael Jucker – Martin Kintzinger – Rainer Christoph Schwinges (edd.), *Rechtsformen internationaler Politik. Theorie, Norm und Praxis vom 12. bis 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2011 (= Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung, Beiheft 45), pp. 147–164.

44 Ibidem.

45 Rotraud BECKER, *Das Präzedenzrecht des Praefectus Urbis. Ein Konfliktthema der Zeit Kaiser Ferdinands II.*, QFIAB 97, 2017, pp. 175–236.

Such misinformation and misunderstandings are potentially more revealing about the perception and actions of the protagonists than genuine information, and therefore historical science has rightly made the category “misunderstanding” an object for research.⁴⁶

A deeper understanding of the political, cultural and confessional developments and connections by means of nuncial reports is only possible if the original wording is available, particularly if the reports and instructions are understood as sources for the history of the Roman Curia itself. The genesis of the nuncial reports is a complex process, in which not only the reported matter is processed, but at the same time the cultural conditioning of the reporter as well as the basic norms and expectations of the recipient resonate in it.⁴⁷ To decode this texture, the original wording is needed.

According to the information with which the publishers promote the latest volumes, these editions shed light on German and European history in general, on Southern Europe in particular, as well as cultural history, theology, religious studies and church history of the early modern period. The present survey of the key aspects of the volumes in question shows that there is indeed scientific potential in these nunciature documents.

If these subjects are ordered systematically, a central aspect in the field of political-diplomatic reports emerges. Among these are, if for instance Volume 4 is consulted, diplomatic negotiations in the narrow sense such as the preparation of (general) peace negotiations and peace mediations during the Mantuan War of Succession, Curial politics at the turning point of the Thirty Years' War such as the Regensburg Diet of Electors in 1630, but also central dynastic events such as the bridal journey of Infanta Maria Anna of Spain (1606–1636) from December 1629 to February 1631 to the Viennese Court for the wedding to the future Emperor Ferdinand III (1608–1657, 1625 King of Hungary, 1627 King of Bohemia, 1636 Roman King, 1637 Emperor).

Furthermore, the edited texts offer insights into the practices of envoys in early modern times: problems of espionage,⁴⁸ questions of postal services and the interception of diplomatic correspondence,⁴⁹ friction between nuncios (e.g. between Baglioni and his predecessor Rocci, who still resided at the Imperial court), the application of knowledge gained in earlier diplomatic missions, such as Pallotto's employment at the *Propaganda Fide*

46 Martin ESPENHORST (ed.), *Unwissen und Missverständnisse im vormodernen Friedensprozess*, Göttingen 2013 (= Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Abteilung für Universalgeschichte, Beiheft 94).

47 G. BRAUN, *Imagines imperii*.

48 Larger surveys take little regard of the Roman Curia, cf. for instance Wolfgang KRIEGER, *Geschichte der Geheimdienste von den Pharaonen bis zur NSA*, München 2014³ (Beck Paperback, 1891).

49 Anne Simone ROUS – Martin MULSOW (edd.), *Geheime Post. Kryptologie und Steganographie der diplomatischen Korrespondenz europäischer Höfe während der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin 2015 (= Historische Forschungen 106). Particularly in this area of the research of espionage, nuncial reports offer to date largely unraised treasures.

congregation with his special field in Bohemian politics.⁵⁰ Despite several (older) studies in the history of the Roman-Curial envoys, there is a lack of research in this field. It is well-known that Garrett Mattingly neglected Roman diplomacy in his definitive book on “Renaissance Diplomacy”⁵¹ because it did not correspond with his assumption of forward-looking secular politics detached from an ecclesiastical-religious context. A comparative study of Curial and Venetian diplomacy is still missing, although such a study has been called for several times.

Another important area of the nunciature editions is to be found in confessional-political aspects and church history as well as the re-catholicisation in the Empire, particularly in Bohemia. This includes the disputes concerning the formation of new bishoprics in Bohemia and the salt treaty to enable their financing; the disputes about the possession of benefices and the allocation of monastic properties to former and new owners. Themes of the history of devoutness and religious orders are mentioned, such as the pope’s request for the dissolution of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and questions of spiritual jurisdiction of nuncios (particularly in volume 6).

Apart from factual issues, the nuncial reports open a considerable potential for findings relating to the protagonists, primarily the nuncios themselves. Certain details of their biographies are only known through these reports, in one case the existence of Francesco, an officer in the Imperial army, who served under Wallenstein and Matthias Gallas during the summer and autumn 1632; he was the brother of nuncio Girolamo Grimaldi, whose correspondence has been edited in volume 5. The nuncial reports provide insights into the personal characteristics and forms of piety of nuncios and other Curial officials, such as Rocci’s scarce participation in ecclesiastic life during his nunciature.⁵² Beyond this, the nuncial documents (accompanied by well-grounded introductions to each volume of the edition) give additional clues as to career paths and patterns of Roman-Curial officials⁵³

50 For the topics of nuncios and *propaganda fide* during the Thirty Years’ War cf. recently Guido BRAUN, *Akteure, Medien und Institutionen in den Prozessen von Wissensproduktion über das Reich an der römischen Kurie in den 1620er Jahren. Nuntius Carlo Carafa und die Propaganda Fide-Kongregation*, in: Sabina Brevaglieri – Matthias Schnettger (edd.), *Transferprozesse zwischen dem Alten Reich und Italien im 17. Jahrhundert. Wissenskonfigurationen – Akteure – Netzwerke*, Bielefeld 2018 (= Mainzer Historische Kulturwissenschaften, 29), pp. 207–240.

51 Garrett MATTINGLY, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, London 1955.

52 For the still rudimentary knowledge about the religious side of the nuncios’ everyday lives cf. the studies of everyday life in A. KOLLER, *Imperator und Pontifex*; also G. BRAUN, *Imagines* offers insights into the religious environment of nuncios.

