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The relationship network of nuncios and forms of reward for its members at the imperial court of Rudolf II (1576–1612)

Abstract: *Unlike the Spanish envoys, the papal nuncios made use of individuals who were attached to the imperial court of Rudolf II. These were in particular members of the Privy Council or of the Aulic Council as well as the most influential representatives of the Czech nobility. The networks of the papal nuncios started playing a key role – with regard to the fact that the sovereign gradually stopped paying attention and carrying out the affairs of state – as centres of influence for pursuing papal interests and sources for gathering information. For their services, the members of these networks could require a wide range of specific rewards the papal court could provide them with.*

Key words: *nunciature – imperial court – papacy – networks – Rudolf II*

One of the important means Spain used in the early modern period to promote and strengthen its power objectives abroad was through creating and maintaining relationship networks. Their carefully selected members, usually from elite aristocratic, courtly, or ecclesiastical strata of other countries, could enjoy not only the king's confidence, but also draw from the very rich and diverse resources of the Spanish Crown for their client service provided to the ruler as their patron. From the sixteenth century onwards, it was beneficial for members of Italian aristocratic families to integrate into Spanish relationship networks, even though the Spanish political involvement on the Italian Peninsula had been significant therein.¹ However, neither did the territorial possessions of the Austrian relatives from the Habsburg family in Central Europe, including the Czech lands, remain neglected by the “Most Catholic Majesty”. In the late sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth century, when the imperial court was based in Prague, many representatives of the great noble families as well as the influential ministers of Emperor Rudolph II, who became clients of the Spanish king, belonged to a precisely

1 For details see Angelantonio SPAGNOLETTI, *Principi italiani e Spagna nell'età barocca*, Milano 1996.

structured and highly functional relationship network, on the formation and maintenance of which the Spanish ambassadors had a significant influence.²

The means with which diplomats were rewarded for their services was diverse. In addition to direct financial commissions in the form of pensions or one-time gifts, rewards could have been a membership into the prestigious military orders of chivalry or being inducted into the exclusive Order of the Golden Fleece. This contributed to the increase of the economic, symbolic, and social capital of the individuals concerned, as part of the stratification of court society.³ The Spanish ambassadors played a significant role in Prague and used their relationships and networks to connect their clients with their patrons.⁴ However, the relationship network of Spanish diplomats was not the only entity of this type at the imperial court. An important place among the local diplomats belonged to the Permanent Representatives of the Holy See – the apostolic nuncios.⁵

Research on relationship networks with respect to the papacy

Close attention has been paid to the working of relationship networks,⁶ especially regarding patronage, in recent decades by historical science. These networks have been investigated

2 Pavel MAREK, *Klientelní strategie španělských králů na pražském císařském dvoře konce 16. a počátku 17. století*, Český časopis historický 105, 2007, pp. 40–88; Pavel MAREK, *La embajada española en la corte imperial (1558–1641). Figuras de los embajadores y estrategias clientelares*, Praga 2013; Rubén GONZÁLEZ CUERVA, *From the Empress to the Ambassador: the “Spanish Faction” and the Labyrinths of the Imperial Court of Prague 1575–1585*, in: R. González Cuerva – V. Caldari (edd.), *Los secretos mecanismos de las cortes: Facciones en la Europa moderna*, Madrid 2015 (= *Librosdelacorte.es* monográfico 2), pp. 11–25.

3 P. MAREK, *Klientelní strategie*, pp. 66–80; IDEM, *La embajada*, pp. 161–183.

4 For the role of the brokers within the relationship networks, see Sharon KETTERING, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*, New York – Oxford 1986, p. 4; Wolfgang REINHARD, *Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621). Mikropolitische Papstgeschichte*, (= *Päpste und Papsttum* vol. 37), Stuttgart 2009, p. 17; Ronald G. ASCH – Birgit EMICH – Jens Ivo ENGELS (edd.), *Intergration, Legitimation, Korruption. Politische Patronage in Früher Neuzeit und Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main 2011, p. 9. For the role of brokers in the case of Spanish diplomats in Rome, see Hillard von THIESEN, *Patronageressourcen in Außenbeziehungen: Spanien und der Kirchenstaat im Pontifikat Pauls V.*, in: H. von Thiesen – Ch. Windler (edd.), *Nähe in der Ferne. Personale Verflechtung in den Außenbeziehungen der Frühen Neuzeit*, (= *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, Beiheft 36), Berlin 2005, pp. 15–39, here p. 33.

5 For the development and changes of the papal diplomatic representation, see Anton PIEPER, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der ständigen Nuntiaturen*, Freiburg i. B. 1894; Pierre BLET, *Histoire de la Représentation Diplomatique du Saint Siège des origines à l’aube du XIXe siècle*, Città del Vaticano 1982; Knut WALF, *Die Entwicklung des päpstlichen Gesandtschaftswesens in dem Zeitabschnitt zwischen Dekretalenrecht und Wiener Kongress (1159–1815)*, München 1966; Robert GRAHAM, *Vatican Diplomacy. A Study of Church and State on the International Plan*, Princeton 1959. For the formation of the papal state in the early modern period, including the role of nunciatures in this process, see Paolo PRODI, *Il sovrano pontefice. Un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna*, Bologna 2006.

6 Wolfgang REINHARD, *Freunde und Kreaturen, “Verflechtung” als Konzept zur Erforschung historischer Führungsgruppen. Römische Oligarchie um 1600*, München 1979.

from various perspectives in research focusing on specific countries, territories, as well as their expansion across Europe.⁷ Looking at the early modern papacy, Wolfgang Reinhard's extensive research produced interesting results. An important foundation for his work was the use of the concept of "micro-politics". In Reinhard's words, this consists of "*more or less planned deployment of the network [...] for political purposes, the filling of a position or the degree of its holder is usually more important than what this person actually pursues.*"⁸ Thus, it was possible to present a precise analysis of the working of these entities and their personnel structure under the pontificate of Paul V within the papal state, as well as in its foreign relations.⁹ A series of monographs then emerged from the circle of Reinhard's disciples. These focused on the individual countries that the papacy was in close contact with; they analysed cross-border "overlaps" of the relationship networks, presenting them as effective tools of power politics.¹⁰

The topic was also elaborated with regard to a specific social group – diplomats. Their incorporation within the relationship networks of the rulers they represented, but often also those of other individuals or interest factions, has been dealt with, especially since the beginning of the twenty-first century, in many inspiring works that have also opened further related historical-anthropological issues in this context: the status and conduct of diplomats as links of family or political strategies, issues of pluralistic loyalty or identity, function or transposition of material values in early modern diplomacy or the reflection of a foreign environment by diplomats.¹¹

7 From a plethora of monographs, see the essential – S. KETTERING, *Patrons, Brokers*; Renata AGO, *Carriere e clientele nella Roma barocca*, Roma – Bari 1990; Linda Levy PECK, *Court, Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*, London 1993; Antoni MAĆZAK (ed.), *Klientelssysteme in Europa der Frühen Neuzeit*, München 1988; Paul D. McLEAN, *The Art of the Network. Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence*, Durham – London 2007. Most recently, see Rubén GONZÁLEZ CUERVA – Alexander KOLLER (edd.), *A Europe of Courts, a Europe of Factions. Political Groups at Early Modern Centres of Power (1550–1700)*, Leiden – Boston 2017.

8 Wolfgang REINHARD, *Amici e creature. Politische Mikrogeschichte der römischen Kurie im 17. Jahrhundert*, QFIAB 76, 1996, pp. 308–334 (p. 312 here).

