

**The House of Vasa
and
The House of Austria**

The House of Vasa and The House of Austria

Correspondence from the Years 1587 to 1668

Part I

The Times of Sigismund III, 1587–1632

Volume 1

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in collaboration with

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| No. 257 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Pozsony, 22 March 1613 | 595 |
| No. 258 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Prague, 27 March 1613 | 597 |
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| No. 261 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 18 June 1613 | 604 |
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| No. 265 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Linz, 6 November 1613 | 609 |
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| No. 268 | King Philip III to King Sigismund III, Aranjuez, 2 May 1615 | 612 |
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| No. 271 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Prague, 16 August 1615 | 616 |
| No. 272 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Prague, 8 October 1615 | 617 |
| No. 273 | Prince Wladyslaw Vasa to King Philip III, Warsaw, 5 December 1615 | 618 |
| No. 274 | Emperor Matthias to Prince Wladyslaw Vasa, Prague, 12 December 1615 | 619 |
| No. 275 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Prague, 12 December 1615 | 620 |
| No. 276 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Prague, 9 March 1616 | 621 |
| No. 277 | Prince Wladyslaw Vasa to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 6 April 1616 | 622 |
| No. 278 | Prince Wladyslaw Vasa to Empress Anna, Warsaw, 6 April 1616 | 624 |

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| No. 279 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 6 April 1616 | 625 |
| No. 280 | Emperor Matthias to Prince Wladyslaw Vasa, Prague, 16 June 1616. | 627 |
| No. 281 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Prague, 16 June 1616 | 628 |
| No. 282 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 10 July 1616 | 629 |
| No. 283 | King Philip III to King Sigismund III, San Lorenzo, 16 July 1616 | 631 |
| No. 284 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 23 July 1616 | 632 |
| No. 285 | Prince Wladyslaw Vasa to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 23 July 1616. | 636 |
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| No. 296 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Prague, 20 December 1616. | 651 |
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| No. 298 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 9 June 1618 | 653 |
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| No. 300 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 6 July 1618 | 657 |
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| No. 302 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 23 [July] 1618 | 660 |
| No. 303 | King Sigismund III to King Ferdinand II, [c. 25 July 1618] | 661 |
| No. 304 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 12 August 1618. | 663 |
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| No. 307 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 23 August 1618 | 670 |
| No. 308 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 15 October 1618. | 671 |

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| No. 309 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 3 November 1618 | 673 |
| No. 310 | Emperor Matthias to King Sigismund III, [November-December 1618] | 674 |
| No. 311 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Matthias, Warsaw, 1 December 1618 | 675 |
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| No. 313 | King Sigismund III to Archduke Albert, Warsaw, 20 January 1619 | 679 |
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| No. 315 | Prince Władysław to Archduke Leopold V, Nysa, 20 July 1619 | 681 |
| No. 316 | King Sigismund III to Archduke Leopold V, Warsaw, 15 September 1619 | 682 |
| No. 317 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Ferdynand II, Warsaw, 30 September 1619 | 684 |
| No. 318 | King Sigismund III to Archduke Leopold V, [September 1619] | 686 |
| No. 319 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Ferdinand II, Warsaw, 2 January 1620 | 687 |
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| No. 321 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 24 March 1620 | 692 |
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| No. 337 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Ferdinand II, Warsaw, 23 January 1621 | 719 |
| No. 338 | Prince Władysław Vasa to Emperor Ferdinand II, Warsaw, 24 January 1621 | 721 |
| No. 339 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Ferdinand II, Warsaw, 7 February 1621 | 722 |
| No. 340 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 14 February 1621 | 724 |
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| No. 348 | Infanta Isabella to King Sigismund III, Brussels, 22 July 1621 | 732 |
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| No. 350 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 24 July 1621 | 734 |
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| No. 352 | King Sigismund III to Emperor Ferdinand II, Warsaw, 6 August 1621 | 736 |
| No. 353 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 14 August 1621 | 738 |
| No. 354 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 31 August 1621 | 739 |
| No. 355 | King Sigismund III to Infanta Isabella, Lviv, 20 October 1621 | 740 |

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| No. 356 | Prince Władysław to Emperor Ferdinand II, Kamieniec Podolski, 20 October 1621 | 741 |
| No. 357 | Prince Władysław to Emperor Ferdinand II, Lviv, 3 November 1621 | 742 |
| No. 358 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 4 December 1621 | 744 |
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| No. 361 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 8 January 1622 | 748 |
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| No. 378 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Kolin, 16 May 1623 | 777 |
| No. 379 | Emperor Ferdinand II to King Sigismund III, Vienna, 3 August 1623 | 779 |
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RYSZARD SKOWRON