53 In correlation to the well-founded introductions of all volumes of the edition, which very often present positively prosopographical studies. This is true namely for the editions of instructions: Klaus JAITNER (ed.), *Die Hauptinstruktionen Clemens’ VIII. für die Nuntien und Legaten an den europäischen Fürstenhöfen 1592–1605*, 2 Vols., Tübingen 1984 (= *Instructiones pontificum Romanorum*); Idem (ed.), *Die Hauptinstruktionen Gregors XV. für die Nuntien und Gesandten an den europäischen Fürstenhöfen*

and they show their connections in Rome itself, to other nuncios and at their destined locations, although the important correspondence with Cardinal-nephews about questions of offices and benefices, which are necessary for the reconstruction of micro-political connections, are not part of the edited nuncial documents.

It is to be wished that such prosopographical information is included in data banks, as Wolfgang Reinhard has already suggested in 1998.⁵⁴ This presumably would yield interesting results, particularly in the research of members of the Curia who were temporarily at the emperor's court or in contact with the Habsburgs. The nuncial documents, however, also provide the basis for findings which cannot be generated in data banks and therefore still need edited sources.

In conclusion, it can be stated that nuncial reports offer considerable source materials with multiple links on many topics for historical research and related disciplines. From the social history of the Roman Curia and its elites, the time of change around 1630 with its highly interesting history of religious confession, to the political culture of Europe, and finally in questions of historical peace studies. Nevertheless, there are some disappointments which are founded in the fact that the body of sources has been subjected to inapplicable questions and narrow perspectives. This is especially true for the relations between Rome and the Habsburg monarchy, which has excellent sources in the nuncial reports.

It is generally accepted that the nuncial reports offer their highest informational value for the sixteenth century, which then declines (unlike the amount of the surviving source material) in the following centuries.⁵⁵ But does this assumption hold true in view of the developments of the first half of the seventeenth century and namely the 1620s and 1630s? Or do the reports still offer a considerable informational value – particularly for the relations between the Empire and the Papacy – and perhaps more so than for the middle of the sixteenth century? In comparison, in the recently edited nuncial reports from the first half of the 1630s or the reports of Carafa from the preceding decade, the reporters seem no worse informed or their reports less profitable than those of the 1550s.⁵⁶ Admittedly, the rising amount of texts poses editorial difficulties, but a well-chosen selection appears to

1621–1623, 2 Vols., Tübingen 1997 (= *Instructiones pontificum Romanorum*); Silvano GIORDANO, OCD (ed.), *Le istruzioni generali di Paolo V ai diplomatici pontifici 1605–1621*, 3 Vols., Tübingen 2003 (= *Instructiones pontificum Romanorum*).

54 W. REINHARD, *Nuntiaturreich für die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft?*

55 IDEM, *Nuntiaturreich*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 7, Freiburg 1998³, col. 948.

56 G. BRAUN, *Imagines*, about the sixteenth century; for the 1620s: Idem, *L'impero nella percezione della Curia romana sotto Urbano VIII*, in: I. Fosi – A. Koller (edd.), *Papato*, pp. 143–172.

be an expedient alternative to a complete edition, rather than the paraphrases of texts by previous generations of scientists.

Scientists by no means agree as regards to further editions of nuncial reports, final relations or Papal instructions. The fundamental issue here is the balance of editorial effort and potential scientific findings. Wolfgang Reinhard, in his statement of 1998, deemed it preferential to strike new paths in the analysis of the existing editions of sources rather than to further extend the basis of source materials (i.e. to ask questions of the body of sources that have been of little consideration by earlier research).⁵⁷ In 2008 Urban Fink preferred main instructions and final relations to nuncial reports.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that nuncial reports in particular often prove themselves to be much richer sources to arrive at detailed results. Regardless, neither the politics of the Holy See nor the paradigms of Curial officials and envoys can be examined preferentially or even exclusively based on instructions; they are idiosyncratic, highly formal in character and argue in declaratory rather than descriptive or even analytic manner. Neither the course of political negotiations (at the centre of attention for earlier historians), nor processes of perception, questions of the self-image, or the roles of historical agents (which have been recently studied), can be reconstructed from instructions. The consultation of nuncial reports, the accompanying memoranda, and a potential visit to the archive seem absolutely indispensable if editorial work is confined to main instructions.

The effort of publishing further editions should be worthwhile. Even if the exaggerated nineteenth-century expectations of nuncial reports have been disappointed, the assessment of Heinrich Lutz (1965) can still be agreed upon in principle. He stresses:⁵⁹ “On the whole we possess no body of sources for this decisive period in German and European history [from 1630 to about 1650] which can rival those nuncial reports for the significance regarding their supra-regional perspective, sharply contoured intellectual and political standards and steady continuity.” Although current historical research partly poses different questions from those seen by Lutz, his statement has not been disproved, but is in fact highly plausible. Putting aside the area of fact, what would we know about the Papal relations to the Habsburg monarchy during the time of the Thirty Years’ War without these nuncial sources?⁶⁰

⁵⁷ W. REINHARD, *Nuntiaturberichte für die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft?*, in particular pp. 213 f.

⁵⁸ Urban FINK, *Die Luzerner Nuntiatur unter Paul V. als Ausnahmeerscheinung? Quellenkritische Anmerkungen zu den Jahren 1605–1621*, in: Alexander Koller (ed.), *Die Außenbeziehungen der römischen Kurie unter Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621)*, Tübingen 2008 (= Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom. 115), pp. 429–456, here 450.

⁵⁹ H. LUTZ, *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland*, p. 313.

⁶⁰ I thank Frank Meier for the translation of the present article.