9 For the summary thereof, see W. REINHARD, *Paul V. Borghese*.

10 Tobias MÖRSCHER, *Buona amicitia? Die römisch-savoyischen Beziehungen unter Paul V. (1605–1621). Studien zur frühneuzeitlichen Mikropolitik in Italien*, Mainz 2002; Christian WIELAND, *Fürsten, Freunde, Diplomaten. Die römisch-florentinischen Beziehungen unter Paul V. (1605–1621)*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2004; Wolfgang REINHARD (ed.), *Römische Mikropolitik unter Papst Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621) zwischen Spanien, Neapel, Mailand und Genua*, Tübingen 2004; Guido METZLER, *Französische Mikropolitik in Rom unter Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621)*, Heidelberg 2008.

11 Daniela FRIGO (ed.), *Ambasciatori e nunzi. Figure della diplomazia in età moderna*, (Cheiron 30), Roma 1999; Hillard von THIESSEN, *Diplomatie und Patronage. Die spanisch-römische Beziehungen 1605–1621 in akteurszentrierter Perspektive*, Epfendorf/Neckar 2010; Hillard von THIESSEN – Christian WINDLER (edd.), *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen. Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2010; Hillard von THIESSEN – Christian WINDLER (edd.), *Nähe in der Ferne. Personale Verflechtung in den Außenbeziehungen der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin 2005 (= ZfH, Beiheft

Nuncios and their role as “brokers”

These interesting issues were also largely related to papal nuncios acting as early modern diplomats.¹² It would be a mistake to only perceive them as authorized representatives of the Roman Pontiff in a foreign country whose task was to promote curial interests in the country and obtain important information. They often performed multiple roles due to the changing nature of diplomacy of the *type ancien*, as was common with their “secular” colleagues, and were connected by close ties not only to the popes, but also to their own

36); Hans COOLS – Marika KEBLUSEK – Badeloch NOLDUS (edd.), *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe*, Hilversum 2006; Heiko DROSTE, *Im Dienst der Krone. Schwedische Diplomaten im 17. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2006; José MARTÍNEZ MILLÁN and others (edd.), *La doble lealtad: entre el servicio al Rey y la obligación a la Iglesia*, Madrid 2014 (= Librosdelacorte.es, monográfico 1); Mark HÄBERLEIN – Christof JEGGLE (edd.), *Materielle Grundlagen der Diplomatie. Schenken, Sammeln und Verhandeln in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Konstanz 2013; Ruth KOHLNDORFER-FRIES, *Diplomatie und Gelehrtenrepublik. Die Kontakte des französischen Gesandten Jacques Bongars (1554–1612)*, Tübingen 2009; Maria Antonietta VISCEGLIA, *Roma papale e Spagna. Diplomatici, nobili e religiosi tra due corti*, Roma 2010; Alessandra ANSELMi (ed.), *I rapporti tra Roma e Madrid nei secoli XVI e XVII: arte, diplomazia e politica*, Roma 2014; Michael ROHRSCHEIDER – Arno STROHMEYER (edd.), *Wahrnehmungen des Fremden. Differenzenerfahrungen von Diplomaten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Münster 2007.

- 12 For the various historical and anthropological issues regarding the early modern papal nuncios, most importantly see Wolfgang REINHARD, *Makropolitik und Mikropolitik in den Außenbeziehungen Roms*, in: A. Koller (ed.), *Die Außenbeziehungen der römischen Kurie unter Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621)*, Tübingen 2008, pp. 67–80; H. von THIESSEN, *Korrupte Gesandte? Konkurrierende Normen in der Diplomatie der Frühen Neuzeit*, in: G. Niels – S. Slanička (edd.), *Korruption: historische Annäherungen an einer Grundfigur politischer Kommunikation*, Göttingen 2010, pp. 205–220; Arne KARSTEN, *Familienbande im Außendienst: Die diplomatischen Aktivitäten des Kardinals Bernardino Spada (1594–1661) im Kontext der Familienpolitik*, in: H. von Thiesen – Ch. Windler (edd.), *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen. Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2010, pp. 45–61; Marie Antonietta VISCEGLIA, “Non si ha da equipare l’utile quando vi fosse l’onore.” *Scelte economiche e reputazione: intorno alla vendita dello stato feudale dei Caetani (1627)*, in: A. M. Visceglia (ed.), *La nobiltà romana in età moderna. Profili istituzionali e pratiche sociali*, Roma 2001, pp. 203–223; Elisabeth ZINGERLE, *Graz–Florenz. Der Grazer Nuntius als Informant für den Großherzog der Toskana*, in: M. Bellabarba – J. P. Niederkorn (edd.), *Le corti come luogo di comunicazione. Gli Asburgo e l’Italia (secoli XVI–XIX) / Höfe als Orte der Kommunikation. Die Habsburger und Italien (16. bis 19. Jahrhundert)*, Bologna – Berlin 2010, pp. 61–74; Massimo Carlo GIANNINI, *Una carriera diplomatica barocca: Cesare Monti arcivescovo di Milano e agente della politica papale (1632–1650)*, QFIAB 94, 2014, pp. 252–291; Manuela BELARDINI, *Alberto Bolognetti, nunzio di Gregorio XIII. Riflessioni e spunti di ricerca sulla diplomazia pontificia in età post-tridentina*, in: D. Frigo (ed.), *Ambasciatori e nunzi. Figure della diplomazia in età moderna*, Roma 1999 (= Cheiron 30), pp. 171–200; Guido BRAUN, *Images Imperii. Die Wahrnehmung des Reiches und der Deutschen durch die römische Kurie im Reformationsjahrhundert (1523–1585)*, Münster 2014; Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK, “Nell’banco dove sta il nuncio non vi sedano altri”, *Ceremoniál jako forma symbolické komunikace pražského nuncia Antonia Caetaniho*, *Theatrum historiae* 15, 2014, pp. 97–107; IDEM, *Služba papeži versus služba vlastní rodině: příklad pražského nuncia Antonia Caetaniho*, *FHB* 32, 2017, pp. 129–141.

families and their private preferences or to other individuals or factions.¹³ It was in the role of clients that they served to the Roman Bishop as the sovereign ruler of the Papal State, or a cardinal-nephew, as the case might have been, who controlled the fundamental elements of political administration and was at the head of the Curia as the most important “secular” patron,¹⁴ as was the analogous case with other diplomats. What distinguished them from the nuncios was that they represented the pope at foreign courts as the head of the Catholic Church.¹⁵ To do so, they were given special authority to interfere not only in the ecclesiastical sphere as such.¹⁶

Similar to the representatives of the king of Spain, the nuncios served at the sovereign courts of foreign countries as diplomats and informants, as well as brokers. They created and maintained relationship networks with important people who assisted with implementing local plans and promoting the papacy. These collaborators would be rewarded from papal funds for their loyalty and could be used for other personal goals of the nuncios. Having a reliable network was an important prerequisite for ensuring success in the nuncio’s activities and it helped to overcome the difficulties that most diplomats had to contend with. Not only did they stand in the position of foreigners, often without the knowledge of local languages or the cultural environment, but – and that is primarily the case of the Prague Nunciature at the imperial court during the reign of Rudolph II – even in an environment of other predominant religions than Catholic.

While the issue of integration of nuncios into relationship networks in the curial environment have been dealt with in a number of professional works, the structure and internal system of the functioning of those networks and the links created directly by the individual nuncios at their places of activity have been analysed rather marginally.¹⁷

This also applies to the nunciature under review at the imperial court in the late 1500s and early 1600s; its origins date back to 1513. An important transformation took place during the reign of Emperor Charles V, where, in addition the papal representative at the imperial court, there was also a nuncio residing from 1524 at the Court of his brother,

13 H. von THIESEN, *Diplomatie und Patronage*, pp. 34, 122–131, 150–152; W. REINHARD, *Paul V. Borghese*, pp. 206–216.

14 Wolfgang REINHARD, *Politische Mikrogeschichte der römischen Kurie im 17. Jahrhundert*, QFIAB 76, 1996, pp. 308–334, here 317–318; M. BELARDINI, *Alberto Bolognetti*, p. 171.