THE HOUSE OF VASA AND THE HOUSE OF AUSTRIA:
CORRESPONDENCE FROM 1587–1668.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The House of Austria and the House of Vasas controlled a vast share of the European continent in the 16th and 17th centuries. Either dynasty was divided into two branches. Habsburgs operated through two courts: in Vienna and Madrid, and the Vasas – through the courts in Stockholm and Cracow/Warsaw. The House of Austria ruled not only the Empire and Iberian kingdoms but also the Kingdom of Hungary and the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Netherlands, a large share of the Northern Italy, and the Kingdom of Naples. In turn, the House of Vasas ruled Intermarium, a large expanse in Central Europe from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, covering Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and the Kingdom of Poland with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Throughout that time, falling back on the heritage of Charles V Empire and commitment to the Catholic religion, the two houses of Habsburgs shared dynastic loyalty, which reached its apogee during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). Although following the War of Succession, the Habsburgs were to lose the throne of Spain, their reign in Vienna lasted until the First World War. The history of the House of Vasas followed an entirely different course: Sigismund III, a grandson of the founder of the dynasty, Gustav I, and a Jagiellonian on the distaff side was elected king of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1587. In 1592, Sigismund III, after the death of his father John III reached for the Swedish crown, yet lost it to his paternal uncle Charles, Duke of Södermanland seven years later. The two branches of the dynasty – the Swedish and the Polish – entered a permanent war and found themselves in the opposing political and religious blocs. The throne in Stockholm was inherited, while the one in Cracow depended on the preferences of the nobility of the Polish–Lithuanian state, who elected the rulers. The reign of the House of Vasas ended both in Sweden and Poland in abdications of the last representatives of the family: Christina in 1654 and John Casimir in 1668.

The power of the Habsburg Dynasty grew from the marriage arrangements with two dynasties situated on the opposite ends of Europe: in 1494, with Trastámara ruling Aragon and Castile, and in 1515 with the Jagiellonians holding at the time the thrones of Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, and Bohemia. The latter treaty concluded during the Congress of Vienna connected the grandchildren of Isabel and Ferdinand with the Jagiellonians with bonds of blood. Sigismund III was a son of John Vasa and Catherine Jagiellon. Through his mother, he was a relative of the Aragons (his grandmother Isabel was a daughter of King Alfonso II) and Habsburgs (the other grandmother was Isabel, daughter of Albert II King of Rome). The nobility of the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania elected him king primarily because he was a Jagiellonian offspring and a Catholic.

Despite being brought to the throne by the anti-Habsburg faction and the need to fight Maximilian for the crown, from the start of his reign, the Vasa aimed at rapprochement with the House of Austria. Moreover, Sigismund realised that remaining in conflict with the Emperor and his family would bear a threat of isolation on the international stage, much like poor relations between Poland and France. Circumstances suggested a need for an alliance with the Habsburgs, the only potential partner in this part of Europe, who was not only capable of providing Poland with military and financial support in the conflicts with Moscow and Turkey but also of assuring ideological and cultural models so coveted by the young monarch.

The Vasas found marriages the basic tool in carrying out the policy of cooperation and alliance with Habsburgs. Matrimonial ties were important not only for political reasons but also for prestige. It was so as the Vasas were a young dynasty that did not enjoy a powerful position in Europe. In May 1592, the Polish king wed Anna of Austria (1573–1598), and after her death, he married her sister, Constance (1588–1631) in 1605. They were daughters of Charles II of Styria and Maria of Bavaria, who produced no fewer than fifteen children. Both the wives of Sigismund III were sisters of among others the future Emperor Ferdinand II, Margaret wife of Philip III King of Spain, Archduke Leopold V of Tyrol, Maria Magdalena, wife of Cosimo II Grand Duke of Tuscany, and Charles Bishop of Wrocław and Brixen. Anne's aunt was Eleonore (1534–1594) Duchess of Mantua and Montferrato. The Polish queens were also sisters of emperors

Rudolf II and Matthew, and archdukes: Ernest Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, Maximilian the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order and rival of Sigismund III for the Polish crown, and Albert Governor of the Netherlands who wed Isabella Clara Eugenia daughter of Philip II King of Spain in 1599, and ruled the Netherlands with her. Let us add that the niece of Queen Constance, Anne of Austria, wed Louis XIII King of France in 1616, her nephew Philip IV became the King of Spain in 1621, and her brother's daughter, Isabela Clara Eugenia (daughter of Leopold V) born in 1629 would marry Charles II Duke of Montour and Montferrato 20 years later.

King Sigismund had five children with Anne of Austria, of whom only the future King Ladislaus IV lived to maturity. Seven children were born from the marriage to Constance: future King John Casimir, John Albert, Charles Ferdinand, Aleksander Charles, Anne Constance (who died a few months after birth), and Anne Catherine who married Philip William Wittelsbach, Elector Palatine. With the exception of Sigismund III, all the members of the Vasa family in the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania were connected to Habsburgs by blood bonds through their mothers.

The policy of marrying members of the House of Austria was continued by King Ladislaus IV, who wed Cecilia Renata, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand II in 1637; her brother was the future Emperor Ferdinand III and sister – Maria Anna, wife to Maximilian I Elector of Bavaria. Let us also add that the sister-in-law of the Polish Queen was Maria Anna of Spain, daughter of Philip III and wife of Emperor Ferdinand III, and her niece was the Queen of Spain, Marianna wife of Philip IV. After the death of Cecilia Renata, disenchanted by cooperation with the Habsburgs, Ladislaus IV turned towards France and married Marie Louise Gonzaga de Nevers in 1646, who after her husband's death, married John Casimir in 1649. It may be worth noting that Marie Louise also had family ties with the House of Austria, as her brother's daughter, Eleonora, daughter of Charles II Gonzaga married Emperor Ferdinand III in 1651, and was the mother of the future Queen of Poland, Eleonora, wife of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki.

Sigismund III and his sons consciously aimed at the reinforcement of the myth of the Vaasa dynasty. Its fundamental element were the family's Jagiellonian roots. The Jagiellonian myth and its symbolism were strongly emphasised in all state ceremonies and special

propaganda campaigns through their artistic and ideological setting, the interior decoration of residences, and also in literature, writings, visual identification, and prints.¹ Polish historiography, however, fails to notice that the Vasas continued to build a parallel, Habsburg myth of their dynasty: King Sigismund III's grandmother was Elizabeth of Austria. They had to do it with other methods and tools, discreetly yet evidently. One of such tools was the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece, whose inheritors were the kings of Spain from the House of Austria, who moreover remained the only sovereigns of the Order until the early 18th century. The Vasas held a special place among the Knights of the Golden Fleece, and after 1565, they were the only non-Habsburg kings to receive the Order.² The Golden Fleece brought great splendour to the Vasas and buttressed their position among the ruling dynasties. They used the Order for their propaganda and ideology in a highly skilful and ostensible manner. Immediately after being presented with the Golden Fleece, Sigismund III began to use it to manifest his religious affiliation, and ties and friendship with the House of Austria. The chain was not only visible on the monarch's neck on nearly all the portraits but, following the standard introduced by the Habsburgs, it began to surround the coat of arms of the state. It is present on numerous objects related to the king and his court. For the first time, the Order was used for propaganda and decoration in Wawel Royal Castle renewed after the fire. It can be seen on the grand fireplace of the Audience Hall and on the portals of the doors to the king's palace. It is present on the Grand State Banner made in 1605, trumpet flares, and drum baldrics. It also began to feature on objects of everyday use: candlesticks, tableware, book covers, and medals. The ideological significance of the Order is best explained by the attitude of Ladislaus IV, who – having married Marie Louise Gonzaga – rejected

¹ On the Jagiellonian myth of the Vasa family, see esp.: J. Chrościcki, *Sztuka i polityka 1567–1668. Funkcje propagandowe sztuki Wazów w epoce Wazów*, Warszawa 1973, and M. Górka, *Polonia–Republica–Patria. Personifikacje Polski w sztuce XVI–XVIII wieku*, Wrocław 2005.

² R. Skowron, "Order Złotego Runa i jego polscy kawalerowie" [in:] *Staropolski ogląd świata. Rzeczpospolita między okcydentalizmem a orientalizacją. Przestrzeń wyobraźnia*, ed. by F. Wolański, R. Kołodziej, vol. 1, Toruń 2009, pp. 213–232; B.J. Garcia Garcia, "El diario de viajes del rey de armas Jean Hervart (1605–1633)" [in:] *El legado de Borgoña. Fiesta y cerimonia cortesana en la Europa de los Austrias*, ed. by K. De Jonge, B.J. Garcia Garcia, and A. Esteban Estringana, Madrid 2010, pp. 451–502.

the proposal of receiving the French Order of the Holy Spirit, as this would have made him return the Golden Fleece.

Ladislaus IV emphasised the Habsburg roots of his family even more strongly. In the dynastic monument of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, i.e. in the Marble Hall³ made to the design of Giovanni Battista Gisleni, portraits of Habsburgs were presented at par with those of Jagiellonians. The number of members of the House of Austria portrayed there included not only archduchesses, wives of the kings of Poland: Elizabeth of Austria, Elizabeth, Catherine, Anne, Constance, and Cecilia Renata but also Archduke Charles II of Styria with his wife Maria of Bavaria, and Emperor Ferdinand II with his wife Maria Anna. Moreover, when room in the gallery had to be found for the portrait of John Casimir, instead of removing an image of a Habsburg, it was probably that of Casimir the Jagiellon that had to be surrendered. The ideological message of the Marble Hall needed no roots reaching so deeply into the past and branching the genealogy of the House of Austria. What the king did was a conscious expansion of the Habsburg myth, as it increased the prestige and position of his family. Similarly, the etiquette of the Habsburg courts made a strong ideological and propagandist connection between the two dynasties, with one of the best examples being the official mourning observances held in Vienna, Madrid, and Brussels for the deceased Polish Queens.⁴