15 H. von THIESEN, *Diplomatie und Patronage*, p. 122. For the function of the nunciatures within the “double” papal power, see P. PRODI, *Il sovrano*, pp. 308–323.

16 For this issue, see the still relevant study – Samuel STEINHERZ, *Die Facultäten eines päpstlichen Nuntius im 16. Jahrhundert*, *MIÖG* 19, 1898, pp. 327–342.

17 Briefly on this issue, see Alexander KOLLER, *Imperator und Pontifex. Forschungen zum Verhältnis von Kaiserhof und römischer Kurie im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung (1555–1648)*, Münster 2012, pp. 48–60, 72–87; W. REINHARD, *Makropolitik und Mikropolitik*, pp. 72–75.

Archduke of Austria and later King of the Romans, Bohemia and Hungary Ferdinand I.¹⁸ The reunification of both nunciatures took place only after the abdication of Charles V and the ascension of Ferdinand to the imperial throne.¹⁹ In the second half of the sixteenth century, it also transformed its diplomatic representation. This was due to religious polarization and confessionalization in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and connected to the efforts to consolidate the positions of the Holy See. Pope Gregory XIII played a major role in the process. He decided to use nunciatures in an effort to campaign against the rapidly expanding Protestantism. During his pontificate and following years, a number of new nunciatures (Graz, Köln, Lucerne, Brussels) were established throughout the Holy Roman Empire and were influential counter-reformation centres.²⁰ The nunciature at the imperial court continued to retain the most prominent position and prestige among them; the local diplomats at the church services were often granted the privilege of wearing the cardinal's red hat.²¹

Basic resources and risks of their use

If we want to focus more intensively on monitoring the activities of papal diplomats in their role as brokers and to analyse the structure and functioning of the relationship network that they formed at the imperial court in Prague, nunciature reports represent a source of great importance, whether they are available in previously published volumes of editions or manuscripts, especially those from the Vatican Secret Archives or the Vatican Apostolic Library. As Wolfgang Reinhard aptly put it, this type of written material can be understood as “*any document between ordinary or extraordinary nuncios (papal legates including) and the State Secretariat and other Roman authorities, in particular the congregations, including the initial instructions given at the outset, jurisdictional powers and final reports.*”²² According to recent German research, the evaluation of nunciature reports by historians has thus far been somewhat limited and inadequate in their significance, scope, and content. The causes of this fact have been seen in the slow and lengthy preparation of relevant editions, changes in the methodological framework of historiography during the twentieth century, language barriers of the texts or their perception as resources primarily focused on political

18 A. PIEPER, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte*, pp. 51–53, 88–89.

19 A. KOLLER, *Imperator und Pontifex*, pp. 36.

20 Ibidem, pp. 61–71; K. WALE, *Die Entwicklung*, pp. 114–124.

21 A. KOLLER, *Imperator und Pontifex*, pp. 287–301; H. von THIESSEN, *Diplomatie und Patronage*, p. 124; M. BELARDINI, *Alberto Bolognetti*, pp. 174–175; K. WALE, *Die Entwicklung*, pp. 121–122.

22 Wolfgang REINHARD, *Nuntiaturberichte*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 7, Freiburg 1998, col. 948f.

history in their methodologically older concepts.²³ The above quoted research findings in recent years have demonstrated that the situation has somewhat improved and the use of historical anthropology methodology has opened new and intriguing perspectives for the use of nunciature reports. Considering the personal conduct of diplomats with members of their relationship networks or with other people, which may not be documented otherwise, they represent a relatively remarkable and exceptional source in this respect. This is further emphasized by the fact that nunciature reports were written at continuous, regular intervals over a rather lengthy period of time.²⁴ When studying and analysing them, it is important to consider more than the historical criticism. We need to consider their character, determined by their “official” function, the interests and tasks of the diplomat but also the evidence limits of the document and specific language expressions.²⁵ The texts are characterized by changing tones and internal tension. There is a difference between the expected activities of the individual nuncios and the reality of their work in foreign settings, the constraints caused by thought patterns leading to a specific or distorted projection of the environment or the presence of stereotypes that the diplomats used in their conduct or written communication.²⁶

However, a critical constraint lies, above all, in the purpose of the nunciature reports, which is manifested in their content. While the content of these letters follows events at

23 Heinrich LUTZ, *Die Bedeutung der Nuntiaturberichte für die europäische Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsschreibung*, QFIAB 53, 1973, pp. 152–167; 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 2008, pp. 208–225.

24 For general information on the characteristics of nunciature correspondence, see Karel STLOUKAL, *Papežská politika a císařský dvůr český na přelomu XVI. a XVII. věku*, Praha 1925, pp. 78–85; Josef ŠUSTA, *Die Römische Kurie und das Concil von Trient unter Pius IV. Actenstücke zur Geschichte des Concils von Trient*, I. Band, Wien 1904, pp. XXXIV–XXXVII.

25 For some of the risks of language formulations in early modern letters when interpreting client relationships, see W. REINHARD, *Amici e creature*, pp. 314–317; Mark HENGERER, *Amtsträger als Klienten und Patrone? Anmerkungen zu einem Forschungskonzept*, in: S. Brakensiek (ed.), *Ergebene Diener ihrer Herren? Herrschaftsvermittlung im alten Europa*, Köln 2005, pp. 45–78, here pp. 62–78. For the issue of the language and structure of early modern letters from the diplomacy environment, see also H. DROSTE, *Im Dienst der Krone*, pp. 99–109.

26 H. LUTZ, *Die Bedeutung*, p. 165; W. REINHARD, *Nuntiaturberichte*, pp. 221–222; Václav BŮŽEK, *Der Heilige Stuhl und die böhmische Länder während Pontifikat Pauls V.*, in: A. Koller (ed.), *Die Außenbeziehungen der römischen Kurie unter Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621)*, Tübingen 2008, pp. 135–136; Volker REINHARDT, *Nuntien und Nationalcharakter. Prolegomena zu einer Geschichte nationaler Wahrnehmungsstereotypen am Beispiel der Schweiz*, in: A. Koller (ed.), *Kurie und Politik. Stand und Perspektiven der Nuntiaturberichtsforschung*, Tübingen 1998, pp. 285–300; Stefan SAMERSKI, *Römische Ordnung und kirchenrechtliches Chaos in Deutschland: Attilio Amalteo als Nuntius in Köln (1606–1610)*, in: M. Rohrschneider – A. Strohmeier (edd.), *Wahrnehmungen des Fremden. Differenzenerfahrungen von Diplomaten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Münster 2007, pp. 73–90; G. BRAUN, *Imagines*, pp. 431–638.

the imperial court, location of interest or the promotion of papal interests, they rarely address by whom or how the information was obtained, or which individuals were used to achieve the objectives. It is thus usually possible to analyse the structure of the relationship networks, examine the status and importance of their members or the transformation of these entities by studying minor indications or information in the text that must be monitored in the context of a larger number of diplomatic reports.

When considering the collection of nunciature reports, the initial instructions and final reports should be regarded as the most significant sections.²⁷ Typically, they mention the names of notable individuals at the imperial court with whom they could confidently connect, as an important source of information for incoming diplomats.²⁸ The private letters of the nuncios are another source of the details of the relationships within their networks. Correspondence between the nuncios and their family or contacts; between the Cardinal protector of Germany and the emperor;²⁹ letters of foreign diplomats working at the imperial court in Prague; or the nuncios' registries are all valuable resources.³⁰ These resources allow researchers/us to identify the individuals employed by the nuncios to facilitate the realisation of curial objectives, identify their roles and examine the strategies utilised.³¹

27 The pontificates of Clement VIII (1592–1605), Paul V (1605–1621) and Gregory XV (1621–1623) available in editions – Klaus JAITNER (ed.), *Die Hauptinstruktionen Clemens VIII. für die Nuntien und Legaten an den Europäischen Fürstenhöfen* (1592–1605), Tübingen 1984; Silvano GIORDANO (ed.), *Le istruzioni generali di Paolo V. ai diplomatici pontifici*, 1605–1621, Tübingen 2003; Klaus JAITNER (ed.), *Die Hauptinstruktionen Gregors XV. für die Nuntien und Gesandten an den europäischen Fürstenhöfen 1621–1623*, Tübingen 1997.