As has been mentioned, the Vasas built the Habsburg myth discreetly, as the nobility considered members of the House of Austria primarily the partisans of *absolutum dominium* and opponents of their freedom and privileges. The Jagiellonian myth, of dynastic and state nature, served domestic purposes. The Vasas developed it together with a society seeking ideological models and a golden age. In turn, the Habsburg myth was directed outwardly, and was of dynastic and European character. It served increasing the prestige of the dynasty

³ J. Chrościki, *op.cit.*, pp. 48–49.

⁴ J. Żukowski, “Z majestatu pańskiego na śmiertelne mary: polskie i europejskie egzekwie królowej Cecylii Renaty (1644)”, *Kronika Zamkowa* 63–64, 2012, pp. 79–125; R. Szmydki, *Artystyczno–dyplomatyczne kontakty Zygmunta III Wazy z Niderlandami Południowymi*, Lublin 2008, pp. 39–42; R. Skowron, “Filip IV wobec drugiego małżeństwa Władysława IV” [in:] *Arx felicitatis. Księga ku czci profesora Andrzeja Rottermunda w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin od przyjaciół, kolegów i współpracowników*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 613–617.

that wanted to assume an ever higher position among the rulers of Europe. The main goal of the Vasas was to create and reinforce the myth of its own dynasty that would portray them as the inheritors of the Jagiellonians and Habsburgs.

The marriages made it possible for the Vasas to enter into the network of Habsburg courts scattered around the Europe, and made possible participation in the processes of assimilation, and reception or rejection of their cultural and political models. One of the most important instruments that lets us observe and investigate these processes are the letters exchanged between members of the Vasa and Habsburg dynasties. The idea to publish the letters exchanged by the two families was born in the discussions at the International Congress *La Dínastia de los Austria*. *Las relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio* organised in Madrid by Instituto Universitario La corte en Europa, headed by Professor José Martínez Millán, in December 2009.⁵ The goal of the project is to use the letters to portray the dynamism and diversity of ties between the two families. This “exchange” portraying the dimension of cooperation and community of dynastic, political, cultural, and religious interests between the Habsburgs and the House of Austria builds the grounds for analysing the mutual relations from the perspective of blood links, emulation, and conflicts. The edition of the letters is to provide a particular catalogue portraying the role and identity of the Vasas in an extensive European context, and to be a starting point for further comparative studies of connected and translational history.

The object of the project is the cultural heritage of the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania found in the archives and libraries of Europe. Royal letters with signatures, seals, and content are a lasting testimony to the presence and role of Poland in the European system of royal courts in modern times. The entire project is a long-term documentation, research, and editorial effort. The edition of the documents will consist of five parts:

Part I – *The Times of Sigismund III* will cover years 1587–1632 and consist of letters exchanged by King Sigismund III and his children with emperors Rudolph, Matthew and Ferdinand II, and members of the House of Austria. Their letters will be published in two volumes.

⁵ *La Dinastía de los Austria: las relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio*, Madrid 2011, ed. by J. Martínez Millán and González Cuerva, vol. 1–3, Madrid 2011.

Part II – *The Times of Ladislaus* will cover years 1632–1646 and will be composed of the letters exchanged by King Ladislaus IV and his brothers and sister Anne Catherine Constance with emperors Ferdinand II and Ferdinand III, and members of the Habsburg dynasty. One volume seems sufficient to enclose this body of letters.

Part III – *Polish Queens from the House of Austria* will gather the letters of the queens: Queen Anne from 1592–1598, Queen Constance from 1605–31, and Queen Cecilia Renata from 1637–1644 with their parents and relatives from the Habsburg family. Moreover, this part is envisaged to include key accounts portraying the nuptial and coronation ceremonies.

Part IV – *The Times of John Casimir* will cover the years 1646–1668 and consist of letters exchanged by King John Casimir and his brother Charles Ferdinand with Emperor Leopold I and members of the House of Austria.

Part V – *Dynastic Compacts and Treaties* will cover the period from 1587 to 1668, and consist of the Polish–Austrian legal arrangements, including lavish documentation connected to the treaties of Bytom and Będzin, and wedding contracts, together with the most important accompanying documents containing the mutual obligations of the two dynasties.

The scope of research conducted in the archives connected to the cataloguing and gathering of the letters of the Vasas and the Habsburgs requires conducting queries of large territorial scope that should first reach to the archives and libraries of Austria, Belgium, Spain, and Poland. A decision was made to start the searches first in the archives that contain files with basic acts concerning the diplomacy and foreign policy of the Vasas and Habsburgs. The archive-related experience of project participants, and their knowledge of the operation of chancelleries, organisation of diplomacy and circulation of information made it possible to assume that these should contain at least 80% of all the letters, and that research must be conducted systemically. In the Viennese Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, such a fundamental collection of the files is *Diplomatie und Außenpolitik*, including series *Polen I (Polonica)*. The years 1587–1668 are contained in 45 volumes with signatures *Polen I* 36–77, 84, and 86–88. The sections *Familienkorrespondenz A* and *Familienakten* are of specific importance for analysing the letters of the Polish queens from the House of Austria.

In Spain, the most important collections from the 16th and 17th centuries can be found in Archivo General in Simancas. Materials on diplomatic relations with the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania can be found primarily in the section *Secretaría de Estado*, covering chiefly the documents connected to the functioning of the Council of the State (Consejo de Estado) and concerning the Spanish foreign policy. The *Polonica* from the 16th and 17th centuries belong primarily to series *Negociación de Alemania* and are an integral part of the files on diplomatic links between Madrid and the Empire and other German countries.⁶ Most significant in the series are the following collections of files: *Correspondencia*, Estado 693–712 (19), *Consultas originales* Estado 2323–2384 (61), and *Minutas de despachos* Estado 2449–2483, 3948 (35), *Cartas de Alemania* Estado 2492–2510 (18): 133 volumes altogether. A system similar to Simancas is present at the Archives Générales du Royaume in Brussels, where documents on relations with Poland can be found in the series *Secrétaire d'État Allemande*. Here too the query should be conducted in dozens of volumes besides the ones that the inventory⁷ identifies as those containing materials on links to the Vasas. The series *Libri Legationum* in the Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych in Warsaw, and within it the volumes from 25 to 39, is of primary significance for the Polish collection. Connected to this series are the files gathered in the *Archiwum Koronne Warszawskie*, where the study will cover the divisions concerning the states ruled by the Habsburgs, including the Empire, Spain, and Naples. Due to the methodology of operation of the royal chancellery, specific principles governing the organisation of Polish diplomacy, and the history of the Crown Archive, also *Teki Naruszenicza* held in the Princes Czartoryski Library in Cracow, ones that belong to other collections, as well as part of the Crown Archive currently in store at Riksarkivet in Stockholm, in series *Extranea IX, Polen*, and in other Swedish collections need to be counted among the body of files for fundamental research. Investigations should also check whether letters were exchanged between the Vasas and the Austrian archduchesses and

⁶ Polonica from the 16th and 17th centuries can be found primarily in *Negociación de Alemania* series consisting of 345 volumes, and are an integral part of the files on relations between Madrid and the Empire and other German countries. Their content was aptly described and defined by Walerian Meysztowicz in FEF, vol. VIII, pp. 1–10.

⁷ É. Laloire, *Inventaire des Archives de Secrétaire d'État allemande*, Bruxelles 1929.

Spanish princess *infantas* who married rulers of other European states: the princesses of Mantua Eleonore and Isabela Clara Eugene, Mary Magdalene Duchess of Tuscany, Catherine Michelle Duchess of Savoy, and Mary Anne the wife of the Elector of Bavaria, and the French queens – Anne and Maria Theresa.

The research in the fundamental collections of files listed above needs complementing with queries in many additional collections of the above-mentioned archives, as well as in other Polish and foreign archives and libraries. Due to the vast volume of the material, the choice must be selective. As far as collections situated outside Poland are concerned, the project should focus only on those that are known to contain letters between the Vasas and the Habsburgs on the ground of inventories or previous studies, but also on those collections that could potentially contain such information due to political, diplomatic, and family considerations. In the case of the Viennese Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, complementary studies should be conducted primarily in the following sections: *Hungarica*, *Turcica*, and *Rusica*. Queries should also be conducted in other Austrian archives: the Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv in the Graz and the Tiroler Landesarchiv in Innsbruck. In the Simancas collection, letters of the Vasas can also be found in a handful of series *Secretaría de Estado*, where – due to the Baltic issues – the series *Negociación de Flandes* is of special interest, as well as *Secretaría de Nápoles* in the section *Secretaías Provinciales*. As far as other Spanish archives are concerned, the most important are the Madrid collections of the Archivo Historico Nacional, Real Biblioteca, and Real Academia de Historia. In turn, the research conducted in the Belgian Archives Générales du Royaume should extend at least to one another collection of files: *Papiers d'État et de l'Audience*. The investigation in Polish archives and libraries should also extend to the manuscripts found among others in the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) in Kórnik, Ossoliński Library in Wrocław, the Library of the Academic Library of the PAU and PAN in Cracow, the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow, the Library of the University of Warsaw, and the Raczyński Library in Poznań. This group should also include the collection of the Ossoliński Library currently held at the Lviv National Vasyl Stefanyk Scientific Library of Ukraine.