28 E.g. for nuncio Speciani, see Alena PAZDEROVÁ (ed.), *Epistulae et acta Caesaris Speciani 1592–1598*, vol. I–III (1592–1594), Praeae 2016, pp. 25–26 (hereinafter referred to as EACS), for nuncio Caetani Milena LINHARTOVÁ (ed.), *Epistulae et acta Antonii Caetani 1607–1611*, Pars I, Praeae 1932, No. 4,17, p. 16 (hereinafter referred to as EAAC I).

29 For the reign of Rudolf II, especially ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Handschrift W 290, vol. 11, 12.

30 Thus far, this is the only known set from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in relation to the Prague nunciature, namely the writings of Nuncio Giovanni Stefan Ferreri from 1604–1607; Maurizio CASSETTI, *L'archivio della nunziatura a Praga di Giovanni Stefano II Ferrero, vescovo di Vercelli (1604–1607)*, in: *Studii in onore di Leopoldo Sandri I*, Roma 1983, pp. 261–264.

31 For the topic of the identification of relationship networks based on diplomatic correspondence, see Anuschka TISCHER, *Diplomaten als Patrone und Klienten: der Einfluss personaler Verflechtungen in der französischen Diplomatie auf dem Westfälischen Friedenskongress*, in: R. Babel (ed.), *Le diplomate au travail. Entscheidungsprozesse, Information und Kommunikation im Umkreis des Westfälischen Friedenskongresses*, München 2005, pp. 173–197, here pp. 176–177. For the topic of application of methods of historical anthropology to nunciature reports, see Peter BURSCHEL, *Das Eigene und das Fremde. Zur anthropologischen Entzifferung diplomatischer Texte*, in: A. Koller (ed.), *Kurie und Politik. Stand und Perspektiven der Nuntiaturberichtsforschung*, Tübingen 2008, pp. 260–271.

Emperor Rudolf II and his relations with papal diplomats

The lengthy government of Emperor Rudolf II encompasses more than three and a half decades. In general, he continued the policies of his father Maximilian II. He preferred to negotiate yet was cautious when faced with challenging problems. He was a tactical strategist who made great efforts to maintain a balanced relationship between the Catholics and non-Catholics in his empire. The emperor's health problems may have had a significant impact on his rule, especially towards the end of his reign: a hereditary mental illness and probably also from contracting syphilis. It seems, however, that this factor cannot be significantly overestimated, perhaps with the exception of the very last phase of his life.³²

A similar description of the emperor's conduct can be found in the nunciature reports. Orazio Malaspina, the first nuncio to reside in Prague in 1578, recorded at least eight cases of direct conversation with the emperor.³³ Similar frequent contact continued in the 1590s with Nuncio Cesare Speciano,³⁴ his successors in the seventeenth century had a different experience. In an interview with the Chancellor of Duke of Bavaria in 1609, Antonio Caetani complained that since he had begun working in Prague, he had had only three audiences with the emperor.³⁵ When he assumed office in 1607, he was warned in advance from Cardinal Borghese's initial instruction that he may not have much contact with the emperor. He was advised to present urgent matters to the emperor in the form of written "*slips of paper*."³⁶ Caetani repeatedly wrote to Rome that Rudolf II was prone to melancholy and he found it impossible to obtain any decisions from him.³⁷ Rudolf II was

32 For the summary of the discussion about the personality and political style of Emperor Rudolf II, see Karl VOCELKA, *Die politische Propaganda Kaiser Rudolfs II. (1576–1612)*, Wien 1981, pp. 95–105; Jaroslav PÁNEK, *K povaze vlády Rudolfa II. v českém království*, FHB 18, 1997, pp. 71–98; Robert J. W. EVANS, *Rudolf II. a jeho svět*, Praha 1997, pp. 64–109. For the most recent information on the topic of the illness and death of Rudolph II, see Václav BŮŽEK – Pavel MAREK, *Smrt Rudolfa II.*, Praha 2015; Iidem, *Krankheiten, Sterben und Tod Kaiser Rudolfs II. in Prag*, MIÖG 125, 2017, pp. 54–81; Heinz NOFLATSCHER, *Einflussreiche Kleingruppen am Hof Rudolfs II.*, in: J. Hirschbiegel – W. Paravicini (edd.), *Der Fall des Günstling. Hofparteien in Europa vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*, Ostfildern 2004, pp. 215–216. For older literature regarding the medical condition, relevant evidence can be found in Josef JANÁČEK, *Rudolf II. a jeho doba*, Praha 1987, pp. 182–194, 329–344.

33 Alexander KOLLER (ed.), *Nuntiatoren des Orazio Malaspina und des Ottavio Santacroce, interim des Cesare dell'Arena (1578–1581)*, [= NBD III, vol. 10], Berlin–Boston 2012, No. 5,5–6, pp. 19–20; No. 7,3–11, pp. 23–27; No. 15,1, p. 39; No. 19,3, p. 46; No. 20,5, p. 49; No. 28,6, p. 60; No. 33, pp. 66–68.

34 EACS, *ad indicem*.

35 Felix STIEVE, *Vom Reichstag 1608 bis zur Gründung der Liga, Briefe und Acten zur Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges*, vol. 6, München 1895, p. 695.

36 "Con Sua Maestà tratterà Vostra Signoria poche volte, essendo l'udienze difficilissime et sarà necessitata communicar li negotii col consiglio segreto et scriver biglietti a Sua Maestà." EAAC I, No. 4,16, p. 15.

37 Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK (ed.), *Epistulae et acta Antonii Caetani 1607–1611*, pars IV, Pragae 2013, No. 21,3, p. 24; No. 73,2, pp. 68–69; No. 247,7, p. 207 (hereinafter referred to as EAAC IV).

failing to fulfil his duties as a statesman, as necessary pending documents were remaining unsigned, even for months.³⁸

The nuncio found the emperor to be indecisive even during negotiations with the envoys of the Silesian estates,³⁹ when addressing the issue of succession in the Duchy of Jülich-Kleve⁴⁰ or in preparation for meetings with electors.⁴¹ Although Caetani in no way questioned the emperor's legitimacy in his reports, he adopted a somewhat critical approach to him, due to the previously stated information.⁴² He believed the emperor was the reason for the troubled state of the government and the decline of the Habsburg and Catholic power in the Roman-German Empire and the hereditary lands. The emperor bowed to pressure from the non-Catholic Bohemian estates and signed the famous Letter of Majesty in July 1609, granting concessions to the Protestants.⁴³ In his final report in December 1610, Caetani assessed the situation in the empire with scepticism; widespread chaos, pending long-term problems and potential conflicts threatened the future.⁴⁴ Caetani's view of the emperor's rule and his capabilities was common throughout his peers. Similar accounts of the sovereign are found in reports written by his predecessors as well as those from diplomats in other countries.⁴⁵

It is important to be vigilant when studying diplomatic reports and consider that the authors had their own bias when speaking about the emperor or his reign. The nuncios had their own specific perspective on many issues and experiences in their situation.⁴⁶ Additionally, it is important to consider that the emperor typically avoided foreign diplomats and did not openly communicate his political intentions or motivations when making decisions.⁴⁷ What may have initially appeared to be an indication/ a symptom of the

38 Ibidem, No. 223,1, p. 187.

39 Ibidem, No. 62,3, p. 61; No. 181,1–2, p. 153.

40 Ibidem, No. 178, pp. 150–151; No. 457,1, p. 386.

41 Ibidem, No. 339,6, p. 291.

42 Ibidem, No. 255,1, p. 215; No. 263,1, p. 225. For more details, see Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK, *Hlavní stereotypy v korespondenci pražského nuncia Caetaniho z let 1608–1609 a jejich proměny*, *Studia historica brunensia* 58, 2011, pp. 13–23.