The third group are copies and possibly also originals of letters exchanged by the Vasas and the Habsburgs that can possibly be found

in many other European archives, including Budapest, Moscow, Milan, St Petersburg, Prague, Rome, and Vilnius. Yet investigations conducted in the archives should not result in postponing the publication of the letters. Conducting them in the first group of archival collections mentioned above provides solid grounds for their publication. Obviously, one of the goals of the project is to catalogue and publish the potentially complete corpus of letters exchanged between the two dynasties, yet this can be achieved in a number of ways: by publishing additional volumes or supplements, and by the development of an electronic, interactive database of letters available online, modelled on the Corpus of Ioannes Dantiscus.⁸ It should, however, not replace a classical, hardcopy publication.

There is a fundamental difference between the Polish and foreign archives. In the Polish collections, both the incoming and outgoing letters are preserved as copies, while the original and fair copies (*minutae*) account only for a small percentage of the entire body of letters. *Libri Legationum* are the copy books of the royal chancellery with entries concerning foreign policy. They contain copies of diplomatic correspondence and assorted documents including instructions, addresses, answers to the above, reports connected to the mission of Polish diplomats in foreign courts and the entertaining of foreign envoys. They include agreements and peace treaties with foreign states, and marriage contracts. Moreover, the books also include documents concerning the internal affairs of the state. The chronological system of both the entire series *Libri Legationum* (LL) and each of its books is fairly complicated. The first of the books to contain documents from the days of the Vasas, *Liber Legationum* 25, covers years 1536, 1561, 1569, 1589, 1597, 1639, 1649, 1656, and 1668–1673. Similarly, volume 33 covers a broad, albeit shorter, period of time. Another feature characteristic of that collection is its incompleteness. For many years, there are no entries whatsoever. In the Vasa period, the gaps cover the following years: 1587–1588, 1590–1591, 1593–1594, 1596, 1603, 1605–1607, 1613–1617, 1621, 1630–1632, 1637–1638, 1640–1648, 1648, and 1663–1664⁹. What is also missing is the systematic nature of

⁸ Internet Publication of Corpus of Ioannes Dantiscus' Texts & Correspondence: www.dantiscus.al.uw.edu.pl.

⁹ Entries for 1592–1608 are contained in thematically uniform LL 39 (AKW, karton 34d) on Brunswick matters. There are also entries on diplomatic matters in

entries within a single year, with intermissions reaching from a number of days to a number of months. Moreover, a great deal of documents, especially letters, are not dated. It should also be noted that in the case of the letters leaving the chancellery we do not know whether the copies entered into the book were made from the original or from the fair copy. This can result in certain temporal shifts in the dating of the original. The few originals of letters that arrived from Habsburgs are found in many different archives. Most of them have been preserved in the AGAD collection in the *Archiwum Koronne Warszawskie*, Riksarkivet in Stockholm, and the Kórnik Library.

Most of the files in the main foreign collections, especially those of Vienna, Simancas, and Brussels, are loose. Only in Brussels, a large share of documents, including originals, was bound together and made into volumes at a later date.¹⁰ The collections of these three archives are the ones that contain most originals of Vasa letters. They also include copies of letters arriving from Poland, their translations from Latin into French, Spain, or German; copies and/or fair copies of Habsburgs' letters in Latin, and fair copies prepared in native languages to be translated into Latin. The condition and content of the *Libri Legationum* show how significant the investigations in foreign archives are not only for investigation of the relations between the Vasas and the House of Austria but also for the insight into the history of Polish diplomacy, operation of the Royal chancellery, Crown Archive, and the Metryka Koronna.

As the purpose of the publication is to cover the potentially most complete body of correspondence, it will also include the letters that had been published earlier. In their case, we will try to reach the originals or archive copies to make them the grounds for our edition.

The publication of the letters of the Vasas and Habsburgs was based on the guidelines contained in *Instrukcja wydawnicza dla źródeł historycznych od XVI do połowy XVII w.* (Wrocław, 1953) as well as *Instrukcja wydawnicza dla średniewiecznych źródeł historycznych* (Kraków, 1925) with respect to the

Metryka Koronna 202 (for 1559–1660) and 206 (for 1663, and 1666–1668), see: I. Kurasiowa-Sulkowska, J. Wejchertowa, “Księgi poselskie (Libri Legationum) Metryki Koronnej”, *Archeion* 48, 1968, pp. 61–73. *Libri Legationum* were digitalised and are available from http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/Metr_Korx.xml#series1.

¹⁰ The stitching and binding of the documents at the Secrétaire d'État Allemande of the Brussels Archive will render the *in extenso* publication of some letters impossible.

Latin language commonly used in the letters. For the texts in German, the basic guidelines drafted by Friedrich Edelmayer were applied,¹¹ and for letters in Spanish – by Ryszard Skowron.¹²

The letters are published in the form typical of classical Latin. The publication expands all the abbreviations and contractions (with the exception of etc. for “et cetera”), a practice that does not entail the use of square parentheses. This concerns especially all such salutation forms as *Mttis Vrae* = *Maiestatis Vestrae* and *Sertas V.* = *Serenitas Vestra*. Apart from the salutations, there are not many Latin abbreviations (especially in the case on grammatical endings) in the texts, which results from the formalised official language and limited subject range of the letters. This also resulted in not signalling of misspellings and simple grammatical errors in the copies of the letters. Contemporary principles were used to standardise the use of upper and lower cases. Thus capitalisation is used for the names of people and states, topographic names, intitulation, Latin adjectives coined from proper names, names of monastic orders, Sundays, and church festivities. The first and last names as well as geographical names are retained in the original form, even though they are frequently misspelled. Footnotes are used to provide their proper spelling, usually in the original version in the given language or in a generally accepted English version; moreover footnotes are used only when a given form is found for the first time, and are repeated in justified cases, e.g. when the same name is misspelled in a different way.

Dates are quoted in the original spelling of the source used in the source, and retain among others capitalisation of the names of the months. Punctuation has been modernised, yet efforts were made to limit the interventions to the minimum when the source used in the publication was an original.

¹¹ Die Korrespondenz der Kaiser mit ihren Gesandten in Spanien, ed. by Friedrich Edelmayer. Band 1: Der Briefwechsel Ferdinands I. und Maximilians II. mit Adam von Dietrichstein, 1563–1565. Edited by Arno Strohmeyer (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur der Iberischen und Iberoamerikanischen Länder / Estudios sobre Historia y Cultura de los Países Ibéricos e Iberoamericanos 3, Wien–München 1997), pp. 11–19.

¹² *Documenta Polonica ex Archivo Generali Hispaniae in Simancas*. Nova series, vol. 1, ed. by R. Skowron in collaboration with M. Conde Pazos, P. Duda, E. Corredera Nilsson, M. Urjasz-Raczko, Kraków 2015, pp. 11–14.

The letters are edited *in extenso*, which covers originals, copies, and fair copies. If the original was found, the publication always makes use of it. A frequent measure used by publishers of royal letters is the omission or abbreviation of the list of titles of rulers opening each letter, as a formal and repeatable element. We face a highly specific situation in the case of the Polish kings from the Vasa dynasty, as after the loss of the Stockholm throne, the title of the Kings of Sweden was not always used, the same being true also about the titles connected to the Grand Duchy of Moscow and together with it of borderland estates, and even of the title of the King of Poland immediately after the coronation of Sigismund III. This is why we decided that quoting all the titles and styles is necessary. Consequently, the titles and styles of the Habsburgs were also included. However, the addresses were removed in the case of originals, as they nearly always followed the addresses were removed of the recipient provided in the letter. Whenever the publication is based on a copy or a fair copy, the titles of monarchs, and greetings and closing formulas freely abridged by the secretary or a copyist were omitted (though these elements were retained if written out in full), as they were of secondary character and not a part of the original. These omissions were not marked in any way so as not to include excessive additional characters. For the same reason the titles of copies and fair copies of letters present in the manuscripts – e.g. *Regi Poloniae, Eodem in negotio ad imperatorem Romanorum, Archiducis Alberti responsum ad easdem a Regia Maiestate, Literae Imperatoris de libero comitate legatorum eius per Regnum Poloniae in Moschoviam ad regiam maiestatem Responsum ad literas Regiae Maiestatis a Caesare datum, Responsum Imperatoris ad easdem, and Litterae ab eodem rege* – were not included. Only in the cases when neither the original of the letter nor its copy have been preserved, the publication makes use of a translation of a letter or a fair copy from the original language drafted in the native language of the chancellery.

The letters were numbered, set in the chronological order, and given headlines. They identify the persons of the sender and recipient, place where the letter was written, and the date of writing it. If the letter is dated and the date is not present at the end of the text, this means that it was quoted in the header of the archival copy or fair copy. This is true primarily about the copies from *Teki Naruszevicza* and fair copies from the archives in Vienna and Simancas. Each document received

a summary. Quoted below it is information about the form of the letter (original, fair copy or copy) used for its publication, and the place where it is stored; other forms of the message are also mentioned, and information concerning the letter: seal, dating, condition, and reception is also included. The last item – the header – contains information related to the earlier publication of the letter, and is used only for the letters published *in extenso* and ones with only minor abridgements.