43 Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK, *Die päpstliche Politik in Mitteleuropa vor und nach dem Majestätsbrief – Wandel oder Kontinuität?*, in: J. Hausenblasová – J. Mikulec – M. Thomsen (edd.), *Religion und Politik im frühneuzeitlichen Böhmen. Der Majestätsbrief Kaiser Rudolf II. von 1609*, Stuttgart 2014, pp. 55–61.

44 G. BRAUN, *Imagines*, pp. 53–55. For the text of Caetani's final report, see S. GIORDANO (ed.), *Le istruzioni generali*, No. 51, pp. 713–773.

45 R. J. W. EVANS, *Rudolf II.*, pp. 76–77.

46 Wolfgang REINHARD, *Historische Anthropologie frühneuzeitlicher Diplomatie*, in: M. Rohrschneider – A. Strohmayer (edd.), *Wahrnehmungen des Fremden. Differenzverfahren von Diplomaten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Münster 2007, p. 58.

47 The description of a *distant monarch* is appropriate for Emperor Rudolf II, as used by David Starkey – David STARKEY, *Introduction. Court history in perspective*, in: idem (ed.), *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, London 1987, pp. 1–24.

emperor's health condition could have been his political tactic. This refers to his alleged indecisions, lack of interest in handling state documents,⁴⁸ as well as his relationships with individual diplomats. He frequently refused to grant an audience to Nuncio Caetani or other foreign diplomats⁴⁹ and openly opposed the visit of Pontifical Legate Giovanni Garcia Millini, (sent by Paul V to solve the “*brotherly dispute*” in 1608).⁵⁰ By contrast, audiences with other ambassadors or people with a specific objective were more likely to be relatively prompt and without problems. In one example, a canon sent by the Cologne Elector, Hartger Henot, arrived in Prague at the beginning of March 1609 and attended at least three personal audiences with the emperor within the next few days.⁵¹

The cold and detached attitude of Emperor Rudolph II to papal diplomats may have been influenced by his personal strategies and tactics. He also had a complicated relationship with the papacy throughout his reign, which worsened over time. In his 1575 succession speech, Rudolf II formally declared himself a protector of the Catholic Church and the papacy;⁵² he approached them with mistrust and opposed their political and religious intentions. In matters where he perceived a threat to his own interests, he took actions and opted for procedures belonging to his own sovereign majesty, regardless of the declared allegiance to the Holy See. From the beginning of his reign, this was reflected in political and religious issues concerning the Roman-German Empire, the Czech lands, or Imperial Italy. Over time this attitude became increasingly stronger.⁵³ The first contradictions in the perception of the relationship became evident in the negotiations of the obedience deputation of the new ruler of the Habsburg Empire in 1577.⁵⁴ In matters relating to the German lands, the popes were dissatisfied with the sovereign's negligent and cautious approach to current problems, his stance on succession, and they disagreed with him on how to elect bishops.⁵⁵

48 For more information, see J. PÁNEK, *K povaze vlády*, pp. 79, 83.

49 An extreme example was the mission of the Savoy Ambassador, Guido San Giorgio. He unsuccessfully waited for four months for an audience with the Emperor in 1608. EAAC IV, No. 50, 2.

50 Jan Paul NIEDERKORN, *Papst, Kaiser und Reich während des letzten Regiurungsjahre Kaiser Rudolfs II.*, in: A. Koller (ed.), *Die Außenbeziehungen der römischen Kurie unter Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621)*, Tübingen 2008, pp. 88–89.

51 F. STIEVE, *Vom Reichstag 1608*, p. 584.

52 K. VOCELKA, *Die politische Propaganda*, pp. 124–125.

53 R. J. W. EVANS, *Rudolf II.*, pp. 112–114.

54 A. KOLLER, *Imperator und Pontifex*, pp. 88–102.

55 Alena PAZDEROVÁ, *Analýza činnosti papežského nuncia na císařském dvoře v Praze Cesare Speciana z let 1592–1594*, SAP 67, 2017, pp. 387–390, 399–411; Alexander KOLLER, *Le relazioni tra Roma e la corte imperiale agli inizi del regno di Rodolfo II. La fine della nunziatura di Delfino e l'intermezzo Portia*, in: M. Sanfilippo – A. Koller – G. Pizzorusso (edd.), *Gli archivi di Santa Sede e il mondo asburgico nella prima età moderna*, Viterbo 2004, pp. 147–171, in particular, pp. 156–159; Heinz NOFLATSCHER, *Monarchische Willkür? Zur Demission des Wolf Rumpfs und Paul Sixt Trautson am Hof Kaiser Rudolfs II. (1600)*, in: K. Brandstätter (ed.), *Tirol – Österreich – Italien*, Innsbruck 2005, pp. 493–516, in particular, p. 507.

Pope Clement VIII criticized the emperor at the very end of the sixteenth century for his attitude regarding the dispute over the Duchy of Ferrara.⁵⁶ The curial position in the Empire was also aggravated by the gradual restriction of the participation of its diplomats in the Imperial Diet.⁵⁷ In 1608, Rudolf II prevented Nuncio Caetani from attending the Imperial Diet in Regensburg. He believed that the nuncio was carrying papal breves concerning the succession issue addressed to the bishops of the empire.⁵⁸ In the same year, he angered Pope Paul V with his efforts to thwart the legation of Cardinal Millini, who was sent to the empire to help resolve Pope Paul V's dispute with Archduke Matthias.⁵⁹ Disputes between the Roman Curia and the emperor also arose in Italy.⁶⁰ At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a dispute arose from Rudolf II's efforts to replenish an empty treasury by selling one of the Italian imperial fiefs. However, the papacy sometimes also asserted feudal power over them.⁶¹ In the Czech lands, the emperor and the papacy had an agreement (in general principle) for the common interest of recatholization, but Rudolf II consistently pursued his own interest. This was demonstrated in his hesitant approach to the plan for the recatholization of the Prague Utraquist University, the defence of the royal powers over the ecclesiastical property, and the limitation of the concept of general visitation of the Czech lands.⁶² The emperor found areas of agreement with Pope Clement VIII and Paul V when dealing with the threat to Hungary from the Turkish Wars in the late 1500s and early 1600s.⁶³

Relationship network of nuncios at the imperial court in Prague

Rudolf II continued to express his critical or distant manner towards curial politics. As his reign continued, direct contact between the emperor and the nuncios continued to decrease

56 K. STLOUKAL, *Papežská politika*, p. 32.

57 J. P. NIEDERKORN, *Papst, Kaiser*, p. 99.

58 EAAC I, No. 195, pp. 242–243.

59 J. P. NIEDERKORN, *Papst, Kaiser*, pp. 88–89.

60 A. KOLLER, *Imperator und Pontifex*, pp. 103–116.

61 In 1610, the dispute concerned the fief of Comacchio. EAAC V, No. 246, pp. 219–220; No. 261, p. 229; No. 424, p. 346.

62 Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK, *Die böhmische Kammer als Thema der Prager Nuntiatur zu Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts*, *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 55, 2013, pp. 219–239; IDEM, *La nunziatura presso la Corte imperiale nei primi anni del regno di Rodolfo II e le Terre ceche*, *Bollettino dell'Istituto storico ceco di Roma* 9, 2014, pp. 41–59; IDEM, *Pražský nuncius Germanico Malaspina a jeho strategie v českých zemích*, in: H. Jordánková (ed.), *Alis volat propriis*. Sborník příspěvků k životnímu jubileu Ludmily Sulitkové, Brno 2016, pp. 238–246.

63 J. P. NIEDERKORN, *Papst, Kaiser*, pp. 84–87; A. PAZDEROVÁ, *Analýza činnosti*, pp. 402, 411–424.

and it was essential for the nuncios to utilise the support of the appropriate courtiers and noblemen, whom were part of the relationship network of the papal diplomats.

Throughout the nunciature reports, initial instructions, final reports, or other correspondence, there is no word used as a collective term for the network of contacts. Using the term *papal party* would be inaccurate and misleading, as would the more established *Spanish party*.⁶⁴ In nunciature reports, it is more likely to find the term *parte nostra*, referring to a group of Catholic courtiers or nobility, or the clerics who were allies to or served the nuncios, which had a wider meaning linked more to an actively manifested confessional affiliation.⁶⁵ Unlike the clients of the king of Spain from among courtiers and nobles at the imperial court and beyond, who are referred to in the correspondence of Spanish diplomats terminologically,⁶⁶ members of the Prague-based nuncios' relationship network are usually not thus defined. In individual cases, an explicit client relationship to the popes can be observed among these individuals, but in most cases the relationship was of the patronage nature only partially or very flexibly.

The key figures of the relationship network near the end of the sixteenth century were emperor's ministers Paul Sixt Trautson⁶⁷ and Wolfgang Rumpf.⁶⁸ Both men previously appeared in the reports of the first Prague Nuncio Orazio Malaspina in 1578,⁶⁹ and continued to serve as important contacts with the subsequent Prague nuncios (Cesare Speciano⁷⁰ and Filippo Spinelli⁷¹) up to the last decade of the sixteenth century. Their significance was aptly described by Nuncio Camillo Caetani in his final report of 1592. He advised his successor Speciano that he "*should befriend all the ministers, make them your helpful confidants, especially Rumpf, through whom you will request and be granted audiences with the emperor, and with whom it will be appropriate to share the same matters after the negotiations with the emperor in order to strengthen his trust and emphasize the importance of his person.*" Trautson would become important to Speciano due to his relationship with Cardinal Ludovico Madruzzo, the Bishop of Trent and Cardinal Protector of Germany.

64 Most recently on this issue, see P. MAREK, *La Embajada*, pp. 50–52; Rubén GONZÁLEZ CUERVA – Pavel MAREK, *The Dynastic Network between the Imperial and Spanish Courts (1556–1619)*, in: R. González Cuerva – A. Koller (edd.), *A Europe of Courts*, pp. 130–134.

65 In the case of Caetani's nunciature, see EAAC IV, No. 94,2, p. 85; No. 257,1, p. 219; No. 281, p. 244.

66 P. MAREK, *Klientelní strategie*, pp. 47–48; IDEM, *La red clientelar en Praga*, in: J. M. Millán – M. A. Visceglia (edd.), *La monarquía de Felipe III*, vol. IV, Madrid 2008, pp. 1351–1353.

67 For more information on him ADB, vol. 38, pp. 522–524; Stefan EHRENPREIS, *Kaiserliche Gerichtsbarkeit und Konfessionskonflikt. Der Reichshofrat unter Rudolf II. 1576–1612*, Göttingen 2006, pp. 313–314; H. NOFLATSCHER, *Monarchische Willkür*.

68 For more information on him, see ADB, vol. 29, pp. 668–669.

69 E.g. NDB III, vol. 10, No. 131,4, p. 216; No. 145,1, pp. 241–242; No. 172,3, p. 283.

70 E.g. EACS I, No. 34, p. 84; 40,6, p. 91.

71 ASV, Fondo Borghese, Series III, 67b, fol. 123–124, 261, 340–341.

According to Caetani, Trautson “shows a special affection for the servants of the Apostolic See.”⁷² Of the two ministers, Rumpf was more important to them, according to the reports of the individual nuncios. He was a source of vital information about the events at the imperial court,⁷³ the intentions or meetings of the emperor,⁷⁴ the contents of documents delivered to the emperor; or the delivery of nuncio’s or curial letters.⁷⁵ Rumpf’s assistance was an opportune way to advance the objectives of the papal policy, presented to him by the nuncios on behalf of the empire. These might be filling a vacant bishop’s cathedra with trustworthy candidates faithful to the Holy See⁷⁶ or the important and sensitive issue of succession in the Roman Empire.⁷⁷ Trautson was utilised in a similar way and for similar purposes, although less frequently.⁷⁸

Certain prestigious and long-term status of these two men continued until 1600, when they fell into disfavour with the emperor and had to leave his court.⁷⁹ Johann Barvitius is another notable person found in the correspondence and direct negotiations of the nuncios. He served at the imperial court from 1589; initially as the secretary of the Latin expedition and later as a prominent figure in Empire’s relationship with the Italian region.⁸⁰ Caetani’s report from 1592 highlights his significance, despite his age being much younger than either of these privy councillors: “it is for his virtue and capability that he is popular with the emperor, [...] respectful of the Holy See and kind to its ministers.” According to Caetani, Speciano needed to establish “a close friendship with him for he will receive many services and help from him.”⁸¹ After Rumpf and Trautson were removed from office in 1600, Barvitius’s importance for papal diplomacy greatly increased. He proved very valuable to the nuncios Giovanni Stefano Ferreri (1604–1607), Antonio Caetani (1607–1611)⁸² and the last nuncio of the era of Rudolf II, Giovanni Salvago (1611–1612).⁸³ The tasks Barvitius

72 EACS I, No. 198,4, p. 447.

73 E.g. NBD III, vol. 10, No. 142,6, p. 236.

74 E.g. EACS II, No. 472,3, p. 1034; No. 522,3, p. 1142.

75 E.g. NBD III, vol. 10, No. 229,2, p. 374; ASV, Fondo Borghese III, 67b, fol. 108r–111r.

76 NBD III, vol. 10, No. 134,4, p. 216; No. 145,1, pp. 241–242.

77 EACS II, No. 204, p. 486; No. 211,1, p. 497.

78 E.g. NBD III, vol. 10, No. 172,2, p. 290; No. 252,2, p. 404; EACS III, No. 655,3, p. 1469; No. 661,12, p. 1484.

79 J. JANÁČEK, *Rudolf II.*, pp. 339–340; H. NOFLATSCHER, *Monarchische Willkür.*

80 S. EHRENPREIS, *Kaiserliche Gerichtsbarkeit*, p. 291; Lothar GROSS, *Die Geschichte der deutschen Reichshofkanzlei*, Wien 1933, pp. 414–418. On the importance of Barvitius in the functioning of the Aulic Council, see Leopold AUER, *Reichshofrat und Reichsitalien*, in: *L’Impero e l’Italia nella prima età moderna / Das Reich und Italien in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Matthias Schnettger – Marcello Verga (edd.), Bologna – Berlin 2006, pp. 27–40, here p. 37.

81 EACS I, No. 198,4, p. 448.

82 Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK – Pavel MAREK, *Vztahové sítě španělských a papežských diplomatů u císařského dvora na pozadí krize z let 1608–1609*, ČČH 115, 2017, pp. 1075–1097, here pp. 1079–1081, 1088–1089.