All the notes from the editors are taken into square brackets []. The sign [!] is used to confirm the spelling of a word, and [?] – doubts concerning the proper reading. Regular parentheses () are the ones used in the original text.

The documents contained in the publication were furnished two types of footnotes: concerning the text and content, included as endnotes for each letter. The textual footnotes concern the form and phrasing of the source texts. The references to these footnotes make use of lowercase letters of the alphabet. If a footnote refers to one or multiple words that were crossed out and are not a part of the basic text, the letter is taken into square brackets [a], and the stricken out text is given in the footnote. A reference in the form of two identical letters connected with a hyphen ^{a-a} denotes those sections of the text that were written over, recorded on the margin and belong to the basic text. This concerns primarily fair copies. Due to the nature of the sources, text versions were only introduced where necessary, and efforts were made to reduce them to the minimum. In case of published originals, no variations were quoted for the copies. The textual footnotes containing variations are present primarily in the case of differences between a fair copy of a letter sent by a member of the Habsburg family and a copy of the letter found in Polish collections. If there are two or more copies of a letter, the publication makes use of the contemporary copy, especially one from the chancellery, e.g. from *Liber Legationum* and not from *Teka Naruszenicza*; versions are provided in such cases, yet only if they have a bearing on the understanding of the content and/or identification of people and places.

Footnotes concerning the content follow the textual ones and are numbered with Arabic numerals. They contain primarily explanations concerning personal and geographic names, and sometimes facts.

Efforts were made to retain the form and visual formatting of the text. Both original letters and nearly all copies were written as single

blocks, without division into paragraphs. This external form of the text was retained with one significant exception: a greater line spacing is applied to original letters to separate intitulation of the sender and recipient, and the salutation formulas used after it, while the graphic form of the salutations in the closing of the letter has been retained.

The first volume was divided into two parts. The first contains studies portraying relations of the Madrid Habsburgs with Sigismund III from the perspective of Spanish researchers. In the first of these, a great researcher of the history of European courts, José Martínez Millán, analyses the processes of construction and then deconstruction of the ideological foundations for political cooperation between the Spanish and Austrian lines of the Habsburg dynasty. Miguel Conde Pazos and Rubén González Cuerva present the significance and role of the Spanish Embassy operating by the Emperor in relations with Sigismund III and the Commonwealth towards the end of the reign of Philip II and in the early reign of Philip III. In turn, Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, a specialist in the functioning of the courts of Spanish viceroys, portrays the negotiations concerning the inheritance of Queen Bona from the perspective of the court in Naples. The issue of the links with the Spanish line of the Habsburgs is also dealt by a Polish art historian living in Belgium, Ryszard Szmydki, who analyses the foreign contacts of Sigismund III with the court in Brussels. In turn the paper by Tomasz Poznański is the only one devoted to the political and diplomatic ties with the Habsburgs of Vienna in 1613–1632.

The fundamental and crucial part of the volume is the edition of letters of the Vasas and the Habsburgs written from 17th October 1587 to 10 December 1623. Of the total number of 388 letters published, 124 are the originals. Already, while working on the assumptions concerning the first part of the project, we realised how vast the archive materials covering the forty-five years of reign of Sigismund III are; a wealth of sources that required investigation, and that in a relatively short time. This is why we have assumed that the first part of the project should consist of at least two volumes. Right from the start we follow the principle of publishing the letters in chronological order, without defining time boundaries for individual volumes. We assumed that the first volume must include the letters contained in *Libri Legationum* in the Archiwum Głównie Akt Dawnych in Warsaw, *Polen I (Polonica)* in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, *Negociación de*

Alemania in Archivo General in Simancas, and *Secrétaire d'État Allemande* in Archives Générales du Royaume, *Extranea IX*, *Polen* in Stockholm's Riksarkivet. A decision was also made to include at least some of the letters from the Library in Kórnik and copies of letters from *Teki Naruszewicza*, as they provide lavish insight into the letters exchanged by the Vasas with the Habsburgs stored in the Polish collections, and are among the collections most frequently used in studies of international relations. The query in the Tiroler Landesarchiv in Innsbruck proved highly fruitful. As it turned out, they allowed the discovery of letters exchanged by Sigismund III with the rulers of Tyrol as well as copies of letters exchanged by the king with the emperors that were either not preserved or found in Vienna and the Polish collections. In turn, the search in the Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv in Graz, which practically contains no Polonica, brought no positive result. Similarly, no letters of the Vasas were found among the sources concerning Poland in Archivo Historico Nacional and Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.

Due to the continuing research, a detailed quantitative and qualitative study of the letters of the Vasas and Habsburgs concerning the entire reign of Sigismund III will be included in the second volume, which will also contain indexes for both the volumes.