83 E.g. BAV, Barb. lat. 6911, fol. 109r; Ibidem, Barb. lat. 6912, fol. 34r–34v, 68r.

carried out for the papal representatives were very similar to those of Rumpf and Trautson. He was essential in acquiring information about the actions or health of the emperor,⁸⁴ on individual political-religious matters,⁸⁵ or pushing them through in the Privy or Aulic Council or with the sovereign himself.⁸⁶ The inclusion of Barvitiuŝ in the group of papal clients is explicitly expressed in the letters of Camillo Cattaneo, an agent of Francesco Gonzaga di Castiglione; addressed to Cardinal Nephew Scipione Borghese in 1611.⁸⁷

Barvitiuŝ's position towards supporting papal intentions had limits and he was not comfortable going beyond what served his personal interests. On September 22, 1608, Caetani wrote to Rome about a resolution he had made with Barvitiuŝ to encourage the emperor to resolve the open question of peace with Matthias, through a joint appeal from the members of the Privy Council and Bohemian provincial officials to the sovereign.⁸⁸ However, two weeks later the diplomat reported Barvitiuŝ's interest had faded, which he attributed to the sovereign showing little interest in the idea.⁸⁹ Nuncio Spinelli called attention to Barvitiuŝ's attitude in 1599, when he wrote to Rome that Barvitiuŝ was "*willing to serve His Holiness and the Catholic faith, but only in secrecy.*"⁹⁰

In addition to those individuals who were essential members of the papal relationship network in Prague, there are other imperial ministers and individuals from the court depicted in the nunciature reports. However, their significance was lesser than those previously mentioned. These associates may have changed their position at the Court, changed their attitude towards papal diplomacy, revealed their influence at the imperial court was relatively limited (from the perspective of the nuncios), or they may have died. This relates to the occurrence of references in the nunciature correspondence or in the number of activities they performed for the Holy See. For example, Jacob Kurz von Senftenau, the imperial vice-chancellor, worked very intensely for a brief period with Nuncio Speciani, until his premature death in 1594.⁹¹ Hans Christoph von Hornstein, an aulic councillor who also figures occasionally in the reports, was also closely associated

84 EAAC IV, No. 21,3, p. 24.

85 E.g. Arnold Oskar MEYER (ed.), *Die Prager Nuntiatur des Giovanni Stefano Ferreri und Wiener Nuntiatur des Giacomo Serra (1603–1606)*, Berlin 1913, No. 580c, p. 530; No. 627e, p. 572; EAAC IV, No. 31,2, p. 32; EAAC V, No. 11,2, pp. 15–16; BAV, Barb. lat. 6912, fol. 57r; Barb. lat. 6913, fol. 108r.

86 EAAC IV, No. 16,2, p. 20.

87 BAV, Barb. lat. 7045, fol. 61r–67r, 77r–82r.

88 EAAC IV, No. 31,2, p. 32.

89 EAAC IV, No. 49,2, p. 47.

90 "*Barvicio, il quale mostra volont  di servire la Santit  di Nostro Signore et la religion cattolica, ma secretamente.*" ASV, Fondo Borghese III, 84a, fol. 412r.

91 E.g. EACS I, No. 39,1, p. 87; No. 93,3, p. 211; No. 113,11, p. 263; No. 122,1–3, pp. 279–282. For more information, see Alena PAZDEROV , *Z zem  Specianovy nunciatury u c sařsk ho dvora v Praze v letech 1592–1594*, *Paginae historiae: sborn k N rodn ho archivu* 23/1, 2015, pp. 7–54, here p. 20.

with Speciani.⁹² At the beginning of his appointment, Nuncio Caetani relied on privy councillor Andreas Hannewald von Eckersdorf. In 1607, the councillor benefitted from the emperor's confidence and had frequent access to him. Eventually, Caetani reassessed Hannewald's importance and willingness, reporting that "*less [...] than promised can be expected of him*"⁹³ and he was not willing to present matters that may make the emperor ill tempered.⁹⁴ Similarly, in 1607, the emperor's ministers Leopold von Stralendorf and Hermann von Attems were useful members of the network, however a year later they both lost the nuncio's trust and their actions were sharply criticized by him.⁹⁵ Caetani's successor Salvago used the help of Ernest von Mollart,⁹⁶ as well as that of Johann Barvitius and Karl of Liechtenstein, who held an important position at the imperial court in the early seventeenth century.⁹⁷ Karl had a beneficial relationship with Caetani's predecessor, Ferrerim. In his final report of 1607, he recommended Karl as a person "*quite favourably disposed to the Holy See*"⁹⁸, which can be read in their mutual correspondence.⁹⁹ However, Caetani did not trust him, and his reports show that it was mutual.¹⁰⁰

It is evident that the general tendency of the nuncios was to recruit key people operating in the main institutions of imperial politics (i.e. ideally the members of the Privy Council or the Aulic Council) for cooperation in their affairs.¹⁰¹ In the later period of Rudolf II's reign, his distrust of the representatives of the Holy See became evident. The nuncios were forced to use people from other social strata in the imperial court who had influence over the sovereign or were accessible to him. In the years 1603–1607, the nunciature frequently wrote of Philipp Lang, the emperor's valet, who enjoyed the emperor's confidence and managed to use it appropriately to his advantage.¹⁰² Nuncio Ferreri, referred to him informally in his reports as "*Filippo*" and used him to obtain information and promote papal matters. According to Ferreri's report of March 19, 1606, it was Lang's contribution that made it

92 EACS I, No. 40,8, p. 91; EACS II No. 238,2, p. 546.

93 "*Da lui si può sperar meno che faccia gli uffitii, che promette.*" EAAC I, No. 39, p. 60.

94 Ibidem, No. 67, p. 98; No. 86, p. 117; No. 90, p. 123.

95 T. ČERNUŠÁK – P. MAREK, *Vztahové sítě*, pp. 1079–1080, 1088–1089.

96 BAV, Barb. lat. 6911, fol. 83r, 109r; 6912, fol. 68r. An explicit statement of Mollart's client relationship with Cardinal Borghese, see BAV, Barb. lat. 6914, fol. 29r. For more information on Mollart, see ADB, vol. 22, pp. 117–118.

97 Karel STLOUKAL, *Karel z Lichtenštejna a jeho účast na vládě Rudolfa II.*, ČČH 18, 1912, pp. 21–37, 153–169, 389–434.

98 EAAC I, No. 4, p. 16.

99 National Archives of Prague, collection of transcripts from the Italian and Vatican archives, Card Index 94, Inv. No. 513, Letter 1 (dated August 17, 1605).

100 EAAC I, No. 36, p. 55; No. 41, p. 61; No. 103, pp. 138–139.

101 A. PAZDEROVÁ, *Zázemí*, pp. 18–22.

102 For the influence of this man, see J. JANÁČEK, *Rudolf II.*, pp. 392–393.

possible for them to remove parts of the Treaty of Vienna which contradicted the interests of the Catholic Church.¹⁰³

Other important components of the network of the Prague nuncios were the representatives of the Bohemian and Moravian nobility. In 1578–1581, Orazio Malaspino used the services of Vratislav of Pernstein, who was mandated to promote (albeit unsuccessfully) the recatholization of the Prague Utraquist University.¹⁰⁴ When implementing papal plans concerning the Czech lands, Nuncio Spinelli relied on Kryštof Popel of Lobkowicz.¹⁰⁵ Zdeněk Vojtěch Popel of Lobkowicz is another Catholic who played a minor part. Nuncio Ferreri used his services,¹⁰⁶ however it is uncertain how much they were utilised by his successor, Caetani. The nobleman was in direct contact with Caetani, especially during the session of the Land Diet in 1609, but it cannot be unequivocally confirmed that he performed any services for Caetani.¹⁰⁷

Camillo Cattaneo was man who originated on the outside of the official court structures and was able to move into their immediate vicinity in the last years of Emperor Rudolf II's life.¹⁰⁸ In the years 1607–1611, he worked primarily as a Prague agent of the Italian nobleman Francesco Gonzaga di Castiglione, the emperor's emissary to Rome (and later to Spain).¹⁰⁹ This position allowed him to easily access the emperor's key ministers, which was why he was employed by papal diplomats to obtain valuable information. Nuncio Caetani repeatedly wrote highly of his services in his letters.¹¹⁰ During his temporary stay in Rome in 1609, Cattaneo won cardinal-nephew Scipione Borghese's confidence, which allowed him to then serve as Borghese's client and independent source in Prague from the beginning of 1611.¹¹¹

103 A. O. MEYER (ed.), *Die Prager Nuntiatur*, No. 734b, p. 691.

104 E.g. NBD III, vol. 10, No. 150,1, pp. 249–250; No. 158,2, p. 261; No. 162,1, pp. 266–267.

105 ASV, Fondo Borghese III, 84a, fol. 408–411; III, 87c, fol. 92–94; III, 67v, fol. 136–137.

106 A. O. MEYER (ed.), *Die Prager Nuntiatur*, No. 429, p. 377; No. 431c, p. 379.

107 T. ČERNUŠÁK – P. MAREK, *Vztahové sítě*, p. 1081.

108 For more information on Cattaneo, see Camillo BOTTURI, *Abati e arcipreti di Castiglione*, in: Massimo De Paoli (ed.), *La chiesa sul colle*, Brescia 2013, pp. 13–29, here p. 17; Josef GRISAR, *Maria Wards Institut vor römischen Kongregationen (1616–1630)*, Roma 1966, p. 536, Note 11.

109 Basic information on his life and work (including bibliography), see *Gonzaga, Francesco*, in: DBI, vol. 57, 2001, pp. 766–767.

110 EAAC II, No. 23, pp. 35–36; EAAC IV, No. 349, pp. 298–299.

111 BAV, Barb. lat. 7045, fol. 61r–84v. Most recently on him, see Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK, *Camillo Cattaneo und sein Dienst am Papsttum. Zum Wirken eines der Agenten am Kaiserhof in Prag*. MIÖG 127, 2019 (to be printed).

Resources of papal nuncios

Similar to the king of Spain's clientele network managed by Prague ambassadors, it is also possible to identify different types of resources of the papal network used by nuncios to reward services of its members.¹¹² The typology, strategy and policy of the use of resources was different in the curial environment than those in the kingdom of Spain. An analysis done by Wolfgang Reinhard of Paul V's pontificate revealed that there were three main types of sources. Firstly, there were benefices, which were a fixed income permanently attached to an ecclesiastical office. Secondly, offices. Thirdly, graces were various dispensations or privileges that could be given.¹¹³ At the imperial court in Prague, two of them in particular were used – benefices and graces of various kinds.

The main sources of rewards which appear in the nunciature correspondence would have been obtaining a benefice, usually for relatives of those in the network or others in their own relationship network. This system of rewards can be illustrated with the example of Nuncio Speciani. He was approached in July 1592 by both the rector of the papal college in Prague, Johann Elleborn and by the emperor's minister Rumpf, asking for the endorsement of specific people to occupy the recently vacated canonry in Magdeburg.¹¹⁴ The Holy See eventually chose to support Rumpf's request,¹¹⁵ who wanted to use the position to reward one of his own servants.¹¹⁶ Similarly, in 1600, Johann Barvitius made a request through Nuncio Spinelli to fill the vacant canonry position in Wroclaw with Gerhard Ecker, a former alumnus of Roman Collegium Germanicum.¹¹⁷ Barvitius then thanked the nuncio for the positive response to his request with a personal letter.¹¹⁸ In 1608, Herrmann von Attems sought to procure a canonry for his son, John James, but his request was rejected by Rome.¹¹⁹

Another resource frequently mentioned in nunciature reports and other related correspondence was the provision of various graces. In 1580, Nuncio Malaspina pleaded with Vratislav of Pernstein to obtain the remains of St. Monika for the chapel in his chateau in Litomyšl.¹²⁰ Graces could also be various forms of dispensations, such as the dispensation for Aulic Councillor Hornstein to read banned books and a marital dispensation for his

112 H. von THIESSEN, *Patronageressourcen in Außenbeziehungen*, pp. 33–34.

113 W. REINHARD, *Paul V. Borghese*, pp. 23–47. Briefly on this issue with regard to the relationship with Spain, see also H. von THIESSEN, *Diplomatie und Patronage*, pp. 51–53.

114 EACS I, No. 40,6, p. 91.

115 Ibidem, No. 56,3, p. 126.

116 Ibidem, No. 42,5, p. 94.

117 ASV, Fondo Borghese III, 67b, fol. 166–168.

118 Ibidem, fol. 274.

119 EAAC IV, No. 350, p. 299; No. 398,2, p. 334.

120 NBD III, vol. 10, No. 174,6, pp. 287–288.

relatives.¹²¹ Additionally included in this term is the sending of personal papal breves, as illustrated by the previous examples of Barvitius or Kryštof Popel of Lobkowicz.¹²²

It is difficult to find any explicit references to direct financial compensation for the members of the network in the correspondence of the imperial court nuncios. One exception is a letter from Nuncio Ferreri's registry, addressed to the nuncio by Cardinal Ottavio Bandini in November 1604. He appealed to Ferreri to support an unspecified matter at the imperial court for his "*closest friend*", Cosimo Strozzi, not only with the authority of the nuncio's office, but also with the "*money he has to pay to His Majesty's ministers at the behest of His Holiness*."¹²³

If we look at the issues of resources in terms of the often-quoted concept written by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, we can describe them as different forms of capital.¹²⁴ However, it must be considered that sometimes it is rather difficult or ambiguous to identify individual resources as belonging to a specific one. Benefices can thus be perceived as economic, social, and symbolic capital. In addition to the direct financial income for the bearers, benefices undoubtedly brought them a prestigious position.¹²⁵

Conclusion

The relationship network set up and administered by papal nuncios was a remarkable entity at the imperial court in Prague. Its importance was more significant due to the reluctance of Emperor Rudolf II to yield to the claims and demands of the Holy See, and his personal aversion to and mistrust of the policies it pursued. This relationship network was not extensive and, especially after 1600, it suffered from increased personnel instability. Apart from Johann Barvitius, the network failed to compensate for the loss caused by the withdrawal of the long-term supporters such as Rumpf and Trautson. In addition, the activity of the members of the papal network was greatly limited by their personal interests and the threat of the sovereign's disgrace or mistrust. The explicit client relationship of these and other individuals from the imperial court with the pope is rarely documented in historical sources. Presently, it is appropriate to state that the members of the network were mostly utilised for their positions at court, based on their confessional affiliation and

121 EACS II, No. 274, pp. 618–619.

122 EACS I, No. 2,1, p. 27; ASV, Fondo Borghese III, 67b, fol. 148–150

123 "*Perché non solo Vostra Signoria potrà aiutarlo con la sua molta autorità, ma anco con la commodità del denaro, che lei deve sborsare per ordine di Nostro Signore alli ministri di Sua Maestà.*" NA, Sbirka přepisů z italských a vatikánských archivů, Card Index 92, Inv. No. 498, Letter 1, dated November 20, 1604.

124 Pierre BOURDIEU, Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital, in: Reinhard Kreckel (ed.) *Soziale Ungleichkeiten* (Soziale Welt 2), Göttingen 1983, pp. 183–198.

125 W. REINHARD, *Paul V. Borghese*, p. 23.

their positive attitude towards papal policies. These allies were supported by the material or symbolic benefits that cooperation with the nuncios provided. The resources available to the papal diplomats corresponded to the character of the Papal State and were rare compared to the resources of the king of Spain. However, their usefulness was limited, and their value was more significant in terms of symbolism. The papal relationship networks were used to strengthen the social status of individual members of the network in relation to the personal structures they built around themselves.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ The present study is based on the GAČR research project (GA17-06049S) *Relational networks of Apostolic nuncios and Spanish envoys in the milieu of the imperial court at the turn of the 16th and 17th century*.